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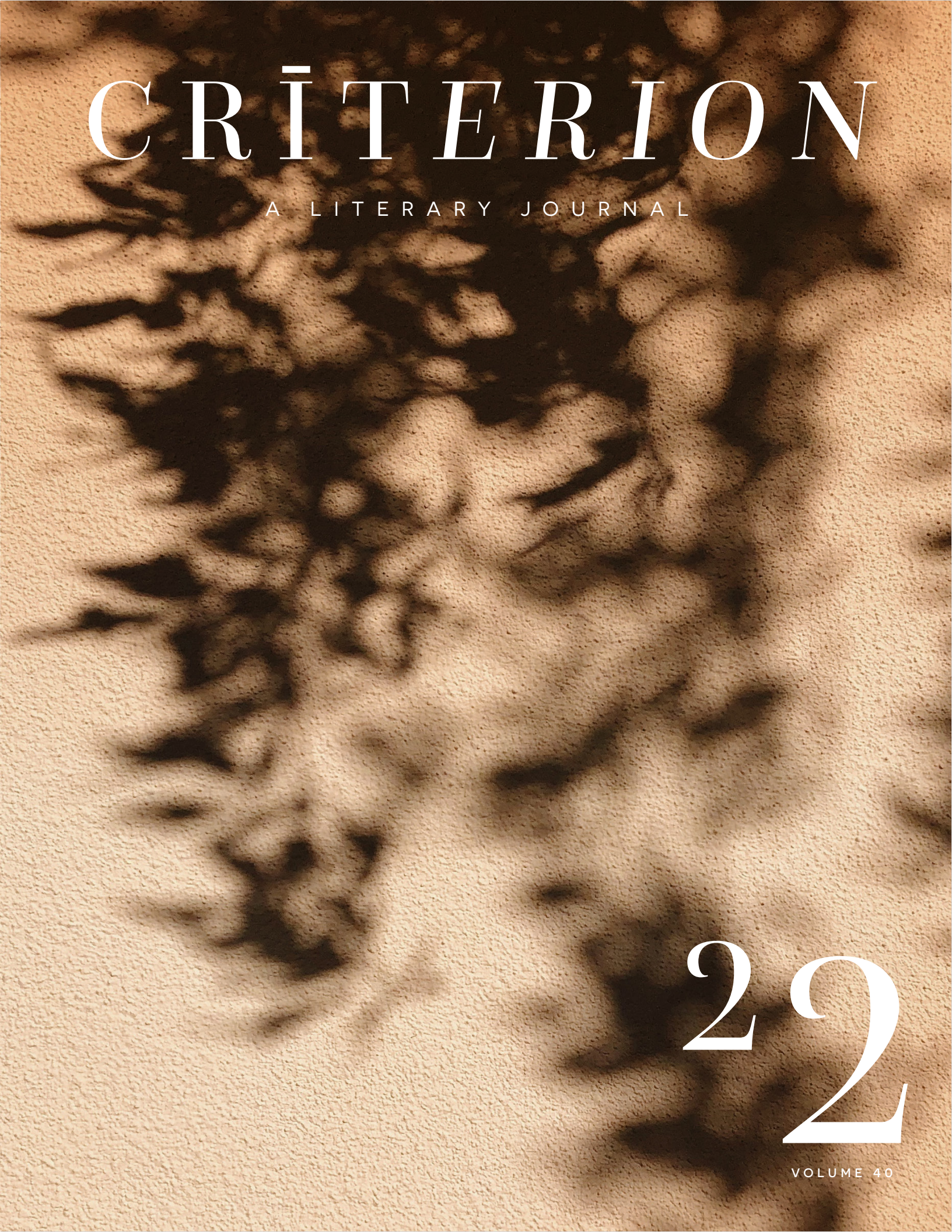
CRĪTERION
A LITERARY JOURNAL
22
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CRĪTERION

A LITERARY JOURNAL

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

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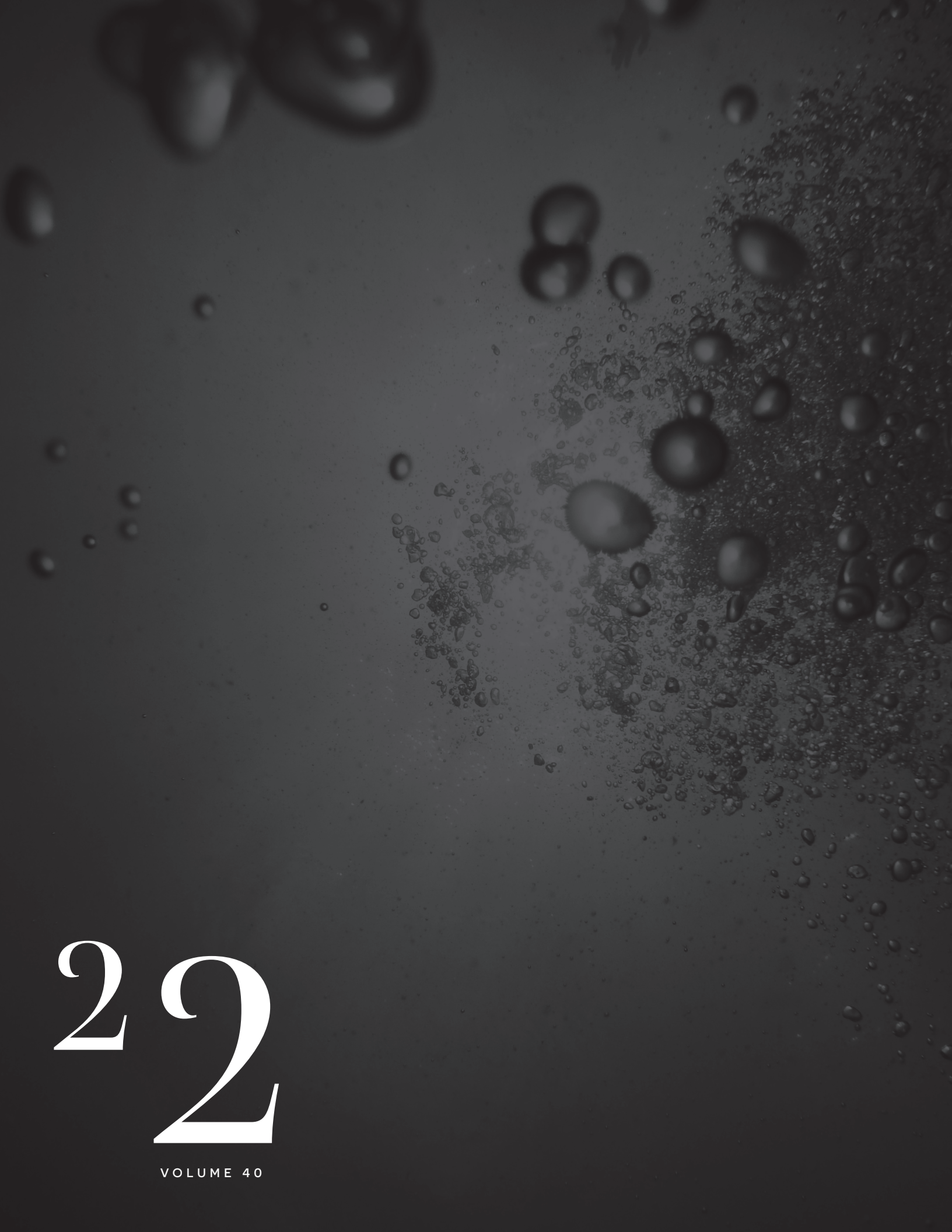

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VOLUME 40

CRĪT*ERION*

A LITERARY JOURNAL

Dear Reader,

WELCOME TO THE 2022 EDITION OF LMU'S CRĪT*ERION*, a literary journal dedicated to putting forth the best of the year's academic essays by students of Loyola Marymount University. The ten works in this year's collection—which span a range of genres, topics, eras, approaches, and critical lenses—were written amidst the continuing difficulty and tumult of a global pandemic and a world in crisis. Also present, however, is the resilience of a student body that seeks to use our collective voice in pursuit of positive change and deepening understanding, striving to overcome our difficulties by looking toward the example of literature.

We would like to thank our contributors, for entrusting us with their essays, and those on the editing team for their careful consideration and deliberation process, and for taking the time to make sure the best possible versions of those works are being presented to you.

We'd also like to extend our gratitude to our faculty advisor, Sarah Maclay, and our graphic designer, Ash Good, for her work over the past years in the creation of our website. It is our hope that, through our efforts in digitizing the collection, these talented voices will reach a wider audience than ever before. As always, continuing thanks to the English department for their tireless support of our magazine and its contributors.

Thank you for taking the time to seek out our journal . . . and now, enjoy the read!

Alexandra Paradzick
Comer Wadzeck
CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Beyond Traditional Literacy: Using New Media to Develop Traditional and Multimodal Literacy

ALYSSA BOBICH

FOR DECADES, professors have lamented a growing number of students who enter college without the basic literacy skills necessary to perform well in a rigorous academic environment. Yet a 2008 study comparing writing errors in first-year college student essays across the past one hundred years found that, on average, "the rate of student error... has stayed stable" (Glenn 360). Compositions have, however, changed: "emphasis on personal narrative has been replaced by an emphasis on argument and research" and papers more than doubled in length compared to data from 1980 (Glenn 351-352). Student writing has not deteriorated in quality; it has simply taken a different form.

In the thirteen years since this study was published, new media, including social media, online videos, and text messaging, has ingrained itself into our everyday lives, transforming how we communicate and express ourselves. Students are no exception to this evolution. Although once again there has been a public outcry against new media's detrimental effects on writing skills of the generation growing up with the Internet in their pocket, I argue that these new forms of media have simply reshaped the type of writing in which students engage, even offering opportunities for an expanded literacy. New media both familiarizes students with traditional literacy skills and introduces new, multimodal literacies invaluable to their

ALYSSA BOBICH is a Los Angeles native studying English and Finance at Loyola Marymount University, where she was recently recognized as the 2022 English Program Scholar. Her fascination with the role of linguistic conventions in creating meaning within discourse communities inspired her essay "Beyond Traditional Literacy." Written in Fall 2021 for Dr. Aimee Ross-Kilroy's Theory of Teaching Writing and Literature class, the essay examines the stylistic conventions of digital communication and their application in teaching traditional writing. After graduation, Alyssa plans on completing her first novel and continuing her education at Loyola Marymount University's School of Education.

future life in an increasingly connected world. Additionally, bringing new media into the classroom presents an opportunity for teachers to connect with students' existing literacy skills and expand on them using these everyday multimodal forms of communication.

NEW MEDIA AND LITERACY

In a reflection on teaching style and grammar, Professor Kate Ronald discusses how, despite the attempt to eliminate style as a grading metric in the move towards process pedagogy, teachers "are still influenced by your writing style more than we admit, or perhaps know," but often fail to teach it in class (Ronald 171). To help remedy the situation, she suggests students "need to write much more than just what's assigned in your classes to develop a beautiful writing style" (Ronald 179). In fact, students are already engaged in many extracurricular writing activities through social media, text messaging, blogging, and even multimedia projects like YouTube videos and podcasts. One study showed that "38% of the writing that the student participants completed happened outside of the classroom, and much of this writing happened online" (qtd. in Buck 35-36). Although these multimodal forms of communication do not follow traditional literacy formats, they still demand abilities in traditional forms of literacy—audience awareness, adapting to conventions, style—and have provided students with the opportunity to practice outside of the classroom.

For example, a case study of social media use tracked the ways in which one student, Ronnie, utilized different media platforms to connect with different audiences. On Twitter, where he "connected primarily with close friends and roommates," he portrayed himself as "an overcommitted and engaged college student" with a passion for music through "stream of consciousness" tweets (Buck 15-16). In comparison, on Facebook, where he had a wider audience, he maintained a similar image through posts about event information and profile photos related to music as well as selections from his Twitter content (Buck 17). By taking into consideration the audiences on both of these platforms, the story of himself he wanted to convey, and the conventions of the platforms influenced by their capabilities (for example, Facebook's format is more conducive to photos and long forms of information, whereas Twitter focuses on short text posts), Ronnie developed skills attributed to traditional literacy and used them towards his own goals on these new media platforms. He analyzed his audience and the conventions of the discourse community in order to create effective written and visual compositions to convey his message.

Another major way new media helps students with traditional literacy skills is by bringing them into a variety of discourse communities, each one with unique conventions to master. A 2011 study analyzed the language features of college students' instant messages, or IMs, and found that punctuation, letters, words, dialect, and metadiscursive markers all diverged from traditional use in order to communicate more effectively in the online environment (Haas 384). For example, "repeated and non-conventional punctuation appear in IM as ways to indicate pausing and a kind of emphasis (as in, *what model?????*)" (Haas 384). Traditional punctuation rules would deem the extra punctuation unnecessary and incorrect, especially in

formal, matter-of-fact compositions focused on conveying information. However, for the purposes of IM, a type of writing that often mimics the immediacy and informality of conversation, the users of IM adapted traditional writing rules in order to better convey their tone, creating an avenue to relay sarcasm or seriousness, jokes or information, depending on the social or informational demands of conversation. This new communication format required the creation of new conventions for clarity's sake, and the participants in the discourse community collectively created them.

Interestingly, there has been a generational divide regarding the adoption of these updated conventions. Younger generations who have grown up communicating through these instant forms of online communication understand these new conventions implicitly, whereas older generations who have had to acclimate to these new writing formats largely carry over traditional writing conventions and may be resistant to "breaking" rules of composition. A study from 2005 comparing academic versus personal writing found that "for younger people, e-mail is more analogous to a print form of speech than it is to a short letter," while older generations tend to "still feel as if I'm writing a brief letter because I'm typing out words" (Williams 705). This is just one of many differences in the ways generations view new media compositions, resulting in different conventions for various online discourse communities. In the example of using punctuation for emphasis, older generations that may read IMs as if they were letters likely would be confused as to the addition of "unnecessary" additional punctuation, whereas younger users familiar with the community's conventions would immediately understand the nuance added by that extra punctuation. And punctuation is only one of various conventions online communities have developed: both textual elements like slang, metadiscursive markers, and spelling, as well as visual elements like emojis, memes, and gifs add layers of nuance to online communication (Haas 384). Through casual participation in these communities, students have developed the same skills of analysis and adapting to conventions as they learn in traditional literature analysis of word choice, sentence structure, and literary devices.

The value of mastering these conventions has been amplified by the shareability of online composition. Traditional composition classes often teach students how to research and evaluate sources as well as how to write persuasively, taking into consideration elements of style, convention, and audience. Through their participation in online communities, students are seeing how influencers, social media activists, and news organizations effectively craft messages that reach large audiences and have personal and emotional as well as political and civic impact (Talib 56). The potential for a viral video and its associated popularity or influence, whether through written compositions on Twitter, video compositions on YouTube, or musical/performance compositions on TikTok, encourages students to think strategically about crafting their own posts for greatest impact and viewership (Talib 56).

Perhaps most importantly, students feel more "deeply engaged and satisfied by self-sponsored writing" compared to in-class assigned writing (Fishman 231). Despite new media being more casual and "fun" compared

to traditional academic assignments, these multimodal forms of communication are complex, challenging for newcomers and demanding of participants. Students who eagerly engage in these communities develop a variety of skills associated with traditional literacy and composition, including one of the most important elements of strong writing: voice. Importantly, by building these abilities through new media use, students also strengthen their multimodal literacy—their ability to write and comprehend meaning-making conventions of various modes of communication. The role of teachers, then, is to help students translate these traditional and multimodal skills into an academic setting.

INCORPORATING NEW MEDIA INTO THE CLASSROOM

By becoming more versed in these new forms of media and communication, students are simultaneously building on traditional literacy skills as well as applying them to multimodal scenarios. However, because this exposure comes through casual use of new media for leisure or personal projects rather than in the context of academic analysis, "they are not particularly skilled or critical users" (Talib 64). This presents an opportunity for teachers to build on the subconscious skills students have built and expand their literacy in a classroom setting using new media's unique attributes.

Teachers already have begun incorporating new media into classroom learning, utilizing videos, podcasts, and other new media formats to supplement textbook readings. One case study with students participating in an alternative to incarceration program (ATIP) described a teacher sharing African-American author James Baldwin's "lasting impact... on other media forms" by taking his students on a "spontaneous multimedia tour" through YouTube (Vasudevan 363-364). In collaboration with the students, he started by showing a video of Baldwin before branching out to other clips of works analyzing Baldwin's work or inspired by it (Vasudevan 364). This sort of research is uniquely enabled by multimodal forms of communication and clearly enhances the learning experience by tangibly showcasing the far-reaching impact of this author and making his existence real to the students. This teacher, in melding academic materials with "out of school literacies," "strived to construct a hybrid space constructed of shared understandings towards the realization of common goals" (Vasudevan 365). In using this form of research in the classroom, teachers help students understand how the multimedia tools students already use in their free time can be used to their advantage in an academic setting as well.

Alternatively, new media can also directly replace traditional texts in the classroom to help students practice applying traditional literacy skills to multimodal online texts. For example, teachers can have students select a post on a celebrity's social media account and ask them to analyze the goal of the post—whether to entertain, to persuade, or to inform; the audience the post targets; the elements of the photo and caption that effectively convey the message; and the ways additional tags, audio, and location support or enhance the message. While new media texts obviously should not replace the canon of literature, taking skills students previously saw as solely academic—analyzing works for audience, purpose, and rhetorical strategies—and meld-

ing them with out of classroom mediums trains students to think critically about what information they consume. By looking at multimodal online texts through this analytical lens, students strengthen traditional literacy skills while also becoming more aware of what stylistic choices are used in the content they interact with every day, ideally making them more critical consumers and intentional participants in online media.

Students cannot only critically analyze this sort of media, however; they also must intentionally and skillfully craft their own multimodal compositions. One way to incorporate these skills in the classroom would be to reimagine traditional projects like essays or research papers as multimodal projects such as video essays, podcast episodes, or social media collections. In a case study examining a research-based podcast project, students practiced traditional research-based skills—reading, writing, designing—but used them in concert with multimodal skills—talking, listening, viewing, use & manipulation—once again taking advantage of the opportunity for building various literacies afforded by new media (Walsh).

Alternatively, integrating multimodal forms of composition could be as simple as altering an assignment to be written in the form of a blog post or text message exchange. These more informal modes of writing could help students think more critically about audience, conventions of different discourse communities, and the ways new media platforms offer opportunities or limits on communication, as well as making them more comfortable shifting between academic and casual prose. By incorporating new media texts into both the reading and writing aspects of literacy education, teachers prepare students to communicate critically and effectively in an increasingly multimodal discursive environment.

WHY NEW MEDIA SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE CLASSROOM

These attempts to incorporate new media into the classroom bring up new questions regarding assessment and often require more energy, time, and nuance compared to traditional assignments, especially on the teacher's end. These challenges are not new; grading has always been a struggle against the subjective, and time and energy is always required to create a strong new assignment. However, in the end, it will be worth it because students will

1. be more invested in what they have learned,
2. be better versed in traditional literacy skills,
3. be more prepared to think critically about the media they consume in their everyday lives, and
4. be more prepared to engage in the discourse communities we collectively share on the Internet.

While the students' final compositions may differ from what we typically expect to find in an English classroom, the students will have the underlying skills necessary to navigate a variety of discourse communities with confidence in their own voice and ability. «

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Confronting Naturalism: The Need for Imagination in Modern Shakespearean Film Adaptations

GABRIELLE JOHNSEN

RECENT EFFORTS abound to adapt the plays of William Shakespeare to the screen, although they often fail to bridge the cultural dissonance between Elizabethan London and modern Hollywood. In order to justify such a permanent and costly endeavor as a film adaptation of a Shakespeare play, a director should offer a definitive artistic perspective on the selected play which both embraces the complexities of the original text and frames the story in a manner that engages the contemporary viewing audience. In this essay, I will first examine how challenges in adapting Shakespeare's theatrically dynamic style to the screen stem from the current trend of cinema into a realm of naturalism nonexistent in Shakespeare's era. I will then formulate an ideal theory of Shakespearean film adaptation through an examination of the camera's role in mediating the thematic and theatrical complexities of Shakespeare's plays on the screen. I will examine three recent film adaptations of Shakespeare plays through the lens of this theory: *The Merchant of Venice* (2004), *The King* (2019), and *Titus* (1999). I will thus demonstrate the link between each adaptation's quality and the ability of its director to balance respect for Shakespeare's original play with a willingness to disrupt tradition in order to make an artistic statement that necessitates the format of a film adaptation.

The primary challenge that Shakespeare plays present to filmic adaptational efforts stems from how expectations regarding

GABRIELLE JOHNSEN is a senior majoring in English and Theatre Arts at Loyola Marymount University. She is currently completing her final semester of college in Germany, where she is studying abroad with an ensemble of LMU actors. Gabrielle's creative work centers around her interest in the intersections between art forms and the interplay between aesthetics and emotions. She wrote this essay for Professor Theresia de Vroom's Shakespeare: The Comedy of Forgiveness class in the spring of 2021.

the degree of naturalism in storytelling differ between the original and adaptational mediums. Philippa Sheppard explains in *Devouring Time: Nostalgia in Contemporary Shakespearean Screen Adaptations* that "the film medium's intense drive towards realism" functions as "[t]he chief obstacle to adapting a Shakespeare play to the screen" (57).

This insidious ability of the camera to present fiction as fact has the potential to lull the audience into believing that there is only one perspective to a story. However, as Sheppard warns, "There are multiple realisms, not one. As soon as we put a camera in front of a real experience, it becomes mediated reality, shaped by the selection of the lens" (Sheppard 59). Particularly in an adaptation, the film director takes responsibility for directing the focus of the film's realism by selecting which reality from the many possible options to present to the audience, as well as how ambiguous to leave the intention behind the selection. The adaptational film's effectiveness, therefore, depends on the definitive selection of a compelling directorial point of view and the integration of that perspective with the focus of the camera's lens.

Shakespeare's plays, however, resist the singular reality of the camera, as they were written for a theatre which encouraged the participation of the audience's imagination in defining the world of the story. These plays were written under assumption that the varying distances between each seat in the theater and the playing area constitute inherently different viewing experiences for each member of the audience. While the camera allows for only one reality at a time, "[a] theatre which could permit both the rant and the whisper encouraged Shakespeare to develop a structural technique which exploited both" (Styan 37).

In *Shakespeare's Stagecraft*, J.L. Styan dubs the entertainment culture that so shaped Shakespeare's technique "total theatre" (196). In the total theatre of the Elizabethan era, the visual and aural components of the play culminated in an individualized theatrical experience, one in which multiple realities were not only possible, but integral to the dramatic form. These components included such non-naturalistic elements as Shakespeare's interchange of verse and prose in his dialogue, use of direct address to the audience, and "[t]he simple sweep of the Elizabethan platform [that] not only lent the playwright the freedom he wanted, but also cleared the mind of the spectator for conjuring up visions" (Styan 29-30). This process of exercising the spectator's own creative instincts further distinguishes Shakespearean dialogue from filmic dialogue. The Shakespearean spectator's freedom to interpolate any creative input born from personal imagination into the given performance onstage sharply contrasts with the filmgoer's expectation of being swept away into the fully-realized world of a film. Therefore, the tension between the perceived reality of film and the participatory fantasy of Shakespeare's total theatre demands that the adaptational director make the decision to prioritize either the filmic illusion of reality or the theatrical engagement of the spectator's imagination when crafting an adaptation.

As film directors continue to persevere in adapting Shakespeare to the screen despite this tension between the two mediums,

directorial intent serves as a gauge by which to evaluate the quality of their efforts. The ideal adaptational director understands the inherent differences between stage and screen and seeks to take advantage of filmic qualities which cannot be realized onstage in order to craft a cinematic, artistically inventive Shakespearean experience. Sheppard divides directors of Shakespearean film adaptations into two groups "based on what kind of experience they aim to give their audiences. The first group are most concerned with telling Shakespeare's story in the most transparent and effective way they know; the second are providing a filmic essay on the play, a very personal reinterpretation" (60). Based on what I have established about naturalism's current inextricability from the desired level of transparency and effectiveness in filmic storytelling and the Shakespearean resistance to translation into that naturalism, I find that the first method falters as an adaptational strategy. In "Towards a Theory of Shakespearean Film," Patricia Ferrara argues that "[e]ach age, and indeed, each viewer has a conflicting desire to see a Shakespearean production which is both fresh and faithful, and our standards of faithfulness are questionable and fickle" (168). The current standard that prioritizes naturalism in film limits the range of language and imagination necessary for giving full value to the emotional life of the Shakespearean text. If the adaptational director prioritizes naturalism, even the most committed performances and exquisite costume and set design may be rendered emotionally ineffective onscreen due to the utter incongruity of Shakespeare's complex language and themes with the director's desired cinematic realism.

Sheppard's second approach, the filmic essay, is the option better suited to a holistic Shakespearean film adaptation. In its emphasis on the directorial point of view, this adaptational strategy takes advantage of both the mediated reality of the camera and the inherent potential for exploring the imagination inherent to Shakespeare's writing. In this regard, Sheppard's concept of the filmic essay connects to Greg Colón Semenza's definition of a reflexive adaptation, in which he posits that "reflexive cinematic adaptations of literature very often dissect their own practices of adaptation, and they just as often include complex critical discourses on their own modes and priorities of adaptations" (149). The reflexive adaptation thus contains the potential for commentary on its source by means of cinematic spectacle. Due to the intricacy of Shakespeare's language, the modern filmgoing audience cannot entirely lose themselves in the cinematic illusion of a Shakespearean adaptation as they may in that of a typical film; therefore, by emphasizing the inherent theatricality of the play rather than diminishing it, the director may approach emotional truth in the extremes of visual spectacle. This adaptational strategy may complement the richness of Shakespeare's language and influence the audience's emotions more profoundly than the most historically accurate or naturalistic approach. Thus, the filmic essay is the stronger of Sheppard's two modes of adaptation, as it lends itself to Shakespeare's total theatre and does not run the risk of replacing the text itself, but offers something new to the tradition upon which it builds.

The relationship between intertextuality and postmodernism in the current landscape of film further supports the adaptational strength of Sheppard's filmic essay. The combination of both concepts activates the associative potential of filmgoers in a manner which resembles the active imagination of Shakespeare's original audiences. Intertextuality, a term "generally understood to connote the structural relations between two or more texts" (Landwehr 2), "has been appropriated and adapted by non-literary art forms so that it is not—despite the embedded word 'text'—exclusively related to works of literature or other written texts" (Martin 149); thus, the concept readily applies to associations between films and other visual mediums as well as between works of literature. Intertextuality is aided by the associative potential of the postmodern tradition. Within the postmodern artistic landscape, in which works "acknowledge their dependence on established forms of representation" (Landwehr 7), the casting of certain actors often takes on intertextual significance based on the other well-known roles of those actors, whether intentional or unintentional on the director's part. This tradition began in the days of Old Hollywood, during which "the number and frequency of similar roles played by America's durable repertory company of major studio stars and contract players, and the loyalty of their audiences, [made] the Hollywood years an exemplary period in which to study such intertextualities" (Fried 304). Casting is a vital process in both of Sheppard's modes of adaptation, but the intertextuality of casting particularly shines in the postmodern associations of the filmic essay adaptational strategy, since the postmodern filmmaker consciously uses the intertextuality of casting to support the thesis of the filmic essay. The director of an intentionally postmodern adaptation relies on the audience's natural tendencies towards intertextual association in order to build an abstract layer of emotion upon the concrete visuals of the film, much in the same way that Shakespeare's audiences filled in the scenery of the blank stage with their imaginations.

Having established Sheppard's filmic essay as the theoretical paragon of successful Shakespearean film adaptation, I will now analyze how three recent Shakespearean adaptations vary on the spectrum between Sheppard's two modes of adaptation. In each of these films, the delineation between transparent and effective storytelling and the filmic essay shifts; the camera's singular focus forces each director to choose which reality to highlight out of the multiple possibilities, but the extent to which each filmmaker explores alternative framing devices or nontraditional design elements as extensions of the directorial vision varies. I will examine these three films in order from least to most imaginative in their translations of Shakespeare to the screen. I will begin with Michael Radford's 2004 adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* and analyze how its realistic approach and emphasis on historical detail succeed in communicating some of the text's more dramatic themes, but fatally undermine the comedic elements present in the text. Then I will discuss David Michôd's 2019 film, *The King*, which condenses events from Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*,

and *Henry V* into one narrative. I will explore how Michôd combines both of Sheppard's methods, as he aims for the naturalism of the transparent and effective mode of adaptation, yet ultimately presents a filmic essay through his heavy revisions of Shakespeare's language and reinterpretation of key character traits and plot points in his pursuit of naturalism. I will conclude with Julie Taymor's 1999 film *Titus*, an adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*, which resides firmly in Sheppard's filmic essay category. I will discuss Taymor's film as an exemplar of how to holistically integrate a filmic point of view into a Shakespearean text and take advantage of the non-naturalistic tendencies of the postmodern artistic landscape in order to translate the heightened emotions of Shakespeare's play into a language recognizable to the modern filmgoer. I will analyze each film on three main criteria: the cohesion of the director's adaptational strategy with the original play text; the detail and vision of the world-building, as communicated by the tone of the cinematography and texture of the set and costume design; and how the intertextuality of the casting and the performances of each film's major actors combine to realize the director's vision. Overall, I will demonstrate that, regardless of how naturalistic the filmmaker attempts to be, each film reveals directorial impulses toward the filmic essay style of adaptation, and those impulses create the most compelling aspects of each adaptation.

The most significant decision that Radford makes in adapting *The Merchant of Venice* into a film is his emphasis on the anti-Semitism of Shakespeare's Venice and centralization of Shylock's plight. His adaptational alterations to Shakespeare's script stylize Shylock as a sympathetic, tragic figure and offer him more predominance in the narrative than Shakespeare originally grants the character. The first scene of the film is of Radford's invention, not Shakespeare's: written messages on the screen which denote the extremity of anti-Semitism in 1596 Venice are intercut with dramatizations of that prejudice, culminating in Antonio spitting on Shylock when they meet on the Rialto Bridge (*The Merchant of Venice* 1:04-3:28). This scene provides necessary historical context, but also establishes the tone of the film as socially-conscious and prioritizes Shylock in the audience's sympathies. Further on in the narrative, Radford's illustration of Shylock's grief after Jessica's disappearance similarly builds upon Shakespeare's description of the event; Radford juxtaposes Solanio's report of Shylock's fixation on money—"O my ducats! O my daughter!" (*MV* 2.8.15)—with visuals of Shylock weeping in Jessica's abandoned room and sulking in the rain (*Merchant* 45:08-45:53). This usage of filmic visuals to qualify Shakespeare's language reveals Radford's artistic intent regarding anti-Semitism with clarity and precision. By endowing Shylock with more humanity than the text alone provides, Radford's adaptational strategy strengthens the emotional resonance of the character's tragedy.

By latching so straightforwardly onto Shylock's plot, however, Radford denies the inherent ambiguity of the tension between the relationships of the play's other characters. While Radford's approach to anti-Semitism is concrete and opinionated, his treatment of

the competition between Portia and Antonio for predominance in Bassanio's heart fails to take such a definite stance. His approach to dramatizing the text's tension regarding this subplot's gender dynamics vaguely culminates in two homoerotic kisses: one between Antonio and Bassanio (*Merchant* 12:19 - 12:26), and the other between Portia and Nerissa (*Merchant* 2:00:28-2:00:31). While the kiss between Antonio and Bassanio is private and establishes the link between the two men as something ambiguously intense, Radford situates it in a scene in which Bassanio declares his intention to court Portia. Hence, the kiss could be interpreted as Bassanio's attempt to placate Antonio after requesting funds from him, or it could be seen as an illustration of routine tenderness in the men's relationship. Either way, Radford does not make explicit what the nature of their bond is. Conversely, the kiss between Portia and Nerissa is clearly performative, taking place as the two women tease their new husbands about infidelity while withholding the secret that they were disguised as men in the courtroom. Again, Radford's staging of a kiss in this scene lacks the same clarity he grants Shylock's arc; perhaps Radford intended this kiss to decry female sexuality as manipulative when juxtaposed with the seemingly more tender kiss between Bassanio and Antonio, but there is not enough evidence in the rest of the film to either prove or disprove this claim. Furthermore, the two kisses between the two men and the two women somewhat discredit the heterosexual union between Portia and Bassanio. Since Radford chooses to style his film in naturalism, yet selectively apply the psychological weight of naturalism to Shylock's plot alone, his staging of these kisses further muddles the inherent confusion regarding gender and sexuality in Shakespeare's text rather than declaring any discernible point of view on the topic or crafting intentional ambiguity from a defined dramatic perspective.

Radford further identifies the bond between Antonio and Shylock as the film's core by using dark lighting and color to emphasize the gravitas of the Venice plot. The dreary decadence of the Venice setting plays into the solemnity of the grim conflict set there, further underscoring Radford's sympathies towards Shylock. Under the cover of darkness, Radford contrasts the hypocrisy of many Christian characters, who carouse masked among half-naked courtesans, with the piety of Antonio, who attends his church, and of Shylock, who attends his synagogue (*Merchant* 3:39-6:00). While nighttime vices attract characters who will prove to be the play's lovers, notably Bassanio, the equal devotion that Shylock and Antonio independently demonstrate to their warring faiths indicates the men to be more similar to one another than they realize. In the daytime scenes, Radford continues to emphasize the darkness of Venice through the consistency of clouds and rain over the city, exaggerating the ubiquity of water in the city's canals. Radford situates Shylock's famous "I am a Jew" speech (*MV* 3.1.53-73) in gray-blue mist, including the running water of the nearby canal in the edge of the frame (*Merchant* 52:35-54:30). Amid the surplus of water, the drear of the situation is evident, and the sense that Shylock's character is on a moral precipice is implicit. The visual language of this scene

absorbs the audience into Shylock's mood as the world appears to sympathize with his extremes.

In contrast, Portia's court at Belmont remains drenched in sunlight, such that, when intercut with the Venice scenes, the cheer of the location underwhelms in its sudden contrast with the prior pathos. Radford ostensibly centers his interpretation of Portia's situation around Nerissa's early comment that Portia's "miseries [are not] in the same abundance as [her] good fortunes are" (*MV* 1.2.3-5). Immediately following the aforementioned scene, which ends when Shylock walks off into the mist with the vengeful knowledge that he can demand Antonio's pound of flesh, Radford cuts jarringly back to Portia's plot at its most optimistic: Bassanio's successful selection of the iron casket (*Merchant* 58:56-1:06:28). When juxtaposed with the drear of Venice, Portia's chief fear that she might have to wed a man she does not want is undercut by the sunny, gilded palace in which she worries. Radford frames her struggle as laughable and her happiness in marriage as a foregone conclusion; his near-disdainful treatment of Portia prevents the exploration of any emotional depth in her plot. Shakespeare weaves a natural interplay between the comic and the dramatic in the play's text, but Radford's directorial approach esteems the dramatic so far above the comic elements that he disrupts the balance of the story through this jarring coding of lightness against darkness.

Perhaps most obviously to the viewing audience, Radford's casting decisions cement the status of the feud between Shylock and Antonio as the film's top priority. The casting of Al Pacino as Shylock and Jeremy Irons as Antonio affirms the importance of these characters by the merit of these actors' recognizability when compared with the other members of the cast. Known for playing iconic antiheroes in films such as *The Godfather* (1972) and *Scarface* (1983), Pacino's household-name fame and penchant for playing volatile characters contrasts with Irons' ease in communicating self-contained abnegation and track record of playing a range of villainous or otherwise morally ambiguous characters in films such as *Lolita* (1997) and *The Lion King* (1994). Radford frames Pacino's Shylock as a tragic figure raging against an unfair system that Irons' self-martyring Antonio manipulates to his benefit. In contrast, the casting of Lynn Collins as Portia and Joseph Fiennes as Bassanio deflates the engrossing potential of their romance. Both actors comport their characters with a level of affectation at odds with the efforts of Pacino and Irons. Intertextually, Fiennes may be welcomed in this role by viewers on account of his prior role as a lovelorn William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), yet he defines his interpretation of Bassanio by shallow smirking and artificially raised eyebrows, while Collins sighs repeatedly and speaks affectedly; the climactic courtroom scene, in particular, loses believability due to Collins' utter inability to convincingly comport herself like a man (*Merchant* 1:32:22-1:49:55). Both actors come across as though their characters are performing love, rather than experiencing it. This could have been an interesting choice, playing off the manipulative codependency that Shakespeare writes into their courtship,

but Radford's repeated demonstrations of directorial disinterest in their relationship and preference for the dynamic between Shylock and Antonio is a likelier explanation for the disconnection between the lovers. Ultimately, Radford's direction explores *The Merchant of Venice*'s message regarding the role of hate in fostering vengeance but routinely overlooks Shakespeare's proposed solution to revenge: mercy, fostered by love.

In *The King*, another attempt at naturalistic Shakespeare, Michôd drastically revises Shakespeare's dialogue, such that his film constitutes a variation on Shakespeare's themes rather than a true adaptation of his plays. While the opening scenes skim over major events from Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, the film spends most of its runtime concerned with the events of *Henry V*, culminating in a muddy, visceral conceptualization of the Battle of Agincourt. In contrast to the calculating, ambitious Hal of Shakespeare's plays, Michôd's Hal earnestly despises his duty as crown prince. At his father's deathbed, this film's Hal rips the covers off and calls the dying king "Wretch" (*The King* 31:45 - 32:09), a stark contrast to the response of Shakespeare's Hal after his father berates him for assuming the crown prematurely: "O pardon me my liege! [...] There is your crown, / And He that wears the crown immortally / Long guard it yours!" (*2H4* 4.5.137,142-144). Michôd reverses the power dynamic in this key scene, yet does not provide a concrete explanation for Hal's deep hatred of his father in his alterations aside from the immediate circumstance before this death scene, wherein Hal learns of his younger brother's death on the battlefield——a detail which is yet another change from the original Shakespeare (*The King* 28:03 - 31:06). Throughout the film, Hal's characteristic concern with the English people is recast as a theoretical concern as he leads his nation from afar, surrounded by significantly older, often dishonest advisors. He does not seek to become acquainted with the governed people, as Hal does in *1 & 2 Henry IV*, and he does not go to war out of ambition, as Hal does in *Henry V*, but he is dragged along reluctantly by his advisors at each major decision. The effect is a Hal unmoored from the concreteness of Shakespeare's details in order to better fit the recognizable character type of the estranged son in a dysfunctional family.

Likewise, Michôd's Hal doesn't cast off Falstaff as Shakespeare's does, but rather seeks out his counsel after assuming the throne. This rendition of Falstaff is considerably less "fat-witted" (*1H4* 1.2.2) and worldly than Shakespeare's Falstaff. The character's comic tendencies are almost entirely erased in favor of framing the knight as Hal's only trustworthy advisor in a court full of treachery; comedy only lightly enters the scene when otherwise accompanying wisdom, such as in a late scene when Falstaff constructs the winning battle strategy for the Battle of Agincourt based on the assumption that it will rain overnight, which he is certain of because his "right knee is aching. It only does that when rain is near" (*The King* 1:25:35-1:29:46).

Likewise, Michôd does not kill Falstaff off in the same way that Shakespeare does——from a broken heart after Hal rejects him (*H5* 2.3)——but he endows him with a hero's death after leading the most perilous charge at the

Battle of Agincourt, complete with Hal weeping over his corpse (*The King* 1:51:11-1:52:53). These basic reversals in the key characters of Hal and Falstaff diminish Shakespeare's themes of chosen fatherhood and responsibility in exchange for a meditation on the unstoppable course of fate, in which Michôd's Hal is a "chosen one" figure who must rise to his destiny, and Michôd's Falstaff is the sage guide who aids him on his path to self-fulfillment.

The illusion of gritty historical realism further bolsters the film's tendencies toward naturalism and disguises the adaptation's infidelity to the text, even as the adaptation fails to completely establish the intended portrait of a king's ascent. The impression of the film's visual world is one of weak light illuminating steady darkness. The most sunlight in the film shines on its most violent scenes: Hal's defeat of Hotspur (*The King* 19:36-25:33), the execution of the traitors Grey and Cambridge (*The King* 59:10-59:45), and the Battle of Agincourt (*The King* 1:38:00-1:51:00). The harsh light shows the plain nature of the violence, exacerbated by the absence of a score in the fight between Hal and Hotspur, the gore of the beheading in the execution scene, and long takes of choreographed violence in the climactic battle. Contrary to the plays, in which grand battles and executions take place offstage, Michôd's camera lingers on the cruel interplay of blade and flesh. He insists that the audience follow each blow, but pulls away just as the repetitive violence becomes mind-numbing. This approach refuses to support Shakespeare's notion of satisfaction in battlefield victory; while the Hal of *Henry V* proclaims "ne'er from France arriv'd more happy men" (*H5* 4.8.126) upon victory at Agincourt, the Hal of *The King* cannot bring himself to answer affirmatively to Catherine of Valois' inquiry, "Do you feel a sense of achievement? [...] In any regard?" (*The King* 1:59:40-2:03:20). Michôd's voice rings louder than any one of the individual characters, conveying a distrust for all systems of monarchy and violence that exist, as well as a fatalistic view of destiny's role in shaping a life.

He transforms Hal from Shakespeare's cunning politician to a victim of circumstance. Michôd consummately strips Hal of his agency, and, while this decision is crucial to the message he wishes to convey with the film, it dulls the film's central character and pointlessly confuses his once-clear motivations.

The casting of Timothée Chalamet as Hal intertextually links the film to coming-of-age stories. At the time of the film's release, Chalamet had recently risen to prominence for playing a range of roles in critically-praised coming-of-age stories such as *Call Me By Your Name* (2017), *Lady Bird* (2017), and *Beautiful Boy* (2018). His bony frame and gawky carriage thus correlate intertextually to teenage naiveté and the discovery of new circumstances, which fits with Michôd's vision of an unwilling, predestined Hal, as opposed to Shakespeare's plotting prince.

Noticeably absent from the film is any version of Hal's famous *1 Henry IV* speech about shining brighter after revealing his hidden kingly nature (*1H4* 1.2.195-217). Chalamet's Hal is forthcoming, rather than deceptive, although this change denies his character the compelling depth of motivation in Shakespeare's original writing;

such inconsistencies mark the character's transformation within the film. When Hal discovers at the film's end that he had been deceived into waging war, he kills the advisor who had tricked him in one stab (*The King* 2:03:35-2:09:51). This cold-blooded violence bookends the film with a reversal of Hal's first violent deed—his reluctant killing of Hotspur, which Hal undertakes only in the hopes that "there will be no battle" (*The King* 17:29-18:01). Michôd thus uses violence to describe Hal's loss of innocence as he transforms from near-pacifism to discovering the need a king may have to kill. Chalamet's internal, slow-burning approach to the role fits with Michôd's vision of a stark landscape stripped of Shakespeare's humor. In this regard, *The King* amounts to little more than a character study of Henry V at his coming-of-age, wherein the consequences of Hal's actions are further heightened in consideration of his youth.

Contrary to both Radford and Michôd, Taymor's postmodern approach to adapting *Titus Andronicus* wholeheartedly leans into theatricality in a grotesque extreme, and in so doing realizes the full imaginative potential of the original play without sacrificing its emotional impact. A director of the stage as well as film, Taymor embraces the imaginative potential of her source material, and her efforts result in a film that remains cinematic without sacrificing the theatrical absurdity present in Shakespeare's text. The opening sequence, which steals a child away from play-fighting at a 1950s-style breakfast table and thrusts him into the ritual proceedings of a post-victory Roman coliseum (*Titus* 0:46-6:30), immediately establishes the heightened nature of her film's world. The identical, choreographed movement of the soldiers as they assemble not only fascinates the young boy, an audience surrogate, but establishes the link between the grotesqueness, beauty, and violence that dominate the rest of the film. Taymor's disinterest in naturalism does not erase the film's potential for moments of emotional effectiveness, however. She notably orchestrates tension and terror in the prelude to Lavinia's rape through theatrical means in keeping with Shakespeare's text, capitalizing on the animalistic movement of the villainous Goth boys, which is theatrically physicalized through their entire bodies and cinematically heightened by disorienting camera maneuvers (*Titus* 54:38-59:48). The direction of this scene makes use of movement in a manner that is unconventional for film, yet equipped for communicating the visceral disgust of the situation. Taymor's theatrical focus on the whole body functions as an alternative to the naturalistic extreme closeup shot as the default means of emoting on film. For the story of *Titus Andronicus* especially, the bodily dynamics of Taymor's approach prefigure the violence subconsciously, so that the audience becomes complicit in the crimes of the characters, much as the young boy from the opening scene becomes absorbed into the story itself.

Taymor's collage of influences from miscellaneous eras and styles visually distinguishes her characters and locations in order to elucidate the plot within the abnormality of the film's world. The wardrobe visually codes the loyalties of the two feuding families, but also distinguishes between individuals. The transformation of the Goths'

clothing displays their reversal of fortune from prisoners of war to royalty, as well as their unalterable natures in both circumstances. Their introductory clothes, shaggy animal furs (*Titus* 10:36-13:00), initially preview their animalistic appetites for sex and vengeance. After Tamora weds Saturninus, Tamora wears the gaudy gold gown of a self-styled warrior goddess—regal, yet distasteful—while her sons bound about in tones of silver and gold, the disparity between the colors reflecting both their sibling rivalry and the degree to which they mirror their mother (*Titus* 34:06-36:46).

Their animalism then transfers from their clothes to their actions, most notably in the physicality of Chiron and Demetrius as they spar with one another and unabashedly gorge their appetites both for food and sex. As their clothes affirm, the Goths prize self-satisfaction above all else.

In contrast, the styling of the Andronicus family reflects their traditional values. Titus identifies himself as a military man either in full traditional Roman battle gear (*Titus* 6:43-8:11) or in a more contemporary military jacket (*Titus* 1:08:40-1:10:23), but when he begins to lose his sanity, he dresses in the comfortable cardigans of a grandfather, showing his age and withdrawal away from the public and professional circuits and descent into the family sphere (*Titus* 1:29:27-1:33:39). His children follow his visual example: Titus' military sons sport buzzcuts like modern American soldiers and don full Roman battle gear (*Titus* 32:00-34:05), and Lavinia wears dresses simultaneously reminiscent of ingenues from both midcentury America and ancient Rome (*Titus* 14:26-15:33, 53:05-59:48). The children proclaim their duty through their clothes, and visually retain their familial identity, even as they are brutalized by the Goths for holding fast to their morals of truth and honor. The importance of tradition to this family's clothing reflects their disillusionment after being failed by the Rome that they had so wholeheartedly served. Taymor emphasizes the animalism of the Goth family and the traditionalism of the Andronicus family in order to exaggerate the downfall of each family into the worst extremes of these natures: the insatiability of the Goths consumes them, while the honor of the Andronicus family shatters them when they cannot adapt to a world that disobeys their standards.

Taymor's casting of her key players further builds upon established visual coding by making use of identifiable character types that suit each actor's strengths yet resist total surrender to Hollywood tropes. The most obvious intertextual connection in this film is the casting of Anthony Hopkins as Titus, given his career-defining performance in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991). When Titus reveals to Tamora that her sons are "both baked in this pie; / Whereof their mother daintily hath fed" (*Tit.* 5.3.60-61), Hopkins relishes in the absurdity of the cannibalism, here played not psychologically subterranean, but fully unhinged, as Titus walks the line between performing madness and succumbing to it (*Titus* 2:23:55-2:30:01). The rest of the cast is not as solidly associated with a singular role to the degree that Hopkins is, yet Taymor continues to take advantage of their suitability to certain

archetypes in order to exaggerate themes within the text. As the royal odd couple, Jessica Lange leans into a strange sensual maternity in Tamora, which Alan Cumming counters with a juvenile dependency as Saturninus. As Tamora's sons, Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Matthew Rhys combine the uncomfortable sexuality of their mother with the juvenile idiocy of their adoptive father in an exaggerated, volatile extreme. As Aaron, Harry Lennix's physical strength lends him a commanding presence which he matches in cold ambition and eventually transforms into steadfast dedication to his son. He leans into his isolation as the only character of color in the play, finding more freedom within it as his plot progresses. The thoughtful wildness of Taymor's visuals allows her actors the authority to imbue their larger- than-life characters with the intrinsic gifts at their natural command as actors. The result of such a varied assemblage of performances is a dynamic film that enthralls the audience by merit of its utter unpredictability, but still maintains the comforts provided by intertextual association.

The thematic complexities and varieties within Shakespeare's plays offer a wealth of material for aspiring adapters to build upon, but those same opportunities for experimentation challenge directors who find themselves unable to wholeheartedly commit to a definite artistic perspective. Some directors, like Radford, who intend to produce a straightforward adaptation, cannot help but bias the text towards their own perspectives and communicate a vision only halfway. Other directors, like Michôd, who seek to exclude the more Shakespearean elements of the texts, often compromise the integrity of the text by so thoroughly revising it. However, directors like Taymor, who embrace the inherent discord of a modern filmic attempt at Shakespeare, paradoxically uncover the human truths of his plays more completely in the chaos of their visions. Shakespeare's capacity for such perennially truthful characterizations and situations results from the unique manner in which he reassembled the familiar. His works thrive in their nuances; his plots cannot be condensed into a simple good-vs.-evil binary or transferred intact into the modern framework of the hero's journey. A robust understanding of the human condition, one that encompasses the surprising and often contradictory spectrum of emotions, lends his plays their immortality, and an interest in deepening that human understanding through further artistic experimentation is therefore necessary for creating Shakespearean film adaptations with the same potential for longevity and emotional impact as the original texts. **«**

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Feminist Reclamation of Women from Greek Myth

ALEXANDRA PARADZICK

SOCIETY IN CLASSICAL GREECE was steeped in misogyny, and as women were being mistreated in real life, so were female characters in their mythos. Even as these characters were forced into the role of wives or mothers, or punished for crimes committed against them, or killed for a moral lesson, women in modern day have started to reexamine these characters and rewrite them to be more empowering. Of all the various women in Greek myth, modern female audiences have latched onto two: Medusa and Artemis. Both of these characters have been taken into the feminist fold, and now symbolize something many women experience: sexual assault and lesbianism. While examining how these women's stories were used to put down the female population of Greece, it is important to recognize how the very ones meant to be oppressed have taken these myths and changed them into something much more powerful.

Medusa is perhaps one of the most well-known mythic monsters of the modern world. In the ancient world, the story of her murder by Perseus was known as a true hero's story, with the dashing young man killing the beast and saving the young princess. When taking into account, however, that Perseus killed Medusa in her sleep, some modern audiences have taken a problem with it. An example of the "modern Medusa" was made by Matt Rhodes in 2013, in which Medusa is depicted as an injured woman hiding in her own home from Perseus in a work of digital art. The hero in question is presented in the background, hulking and angry, hunting down the bleeding and crying woman in the foreground. Medusa's backstory also gives some credence to this idea of her being a victim. The story goes that Medusa, a devout priestess of Athena, was raped in Athena's temple by Poseidon. In response to

ALEXANDRA PARADZICK is an English Major at Loyola Marymount University, graduating this year with the rest of the Class of 2022. The following essay was written for Professor Christopher Gibson's Classical Myth class in the Fall Semester. She had been interested in Greek Mythology since a young age, and read not only the original myths, but many modern adaptions put out as fiction novels. These adaptions became the inspiration for the paper's topic, in which she decided to explore which myths woman had decided to adapt, and why these specific mythological women were so fascinating to the modern audience.

her temple being defiled by the crime, Athena cursed Medusa, changing her from a beautiful woman to a hideous monster with snakes for hair and a gaze that turned living creatures to stone. For the ancients of the time, Medusa was constantly depicted in art as a frightening monster that killed indiscriminately, and Perseus killing her was considered something akin to a rabid animal being put down rather than a murder. Modern women have changed the story a bit. Generally, women believe that instead of a curse, Athena was helping Medusa by giving her the ability to protect herself from other men that would wish to harm her. A lesser, extremely modern change to the story, is that Medusa's stone gaze only affected men, though there is no evidence from Greece that this claim has any basis. One could attribute the ancient view of Medusa being victim-blamed to the misogyny of the times, though there are those that offer a much darker reason to the myth's construction.

There is no set author of the Greek mythos that we know of, and there is no name to credit the story of Medusa and Poseidon in Athena's temple. However, due to the subject matter and the Greek norm of not teaching women to read or write, it is safe to assume that it was a man that originally presented the story of the gorgon. There has been an idea presented that, since Medusa's story focuses on sex in particular, it could have originally been someone's own sexual fantasy. As men of the time were used to controlling women, they could have "taken possession of the female image, which always gives its intermedial texts overtones of pornographic writing and masturbatory fantasy" (Schultz 332). It is important to note that before Medusa was a gorgon, she was a priestess who served a virgin goddess, and implied to be a virgin herself. Religion was important in ancient society, and even if women were treated badly, priestesses were given a certain amount of respect. Raping one, especially one who had sworn a vow of chastity, was punishable by death. Poseidon, then, is the male stand-in, and Medusa, the subject of "repressed sexual violence" that the men of the time wanted to act on without facing consequences (Schultz 332). Even after the rape is committed and Medusa is no longer seen as sexual, she is still continually mistreated, first by being murdered by Perseus, and then by having her head inlaid upon Athena's shield. In this way she becomes "a triple, if not quadruple, victim of patriarchal violence" (Schultz 337). Rather than being a character, she became something solely erotic in nature: a rape fantasy masquerading as a hero's story, a way for men to imagine raping a virgin priestess and avoiding the consequences. The trend of men seeing Medusa as erotic did not stop with the Greeks, but carried on into later art and study. When discussing what the symbolism of Medusa's severed head might have been, Ferenczi stated that "the head of Medusa is a terrible symbol of the female genital region" with her mouth open in a scream being seen as an image matching that of a vulva (Spector 35). Obviously, there is nothing sexual about a severed head. Even in the original story, her head is still said to be hideous enough that she is able to turn people to stone from beyond the grave. Medusa is just generally, by the male audience, seen as an exclusively sensual being. Spector points out that despite her being

written as a horror, despite many women being written as horrors or violent beings, "men have in general viewed women sexually even when the women performed violent or heroically militant acts" (28). Medusa, in the sense of the male gaze, has always been seen as sexual from her fictional conception. The important thing to point out is that she *shouldn't* be, because even if her story is based in sex, it is not sex she willingly partook in. Feminine audiences have looked at this story and instead made her more powerful, more able to protect herself, and not so much cursed as blessed. The modern Medusa is not seen as a sexual being because of her rape, but a survivor of rape who becomes stronger and gets her revenge on the male heroes that try to murder her.

As myths have remained in the cultural sphere, so too have the gods that inspired those myths in the first place. Of the twelve Olympian gods, Artemis has become a favorite of retellings in which her manner and sexuality are brought into question. In the original myth, Artemis is the goddess of the hunt and virginity, often seen with a group of women simply known as her hunters; all the hunters, of course, have taken the same oath of virginity that she did before she got her Olympian throne. In association with her domain, Artemis herself is somewhat wild and uncontrollable, and most of her well-known stories are about her punishing men, women, and most often her own hunters. She transforms men into deer, or changes their gender; she has a special hatred for women who have sex, and if any of her hunters break their oaths, they are ostracized or turned into animals as well. The more modern Artemis has been taken in by the queer community, in which it is argued that she is actually a lesbian—as is every single hunter in her group. Rather than hate every woman who has sex with a man, she is primarily angry with Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty; she is rewritten to hate the cause rather than the symptom. Modern writers still allow her to keep her wildness, something that in Greece was a sign that she had not been "tamed" by a man, and changed it to mean that she is more free and able to make her own choices, as compared to her siblings or other female relatives. Instead of focusing on the stories in which she punishes women, modern writers focus on when she punishes men who try to force her into marriage. There is a pair of giants that she tricks into killing each other, a river spirit that she punishes, and there is even an instance in which she reads the mind of a god—who thought about raping her—and smites him instantly. This idea of Artemis being a queer woman may not actually be the modern take that some seem to think it is. Due to the way the myths were presented, it is possible women of the times may have been identifying with Artemis as a lover of women for years, even as the men of the times tried to stop them.

The most promising myth that shows Artemis as a lesbian is that of Callisto. Callisto was one of Artemis's hunters, known for being Artemis's favorite, and was tricked by Zeus. Zeus, disguising himself as his own daughter, raped Callisto, which resulted in her being kicked out of the hunters and then turned into a bear. The detail that draws attention is the fact that Zeus chose to pretend to be Artemis to get closer to the girl, almost as if he knew the two of them were that close from the outset of his plan. Downing suggests that this story proves that

"Callisto had already been initiated by Artemis, that they were lovers, as witness Callisto's ready acceptance of intimacies she believes come from the goddess" (180). Within the story, Callisto actually realizes it is Zeus, most likely due to the fact that her Artemis suddenly has male genitalia, and fights against him. Callisto is consenting to sex, but only with Artemis, only with a woman. This draws attention to the fact that in ancient times, being a virgin meant you had not been penetrated by a man. The insertion of a penis into a woman was what defined her as a virgin or not. Theoretically, this creates a loophole in Artemis's oath that she and her hunters took: they would never marry or lie with a man, remaining virgins forever. Said oath says nothing about women, and two women bringing each other pleasure would not qualify as true sex in these times. After all, if Callisto and Artemis were lovers, it is only once Callisto is penetrated by Zeus that Artemis expels her from the hunters. There is little evidence of women loving women in ancient times, to the degree that it really was not known. While there was common etiquette concerning male homosexual love, there was "no definition of a code pertaining to women loving women," and it may have never been addressed in writing due to the fact that "it may have inspired male anxiety" (Downing 175). This is just another section of the misogyny apparent in Greece at the time, in which women were barely represented at all. This interaction between Callisto and Artemis actually inspired a ceremony for young girls. At her temple in Brauron, young girls stayed there just before they reached marriageable age. It is possible that since Artemis was associated with young women she may have possibly "been imagined as the goddess who might initiate girls into the mystery of their own sexuality" (Downing 179). In a sort of ceremony, if one pledged themselves to Artemis they could have "sacrificed their virginity to the virgin goddess—and thus [kept] it," in the sense that they could have had sex with a priestess of Artemis as proxy (179). This is all theory, of course, as not much of the ceremonies are recorded or known. This could be because ceremonies are meant to stay secret, or because women finding sexual pleasure with each other made the men of the times afraid. Afraid, because in a sense this was a type of power for them, the ability to find pleasure without a man. In Greece, sexual prowess was something men found extremely important, the ability to have children and how many children you could have being something that they constantly attributed to themselves. If women could love each other, and not need a man, then it took some male power away from them. This fear may in fact be why the sole evidence of lesbianism we have from Greece comes in the form of Sappho of Lesbos, from which we get the words "sapphic" and "lesbian," respectively.

Sappho's poems, though primarily found in fragments, are one of the earliest examples of a woman finding pleasure with another woman. Of course, some argue that Sappho is a man pretending to be a woman, or that Sappho has a daughter and is therefore heterosexual; these arguments have fallen out of fashion. Now, most people know Sappho as the "first lesbian," in the sense that she constantly wrote about having sex with and loving those of her gender. The most notable goddess she calls upon is

Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, as well as Eros, Love Himself. Many poems exist in which Sappho states that the two of them have infected her with longing for a woman, in the sense that she is so full of desire that she can do nothing else. However, there exists evidence that Sappho may have also called on Artemis, even if the evidence is a single fragment. The fragment in question is labeled Fragment 84 and just reads "Artemis" (Robson 358). This is not to say that any poem of Sappho's that contains reference to Artemis was destroyed. One of her fully intact poems is about a girl taking care of Artemis's shrine, which then raises the question why this particular poem was not allowed to survive past one word. People argue that there are any number of reasons as to why a majority of Sappho's works are fragmented—the primary one being that she and her writings are from so long ago that it would be impossible to still have them all intact. To that, it is important to remember Homer and his works that have existed for ages. Aeschylus, Euripides, Apollonius of Rhodes, Ovid, Virgil—all of these poets and playwrights with their work mostly intact and taught in schools—what do they have in common? All are men. When it comes down to it, Sappho existed in a misogynistic time, and her work was inevitably going to be controlled by men; they were the majority who had the ability to read and write. "The fragments of Sappho did—or did not—flourish by the whims of men" (Robson 356) and at the time, men were concerned with their own work and their own power. It is entirely possible that Sappho herself read the myth of Artemis and Callisto as queer in nature, and resonated with it, perhaps writing poetry that compared her own feelings towards women with that of the goddess. This is not that far a stretch, considering the fact that "Sappho's well-known argument is that [whatever one loves] is the most beautiful thing on earth" (Robson 358). Easily, she could be talking about Artemis loving a woman, and how this divine lesbianism proves that not only should women be allowed to love other women, but it should instead be common knowledge. Not only does the fragment exist, but there are other poems of hers where she constantly mentions deer and fawns. It should be noted that "deer are sacred to Artemis. Which is yet another reason not to believe those that diminish Sappho's love of Artemis, insisting that she is an acolyte of Aphrodite" (Robson 366). It is easy for men to associate Sappho with Aphrodite. As the goddess of beauty and love, she was consistently portrayed as somewhat sex-crazed and fickle, petty and annoying, weak in strength but still able to control others. In this way men are able to label Sappho as such, just like they labeled many women as far more sexual beings than men. In this way, they turn Sappho from someone to be taken seriously to a woman just wanting to find her own pleasure. Aside from the mention of deer, and the poem about the shrine girl, Fragment 84 is all we have in reference to Artemis by Sappho. It is entirely possible that there were more poems, but that the men of the time destroyed them, deeming them unfit to be read—possibly even blasphemous, implying that Artemis had sex with women; or perhaps the fact that Sappho took it to be something mortal woman could participate in was the blasphemous aspect. In the end, as most ancient things are, it was most

likely a way to control women and their ability to express themselves.

When it comes to rewriting Greek myth, there are certainly a large number of examples to choose from. There are a number of video games, movies, books, and comics that all make use of characters and stories from the period of Classical Greece to create more modern and engaging tales. The question arises, then, as to why modern women have clung to Artemis and Medusa so intensely. Some may come to the conclusion that it is because they match our more modern idea of a "strong woman," in the sense that they are able to fight off dangerous threats alone. Compared to other women from their stories—say, Andromeda and Aphrodite—they could be considered more powerful. Andromeda, compared to Medusa, is simply put into the story to fill a damsel-in-distress role. She exists simply so Perseus has a woman to marry by the end of his story, and the reader is never aware of her thoughts on the matter. In art, Aphrodite is constantly depicted nude; her primary attribute that draws those to her is her physical appearance. She is known for sleeping with men, having children, and not much else. Medusa and Artemis, on the other hand, are independent and able to defeat dangers by themselves, rather than wait for a man to come and save them. The truth of the matter is that it is not this strength that draws the female audience to them, but rather what they experience. Medusa and Artemis both experience and represent activities that the majority of women in the modern world face: sexual assault and lesbianism. Medusa, as previously explored, may have served as a rape fantasy for men of the times. In modern times, she can instead be analyzed as a revenge fantasy, in which she goes against men who would want to hurt her. While men of the time saw Medusa as something to sleep with and own, modern women see her as someone to be viewed with "the female gaze, in order for women to reclaim their own sexuality," in a sense of reclamation of the self after an assault (Palmer 80). It should also be noted that even her image has become a part of the reclamation, in which sexual assault survivors are getting her visage tattooed onto their bodies—the meaning, of course, being that she is "meant as a figure of strength and empowerment" after the crime; therefore, making her a symbol for survivors everywhere (Allen). As for Artemis, she has become incredibly important to the female queer community. When looking at her and her interaction with Callisto, many want to find "images and language which may help illuminate [their] own experience as a lesbian" (Downing 170). There is a need for people to see themselves in media, whether it be ancient or not, in the sense that it makes them feel seen and appreciated. This is especially important for lesbians, as for a long time they were excluded from any other feminist activity throughout history. The idea of seeing Artemis, a goddess whose name is still recognized by many today, as a lesbian makes them feel as if they are part of history itself in a rather significant way. Greece is an important place to look for same-sex love, especially because of Sappho. Downing states that "because we call ourselves lesbians, we imply that Sappho of Lesbos serves as our foremother, a near mythical prototype" (170). Given that Sappho may have written poems giving a queer reading

of Artemis, this link becomes even stronger. If Sappho is the mythical prototype of female queerness, and she saw Artemis as a lesbian just like the modern lesbian, then it becomes commonplace. Men, in the past, used the stories of these two women to try to control their own female population—Medusa as a sexual fantasy and way to blame women for their own assault; Artemis as a goddess who was written to hate sex-having women, the story of her and Callisto one of same-sex female love incurring divine rage. Nowadays, women have taken them and reversed them, turning them into power icons that they can see themselves reflected in. Men, at the time, "were focused on the flourishing of men," and, finally, "we are interested in the flourishing of women" (Robson 356).

Women in Greek myth are many things. Mainly, they are mothers and wives, victims or monsters. In a time when the patriarchy was unbending, mythical women were depicted as badly as the real-life women were being treated. As society progressed, the stories stayed the same, and were carried along as progress continued. Nowadays, women have taken a look at female mythological figures, and shaped them into mirrors and icons. Medusa and Artemis, two of the most rewritten women, have become poster examples of what it means to be reimagined by feminists. Medusa has been taken from a victim blamed for her own sexual assault and turned into a survivor who is still strong, a symbol that women ink onto their skin instead of degrading to the rank of monster. Artemis, known to be petty and disapproving of women, has become a symbol of queerness, joining the ranks of Sappho when it comes to the lesbians of Greek times. These reclamations have taken over the old ideas that men used to have, and have been taken over by the very population that they were trying to silence. Modern women have drawn their strength from Medusa and Artemis, and, in a way, these characters have drawn strength from the modern woman. «

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"As Crooked As the Other": Representations of the Psychological Effects of Internal Colonialism in Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

SIERRA CREDICO

DURING THE CONCEPTION of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* in 1845 and 1846, the British empire was embroiled in the controversial practice of colonialism, "a centralizing of power, capital, and control in a core, with peripheral groups exploited for their labor, materials, and natural resources" (Markwick 128). This was occurring on several fronts, including in India, in Ireland, and even in the poorer, less developed regions within its own country. The outset of the Industrial Revolution in Britain pitted wealthy Southern regions against the rural Northern regions in a practice referred to as internal colonialism. Southern landowners "grew rich from coal-mining on their property and exploiting other natural trade resources" and "had the capital to industrialize the weaving trade, and to build the mills and factories that became the defining feature of the North of England," while the North struggled with "the inhumanity of the mill owners and the sufferings of the laboring poor" ushered in with the urbanization (Markwick 128). In other words, Britain's South raked in enormous profits from the mills, factories, and coal mines that simultaneously exploited and abused poor laborers in its North.

SIERRA CREDICO wrote this essay for Dr. Molly Youngkin's "The Nineteenth Century Novel" class. Sierra is originally from Las Vegas, NV, and is a Senior Psychology and English major at Loyola Marymount University. She will be attending the University of San Diego's School of Law in Fall 2022.

Perhaps equally as damaging as the South's capitalistic exploitation of the North was its domination over social and emotional facets of Northern culture, as "the colonists [did] not simply remove resources and wealth from the new land... but actually [occupied] the territory, [built] settlements, and often [dominated] agriculture and industry" (Markwick 128). As aspects of affluent Southern culture seeped deeper into Northern territory, the working-class Northern lifestyle was looked down upon and labeled negatively in comparison. The South was often distinguished by impeccable manners and even temperaments, portrayed as delicate, elegant, and highly educated. In contrast, the Northern region, particularly Yorkshire, became synonymous with rough or wild lifestyles and its people were characterized as uneducated, simple, and odd. Evidence of this can be found in Elizabeth Gaskell's biography, where she "describes Yorkshire people as 'interesting as a race,' a 'wild rough population... Their accost is curt, their accent and tone of speech blunt and harsh'" (Markwick 126). In this sense, the North and South became polar opposites: one representing high society and cosmopolitan culture, the other representing simplistic, rural habits; one respected, the other ridiculed.

Despite the negative public opinions surrounding Northerners, Emily Brontë grew up a "Yorkshire woman so rooted in northern soil that she became physically ill whenever she left it" (Markwick 125). She admired the Northern lifestyle, feeling deeply and personally connected to its hearty, earnest roots and hard-working values, leading many scholars to understand *Wuthering Heights* as a social commentary on the colonial shift occurring within Britain and the 'othering' of her "beloved" Yorkshire and other Northern regions. Wuthering Heights, in its rugged, untamable depiction, seemingly represents the similarly rugged and untamable North, colonized and dominated by the softer, upper-class Thrushcross Grange. Interestingly, "by making Wuthering Heights her center and Thrushcross Grange the seat of imported and suspected values, Brontë inverts the received position; Wuthering Heights is the power center, and Thrushcross Grange the periphery—her 'other'" (Markwick 126). Since Wuthering Heights, the center of the novel, represents the North, it follows, then, that Hareton Earnshaw, its longest inhabitant, represents the Northern man—a hardworking, earnest, inherently *good* man, a man exploited and victimized by the practice of internal colonialism. Through his relationship with Heathcliff, who takes the form of both the colonized and the colonizer at different points of his life, and Catherine Linton, a physical embodiment of the South, Brontë comments on internal colonialism's complex psychological effects on its perpetrators and victims and highlights both its pitfalls and positive outcomes.

From Lockwood's first introduction to Hareton Earnshaw at the beginning of the novel, it is clear that Hareton physically embodies both Wuthering Heights and, more broadly, Northern stereotypes altogether, as "his thick, brown curls were rough and uncultivated, his whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks, and his hands were embrowned like those of a common laborer" (Brontë 12), plainly similar to Gaskell's description of the Yorkshire

population. He lives "as a diligent farmhand" with references often "made to his going off to work, being away at work, or returning home from work" in the fields (Tytler 125). Early in his childhood, Hareton is robbed of his position as "the first gentleman of the neighborhood" and is "reduced to a state of complete dependence on his father's inveterate enemy," living "in his own house as a servant deprived of the advantage of wages, and quite unable to right himself, because of his friendlessness, and his ignorance that he had been wronged" (Brontë 188). Hareton's situation, which lacks any sort of autonomy, power, or freedom, is distinctly reminiscent of the lack of sovereignty many Northern laborers faced while being colonized, which is furthered still when considering the mocking and degradation Hareton faces as a result of his entrapment.

However, despite his rough appearance and the apparent hopelessness of his environment, it becomes quickly evident that, at his core, Hareton is undoubtedly and unshakeably *good,* as Brontë seeks to use Hareton as a "paradigm" for her "dissection of what internal colonialism is doing to her beloved Yorkshire, as southern imperialism exploits the North and fails to recognize its true worth" (Markwick 136). The tragedy of his situation lies in his inherent sense of compassion, intelligence, and righteousness, as he appears to lack the ability to reach his full potential and is continually taught to be less than what he is capable of becoming. Under Heathcliff's supervision, Hareton leads a lonely, simple life, deprived of socialization, education, and other means of self-improvement and is encouraged instead to resort to physical and verbal violence in order to express himself. Meanwhile, in spite of his brutish upbringing, his parental figures often acknowledge moments that his inner worth shines through, as Nelly notes in "his physiognomy a mind owning better qualities than his father ever possessed" and calls his admirable qualities "good things lost amid a wilderness of weeds" (Brontë 196), Joseph reiterates that "the bairn was every bit as gooid" and "every bit as wollsome" as his counterparts at Thrushcross Grange (Brontë 141), and Heathcliff compares him to "gold put to the use of paving stones" (Brontë 196). Although his inherent value is sometimes recognized and the misfortune of his plight unquestioned, Hareton is still expected to remain a working-class servant and to become little more than a victim to his circumstances.

Nevertheless, however, Hareton endures. Despite being purposefully misled and mistreated by those around him, he consistently maintains a sense of integrity, self-control, and superior morality in his interactions throughout the novel, even when such actions directly contradict what he has previously been taught. Especially when compared to other characters, namely Heathcliff or Cathy, who more often succumb to their compulsions and learned behaviors, Hareton's actions become a sense of moral high-ground, as he seems to be the "only character not only to show remorse for his violence to others but also to exercise self-control in the very moment when he bids fair to hit someone for antagonizing him in some way or other" (Tytler 271). He works tirelessly to combat his trained urges, "[labouring] under a severe sense of mortification and wrath, which was no easy task to suppress" (Brontë 302). If Hareton's tragedy lies in his circumstance, his heroism,

then, lies in his ability to overcome it, rising above his own exploitation and victimization through the sheer strength of his inner spirit. Through Hareton, Brontë seems to express a sense of hope for the enduring Northern spirit as a whole, indicating that, despite the harsh realities of colonialism and the severe mistreatment they've suffered at the hands of Southern colonization, the Northern morality will persist, the Northern spirit unconquered.

In contrast, Heathcliff, who suffers similar exploitation and degradation in his early life, is overpowered by his victimization, ultimately adopting the role of a colonizer within his relationship with Hareton. As a child, through his tumultuous relationship with Cathy Earnshaw, Heathcliff learns to associate love with loss, personal sacrifice, and pain—essentially, he is taught that he must be overpowered and exploited to remain worthy of Cathy's love, that his ability to be loved by her is rooted in his ability to remain a victim. Though their bond initially develops as "Cathy taught [Heathcliff] what she learnt" to bear Hindley's degradation and "played with him in the fields" while he laboured (Brontë 46), Cathy emotionally and physically dominates Heathcliff, as well, "exceedingly, [acting] the little mistress; using her hands freely and commanding her companion" (Brontë 42). For Heathcliff and Cathy, "their love is founded on a paradox" (Levy 164): without suffering and anguish, there is no pleasure or companionship; without pain and victimization to be protected from, there is no love to be shared. "The very condition in which [Heathcliff's] love for Catherine originally depended" was "his own isolation," his ability to be conquered and to endure his own victimization, leading Heathcliff to, in turn, impose "loneliness on others in revenge against the lack of love he himself was forced to endure" (Levy 171).

It is this principle that drives Heathcliff in his subsequent relationships, particularly with Hareton, in which he adopts the role of both a tyrant and a father. Heathcliff, in a sense, becomes "both perpetrator and victim of colonialist attitudes" (Markwick 135), translating the twisted notion of love he learned from his relationship with Cathy and Hindley onto Hareton. While he subjects Hareton to an equivalent amount of the degradation and exploitation that he endured, he also protects Hareton as Cathy used to protect him, as Hareton describes Heathcliff "[paying] Dad back what he gives to me—[cursing] Daddy for cursing me" (Brontë 110). While he seeks to breed Hareton to "grow as crooked" as himself "with the same wind to twist it" (Brontë 187), Heathcliff also finds a "pleasure in him" and an ability to "sympathise with all his feelings, having felt them [himself]" (Brontë 187). It is in Heathcliff's duality that Brontë allows herself to elaborate on the effects of victimization within internal colonialism, to highlight its ability to breed notions of revenge, hatred, and suffering within its victims. Heathcliff becomes both compassionate and callous in his opposing roles, at once maintaining sympathy as a victim of colonization and degradation while also developing into a merciless, unforgiving tyrant in his furthering of the evil that had once damaged him. Heathcliff comes to represent what Hareton is threatened to become: a power-hungry, selfish colonizer.

To further the complexity in their relationship, Heathcliff does not consider

Hareton as an individual worth loving. Rather, he is "a personification of [his] youth... the ghost of [his] immortal love, of [his] wildest endeavours to hold [his] right, [his] degradation, [his] pride, [his] happiness, and [his] anguish" (Brontë 323). While Heathcliff acknowledges the immorality behind his treatment of Hareton, he pursues his revenge scheme regardless, viewing Hareton as merely a pawn to achieve his larger goal—which, through his own victimization, is what he was taught to believe himself to be, as well. This warped thought process mimics a colonizer's objectification of their victims, the self-serving nature acting as the driving force behind the practice. Hareton becomes the symbolic representation of Heathcliff's victimhood, a status that brought Heathcliff both enormous anguish and "the whole joy of [Heathcliff's] life" (Brontë 178), Cathy. Though Heathcliff regards his past both fondly and with hatred, attributing to his complicated feelings about Hareton, the fact remains: Hareton is still less than a person to Heathcliff, serving as an object, as a means to an end.

While Heathcliff demonstrates the evils of colonization, Brontë utilizes Catherine Linton, an embodiment of the South, as a physical representation of its ability to bring forth positive change. Much like Heathcliff, Catherine also represents a version of Hareton he could potentially become: a polite, upstanding, Southern gentleman. Upon Catherine and Hareton's first meeting, Catherine's unfamiliar beauty and intelligence amazes Hareton, "[staring] at her with considerable curiosity and astonishment" (Brontë 193), and her presence inspires a desire within Hareton to improve upon himself. Catherine persistently insults and degrades Hareton, "[fancying] him an idiot," joining in on jokes about "his frightful Yorkshire accent" (Brontë 302), and mocking his attempts to learn to read, and yet, it is the "shame at her scorn, and hope of her approval" that act as Hareton's "first prompters to higher pursuits" (Brontë 303). Catherine is the first "Southern" person Hareton encounters, therefore kickstarting his first encounters with predominantly Southern traits, such as politeness, literacy, and elegance. Hareton is initially "content with daily labour and rough animal enjoyments, till Catherine crossed his path" (Brontë 303), introducing Hareton to the education and socialization, to the development and enlightenment, necessary for him to thrive in the quickly evolving society. Catherine's presence plays a major role in pulling Hareton out of his provincial, almost-animalistic lifestyle and guiding him into the land of civility. Similarly, Brontë seems to use Catherine's positive influence on Hareton to ponder the positive influence of Southern colonization on the North, understanding the inevitability of change and industrialization and the South's unique capability to thrust the North forward with them in this evolution. Catherine becomes Hareton's *potential*, just as the South becomes the North's *potential*.

While Catherine surely ignites change in Hareton, Hareton's character has a valuable effect on Catherine as well, as she recognizes Hareton for the righteous man he is and grows kinder, softer, and more compassionate in his presence. Where she previously maintained her headstrong, domineering personality, refused to acknowledge Hareton's rightful status as her relative, and "had done her utmost to hurt

her cousin's sensitive though uncultivated feelings" (Brontë 302), Catherine is ultimately forced to abandon her pride and apologize to Hareton for her misjudgment and ill-treatment of him, admitting, "I've found out, Hareton, that I want—that I'm glad—that I should like you to be my cousin, now" (Brontë 312). She is, in essence, forced to see him as her equal. Even the conclusion of the novel, in which "Hareton achieves what he desires, but will not admit to, in the opening chapters—Catherine's attention—and [Catherine] is free to return to the house where she was born," suggests that the novel is "in some important way about a change of attitude by Catherine" (Dawson 293), more so than a change in Hareton. Just as Catherine inspires Hareton to evolve, encouraging him to become more mild-mannered, agreeable, and educated, Hareton inspires a change within Catherine to improve upon her morality, stubbornness, and empathy. She becomes lighter and happier in Hareton's presence, "smiling...singing upstairs, lighter of heart... than she had ever been under that roof before" (Brontë 296), embracing the simple pleasures in life and acting with sensitivity and compassion as Hareton continually does. Hareton does not simply succumb to the changes Catherine ignites in him—rather, he incorporates her education and civility into his own morality and kindness, becoming a better person, but not an altogether different one.

The relationship between Hareton and Catherine, their profound impact on each other, demonstrates a "marriage between the North and South... [uniting] the best properties of both" (Markwick 137). As Hareton becomes more apt and prepared for societal change, Catherine transforms into a more sympathetic, down-to-earth individual. Together, the unification of Hareton and Catherine exemplify the admirable qualities in both the North and the South, with the rugged, wholesome charms of the Northern people and the refined, headstrong civility in the Southern people. Brontë posits that both have recognizable value and the ability to improve one another, that one is not obviously good or bad, nor is one fit to dominate the other completely.

The end of the novel—which sees Hareton and Catherine engaged to be married, Catherine set to "inherit her father's estate" and "Hareton, with the mortgagee dead... installed as the rightful owner of Wuthering Heights" (Markwick 137)—furthers Brontë's contemplation of the benefits of a unified Southern and Northern front. Hareton and Catherine's partnership acts as the proverbial 'nail in the coffin' to trigger Heathcliff's death, as Catherine exposes Hareton to Heathcliff's exploitation and signals an end to his domination and, symbolically, to his colonialist actions. Oddly, despite being "the most wronged," Hareton mourns Heathcliff's death regardless, "weeping in bitter earnest" and "kiss[ing] the sarcastic, savage face that everyone else shrank from contemplating" (Brontë 335). Perhaps Brontë sought to utilize this interaction as another demonstration of Hareton's enduring empathy and his inherent goodness, or perhaps she is suggesting that Hareton not only connects and empathizes with Heathcliff, but that Hareton holds the ability to forgive Heathcliff for his victimization and understand that Heathcliff's actions were simply a reaction to his own victimization in his past. In a "cyclical" ending (Dawson 303),

Heathcliff's victimization of Hareton, which gives Hareton his own ability to simultaneously understand and combat his own victimization, is what ultimately prevents the cycle of violence and colonialist underpinnings from continuing into future generations.

Despite enduring Heathcliff's mistreatment and the brutalities of his circumstance, Hareton's "honest, warm, and intelligent nature shook off rapidly the clouds of ignorance and degradation in which it had been bred" (Brontë 322), and "the hero (Hareton) and the heroine (Catherine) overcome the obstacles of an obstructive society and withdraw into the private realm of domesticity" (Baldys 62). The two become the epitome of a traditional, 'happy' ending, maintaining a content, heterosexual relationship, living up to their birthrights, and staying firm in their morals, suggesting that a partnership between the North and South—a combination of Northern and Southern ideals—will ultimately suit Britain the most. Through their union, Brontë predicts that internal colonialism does have the ability to usher in positive, prosperous changes instead of oppressive and violent behaviors.

When Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights for the final time, the property itself is described with "a fragrance of stocks and wall flowers, wafted on the air, from among the homely fruit trees... a fine red fire illuminat[ing] the chimney"; Hareton, similarly, becomes "a young man, respectably dressed, and seated at the table, having a book before him" and his "handsome features glowed with pleasure" (Brontë 307). Hareton, who "physically [embodies] the disordered nature of the domestic environment at Wuthering Heights" (Baldys 50), is, at first, wild, tough, and aggressive, but through his relationship with Catherine, becomes domesticated, becomes *happy*. Ultimately, it is both Hareton's inherent value *partnered* with Catherine's belief in him and her respect for him that restores peace and prosperity to Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, defying the cycle of violence Heathcliff initially sought to continue and prompting readers to consider both the importance of the value of victims of colonization and to appreciate the positive change colonization brings forth. «

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Wild Outsiders: How *Sorrowland* Examines Social Issues Through Nature

SOPHIE JONSSON

IN THE GENRE of Dystopian Literature, the examination of a dystopian society is often paired with commentary regarding the social issues of our current world. In Rivers Solomon's recently published novel *Sorrowland*, the main character, Vern, is forced to live in both the dystopian society of Cainland, as well as the wild woods. Through interactions and experiences in these places, Vern explores many social issues that our society is grappling with today, particularly those related to gender and sexuality, as well as ancestral trauma. Throughout *Sorrowland*, Solomon connects Vern's personal journey to self-discovery and self-acceptance to elements of nature, particularly mushrooms and other fungi, as well as the idea of wildness in general. In doing so, Solomon argues that many marginalized groups have to look beyond human society to find peace and acceptance because, ultimately, the feelings and actions Vern is criticized for in that society are normalized and prevalent throughout the natural world.

Through the character of Vern, Solomon examines life as a black person in America, more specifically a black woman, and even more specifically, a black-intersex-albino woman on a personal journey of self-discovery and acceptance. In *Sorrowland*, readers are taken on multiple "journeys" through Vern's character: the first being the physical traveling journey that Vern takes, the second being the journey she takes mentally to discover and accept herself, and the third journey being the bodily transformation that Vern undergoes as she is enveloped by fungus and other earthly beings.

Throughout *Sorrowland*, after Vern has escaped Cainland, she is reminded of the memories of others in that place, degrading any sexual orientation besides cis-heterosexuality.

SOPHIE JONSSON is an English major in the class of 2022. This piece was written for Dr. Alexandra Neel's Postapocalyptic and Dystopian Fiction class she took during the Fall 2021 semester. For her final paper of the class, Sophie wanted to write about how the genre of dystopian fiction compares and contrasts human society and the natural world, as well as challenge herself by writing about a work that has been minimally referenced in scholarly texts due to its recent publication.

At one point, Vern worries that if she is heard or found out, Sherman will "hear and track her down" and "launch into a lecture about how the hormones, antibiotics, and altered genes in food off the compound could stimulate unnatural lesbian attractions" (Solomon 48). Later, she also recalls Sherman preaching that "Lesbianism, a proclivity of white women, was but one way Black women's lust could be used to bring down the descendants of Cain" (Solomon 218). Though Vern is troubled by many people in her life degrading the very identities she feels she aligns with, Vern finds comfort in nature as Solomon shows her and the reader that the natural world is more diverse and open-minded than any human society, thus far.

Fungus and fungi are incredibly important to *Sorrowland*, as they embody Vern's journey to self-actualization. Since that journey is especially related to diversity, sexuality, and gender, scientifically speaking, fungus is a perfect organism to relay this message.

Growing all over the world, fungi have an abundance of habitats, some of which include extreme hot and cold temperatures, as well as areas of ionizing radiation and deep-sea sediments (Vaupotic, Dadachova, Raghukumar). Additionally, though not fully understood, as of 2020, around 148,000 different species of fungi have been discovered and described (Cheek). Other estimates suggest that there may be between 2.2 and 3.8 million species around the world, with anywhere between 2,000 and 2,500 new species being discovered each year (Hawksworth). In fact, in 2019, it was estimated that 90% of fungi remain undiscovered and unknown (Cheek).

Amidst this vast kingdom of fungi, each species is defined by a variety of characteristics, including size and shape of spores, fruiting structure, as well as their ability to metabolize particular bio-chemicals. In addition, species of fungi are also determined by the biological species concept, which is the notion that "in biology, a species is the basic unit of classification and a taxonomic rank of an organism, as well as a unit of biodiversity. A species is often defined as the largest group of organisms in which any two individuals of the appropriate sexes or mating types can produce fertile offspring, typically by sexual reproduction" ("Species").

Solomon's choice to make fungus such a central piece of their story pushes a message that, although humans seem to struggle with grasping the strength of diversity represented by Vern's intersectional identities, the animal kingdom is already doing so. With perhaps millions of species across the planet, fungus stands as the perfect representation of the vast potential for uniqueness that can happen when diversity is embraced, and that the earth, the place *we* come from, is already doing so.

In addition to fungi's extensive amount of species, their reproduction also adds to their diverse nature, as well as connects to Vern's own sexual journey. Since there is a wide range of genetics and living conditions within the fungal kingdom, there are varying complex modes of reproduction as well, oftentimes more than one; "It is estimated that a third of all fungi reproduce using more than one method of propagation; for example, reproduction may occur in two well-differentiated stages within the life cycle of a species, the teleomorph

(sexual reproduction) and the anamorph (asexual reproduction)" (Cheek). In other words, fungi can reproduce in a variety of ways, including asexual reproduction, sexual reproduction, homothallism (self-fertile unisexual reproduction), as well as parasexual processes (transferring genetic material without sexual structures), which has been known to play a role in hybridization, implying that it is responsible for hybridizing fungal species, and therefore advancing fungal evolution. Regarding mating, fungi are able to utilize two mating systems: "heterothallic species allow mating only between individuals of the opposite mating type, whereas homothallic species can mate, and sexually reproduce, with any other individual or itself" (Metzenberg).

In *Sorrowland*, Vern's personal sexual journey is one of realizing and accepting sex in non-heterosexual and non-heteronormative forms. From her time in Cainland, Vern is told that "homosexuality is a white man's disease," and in turn, tells herself that she "was not a woman whose body could be trusted. Sherman had often called attention to the specific wickedness of those who lusted after the same sex, and though Vern could see no special reason why this would be so, her aggressive lack of chasteness did seem evidence of her degeneracy" (Solomon 221, 196). Lester also tells her that she is not allowed to turn down requests for sex "because that would create a rift between them, severing the bonds of family" (Solomon 345). And though "she disagreed, of course, [she] didn't know if she had any right to, or if her mind was corrupted by the notions of whiteness, like all their minds were" (Solomon 345).

Vern's time outside of Cainland allows her to unlearn many toxic ideas, leading her to ultimately recognize that "Cainland had so confused her notions of goodness, pleasure, and degradation that she'd never thought there could be sex without guilt and self-loathing, without a streak of squalor" (Solomon 298). Once Vern is able to recognize and accept that her sexual identity can be whatever *she* wants it to be—that it can be with anyone of any gender, it can be with herself, and it can be for pleasure instead of just reproduction—without guilt or self-loathing, it is then that she assumes her role as a "demigod."

The role of the fungus in Vern's sexual journey is both metaphorical and literal. As mentioned previously, fungi's sexual reproduction is incredibly diverse, leading readers to acknowledge a correlation between Vern's sexual identity and that of the natural world, specifically fungi. Neither Vern's nor the fungi's sexual identity is one thing or practice—it can be with the same genders or species, it can be with different genders or species, it can be alone, and it can be together. Through references to the natural world, Solomon illustrates that non-heteronormative sexual activity, something labelled as unnatural by those who argue against it, is indeed normal across the natural world.

Then, in a literal, albeit fantastical, sense, the fungus plays a role in Vern's self-actualization as she accepts and embraces her sexual preferences. As she does so, "she [calls] out, God, God, God, God, God. She [is] not invoking any known deity. She [is] calling unto herself, this new being emerging inside of her," that "being" being the fungus (Solomon 193).

Vern had previously thought that "perhaps by merely existing, her sexuality was an imposition" (Solomon 196). However, from that point on, with fungus inextricably linked to Vern, she moves ahead, operating "under the logic that her life [is] her own business and [that] she [doesn't] hurt anyone by living it according to her own whims, [all while fighting] mightily to make room for herself" (Solomon 196).

While fungus is prevalent throughout *Sorrowland*, as well as within Vern, a more specific kind of fungi, the mushroom, is also relevant in the discussion of the intersection of nature and social issues. Though Vern identifies as a female with she/her/hers pronouns in the book, *Sorrowland*'s author, Rivers Solomon uses they/them/theirs pronouns, indicating an intimate and personal connection to the evolving societal discourse regarding the spectrum of gender. Additionally, while Vern may use she/her/hers pronouns, her transformation throughout the novel also suggests a sort of non-female, perhaps even non-human-being identification—one that is not necessarily constricted by gender pronouns. That being said, throughout the novel, Solomon makes mention of mushrooms, a type of fungus that defies all gender stereotypes. For example, a type of mushroom scientifically known as Schizophyllum commune has more than 23,000 different sexual identities, "a result of widespread differentiation in the genetic locations that govern its sexual behavior" (Scharping).

Though it is technically fungus that grows inside of Vern, mushrooms are also mentioned throughout *Sorrowland*. They are often mentioned as savory treats, with Vern at one point saying, "at least something good would come from this day. Fried mushrooms for supper," and at another point eating "wild grapes, red plums, and prickly pears. For savory fare, there were bearded tooth mushrooms, wild onions, and amaranth" (Solomon 24, 26). To Vern, particularly in the woods, mushrooms are a necessity to her survival. At one point, "Vern walk[s] twelve hours, then twenty-four. If she'd stopped then, she might've cited adrenaline for her endurance, but she didn't. She carried her children in the woods without sleep for days, with no food and little water. She stopped only so everyone might do their business, to forage for mushrooms, and to let the babes stretch their legs. It wasn't until the tenth day-and-night cycle of walking straight without sleep that she collapsed" (Solomon 96). Vern almost only stops for mushrooms. Her connections to food, the earth, and survival are wrapped up in a being that represents a spectrum of gender most humans find unfathomable.

In addition to mushrooms taking on an edible role for Vern, they are also included in Vern's parting thoughts about nature and wildness at the end of the novel. In the final pages of *Sorrowland*, "Vern nod[s] and wipe[s] away the single tear threatening to fall. 'I like the woods,' she said. 'In them, the possibilities seem endless. They are where wild things are, and I like to think the wild always wins. In the woods, it doesn't matter that there is no patch of earth that has not known bone, known blood, known rot. It feeds from that. It grows the trees. The mushrooms. It turns sorrows into flowers'" (Solomon 354). Vern's simultaneous mention of wildness and mushrooms further indicates mushrooms as a symbol of societal "wildness"—the idea that bending and exploring more than

two genders, though still taboo in much of human society, is not unprecedented, and is not "wild" as in crazy or unattainable, but "wild" as in natural and liberating.

While Dystopian Literature is known for commenting on social issues, stories in this genre also often pose the question: who are we outside of the society that we live in? While living in Cainland prior to her escape, Vern was only taught patriarchal and constricting things about womanhood and sexuality. However, once she was able to escape Cainland, a whole new free world of thoughts and actions opened up to her, allowing her to truly meditate on the idea of who she is outside of that society, albeit a constructed one. With this idea of open-mindedness in the wild, one can also recall the importance of mushrooms in that setting. And though it is not explicitly mentioned in the novel, the psychedelic nature of some mushrooms can also be noted. In addition to their connections to the spectrum of gender, Solomon's use of mushrooms as a symbol of openness can also be applied to the opening of the mind, allowing us to question who we are and the greater picture beyond human society. Additionally, in recent years, there has been greater investigation and discovery into how using micro-doses of psychedelics can improve symptoms of Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder (PTSD), something that Vern would most definitely suffer from.

In a somewhat similar discussion of trauma and Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder, Solomon most notably utilizes fungus in *Sorrowland* as a physical manifestation, representation, and overall embodiment of Vern's ancestral trauma as an albino black woman. As Gogo is examining and attempting to explain the physical transformation that Vern is going through, she wonders, "maybe it's the fungus's enzymes, you know? It should be breaking you down, I mean, it is breaking you down, but maybe it also triggered otherwise dormant genes in your body? There's documented evidence of that happening, though not in humans, that I know of" (Solomon 177). Vern then thinks to herself, "there was a haggard beauty to all of this. Fungi consumed and consumed, but Vern's body had refused to be devoured. She was being fed on but not rotting. Together, her body and the fungus had fused into a sickly monstrosity. Would she loom as terrifyingly large as the creature in her haunting one day?" (Solomon 177). Vern eventually realizes that the fungus and her hauntings are connected, coming together to bring forth fragments of her past. And while the fungus has fed on and destroyed others, Vern survives with it, she survives with the "seeds of a thousand hauntings hid dormant in her recesses. Underground, an invisible web of mycelium connected Vern to anyone who had or had ever had the fungus," or the historical trauma of being a black American (Solomon 192).

As Vern grapples with the hauntings and begins to understand them, she explains that they are one of the primary effects of the fungus, meaning that she and all those who experience them are, themselves, experiments and test subjects. Though the "hauntings [are] myriad and strange, and their ways [resist] complete understanding," their experimental nature and effects on Vern reflect a connection to the concept of trauma (Solomon 295).

Ancestral, or transgenerational, trauma is "a collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group

identity or affiliation—ethnicity, nationality, or religious affiliation [and] the legacy of numerous traumatic events a community experiences over generations" (Kolahdooz). For black Americans, that trauma revolves around slavery and systematic racism within American society. Throughout the story, Vern's hauntings cover a variety of visions and traumas, from hangings to men dying of AIDS. And while Vern cannot completely control the fungus, or the trauma, it becomes an innate part of her. By the end of *Sorrowland*, as Vern gets a better understanding of her fungus and hauntings, she realizes what "the fungus [has] turned her into: her true self," wondering if "maybe the fungus was truly divine after all and had made her into a demigod" (Solomon 320, 348). In fact, Vern's spores, the reproductive cells of fungi, are what heal and save Gogo after she's shot, and what resurrects the Cainites. As the fungus plays a role in connecting Vern to the earth and the natural world, it also symbolizes her recognition of her transgenerational trauma, the acceptance that it is an integral, inescapable part of who she is, as well as the idea that she can use the knowledge of its existence to heal, moving forward.

In addition to Dystopian Literature often discussing social issues and contemplating who we are independent of society, the genre is also known for using the outsider or marginalized perspective. At the beginning of *Sorrowland*, Vern feels very much like an outsider—she is told her feelings related to sex and gender are immoral, leading her to run away from Cainland. And while she is then *literally* a societal outsider, she begins to better understand herself, her history, and her connection to the natural world. Through the literal and metaphorical use of fungus and mushrooms, Rivers Solomon weaves together a story that discusses societal issues of sexuality, gender, race, and transgenerational trauma, arguing that perhaps nature and true wildness is the only answer for outsiders to feel complete freedom. «

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Isolation and the Immigrant Experience: An Analysis of Jhumpa Lehiri's "Mrs. Sen's"

MADELEINE MALCOLM

NEXT TO NOWHERE is more densely populated, yet isolated, than the American suburb. In a place where every house is separated by yards of, well, yard, it is hard not to feel an emotional distance from your neighbors as well. This feeling is multiplied tenfold in people who emigrate from countries where homes are literally stacked on top of one another and a neighbor is only a shout away. This phenomenon is the central subject of Jhumpa Lahiri's short story "Mrs. Sen's," in which an Indian immigrant woman's experience in an American suburb is narrated through the eyes of Elliott, the young American boy she babysits. Lahiri uses food imagery, the contrast between cold and warmth, and juxtaposition of cultural dynamics to illustrate the isolation immigrants from collectivist societies feel in the individualist culture of the United States.

In the first introduction of Mrs. Sen, the apartment is described in more detail than the woman herself. Through Elliot's point of view, the apartment is described with words such as "unattractive," "mismatched," and "gray"—overall, very unattractive. This stands in stark contrast to Mrs. Sen in her "shimmering white sari" and "complimentary coral gloss," a vibrant image when cast against her bland surroundings (Lahiri 112). Through these descriptions, we can see that the apartment is not an extension of Mrs. Sen, but rather a representation of her overall situation. It is Elliot's mother, in fact, who seems to fit in better in Mrs. Sen's home. Her "cuffed, beige shorts" and "lank and sensible" appearance blend right in, despite the fact that this is not her home (Lahiri 113). It is the foreign Mrs. Sen, rather, who seems out

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MADELEINE MALCOLM is a sophomore English major from Atlanta, Georgia. After a year at Georgia State University, she transferred to LMU because of her admiration for the English program. The following essay was written for Professor Stuart Ching's rhetorical arts course. She has always admired Jhumpa Lahiri's work and enjoyed the opportunity to analyze it in further detail.

of place in her own home. The most impactful description of the apartment comes later, after Elliot has spent some time there. He states that "Mrs. Sen's apartment was warm, sometimes too warm; the radiators continuously hissed like a pressure cooker" (Lahiri 114). Mrs. Sen must manufacture her own warmth, sometimes to the point of discomfort, in order to feel comfortable in her own home. Elliot's home, however, stands in stark contrast. The beach house he lives in is already cold, similar to his mother's cool demeanor. His mother does not seem out of place in her surroundings in the same way that Mrs. Sen does; in fact, she seems to reflect them. Elliot's mother takes minimal interest in her son's life, takes even less interest in socializing, and spends her rare days off "[doing] laundry and [balancing] the checkbook" (Lahiri 116). When this solitary way of life seems to be the norm in the American suburbs, it is no wonder that the sociable Mrs. Sen feels out of place.

The difference between Mrs. Sen and Elliot's mother is perhaps most apparent in their attitudes towards food. At home, Elliot lives off of a diet of store-bought pizza, which he and his mother eat with little conversation and that he is left to clean up. It is no wonder, then, that he is mesmerized by Mrs. Sen's daily cooking ritual. Each night she chops vegetable after vegetable, "at times [sitting] cross-legged, at times with legs splayed, surrounded by an array of colanders and shallow bowls" (Lahiri 114). Even with the mountainous task she assigns unto herself, she still pays close attention to Elliot, keeping an eye on him and making sure he does not get too close to her blade, which is more attention than even his own mother seems to give him. This care and attention to detail emphasizes the collectivist cultural values Mrs. Sen has brought with her to this individualist environment. The sad reality is, however, that despite the difference in effort, Mrs. Sen and Elliot's mother are still only providing for one person. Elliot observes that "it was never a special occasion, nor was she expecting company. It was merely dinner for herself and Mr. Sen, as indicated by the two plates and two glasses she set..." (Lahiri 117). Earlier she explains to Elliot that usually this task is fulfilled by all of the women in the neighborhood; it is a social activity, where they all sit and talk with one another while preparing food for a special occasion. Here, there is no occasion. The chore is simply a distraction from this fact. She attempts to satisfy this desire to cook for others by preparing food for Elliot's mother—but again, Elliot's mother's cold demeanor clashes with the warm Mrs. Sen. His mother politely tastes each meal prepared, always "setting the plate down after a bite or two" (Lahiri 118). She does not seem to understand Mrs. Sen's desire to provide—after all, it is not a part of her culture. This leaves Mrs. Sen to continue her search for this connection, eventually finding it in a specific type of food—fish.

Mrs. Sen makes the cultural importance of fish clear from the beginning. She states that "in Calcutta people ate fish first thing in the morning, last thing before bed, as a snack after school if they were lucky" (Lahiri 123). Fish was a staple of her diet at home, always accessible to her at the local market that she was able to reach on foot. In America, however, she finds the fish at the supermarket to not be fresh enough for her tastes. Instead, she asks Mr. Sen to drive her to a fish market near the shore, which she begins to frequent. Eventually, she even finds her first

connection here. After a period of time in which she is unable to go to the market due to Mr. Sen's work hours, the man who works there calls her to ask if she wants him to hold a fish for her. "'Isn't that nice of him, Elliot? The man said he looked up my name in the telephone book,'" she says (Lahiri 124). This simple act of community is one of the few reminders of her relationships back home. It is so important to her, in fact, that she is willing to drive to the fish market one day, something she hates doing. On this journey to the first market, she gets into a car accident. It is minor, and no one is injured, yet when they get home Elliot can hear her crying from behind her bedroom door. The fact that she is so upset about being unable to reach the market goes far deeper than a fender-bender and a desire to make stew. The fish market represents the one connection she has to home, the one place where she feels the sense of community she longs for so much. Its position of being so close, yet so unreachable, represents the fact that no matter how hard she tries, Mrs. Sen will never find a home in the United States.

Perhaps the most provocative question posed by the story comes from Mrs. Sen herself. She asks Elliot, "'If I began to scream right now at the top of my lungs, would someone come?'" (Lahiri 116). Elliot ponders this for a moment, remembering the time his neighbors had a party and his mother called in a noise complaint. He then responds, "'They might complain that you were making too much noise'" (Lahiri 117). This brief interaction succinctly summarizes the difference between Indian collectivism and American individualism, in turn revealing the root of Mrs. Sen's dissatisfaction with life in the United States. In the article "Mating Strategies along Narrowing Definitions of Individualism and Collectivism," Kristin Fong and Aaron Goetz provide the following definition and differentiation between the two terms: "Individualism is the subordination of the goals of a group to individual pursuits and a sense of independence and somewhat lack of concern for others. Collectivism, then, is the subordination of individual pursuits to the goals of a group, along with a sense of harmony, interdependence, and concern for others" (Fong et al). Indian culture can easily be categorized as collectivist, evident from Mrs. Sen's many laments for her homeland. She explains, "'Just raise your voice a bit, express grief or joy of any kind, and one whole neighborhood and half of another has come to share the news, or help with arrangements'" (Lahiri 116). This reaction differs greatly from that which we have just seen from Elliot's mother. The juxtaposition of these two dynamics reveals the root of Mrs. Sen's discomfort, as well as providing a critique of American individualism.

Lahiri also uses the juxtaposition of relationship dynamics to reveal the source of Mrs. Sen's discontent. The differences in ideas towards a marriage and how it should function directly clash with Mrs. Sen's personal experiences. In India, most marriages are arranged. Tulika Jaiswal explores and explains the concept of an Indian arranged marriage in her book *Indian Arranged Marriages: A Social Psychological Perspective*; these ideas may suggest why Mrs. Sen's marriage would make her feel even more isolated in the U.S. Marriages in India are not so much about the union between two people, but rather the union of two families. After marriage, most couples live in a joint household system, where instead of living alone

the couple lives with both sides of their extended family. "The joint household directs marital expectations, ensuring that relationships are focused first on the family and then on the individual," Jaiswal explains. She goes on to mention that most couples are actually discouraged from forming a close personal bond, as the family should always come first (Jaiswal 16). The issue here is obvious: the Sens no longer live in a joint household system. This leaves Mrs. Sen with no family and a husband with which she shares no close bond. She seems to have had very little autonomy in her marriage and seems to resent Mr. Sen for the move, describing the U.S. as a "'place where Mr. Sen has brought me,'" rather than a place she has come to on her own (Lahiri 115). The dysfunction in her marriage is further highlighted by the description of American couples who were not formed in the arranged joint household system. Elliot's own mother is divorced; presumably she was not happy in her marriage with Elliot's father and chose to leave the relationship—an option that Mrs. Sen does not have. On the other end of this spectrum are Elliot's neighbors, the only other winter residents of the beachside community. They apparently have such an interpersonal bond that they are satisfied with only each other's company during the winter months, "[waving] from time to time as they jogged at sunset along the shore" (Lahiri 116). While these two marriages fall on either end of the spectrum, Mrs. Sen's cannot even be a part of it. Hers is simply not designed to survive in an individualist culture, and in turn furthers Mrs. Sen's personal isolation in her new home.

The conclusion of Mrs. Sen's story implies that she will never be able to assimilate to life in the U.S.—she will always be a part of the diaspora, longing for the collectivist culture she has left behind. Though this ending seems bleak, like most of Lahiri's stories it is open-ended, providing a glimmer of hope for Mrs. Sen. Our view of Mrs. Sen ends when Elliot stops being her ward and transitions to life as a latchkey kid (another individualist concept). The reality is that many immigrants find ways to thrive in the U.S. by forming their own communities. They are able to seek out members of their own culture (see Lahiri's "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine") and begin forging cultural connections in their new home. As the U.S.'s immigrant population increases, it brings diverse cultural ideas with it, as many were born in collectivist societies. This has led to the decrease in individualist ideas that have been in place since the days on the early frontier, ideas that are so clearly outdated. The truth is that there is, in fact, hope for Mrs. Sen. By forming that simple connection at the fish market, she proves that there may be a place for her in the U.S. after all, so long as she is able to find a community that shares her values. «

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A Historical Walk-Through of Olvera Street

DANIELA AVILES GONZALEZ

AS AN UNDOCUMENTED woman living in the United States, I find myself seeking out ways to connect to my culture. One of these is visiting Olvera Street, which has provided a safe space for my family and me. To explain, Olvera Street is a Mexican marketplace and cultural space located in Downtown Los Angeles. When walking through Olvera Street, one notices the vibrant colors of the outdoor shopping centers selling Mexican wares, and the alluring smell of authentic Mexican dishes being cooked. There are myriad ways Olvera Street holds importance to not only people like me—who are reconnecting with their Mexican roots away from Mexico—but historical and cultural relevance, such as the preservation of the Avila Adobe House. Olvera Street is an essential part of Los Angeles because it is a reminder that California has a strong Mexican presence.

CULTURAL RELEVANCE

There are many positive things to admire about Olvera Street, such as the religious traditions that occur all year round. Our Lady, Queen of Angels is the modern name for the church on Olvera Street that provides the community with a variety of holy sacraments, charity services, and social justice opportunities. One beautiful tradition is "The Blessing of the Animals," which has happened every year since 1930. This tradition stems from the fourth century, "when San Antonio De Abad was named the patron saint of the animal kingdom and began to bless animals to promote good health," as described on the Olvera Street Event Bulletin (Meares).

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DANIELA AVILES GONZALEZ is a first-generation senior majoring in English at Loyola Marymount University. She was born in Mexico and raised in North East Los Angeles. Daniela's career goal is to be the assigned community college counselor for a Dream Resource Center so she can assist students with AB450 forms, DreamAct, finding affordable legal services, and overall guidance in navigating higher education while undocumented. She wrote this essay for Dr. Carlos Parra's Chicana/o and Latina/o History Course.

When Our Lady, Queen of Angels began to adopt this practice, it was common for priests to bless livestock; however, as the tradition followed, The Blessing of the Animals began to see a more extensive trend of pets participating in the Catholic tradition. The animal owners come dressed in traditional clothing and often decorate their animals in floral collars.

Olvera Street is also known to host a Día de los Muertos Festival for thirty-five years. Día de los Muertos is an indigenous event that has been celebrated before pre-Columbian times. Death is honored at Olvera Street through a nine-day celebration of colorful entertainment. During the nine-day celebration, there is a mass display of ofrendas—altars that are decorated with pictures, papel picado, marigolds, food, candles, incense, and pan de muerto. Surrounding the ofrendas, there are also different makeup artists that attend the event to allow the community to experience traditional calavera face painting. The dancers are dressed in Mexican clothing but have skeleton costumes underneath vibrant face paint. Calavera face painting is a staple for the Día de los Muertos event. Danzantes that participate in the Danza de la Muerte tell "the story of Día de los Muertos with its Indigenous roots and how it has transformed to our modern-day celebrations" ("Día De Los Muertos Festival"). It is a time of remembrance and rituals to honor the dead and one's ancestors.

Posadas are a tradition at Olvera Street as they have been in Mexico. Posadas are a set of fiestas that celebrate the nine days before Christmas in Mexico. Olvera Street follows this tradition through "reenacting the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem with traditional songs, colorful costumes, and vibrant music brings one of the oldest Christmas stories to life" ("Las Posadas at Olvera Street"). The participants, Catholic or not, sing and pray in accordance with the priest. In Mexico, the carolers visit different houses in their community. Here, however, they travel around the different vendors and honorary locations all throughout Olvera Street. As they stroll from one vendor to the next, they collect food, refreshments, or gifts. Lastly, during the very final stop, the people who participate get gifted a pan dulce and a champurrado.

Olvera Street is also home to the famous art pieces that honor indigenous culture and insight to their history. David Alfaro Siqueiros is known to be one of Mexico's top muralists. Before his death in 1986, he showed strong interest and participation in the Mexican mural movement during the 1930s. The Mexican mural movement was a project that wanted to highlight Mexican culture, post-Mexican Revolution. To partake in this movement, Siqueiros painted "Tropical America" in 1932 on the outside of the second floor of the Italian Museum. Olvera Street's website describes his work:

> the central visual and symbolic focus of the piece is an Indian peon, representing oppression by U.S. imperialism . . . crucified on a double cross-capped by an American eagle. A Mayan pyramid in the background is overrun by vegetation, while an armed Peruvian peasant and a Mexican campesino (farmer) sit on a wall in the upper right corner, ready to defend themselves. ("Siqueiros Tropical Interpretive Center")

Considering Olvera Street's history and its roots in indigenous cultures and white saviorism, having Siqueiros' "Tropical America" is important, as it reinforces the strength and power of the Mexican people. The mural was a way to remember the indigenous importance and contribution to the success of Olvera Street.

A must-see, when visiting Olvera Street, is the Avila Adobe House. Right outside of the Avila Adobe House is a wooden bench where one can enjoy and take in the wonderful Mexican scenery; however, the Avila Adobe House can also be explored through a trip into the building to see and learn about the history. If one takes a tour inside the Avila Adobe House, you will find a variety of Mexican artifacts. For example, on the table, you can find a table with a molcajete and a metate, both tools used and invented by indigenous communities in earlier times. The molcajete can be used to blend and break down spices and to crush vegetables into salsa. The metate is used to process grains and corn but can also be used to refine masa for tortillas and other creations.

HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES

In 1781, Los Angeles was founded in September and named "El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Ángeles." Nathan Masters—a historian—recounted the plan Spain colonized California with in mind during the 1760s, building "religious missions to convert the Indigenous peoples, presidios to secure military hold, and pueblos to supply... food and establish a civilian presence" (Meares). Together, the settlers developed and expanded their agricultural knowledge. To accomplish this goal, the Spanish forced forty-four residents from San Gabriel Archangel Mission to move onto the new ground by implementing a guard of Spanish soldiers to prevent trouble along the journey. Considering Spanish rule over El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Ángeles, the Roman Catholic Church's "La Iglesia de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Ángeles" was built by the labor of Mexicans, Indigenous, and Africans who were brought over to establish a neighborhood alongside the Spaniards. Although it was founded in 1814, this church remains a popular religious landmark to this day for Angelinos and tourists alike.

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

The Mexican-American War ignited major change for El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Ángeles. To contextualize, the Mexican-American War started in 1846, ending in February 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded present-day New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, and California. Although California became territory of the United States, El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Ángeles survived this shift intact and standing strong. According to City Council demands, the pueblo was named to honor Agustín Olvera, who was the first Superior Court Judge of Los Angeles County. Olvera served many government positions when he arrived in Los Angeles; however, he is known for his contribution to the Mexican-American War. The Los Angeles Almanac documents his accomplishments during the war, stating:

> after U.S. forces invaded California, Olvera fought back as an officer in Mexican forces

> resisting from Los Angeles. When the diminished Mexican force saw that the war was lost, Olvera joined a commission to negotiate terms of surrender and capitulation. ("Agustín Olvera Los Angeles County's First Judge")

This negotiation led to his participation in signing the 1847 Treaty of Cahuenga. Historian D.J. Waldie was interviewed by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County for the informational video titled "The Cahuenga Treaty Table in Becoming L.A," describing the Cahuenga Treaty as "the terms of an agreement that respected the rights of Mexican Citizens. The agreement they signed paved the way for the transfer of California to the United States" ("Historian D.J. Waldie on the Cahuenga Treaty Table in Becoming L.A. #BecomingLA #LAHistory"). This agreement played a major role in the evolution that the plaza came to experience, becoming a place for Mexican expressionism and the warm embrace of the culture; therefore, naming it after Agustín is important because it not only proves we can have roles in governmental offices, but because it reflects and commemorates a historical Mexican leader and peacemaker.

ITALIAN-AMERICAN CONNECTION

Although Olvera Street captures the spirit of Mexico, it also recognizes and honors the presence of other cultures important to the space—such as the Italian community. In fact, Olvera Street was once known as Wine Street because many Italian immigrants flourished in the wine industries located where Olvera Street now stands. Although the settlers of the Pueblo during Spanish conquest were of Mexican, Indigenous, and African descent, Italians were present within this diverse population when many Italian immigrants looked towards Los Angeles to find opportunities of social mobility in the 1850s. The Italian American Museum of Los Angeles shared that many of these Italian immigrants contributed to California's economy through wine production, which led El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Ángeles "to originally be named Wine Street," which was later changed in 1877 ("Southern California's Italian Roots").

THE AVILA ADOBE HOUSE

Olvera Street also preserves the famous Avila Adobe House, which is the oldest residence in all of Los Angeles. Scholar William B. Butler shares his research on the Avila Adobe House, as it is a key element in Olvera Street. Butler details that "The Avila Adobe, on the east side of Olvera Street, was built by Francisco Jose Avila in about 1818...[and] the house remained in the Avila family through the 1850s and 1860s" (31). When the Avila family moved, it was then occupied by various high-titled people, such as Commodore Robert F. Stockton. Although a variety of families lived in the Avila Adobe, Luisa O. de Forbes had attempted to demolish the building, as the city believed that it was "unsafe for habitation" (Butler 32). This idea led to a strong attempt to keep the Avila Adobe house and commemorate Mexican culture to its surrounding environment.

As Los Angeles began to increase in population size at a very rapid pace, Olvera Street and surrounding areas became home to many Mexican immigrants during the

1920s. With this population expansion came the neglect of Olvera Street and attempts to demolish the Avila Adobe House. As the City of Los Angeles tried to move forward with demolishing the 110-year-old historic Adobe home, an unexpected figure appeared on the scene to preserve the home and implement commemoration of a very "Anglo" view of Mexican culture in the former heart of Los Angeles—Christine Sterling.

THE "SAVIOR" OF OLVERA STREET

In many ways, Sterling rewrote history when she arrived from San Francisco in order to preserve the neighborhood of Olvera Street, and its Avila Adobe House, in 1929. Despite never having visited Mexico or having Mexican roots, she enlisted help, aimed to beautify Olvera Street. In "Citizens of the Past? Olvera Street and the Construction of Race and Memory in 1930s Los Angeles," historian Phoebe S. Kropp states that her desire to alter Olvera Street occurred after she "reported dismay at finding 'filth and decay' at the historic plaza where she had hoped to see a 'beautiful little Spanish Village with balconies and señoritas'" (37). Her goal was for Olvera Street to become a center of business by making it a tourist attraction—by capturing a Mexican experience in Los Angeles—which successfully opened on Easter of 1930.

In order to allow for Sterling's project to flourish, the *Los Angeles Times* made a large contribution. Not only did they publicize the project, but in "Olvera Street: The Fabrication of L.A.'s Mexican Heritage," the money [it is noted], began to be raised when "Sterling's sales pitch for a Mexican marketplace, replete with vendors and musicians in ethnic garb, persuaded *L.A. Times* owner Harry Chandler [to] contribute $5,000 dollars, and in the process several prominent Angelenos joined his philanthropic party" (Parra). Chandler and other donors paved the way for more help to be provided, both financially and with manual labor. The article also shared that the *Los Angeles Times* was present during a fundraiser held at the Avila Adobe house that inspired Chief Police Charlie Davis to "[volunteer] prison labor for Olvera's reconstruction" (Parra). Whether or not these prisoners were treated humanely or were forced to work in deplorable conditions is not mentioned anywhere. Nonetheless, the manual prison labor is important to mention because they, too, deserve recognition for the condition Olvera Street is in today.

Christine Sterling is over-glorified for her contribution to Olvera Street, which can even be seen on the Olvera Street website. Olvera Street, like many other ethnic spaces in the United States, unfortunately, has a foundation based on the "White Savior Complex." Nicole Maurantonio's article "Reason to Hope? The White Savior Myth and Progress in 'Post-Racial' America" defines the white savior complex as "a narrative with historic roots . . . the white savior is typically a male [or female] 'whose innate sense of justice drives [these] tales of racial cooperation, nonwhite uplift, and white redemption'" (Maurantonio 1131). Although much of the appreciation towards the safekeeping of Olvera Street is due to Sterling's initiative, she invited Anglos to participate in cultural appropriation and enforced harsh stereotypes within the Mexican vendors. Nonetheless, Sterling is to be rightfully

credited for the preservation of many buildings and preventing the destruction of buildings on Olvera Street.

Sterling did not acknowledge the history nor the impact the Mexican community had, as a result of the Mexican-American War and Spanish rule. When Mexico was under Spanish rule, the Indigenous Mexican population was forced to assimilate and obey Spain's governance. To successfully absorb the Spanish way of life, the Spanish forcefully stripped indigenous people of their identity and culture. Right after, the Mexican-American War turned California into American territory, further trying to destroy Mexican culture and enforce American ideologies as the dominant culture for society. Sterling did not demonstrate knowledge in Mexican history but attempted very hard to take up a one-woman lead to create a space full of Mexican tradition in the new Los Angeles. Sterling only used derogatory words to describe Olvera Street because she was convinced of her fantasy idea that Mexico should be full of "romance and contentment" (Kropp 42). It is true that Mexican culture is colorful and full of life, but considering the different historical violent changes that the country was facing, Mexican people held onto trauma and confusion; therefore, trying to exhibit their culture must have been difficult, because they were constantly forced to assimilate and erase their Mexican identity. Sterling, having no background in ethnic studies or Mexican history, took on the role of a savior, trying to rebuild and revitalize a culture that she had never been a part of, from a country she had never seen.

Olvera Street became an outdoor shopping area where many vendors sold Mexican artifacts and Mexican food. In the plaza, however, Sterling allowed space for Anglo vendors as well. Kropp states that "the majority of the lessees were Anglo, and their shops had little to do with the fact that their address was on Olvera Street... included bookstores, interior decorators" and many other "American" storefronts (40). While "American" people financially contributed to Olvera Street's remodeling, Sterling distinguished the two groups: the "American" shops were placed at the interior of the Olvera Street layout, while the Mexican vendors were located at the outdoor walking space. This was a tactic Sterling used because she wanted to recreate Olvera Street based on her idea of what Mexican culture was. She needed Mexican people to be visible in her project and wanted a performance—a "circus-like" approach in her "display" of Mexicans and their culture to best fit her needs: "Sterling urged vendors to do more than just sell Mexican souvenirs; she wanted them to demonstrate their crafts in action, assuming that the display of hard labor would link them more clearly to an older, preindustrial way of life" (Kropp 41).

During the 1930s, America was advancing rapidly in terms of modernization and technology, but Sterling wanted Mexicans to appear as "preindustrial" for the benefit of her imagined Olvera Street: she wanted Mexicans to "put on a show" for the tourists and Anglos. To further her "circus" and display of Mexicans, she had enforced that they wear traditional Mexican clothing when working at Olvera

Street, while "Americans" were not expected to do such tasks—even though they did not enhance the "theme" at Olvera Street.

FAMOUS CONTROVERSIES

Olvera Street was also an invitation to allow Anglos to take ownership of Mexican culture. The idea that an Anglo woman was desiring to open a Mexican space is complicated, in and of itself. This is because Olvera Street was all about what Sterling imagined Mexico to be. Many Anglos did not deem this community valuable—a conflict alluded to in how they "described Olvera Street" and "participated in social activities"—but commodified its otherness all the same: "they simultaneously desired and denied its Mexican-ness" (Kropp 42). The way in which Sterling spoke about Olvera Street, in terms of ownership, caused the Anglos to feel an unrealistic connection and disconnection at the same time. Sterling would "preserve our history" but with the subtle, patronizing insistence that she and other Anglos could stake a claim to this piece of Mexican history, allowing for an entitlement to the space. If Sterling had intentions to preserve Mexican history but wanted to interconnect the Anglo "hand" in its shaping, one of many options would have been creating a space for Anglos to openly discuss the harm and abuse towards the community they claimed to help foster.

It would be comforting to say that despite the way Sterling brought about Olvera Street, it has not impacted the way Olvera Street operates today. Miguel Gonzalez [name changed for privacy] is an employee of "Cielito Lindo"—a widely acclaimed restaurant whose mouth-watering taquitos draw lines down the block. "Cielito Lindo" has sold more than thousands of Mexican taquitos in a small corner stand at Olvera Street since 1934. Gonzalez has played the role of cashier and cook at "Cielito Lindo" for approximately eight years. Throughout his time at Olvera Street or, as he and many others refer to it, "Plazita Olvera," he has had a variety of experiences with Anglo cultural appropriation. When asked about what he has seen in terms of cultural appropriation, he shared how "many Anglo people come to Olvera Street to find traditional Mexican clothing like sarapes and huaraches for their Mexican costumes" on Halloween (Gonzalez). One of many, Gonzalez does not appreciate his culture being used as a Halloween costume, because the clothing, to him, "connects Mexican people to their land and culture, especially those who are undocumented and cannot go back... to remember Mexico." Olvera Street makes a huge statement, but plays a role in the anger and discomfort in their seeing the way their culture is disrespected in these American contexts.

Whether or not one considers Olvera Street's history to be controversial, it is a place and safe space for everyone and anyone—whether Mexican, Chicana/o, or otherwise—to experience a taste of Mexico in Los Angeles. I came to the United States at the age of two so I do not recall what Mexico looks like. In fact, I do not know what part of Mexico I was born in. I dream of the day where I can visit my country and indulge in its gastronomy and explore its culture first-hand. For now, Olvera Street provides me the cultural comfort I need that connects me to my culture—a culture full of

color, warmth, and creativity, which is evident by the decorations of the plaza. It is very special for the undocumented Mexican community because we can dive deep into their culture without leaving the United States. Furthermore, it keeps Mexican culture alive through religious practices and by making Mexican traditional clothing and mementos available and accessible. Although Sterling's approach to Olvera Street was primarily to benefit the Anglo community, her efforts resulted in the fostering of Olvera Street: a home to many Angelenos today. «

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Teaching the Tongue to Desire

IZABEL MAH Y BUSCH

IN THE COLLECTION *Postcolonial Love Poem*, Natalie Diaz does not intentionally write to resist. Rather, it is through colonialism that her body has become an act of resistance. As Diaz teaches her tongue to desire, the prevalence of colonialism makes that desire a form of resistance.

The nature of this book of poems is one drawn from and of lived experience, from being Native American, a woman, and queer. It is the intersection of the three, interspersed throughout each poem in varying degrees, that exhibits not only a complexity of experience but also a complexity of the individual, of what it means to be a person, which is what colonial thought tries to erase. Although not intentionally doing so, Diaz humanizes her experience and normalizes her reality, allowing herself to take ownership of her desire and to find comfort in herself despite using a language that attempts to estrange her from her body. In particular, the poems "These Hands, If Not Gods," "Isn't the Air Also a Body, Moving," and "Ink-Light" reveal the nature of genocide and the interpersonal violence, but then move into how colonialism manifests itself in its victims, turning them into their own oppressor by estranging them from their bodies. To conclude is a poem of hope and ownership for and of the body. The three poems each expose language as an active oppressor for marginal identities, but especially for Indigenous persons who have had their tongues folded and twisted to accommodate this colonial language, English. Additionally, the poems, in their order, mimic the path of healing needed by Indigenous

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IZABEL MAH Y BUSCH is a double major in English and Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies and is graduating in 2024. She has always had an interest in topics concerning race and power. This piece allowed her to explore these topics while also delving into English and writing, another one of her interests. It was written for Sarah Maclay's Genres: Poetry course.

persons as well as other marginal identities. "These Hands, If Not Gods" demonstrates this first, noticing the interpersonal violence; then, "Isn't the Air Also a Body, Moving" exposes how the individual internalizes this violence, and, lastly, "Ink-Light" is where the individual breaks free through their choosing to desire, which is a powerful way to obstruct an oppressive power.

For colonized Indigenous peoples, the lack of ownership of their language is a permanent and constant reminder of colonization. Not only did it literally erase a significant aspect of their culture but it was replaced with a hostile one. This is especially true for Native Americans. Not only is the language itself an example of the forcible use and administration of the colonizer's themselves, but, within, the language also holds words that actively erase the Native. Language is a reflection of culture. It frames both what we think about and how we think. Therefore, through the language the colonizers use, it perpetuates a Eurocentric view of the world and a degradation of anything that cannot be considered such; white, heterosexual, and masculine, to name a few.

This degradation extends beyond just words; it is reflected in the actions themselves. As poet Natalie Diaz says in an interview with David Naimon, "I believe language is physical. I believe language is beyond us but the thing I'm most interested in is what is human action" (Naimon). Diaz's usage of human action can refer to two things: the colonizer's treatment of Native Americans or Native Americans' own perception of themselves. An integral part of the colonization process is that the oppressed take on the sentiments of the forced language and learn to internalize the hate. The relationship between the colonizer and colonized no longer is a linear relationship in terms of oppression because its victims become their own perpetrators. As Parmar wrote in an interview with Diaz, for *The Guardian*:

> 'Most of us live in a state of impossibility,' Diaz says, by which I think she means not the inverse of hopefulness but an awareness of the limitations of an individual life. Impossibility as a state of desire, a will towards rebuilding. 'In Mojave, our words for want and need are the same——because why would you want what you don't need? For me, that's true desire. Desire isn't frivolous, it's what life is.' (Parmar)

The colonizer is so internalized that Native Americans lose a sense of self. The forced language is a living system continually implanting doubt and self-deprecation that Native Americans' lives become, in and of themselves, an act of resistance. In the *Guardian* interview, Diaz said, "I had to be willing to risk myself for what I wanted. And I want desire; I want to be capable of it. I want to be deserving of it."

In the poem "These Hands, If Not Gods," Diaz personifies religion, specifically Christianity, with motifs of rape and exertions of power over Indigenous bodies. She thereby adds a tangibility to a seemingly intangible aspect of colonization: religiosity. Through this, she demonstrates that oppression has a life to it and extends beyond language and into interpersonal violence. Diaz writes the

poem addressing the reader and intertwines a seductive voice, like that of the serpent from the Genesis story in Christianity. Oppression is not just the interpersonal act but the words they stem from. In lines nine to ten Diaz writes, "Finally, a sin worth hurting for, a fervor, / a sweet—*You are mine*" (Diaz 9-10). The first line refers directly to the notion that Native Americans are not enough, in the statement, "Finally, a sin worth hurting for," which ignores the preexisting culture. Essentially, those introducing the new religion think of themselves as more than the existing culture. The oppression then moves beyond the interpersonal and the forcing of Christianity but rather it remains in the language itself, the "*You are mine.*" This phrase gives a voice to the force of Christianity in how the religion took ownership of Native American bodies. But there is a twist in the words, which creates an eerie sexual connotation to the phrasing—religiosity used as an excuse to forcibly use Native American bodies. Even then, the bodies alone were not enough. Colonization, being inherently racist, broke the Native Americans down to fit the colonizer's image. As Diaz writes it, "these two potters crushed and smoothed you / into being—grind, then carve—built your form up—" (Diaz 13-14). In Catholicism, God made humans in his own image. Here, the colonizers are playing "god" by "crushing, smoothing, grinding, and carving" the Indigenous bodies. The carnal imagery draws out a tone of physical torture paralleling the lived torture of Native Americans during the time—torture that lives on in every Native American body, as it is an experience that is inherited.

It is after this point that the poem takes a turn, adding more motifs that relate directly to rape and the abuse of women. For instance, in the line, "one breast a fig tree, the other a nightingale, / both morning and evening" it references women through body parts, objectifying them the way they had been and continue to be (Diaz 16-17). This objectification extends out to sexualization. In the first phrase, the image of "a fig tree," soft and sweet fruit to be eaten, can connote the Pocahontas trope of the innocent, young, and "exotic" Native American woman. The second image, "a nightingale," turns the image of a Native American woman into an animal, one that can be trapped and played with for entertainment. Even the line "both morning and evening" has a devastating play into how Native American women were used without break or end. Diaz extends this use of the body into her lines, "And when these hands touched your throat, / showed you how to take the apple *and* the rib" (Diaz 27-28). The phrase apple and rib does not simply refer to the relationship between Adam and Eve from the Genesis story, Eve being made out of one of Adam's ribs and the apple referring to Eve eating from the tree of wisdom, but it has phallic and sexual tension in it. The rib and apple are representative of male genitalia, and the "showed you how to take" both signifies oral sex and the rape of the Native Americans, but more specifically Native American women. The violence of rape also informs the colonial nature of the English language—the notion of the scraping out of Native languages from Indigenous persons to then force English on their tongues.

Natalie Diaz's poetry is complex because it draws from the combined experience of being a queer Native American woman, and each poem, to varying degrees, touches on at least two of these identities. It is important to keep this in mind because Diaz's poetry is inspired by her experience, and experience is complicated, especially, with varying oppressions at different angles. For instance, the motifs of rape are important in "These Hands, If Not Gods" because the oppressive behavior by the colonizers was not the same for all Native Americans, but gender also had a play in how the women's bodies would be used. The motif of rape on women's bodies is an integral aspect to the Native American woman's experience because women are often seen as the gatekeepers of life within their communities. A colonization technique was to rape the women because women are representative of their nation. To rape the women demonstrated full domination and degradation of the male Native Americans. It is in this intersectional perspective between being both Native American and a woman that the experiences and relationship with oppression differ. And it is integral that this fluidity of oppression be exhibited because, in order to heal, there needs to be a complete understanding of the varying trauma and how it manifests itself within the individual. The separation of Native American and women as identities cannot exist, as it would mean to simplify and erase a trauma, making it far more difficult to heal.

In the poem "Isn't the Air Also a Body, Moving" Diaz uses the text to discuss the trauma and lack of self through an internal dialogue. The self-reflective aspect touches on the never-ending healing process in order to relearn how to appropriately love themselves as humans despite a culture and language that demonizes. Early in the poem, Diaz questions, "How is it that we know what we are? / If not by air / between any hand and its want—touch" (Diaz 3-5). The dialogue is directly questioning the self and existence, and yet there is an undercurrent of yearning, the yearning to desire. In the line, "between my hand and its want—touch," it's not just a touch *to feel* but a touch *to be seen*. Again, Diaz, in the interview with Parmar, talks about the word "want" and that it is conflated with "need" in her culture because, as Diaz explains, "how could you want something you don't need?" With this understanding of the word, the healing process needs touch. It is not a mere want but a necessity. People understand each other in relation to others, so this touch is really a part of the idea of reconnection and community, a rebuilding of sorts. Diaz understands that identity is understood through socialization, and she writes, "*I am touched—I am*, / *This is my knee*, since she touches me there. / *This is my throat*, as defined by her reaching" (Diaz 6-8). The first line "*I am touched—*," is the narrator's awareness of community, but the second part, "*I am*," is a reaffirmation. The trauma from colonization is so pervasive that there is a constant internal fight to believe that they too are deserving and are human. The subsequent lines demonstrate how important touch is by another: "*This is my knee*, since she touches me there. / *This is my throat*, as defined by her reaching." Self-doubt is so pervasive that community is a necessity because the

individuals need to hear and be reaffirmed by another for it to be true. The word "defined by her reaching" is this touch, rebuilding and showing the narrator her body, her physicality, and that she has life—an affirmation that life is not a mere dream but something to act upon.

This poem, "Isn't the Air Also a Body, Moving," is not simply demonstrating that its individuals have a physicality, but it is also convincing them that they are deserving. They are deserving of desire, because it is in desire that there is hope. Halfway through the poem, Diaz makes a switch in voice, where she is no longer contemplating, but understanding with conviction. For instance:

> I have been angry this week. Christian said,
>
> *Trust your anger. It is a demand for love.*
>
> Or is it red. Red is a thing
>
> I can trust—a monster and her wings.
> (Diaz 29-35)

The first line, "I have been angry this week," is not a question but a statement. She is acknowledging what she feels and does not feel, a need for reassurance of the feeling. And yet there is still doubt, even with conviction, because "Christian said, / *Trust your anger. It is a demand for love,*" implying that she needed more affirmation and validation of her feelings. Christian takes it further, though, saying it is "*a demand for love.*" As a Native American, Diaz grew up conditioned to not love herself as an effect of speaking English, one of the most prevalent forms of constant colonization. Additionally, Christianity has continually demeaned and alienated people who are part of the LGBTQ community. Again, the overlap of identities paints a more complex idea of the difficulty to love. In the last line, it comes together: "I can trust—a monster and her wings." The monster is gendered as a female and is a living entity of love, but also representative of how the LGBTQ community has been demonized. So, not only is Diaz coming to terms with her sense of self as a Native American and simultaneously as a member of the LGBTQ community; she is learning to love herself and how to desire on her own terms, along with her "want" to be loved by a woman. Interestingly enough, she still holds on to this adopted view of herself—"monster." There will always be that lingering doubt.

Both identities, although different, have affected her in the same way, to a degree. Each was alienated by the colonized society and they are interwoven with each other. To address loving, for Diaz, means to address the fullness of the word and all aspects of loving. The last two lines, "What we hold grows weight, / becomes enough or burden," is touching on what individuals hold onto (Diaz 49-51). Do they choose to hold onto the burden of trauma and focus their energy there or do they embrace the act of wanting to desire? Both will always be there, but it is a choice and a constant struggle between the two. Trauma isn't just the interpersonal act, it is not just the ugly, but it can reside in the constant doubt and questioning. This is what Diaz touches on, the choice to move forward; but that, in and of itself, is a form of trauma. Every day she has to fight to desire and to love.

In the poem "Ink-Light," Diaz writes about love and desiring. And it is raw because she doesn't feel the need to isolate any one identity, but shows them throughout with a focus on how she feels. In this poem, Diaz describes loving as a language to learn. Being queer and Native American in a colonized society is not deemed "appropriate," nor are those identities ever associated with loving and desiring. Diaz writes, "We move within the snow-chromed world: Like-animal. Like-deer. An / alphabet. Along a street white as lamplight into the winter, walking--:like / language, a new text. I touch her with the eyes of my skin" (Diaz 1-3). With the animal imagery, she adds a carnal desire to the love, but she makes sure to put "Like-animal" as opposed to "animal-like." In this way, the people are put first and it cannot be easily misconstrued as people being compared to animals. Along with the motif of language and reading her lover, it falls in line with the workings of language throughout the book. Language is something to learn and practice, so to put it in context with loving someone adds a depth to the loving and makes it more active, as opposed to a stagnant love or something to be simply declared. This motif of language and loving continues as follows: "The way I read any beloved--: from the ramus of the left jaw down to the / cuneiform of the right foot. She isn't so much what she is—: and becomes / herself only when added to the space where she isn't" (4-6). The phrase "and becomes herself only when added to the space where she isn't" touches on a feeling that transcends material. Echoes of her beloved are made vivid when she isn't there, which implies she can get the fullness of who her lover is in its most raw form this way. In a *Tin House* interview with David Naimon, Diaz discussed love, in terms of the Love Poem, as "an energy much larger than I am, like in some ways I think the energy of the world that has made itself . . . the literal world from cosmos to dirt to mountain." In context with the previous phrase of the poem "Ink-Light," and by applying how Diaz defines love, love itself transcends the physical. So, to understand the beloved is to see what she is where she isn't. To continually love despite the beloved's absence.

When considering how Diaz discusses the notions of desiring and loving as a want and need, she is taking ownership of a language that continues to alienate her and attempts to estrange her from her body. She does not think within the confines of it but develops and adapts the words to what resonates with her lived experience. This is an act of resistance, just as her simply loving herself and allowing herself to desire is an act of resistance. Colonization has politicized her body because she is a queer Native American woman, and neither can be separated from the other because to exempt one is to ignore an aspect of her lived experience. As Diaz said in the Naimon interview, the title, "*Postcolonial Love Poem* came from realizing that [she] could probably never write a poem that wasn't postcolonial." Experience, especially trauma, becomes an integral part of a person and their development but, also, it is integral to notice all the aspects of oppression in order to heal. Although dark, *Postcolonial Love Poem* is full of hope in choosing to desire and to accept the self to the fullest. It is in this hope to desire, in these pieces of experience, that Natalie Diaz paints a fuller picture of what it means to be a

queer Native American woman and to start the healing process of learning how to love the self within the confines of a language that doesn't. «

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Natalie Diaz: Native American Identity through Poetry

ANTONIO RADIC

WHEN IMMIGRANTS come to America, there forms a tight tension. The inner battle of identity is a challenge that has plagued foreigners since the establishment of the United States. It is the continuing choice between converting to American society and letting go of one's original culture or adjusting to the change but never betraying one's roots. However, Native Americans are not immigrants of the land that the U.S. occupies, yet they still share many of the same issues. Natalie Diaz is a Latina and Mojave American poet who writes about the process of bringing her native culture to life and explores the injustices suffered by all indigenous tribes. Her poems "American Arithmetic," "Run'n'Gun," and "Top Ten Reasons Why Indians Are Good at Basketball" uncover the conflicts between a Native American identity and an American identity. They express the need to be accepted, countered with the desire and motivation to stick with life on the reservation. Despite the differences in the style and approach of these poems, Diaz advocates for indigenous pride and justice while challenging the stereotypes.

"American Arithmetic" reads heavily as the speaker desperately tries to make sense of their near nonexistence through appeal to logos. This approach makes the poem, with irregular stanza lengths, sound like a 'results' section of a research project. Through these numbers, it is clear that Diaz feels isolated, with lines such as: "Native Americans make up less than / 1 percent of the population of America" (1-2) and "When we are dying, who should we call?" (20). The use of data and numbers manages this mood very well, as it not only serves as a reality check for Diaz, and maybe for other Native Americans, but also as a persuasion tool for readers who belong to the

ANTONIO RADIC is an English Major and Screenwriting Minor at Loyola Marymount University. Class of 2024. This essay was written for Professor Sarah Maclay and her Genres: Poetry class. Having been born and raised in Mid-City, a diverse neighborhood in Los Angeles, California, he takes interest in learning about the troubles of representation in film and literature. In addition, his passion for writing in the epic and sci-fi genres has been a creative outlet for exploring these issues.

majority population of America. It is saying that the native population is so small and that it has so many urgent problems that need addressing. Diaz continues using this approach in other parts of the poem too, such as: "Police kill Native Americans more / than any other race" (7-8), "I'm not good at math—can you blame me? / I've had an American education" (15-16), and "At the National Museum of the American Indian, / 68 percent of the collection is from the United States" (23-24). Diaz is only hitting on the core issues that seem to currently occupy the political and social atmosphere in the U.S. today. Though these particular core issues bring about the grim symbolism in ways more people would recognize today, other Native American issues are still important and worth considering, to understand Diaz's motivation. Schell et al. extensively explain other core issues and their observed repercussions, such as health. The figures for cases of heart disease and strokes show that Native Americans suffer more frequently from these health problems than any other race (Schell et al. 109). Native Americans are second more than any other race to suffer from high infant and newborn mortality rates (Schell et al. 110). Native American mothers once held the highest fertility rate, but now they hold the lowest of mothers of any race (Schell et al. 111). These statistics conclude that a total disregard for Native American lives leads to very high death rates. Thus, Diaz's fear of isolation can translate to her fear that the Native American population is still slowly vanishing and ceasing to exist.

While Diaz doesn't necessarily confront the health issues surrounding Native Americans in "American Arithmetic," she points out another interesting subject. In an interview with Leila Fadel from National Public Radio, Diaz purports that this poem asks questions about her "visibility and invisibility" (Diaz). One of the areas where this occurs in "American Arithmetic" is when the speaker has trouble figuring out what "race" means. She describes it as a "funny word" (Diaz 8) that either "implies someone will win" (Diaz 9) or a word that means "*run*" (Diaz 14). The confusion of the word "race" is sensical because, according to the U.S. system, all Native Americans are considered part of the same race. In reality, Native Americans consist of myriad cultures, languages, and tribes that differ from one another. Yet still, the American system and its components, such as the U.S. census, bring many complications. Schell et al. inform us that about half of Native Americans in the U.S. chose 'Native American' as their selected identity in 2010 (107). The count on the census also did not include many Native Americans living on reservations (Schell et al. 108). Schell et al. thus reveal the continued strategy to erase Native Americans and further justify the history of genocidal colonialism. However, some Native Americans do not want anything to do with the American government or society (Schell et al. 108). They are keeping their indigenous cultures safe from destruction instead. Diaz does the same thing by keeping her culture alive inside her poetry. However, she wants outside recognition as well. She does not want to feel like "Only a fraction / of a body..." (Diaz 30-31). Despite this arduous task, "American Arithmetic" and its use of statistics and sinful facts as the basis of the poem is clever, in that Diaz can personally reflect on those numbers. She can answer the

questions the poem is asking. One of the answers is intimacy or, in Diaz's words from the interview: "love, tenderness, pleasure, sexuality..." (Diaz). Diaz gives this answer in the last line where she talks about having a lover (Diaz 32-33). Here, she creates a new image for herself and Native Americans that both advocates for equality and preserves her indigenous identity by keeping some aspects of life, least talked about, hidden.

In the second poem, "Run'n'Gun," Diaz uses large prose paragraphs to narrate a story about basketball, which showcases her ability to tell a story ripe with pride and serves as a great contrast to "American Arithmetic." Instead of bombarding readers with haunting statistics and anxieties of being alone, Diaz now brings a story filled with joy about being with her people. However, since the main setting is a reservation, readers still learn about the cold reality of many Native Americans' living conditions. Diaz includes images associated with poverty, such as the run-down "rez park" and a "tagged backboard with a chain for a net" (3), "abandoned school yard" (10), "slanted driveway" (16), and "jacked-up shoes and mismatched socks" (21). When such images are utilized, just like the statistics in "American Arithmetic," it indicates that Diaz wants to spread awareness about various environmental injustices. Schell et al. describe such injustices by pinpointing how the poorly regulated Native American communities expose residents to extremely hazardous pollutants (107). What is new in this poem, though, is Diaz's primary focus on the importance of basketball.

Diaz recalls her memories as a basketball player with fondness, as it was the sport and pastime of her youth. Youth and memories become a grounding source for her and her sense of indigenous pride. She does this in numerous places in "Run'n'Gun," but particularly in stanza 3:

> I got run by my older brother on our slanted driveway, the same brother I write about now, who taught me that there is nothing easy in our desert, who blocked every shot I ever took against him until I was about twelve years old. By then, his addictions had stolen his game, while I found mine. (16-19)

As Diaz recounts her memories as a basketball player, she does not have to worry about outside criticisms that say she is playing into the Native American stereotypes. "Run'n'Gun" is her way of shining bright amid all the darkness of Native American invisibility. Additionally, any such criticism would be invalid because stereotypes are products of the same America that continues to erase Native American culture. Some Native Americans won't acknowledge stereotypes, such as "poverty," which is in most cases defined through the lens of capitalism. As explained by Schell et al., "poverty in this [capitalist] context... does not refer to spiritual, social or any other dimension of life" (108). Thus, "poverty" can mean something entirely different to a Native American who leads a spiritual life. Diaz is not marginalizing herself or Native Americans; she takes pride in her Native American identity. However, there is still more to "Run'n'Gun" and its use of basketball than meets the eye. Psychologically, basketball has a greater significance.

The role of basketball in "Run'n'Gun" humanizes Native American identity through a sport that many from outside communities can relate to. For Diaz, it brings a greater sense of collective identity to the table. Unlike "American Arithmetic" and its themes of Native American extinction through objectification, Diaz demonstrates what it means for Native Americans to unite against the real enemy, white privilege. One way she does so is by explaining that she "learned the game with [her] brothers and cousins, with [her] friends and enemies" (Diaz 20-21). Even though she might have fellow Native Americans as "enemies," she can put aside her differences and play basketball with them to beat "the bigger, older white kids" (Diaz 23). Basketball thus provides the Native American youth in "Run'n'Gun" with a sense of pride, identity, and willingness to cooperate. This is not a farfetched outcome when talking in terms of actual Native American youths, as displayed in the studies of Gagnon et al. When looking at the effects of afterschool activities on children, there is "improved academic achievement, physical health, socioemotional development, and psychological well-being" (Gagnon et al. 1). Looking back at "American Arithmetic," it is clear that Native Americans are suffering a continual rate of murder (Diaz 12-13) and poor education (Diaz 15-16). Coupled with the inequalities mentioned in "Run'n'Gun," it is safe to say that the physical and mental health of Native Americans, especially Native American youth, develops negatively (Gagnon et al. 2). As we see the happiness in Diaz's word choice and the plot of her poem, we can conclude that basketball is indeed improving her and her teammates' overall well-being. The Native kids' ability to run "faster than [the white kids'] fancy kicks could, up and down the court, game after game" (Diaz 28-29) is an example of how their health had caught up to the same level as the white kids.

However, afterschool activities alone are not the answer to this specific outcome. They are based on the "quantity" and "quality" of "participation" of such activities that lead to positive health growth. According to Gagnon et al., there are four "dimensions" of participation that should be measured for this specific study:

> (1) *breadth*, number of unique activities in which a youth participates, (2) *intensity*, frequency of youth participation in a unique activity over a fixed period of time, (3) *duration*, number of years during which a youth has participated in a particular activity, and (4) *engagement*, level of effort, attention, enjoyment, and interest a youth demonstrates toward a particular activity (2).

Looking at the framework of participation in afterschool activities, it is easy to identify how Diaz and her basketball team participate and interact with each other. The team's skills improve as time goes on (Diaz 22-23), they willingly continue to play even though it's harder for them to do so (Diaz 24-25), and they start winning games (Diaz 26). In the last stanza, Diaz states, "we played our dreams" (37-38), indicating total accomplishment in positive health growth, especially mental health growth. "Run'n'Gun" thus illustrates Diaz's continual call for justice, visibility, pride within a collective identity, and provides an instance

in which "rez" life challenges stereotypes and leads to remarkable improvement of personal well-being.

The last poem, "Top Ten Reasons Why Indians Are Good at Basketball," is composed of a list divided into ten different sections for each "reason" given. It is an extension of all of Diaz's identities, as it contains a perfect balance of her Native American identity, her athletic identity, and her poetic identity. Diaz also uses a different style to convey how she deals with Native American injustice, stereotypes, pride, recognition, and identity—a sense of humor. In every element and every reason that is listed, there is a comedic aspect. For example, Diaz states in the seventh reason that "Indians are not afraid to try sky hooks in real games, even though no Indian / has ever made a sky hook, no Indian from a federally recognized tribe, / anyway" (20-22). Here, there are basketball-related words and possible use of stereotypes, but as mentioned earlier, stereotypes are one-sided. We also see a satirical element in which Diaz has to clarify that she is talking about "federally recognized" Native Americans to differentiate between the different ethnicities. The use of satire thus reminds readers of the injustices mentioned in "American Arithmetic" with feelings of isolation and lack of recognition—the "visibility and invisibility" (Diaz) factor. On the bright side, we see identity positivity enter in the following sentence: "But still, our shamelessness to attempt sky hooks in warm-ups strikes fear in our opponents, thus giving us a mental edge" (Diaz 22-23). The positivity not only shows Diaz's comfort with a collective Native American identity but also the profitable outcomes of basketball as shown in "Run'n'Gun." The combination of all of Diaz's themes amplifies each objective towards the reader, but here a question lies: why create this combination in the first place?

In the National Public Radio interview, Diaz expands on the theme of identity the way she explores it in her poems by explaining that in her Mojave culture, the body has special meaning (Diaz). There is a connection between the human body and the land, the water, people, and essentially everything else in the world (Diaz). Diaz treats all of her identities, including her Latina one, as one big body to explore, love, and understand. In "Top Ten Reason Why Indians Are Good at Basketball," she adds Native American history to her body of significance. She makes many references to history, such as "howitzer and Hotchkiss and Springfield 1873" (Diaz 7-8), "the year 1492" (Diaz 36), and "our enemies will fall to their wounded knees" (Diaz 36-37). Her usage of small references to infamous historical events works well in resonating the meaning of a collective Native American body. Behind the violent imagery of the war-time Native American past lie other appalling events to be remembered, such as The Trail of Tears, the Carlisle Boarding School, and "the practice of forced sterilization of American Indian women" in the '70s (Schell et al. 108). One would start to notice the connections between statistics and history, the social and environmental injustices, and the complications of identity within Native Americans. There forms an understanding of the relationship between the U.S. and the indigenous people, who were here before us and are struggling to continue being here.

We can consider research, such as the study by Gagnon et al., that says after-school activities can help the most vulnerable Native Americans rise out of the usual, isolated path that often leads to death (102) as valid. We can know in our hearts that preserving Native American culture is necessary and that we can only help by allowing Indigenous cultures to use their voice instead of trying to integrate them into a Eurocentric society.

In the last part of the interview, Diaz ends by saying, "I don't know where the gift of poetry came from, but I do know it's in me and it's mine" (Diaz). In the poetry community, poems are thought to be entities that demand dominance over the writer. Diaz's way of writing poetry adheres much to this fact. Diaz is her poetry as much as the poetry is Diaz. "American Arithmetic," "Run'n'Gun," and "Top Ten Reasons Why Indians Are Good at Basketball" all embody Mojave culture and the clash of American history and present-day morality, while Diaz exhibits her childhood memories, personal insecurities, and collective feelings in return. They are unique in presenting the common critical themes, but they all tell us who we could be and why. Our individual identities are our own, and they are complex. For Native Americans, especially Natalie Diaz, the level of freedom to express and explore identity has not been a given—but she proves it is not impossible, either. «

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Sisyphean Virtue: Existentialism as a Critical Lens for Reading *A Farewell to Arms*

JACOB LONGINI

WITHIN THE scholarship of 20th century literature, there have been many efforts to classify fictional works like Hemingway's within the philosophy of existentialism. This temptation arises out of the natural inclination to bring together fiction produced in the period with the philosophy that arose from it. In the 1948 introduction to *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway tells the reader that the novel was "begun in the first winter months of 1928" and "the final rewriting was finished in Paris in the spring of 1929" (vii). He wrote the book in a little over a year, all in the period after World War I described by Gertrude Stein as the "lost generation." Mark Spilka discusses the context of Hemingway's writing in his article "The Death of Love in *The Sun Also Rises*." The article applies the thematic lens of "the death of love in World War I" (Spilka 127) to Hemingway's work. This "death of love" refers to the destruction of many systems of meaning caused by the war. People, and especially writers, had trouble valuing the same things that they once did after being faced with the atrocities of the conflict. There was a void left in the place of these systems, and a need to find a new meaning was born. Existentialism was popularized and expanded upon in this era, and Hemingway wrote *A Farewell to Arms* (among other books) during this ideological shift, so scholars have long been interested in bringing the philosophy to his work. The question is, what is the right way to do this?

JACOB LONGINI is from Phoenix, Arizona, where he attended school until moving to LA to earn a BA in English and a minor in Philosophy from LMU. Falling in love with English and the LMU community, he decided to stick around to pursue a MA in English Literature from Loyola Marymount. He is interested in bringing his background in Philosophy to his studies in Literature, engaging with contemporary critical theory. His contribution to this issue uses 20th Century Existentialism to dissect classic works of fiction, which he wrote for Dr. K.J. Peters' Authors and Movements course on Hemingway.

PAST SCHOLARSHIP

Much of the earlier scholarship in this area attempted to place Hemingway completely under an existentialist classification. The argument became trying to decide if his works/characters/plots were a perfect fit or if they didn't fit at all. John Killinger argued for the importance of existentialism in understanding 20th century fiction in his article "Existentialism and Human Freedom." He wrote, "Somehow it is this inevitable contemporaneity that makes the message of existentialism so urgent. It is of our times and it is to our times, and it is set so thoroughly within the context of where we live that we cannot fail to be impressed by its passionate relevance" (Killinger 312). He would go on to write an entire book, *Hemingway and the Dead Gods*, explaining how Hemingway's works fit under the philosophy of existentialism. Other scholars followed suit. In "Hemingway's 'The Killers,'" Hal Blythe & Charlie Sweet applied Killinger's existentialist interpretation to Hemingway's short story, emphasizing the existentialist notion of choice, the freedom-symbol of doors, and the restriction of walls. In "Sartre, Nada, and Hemingway's African Stories," Ben Stoltzfus examines notions of existentialist freedom in light of Hemingway's own system of nada, as portrayed in the African short stories, in order to better understand how his characters fit into existentialism. In "Hemingway and the Cuban Revolution: *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in the Sierra Maestra," Jeff Morgan pairs existentialism with Hemingway's individualist characters, a similarity that Fidel Castro appreciated in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. There is much more of such work.

However, many other scholars disagreed with Killinger's classification, arguing that key differences barred Hemingway from belonging to existentialist philosophy. Wayne C. Holcombe was one such critic, and he engages with Killinger and other critics who have classified Hemingway's works under existentialism in his article "The Motive of the Motif: Some Thoughts on Hemingway's Existentialism." He discusses where he thinks Hemingway is inconsistent with this interpretation to show it is too simplistic, before arguing for a more nuanced view of Hemingway's philosophy. He ultimately argues for adopting certain existentialist interpretations of Hemingway's work, but combining them with contradictory interpretations, showing that Hemingway is multifaceted: certain instances reflect existentialism, but the digressions are too numerous and significant to classify his work as purely existentialist. The main focus of this article is how the protagonists adopt a "'Not to think about it' precept" when dealing with topics out of their control, conflicting with existentialist approaches that Sartre or Camus would champion. In existentialism, it is generally argued that one must engage with the unknown, absurd, or painful—not avoid it. Avoiding this engagement is considered "bad faith," a vice I will discuss later on. Hemingway's characters clearly subvert this existentialist precept. I agree with Holcombe that Hemingway isn't as perfectly existentialist as Killinger may believe, but I also think he may be more existentialist than Holcombe gives him credit for. In any case, I have come to realize that trying to fit Hemingway perfectly into the philosophy is not the real value to be found in pairing the two.

EXISTENTIALISM AS A CRITICAL LENS

Whether or not Hemingway's novels and their characters perfectly fit into existentialism is beside the point. The fact is that both existentialism and Hemingway's novels were influenced by similar time periods—the relation is inevitable. It is not important to decide how well these two fit together, but rather to see if the philosophy can serve as a critical lens to better understand the novels and their characters. By using elements of the philosophy, can we discover truths about the human condition that are portrayed in Hemingway's novels? For some scholars, the answer has been yes.

In "Of Rocks and Marlin: The Existentialist Agon in Camus's 'The Myth of Sisyphus' and Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea*" Dwight Eddins writes, "It has long been clear that certain authors of the 1920s—I am thinking particularly of Fitzgerald and Hemingway—discovered existentialism in practice before it was theorized by the likes of Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus" (68). He finds that the authors wrote understandings of existentialist notions into their works before ever reading the work of the famed existentialist philosophers. He continues, "In this regard, we might even speak of 'existentialisms' as they represent the various philosophical grids that help us parse particular 20th century fictions from distinctive angles" (Eddins 68). This is exactly what Eddins goes on to do in his "explicatory enterprise" (69); he takes notions of existentialist thought and applies them as critical lenses to Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Similarly, James V. Baker applies categories of existentialism as critical lenses to examine King Lear in his article "An Existential Examination of King Lear." I believe these scholars have captured a much more important side of pairing fiction with existentialism. It is far more useful to apply the philosophy as a critical lens than it is to simply see how closely Hemingway's novels align with it. By examining his novels through the critical tool of existentialism, the scholar can find what messages are portrayed in the content and characters of the books. I will be adopting Eddins' and Baker's techniques and applying them to my own existential examination of *A Farewell to Arms*. As one of the seminal texts from the 20th century American literary canon, *A Farewell to Arms* is a perfect case study for this technique. However, this technique can and should be used much more broadly, to examine other works from the time period, as well as perhaps all works of literature.

HISTORY AND IDEAS OF EXISTENTIALISM

In order to conduct this critique, we must step back for a moment and establish a solid understanding of existentialism itself. My critical examination will draw most heavily from the full-blooded existentialism developed by Sartre and Camus' time, but it is important to note that existentialism's roots extend further back. John Killinger summarizes the philosophy's history succinctly in "Existentialism and Human Freedom." He explains its start with Kierkegaard in the 19th century in response to the abstracted state of philosophy during his time. Kierkegaard felt that philosophy was so far removed from the actual human experience that even philosophers weren't living by their complex systems of thought. Man needed a worldview that took into account his mortal existence: making choices and living by them.

Kierkegaard sought to return people from these abstract systems of meaning to their individual, struggling selves. He wanted to "awaken men to their freedom—and to the dread that always accompanies it," wrote Killinger (307).

Killinger goes on to explain how Heidegger took the baton, reviving and drawing from Kierkegaard in his 20th century work. He distinguished between *sein*—objective being or the normal state of inanimate objects—and *dasein*: being there, as only man can do. In doing so, Heidegger picked up on Kierkegaard's notions of human awareness, a realization that man is thrown into an unstable existence. Man only confronts this realization when shown he can cease to exist. Most would like to avoid this dread, but true living is facing the freedom of existence, the dread of death, and living anyway (Killinger 307). Karl Jaspers is the next to develop the philosophy, Killinger writes. Jaspers develops the ways men avoid coming to a realization of their existential dread: by losing their self-identity in "various workaday cares" (Killinger 308). Jaspers feared men becoming slaves to their technology and societal functions. Like Heidegger, Jaspers thought men must encounter nothingness to avoid this fate.

According to Killinger, this is where Sartre comes in. He is the one who developed existentialism into the successful and popular version it is today. Similar to Heidegger's *sein* and *dasein,* Sartre states there is "being in itself" and "being for itself," and man must confront nothingness to remind himself to take responsibility for his freedom, despite the dread this elicits. Camus echoed and further developed this central tenet of existentialism in his idea of the "absurd." For Camus, the absurd is man's realization that being a subject in a world of objects is insane. We are thrown into a random and hostile universe with the ability to understand our inevitable doom but not the ability to stop it. Killinger writes, "Authentic existence, for Camus, is for man both to accept and to rebel against this absurdity" (310). Camus develops this view in his "The Myth of Sisyphus." Sisyphus is doomed by the gods to endlessly roll a boulder up a hill, just to have it roll back down when he gets to the top. Sisyphus recognizes the absurdity, futility, and hopelessness of his situation, but he decides to persevere anyway, scorning the gods who placed him there.

It is from these central tenets of existentialist thought that Eddins and Baker draw their critical lenses. Baker's five categories rely on the idea of a time-bound man cast into a hostile predicament, aware of his doom but unable to alter it. He measures characters' virtues in how they respond to this situation. Do they fall into Sartre's "bad faith," distracting themselves from the dreadful reality of their lives by immersing themselves in illusory sources of meaning? Or do they live "authentically," acknowledging the futility of their lives but choosing to transcend through meaningful pursuits? Eddins' critique is similar, as he measures each character against Sisyphus, who avoids the vice of blissful ignorance or hope, instead choosing to surmount his fate through scorn of his hopeless situation and a decision to persevere anyway. For Eddins, the virtue/vice split is between assertion of values in the face of hopelessness and an ignorant clinging to false hope. I will return to Sartre's and Camus' existentialism briefly as I outline Eddins' and Baker's critical techniques, but this summary of existentialism is satisfactory for now.

THE APPROACH

Before applying their critical lenses to an existential examination of *A Farewell to Arms*, I must go more deeply into the work by Dwight Eddins and James V. Baker. In his article, Baker breaks down existentialism into five categories to examine Shakespeare's *King Lear*. He lays out the five categories of existentialism thus:

> First, being born into this world and finding ourselves here. Secondly, being towards others and finding ourselves existing among other people who are similarly bounded as ourselves; this is the whole realm of intersubjectivity, of our relations with others. Third, experiencing certain elementary emotions, such as fear, love, or hate; the existentialists have made particular capital out of the study out of an emotion which is called anguish. Anguish is experienced in difficult decision or choice, but existentially anguish is defined as one's feeling in the face of existence as a whole, being distinguished from fear, which is fear of some object or ordeal. Fourth, the human experience of time and of being headed towards death. And, finally, the possibility of transcendence of these space-time limitations. Space-time limitations may be overcome in three ways: through art, through love, and through religion. (Baker 546)

Each of these categories serves as a critical lens. The first category is essentially Heidegger's claim that man is "thrown into" existence, and Baker uses this to examine the existential setup of the play. The second category allows Baker to understand the relationships between the characters in existential terms. Third, Baker looks at expressions of fear, love, hate, and anguish in the story. Fourth, Baker examines how the characters acknowledge their existential doom through encounters with death. And fifth, he dissects how each character attempts to transcend their existential limitations through art, love, and religion. I will adopt Baker's first four categories to examine the plot and setup of *A Farewell to Arms*. With the final category, overcoming space-time limitations through art, love, or religion, I will delve into a character examination of Frederic, Catherine, Rinaldi, and the priest. By looking at how each character attempts to derive meaning from their doomed existence, one can see which sources of meaning the novel approves of and which it argues against. Like Baker, "By putting literature, a poem, a play, or a novel, under the existential lens, I mean to study it closely through the instrumentality and by the light of the categories, the play [novel] itself being regarded as symbolic construct which may perhaps throw illumination upon the human condition" (547).

So where does Dwight Eddins come in? In his article, he uses Albert Camus' "The Myth of Sisyphus" as a tool for applying an existentialist perspective to Hemingway's works to get a better understanding of them. He writes, "For Camus, the nihilistic void functions as an inescapable generator of absurdity, undermining every human enterprise and thought by revealing its ultimate pointlessness and meaninglessness. He locates the only intellectually defensible response to this absurdity in acts of rebellion that maximize available life and its intensity, even as the cosmic futility of these acts is kept uncompromisingly in mind" (Eddins 69). His

main application is to *The Old Man and the Sea*, in which he examines Santiago as a Sisyphean hero. Instead of pushing a boulder up a hill just for it to roll back down, he proves himself with each new day on the ocean, struggling to find a fish, and often returning ashore empty-handed. In many moments, he addresses the hopelessness of his situation, but he acts anyway. Eddins writes,

> The Sisyphean protagonists of Hemingway face this gravity as a vortex of random, quasi-malignant forces that constitute a steady—and ultimately effective—resistance to dreams of love and achievement. The rebellion of those initiated into this dark gnosis by experience centers on the assertion of such provisional values as honor, courage, decency, generosity, and stoical fortitude—in other words, the code. This assertion—embodied constantly in actions—is a way of establishing an island of human dignity in the middle of the cosmic mess without losing sight of the certainty that the island will eventually be overwhelmed. (70)

In Eddins' view, the Sisyphean absurdist hero must avoid hope, instead recognizing the hopelessness of his situation and deciding to assert his own value anyway. In this way, hope and other illusory values of escape are weaknesses in the absurdist hero (Eddins 73); whereas, acknowledgement of doom and assertion of transcendent values are strengths. In my own examination of *A Farewell to Arms*, I will pair Eddins' approach with my character examination using Baker's fifth category. I will decide if each character asserts values in the face of hopelessness, living authentically, or if they cling to false hope through illusory sources of meaning, living in bad faith. Using Baker's transcendent values alongside Eddins' comparison against the absurdist hero in Camus' "The Myth of Sisyphus," I can dissect what virtues and what failings each character contains as presented by Hemingway in the novel.

EXISTENTIALIST SETUP OF A FAREWELL TO ARMS

Now that the past existential scholarship has been covered, and the techniques of Eddins and Baker have been laid out, I can get into my own existential examination of *A Farewell to Arms* and its characters. A true application of existential lenses to a character examination cannot occur until the existential setup of the larger novel itself is established, so I will begin by applying Baker's categories of existentialism to the novel. Baker's first four categories are very useful in accomplishing an understanding of the existential setup of the novel, as well as what truths about the human condition this setup portrays. In the next section, we will focus more closely on how the characters act within this setup, using Baker's fifth category and Eddins' Camus/Sisyphean technique.

Baker writes, "First, being born into this world and finding ourselves here" (546). By this first existential category, Baker refers to Hegel's idea that man finds himself cast into the universe, unable to decide this for himself. This "finding ourselves here" in a meaningless universe is an existential aspect of *A Farewell to Arms*. Rinaldi echoes this sentiment when he says, "We never get anything. We are born with all we have and we never learn. We never get anything new. We

all start complete" (Hemingway 149). When paired with Frederic's later remark, "You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you" (Hemingway 280), it seems clear that the novel mimics the existentialist universe and man's coming into it. Hemingway's characters are thrown in with nothing but their understanding of the unfairness of life and ignorance of how to overcome it. This sets the stage well for a critical examination of the characters using existentialist lenses.

The second precept that Baker uses to examine existentialism in the setup of a novel is stated thus: "Secondly, being towards others and finding ourselves existing among other people who are similarly bounded as ourselves; this is the whole realm of intersubjectivity, of our relations with others" (546). Essentially, a plot can be understood in existentialist terms if the relationships between the characters as limited and subjective individuals plays an important role. It shouldn't take long to convince anyone who has read it that this is the case with *A Farewell to Arms*. Centering around the relationships between a flawed main character and the flawed characters he encounters, the story is full of interactions between limited subjects. There are several instances in which Rinaldi and Frederic are described in the context of a brotherhood, such as on page 57, when Rinaldi says, "We are brothers and we love each other" (Hemingway). Perhaps more importantly, Catherine and Frederic are described in relationship with one another, often against the rest of the world. Frederic recalls, "We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others" (Hemingway 216). This notion of companionship against the hostile "others" is just the type of relationship that Baker argues drives an existentialist plot.

"Third, experiencing certain elementary emotions, such as fear, love, or hate; the existentialists have made particular capital out of the study out of an emotion which is called anguish. Anguish is experienced in difficult decision or choice, but existentially anguish is defined as one's feeling in the face of existence as a whole, being distinguished from fear, which is fear of some object or ordeal" (Baker 546). Per Baker's third category, one must locate the expression of "certain elementary emotions" in *A Farewell to Arms* if one is to carry out an existentialist examination of the novel and its characters. There are many such expressions in the book, such as when Rinaldi expresses love for Frederic: "We won't quarrel, baby. I love you too much" (Hemingway 58). There are also expressions of loneliness and fear—"we were never lonely and never afraid when we were together" (Hemingway 216)—and several expressions of love between Frederic and Catherine, including exchanges of "I love you" on page 80 and 81. Perhaps most strikingly, in light of Baker's insights, *A Farewell to Arms* also brings up emotions very reminiscent of the existentialist "anguish" in the face of existence. In this case, the anguish is in the face of the meaningless war. A British major tells Frederic, "we were all cooked but we were all right as long as we did not know it. We were all cooked. The thing was not to recognize it. The last country to realize they were cooked would win the war" (Hemingway 116). This passage is illustrative of Sartre's

"bad faith," in that the participating countries seem to be in denial. But it is also a perfect description of the anguish experienced by Hemingway's characters as they try to wrap their heads around the incomprehensibility of their situation.

Baker's fourth existential category, and the final one I will use to examine *A Farewell to Arms*' existentialist setup, is "the human experience of time and of being headed towards death" (546). Essentially, the characters in the existential plot are bound by time, stuck in the short window between birth and death, with the presence of death lurking just around the corner. The sheer presence of death in this novel provides reason to be convinced by this interpretation, but the passages that address it are perhaps even more convincing. Particularly, the famous "world kills everyone" passage:

> If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry. (Hemingway 216)

In the Hemingway novel, no one escapes time or the all-consuming death that it will eventually bring. This reality is echoed by Hemingway's tragic "Nada Ending," which is available on page 303 of the Hemingway Library Edition of the novel: "That is all there is to the story. Catherine died and you will die and I will die and that is all I can promise you." This no-nonsense presentation of his characters, as doomed to die, plays into Baker's fourth category perfectly, rounding out the existentialist setup necessary for conducting a critical character examination.

We will save Baker's fifth category for the character examinations, but the first four have helped us form an image of *A Farewell to Arms* as an existentialist plot. The novel is set up in such a way that a character examination using themes from existentialism as lenses will not go awry. The hopeless setting in a meaningless war provides the characters with a backdrop against which their virtues and vices, victories and failings can be explained in existentialist terminology. Within the absurd landscape of the war, Hemingway's characters act in ways that reveal the human need to transcend the meaningless. We will turn next to which ways of doing so are to be praised, according to the novel, and which are to be avoided.

EXISTENTIAL CHARACTER EXAMINATION

Each character represents different victories, failings, and transitions in relation to Baker's and Eddins' existentialist character critiques. I will examine the priest, Rinaldi, Frederic, and Catherine against Camus' absurd hero, Sisyphus, analyzing when they cling to a false hope, in Eddins' lens, and when they follow the example of Sisyphus, acknowledging hopelessness and persevering up the metaphorical hill despite its futility. Then I will give a judgement (à la Baker), discerning whether they transcend their situation authentically through worthy sources of meaning, or run from it through "bad faith" distractions. "Authenticity" is here defined as

the existential virtue of recognizing the doom and futility of human existence and responding by finding meaning in something worthwhile anyway. "Bad faith" is the existential vice of distracting oneself through illusory sources of meaning, avoiding the reality that life is doomed, futile, and meaningless. After dissecting each character according to Eddins' absurdist heroism and Baker's existential transcendence, I will conclude with what I think this captures about the novel's portrayal of virtue and vice in the face of the existentialist landscape established in the previous section. Essentially, I will show how existentialism helps the reader analyze how the novel relates the human condition.

One important point of contention between Baker's view and my own is in what we define as worthy sources of meaning. According to his fifth category of existentialism, Baker outlines his "transcendent" concepts as "art, love, or religion" (546). I believe art and love can be understood as authentic causes for the existentialist. One can acknowledge the meaninglessness and futility of life, and still decide to find meaning in the pursuit of their craft or in their devotion to their partner. I see no conflict in an existential realism and a dedication to such values. Religion, however, seems to be incompatible with this kind of existentialism. If one dedicates oneself to religion, I do not see how one can still accept the meaninglessness of the universe. It seems that one cannot hold a healthy realism about the futility of life and dedicate oneself to following a god who created man for a purpose. Therefore, while I will allow for authentic sources of meaning such as art and love, I will classify dedication to religion under "bad faith." Religion in the characters of *A Farewell to Arms* is seen as a failing, a clinging to an illusory system of value—a denial of reality.

With these points out of the way, let's turn to the character examinations, beginning with the priest. The priest is a good place to start, as he is perhaps the least daunting character to examine, though he still undergoes an interesting shift. In comparison to Sisyphus, the priest seems at the novel's beginning to be a failed absurdist hero. The great vice in the face of the absurd, for the existentialist, is to give in to hope. This seems counterintuitive to a reader who has been taught that hope is a positive value, but to Camus, hope was a great failing. According to him, hope was the belief in an illusory notion that things happened for a reason, and things would work out ok. The informed existentialist knows that in the absurd universe, everything is random, and things will end in death and nothingness. For this reason, the priest's vehement assertion that he holds on to hope classifies him against the Sisyphean example. He says, "It is never hopeless. But sometimes I cannot hope. I try always to hope but sometimes I cannot" (Hemingway 62). The priest clings to an illusory notion of hope, despite his seeming admission that he knows he is really wrong to do so.

However, it seems that the priest shifts his views as the novel progresses. Far from his initial inability to look hopelessness in the eye, the priest eventually seems to let go of his stubborn hope. He says to Frederic, "I had hoped a long time for victory ... I don't believe in victory anymore" (Hemingway 157). In this realist rejection of hope, the priest shifts away from his earlier failure and gets closer to the Sisyphean standard. Nevertheless, we do not

see a subsequent acceptance of the hopeless state and a renewed commitment to action. So, while the priest gets closer to absurdist heroism as the novel progresses, he fails to reach it.

With Eddins' Sisyphean lens applied, how can we view the priest in relation to Baker's notion of "transcendence"? While Baker himself places religion as one of the appropriate transcendent values for the existentialist hero, I see the priest's religion as a failing. In the face of the absurdity of the war, to believe in a loving God and insist that that belief will save you is a position of denial and ignorance. Instead of facing the meaninglessness of the war and deciding to find meaning in a value that allows him to transcend his human situation, the priest distracts himself with an illusory source of meaning: religion. For this reason, I find the priest guilty of bad faith in my adapted version of Baker's lens. There is a possibility that his shift from hope to hopelessness, as described previously, suggests he may be giving up such illusory sources of meaning, but it is clear he has not done so fully by the end of *A Farewell to Arms*.

Next, let's dissect Rinaldi. In Eddins' Camus approach, Rinaldi seems to fare better than the priest did. Although his reliance on alcohol could be seen as an avoidance of reality, it is initially apparent that Rinaldi doesn't cling to any illusory sources of meaning that prevent him from facing the absurdity of the existential situation. In fact, he shows remarkable clarity about this situation when he remarks, "We never get anything. We are born with all we have and we never learn. We never get anything new. We all start complete" (Hemingway 149). This suggests an understanding of man's predicament as a being cast into the cosmos with nothing but the ability to comprehend the meaninglessness of their existence. When he says that we "never learn" and "never get anything," it seems that he is being realistic about this lack of meaning. This realism is very much in line with Sisyphus' recognition of his situation. Rinaldi even seems to model Sisyphus' decision to persevere in spite of his situation, as he dedicates himself to his work as an army surgeon. In this way, he "fights the good fight" while not losing sight of the fact that his efforts are futile.

It is only when we add Baker's lens to this one that we see where Rinaldi's primary failing lies. According to Baker's fifth category of existentialism, one can authentically dedicate themself to their art despite holding existentialist views. In Rinaldi's case, he dedicates himself to the art of his work. He says, "I never think. No, by God, I don't think; I operate" (Hemingway 147). This head-down-and-work mentality is clearly reminiscent of Sisyphus, and it seems that the focus of his efforts could pass a Baker-style examination. But there is a problem with the "not thinking" aspect of Rinaldi's actions. If his dedication to his work serves as a distraction, keeping him from facing the reality of his existential situation, then we cannot say his value in work is an authentic action. Recall my discussion of Wayne C. Holcombe's article earlier, in which he argued that the "not to think" precept is a direct transgression of existentialist authenticity. So, in the proposed values of *A Farewell to Arms*, Rinaldi only *seems* to transcend his existentialist situation through his work, but he is actually acting in bad faith.

We will discuss Catherine last, turning instead to perhaps the most complicated character to examine—Frederic. Frederic seems to perform differently in different points

of the novel. At the beginning of the novel, Frederic appears to be a solid absurdist hero, in the vein of Camus' Sisyphus. He acknowledges the absurd, stating, "There isn't always an explanation for everything" (Hemingway 15). Clearly this is not a man who holds on to illusions of meaning. This thread is confirmed by Rinaldi's descriptions of Frederic as "so brave and quiet I forget you are suffering" (Hemingway 56) and "All fire and smoke and nothing inside" (Hemingway 57). These descriptions affirm the Sisyphean heroism of Frederic. He is a man of quiet dedication and action, not filled with notions of intrinsic value or any other non-existentialist illusions. He accepts the hostility of the absurdist landscape and takes action anyway, just like Sisyphus.

In Baker's lens of existential transcendence, too, Frederic seems at first to excel. He remarks in this famous passage:

> I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain ... I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it ... Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. (Hemingway 161)

Far from the bad faith of the priest, Frederic refuses to distract himself with illusory sources of meaning. Instead, he relies on concrete details, facts, and reality. When it comes to where he places his value, it is on one of the transcendent concepts approved by Baker and the existentialists: love. As long as the existentialist keeps the reality of his hopeless situation in mind, it is admirable to decide to find meaning in love while here on earth. When Frederic begins to fall in love with Catherine, he seems to understand that that love is important despite the fact that it doesn't change the meaninglessness of the universe. His love for Catherine gives him meaning, but he knows he still must return to the absurd war. Even when he decides to leave the war, it seems that the decision is still one we can deem existentially authentic. Frederic reflects, "I was going to forget the war. I had made a separate peace" (Hemingway 211). In this instance, he quite literally transcends his existential situation in the war by self-imposed meaning.

But this movement begins to degrade Frederic's existential virtue. As he falls more deeply in love with Catherine, he falls into the vice of letting that love distract him from his existential predicament. He says, "I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine" (Hemingway 200). Again, Holcombe's "not to think" precept returns, a direct act of bad faith. Frederic, who started the novel with a strong ability to look the hostile cosmos in the face and act anyway, is now using his love of Catherine to distract himself from the hopeless reality. His efforts "not to think" continue, as he tells Catherine, "Let's not think about anything" (Hemingway 218). His love for Catherine, which began as his transcendent value in Baker's lens, becomes the very thing that pushes him into bad faith.

It isn't until later, when he is confronted with the possibility and eventual reality of Catherine's death, that Frederic's existential heroism seems to return. When it seems that Catherine will die in childbirth, Frederic's belief in love is shaken: "This is what people got for loving each other ... You never got away with anything. Get away hell!" (Hemingway 274). Clearly, his Baker-style value in love is fading, and he is returning to a non-transcendent existentialism, albeit one free from the bad faith distractions. He continues asking himself, "what if she should die?" over and over, answering with, "She won't," or, "She can't." He asks himself, "What reason is there for her to die?" (Hemingway 274). What Frederic will come to remember is that there isn't any reason. In the absurd universe, such deaths happen meaninglessly, and there is no stopping the onslaught of time. This realization comes and goes, as he waivers between recognizing his existentialist reality and clinging to hope that things will work out: "I knew she was going to die and I prayed that she would not. Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die" (Hemingway 282). When she finally dies, he sees no meaning in saying goodbye to her corpse, and he walks out of the hospital. Presumably, Frederic has learned the hard lesson that he can't avoid the meaninglessness of the universe, but this lesson seems to have come at the price of his transcendent value: love. In *A Farewell to Arms*, only the exceptionally strong can accept their existential fate and choose to love anyway. Next up, we have just such a character.

In this novel, Catherine is the only character that seems to fully rise to the challenge of both Eddins' and Baker's critical techniques. She demonstrates a Sisyphean wisdom, and also a dedication to love despite its ultimate futility. Beginning with Eddins' technique, there are several instances in which Catherine measures up against Camus' absurdist hero. She says things like, "I suppose all sorts of dreadful things will happen to us. But you don't have to worry about that" (Hemingway 100). It is an absurdist vice to pretend nothing bad will happen, but it is an absurdist strength to acknowledge inevitable doom and act anyway. Catherine is realistic about the "dreadful things" that "will happen," but she doesn't let those worries stop her. Shortly after, she says, "life isn't hard to manage when you've nothing to lose" (Hemingway 119). Like Sisyphus, Catherine's existential knowledge informs her that she has nothing to lose. Both Sisyphus and Catherine, acknowledging the futility of their struggle, can decide to struggle anyway, even "till they break you" (Hemingway 276).

Unlike Frederic's, Catherine's knowledge of the meaninglessness of life does not prevent her from asserting her own meaning in the transcendent value of love. When Frederic asks her about marriage, she says, "You see, darling, it would mean everything to me if I had any religion. But I haven't any religion" (Hemingway 100). Clearly, she doesn't choose to cling to illusory sources of meaning, like the priest's religion. Instead of faith, Catherine chooses the active virtue of faithfulness to love: "I'm not unfaithful, darling. I've plenty of faults but I'm very faithful" (Hemingway 100). Catherine, the perfect absurdist hero, sees that her rock will roll right back down the hill, but she chooses to push it anyway, scorning her captors all along the way. More than any of the other characters, she is able to combine awareness of hopelessness with a dedication to a personal

value, transcending her existentialist situation just as Baker argues one can.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* can be broken down into the structural elements of an existentialist plot using Baker's first four categories. Furthermore, this establishes an understanding of the wartime setting as an absurdist landscape upon which the characters act in ways that can be judged using existentialist critiques. The priest, Rinaldi, and even the novel's narrator, Frederic, all fall short of the existentialist ideal as directed by these critical lenses. It is only Catherine who demonstrates a Sisyphean wisdom worthy of Eddins' technique, and also a dedication to love despite its ultimate futility as outlined by Baker. For this reason, Catherine is the only character to truly transcend her existentialist reality. Catherine knows life is meaningless, but she chooses to find value through living in love.

This is the value judgement proposed by the novel. The first three characters demonstrate vices that are teased out when examined through an existentialist lens. The priest, Rinaldi, and Frederic all share moments in which they choose ignorance over facing the horror of their existential reality. Even those that attempt to transcend this predicament fail to do so, placing value in illusory notions of hope, work, or distracting love. The novel claims that these are not authentic sources of value and meaning. The same existential lens that reveals their failings reveals Catherine's virtue. Catherine's commitment to facing existential dread head-on and choosing to find meaning in her life anyway is admirable. Her dedication to love is promoted as an appropriate source of meaning. In this sense, Catherine—not Frederic—is the hero of the novel.

A Farewell to Arms places its characters against the absurdity of World War I, displaying an essential truth of the human condition: that mankind must find meaning for itself, as the structures of meaning that once supported it are no longer reasonable. In doing so, the novel claims that living in ignorance or false hope is the wrong way for humans to respond to their situation. The only way to exist for humans is to acknowledge their responsibility to create their own meaning in a meaningless universe. If we are to follow the example of Catherine, one way to do this is to love with open eyes.

As a seminal work of its time, *A Farewell to Arms* is a fantastic case study for applying existentialism to 20th century fiction as a critical and analytical lens. I think there is plenty of space for further scholarship in bringing existentialism to 20th century literary critique. In fact, Baker shows that the 20th century is just the tip of the iceberg. If existentialism can be applied to critically examine both William Shakespeare and Ernest Hemingway, I see no reason not to pursue an entire school within critical theory in which philosophies are converted into critical lenses with which to analyze novels and their characters. Philosophy, when used as a technique for critical examination, is invaluable in understanding what literature has to tell us about the human condition. «

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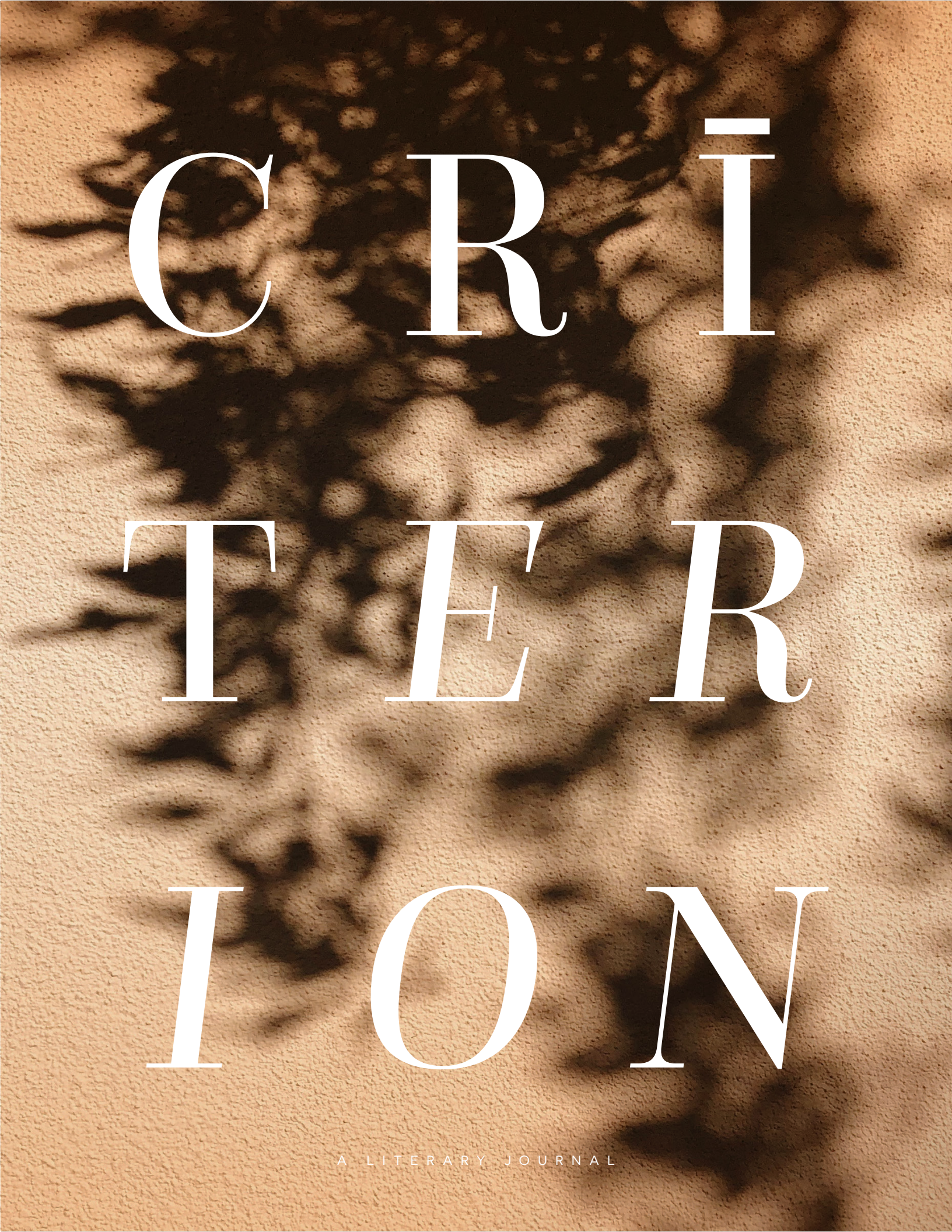
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