

Symposium

Symposium

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The cover is designed by Daniel McElroy. It is set in the font Futura, designed by Paul Renner in 1927, that was used on the Apollo 11 plaque. The plaque remains on the Landing Module of that mission sitting on the surface of the moon.

The cover images come from the Pioneer plaque fixed to the Pioneer 10 & 11 probes. Eric Burgess approached Carl Sagan with the idea to place a message for extraterrestrial life on the Pioneer probes. Sagan approached Frank Drake, known for the Drake Equation (that predicts the probability of alien life), and the scientists collaborated on the design of the Pioneer plaques. The artwork, which is now in deep space, was created by Linda Salzman Sagan.

The front image is a map of the Milky Way Galaxy where the center point is earth and each line radiates outwards towards the nearest pulsars which are rapidly rotating neutron stars that emit intense beams of energy.

The back image is a diagram of the solar system amended with astrological symbols that do not appear on the Pioneer plaque. The pioneer probe is depicted having been launched from earth and shooting out of the solar system into deep space. The diagram on the top left shows the hyperfine transition of neutral hydrogen or what the scientists imagined would be a recognizable piece of knowledge for intelligent life capable of deciphering the plaque. Hydrogen also provides the unit of measurement and conversion throughout the plaque in binary with tick & dash marks.

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A Perfect Peculiarity: The Role of Similes in Homer's *Odyssey*

Laura Jacobsen

Homer's *Odyssey* presents a famous account of one man's voyage home to his family; however, this epic poem's namesake is not the only character on a journey. Odysseus's twenty year absence from home was tumultuous for everyone, especially for the son and wife he left behind when he had set sail for Troy. Chaos disrupts Odysseus's life as well as the lives of Telemachus and Penelope; each individual's fate remains in question. Though there are but a few similes featured in *The Odyssey*, they provide meaningful contributions to the poem as a whole. In particular, there are two pairs of similes which I will discuss that reflect this chaos and the complexity of the situations in which the characters find themselves. Often, these comparisons do not appear to align with the subject, or the descriptions seem unfitting within their context. However, in the scope of *The Odyssey's* narrative which involves deception, disguises, and secrets, the peculiarity of these similes makes perfect sense. In chaos, the characters find their way home, and the similes' meanings become clear.

The first simile centers on Telemachus. Odysseus's first interaction with his son is not the long awaited joyful reunion the two had hoped it would be; rather, when Telemachus arrives at Eumaeus's home, "...as a loving father embraces his own son / Come back from a distant land after ten long years, / His only son, greatly beloved and much sorrowed for— / So did the noble swineherd clasp Telemachus" (16.19-22). On the surface, this comparison makes sense in that Eumaeus has been a faithful servant who has witnessed Telemachus' maturation and his trials with the

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suitors in his father's absence. Understandably, Eumaeus feels overwhelming relief at the safe return of his young master who has escaped the suitors' murderous plots. Looking past this superficial aptness, however, the peculiarity of the simile—especially in the context in which it appears—presents itself. A poignant irony results from this pseudo father and son reunion which occurs in the presence of Telemachus's real father, Odysseus, who has returned home after years of turmoil, and who still is unable to reveal himself to his son. Furthermore, Eumaeus rejoices over Telemachus' return as a father would his son after ten years; in reality, Telemachus was not gone for nearly as long as Odysseus was, nor was he in as distant a land. Odysseus's is the more significant homecoming, yet the disguised hero's identity remains hidden and unrecognized.

An equally peculiar simile describes the moment in which Odysseus and Telemachus finally reunite as father and son; they embrace and let out cries "like the cries of birds— / sea-eagles or taloned vultures— / whose young chicks rough farmers have stolen / out of their nests before they were fledged" (16.229-232). This comparison certainly captures the emotion of the reunion; father and son united after twenty years apart, lamenting the time they have lost. However, the comparison strangely describes the reunion in terms of a loss. It is a simile of sorrow rather than joy, of abduction rather than homecoming. Moreover, the main character in this reunion should be Odysseus, the returning father and war hero. This comparison, however, focuses on a young offspring taken from a parental unit. Further complicating the examination of this simile is the fact that Telemachus was not taken from his nest at all; rather, it was Odysseus, the father, who left when his

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son was not yet fledged. Oddly, these lines describe the homecoming of a father in terms of the loss of a son.

Taken together, the aforementioned similes only heighten the peculiarity, and perhaps confusion, of each individual comparison. After more careful analysis, however, the very oddity of the pair of similes serves to further illuminate several themes of the poem. This strange pair of similes, for example, succinctly encapsulates Odysseus's ten year journey home. In the first simile, a son returns home; in the second, a son is kidnapped. This echoes Odysseus's pursuit of *nostos*—he departs Troy homebound for Ithaca, only to be kidnapped by Calypso; he travels for his homeland again, only to be intercepted by Circe, his homecoming further delayed. A cycle of anticipated homecomings followed by setbacks and kidnappings comprise Odysseus's voyage home from Troy. Additionally, this cycle reflects the structure of the poem and the telling of Odysseus's story; the audience hears of Odysseus's captivity with Calypso and subsequent journey to Alcinous's court before learning, through Odysseus's narration to the Phaeacians, of his struggle with the cyclops, his year with Circe, his trip to Hades. Only then does the poem resume with Odysseus's eventual return to Ithaca. The homecoming and kidnapping featured in these similes reflect the fragmentary and chronologically disjointed telling of Odysseus's ten year journey home.

In the scheme of the entire poem, this pair of similes serves to further another theme: the parallelism of Odysseus and Telemachus. Several characters comment on and directly observe physical characteristics and mannerisms shared by father and son. Upon meeting Telemachus, for example, Nestor comments, "No

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man could match Odysseus for cunning... The way you speak is very much like him” (3.132/135-136). Father and son are also united throughout the poem through parallel actions. For example, when Telemachus and Odysseus enter Menelaus’s and Alcinous’s palaces, respectively, they are similarly awestruck (4.46 and 7.91). Telemachus’s voyage home from Menelaus’s also presents itself as an Odyssey-like journey, or *nostos*, on a smaller scale. Telemachus pleads with Peisistratus to drop him off directly at his ship, saying “I’m afraid the old man / Will keep me in his house against my will” (15.219-220). In this way, Nestor and his overwhelming hospitality equate to the several obstacles of Odysseus’s own journey. Essentially, the pair of similes concerning Telemachus’s return home and reunion with his father further unites the two men. They are so similar to each other that here, the similes reverse their roles. Telemachus receives the highly emotional homecoming welcome instead of his father, and the two lament as birds whose young are taken, when in this case it was the father who left the son.

A similarly complex and seemingly anomalous simile describes Odysseus’s emotional response to the Phaeacian bard’s performance of a song documenting the Trojan War and at the same time praising Odysseus, whose true identity has not yet been revealed to his hosts. Upon hearing the song, Odysseus cries like “[a] woman wails as she throws herself upon / Her husband’s body. He has fallen in battle / Before the town walls, fighting to the last / To defend his city” (8.567-570). He cries as a woman who “shrieks, while behind her / Soldiers prod their spears into her shoulders and back, / And... lead her away into slavery” (8.571-573). Particularly convoluted, this simile not only compares Odysseus to a woman, but also compares

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the hero more strikingly to a Trojan woman, one who is grieving the death of her husband who has died in battle, and who is taken as a prize by the enemy. Was this not the fate of hordes of Trojan women whose husbands were killed at the hands of Odysseus? If studied from a more figurative perspective, however, this fate threatens to be Penelope's own if Odysseus does not make it home. The suitors are waging war against Odysseus's home and family, and Penelope's battle becomes increasingly difficult the longer Odysseus remains absent. Though the suitors do not plan to take Penelope as a literal slave, a life with another man, in another home, would be equivalent to enslavement. Odysseus fears his wife will suffer such a fate.

Fortunately, Penelope escapes this fate. After he slaughters the suitors and reclaims his home, Odysseus finally reveals his true identity to his wife. A fourth simile compares this moment of recognition to the moment in which shipwrecked men finally spot land, and "come out / Of the grey water crusted with brine, glad / To be alive and set foot on dry land. / So welcome a sight was her husband to her" (23.243-246). At first glance, this comparison of Penelope to a man lost at sea seems unfitting; she has never left her home, has never been at sea. However, the simile quickly becomes touchingly meaningful when its immediate meaning is analyzed. Just as Odysseus was concerned with his wife's fate and has cried for her, virtually assuming her role as grieving wife, so Penelope feels such joy at seeing her husband that she feels as if she has finally reached home herself. As Odysseus's harrowing journey has finally come to an end, so has Penelope's. This simile describes Penelope's happiness as equivalent to Odysseus's own relief upon realizing he has reached Ithaca.

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The Trojan War disrupted everyone's lives. Odysseus was not the only individual to wage war; Penelope, too, fought her own battle against the invasion of suitors in her home, each staking his claim to Odysseus's spouse. Both husband and wife were faced with precarious futures, yet both persevered in the hopes they would one day reunite. Despite his various setbacks during his ten year voyage home, Odysseus never relented in his determination to get home to Penelope. Calypso warns him of all the suffering he will endure on his journey back to Ithaca. Even so, Odysseus answers Calypso, "I know very well that Penelope, / For all her virtues, would pale beside you. / She's only human, and you are a goddess, / Eternally young. Still... / My heart aches for the day I return to my home" (5.216-220). Though Penelope remained at Ithaca, it was not the same without Odysseus; home was not truly home without her husband. She was swimming tirelessly, trying to keep the estate afloat, and did not reach land until Odysseus returned. Only then was Penelope truly home. These two similes put Odysseus into Penelope's situation, and Penelope into Odysseus's, as if they were not wholly themselves without each other.

Though strange on their own, and perhaps even stranger as pairs, these four similes act together to enhance the depth and scope of the poem as a whole. For example, the complexity and confusion of the similes make sense in the context of the poem; that is, the nonsensicality becomes understandable within a poem involving hidden identities, disguises. Eumaeus embraces Telemachus as a father would a son because as far as he knows, Telemachus's true father remains lost; disguised as a beggar, claiming to hail from Crete, Odysseus has purposely deceived

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his hosts. This is neither the first nor the last time that the hero conceals his true identity, as Odysseus maintains restraint and caution throughout the poem, even when he sees his long estranged family. Similarly, Telemachus does not immediately reveal his family line when he sets out to find information about his father, and Penelope cleverly delays her seemingly inevitable marriage to a suitor through deceptive means. When considering that this poem involves a family of cautious and cunning individuals, each of whom undertakes some plan of duplicity in order to achieve *nostos* throughout the narrative, the complex similes and perplexing comparisons become less surprising. Just as the external realities crafted by Odysseus, Telemachus, and Penelope did not always align with their true intentions, the comparisons made in the similes do not always appear to align with their subjects.

Taken all at once, the four similes also provide a more meaningful understanding of the poem, contributing to an overarching theme throughout the work. Together, these four similes fit into the nature of Odysseus's journey and pursuit of *nostos*. Despite, and perhaps because of, their strangeness, these comparisons emphasize the gradual action of Odysseus's return and his reunions with his family. The first of the four similes to appear in the poem compares Odysseus's weeping to a woman lamenting over the corpse of her husband, reflecting his fear that he will not make it home, or will make it home only to be killed by the suitors. Odysseus fears for his wife's fate without him.

This fear remains even when he first arrives at Ithaca; merely landing in his homeland does nothing to quell Odysseus's concerns for his wife and estate. He

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must eradicate the threat of the suitors before he can fully rejoice in his homecoming. Here, the second and third similes work well as a pair, even in the larger context of the poem. Eumaeus's and Telemachus's embrace foreshadows the reunion of the true father and son, a reunion for which the audience has been waiting for a long while. Odysseus's inability to embrace his son in front of Eumaeus serves as a moving tribute to his restraint, but only deepens the audience's desire for a genuine reunion between father and son, between two weary travelers. When this moment finally comes, however, the joyousness the audience had hoped for turns into sorrow. The simile of the young birds' abduction reminds the audience that despite this reunion, Odysseus's *nostos* remains unachieved. A kidnapping can follow a homecoming; a calamity can follow a celebration. The suitors can still wreak havoc, and Odysseus cannot yet reveal himself to anyone other than Telemachus. The revelation of Odysseus's return remains gradual.

Finally, the last of the four similes concludes the journey. Odysseus has finally reached his wife; Penelope has finally reached land. After a frightening image of Penelope's potential future, an unsatisfying pseudo father and son embrace between Eumaeus and Telemachus, and an ominous reminder that Odysseus's trials were not finished despite his reunion with his son, the final simile provides satisfaction for the audience. The image of a shipwrecked man finally reaching land, glad to be alive and relieved that the tortuous journey has ended, provides a sense of peacefulness and comfort. The penultimate, yet most longed for, reunion has occurred: husband and wife are reunited at last. The saga has reached its conclusion; Odysseus achieved his *nostos*, Penelope has reached dry land, and

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everything is as it should be.

The Odyssey truly deserves its designation as an epic poem; it incorporates ten years of storytelling, of conflict, and of journeying across the world. Such a grand scope of work will necessarily involve complexity. This poem tells the tales of three individuals, each affected by the Trojan War, each trying to survive and make it home— some literally, some just trying to return to normalcy. External features do not always equate with the internal; physical disguises, hidden emotions, and fabricated identities all add to the complexity, and at times confusion, of the poem. Reality, knowledge, and perception do not always align; therefore, the odd similes arise. But in the scope of this epic poem, they make sense. After years of chaos and a series of peculiar similes, Ithaca is at peace and order restored. Identities have been re-established, and *nostos* has been achieved.

Work Cited

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Stanley Lombardo. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2000.

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MEASURE

A play in one act

Nicole Heneveld

CHARACTERS

EMILY DICKINSON, genius poet and resident baker.

SUSAN GILBERT DICKINSON, Emily's sister-in-law. A woman of great intelligence. Married to Austin Dickinson.

MABEL LOOMIS TODD, a beautiful woman who is having a rather public and indiscreet affair with Austin Dickinson.

SETTING

Amherst, Massachusetts.

TIME

Evening. December 10, 1883.

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MEASURE

(Lights up on the Dickinson family Homestead. EMILY, age fifty-three and dressed entirely in white, is in the kitchen. The counter, table, chairs, and floor are covered in flour. There are flour handprints on the wooden cabinets. It is clear that she has been baking, but beyond that, there is very little sense to be made of the mess. EMILY is humming a Christmas carol as she places a cake pan into the oven. She moves to the ingredients strewn across the table, clearly intending to make another batch.)

EMILY

(To herself)

Three cups of flour.

(Measuring)

Flour is so peculiar. It has a mind of its own. If I had a flower for every speck of flour that wandered off, I'd have a garden—a Garden of Eden—eaten—even—Eve, then... I wonder what kind of flowers Eve followed out of the garden. Flowers can show you the way to anything—I say—

(Reciting as she pours the flour into a larger bowl)

The Daisy follows soft the sun,

And when his golden walk is done,

Sits shyly at his feet.

He, waking, finds the flower near.

“Wherefore, marauder, art thou here?”

“Because, sir, love is sweet!”

(EMILY finishes pouring the flour and looks around the table, a bit lost.)

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What's next?

(Enter SUSAN GILBERT DICKINSON, dressed in black. She appears pale and distracted. When she sees the mess, she pauses, watching as EMILY attempts to measure out a teaspoon of baking soda and a teaspoon of salt at the same time.)

SUSAN

Emily?

(EMILY jumps, spilling salt on the table.)

EMILY

Susie!

(Surreptitiously, EMILY takes a pinch of the spilled salt and throws it over her shoulder. SUSAN moves closer.)

SUSAN

What happened?

EMILY

What do you mean?

SUSAN

(Gesturing to the spilled ingredients)

Are you...?

(Losing both the energy and will to know the reason for the mess)

Do you need help?

EMILY

Can you watch the oven while I finish the next batch?

SUSAN

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“Watch the oven?” Is it going somewhere?

EMILY

You know what I meant.

SUSAN

(Wearily)

Word choice, my dear.

EMILY

(Meticulously measuring a tablespoon of ginger)

Choosing the best word is like choosing a favorite child.

(A heavy silence. SUSAN’s eyes are far too bright and shimmer in the candlelight. She pointedly looks away, towards the oven. EMILY immediately knows her mistake, but has no words with which to fix it.)

I’m sorry.

SUSAN

(Still looking at the oven, avoiding EMILY’s eyes)

Gingerbread?

EMILY

(Softly)

I thought it might bring a bit of cheer into the house.

SUSAN

It was his favorite.

EMILY

I know.

(Beat.)

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SUSAN

I'm sorry.

EMILY

You're sorry? Whatever for?

SUSAN

I did not mean to lead the conversation down a dark path.

EMILY

(Remembering as she measures out one half-cup of heavy cream)

"I would have drowned twice to save you sinking—"

SUSAN

(Turning towards EMILY)

What?

EMILY

"If I could only have covered your Eyes—"

SUSAN

Emily—

EMILY

"...so you wouldn't have seen the Water."

SUSAN

How could you possibly remember that?

EMILY

You remember it, if your reaction is any indication.

SUSAN

That was twenty years ago.

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EMILY

What's twenty years to Immortality?

SUSAN

Let's change the subject.

EMILY

(While mixing ingredients)

Unable are the Loved—to die—

For Love is immortality—

Nay—it is Deity—

SUSAN

Please, Emily—I have had quite enough.

EMILY

You used to love when I quoted my poetry to you.

SUSAN

(Abruptly)

Why so much ginger?

EMILY

(Taken completely by surprise by the non sequitur)

What?

SUSAN

Why do you put so much ginger in the mix?

EMILY

The answer is in the name.

SUSAN

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You have a very generous hand.

EMILY

This is the first time I am hearing a complaint.

SUSAN

Not a complaint, just a curiosity.

EMILY

(Smiling affectionately at SUSAN to ensure she is not offended)

You are a curiosity.

SUSAN

(Gesturing to the mess EMILY's made of the kitchen)

And *you* are not?

EMILY

All right, we're both curious. And we keep getting "curiouser and curiouser."

SUSAN

Two orphans, baking gingerbread, quoting Lewis Carroll. Curious, indeed.

EMILY

(Gathering the butter and molasses)

Orphans?

SUSAN

Well, I suppose I've had more practice at it. I've been one a lot longer than you.

EMILY

When you married my brother, you stopped being an orphan.

SUSAN

I don't know if you can ever really "stop" being an orphan.

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EMILY

Well, I don't consider myself an orphan. I was a grown woman when I lost my parents. You were eleven.

SUSAN

Eleven felt grown enough back then.

EMILY

Indeed. But eleven feels so long ago, now that I am fifty-three.

SUSAN

(Shocked and upset by having forgotten)

Your birthday!

EMILY

What about it?

SUSAN

Today is your birthday, Emily!

EMILY

I know.

SUSAN

Why aren't we celebrating?

EMILY

(Finishing up the batter)

I hardly thought it was appropriate.

SUSAN

Time keeps going, even when we feel as though it should stop forever.

EMILY

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I didn't feel like celebrating.

SUSAN

I am so sorry—

EMILY

No, Susie. Don't you dare apologize. None of this is your fault.

SUSAN

I feel terrible.

EMILY

You *look* terrible.

SUSAN

(Wryly)

Thanks.

EMILY

You were in no state to plan a party.

SUSAN

(Taking the cake out of the oven with a worn dishtowel wrapped around one hand)

But how could I have forgotten it altogether? There's no excuse for that!

EMILY

Of course there is! Gilbert—

(Hearing the name, SUSAN accidently drops the cake pan on the counter. She burns herself trying to ensure it does not fall to the floor.)

Susie!

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(EMILY rushes to help SUSAN. She pulls SUSAN over to a chair, sits her down, and hurries to the sink to run cold water onto the dishtowel.)

SUSAN

(Calling to EMILY)

I'm fine. I'm fine. Don't fuss.

EMILY

(Returning with the damp towel to place on the burn)

Susie, you're not fine! Look at you! You haven't slept in months. You can't even hear your son's name without burning yourself.

SUSAN

(Gesturing with her good hand to the damp cloth over her burned one)

Not exactly Elizabeth Blackwell, are you?

EMILY

Don't keep changing the subject, Susie. We need to discuss this.

SUSAN

(With a pained sigh)

Please, Emily, I am too tired to have this—

EMILY

(Softening her voice)

You'll run yourself into the ground. Don't you dare make me write your obituary.

SUSAN

As long as you don't make me write yours. I've had quite enough death for one lifetime, I think.

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EMILY

(Placing a hand on SUSAN's face to wipe away a stray tear)

Pass to thy Rendezvous of Light,

Pangless except for us—

Who slowly for the Mystery

Which he hast leaped across!

SUSAN

My little boy. An angel, if there ever was one. For his sake, I hope Heaven is everything we've ever dreamt it to be. When he was lying there in his bed, feverish, he kept saying, "Open the door, open the door—"

EMILY/SUSAN

(Together)

"They're waiting for me."

SUSAN

Who was waiting for him, I wonder?

EMILY

I'd give anything to know.

SUSAN

So many little things seem impossible to do now.

EMILY

(Playfully trying to lift her spirits)

Like taking a cake out of the oven?

SUSAN

(Lifting her burnt hand)

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Yes, I suppose. And decorating for Christmas—

EMILY

Christmas won't be the same without Gilbert.

SUSAN

Eight years old. Imagine being a child, knowing you won't live to see another Christmas?

EMILY

Don't think such things.

SUSAN

What else can I think?

(As SUSAN recites a poem, EMILY listens with increasing difficulty)

One asked, when was the grief?
The robbed one raised her head
When—when her answer brief
Eyes hot with tears looked vague
When—when was all she said—
I've lost my way in time
I lost the hours in vain
T'was years—t'was ages—yesterday—
Oh shattered heart t'was now—!
How many Winters gone
How many Summers loved their flowers
Since sorrow laid thee low

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How many trains of solemn hours

Have passed...

Grief's calendar has no hour—

EMILY

(Carefully, looking at her pale face and thin frame)

What would Austin say, if he heard you—saw you—like / this?

SUSAN

(Interrupting)

Austin? Or my husband? The two are not the same.

EMILY

Your husband, then.

SUSAN

I have no husband.

EMILY

Susie—

SUSAN

That man is not my husband.

EMILY

Susan—

SUSAN

Do you know what he would say?

(EMILY remains silent)

He would say, "The boy should not have been playing in the mud. Where was his mother when he was getting typhoid?"

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EMILY

Susan!

SUSAN

And I would say, "Where was his father?" Do you know where *he* was that day, Emily?

EMILY

(A bit too quickly)

No.

SUSAN

I think you do.

EMILY

I swear—

SUSAN

Don't swear. Don't make me call you a liar.

EMILY

He was—

SUSAN

Please, Emily. "Tell all the truth" without the slant, for once. For me.

EMILY

He didn't tell me where he was going.

SUSAN

But you know.

EMILY

(Softly)

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I do.

SUSAN

So do I.

EMILY

Susan—

SUSAN

He was with *her*. That Todd woman. *Mabel*.

(There is a long pause, during which EMILY puts the second batch of gingerbread cake into the oven and begins to clean up the mess she's made of the kitchen. Neither woman can look at the other.)

EMILY

(Breaking the silence)

I know he may not be a good husband, and for that, for *you*, I will never forgive him. But he is a good brother.

SUSAN

(Almost laughing at what she perceives to be a ludicrous distinction)

Is that supposed to be comforting?

EMILY

No. He is not faithful, and he is...neglectful...but he does love you.

SUSAN

(Losing energy)

Emily, please, this is all too much.

EMILY

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You're right.

SUSAN

Let's not talk anymore about the dead or the adulterous.

(Placing her good hand on EMILY's)

It's your birthday.

EMILY

(Smelling the gingerbread)

Then let's have cake!

SUSAN

A whole cake, for the two of us?

EMILY

Why not? We deserve it!

SUSAN

We do.

EMILY

(Finding two glasses and pouring some milk for each of them)

A toast!

SUSAN

(Laughing)

Of milk?

EMILY

A toast to Gilbert, beloved son and nephew.

SUSAN

(With more peace than before)

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To Gilbert.

(They drink)

And a toast to Emily!

EMILY

To me?

SUSAN

To my beloved friend, on her birthday. Here's to many more years together.

EMILY

(Smiling)

Cheers!

(Offstage, there are sounds of someone approaching)

EMILY

(Alarmed)

Who is that?

(Laughter can be heard. A woman's voice can be heard.)

MABEL

Let me just get a glass of water, dear.

(The reactions of the two women are immediate and distinctly different. EMILY launches herself towards the broom closet. SUSAN stands, but does not move from her place.)

EMILY

I have to hide.

SUSAN

You have to hide?

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EMILY

(Climbing into the broom closet)

That woman has never seen me and I'd like to keep it that way.

SUSAN

(With a slight touch of panicked exasperation)

How am I—

(EMILY closes the broom closet a moment before the kitchen door opens to reveal MABEL LOOMIS TODD.)

MABEL

(Looking back over her shoulder)

Austin, would you like a glass as—

(Seeing SUSAN)

—well? Oh.

(An extremely tense silence. Then, MABEL breaks it with floundering words)

I'm sorry. It's very late. I never expected—that is, I thought—

(Looking at the mess, and then at the towel wrapped around SUSAN's burnt hand)

Are you quite all right?

(SUSAN remains silent)

What are you doing here, alone?

(SUSAN does not engage. MABEL sees two glasses of milk.)

Are you alone?

SUSAN

Quite.

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MABEL

(Lighting up)

Was “the Myth” here?

SUSAN

(Angrily. This is the first touch of emotion she has allowed herself since MABEL’s entrance)

Don’t call her that!

MABEL

What else can I call her? I’ve never even seen her. I think you’ve all made her up.

SUSAN

She’s real.

MABEL

Maybe to you, but not to me. Not until I see her.

SUSAN

Get out.

MABEL

They say she’s a genius. Absolutely insane—a complete recluse—but a genius nonetheless.

SUSAN

Get out.

MABEL

I need a glass of water.

SUSAN

This is not your home.

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MABEL

It isn't yours, either.

SUSAN

I am family.

MABEL

And I am a guest in need of water.

(A stand off)

SUSAN

(Sitting down)

Go on then.

MABEL

(Surprised by SUSAN's acquiescence)

Thank you.

(She grabs a cup from the cupboard. It is clear she knows her way around the Dickinson's kitchen. She goes to the sink to fill it up with water.)

You know, I never gave you my condolences.

(MABEL's voice is softer, more congenial. SUSAN does not respond.)

Such a terrible thing, to bury a child. Austin was positively inconsolable.

SUSAN

My husband certainly sought solace elsewhere.

MABEL

(With her glass of water in hand, looking around at the flour and scattered ingredients)

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He did. Well, I wish you all the best with your baking. Say “hello” to the Myth for me, will you?

(Exit MABEL. SUSAN sits as still as a statue. Shuffling can be heard from the broom closet. EMILY eventually tumbles out of it.)

EMILY

(From where she has fallen on the floor)

That—that—*woman!*

(She gets up and goes to SUSAN, who is staring blankly into space.)

How dare she?! How *dare* she—

SUSAN

(Quietly)

She isn’t worth getting yourself upset—

EMILY

Upset?! I’m not “upset,” I’m furious! How could she say those things to you?

SUSAN

She said no more or less than I expected her to say.

EMILY

(Incensed, pacing back and forth)

The “Myth”? I’ll show her a myth—

SUSAN

Calm down, Emily.

EMILY

Barging in here like she owns the place—

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SUSAN

Emily—

EMILY

I'll talk to Austin. I will. This affair has gone on long enough—it's practically public—

SUSAN

(Grabbing EMILY's hand as she passes in front of her)

Emily. Please.

EMILY

What?

SUSAN

It's your birthday.

EMILY

To hell with my birthday!

SUSAN

Let's just forget it. At least for tonight. Tomorrow, I will think about the affair.

Tonight, I just want to be with you and be happy.

EMILY

(Sensing how much SUSAN needs her)

All right. For your sake.

(She sits down and picks up her abandoned glass of milk)

Should we make another toast?

SUSAN

(Glad for the change of subject)

Sure.

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EMILY

To Susie!

SUSAN

(Laughing quietly)

To me?

EMILY

To my best friend—the smartest, finest, loveliest person I’ve ever known.

SUSAN

(Clinking their glasses together)

You’re too kind.

EMILY

(Finishing her drink)

Now, on to this gingerbread.

SUSAN

We can’t possibly eat it all on our own.

EMILY

Well, I’m certainly not sharing it with anyone but you!

SUSAN

(Smiling)

We ought to do this every Christmas.

EMILY

What? Eat our weight in gingerbread?

SUSAN

No, bake together.

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EMILY

I think I did most of the baking.

SUSAN

Well, I kept you company, didn't I?

EMILY

You did. Maybe next time *you* can measure everything so I don't make such a mess.

SUSAN

The mess is half the fun!

EMILY

Until you have to clean it!

SUSAN

I'll help. Many hands make light work.

EMILY

(Mischievously taking a handful of flour)

Or *more* work!

(Laughing, she tosses the flour at SUSAN. A flour fight ensues, by the end of which, SUSAN's black mourning gown is almost white.)

(Blackout)

END OF PLAY

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Shakespeare in OUR Time: Fanworks and the Bard

Erika Panzarino

Ben Jonson's famous observation, that Shakespeare was "not of an age, but for all time," can be taken one of two ways: first, that the meaning of Shakespeare's work remains stable; and second, that Shakespeare's work adapts to our time. A traditional academic resistance to a more fluid notion of Shakespeare is reflected in Stephen Greenblatt's lament that his young students' "engagement with language, their own or Shakespeare's, often seems surprisingly shallow or tepid" (Greenblatt). Greenblatt's scathing statement, along with his critique of mixed media and fandom interaction, exemplifies a crucial flaw in academic rhetoric: the assumption that fans do not engage with Shakespearean text in any meaningful way.

On the contrary, there exists a thriving culture of interest in Shakespeare, and it is those fans who are at the front lines creating innovative and socially relevant commentary on Shakespeare's work. The vast libraries of Shakespearean fan fiction, the many blogs and websites devoted to in-depth exploration and discussion of his texts, and the plethora of fan art devoted to the iconography of this canon, provide ample evidence of this dialogue. Sites such as fuckyeahqueershakespeare.tumblr.com openly invite discourse on queer theory, fan art, and fan fiction, and reflect the general excitement over the queer interpretation of Shakespearean text. Timelessly tragic characters suddenly leave the page and become alive as we see ourselves in their struggles. Young people do not merely

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read Shakespeare out of some long demanded obligation to higher education; rather, they are living with the text as they find themselves part of the action.

Traditional academic discourse resides in classrooms, books, and scholarly journals. While crucial, these mediums, also by their nature, create a divide. The privilege of a university education and the ability to access scholarly journals and books may “cut off” those who cannot, for any number or reasons, enter those conversations. The internet, unlike previous communities, is open to all; everyone has access, and, more importantly, everyone can contribute to the conversation. Without the curated nature of the academic framework, it is much easier to present a new perspective, and to share that perspective with anyone willing to listen.

Social media offers anyone with internet access a platform to express themselves and an audience. Tumblr as a blogging specific platform exemplifies this situation. What makes tumblr unique is the ability users have to re-blog a post and to add commentary to the original blog. This forum curates discourse between users while inviting others to engage with the posts, and creates a multi-user dialogue that allows for real time debate. No longer bound by something as arbitrary as a publication deadline, users freely and engagingly devote their time to discourse that focuses on their interests.

These communities, or fandoms, engage with the text on a visceral level. They do not separate themselves from the content discussed; they occupy its space. For example, a short essay post from tumblr user professorbumblebee entitled “Spare Some Kindness for Romeo and Juliet” describes the tragedy of the two main characters, and also acknowledges the common critical rhetoric of their foolishness.

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However, rather than add to an echoing symphony of condemnation for their shortcomings, this blogger humanizes Romeo and Juliet, emphasizing the desperation of their situation. This analysis could easily appear in a scholastic venue, but within the context of tumblr, the discourse expands with limitless possibilities. This academic fan (a combination of academic and fan) explores, at length, the various conflicts within the text, and also critiques and engages with the audience's reactions to the text. She addresses the fans' frustration with Romeo and Juliet, and continues to spin this idea, offering justification for their motives beyond what explicitly appears in the text. Professorbumblebee's textual analysis and her analysis of fandom's reaction is furthered by her conclusion: "why is this important? Because there are real people, real children who see no other out besides death. And if you can't spare some kindness for the fictional characters that reflect them, they will think you cannot spare kindness for them" (Abigail). This "why" includes both an emotionally charged response and a socially aware call for action, addressing and emphasizing the often magnetic connection between fans and characters, and defending that unique relationship so often silenced in academic study. As a result, tumblr user professorbumblebee employs academic rhetoric as a means to comprehend the text and to bring awareness to larger social issues. Whether merely in the realm of fandom or the greater audience at large, this conversation blurs the lines between an intellectual and emotional discussion of a text, and defines the very essence of an academic fan who engages with a work in a way very different from that of an academic.

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One of the most compelling examples of fan interaction comes from fan fiction serving to supplement, expand, explain, or even replace canonical texts. While academic study exists as written commentary about a text, in many respects, fan fiction embodies the text itself. Succinctly described in an essay entitled “Praxis,” fan fiction is known for “negotiating between a belief in the significance of the individual author, Barthes's death of the author, and newer collaborative forms of writing; fans constitute themselves as an authoritative body in regard to rights of interpreting text or writing fan fiction” (Herzog). Fandom creates a space in which the author of a canonical text does not maintain full authority over the text, but rather shares that authority with fan authors. Many fan writers take on the role of co-author, expanding upon the story and filling in gaps. Others supplement their own timelines, their own plots, even their own characters, in order to create an entirely new canonical text. Depending upon how popular within the fandom that work becomes, it may be coined fanon, and considered as canonical to the story.

Often these fanon tropes stem from some ambiguity in the canonical text. One such example appears in the *Hamlet* fandom, in which a popular thematic addition to the play is in the form of a romantic sub-plot between Hamlet and Horatio. Fan fictions that reflect this plot occur in abundance. A sample of this work is from Archive of Our Own user highlyannoying whose supplemental plot adds scenes to *Hamlet's* timeline. These scenes comprise a series of vignettes which avoid Shakespeare's iconic iambic pentameter, and instead, reach for a thematically comparable tone:

Being with Hamlet starts to feel synonymous with talking to the stars. Distant.
Horatio can't be sure if his words are reaching. Incomprehensible.

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Horatio is a scholar. Educated. The stars cannot be explained by the actions of a Prince, he knows that. But when he looks at Hamlet, he can't help but think he understands the night sky a little better. (highlyannoying)

The star motif along with Horatio's referencing Hamlet by title and the melancholy voice of the piece together mirror the play. The romantic plot, however, remains a creation of the fan author, most likely influenced by the *Hamlet* fandom surrounding the canonical text thus further blurring the lines between that of a fan and of a creator.

Alternatively, there exists a body of fan work designed to embrace the absurd and to manipulate character and plot, changing tragedy into comedy. One such example is "Geraldus Spring, the Shakespearean Talk Show" by Archive of Our Own user marruman who substitutes a shortened iambic line and modernizes the material by sending Hamlet to a daytime talk show to resolve his many familial issues. The host, Geraldus, introduces himself and Hamlet whom he invites to explain his tale of woe:

...I'm Geraldus Spring, and we'll see tonight
"My father is dead and wants his revenge
And my mother has married the killer!"
We have with us now, the Prince of all Danes
And Hamlet is his name. Please tell us now,
Goodly prince, thou claimst this but how?
Surely your royal mother could not
House such a villain, or t' him should marry!

HAMLET: Alas, 'tis true! My noble mother did submit
To mine treacherous uncle, when she was still
In black cloth'd and his nails still with grave-dirt stain'd. (marruman)

Marruman's spin on the original story of Hamlet reconciles Shakespeare's lofty form and content with an accessible pop culture reference. While at first glance merely an exercise

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in hilarity, this writing method creates a wider range of accessibility by focusing on and concentrating in one space all of Hamlet's woes, thus garnering sympathy for a character who is often harshly judged in other critical analyses.

Hamlet exemplifies one fandom that further fleshes out and extends a canonical text, and affords aca-fans the opportunity to theorize and to create narratives about these texts using various social media platforms. Thus, the blog fuckyeahqueershakespeare collects submissions from fans all over the world in order to compare notes on different productions, studies, and interpretations of Shakespeare's characters in conjunction with queer theory. Many of the submissions highlight student-led performances, or express observations made while studying the plays. In addition, the blog runners moderate the page to include not only fan art and fan fiction, but also address scholarly issues and academic theory.

Once again, the distinction between a scholar and a fan is blurred as it becomes an arbitrary matter of language and publishing medium to distinguish an academic argument from a fan perspective. Naturally, both sides are interested, but the driving motivation behind fans often comes from desire. Fans identify with these works, and thus they live and breathe the discussion in a way that academic discourse strives to negate. When discussing a work objectively, as traditional academic discourse would dictate, the emotional connection to any work must remain apart. Blogs like fuckyeahqueershakespeare allow these two spheres to meet and engage, considering both fan theory and scholarly hypothesis equally weighted.

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What makes this a radical, timely discussion is the very nature of Shakespeare. The pinnacle of academic study in the English language, ubiquitous in our cultural currency and educational growth, returns at last to the groundlings. The young, the poor, the marginalized, once again have access to his work and are claiming it as their own. Shakespeare in our time descends from the dusty bookshelf and becomes electrified. Shakespeare in our time becomes a dialogue of scholastic and fanatic inquiry, an explosive scene born again from a stale soliloquy.

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The Shift from the Oppression of Women During the Period of Courtly Love to the Idealization of the Sexual and Emotional Domination of Women in Pop Culture

Katya Garashchenko

Social constructs that define how women should act in romantic and sexual relationships are built, for the most part, on mainstream media and pop culture. Female characters are often designed in such a way that they are dependent sexually and/or emotionally on their male counterparts. This dependency is not solely an aspect of popular media, but rather a quality that has been sewn into the very fabric of our society. The subtle domination of women is seen as normal by many because it has existed for so long. We want to believe that it is diminishing, when in actuality it is simply translated into another form of subjugation. Women are conditioned to think that they have certain obligations when it comes to sexual and emotional relationships.

More often than not, women assume roles assigned them without considering their one-sidedness. In some cases, books and movies that are deeply offensive to women may become hugely most popular with a large female fan base. Stephanie Meyer's series *Twilight* presents a perfect example of an overly masculine male character who dominates the thoughts and desires of the weaker, love-obsessed female. Similarly, E.L. James's *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a popular series that romanticizes a subservient female in sexual relationships, and is likewise representative of abusive gender roles and ownership.

Twilight is a popular franchise that has captured the hearts of a very large following. Bella Swan is the novel's heroine; however, the question remains: is she a suitable role model for young women? The premise of the novel is that true love is worth total sacrifice and that love can exist in many forms. Bella is portrayed as willing to

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sacrifice close to anything for a relationship that is emotionally draining and near impossible to uphold. She is characterized as a weak, clumsy, and dependent woman who needs the vampire Edward Cullen in her life to give her strength. Bella is consistently described as fragile as she stands on the sidelines and is passed from the care of one man to another. She is portrayed as needing to give up her entire life and everyone she loves in order to marry Edward Cullen, much as women were expected to do in the period of courtly love. Edward never treats Bella as his equal throughout the novel, but she is not characterized as a woman who minds being oppressed. In fact, she gladly acquiesces.

This emotionally abusive and dangerous relationship that is romanticized in the novel spills over into the sexual encounters between Bella and Edward. Bella, fragile and weak, is incapable of saying no not only to love but also to the sex that is physically harmful to her. Throughout the series, despite Bella's continual sexual interest in and pursuit of Edward, he adamantly refuses her because he is worried about hurting her. Bella is portrayed as the one pursuing sex because she needs to belong to Edward in every possible way. For the majority of the series, Bella is a virgin; this situation appeals to the reader because she is vulnerable and pure, qualities that are also attractive to a vampire. The entire series plays with the predator-prey fetishism that makes women the target of the dominant male who is kind enough to exercise self-restraint long enough to call her his own. If she had not been made a weak, naïve, willing virgin, would he have been as deeply in love with her and as willing to control himself until marriage as he was? Susan Ostrov Weisser writes in *The Glass Slipper* that the allure of the overly masculine and dominant character of Edward is that he has the ability to take complete control of Bella Swan's body because she is so helpless, but chooses not to:

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What is this all about? As with *Beauty and Beast*, the vampire romance fantasy is that women *need* masculine force, a power that is channeled for their good if the man loves you romantically. A superhero is the other side of a villain when the lover is nonhuman: Edward insists that if he killed to save “a young girl” from rape, that wouldn’t be bad (Meyer 270). He later explains that when he first met Bella, “I so very nearly took you then,” referencing the threat of rape. But when he “leaps at” her, crashing her into the sofa and knocking it into the wall, “all the while, his arms formed an iron cage of protection around me—I was barely jostled” (Meyer 345). Instead, he will fight *for* her, a much more satisfying fantasy. (Weisser 103)

Fans of the series look at this dangerous and risky relationship as one that demonstrates true love because Edward is so kind for *not* raping and killing Bella when he could have so easily. Instead, he is able to protect her and keep her from harm. Bella, being the overly weak and emotionally unstable character that she is, cannot seem to live without Edward in her life because when he chooses to leave her for her own good, entire months are omitted from the narrative, implying that Bella’s life is not worth discussing when Edward is not present. When Edward is present, however, Bella is willing to surrender herself entirely to him, so much so that she doesn’t mind the pain that comes with their sexual and emotional relations.

Physical and emotional abuse seems to be a trend in today’s bestselling books and movies. *50 Shades of Grey* is an international best-seller that romanticizes an abusive relationship between a recent college graduate and a young business tycoon. The characters Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey embody two dangerous stereotypes in current gender roles. Anastasia is characterized as a modest, poor, weak minded, introverted female with low self-esteem and a need for protection. Christian Grey, on the other hand, is a rich, confident, self-absorbed, self-made entrepreneur who needs no one but himself. Putting two characters like this together in a novel which focuses on the sexual gratification of the male sets the groundwork for a type of female oppression.

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Many fans find this series sexually appealing. There is a certain allure to a man who lays down the rules and asserts his dominance. However, a very important aspect is overlooked by many: Anastasia Steele has little to no say in this relationship. Christian Grey is described as absolutely irresistible and charming; he wins over Anastasia and she inadvertently falls in love with him. Anastasia's attachment to Christian is based entirely on love and an emotional connection; Christian's relationship, however, is purely physical and based on Anastasia's willingness to submit completely to his every wish which he uses to lure her into a sexually and emotionally abusive relationship in which he is the only one gratified.

In the beginning of the series, Christian proposes a set of guidelines for Anastasia to follow if she is interested in being his partner; he asserts his dominance immediately, and Anastasia is eager to accept his conditions with a few minor changes that have nothing to do with her own personal interests. As the relationship continues, Christian goes out of his way to demonstrate that he has full possession of Anastasia, at one point even demanding that Anastasia change her name so that everyone would know that she belongs to him. Christian tries to take full possession of Anastasia, her sexual interests, and eventually, her lifestyle choices.

Why is it that some of the bestselling books and movies of today place women in such submissive and stereotypical positions? The general public seems to have interest in establishing equality between the sexes but chooses to ignore the disturbing and underlying oppression of women which is so prevalent in pop culture. This underlying oppression can be traced back to the period of courtly love. Women in today's society have opportunities that women in that period could never imagine possible. But is it

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possible that this oppression has simply changed into another form that is more easily dismissed by the general population today?

For example, In *Lancelot, The Knight of The Cart* by Chrétien de Troyes, a classic of courtly love, the gender roles and expectations of women are evident. Lancelot is characterized as hypermasculine; he is the hero that every woman wants because he is courageous, strong, chivalrous, and willing to die for Guinevere. The entire poem focuses on the obstacles and triumphs of Lancelot, our hero, while Guinevere, the heroine, on the other hand, is not discussed in much detail at all. She acts more as a narrative tool in this masculine tale of chivalry. Jane Burns accurately discusses the courtly lady as an accessory in her book *Courtly Love: Who Needs It? Recent Feminist Work in the Medieval French Tradition*:

Raised high atop the metaphorical pedestal of courtliness, the lady reputed to have ultimate control over her suitor's well-being, his life, and even his death actually derives little power, authority, or material gain from this glorified position. (24)

It may seem that Guinevere has the ultimate control and importance in such a poem because she is the object of Lancelot's interest, but the knight's actions are minimally affected by Guinevere, and her presence in the poem is almost ghostly.

It was around the twelfth century that the concept of chivalry was established. Chivalry is defined as the medieval knightly system with specific religious, moral, and social codes. However, today people consider chivalry in direct correlation with gentlemanly behavior. This in itself is problematic because men who were chivalrous in the period of courtly love were those who took ownership of their women, and who believed that women were meek, fragile, and unable to fend for themselves. This idea has been carried over into today's society. Many men believe that being a gentleman refers to being chivalrous; being chivalrous, however, can be seen as a way of demonstrating

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dominance over a woman. In many cases, men may see chivalrous acts as quid pro quo arrangements in which they expect obedience in exchange for ownership.

This modern version of chivalry is evident in contemporary movies and media such as *50 Shades of Grey* whose protagonist, Christian Grey, is much like Lancelot in his characterization and actions. Lancelot is a successful knight who must face many challenges much like Christian who is portrayed as the successful business owner who overcomes many obstacles and daily challenges as he works to maintain a high-level position. Anastasia Steele is much like Guinevere in that she is set atop a pedestal and made to be a fragile, beautiful, desirable lady who catches the eye of our hero. Of course Anastasia, unlike our knight's lady, is a more dynamic character. But Anastasia is still made to be an obedient, love-struck, woman who seems to make her own decisions, but in actuality is guided entirely by her emotional attachment to Christian who is portrayed as perpetually domineering. In many instances, Christian uses Anastasia's love for him and her emotional instability as a way to convince her to do things against her will. Although Christian is chivalrous, Anastasia often acts in ways contrary to her nature because he is "so good to her." For example, Christian strongarms Anastasia into changing her name in *50 Shades Freed*; she clearly does not want to change her name because she wants to maintain professional autonomy while working at a company that Christian purchased, but of course that is unacceptable, and Christian must claim what is his. Anastasia eventually changes her name perhaps because Christian plans to put her in charge of the company, and she feels indebted to him. Christian, much like Lancelot, is the main focus of the reader's attention because Anastasia's wants and needs are barely mentioned.

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The development of female characters in Western Literature from the period of courtly love to now demonstrates the shift to more dynamic female characters which parallels the advancement of women's rights. During the period of courtly love (1300s to the 1500s), women were seldom educated, were often forced into marriages, and were routinely seen as having value only as the possessions of men. During the 1800s, women had increasing access to education, but the focus was often on domestic skills and other household concerns that would hopefully enable them to "catch" a husband. These competencies were learned either at boarding school or from a resident governess. The result of such an education and the effect on literature from the time can be seen in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Pride and Prejudice is set in a patriarchal society where men held almost all economic and social power. Austen's narrative is well past the period of courtly love but still retains some prominent beliefs from that time. Elizabeth Bennett, the novel's heroine, is a wildly progressive female character in a plot that focuses mainly on marriage and social class. Women are discussed as if they are being auctioned off to the highest bidders. Elizabeth, her sisters, and other women in the novel are all competing for the attention of the wealthiest men in their society. Marriage took precedence over education, and women who pursued intelligence too vigorously were called Blue Stockings and considered unfeminine and off-putting in the way they attempted to usurp men's 'natural' intellectual superiority. A woman's value, therefore, was entirely based on her virginity and her family's standing in society. Thus, when Lydia Bennett runs away with the scoundrel Wickham, although it's not certain she's lost her virginity, she suffers the disdain of her entire family whose name has been dishonored. Even though Jane Austen has created a female character who is independent, free-thinking, and radical

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for her time, Elizabeth will ultimately conform to the institution of marriage: the novel ends with the successful union between Elizabeth and Darcy who just so happens to be the wealthiest man in her society.

In addition to a woman's conformity to marriage, her sexuality was never allowed to be expressed. A woman was expected to be modest and pure, abstaining from any sexual behaviors that might tarnish her good name. This idea still exists in the West. The ideal woman in some of today's most popular romance books and movies usually retains her virginity until she meets the man of her dreams. In *Twilight*, Bella is new to all sexual encounters, but Edward brings out her innermost desires. Similarly, in *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Anastasia has never been with another man, but her deep emotional attachment to Christian makes her willing to give up the most sacred part of herself. A comparison of *Pride and Prejudice* (a 19th century novel) to *Twilight* and *Fifty Shades of Grey* (both 21st century novels), shows that the characterization of the main women in these three texts is similar as stereotypically they are emotionally driven by and devoted to the men in their lives. Their characters are pure in every sense. Men, who are free agents, have the power to obtain and ultimately change these women.

Women are made to seem most vulnerable in relation to anything that has to do with love and romantic relationships. As Shulamith Firestone writes in *The Dialectic of Sex*, "For love, perhaps even more than childbearing, is the pivot of women's oppression today" (69). Much of today's media and popular culture portrays women as diminished creatures who cannot function properly without a man in their lives. Firestone states that the political construct of love deems that a woman is only allowed to love herself if a man finds her worthy of love. This can be seen in *Twilight*, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. In *Twilight*, when Edward leaves Bella for her own safety, she has a

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serious emotional breakdown and throws herself off a cliff into the ocean only to get a piece of Edward back for a short while. Similarly, in the *Fifty Shades of Grey* series when Anastasia and Christian break up, we find Anastasia starving herself and wasting away until Christian comes back into her life. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the female characters constantly fear the possibility that they may never find a man of high social standing to marry; they worry that they will be doomed to spend their lives alone. Without a husband to look after them, women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had very few alternatives, so marriage would decide their value to society.

Today, many forms of literature and cinema unintentionally portray women as inferior beings because the oppression of previous centuries persists in more subtle portrayals of women in popular culture. Firestone writes about this view of women:

Women today still live under a system of patronage: with few exceptions, they have the choice, not between either freedom or marriage, but between being either public or private property. Women who merge with the ruling class can at least hope that some of his privilege will, so to speak, rub off. But women without men are in the same situation as orphans: they are helpless and sub-class lacking the protection of the powerful. (73)

It is this belief that allows women to be continually placed in the role of the subordinate. It is something that is so embedded in our society that when it is pointed out, people choose to overlook it. It is as if this subtle control over women is so natural that it does not even need to be addressed. Women today are freer to express their sexuality more than ever before, but much romantic cinema and literature still place the virgin on a pedestal as a more morally correct and desirable object. Once a woman becomes interested in sexual encounters that do not involve her being submissive and commandeered by a man, her value and ability to attach emotionally to a man may be

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lost. It is almost as if pop culture tries to maintain that women do not develop the freedoms that men have in romantic relationships.

Susan Ostrov Weisser discusses some of the reasons why it seems that fans are so enthralled by the sexually one-sided relationships portrayed in movies and books today:

Since the sexual revolution and the recent explosion of exploitative sexuality in print and electronic media, it seems more important than ever for many women to hang on to romance as a way of defining femininity and women's surplus value beyond that of sex object. I see in contemporary love stories in all media a common fear of giving up traditional ideology, in which women will be respected only if loved by men. Popular culture in particular soothes these concerns by combining elements that are both modern and retrogressive into one reassuring anodyne. (208)

It is as if women fear that by embracing their sexuality as they are now able to, they will lose the respect of men and destroy a traditional classification system. Pop culture seems to be a strange medium in which women are represented as having what seems to be the ability to express their sexuality freely, but also in which women are dominated and coerced by more powerful men who make it look as if the minor decisions they make are in some way significant. Women are discussed more freely in relation to sex, but why is it that women are still portrayed as subordinate sexual objects?

Courting rituals and gender roles from the period of courtly love still haunt us today. Women may be freer to pursue interests that are similar to men, but they are still seen as passive figures in society. Mass media and pop culture produce an unattainable and objectified view of women. The recurring theme of male dominance in popular literature and cinema continues to present women as fragile characters in need of protection. Women were denied basic freedoms and opportunities in the period of courtly love and this was reflected in the literature of the time. Interestingly enough, today it is argued by many that women are at an entirely equal standing with men, but this status is

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not always reflected in contemporary books and movies. The sexual and emotional domination of women in pop culture today is a reflection of a society that still holds gender roles as sacred aspects of our culture. The creation of female characters who are weak, helpless, and entirely indebted to their male counterparts only reinforces the gender stereotyping that is so prevalent. If female characters were made to be dominant, assertive, and in control, then maybe the imbedded idealization of docile and obedient women would more rapidly diminish, continuing to modify the perception of what an ideal woman is like.

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OUT OF LOVE

Or

“The Leopold and Loeb Murder.”

A historical narrative by

Andrew Ostrow

Bobby Franks on MAY 21st, 1924: Kenwood, Chicago. 7:30 AM

A Wednesday morning in Kenwood began for Bobby Franks in the most ordinary of ways. His mother roused him from bed while the family cook prepared pancakes and freshly-squeezed orange juice. Bobby slid out of the bed without much willingness, hoping that if he could just move slow enough his mother would relent and allow him to sleep. As he began to dress sullenly, he realized that the day held some excitement. He would be umpiring a game of baseball once his classes were finished. This was enough motivation to cause Bobby to dress with great speed. He bounced downstairs to greet his father, a wealthy Chicago manufacturer by the name of Jacob, and his sister, the seventeen year old Josephine. Jacob Jr., still in grade school, was allowed to sleep for another hour before his schooling would begin. The cook was just finishing breakfast, pausing her folding of the napkins to refill Mr. Franks' cup with black coffee, careful not to disturb him from the business section of his newspaper. Moments later, his mother, Flora, reappeared in the room, floating across the kitchen with a refinement that was reserved for elite Chicago wives.

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“Jack will be staying home from school again, his chicken pox just won’t go away,” she said with a shrug. Bobby would have to walk to and from school alone yet again. There was no danger in Jack’s illness; the doctor had come over just yesterday and assured them of that fact. Flora was likely to contact him again, later in the day, to see if any medicine could be acquired to speed up his recovery. Anything for her little darlings. Besides, money was easy to come by for the Franks family. Breakfast conversation began to dissolve into the usual banter. Josephine had been asked out by a local boy, but she was considering turning him down. Flora would have to make sure that the maids didn’t disturb Jack’s rest with their afternoon cleaning routine. Bobby was going to umpire a baseball game with his friends after school. It was now 7:30 am, and Bobby had inhaled his pancakes and was out the door. His father said his goodbye distractedly, but his mother gushed over him as she did every morning. Bobby had always been her favorite.

As Bobby closed the heavy oak door behind him and walked down the tree-lined blocks to the Harvard School for Boys, he had no comprehension that he would never see his family again.

Nathan Leopold on MAY 21st, 1924: The University of Chicago. 9:00 AM

Nathan Leopold was unfocused in his morning lecture with Professor Dargan. Usually, Leopold was quite engaged in the subject of Romance Literature, but today the pale boy’s mind was far from Verlaine. In his mind, a thousand thoughts demanded his attention, and none were in regard to the lecture. He drifted far, looking about the lecture hall without concentration, his hand scribbling on the page usually reserved for his notes. Today, all it bore was one word, over and over. “Supermen. Supermen. Supermen.”

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He ran through a mental list of all that had been accomplished. Alibi. False-Identity. Where to get the car. Ransom letter. Richard would surely collect the chisel, rope and chloroform. So little was left on the list to be collected. Car. Child. After those were obtained, all would be well. He would meet Richard at eleven, after his third lecture of the morning, and their big day would really begin. The anticipation was embedded in his blood by now, rushing through his entire body. He was excited.

Eleven finally came and he rushed out of Haskell hall under the watchful gaze of the gargoyles that lined the building. The campus of the University of Chicago felt dark even on a day as sunny as this one. The gothic buildings that surrounded him were covered in statues, typically gargoyles that seemed to watch the students wander from class to class. Their presence provided Nathan with a sense of security. The statues could see no more than the students around him. No one would ever know of the day he was about to embark on. He pitied them.

There *he* was, just outside the entrance to the university law school. His long face framed by his slicked black hair, as he leaned carelessly against the concrete wall. The sunlight was shining on his skin in a way that made him glow as if the sunlight were radiating off him. Nathan's breathing hastened, and he quickly bounced over to Richard Loeb with childish enthusiasm.

Today was the day.

Bobby Franks on MAY 21st, 1924: Kenwood. 5:06 PM

The sun was just beginning its descent into twilight as Bobby made his way home. He was tired after the game, his black shoes stained by the dust of the baseball diamond. He kicked a small rock down the sidewalk, his stomach rumbled. He began to

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wonder what the cook was making for dinner, and whether Jack was finally feeling better. He missed their walks to and from school, the older boy mussing Bobby's hair as Bobby listened intently to Jack's exploits of the day. Jack was his idol. He did well in school, girls liked him and he had a guaranteed future working at his father's business, eventually succeeding him. The three block trot to the family home seemed so lonely without Jack. Bobby felt quite exposed, unsafe even. He brushed this feeling aside. What would Jack think if he knew how much of a pansy Bobby was being?

The street was surprisingly empty for a May afternoon. The neighbors were probably enjoying a glass of iced tea inside their large homes, away from the growing heat that signaled the rise of summer's hold on the city. Bobby was comfortable though. It wasn't that much over 65 degrees, and most people in the neighborhood never sat on their porches or played in their front yards. The men of the family were still in their offices in the heart of the city, while the women were overseeing the making of dinner or reading a gossip magazine, wasting the day away until their children returned home.

The slick rumble of wheels filled his ears. A car had glided up beside him, nearly silent until it had come to a stop. Leaning out of the car was his cousin, Richard, smiling at him.

"Need a ride, Bobby?"

"Hi Richard!" Bobby had seen his cousin just last week, playing a game of backyard tennis at the Loeb estate. "I can walk." He was only two more blocks from home.

"Come on in the car; I want to talk to you about the tennis racket you had yesterday," Richard said, slowly and with deliberation, "I want to get one for my

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brother.” He nodded with a shrug, hopping off the curb and into the dark green Willys-Knight 54.

As Bobby sat in the car, he thought of the poster for the car that had been plastered on the wall of the drug store down the block. “Willys-Knight,” it read, “Happiness – and lots of it!” The car glided away from the curb and started toward the Franks estate. “You are bound to be happy with a Willys-Knight.” Richard’s friend Nathan sure seemed happy with the car. Bobby could not remember ever seeing him with such a big, cheesy grin. “Happy in the very beauty of it – ” The car smoothly turned left, no longer heading towards Bobby’s house “ – in the silky action of it – ” Bobby felt a hand cover his mouth. “*The day of the Knight is here.*” Black.

Nathan Leopold on MAY 21st, 1924:Wolf Lake. 9:16 PM

Black. Perfect. The cover of darkness was what they needed. Nathan parked the car on the side of the road along the train tracks. Some twenty yards along was the culvert, their spot. Richard slipped out of the car and opened the rear door on the driver’s side. Nathan peered in at the black form lying on the ground. He had yet to actually look on the body, lying like a lifeless lump in the dark. Nathan smiled with pride. Richard slid around him, placing a hand on his shoulder. The two took a moment to look at it, their work of art, wrapped up snug like a newborn in a black blanket. He was their baby.

Nathan reached into the car, gently withdrawing Bobby. Richard joined them in cradling their sleeping child to the culvert, treading softly on the ground so as not to wake him. Upon reaching the culvert, the two slunk down to greet the gaping mouth that would swallow the evidence. The two placed their gloomy parcel upon the wet, muddy earth and

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unwrapped it, revealing Bobby. The night was warm. Nathan removed his jacket and tossed it to one side, not noticing his field glasses dropping out of the front breast pocket.

Nathan began the process of tucking Bobby in for his eternal sleep while Richard stood by, illuminating the deed with his flashlight. Nathan purposefully undressed Bobby and removed him from the blanket. He withdrew from his pocket a pint of hydrochloric acid, pouring it upon Bobby's face and genitals with care. Nathan wanted to assure Bobby was safe from prying eyes, and this would assure that Bobby would never be recognized.

Richard dropped the flashlight to the ground and helped Nathan to slide Bobby into the culvert. At first, his feet stuck out from the end, so a forceful shove was needed to force Bobby deeper into the crevice. The two walked away from the hole, smiling with satisfaction at each other by the dim light of their electric torch. Nathan retrieved his coat as Richard wrapped Bobby's discarded clothes in the damp blanket that had previously held the boy. Collecting the much smaller parcel, the two strolled peacefully off to the car. Just before they reached the Willys-Knight, Richard halted and turned to Nathan.

"We've done well," Richard spoke softly, smiling at Nathan. Indeed, Nathan could not remember another time Richard had been so overtly romantic.

"And yet, we are not done, yet."

"All that's left is mailing the ransom note and making a few calls. Nathan, we've done it. We'll always have this night."

Richard leaned in, placing his lips on Nathan's softly. The stars of the night shined all the brighter for Nathan, who finally had the boy he had fallen for four years earlier at the University of Chicago. When Richard went out for a night of frolicking and vandalism, Nathan was there. When Richard transferred to a school in Ann Arbor,

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Michigan, Nathan had followed. When Richard stole a typewriter from his old fraternity house for the thrill of it, Nathan had joined him. He thought back to the days when they had fallen out, those cold Michigan winter days when Richard had said he no longer wanted him and Nathan cried himself to sleep. Those nights were darker than this one ever could be, for on this night he had the bright stars and Richard's bright eyes.

The two walked back to the car and the short drive to Chicago. He thought about the first time Richard had mentioned Nietzsche's "supermen" to him, men so intellectually superior to others that the laws of men did not apply to them. When he first proposed the murder to Nathan, he had not felt fear. He felt more connected to Richard in that moment than ever. He would never lose his love again now that they were so deeply connected. Richard knew this connection, and tonight they had sealed their love in blood. The car glided to a stop as it reached the post drop box on 55th Street. Nathan walked lightly to the mailbox, head in the clouds as he slid the final piece of their plan into the slot. The two then returned to the Loeb house on 50th Street and Ellis Avenue, where Nathan and Richard spent the remainder of their night basking in the glow of the firelight that shone from the basement furnace, illuminated by the embers of Bobby's burning clothes.

Jacob Franks on MAY 22nd, 1924: Kenwood. 8:16 AM

Dear Sir:

As you no doubt know by this time your son has been kidnapped. Allow us to assure you that he is at present well and safe. You need not fear any physical harm for him providing you live up carefully to the following instructions and

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such others as you will receive by future communications.

Should you, however, disobey any of our instructions, even slightly, his death will be the penalty.

1. For obvious reasons make absolutely no attempt to communicate with either the police authorities or any private agency. Should you already have communicated with the police, allow them to continue their investigations, but do not mention this letter.

2. Secure before noon today \$10,000. This money must be composed entirely of old bills of the following denominations: \$2,000 in \$20 bills, \$8,000 in \$50 bills. The money must be old. Any attempt to include new or marked bills will render the entire venture futile. The money should be placed in a large cigar box or, if such is impossible, in a heavy cardboard box securely closed and wrapped in white paper. The wrapping paper should be sealed and all openings with sealing wax.

3. Have the money thus prepared as directed above and remain home after one o'clock p.m. See that the telephone is not in use. You will receive a future communication instructing you as to your future course. As a final word of warning, this is a strictly commercial proposition, and we are prepared to put our threats into execution should we have reasonable ground to believe that you have committed an

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infraction of the above instructions. However, should you carefully follow out our instructions to the letter, we can assure you that your son will be safely returned to you within six hours of our receipt of the money.

Yours truly,

George Johnson.

Jacob Franks was on his third reading of the letter. When Bobby had failed to return home the night before, he had contacted his lawyer and the local police, both of whom were searching for Bobby with desperation. Now, a ransom letter. Whatever the cost, Jacob knew he had to bring his son home. He would do all that he must to please this George Johnson just to see his son again.

Jacob Franks on MAY 22nd, 1924: Kenwood. 1:06 PM

“Yes.” *click*

Yes. A few hours ago, Jacob Franks had sent his lawyer down to the police station. Yes. A body had been recovered from a culvert near Wolf Lake. Yes. The police suspected it was Bobby. Yes. When his lawyer left the home, he told Jacob that in the unlikely instance that the body was, indeed, Bobby, he would call the home, say “yes,” and hang up. But Bobby could not possibly be dead. Yes. He was being ransomed for Bobby’s safe return. Yes, but Bobby was lying on a cold slab of metal in a cold, white, clean room.

The phone rang. It was George Johnson, with more instructions. “Could you give me a moment?” Mr. Franks asked, confused and desperate.

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“No. You must follow my instructions to the letter. In a few minutes, a cab will arrive at your home. Get into it and go to the drug store on –” The rest faded into the back of Mr. Franks’ thoughts. How could he pay ransom for a boy not only not in the possession of the alleged kidnapper but one who was dead at the police station? Could his lawyer be mistaken? Could this kidnapper have killed Bobby?

A cab pulled up before the Franks’ Manor. Jacob quickly walked up to the car, holding a cigar box full of old bills. When the driver asked where he would like to be taken, he could not remember the street the drugstore was on. He racked his mind, trying madly to remember the address that Johnson had given to him. Johnson. The man who had likely killed Bobby. And now he was to pay this man? He was to give money in payment for the death of his son?

When the cab left the Franks’ Manor, it did not go to the drugstore where the game of cat and mouse “George Johnson” had orchestrated would continue. Jacob Franks never went from that drugstore to the Illinois Central Train Station, where he was to board a certain train and throw the box from the back car five seconds after passing the “Champion” water tower into the waiting arms of “George Johnson.” Jacob Franks never entered the cab.

Richard Leob on MAY 31st, 1924: Chicago Police Station. 3:16 PM.

Richard had been facing interrogation at the hands of Robert Crowe for three days. Crowe had just left the room, giving Richard time with his thoughts. “Thoughtless,” was all that crossed his mind. “How on earth could Leopold be so thoughtless?” The glasses had been the first link to the pair, but Leopold's alibi was sound. Was it not? Damn him. Damn him for losing the glasses. Damn him for putting them back in his

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pocket and failing to force them to fall free. If he could have just gotten those damn glasses to fall loose, they would both be free.

He thought back to Leopold and laughed inwardly. He remembered that night three months ago, when they drove all through the night from Ann Arbor, with the stolen typewriter. Richard had driven, so thrilled by the act of theft the two had just performed. They had gone all the way. As he drove, he caught glimpses of Nathan, head permanently cocked to one side, ever facing Richard. The look in his eyes was unmistakable, the look of a love-struck teenage girl being driven home from her first date. Did Nathan expect a kiss on the doorstep when they returned to Kenwood?

Poor Nathan, so smitten with him. Richard had the brains to utilize this. He needed an accomplice in his perfect crime, one who was loyal and would not fail him. Ah, how he had believed in him. Leopold had signed on to their little adventure in exchange for love, love that he had pitifully believed Richard was capable of granting him. That night, when they returned to Chicago, Nathan had gotten a proposition instead of a kiss. Richard had wanted the thrill, but Nathan believed his thrill to be love. Fool.

He presently wondered, silently, if he could escape with most of his innocence intact. What if, he wondered, he could pin it on poor little Leopold? It would be simple enough, just confess and blame everything on him. With his confession coming first, this Crowe man was likely to believe that Nathan's steadfast resolve of innocence would equate to guilt in the face of a corroborating confession. He would allow Leopold one last act of love, a lasting testament of his devotion. He had joined the crime out of an addiction to Richard. Why not allow him to make a Shakespearian sacrifice to his love?

The door swung open metallically. Crowe walked back into the room, wearily looking over his shoulder. Richard acted quickly. He allowed his hand to tremble, wiping

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his remaining hand over his eyes. A snuffle. Crowe leaned forward into Richard's plan. Richard forced back a smile. He was getting away with it.

"I will tell you all."

Nathan Leopold on FEBRUARY 14th, 1966: Santurce, Puerto Rico. 7:05 PM

The sun had maintained its presence in the back room of the church where Nathan Leopold had spent the past several years. Father Weir had allowed Nathan to spend the afternoons he had off from his work at the hospital, sweeping the aisles of the church and cleaning the stained glass that allowed God's light into the chapel.

Nathan knew of Richard's betrayal. He forgave him. Richard may have been a superman, but he had missed many things in his assumptions. Clarence Darrow, a man whom Nathan believed to be second only to Jesus, had saved them from the gallows and given them a life together. There was no way that Richard could leave him in prison, and thus he had succeeded. When questioned, Nathan had told Robert Crowe he only committed the crime to please Richard, whom he could never admit to loving.

Richard never got out of prison. Some thirteen years into their life-plus-ninety-nine-year sentence, Richard Loeb was stabbed. Nathan was by his side when he died. In 1958, Nathan went free on parole due to his work educating prisoners and his reunion with God, but a part of him never left prison. Indeed, a part of him never entered prison. No matter what Richard had said or done, a part of him never left Wolf Lake that night, when the stars looked down on the two of them, the one night Nathan believed it was possible for Richard to love him.

Many years after the trial, Nathan had come across a photograph of the two of them, taken the day of their sentencing. He could see clearly now the difference in the

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nearly-identical boys from his past. One, the fool in love, leaned to one side, hands sliding toward his would-be love. The other, cold, folds in and leans away from the boy he used, staring straight ahead as the sap beside him struggles to see his stony face out of the corner of his eyes.

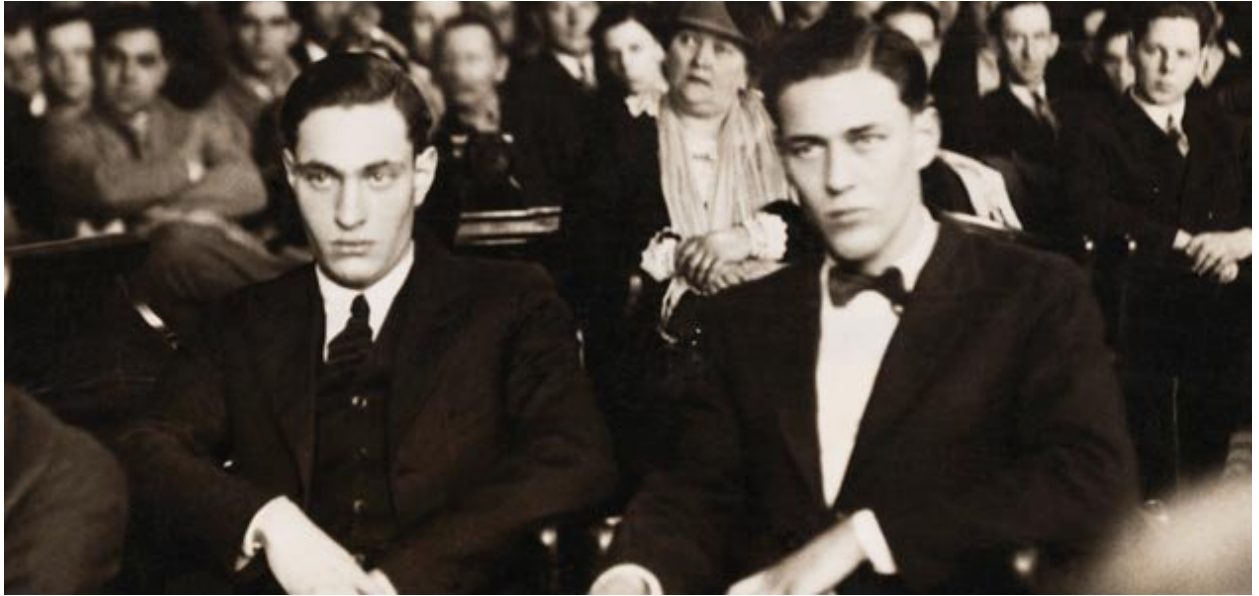


Fig. 1. Nathan Leopold, in bow tie, and Richard Loeb, in vest (Baatz).

NOTE: The works listed below were used to create a narrative of the events and settings surrounding the murder, as well as the media referred to in the narrative, including but not limited to all pictures and ransom notes.

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Anti-Jokes and Ambition: Beauty in the Absurd

Tanner Grogan

Comedy has evolved rapidly since the turn of the 21st century, especially in internet media. Memes get posted and inspire new memes seemingly endlessly. This kind of comedy, which builds on itself, defies Edmund Burke's claim in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* that nature is a stronger cause of beauty than any human creation. This paper will examine Burke's account of beauty in examples of anti-humor, and expand upon Burke's cursory discussion of beauty in the verbal arts. In these witty anti-jokes, I find convincing evidence that human ambition is a more powerful source of beauty than nature.

Comedy, meaning here the art whose end is humor, is a source of beauty, though Burke does not mention it. For Burke, love is primal lust refined by human kind's social tendencies towards a distinct appetite, as opposed to primal lust which according to Burke occurs by itself in animals. Burke defines beauty as the object of preference and thereby the cause of love (39). Comedy conforms to Burke's definition in light of three observations. First, that comedy is as much a matter of preference as any other art is evidenced by the diversity of different kinds of humor. As an audience, we distinguish different styles of humor such as sarcasm, slapstick, stand-up, parody, satire, mockery, and so forth. We also discriminate between dark humor and light humor, crude humor and sophisticated humor, dirty humor and clean humor, and so on. The qualifications are far too numerous to list; in fact, one might well wonder if any other art caters to such a vast set of demands. Secondly, humor is a common catalyst for affection. A good sense of humor is generally considered an endearing trait, whereas a bad sense of humor is

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generally alienating. We associate with people whose taste in humor is similar to our own and distance ourselves from people whose humor offends our tastes. We even use the normative terms of good and bad to distinguish pleasing and displeasing senses of humor. Thirdly, attraction and relationships are frequent objects of comedy. Love and humor are so closely connected that there are forms of comedy specifically for the purpose of romance, such as flirty humor and teasing, and there are other forms of humor intended to parody those first forms, such as ridiculous pick-up lines and disastrous date stories. The exact nature of this connection is not the topic of this paper, but the extent and complexity of the relation between comedy and romance establishes that humor is a frequent cause of love. Thus, there can be no doubt that there is beauty in funny things.

In comedy, words that usually convey the sublime can still be funny and thus convey beauty without changing their meaning. Burke defines the sublime as that which causes feelings of terror, pain, and danger (36). Anti-humor, a kind of humor that recently became popular on the internet, makes a familiar bad joke funny by taking it grossly out of context. This kind of joke is called an anti-joke. An anti-joke is generally so bad in its original capacity that it is funny to think of it as a joke at all. Some of these have terrible punch-lines. For example, one such anti-joke goes,

“Why did the squirrel fall out of the tree? It was dead. Why did the second squirrel fall out of the tree? It was stapled to the first one. Why did the third squirrel fall out of the tree? Peer pressure.”

(<http://kickasshumor.com/funny-joke/10230/why-did-the-squirrel-fall-out-of-the-tree-it->).

Each anti-joke in this series starts by signaling a childish joke, but finishes with a response so terrible that the absurd union of these two ideas makes it funny. The

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audience expects the punch-line to be something funny and simple to do with squirrels, but instead it is not funny at all and the responses are incrementally more twisted. None of the words in this anti-joke are individually beautiful, for they represent either familiar elements of a childish joke or terrible ideas. As Burke notes, the beauty of a text like this anti-joke lies not in the ideas its words represent. Burke discusses examples from poetry which convey the beauty of a body without evoking its idea (153). The punch-lines evoke the sublime, but they are taken within the anti-joke, which is funny as a whole. The example is not funny despite the sublime ideas of death, animal cruelty, and peer pressure but because of them. It is the gravity of these punch-lines that confuses the audience, brazenly defies their expectations, and most importantly makes the whole anti-joke absurd. Anti-jokes evoke ideas to profit from the absurdity of their union, even when the ideas are in bad taste. In general, the ideas represented by words are not necessary for beauty to be conveyed in words, even when the ideas conflict with the conveyed beauty.

Furthermore, relations between ideas are not what make anti-jokes beautiful. In general, anti-jokes are funny because they unite the funny with the not funny; however, that absurd unison is not fit to be called an object of preference. For example, another common anti-joke goes “How do you confuse a blonde? Paint yourself green and throw forks at her” (<http://anti-joke.com/anti-joke/popular/how-do-you-confuse-a-blond---paint-yourself-green-and-throw-forks-at-her>). The audience expects a so-called dumb blonde joke, but instead is befuddled with a perfectly logical response, an a fortiori categorical syllogism. Painting yourself green and throwing forks would probably confuse a blonde

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because painting yourself green and throwing forks would probably confuse anyone and a blonde is someone. This anti-joke unites the ideas of crudeness and rational sophistication and derives its absurdity from how remote these two ideas are. These are not antithetical ideas, like hot and cold; rather, these ideas are remote in the sense that they seem opposed to any relation with each other. The effect of antithetical ideas in humor is irony, not absurdity. Absurdity is the effect not of a definite relation of contrariety but of the impossibility of any conceivable relation. To demonstrate more clearly the role of absurdity in anti-humor, consider the following joke: “The fastest way to a woman’s heart is with a reciprocating saw through the ribcage” (<http://www.quickmeme.com/meme/3q9x3r>). The absurdity is apparent from the obvious category mistake. There can be no significant relation between the idea of feminine affection, as represented metaphorically by a woman’s heart, and the quickest surgical procedure for accessing the anatomical heart. Absurdity is not a real quality of the anti-joke, but the necessary absence of apparent relations among its constituent ideas. Thus, the sampled anti-jokes presented here, whose end is absurdity, have nothing in them to ascribe beauty to.

Anti-jokes are transformations of familiar jokes; they are thus products of ambition. The author of an anti-joke feels that he can improve a dumb joke by breaking it. The more absurd the original joke becomes in its joking capacity, the better the anti-joke. The classic anti-joke reads “Why did the chicken cross the road? Actually chickens don’t have the cognitive capacity to reason, therefore it was random” (<http://memegenerator.net/instance/35164057>). This anti-joke, which is something of a paradigm for anti-humor, has for its object nothing but

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that familiar class of fowl pedestrian jokes. Childish jokes, such as the original chicken jokes, tend to draw on simple natural reality, and thus are closer to imitation. Wit, fueled by ambition, leads us farther and farther away from nature. However, for Burke, the ultimate source and paradigm of all things beautiful is to be observed in nature (Part I, Section XIX). “But art can never give the rules that make an art. This is, I believe, the reason why artists in general, and poets, principally, have been confined in so narrow a circle: they have been rather imitators of one another than of nature” (49).

Burke argues that a public execution will draw a bigger crowd than a great dramatic tragedy (43). But is that necessarily so? Is an execution, merely as such, a greater spectacle than a superb theatrical tragedy by necessity? If the announcement stated only that some unfamiliar person were about to be publically executed by lethal injection, would it still draw an audience away from a play in which the hero was about to meet their unjust end at the gallows in a perfectly staged fashion? No, for the execution and announcement are works of art as well. The execution can always be made more climactic by adjusting the lighting somehow or proportioning the dimensions of the gallows just so, and the announcement can be rhetorically crafted to arouse more pity for the sentenced. The bare reality of the execution alone is not as powerful as the designs worked upon it.

If beauty, or the sublime for that matter, is the cause of some passion, be it love or terror, in the mind, then human artistry, knowing passions well and creating with intent, thus could not be inferior to nature, which is in itself uninformed and without principle. Moreover, the principles of absurdity, the

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efficient cause of anti-humor, could never be found in nature, for absurdity is a product of the wit. For instance, consider the following anti-joke: “A man walks into a bar and suddenly the universe around him cracks, unable to sustain the weight of infinite potential punch-lines. He tumbles through an empty void amongst shards of his broken reality” (<http://anti-joke.com/anti-joke/popular/1659-so-a-man-walks-into-a-bar-suddenly-the-universe-around-him-cracks-unable-to-sustain-the-weight-of-infinite-potential-punchlines-he-tumbles-through>). The design of this joke is necessarily foreign to nature, as the latter idea in its absurd synthesis is the privation of nature itself. Anti-jokes, a genre built on genre, is an art that defies Burke’s claim that nature is the greatest inspiration.

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Symposium

Active v. Passive: Different Conceptions of the Body as Art

James Taglienti

How should the body be constructed and viewed? Depending on how the body is rendered, specifically through the medium of sculpture, it can be viewed either from many different angles or from one direct position. The sculpture, therefore, can either actively engage the viewer, calling unequivocal attention to its immediate context, or be represented passively as an image to be viewed. *The River* by Aristide Maillol and *The Back (IV)* by Henri Matisse display this precise dichotomy in the craft of sculpture. *The River* engages the viewer as a rousing subject present in the world and *The Back (IV)* remains as an object to be viewed that is not necessarily depicted as a body within a context. Maillol's work shows that the body cannot be divorced from movement and Matisse's work pronounces that the body can be viewed as a still life. The difference in the way each work was constructed alters the experience, perception, and engagement of the viewer.

Maillol's own perception of sculpture is extremely interesting in contrast to the final product of *The River*. He classically sought art as an expression of "stillness and serenity, of classical nobility and simplicity," and personally remarked, as late as 1937—a year prior to the work's start—that "for my taste, there should be as little movement as possible in sculpture" (<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81798>). This remark contrasts strongly with this sculpture that displays seemingly erratic and capricious movement.

Maillol's sudden departure from his traditional conception of sculpture could be attributed to the fact that he was first commissioned to create the sculpture by French

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pacifist and writer Henri Barbusse. Although Barbusse was clear about what the sculpture's overall meaning should convey, the commission fell through, leaving Maillol free to take his original project and dramatically shift its meaning relevant to his own ideas (<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81798>). This movement from commissioned to "un-commissioned" almost seems to mimic the irregular movement present within the sculpture itself. Maillol's own conception of sculpture *moved* along with the commissioning of the artwork. Even if he was not interested in movement prior to the work's construction, Maillol certainly utilizes movement and makes it an essential part of *The River's* interpretation.

The River is a large-scale lead sculpture constructed in a way that leaves not only negative space around the work, but also calculated space between the legs and under the body by the upper-torso. The moving figure of the woman is situated on top of a solid rectangular pedestal. This pedestal serves as a stark contrast to the apparent movement in a pose that places part of the body below the pedestal and almost resting upon the water. This relationship suggests violent movement and makes an impact more effective than if the sculpture had no base.

The expression and gesture of the figure invite different ways to interpret the context of the scene. Originally, the sculpture was intended to express the theme of war: a woman stabbed in the back is now falling, crushed by pain as her life fades away (<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81798>). What preceded the fall is not explicit but the woman's wide gaze shows the viewer that she is in shock from trauma and blood loss as she faces death. Peculiarly, there is no open wound on her back, and no depiction of blood or gore. However, the sculptor's title, *The River*, might refer to a river of blood that is surrounding the woman as she dies, rather than a body of water. From a different

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perspective, the figure could also be moving her arm upwards to block an attack as she quivers in fear. The movement is almost cinematic: a woman attempts to block a hit from an aggressor in an effort to save her life. Her eyes are wide open, as if she stares out at her own anticipated death. The creation and movement of the sculpture makes it a body within a context that can be viewed literally and figuratively from many different angles.

Finally, the way the sculpture is displayed at New York's Museum of Modern Art clues the viewer in to yet another movement of the sculpture. The work is located above a body of water which seems fitting to *The River*. The figure of the woman seems to personify the currents of a river: moving erratically and raising her hand up as if she were fighting the pressure of a current. The body also curves at the torso which could mimic the rippling effect of water as it moves down the river. The body of water under the figure, depending on the weather conditions of the day, can also show the figure staring at her own reflection. The body can be seen as part of the river when viewing its reflection, with the water caressing the sculpture just as the river winds around its edges. Maillol's sculpture cannot be conceived of without its movement which is essential to the impact of the work as a whole.

By contrast, *The Back (IV)* does not seem concerned with movement, and can be seen as a static image. Matisse began *The Back* series in 1908 with the construction of *The Back (I)* and finally ended the work in 1931 with *The Back (IV)*. Although the different pieces seem to be in a continuous progression, the construction of the series was fragmented. Matisse kept *The Back (IV)* in his studio for the rest of his life. Originally, the piece was created from plaster, and it was not until 1950 that it was cast in bronze (<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/80778>). The sculpture gives the viewer only one perspective from which to examine it, just like a painting mounted upon a wall. This

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gives *The Back (IV)* the quality of a still life, not allowing the body to be viewed from more than one place, and precluding any suggestion of movement.

The Back (IV) gives the viewer one direct angle at which it can be viewed: a direct, head-on view of its three-dimensional elements. Although the sculpture is unambiguously titled *The Back*, the composition can be seen in a second way. As the title suggests, the spine and the head can be seen as the elevated piece of bronze in the center with the head looking into the figure's forearm. The back therefore is divided into two separate halves by the spine, and the other arm is cast at its side with its legs spaced apart. The work can also be seen as a man picking up a large stick or pole, and aligning it with his spine which is the site of the elevated bronze. The object is so precisely aligned however, that the viewer sees an amalgam of the object, the head, and the spine. This conception of the sculpture divides the rather expansive back into two sides. Since the sculpture only allows for one distinct point of view, it is difficult for the observer to clearly arrive at an authoritative interpretation.

The gesture and overall shape of the image—whichever interpretation is adopted—still hints that this is in fact an anatomical back. Even though Matisse disregards movement and limits the angle of view, the artist is still able to represent the body as an image. The solid bronze casting makes the body one whole form which potentially would make the overall image difficult to decipher, but the use of elevation takes the body from the background to the foreground. The static body can almost be conceived of as a photograph of a person facing away from the camera. In contrast to *The River* which uses emotion to convey a large part of the figure's meaning, *The Back (IV)* evades emotion. Considering these works, *The River* strongly contrasts with *The*

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Back (IV): the one moving body can be identified and interpreted for context, whereas the static body is an object or even possibly an assortment of geometric shapes.

The two sculptures starkly depict the body in opposite ways. *The River* utilizes the body in a way that gives it a context and the ability to be viewed in multiple perspectives, whereas *The Back (IV)* showcases one main viewpoint and does not necessarily need to situate the body within a context to convey its meaning. Maillol's sculpture explicitly invokes movement which gives the work one kind of impact and value. Matisse's sculpture eschews movement and conveys the body in a still life fashion. Although both works make statements about the ways that bodies can be viewed, they nonetheless depict the body in a way that is conceivable to the viewer. With the opposition of movement and still life, Maillol and Matisse present the body as an object to be interpreted in multiple ways.



The River by Aristide Maillol

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The Back IV by Henri Matisse

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Almonds

She could hear the rain
Stomping against the roof.
Another woman was crying
And her mother was asleep.

The figure in the Black Suit
Slammed open the door.
He raised his white finger
At her and shouted “You!”

She rose, along with others
And together they marched.
The mud squished between
Her small, emaciated toes.

The iron shower curtain
Opened up on the Guard’s orders.
In she stepped with the others
The doors closing behind them.

The woman was still crying
The girl stared at the ceiling.
The air started to choke her
And then she smelled Almonds.

~ Sultana Andrews

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I wish that I were great, like Mr. Michael Angelo, and I would paint for you.

A series of paintings inspired by the poems of Emily Dickinson.

by Alia Danilo



Symposium

He fumbles at your Soul
As Players at the Keys
Before they drop full Music on -
He stuns you by degrees -
Prepares your brittle Nature
For the Ethereal Blow
By fainter Hammers further heard -
Then nearer - Then so slow
Your Breath has time to straighten -
Your Brain - to bubble Cool -
Deals - One - imperial - Thunderbolt -
That scalps your naked Soul -

When Winds take Forests in their Paws -
The Universe - is still -



Symposium

After great pain, a formal feeling comes -
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs -
The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?

The Feet, mechanical, go round -
Of Grown, or Air, or Ought -
As Wooden way
Regardless grown,
As Quartz contentment, like a stone -

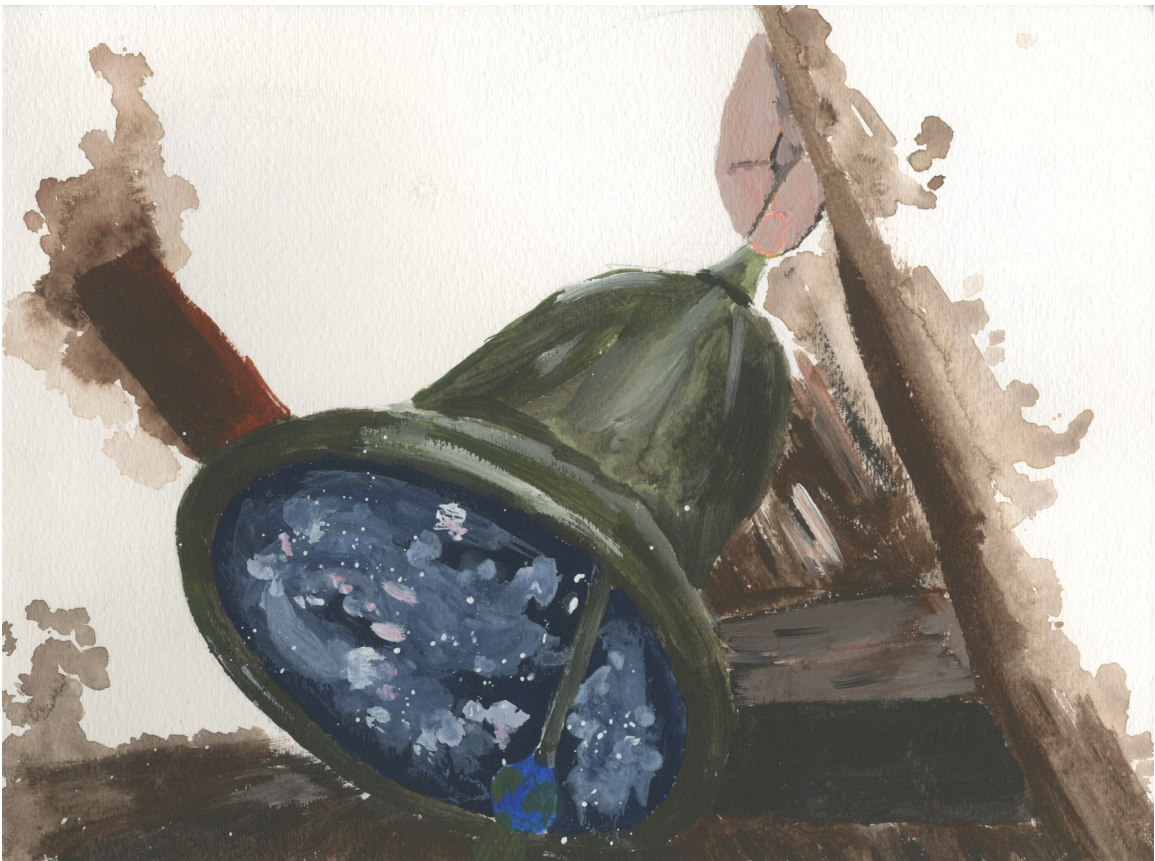
This is the Hour of Lead -
Remembered, if outdried,
As Freezing persons recollect the Snow -
First - Chill - then Stupor - then the letting go -



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I saw no Way - The Heavens were stitched -
I felt the Columns close -
The Earth reversed her Hemispheres -
I touched the Universe -

And back it slid - and I alone -
A Speck upon a Ball -
Went out upon Circumferences
Beyond the Dip of Bell -

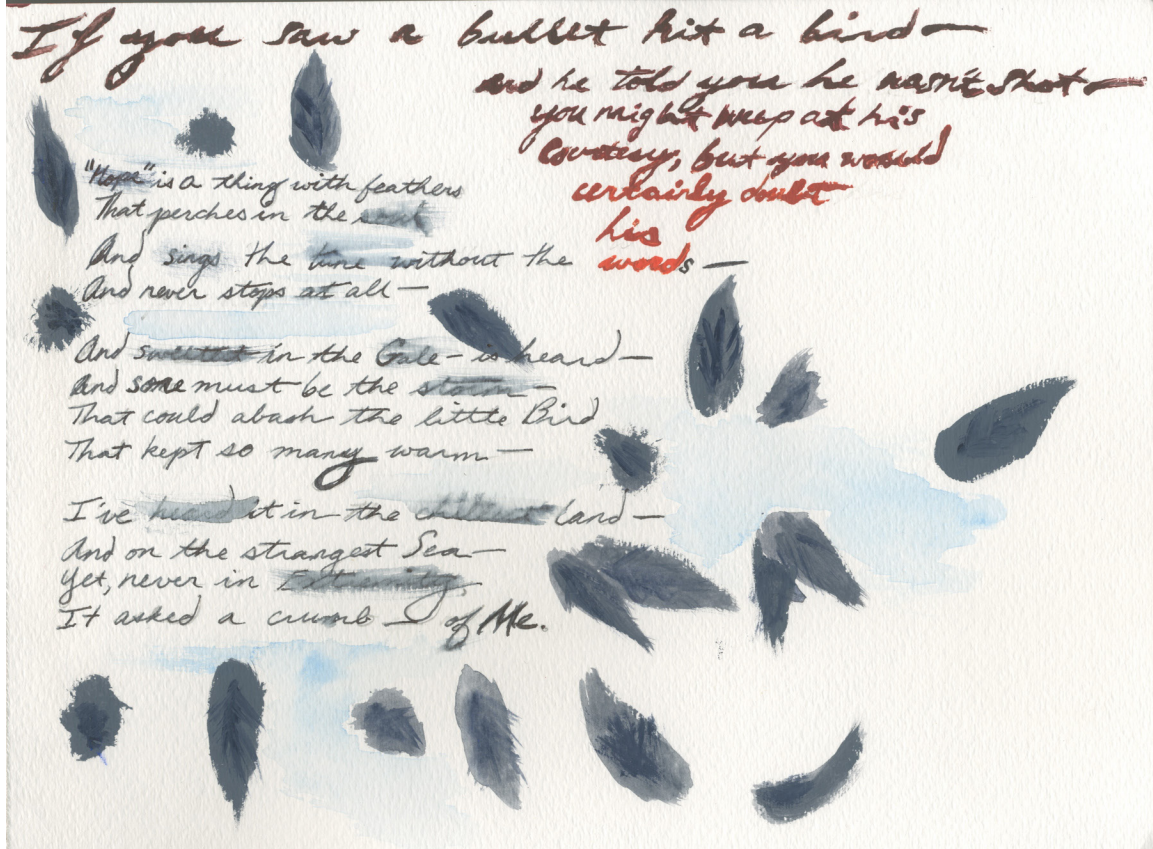


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No Rack can torture me -
My Soul - at Liberty -
Behind this mortal Bone
There knits a bolder One -
you cannot prick with saw -
Nor pierce with Simitar -
Two Bodies - therefore be -
Beard One - The Other fly -
The Eagle of his Nest
No easier divest -
And gain the Sky
Than mayest those -
Except Thyself may be
Thine Enemy -
Captivity to Consciousness -
So's Liberty.



Symposium



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Inspiration:

“I wish that I were great, like Mr. Michael Angelo, and I could paint for you.”

These words written by Emily Dickinson in one of her Master letters were my inspiration for this project (Letter 187: see appendix for letters and poems cited in the text). My first reaction was incredulity. Having already read quite a few poems before reading this letter, I was shocked at her evident self-doubt; her poems painted wildly vivid images in my mind. Her words reminded me of van Gogh’s letters in which he articulated a deep frustration with his artistic ability. He could not express himself and what he saw in words, so he turned to painting; still, he could not quite depict what he wanted, so he was stuck in an endless cycle of creative frustration mingled with despair. Emily Dickinson’s work conveys the same sentiment. Unable to shake the intense images that Dickinson’s poems instilled in me, I was inspired to create a series of paintings to complement some of her verses. If Emily could not paint, I would paint for her.

The Book:

I chose to collect these paintings in a book in the same way that Dickinson created her fascicles. By creating my own fascicle of her work, the illustrated poems can be looked at as a unit or separately. The physical act of making the book (cutting, gluing, and sewing), along with the creation of each painting, is a reminder that writing poetry and creating other forms of art is work. Art does not simply appear; it is created. To create such a large volume of work as Dickinson did is extremely difficult. I wanted to capture that sense of creation in the physical form of the project.

The Cover:

Unlike the rest of the paintings which are drawn from poems, the cover was inspired by Thomas Wentworth Higginson’s retelling of his first encounter with

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Dickinson in Letter 342a. It seemed fitting in an historic sense because the world was first introduced to Emily and her poems not through her own words, but through Higginson and his mutation of her poems. Though Higginson describes her as childlike and timid, Emily would have been almost forty years old at this point and she was certainly not a young girl. While Higginson's words describe her in this way, the tone of the letter and more subtle descriptions tell a different story. He likens her house to one of Elizabeth Stoddard's novels, "where each member runs his or her own selves." He states that although she said she does not know what to say to people when she meets them, she talked continuously to him throughout their time together and hardly stopped. By listing quotes of things Emily said to him, Higginson makes it clear that he was struck by her intellect and her being; had he been less enthralled and overpowered by her presence, he might have done some talking himself, but it is clear she was in complete control. I wished to recreate the scene in which she first appears to him, wearing white and handing him two day lilies. I chose to position her as a queen during her coronation, replacing the globus cruciger (orb and cross) with a ball of lilies, and the scepter with a single lily on its stem —interestingly, the lily is both a symbol for Hera, mythological queen of heavens, and Mary, the Christian queen of heaven. We have no way of knowing if she chose this flower intentionally, but I would not put it past her to do so. I painted her shirt not buttoned at the neck like a school girl's, but rather open so as to dispel the stigma that this woman was merely an innocent schoolgirl. Her shirt then morphs and blossoms into a purple ball-gown, purple being a common indicator of royalty. The last detail is a quote from Emily contained in Higginson's letter of this encounter. After approaching Higginson, she presents the lilies to him saying, "This is my introduction," a sentence

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loaded with meanings we will never be able to discern and that left Higginson speechless. I placed this quote on the lily orb because this cover is my introduction.

Paintings 2-5:

The next four paintings each come from the poems, “He fumbles at your soul,” “After a great pain, a formal feeling comes –,” “I saw no way – The Heavens were stitched –,” and “No Rack can torture me –.” I chose these poems because of the way they struck me visually. When reading them, I felt like I could *see* them. I often have strong emotional reactions to poetry, but rarely do I have such strong visual reactions to poetry. This effect is particular to Dickinson’s poems; their imagistic quality is astounding. The effect is achieved by her characteristic use of dashes which often prevents full sentences, and her use of words with double (and sometimes triple) meanings. The meanings of her poems are ambiguous and the pictures are unclear. They are unclear simply for the fact that they are not pictures (which set a scene), but images (which are representations of objects). In an effort to maintain this quality, I made the decision to not paint full pictures and to barely hint at a sense of placement. Even where a place or object is clear, I blurred the lines and had them fade like smoke, something present but ungraspable.

Each of these paintings is accompanied by the poem that inspired it. I copied the poems in her handwriting to the best of my ability. My main concern here was to capture the intensity of the poems as if they were written down in such a blaze of inspiration that Emily could hardly finish writing one word before she moved to the next.

Painting 6:

The final page is quite different from the preceding paintings. It was inspired by the quote, “If you saw a bullet hit a Bird – and he told you he wasn’t shot – you might

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weep at his courtesy, but you would certainly doubt his word,” another of Emily’s Master letters (Letter 233). For this I wanted the words to be the centerpiece because Dickinson, despite how imagistic her poems are, is first and foremost a poet. I surrounded the text in a cloud of feathers: minimalistic, but still shocking. I combined this quote with one of her most famous poems, “Hope is a thing with feathers.” What better way to capture the ambiguity of her poems than to combine one of her most positive poems with a positively disturbing quote? Coincidentally, the poem is one of the few that ends with a period rather than a dash, so I thought it fitting as the conclusion to the project.

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He fumbles at you Soul
As Players at the Keys
Before they drop full Music on –
He stuns you by degrees –
Prepares your brittle Nature
For the Ethereal Blow
By fainter Hammers – further heard –
Then nearer – Then so slow
Your Breath has time to straighten –
Your Brain – to bubble Cool –
Deals – One – imperial – Thunderbolt –
That scalps your naked Soul –

When Winds take Forests in their Paws –
The Universe – is still –

341

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –
The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –
A Wooden way
Regardless grown,
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –
Remembered, if outlived –
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –
First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –

378

I saw no Way – The Heavens were Stitched –
I felt the Columns close –
The Earth reversed her Hemispheres –
I touched the Universe –

And back it slid – and I alone –
A speck upon a Ball –
Went out upon Circumference –
Beyond the Dip of Bell –

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384

No Rack can torture me –
My Soul – at Liberty –
Behind this mortal Bone
There knits a bolder One –

You Cannot pick with saw –
Nor pierce with Scimitar –
Two Bodies – therefore be –
Bind One – The Other fly –

The Eagle of his Nest
No easier divest –
And gain the Sky
Than mayest Thou

Except Thyself may be
Thine Enemy –
Captivity is Consciousness –
So's Liberty.

254

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of Me.

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Letter 187

c.1858; From Emily Dickinson, recipient unknown

Dear Master,

I am ill, but grieving more that you are ill, I make my stronger hand work long eno' to tell you. I thought perhaps you were in Heaven, and when you spoke again, it seemed quite sweet, and wonderful, and surprised me so - I wish that you were well.

I would that all I love, should be weak no more. The Violets are by my side, the Robin very near, and "Spring" - they say, Who is she - going by the door -

Indeed it is God's house - and these are gates of Heaven, and to and fro, the angels go, with their sweet postillions - I wish that I were great, like Mr. Michael Angelo, and could paint for you. You ask me what my flowers said - then they were disobedient - I gave them messages. They said what the lips in the West, say, when the sun goes down, and so says the Dawn.

Listen again, Master. I did not tell you that today had been the Sabbath Day.

Each Sabbath on the Sea, makes me count the Sabbaths, till we meet on shore - and (will the) whether the hills will look as blue as the sailors say. I cannot talk any more (stay any longer) tonight (now), for this pain denies me.

How strong when weak to recollect, and easy, quite, to love. Will you tell me, please to tell me, soon as you are well.

Letter 342a

c.1870; From Thomas Higginson to his wife

I shan't sit up tonight to write you all about E.D. dearest but if you had read Mrs. Stoddard's novels you could understand a house where each member runs his or her own selves. Yet I only saw her.

A large county lawyer's house, brown brick, with great trees & a garden - I sent up my card. A parlor dark & cool & stiffish, a few books & engravings & an open piano - Malbone & O D [Out Door] Paper among other books.

A step like a pattering child's in entry & in glided a little plain woman with two smooth bands of reddish hair & a face a little like Belle Dove's; not plainer - with no good feature - in a very plain & exquisitely clean white pique & a blue net worsted shawl. She came to me with two day lilies which she put in a sort of childlike way into my hand & said "These are my introduction" in a soft frightened breathless childlike voice - & added

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under her breath Forgive me if I am frightened; I never see strangers & hardly know what I say - but she talked soon & thenceforward continuously - & deferentially - sometimes stopping to ask me to talk instead of her - but readily recommencing. Manner between Angie Tilton & Mr. Alcott - but thoroughly ingenuous & simple which they are not & saying many things which you would have thought foolish & I wise - & some things you wd. hv. liked. I add a few over the page.

This is a lovely place, at least the view Hills everywhere, hardly mountains. I saw Dr. Stearns the Pres't of College - but the janitor cd. not be found to show me into the building I may try again tomorrow. I called on Mrs. Banfield & saw her five children - She looks much like H. H. *when ill* & was very cordial & friendly. Good night darling I am very sleep & do good to write you this much. Thine am I

I got here at 2 & leave at 9. E.D. dreamed all night of *you* (not me) & next day got my letter proposing to come here!! She only knew of you through a mention in my notice of Charlotte Hawes.

"Women talk: men are silent: that is why I dread women.

"My father only reads on Sunday - he reads *lonely & rigorous* books."

"If I read a book [and] it makes my whole body so cold no fire ever can warm me I know *that* is poetry. These are the only way I know it. Is there any other way."

"How do most people live without any thoughts. There are many people in the world (you must have noticed them in the street) How do they live. How do they get strength to put on their clothes in the morning"

"When I lost the use of my Eyes it was a comfort to think there were so few real *books* that I could easily find some one to read me all of them"

"Truth is such a *rare* thing it is delightful to tell it."

"I find ecstasy in living - the mere sense of living is joy enough"

I asked if she never felt want to employment, never going off the place & never seeing any visitor "I never thought of conceiving that I could ever have the slightest approach to such a want in all future time" (& added) "I feel that I have not expressed myself strongly enough."

She makes all the bread for her father only likes hers & says "& people must have puddings" this *very* dreamily, as if they were comets - so she makes them.

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Letter 233

c. 1861; From Emily Dickinson, recipient unknown

Master,

If you saw a bullet hit a Bird - and he told you he was'nt shot - you might weep at his courtesy, but you would certainly doubt his word.

One drop more from the gash that stains your Daisy's bosom - then would you *believe?* Thomas' faith in Anatomy, was stronger than his faith in faith. God made me - [Sir] Master - I did'nt be - myself. I dont know how it was done. He built the heart in me - Bye and bye it outgrew me - and like the little mother - with the big child - I got tired holding him. I heard of a thing called "Redemption" - which rested men and women. You remember I asked you for it - you gave me something else. I forgot the Redemption [in the Redeemed - I did'nt tell you for a long time, but I knew you had altered me - I] and was tired - no more - [so dear did this stranger become that were it, or my breath - the Alternative - I had tossed the fellow away with a smile.] I am older - tonight, Master - but the love is the same - so are the moon and the crescent. If it had been God's will that I might breathe where you breathed - and find the place - myself - at night - if I (can) never forget that I am not with you - and that sorrow and frost are nearer than I - if I wish with a might I cannot repress - that mine were the Queen's place - the love of the Plantagenet is my only apology - To come nearer than presbyteries - and nearer than the new Coat - that the tailor made - the prank of the Heart at play on the Heart - in holy Holiday - is forbidden me - You make me say it over - I fear you laugh - when I do not see - [but] "Chillon" is not funny. Have you the Heart in your breast - Sir - is it set like mine - a little to the left - has it the misgiving - if it wake in the night - perchance - itself to it - a timbrel is it - itself to it a tune.

These things are [reverent] holy, Sir, I touch them [reverently] hallowed, but persons who pray - dare remark [our] "Father"! You say I do not tell you all - Daisy confessed - and denied not.

Vesuvius dont talk - Etna - dont - [Thy] one of them - said a syllable - a thousand years ago, and Pompeii heard it, and hid forever - She could'nt look the world in the face, afterward - I suppose - Bashfull Pompeii! "Tell you of the want" - you know what a leech is, dont you - and [remember that] Daisy's arm is small - and you have felt the horizon hav'nt you - and did the sea - never come so close as to make you dance?

I dont know what you can do for it - thank you - Master - but if I had the Beard on my cheek - like you - and you - had Daisy's petals - and you cared so for me - what would become of you? Could you forget me in fight, or flight - or the foreign land? Could'nt Carlo, and you and I walk in the meadows an hour - and nobody care but the Bobolink - and *his* - *silver* scruple? I used to think when I died - I could see you - so I died as fast as I could - but the "Corporation" are going Heaven too so [Eternity] wont be sequestered - now [at all] - Say I may wait for you - say I need go with no stranger to the to me -

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untried [country] fold - I waited a long time - Master - but I can wait more - wait till my
hazel hair is dappled - and you carry the cane - then I can look at my watch -- and if the
Day is too far declined - we can take the chances [of] for Heaven - What would you do
with me if I came "in white?" Have you the little chest to put the Alive - in?

I want to see you more - Sir - than all I wish for in this world - and the wish - altered a
little - will be my only one - for the skies.

Could you come to New England - [this summer - could] would you come to Amherst -
Would you like to come - Master?

[Would it do harm - yet we both fear God -] Would Daisy disappoint you - no - she
would'nt - Sir - it were comfort forever - just to look in your face, while you looked in
mine - then I could play in the woods till Dark - till you take me where Sundown cannot
find us - and the true keep coming - till the town is full. [Will you tell me if you will?]

I did'nt think to tell you, you did'nt come to me "in white," nor ever told me why,

No Rose, yet felt myself a'bloom,
No Bird - yet rode in Ether.

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Self-Portraits

Gabriela Mora

These self-portraits are both oil paintings. I view my visual work through a nostalgic lens because I am fascinated by our ability to recall and compose memories which ultimately lead us to mold our identities. The subject for these paintings is myself because I feel that my own identity is always changing; however, I also recognize that my past is highly influential on what makes my present self.

The Discordant Sense is an oil painting on a 48" x 46" panel. I used my own photographic reference of myself to create the double exposure image. I hope to visualize the temporary, fleeting moments of the figure; how the human figure is animated and constantly moving. Mood is also an important part of my artwork, because I believe our feelings influence our everyday actions. I also wanted to take on the challenge of painting a photographic double exposure, forcing myself to perceive pure color as opposed to the line contours.

In preparation, I cut a masonite board to 48" x 46". I gessoed the masonite so the board became a support. I took reference photos of myself against a white background, and using Photoshop, I superimposed two images of myself to create a double exposure effect. During the painting process, I stayed loyal to the colors of the photograph; I was most concerned with being able to replicate the transparencies found in the photograph. Because of its large scale, the painting took a month to complete. As a final step, I varnished my painting with Gamvar varnish.

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The Discordant Sense

Oil on panel, 48" x 46"

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Apperception is a 20" x 16" oil on panel. Its connection to *The Discordant Sense* is the realization that the concepts of self and identity are in a perpetual state of change. I chose the title *Apperception* because it means comprehension and understanding. Every day I feel as if I understand not only the physical world surrounding me, but also my own identity, the one I often find unsettling. I wanted to experiment with abstraction in the background of my figure to convey the idea that nothing in the world is quite clear-cut; rather, everything is conceptual and is always changing. This painting explores the space between abstraction and realism in order to create a surreal and dream-like experience.

I rendered my self-portrait using flat oil paint brushes so that my markings would be precise. In contrast, for the background, I used big brushes to create quick, impasto marks. The colors between the self-portrait and the background also complement each other: the skin tones have an orange-like hue while the abstract background contains cerulean blues and greens. By creating these contradictions, the figure appears to emerge from the panel itself. In conclusion, I varnished the finished product using Gamvar varnish.

In the process of creating this painting, I was looking at numerous influences, but I was mainly inspired by Kent Williams, a contemporary painter based in Los Angeles, CA. *Apperception* was a part of the Kappa Pi Honor Society's *A Lasting Presence* student show at the Performing Arts Gallery at Adelphi University.

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Apperception

Oil on panel, 20" x 16"

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Malagasy Giant Chameleon (*Furcifer oustalet*)

Laura Rempel

I took Scientific Illustration with Professor Agelarakis because I've always had a great appreciation for life-like art. I wanted to use other examples of scientific illustrations and photographs to guide me as I attempted to reproduce artistically the natural world in as compelling a way as I could. After experimenting with rapidograph pens in class and discovering their capacity to create texture using series of small black dots, I was inspired to illustrate this chameleon. By varying the amount of blank space between dots and also

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the weight of the dots, I was able to create patterns and emphasize the scaliness of the reptile's skin. I used colored pencils to create greater depths in tone, add volume and roundness to the body, and provide more information about the physical attributes of the animal for the benefit of the illustration's viewer. The vellum material was an ideal medium for the ink, as it minimized bleeding and weakening of the dark black color; however, it did present some challenges when I attempted to use colored pencils. I was able to apply individual colors smoothly to the vellum surface, but layering a color atop another merely scraped away the underlying layers. Despite these challenges, creating this illustration taught me the importance of choosing the right materials for a certain subject, as one material often proves to be more effective or more appropriate than another. I also learned that colored pencils work better on paper than on vellum.

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Garden Spider (*Argiope aurantia*)

Laura Rempel

For my next illustration, I spent more time considering my subject. I had enjoyed focusing on the chameleon's scales and I knew that I wanted to illustrate another extremely detailed, relatively small animal. Bugs and spiders came to mind since their bodies are incredibly complex, with characteristics too small for us to notice with the naked eye. I had a fear of spiders when I was younger which, for reasons I haven't understood, has over the years faded and transformed into fascination. I wanted to recreate a photograph of a vibrant spider in the act of entangling a bug in its webbing, and in the process, to feature its intricate beauty, hopefully inviting the viewer to feel less

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inclined to label this creature immediately as gross or disturbing. I was most excited to recreate the webbing of the photo; however, I was not sure how I would be able to reproduce its brilliance on white paper. Professor Agelarakis suggested that I use a light brown paper, and I was surprised and pleased to see how well the white colored pencil stood out in bright contrast against the background hue. Using colored pencils, I was able to make very small, precise marks and control the density of the pigment to allow the paper's brown hue to blend with the color of the pencil marks in some areas. The areas of brown paper showing through the image helped create the illusion that the subject is emerging from the page – a quality which I believe makes the spider and its prey even more life-like. I purposefully left parts of the illustration incomplete, suggesting that the image will continue to “emerge” while hinting at the architecture of the piece and maintaining an unresolved aesthetic.

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Carribean Sea Fan
(*Gorgonia ventalina*)

Megan Ossman

I chose my subjects for scientific illustration based on my fascination with life under the sea. I was inspired by my study abroad in both the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Caribbean and the Great Barrier Reef in Australia where I studied marine ecosystems and organisms with other Adelphi students and professors. After seeing hundreds, perhaps even thousands of different species of coral, fish, algae, turtles, and sharks, I chose subjects

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that I thought were especially beautiful in nature and would also be well represented by technical illustration. The Caribbean Sea Fan (*Gorgonia ventalina*) is a species of “soft coral” that attaches itself to a hard surface and gently sways with the current and waves, the changing light illuminating its different shades of color. To capture both the intricate detail of the veins as well as these different shades of color, I chose to use colored pencil on paper. I started with a base layer of a light shade of purple, and then went back to overlay different shades of pink, purple, blue, and gray to represent its light and dark areas.

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Green Sea Turtle
(*Chelonia mydas*)

Megan Ossman

The green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) is a species that I saw for the first time in the wild in the Caribbean and then several more times on the Great Barrier Reef. Sea turtles have always been a favorite animal of mine, and each time I got to swim alongside one, I felt a very overwhelming, special connection to this gentle, graceful creature. I chose to draw a juvenile because I have always wanted to watch one hatch and make its way to the ocean, but have not yet had the chance. At first glance, these turtles appear to be only two colors, dark green/gray and tan. Upon closer inspection however, blues, greens, yellows, and

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even orange color its skin and shell. In order to reflect this subtle blend of color, I chose to use pastel. By shaving the sticks of pastel with an X-acto knife, I created powders that I then blended on paper with a paintbrush. I added precise details in the texture of the skin and the eye with pastel pencil and colored pencil. Finally I added highlights in the eye and nose with gauche.

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Kings Crown Conch Shell
(Melongena corona)

Jacqueline Condon

This illustration was drawn on matte velum paper and shaded using the stippling method with .1 millimeter and .05 millimeter point Rapidograph pens, then copied onto cardstock paper and colorized with watercolor paints. I chose to draw this conch shell after working on a series of small, simple, lightly colored shells in class using this same method, wanting to work on a more complex and demanding specimen. I enjoy combining the ink and watercolors because the former, especially with such a small pen point size, offers extreme and rigid precision, while the watercolor directly opposes that

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precision, offering freedom and fluidity. The darkness of the black ink and various shades of brown watercolor on the rough, weathered exterior of the shell coupled with the lighter, brighter coral pink of the smooth inside of the conch created the perfect contrast in color and brightness while still maintaining an overall earthy tone to the piece. This illustration was a challenge to create, and took many, many hours to complete; it remains, however, one of my favorite accomplishments in art.

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Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*)

Katie Graham

This is my illustration of ruby-throated hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*). For this image I used clear vellum layered over the original photograph to trace the hummingbirds, flowers, and branches. I then used a technique called “stippling” to complete the design with a .25 Rapidograph pen. Stippling involves placing layers of individual dots of ink on the image with varying concentrations to provide the effects of shading, depth, and texture. While many individuals dislike stippling because it can be a tedious process, I thoroughly enjoyed rendering this image because I find stippling to be very calming.

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I chose a smaller pen for this project because the hummingbirds as well as the branches have many intricate, detailed patterns that I did not believe would be captured by a larger rapidograph. I wanted the observer's eye to be drawn to the hummingbirds so I focused mainly on these locations when stippling.

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A Spider Mum
(*Chrysanthemum sp.*)

Vanesa Martinez

Spider mums are part of the genus *Chrysanthemum*. They have long, tube-like petals which give them the appearance of a spider's legs. Some varieties' petals are more tube-like than others. The spider-mum has somewhat curved petals, but does not exhibit much of this tube-like quality.

In order to create this illustration, I laid carbon paper over black construction paper, and then set an image of a spider mum over it. I then used a pencil to create an

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outline of the flower petals, as well as the stem and leaves. The colors were created by layering with colored pencils. The white is overlaid with gray for shading, and the stem and leaves have a mix of several shades of green, brown, and red; they are also outlined in white in order to create a connection to the petals. The purple tips of the petals were created by layering several shades of purple, blue, and violet. This allowed for differentiation between petals.

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Red-Eyed Tree Frog
(Agalychnis caladryas)

Samantha Wilson

I've never been much of an artist, even though I've always wanted to be. It's always been so hard for me to concentrate on what colors make up an image, and how to blend them correctly to show something as it truly is; however, since taking scientific illustration, I feel more confident. I drew this frog free-hand while looking at a photo in a magazine, and then colored it using colored pencils. When I was done, I added highlights using gouache, which can be seen on the arm and underbelly of the frog. At first I felt a

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bit reluctant to start adding blues and purples to the drawing since I couldn't discern any of those shades when I looked at the picture. I trusted my professor, however, and the result is much better than I would have thought when I first started. I picked the frog because of its vibrant colors; I just didn't realize there were so many colors involved at first. This is the first piece that I've completed in the class, and I hope I gain a better sense of colors by the time the semester is over and create more pieces I can be proud of.

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The Concept of Intuitive Knowledge (Gnosis) within the Sufi Tradition

Omar Hameed

As renowned Sufi scholar Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī stated, “Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it” (“Masnavi”). The emergence of Sufism, an initially revered ascetic approach to Islam that evolved into a mystical one, dates back to the death of Ali [Caliph, 656-661 C.E.] and is ultimately based on extreme divine worship. Its transition from an ascetic approach to a mystical one embodies its ultimate goal, which is to draw the individual nearer to God by absorbing the gnosis, a special intuitive knowledge that differs from the theologian's science (Peters 320). This same gnosis serves as the groundwork for Gnosticism, which is representative of a larger religious wave that came from the spread and interaction of Greek culture with the East following the success of Alexander the Great. The Gnostic movement and the Sufi tradition diverge when it comes to the objective of each approach: the former is heavily based on salvation and redemption, while the latter is heavily based on completely emulating the *sunnah* [verbal and practical customs] of Muhammad. The approaches to achieving these objectives, however, share much in common; gnosis (special knowledge) is a connection to the ‘divine’ self, and this connection to the self is achieved through alienation from the ‘materialistic’ self. There exists an internal divine ‘light’ for both systems that can be recognized and appreciated by obtaining gnosis.

Whether or not the primary emergence of Gnosticism can be linked directly to the emergence of Christianity is debatable; however, Christian Gnosticism emerged with the school of Valentinus, which argued that illumination from divine knowledge helps cancel out divine ignorance externally manifested as materialism, leading to a reintegration of

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the demiurge. In the Gnostic context, ignorance is divine because it exists as an obscured mode of knowledge, “a disturbance befalling a part of the Absolute, arising out of its own motivations” (Jonas 175). It represents the loss of knowledge and is externally represented as materiality. Special knowledge (gnosis) then, serves as the inverse equivalent of ignorance and this is known as the “pneumatic equation” of Valentinian thought. Under this scheme, anything created by humans which can generally fall under the umbrella of “materialism” stems inherently from ignorance, and is therefore corrupt. This logic is also applied to morality, which is a social construct and is “materialistic” in this sense. Along with an ascetic lifestyle, some Gnostic individuals even practiced non-conventional ethics which opposed morality within the world. The Gnostic approach fundamentally despises the physical world completely, and strives to leave it behind in favor of the spiritual world. Although the Gnostic movement does incorporate mysticism, or the belief that esoteric knowledge can be obtained through meditation and contemplation, it does not have a mystical foundation. That is, while Gnosticism includes components of mysticism, a mystic can be a mystic without any recognition of core Gnostic elements, such as complete disconnection from and aversion to the physical world.

On the other hand, during its emergence within the Umayyad caliphate, Sufism was a well-received ascetic movement etymologically based on the term *al-suf*, or wool. The Umayyad caliphate brought with it a golden age in which people were inclined toward worldly affairs. Within this caliphate emerged the “Sufis”, individuals who aspired to divine worship and opposed wearing gorgeous garments by wearing wool. The Sufis thus came to represent “asceticism, retirement from the world and devotion to divine worship” (Peters 165). This ascetic movement then became a mystical one when

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retirement from the world and devotion to divine worship was connected with ecstatic experience.

Since the primary focus of the Gnostic movement was salvation and the orientation of the world toward some future transcendent reality, isolation from materialism and the earthly world was heavily emphasized. To experience this removal from the hostility of the world meant to combat ignorance, or gain salvation of the inner man on a spiritual, rather than a corrupted corporeal level. The mystical aspect of Sufism also stressed disconnection from the material world, but it did not deem the entire world as always being corrupted. The goal of the Sufi tradition is to surpass the conditions that the fundamental and orthodox practices of Islam create. Hence, the focus of the mystical tradition took the ascetic tradition one step further; the focus is on the corruption of man himself, not of the world around him. This way, there can be some unity between the physical world and the spiritual world through the Sufi who, after his journey of asceticism, views the physical world from a spiritual lens.

Along with constant application to divine worship, complete devotion to God, aversion to the false splendor of the world, and abstinence from immediate pleasure now came the ecstatic experience. Mystical Sufism embodies that man is distinguished from all other species by his ability to perceive. He can perceive either the sciences and matters of knowledge, or he can perceive “states” consisting in himself, such as joy and grief, anxiety and relaxation, satisfaction, anger, patience and gratefulness (Peters 165). Perception of these states became an overarching practice of self-scrutiny, or constructive criticism of oneself in the contemporary sense to become closer to God. This approach goes beyond orthodoxism and even beyond asceticism; it involves evaluating personal actions and obtaining feedback to see if there are any deficiencies present. Mystical and

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ecstatic experiences as well as the discussion of self-scrutiny are all a result of this extrapolation process which solidifies the progress of a Sufi as he rids himself of his deficiencies. In essence, the external mystical experiences are evidence of self-evaluation and, more importantly, checkpoints in the process of obtaining gnosis. These checkpoints, or discussions of the ecstatic experience, crystallize for the Sufi novice into “stations”, and gnosis becomes the ability to solidify self-scrutiny so much that there are no more “stations” left to crystallize (Peters 172).

By perfecting self-scrutiny to a point of zero deficiencies, Sufis can actually reconnect with the material world, and this is where they slightly differ from Gnostics. This is seen through the life of Ibn Abi al-Khayr who, from a severe asceticism, turned to what appeared to be a profligate life style, complete with luxurious feasts and splendid entertainments filled with song and dance. This transition can be explained by focusing on what asceticism ultimately brings: an understanding of self-conceit, or arrogance. Following his ascetic journey, Ibn Abi-al Khayr stated, “Then things changed. Ascetic experiences passed over me of a kind that cannot be described in words, and God strengthened and aided me therein, but I had fancied that all these acts were done by me” (qtd. in Peters 172). The ascetic journey places the Sufi in an objective state where he is able to remove self-conceit completely. According to Ibn Abi-al Khayr, those who claim that the Sufi tradition is self-conceit are actually displaying denial, which in itself is self-conceit, and the self-conceit of this denial will not be exposed and unveiled until the Sufi path is taken. Al-Khayr classifies the progression of the Sufi tradition by listing steps of self-conceit in relation to God. The non-believer has no religion; thus, any acts he performs are not rewarded by a higher authority since he acts out of disbelief. Then comes the orthodox Muslim, who performs religious acts and believes that he is rewarded

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for these actions. This step is dualistic where “you” perform some religious acts and “He (God)” rewards your doings.

The Sufi tradition takes this belief one step further, where the orthodox Muslim is able to put himself away altogether. There is a change in how an individual views the materialistic world; instead of believing that “blessings” were His gifts for the acts one has done, the believer understands that the acts were performed by virtue of His grace since even that was His gift (Peters 172). Rewards are now confirmations of the grace that God Himself has given an individual, and the individual is removed completely. This removal of self-conceit is the same reason why Sufis, including Ibn Abi-al Khayr, were able to engage with “graces” and “blessings”, such as the luxurious feasts and splendid entertainments. This materialism is viewed through a different lens now; it is a confirmation of the grace of God rather than a mere reward for a good deed.

Similar to how Gnostics opposed morality by practicing non-conventional ethics, Sufis generally opposed the orthodox approach to Islam which involved dualism and the self. Al-Khayr explains this opposition by making a connection between self-conceit and orthodox law. Since self-conceit lies in religion (A is to B), or the belief of performing an act to be rewarded, and religion lies in law (B is to C), self-conceit originates when one fulfills the law (A is to C). Because it links self-conceit to religion and orthodox law in general, the Sufi tradition has existed outside of the realm of Islam, just like Gnosticism may have existed outside the realm of Christianity. However, the application of the Sufi tradition originated in response to a materialistic movement under the Umayyad caliphate, and for this reason, it is tailored to the Muslim experience.

Along with a rejection of materialism, Gnosticism and Sufism both incorporate the concept of the ‘divine light.’ The Gnostic movement believed that individuals are

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divine to an extent and are not a part of the material, corrupted world. There is a divine spark or shard of the divine within individuals that does not belong within the corrupted world. Similarly, the mystics of Islam believe in “light” as a form of intuitive knowledge and an intuitive experience. Justification of this light comes from the “Light Verse” [Quran 24:35], under the interpretation of Ibn Babuya al-Qummi (d. 939). Al-Qummi interprets “His Light” as the light of Muhammad that is of “a niche”, or within Muhammad’s breast, which is passed on as “light upon light”, or from one Imam to the next (Peters 236). This light only can be passed on to those who intuitively experience the mystical journey through self-scrutiny.

The Gnostic movement and the Sufi tradition also agree on the transcendence of God, something beyond the material world. As the Gnostics rid themselves of the hostility of the world through asceticism, they are able to connect with the inner divine light, derived from the nature of the divine which is completely beyond the real world. The Sufi tradition emphasizes the transcendence of God in a similar way by focusing on personal removal from sensual reality. Sufi scholars refer to this removal of sensual reality as “self-annihilation” after which comes “the removal of the veil”. One of the early Sufis of Islam, Junaid-al-Baghdadi, describes self-annihilation as “the obliteration of attributes, characteristics and natural inclination in your motives when you carry out your religious duties, making efforts and doing the opposite of what you may desire, and compelling yourself to do things which you do not wish to do” (qtd. In Peters 243). Gnostic allegory embodies this exact inversion of treating the unexpected as the expected by subversively focusing on anti-heroes and making them heroic figures. This provocative design aiming to overthrow the orthodox approach is demonstrated by some

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Sufis who wore their “kufis” (hats) sideways and pierced their ears to show their disapproval of orthodoxy.

Moreover, Ibn Khaldun experienced this self-annihilation by attempting to recite the entire Quran upside down until blood poured from his eyes. From this self-annihilation, he had overcome any form of human pain that would serve as a barrier between him and God. Ibn al-Arabi describes the continence that must come with this form of self-annihilation through his master who would “record his emotional states during the day in a book that he had” for self-evaluation (Peters 178). The purpose of self-scrutiny now becomes clear: it serves as a means of self-annihilation and of avoiding anything that would leave an impression on the soul. Achieving self-annihilation to reach gnosis (intuitive knowledge) is accomplished through peculiar manners of worship, such as highly charged music recitals. Muslim traveler Ibn Jubayr noted the peculiar displacement of these Sufis from the material world in 1183 C.E.; “sometimes, so carried away are some of these rapt ascetics when they are under the influence of [worship], that they can scarcely be thought of as belonging to this world at all” (qtd. in Peters 180).

The overlap of the Gnostic movement and the Sufi tradition is seen in Ibn Arabi’s *Futuhāt-al-Makkiya* [The Meccan Revelations]. When giving an account of his father’s death, Ibn Arabi states, “the (true) servant is the person whose state already while living / is like his state after the death of the body and spirit” (333). The Gnostic movement viewed the world as a cosmic prison and the only means of escape was salvation, since knowledge cannot be corporeal due to the corruption of the body, and cannot be psychical due to the corruption of the soul and spirit. Death, then, is the killing of the corrupted body and spirit, as Ibn Arabi states, and those who die without divine light in Gnosticism still have no knowledge and are trapped. The true servant is he who attains

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gnosis in a living state on a level beyond the corruptible so that when he dies, nothing is taken away from him. Thus, his state while living is as if he is already dead, since gnosis has been unlocked and will exist in either state. The revelation of gnosis eternally links the individual to God where he is displaced from the cosmic and the bodily prison, and is removed from death in the material sense.

Despite its relation to materialism for ecstatic experiences, Sufism in the ascetic context viewed the world as a cosmic prison as well. The Persian Sunni jurist and Sufi of Baghdad, Abdul al-Qadir Ghilani (d. 1166 C.E.) states in *Futuh al-Ghaib* [Revelations of the Unseen], “Polytheism consists not merely of idol worship. It is also polytheism to follow the desire of the flesh and to adopt anything of this world and of the hereafter in association with God. Because whatever is besides God is not God” (35). This is the same Gnostic concept of the transcendence of God and the nature of the divine as beyond the material world. Adopting “anything of this world”, including morality, as a derivation from God would be blasphemous, as it would associate what is not God with God. Again, Sufi scholars rejected materialism in the ascetic sense but heavily engaged in feasts and music in the mystical sense. After overcoming the corruption of the sensual state through asceticism, they have removed dualism along with the sense of self and see the world as a confirmation of God’s grace rather than a reward for the self who performed good deeds. Although both the Gnostics and the Sufis rejected materialism and viewed it as a form of corruption, the Sufi objective is oriented more towards escape from the bodily and sensual prison which would allow an individual to view the cosmic prison through a different lens.

Through achieving the Sufi “stations” mentioned earlier, Sufis eventually achieve a state where the sense of self is completely obliterated. Persian scholar Rumi captures

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this annihilation of the self in his poem “Masnavi”, where a certain man is denied entrance into his friend’s house when he states, “It is I.” The man is finally let in towards the end when he states, “It is thou”: “‘Now,’ said the friend, ‘since thou art I, come in, there is no room for two I’s in this house” (qtd. in Peters 231). This exchange is a microcosm of the greater exchange between God and the Sufi who has reached gnosis and has obliterated self-conceit. Once the Sufi intuitively recognizes that God is solely in control, he has connected with the inner divine light of God within him, and he is God, and God is he. As stated before, that inner divine light is the light of Muhammad, and Ibn Arabi captures the connection to this light in the *Futuh-at-Makkiya* [The Meccan Revelations]; “I saw (in a dream where) it was as though I was in Mecca with the Messenger of God, in the same dwelling. There was an extraordinary connection between him and me, almost as though I was him and as though he were me” (375). This is the same gnosis, or knowledge of self-divinity, of the Gnostic movement, which is salvation as soteriology that leads to eschatological ideas and beliefs about the end of the world. The Sufi tradition also inverts the orthodox Christian and Islamic approach of soteriology leading to eschatology; by recognizing and achieving self-divinity; the individual becomes aware through intuitive knowledge that there must be no higher power than that of God, and becomes connected to eschatology.

Although it was well-received initially, the intuitive knowledge linked to Sufism and Gnosticism was heavily criticized through fundamentalist interpretations. In Book II, Chapter 28 of *Against Heresies*, St. Irenaeus states in reference to Gnosticism;

If, however, we cannot discover explanations of all those things in Scripture which are made the subject of investigation, yet let us not on that account seek after any other God besides Him who really exists. We should leave things of that

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nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit. (2)

This same criticism was used against Sufis, whose idea of intuitive knowledge was rejected as something beyond what the Scripture of God already provides the Muslim community. The Sufis are seen by the orthodox community as an extreme branch that thrives on *bid'ah*, or innovation, which goes against how Islam gained momentum through its mediated approach that everyone of all levels of faith could adhere to.

In response, justification of the Sufi tradition relies on its obedience and connection to the life of Muhammad which is the fundamental pillar of orthodox Islam. Early Sufi author al-Kharraz describes accounts of the companions of Muhammad, specifically the four caliphs, from which the original ascetic Sufi tradition was derived. For example, Sufi asceticism is justified by the account of the first caliph, Abu Bakr [Caliph 632-634 C.E.], who upon receiving leadership wore only a single garment which he used to pin together, so that he was known as “the man of the two pins.” Furthermore, it is related that Uthman [Caliph, 644-656 C.E.] was seen coming out of one of the gardens with a firewood faggots on his shoulders, and when questioned on the matter, he said, “I wanted to see whether my soul would refuse” (qtd. in Peters 165). This is essentially the process of self-scrutiny that the Sufis thrive upon, where evaluation of the soul and the decision one makes leads to self-control and gnosis.

In addition, Ibn Abi al-Khayr reveals his commitment to the lifestyle of Muhammad; “I performed everything I had read or heard of as having been done or commanded by the Prophet” (qtd. in Peters 171). Under this commitment, he once stood on his tiptoes and performed his prayer to imitate when Muhammad injured the sole of his foot and performed the prayer on his tiptoes during the battle of Uhud. According to

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al-Ghazali, it is this very dedication to the life of the Prophet that makes the Sufis untouchable. The Sufi movement, on the internal and external level, brings illumination from the prophetic revelation. Behind the light of prophetic revelation, there is no other light on the face of the earth from which illumination may be received, and this classifies the Sufis as credible and their approach as appropriate (Peters 176).

Although Ghazali's justification of the Sufi movement temporarily ended Sufi criticism, the movement was subject to backlash once again during the time of Ibn Khaldun. The backlash was similar to St. Irenaeus' criticism in that the Sufi charting of the higher realities was a private, intuitive revelation beyond the Scripture of God. In response, Ibn Khaldun stated:

[The Sufi discussion of the removal of the veil] is based on the intuitive experience of the Sufis, and those who lack such intuitive experience cannot have the mystical experience that the Sufis receive from it. Therefore, we ought merely to leave it alone, just as we leave alone the ambiguous statements in the Quran and the Prophetic custom. (qtd. in Peters 259)

Ibn Khaldun further argues that language, like morality in Gnosticism, is a social construct, and cannot capture the Sufi connection because it has been invented only for the expression of commonly accepted concepts within sensible reality. He ends by stating that the Sufis enjoy nothing but happiness, and this is a confirmation of God granting them some understanding through mystical utterances.

For the Gnostic and the Sufi, intuitive knowledge (gnosis) is an escape from the corruption of the cosmos and the corruption of the self. Gnosis can be obtained through asceticism, primarily a disconnection from the corrupted world, and mysticism, or obliteration of the self for survival within the physical world. Both the Gnostic movement

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and the Sufi tradition conflict with the orthodox approaches of Christianity and Islam, claiming that there is a hidden, esoteric knowledge beyond the lines of the Scriptures. As for those who seek this intuitive knowledge, there is no explanation of it and they must themselves give praise to “the great invisible Spirit” who is “the silence of silent silence” (Robinson 210). Gnosis is solely experiential and cannot be put into words, for “silence is language of god, [and] all else is poor translation” (Rumi, “Diwan-e Shams-e Tabriz-i”).

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A Reflection in Verse: The Human Condition

Erika Panzarino

War Told

War told with weapons,
Of horror and Achilles' rage
deadly hatred seething inside¹
Life spilled on a blood-stained page
Grief beside the rising tide

War told with weavers,
of words and stories spun
of monsters and men that clash
Odysseus' victory hard won
Confirmed with lightning's flash

War told with wounds,
Of betrayals and the stench of shame
Neoptolemus conflicted by command
Trust exploited, but who to blame?
Pain no longer lets him stand²

Time is the metre³
Of the raging of the battle drum
Of the unseen life of a now grown son
Of betrayals and of timeless rot
Memory the only plot

¹ Homer. *The Iliad*. trans. Robert Fagles NY: Penguin, 1990. Book 22 line 112

² Sophocles. *Philoctetes*. trans. David Grene. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969. Pg. 227
line 819

³ Walcott, Derek. *Omeros*. NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1990. Pg. 129. "Time is the
metre, memory the only plot."

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The Grave is Not a Hole in the Ground

Remember that there are no graves
For our epic heroes brave
No place of rest or quiet spot
Memory the only plot

The Work That Turns the World

Sing, oh Goddess
Of the work that turns the world
Of epic histories, myth unleashed
Ink at attention, paper unfurled
Reverent dedication, ideas released

The rituals of writing
building our own pyre
compelled by prayer inciting
to light the freezing fire

recall an infinite horizon, time
standing safely on the shore
Cement ourselves within the rhyme
Remembering what was before

I write for the mystery of oceans vast,
Full of words I carry in the crevice of my soul
Certain in every doubt that I cast,
That words will come as the waves will roll

I write for waves that bless the shore
A familiar rhythm, never heard before
I know my work, my humble quest
Forget the Gods, I'll write the rest

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Meaning in Music

Rahanna Khan

Music contains meaning that is brimming with the potential for interpretation. While a listener must be present in order for a sound to be meaningful, the absence of a listener does not mean that a sound is non-musical. Without a listener to interpret a piece, it would still be music. The composer would have instilled a meaning in her composition. But what about the case of a sound made in nature, such as rainfall on the ground? In the absence of a composer, is it possible for this sound to have meaning? To answer this, we must consider that music and its interpretations are subjective. For this reason, there can be rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic sounds that one person might classify as senseless noise (not music), while another person might interpret that same sound as a meaningful and symbolic sound (music). Given these notions, I would argue that music is inherently meaningful to humans because we either classify meaningless sounds as mere noise, or label sounds that we interpret as meaningful as music.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines meaning as “the thing one intends to convey, especially by language.” Arthur Davies claims that "music cannot usefully be compared to a language," which implies that music is not applicable in communication through systematic meaning (Davies 125). It is true that the response a piece can evoke from a listener is often unpredictable, invalidating the piece as a perfect means of conveying a specific message. In a world of diverse cultures and individuals, it is impossible to say that a piece will convey the same exact meaning to any two listeners. However, music is an interdisciplinary art encompassing science, math, and fine arts in a way that creates a universal language capable of eliciting *some* response. Even without

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lyrics, music can convey meaning through emotion. According to the affect theory of the eighteenth century, meaning in music is derived from its "ability to capture and convey such affects as love, rage, or jealousy" (Cook 75). This defines music as inherently evocative with the purpose of eliciting a response that connects with reality outside of music.

Yet, music *can* convey meaning through the emotional responses of the listener and of the artist to a particular song. Affect theory can be demonstrated regardless of a listener's presence. The performer is capable of instilling meaning in a piece through emotional expression and interpretation while actively performing. Since no two people are exactly alike, it is highly unlikely that two people, whether performers or listeners, will interpret a musical work as having the exact same meaning. Emotional responses may be similar, but two people's memories and associations may differ. This potential for varied interpretations might indicate that music cannot have meaning, as it is not a clear form of communication. But the meaning that a given composition may have far outweighs the complication of variable interpretation. Music allows the expression of sentiments beyond spoken language, a potential clearly recognized and used by composers. That being said, few things are more expressive than a combination of spoken language in the form of lyrics and music.

The use of lyrics helps to stabilize meaning in music. Lyrics give the listener a surface interpretation that may help to stimulate a complex emotional response. But what about songs without lyrics? Or even songs that are not songs in the literal sense? Some might argue that the sound of falling rain is musical. What, then, is the meaning behind it? In this example, there are no lyrics to interpret, no chord progressions to analyze, and no defined rhythm. Instead, one may consider the differences between Gricean (after the

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philosopher Paul Grice) “non-natural” and “natural” meanings. “Non-natural” meaning is systematic and uses an established symbol or sound in order to convey a message to the listener. “Natural” meaning is more abstract and directly associates sounds or actions unassociated with a previous system with its literal meaning (Cook 73). In the case of the falling rain, the “natural” meaning of the sound of raindrops hitting a surface would simply be that rain is actively falling outside. There is no orchestrated (no pun intended) system of symbols or indicators beyond the sound of droplets colliding with an exposed surface. However, the “non-natural” meaning is more subjective and buried deeper within the sound. Theodor Adorno describes “musical sense” in “serious music” as an interaction between every detail of the piece with “the concrete tonality of the piece, which consists of the life relationship of the details and never of a mere enforcement of a musical scheme” (2). Here, Adorno means that details of the piece such as characteristics of emotion must be related to its overall framework for comprehension of the “musical sense,” or meaning. His formula is useful for determining the non-natural meaning of a sound, by considering the sound in its entirety. To interpret this layer, we might consider the surface the rain is actually striking to produce sound. Are we hearing a collision with the roof of a house? Or splashes against pavement? Rain against a roof may signify safety if one is listening from within the protected area. Rain against the pavement may represent a dreary scenario involving a person caught in the rain outside. In this way, a sound’s context is the most important factor in determining its meaning in order to classify it as music. Of course, there are those who would argue that rain is not meaningful at all, and therefore does not fall into the category of music or art.

While there is debate regarding what sounds warrant the label “art,” it is widely accepted that our most basic form of communication is spoken language in its internal

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form, which I refer to as ‘inner monologue.’ This coincides with Wittgenstein’s “picture theory” of meaning in which “language represents an external reality existing independently of language” (qtd. in Cook 74). This seems intuitive as humans use language in thought in order to process the reality in which they are living. But what if spoken language wasn’t our most basic form of thought, and instead, our internal language was music? Wittgenstein argues that language relates to reality in a way that musical themes do not. Yet, it could be argued that the meanings within a piece of music can capture a particular mindset more effectively than our inner monologue is capable of. For example, musical meaning may better convey my state of mind when faced with something like a difficult exam than mere words could. Instead of my inner monologue literally telling me, “you’ve got this, just focus, you know all the answers!” I could hear the first few bars of Survivor’s “Eye of the Tiger.” The fast tempo, energetic electric sound, and emphatic power chords would motivate me more effectively than spoken (or internalized) words. For some, music can express so much more through latent meanings and can allow people to relate to their reality on a deeper level.

Music as a whole can be defined as meaningful because of the individual meanings given to distinct sounds by humans. Susanne Langer states that music is naturally meaningful since the “relationship between aural elements of a musical work” corresponds with “the sensations that constitute a feeling” (qtd. in Davies 130). Langer’s interpretation attributes music’s meaning to its specific potential for evoking emotion. Additionally, Cook claims that “music of one time and place satisfies the needs, desires, or aspirations of another time and place” (84). Langer’s conception of meaning supports this notion, given that musical meaning transcends temporal boundaries through human emotions which are timeless. However, Cook’s claim erroneously assumes that the

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needs, desires, and aspirations of society have changed dramatically over time. Building upon both of these concepts, it is quite possible that music, despite its subjectivity, has continually fulfilled the same basic human emotional needs across time periods, whether they are cathartic, communicative, or even deeper in meaning.

The evocative nature of music includes its potential to be privately meaningful to an individual. For example, music may act as a catharsis. A “break up song,” or song connected to a specific time in our life may allow expression of feelings of sorrow, loneliness, and anguish. Whether singing along, contemplating lyrics, or simply listening to the actual sound of the music, potentially, we could express these negative emotions in the form of tears. Music may mediate a reaction to breaking off a relationship and perhaps allow an individual to emerge in a healthier, happier state.

Satisfaction of the same basic human emotional needs across various different times and places is especially evident in love songs. Ben E. King’s “Stand By Me” was released in 1961 and lyrically conveys the same message as Bruno Mars’ 2010 hit “Count On Me.” The lyrics narrate unyielding loyalty between two people even if “the sky should tumble and fall,” or “the mountains should crumble to the sea.” The same message is conveyed lyrically with Edith Piaf’s “Hymne a l’amour,” which begins with, “le ciel bleu sur nous peut s'effondrer, Et la terre peut bien s'écrouler, Peu m'importe si tu m'aimes” which translates to, “the blue sky over us can collapse on itself, and the ground can (really) cave in, little matters to me if you, love me.” This song, from 1940s France, also features the same lyrical meaning as “Count On Me,” and “Stand By Me,” but from a completely different time period and location. Despite contextual variations, all three of these songs have lyrics that proclaim and expound upon feelings of love.

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Coincidentally, these songs were well-received and remain popular as expressions of love between individuals. In this case, the meaning expressed by the artists is typically felt by the listener as well. It could therefore be argued that all of these songs satisfy the human need for romantic feelings, regardless of their historical or geographical identities. These songs also focus on the emotional needs of both performer and listener. This thematic commonality makes it difficult to refute the significant role of music in human life. If love songs were not meaningful, why would society continually produce them?

Moses Mendelssohn's theory of aesthetics states that, "the essence of the fine arts and sciences consists in an artful, sensuously perfect representation" (Mendelssohn 173). We could interpret this to mean that all art is imitative and aspires toward perfection. However, I believe that performances do not necessarily aspire toward perfection, but rather focus on portraying and expressing a feeling in accordance with the theory of affects. Music, especially in performance, can be messy and more realistic in order for an artist to better relate to the listener. Live performance is the best indication of Cook's idea that "music's meaning lies more in what it does than what it represents" (77). Artists will often vary their songs in live performance, if not to accentuate authenticity, then to further define their meaning.

Alicia Keys' 2009 hit "Empire State of Mind," is meaningful to the artist as it embodies her pride in her New York origins. The song is also meaningful as a source of inspiration for an average listener who hears the harmonious piano chords driven by a steady drum kit. Performance allows the piece to take on a new dimension as the raw quality of the singer's voice and alterations to the melody convey a deeper, more personal meaning. In the live version, Keys' unrefined, raspy, raw voice accompanied by an exposed piano conveys a personal sincerity, as if she is literally telling her story. In

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particular, the lyric, “there’s nothing you can’t do,” is striking for its differences from the studio version as she moves up to belt a C# instead of a simple Bb on the word “can’t.” For me, the belted “can’t,” tugs at my heart in such a way that I find her delivery more authentic than in the studio version. In essence, the live performance highlights Alicia Keys’ personal rise to fame from a rougher area of New York City in a way that the studio version does not. This is meaningful to a listener who can experience positive feelings from the sound and draw inspiration from her triumph against adversity.

Davies’ statement that “music does refer beyond itself” best explains music’s meaningful mechanism, especially with regard to live performance (122). The lyrics, context, and characteristics of the emotion of a sound can interact to evoke emotional responses based upon an individual’s personal experiences. A comprehensive study of music and meaning would necessarily consider the effects of the performer on meaning in music, perhaps by comparing multiple portrayals of the same song and the emotional responses of various audiences. Overall, we should always differentiate between labelling a sound as “music” or mere noise based on a careful consideration of its potential meanings.

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Youtube link to Empire State Part II (Broken Down) Live:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYmmh9zqpQM>

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Fun Home

Danielle McDougall

To read Alison Bechdel's graphic novel *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* is to confront the question of what constitutes a lesbian narrative. Bechdel, who is both illustrator and protagonist of the novel, poses this question through three aspects of her story: the revelation of the heteronormative ideal of the American family as false and constricting; Bechdel's subversion of the patriarchal gaze vis-à-vis the illustration of the female body; and the utopian nature of its conclusion. By exploring these components of Bechdel's work, we can arrive at a more thoughtfully developed understanding of the political impact of these authorial decisions, and a more deeply evocative reading of *Fun Home* and its insights about identity and futurity.

In order to analyze *Fun Home* effectively, we must first establish the meaning of the term lesbian novel. Marilyn Farwell, in *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives*, proposes that a narrative becomes lesbian when it "reorders the narrative codes and the values on which the system rests" (16) and acts as a "harbinger of the future" (16). Essentially, a narrative can be defined as lesbian when it disrupts the hegemonic structures that shape the expected course of that narrative. *Fun Home* is concerned with the heteronormative patriarchy and generates a utopian potentiality, a space in the novel wherein an indeterminate future is left up to the individual to shape. This space – an inkling, not a promise, of a future – is not bound by the limitation that is being committed to the page, but contains a limitless capacity for possibilities, thus making it a site for utopian potentiality. It is this complex definition of the lesbian narrative which operates in *Fun Home*: a narrative that attempts to subvert the hegemonic values that typically inform its structure and presents a space—especially within its ending—where the

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characters and reader are able to conceive of a future that has not yet been spelled out by the author, a space that can be utopian because it must be fleshed out by the characters' discretion.

This disruption of heteronormative and patriarchal values within *Fun Home* is evident in the story's portrayal of Bechdel's familial dynamic. There is a stark contrast between the presentation of this family and the presentation of families in earlier graphic novels. To elaborate on this, we must stress the prevalence of the latter as well as its institutionalized nature via the *Comics Code* (cblf.org). The code, authored by the Comics Code Authority of 1954—an organization of comic book writers whose dictations carried the authority of government regulation—sought to enhance the moral character of the United States by transforming the sexually explicit and heavily violent imagery prevalent in comics of the age. According to its preamble, the code would “make a positive contribution to contemporary life [by] developing sound, wholesome entertainment,” (*Comics Code*) and would attempt to do so until the 1980s. The Code suggested that the “wholesomeness” of a work was paramount if it were to be released to the public. However, we must question what constitutes “wholesome,” for in seeking an answer, we arrive at the first hegemonic structure with which Bechdel's narrative must grapple: heteronormativity.

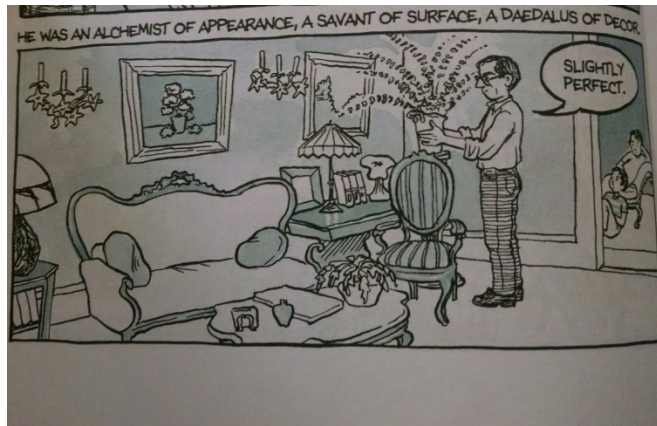
Though the *Comics Code* did not explicitly forbid the portrayal of lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and queer (LGBTQ) characters and themes by artists, it did seek to forbid the portrayal of relationships and dynamics between characters that were perceived as lewd or disruptive. What constitutes as such becomes clear upon reading one specific regulation within the *Code*: “sex perversion or any inference to same is strictly forbidden.” The early 1950s in the United States was a time when sodomy laws were

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enforced by police raids of gay bars, by the harassment of gay individuals by said officers and the public alike, and by the wholesale denunciation of gay people by politicians and religious leaders. It is not difficult to determine which type of people fell within the arena of “sexually perverse” according to the *Code*. As Nickie D. Phillips and Staci Strobl state in *Take Down the Bad Guys, Save the Girl*, “the *Code* required adherence to the heterosexual norm and forbade deviation from the norm in terms of marriage and sexual relationships; it wasn’t until 1989 that gay people were positively portrayed” (141-2). Thus, as an artistic medium, the comic book, and more broadly, the graphic novel, was forbidden territory for queer artists.

Later graphic novels such as *Fun Home* challenged this position. Bechdel’s quest reflects on the enigmatic nature of her gay, closeted father, Bruce. His ultimate suicide is central to the narrative. Bruce, born in a small Pennsylvanian town in 1936, came of age at a time when the *Comics Code* served as law for graphic novel artists, the *Hayes Code* dictated what played on the silver screen, and the societal heteronormative paradigm that necessitated codes such as these governed the unconscious mind of queer and non-queer people alike. We observe the psychological devastation that Bruce experiences in his repressive rural setting. As Bechdel describes him, Bruce is an “artificer”: “he used his skillful artifice not to make things, but to make things appear to be what they were not...that is to say, impeccable” (16). “Impeccable” is a revealing term. Bruce paints a portrait of his family and household as being quintessentially American by dressing his home in lavish decoration and elaborate renovations, and by meticulously coordinating outfits and accessories for his children to wear. **Note:** the following illustration and those that follow are from *Fun Home*.

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The façade of the pristine Pennsylvanian family and household that Bruce constructs suggests that he has internalized the ostensibly homophobic principle of wholesomeness that is established in the *Comics Code*. Bruce's tendency towards artifice can be read as a measure by which he expresses contrition for the attraction that he feels towards men, and as a medium through which he can right his wrong of challenging the heteronormative standard.

This contextualization of Bruce's character supports the argument for *Fun Home* as a lesbian novel by underlining the heteronormative heritage of its genre, the graphic novel. Farwell's conception of the lesbian narrative as "reorder[ing] the narrative codes and the values on which the system rests" (16) is appropriate. In this case, we have established these values upheld in part by graphic novelists as being heteronormative in nature by positing heterosexual marriages as the norm. Bechdel, however, carefully examines the validity of this standard through her portrayal of her family and parents' relationship as being one bound by falsehoods and constructions: "our house was not a real home...but the simulacrum of one; we really were a family [but] still, something vital was missing..." (17-8). That "something", we are told, is a margin of error – a slip-up by either Bechdel's mother or siblings. In one instance, Bechdel refuses to don a dress

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for an outing; in another, her brother Christian fails to clean their elaborately-decorated home sufficiently. This is more than enough to incur Bruce's wrath. One must wonder, if the heteronormative model of the family is as normal as it is posited, why must careful constructions such as codes and the painstaking effort on Bruce's part be created in order to uphold it? Bechdel does not attempt to answer this question for us, but rather poses this question to her reader. She begins the crucial work of the lesbian narrative by uprooting and subverting the values upon which such a narrative is typically constructed.

Though one might contest that the *Code* and all its restrictions on content were done away with in the 1990s, the principles it had imposed on its artists had already been woven into the fabric of the graphic novel's history. Undoing that fabric is the difficult work of contemporary artists like Bechdel. Alongside the complication of the heteronormative paradigm of the graphic novel tradition, there is the systemically patriarchal nature of the arena itself.

A common criticism of graphic novelists, particularly of the illustrators, and in response to the implementation of the *Comics Code*, has been the portrayal of women and their bodies. We learn from Phillips and Strobl's *Take Down the Bad Guys, Save the Girl* that "in his analysis of comic books, author Mike Madrid finds that by the 1960s, female superheroes were drawn in a sexually suggestive manner, but it was not until the late 1980s and 1990s that female characters were portrayed as ultra-violent and hypersexual" (162). Throughout the *Code*'s reign, the graphic novel was governed by an idealization of the heterosexual dynamic partly reflected in illustrations of women as gratuitously voluptuous and large-breasted. Women seemed unable to select costumes that would prevent the exploitation of their figures which were displayed for the audience. As a

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number of critics have observed, these illustrations have become more explicit in recent years:

Popular culture commentators have noted the ‘pornification’ of female heroes [and, as Strobl and Phillips go on to observe in their work, female villains and civilians within the superhero canon] as they are being drawn with more accentuated curves than in past comic book eras. These characters’ proportions are wildly exaggerated, with large, exposed breasts and skimpy costumes that would most certainly serve as a hindrance to crime fighting. The anatomical anomalies of women in comics may relate to a culture of reshaping women’s bodies (plastic surgery, etc.), connected to Michel Foucault’s notion that contemporary men and women reproduce cultural hegemony by disciplining their own bodies. In essence, women’s bodies have become ‘cultural plastic.’ (Phillips and Strobl 163)

This phenomenon can be seen as a patriarchal manifestation promoting ostensibly misogynistic images of women that remain prevalent in the graphic novel arena. In order to approach what might be reason for this “pornification” of female characters and to establish precisely how that precedent acts as a roadblock for new works such as Bechdel’s *Fun Home*, it is necessary to emphasize how this type of illustration perpetuates the patriarchy. The wildly exaggerated proportions of these women severely infringe upon their ability to fight crime—one of the main sources of celebration for the average male superhero (think Superman or Captain America). As these hypersexualized images suggest, these female superheroes are rendered impotent, or at least less able to navigate the space occupied by male superheroes who rely on their physical prowess. The prevalence of male musculature in these superheroes is not so much for the purpose of titillation in the way that “pornified” female superheroes are, but for the utilitarian purpose of achieving their goal of protecting their community, warding off evil, and demonstrating their strength. In contrast to the heavily sexualized and impotent woman superhero, her strong, male counterpart projects strength.

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In this way, the male figure's capacity for asserting masculinity—physical strength, in this case—hinges on the impotence or at least weakness of the female figure. One cultural hegemony perpetuated by this male-female dynamic of strength versus weakness is the patriarchal notion that women are subordinate to men, and as the weaker sex, must be protected by them. It is in this context that “hegemonic masculinities” are performed. In *Take Down the Bad Guys, Save the Girl*, sociologist R. W. Connell describes this imbalanced dynamic as a manifestation of “hegemonic masculinity” – a hierarchical conception of masculinity and femininity wherein the dominance of men over women is stressed (148) so as to reaffirm the desire of men to, among other things, perpetuate their position of power. It is for this cause that the visual subordination of women is crucial: the hypersexualization of female figures in graphic novels both reaffirms the hegemonic notion that women are, indeed, subordinate to men and empowers the otherwise insecure male figure by asserting his utility as both the woman's ultimate protector and sexual possessor (the images of women are as titillating as they are reaffirming, and are made for male consumption).

Moreover, we can conclude that if the image of women as weakened, sexual objects is so crucial to the perpetuation of patriarchal masculinity, then the presentation of women whose bodies deviate from this ideal poses a threat and renders it as useless and vulnerable. For if there is no fragile woman to stand as subordinate to the stronger, male figure but rather a physically strong, independent one in juxtaposition to him, how can the concept of men being inherently stronger not be exploded?

The potential destruction of this patriarchal notion accomplished by presenting women in a non-sexualized and strong manner is also addressed by Marilyn Farwell once more. In discussing the lesbian subject (either a character or a narrative at large), she

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describes it as a “powerful political tool for challenging asymmetrical gender codes in the narrative” (17). Thus, by challenging these patriarchal values, the lesbian narrative, *Fun Home*, works to undo the notion of male dominance and female subordination as perpetuated by hypersexualized and vulnerable portrayals of women in the graphic novel. Bechdel attempts to accomplish this by presenting veristic, correctly proportional illustrations of women’s and men’s bodies, and by celebrating the butch, an archetypal lesbian who tends to have a bulky build, and who chooses clothing associated with the masculine.

Gone from *Fun Home* is the “pornification” of the female body: the pristine hourglass figures, the pert and voluptuous busts on women, and male physiques that burst with well-worked muscles. Instead of utilizing the bodies of men and women as symbolic stand-ins for the sake of perpetuating a patriarchal notion, Bechdel’s illustrations of the body remain faithful to how these people look in real life. Crow’s feet sit firmly in the spaces below the eyes of Bechdel’s mother and father, the hairstyles of each character appear tousled and imperfect, and the solid figure of Joan (Bechdel’s college girlfriend) is drawn with such care that we are able to see her protruding tummy and folds of skin at the tops of her thighs. The women and girls of *Fun Home* do not exist for the sake of perpetuating patriarchal hegemony by being presented as objects of the male gaze (or male consumption) or affirmations of male dominance. Instead, Bechdel actively repudiates the notion of the graphic novel as a tool for perpetuating this harmful system, and reclaims this medium for the sake of telling the nuanced story of the development of her own and her family’s identity.

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Consequently, the distinguishing line between the male and female body is blurred. Bechdel and her brothers have the same lithe physique for much of their adolescence, and her father and mother mirror one another in their delicate and seemingly haggard frames. In the same way that she contests the notion of heteronormativity as being an ideal model for a family, revealing it as an ideal that requires artifice in order to be achieved, Bechdel also contests the highly artificial constructions necessary to perpetuate the concept of men's strength and dominance over women's innate weakness and subordination. As Farwell states, the illustrations in *Fun Home* do the work of the lesbian narrative that is the "performative interrogation of the naturalness of the gender categories embedded in the narrative" (12). There is no better demonstration of this performative interrogation in *Fun Home* than the scene in which Bechdel sees her very first butch at the age of five.

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A burly, stern-faced butch with short hair and a flannel shirt—a costume that signifies as masculine to the world—saunters into a diner where the author and her father are sitting; Bechdel is struck by her appearance, then inexplicably enraptured. Long before knowing that “there were women who wore men’s clothes and had men’s haircuts” (118), Bechdel was filled with a sense of kinship with this woman. Bruce was filled with an apparent haunting sense perhaps as a result of his simultaneous realization of the bond between him, his daughter, and the butch by way of their shared homosexuality, and the understanding that he was failing to uphold the harsh gender binary which he had internalized as being natural. By interrupting Bechdel’s conception of gender as rigidly binary, the butch was able to spark her sudden acknowledgement of some other-ness in herself that the butch also possessed: queerness. And so, Bechdel’s adolescent anxiety over the emergence of her breasts, while not an overall desire to abandon her identity as a woman in place of assuming manhood, indicates her willingness to exist suspended in a state of androgyny so as not to conform to the hegemonic value of masculinity and femininity as being two clearly distinct identities, makes sense.

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These possibilities for presenting one's gender, sexuality, and willingness to exist in an ambiguous place brings us to the final aspect of *Fun Home* that constitutes a lesbian narrative: the presence of utopian potentiality in its conclusion, specifically, the way in which Bechdel frames her father's suicide. As Farwell phrases it, we can look to Bechdel's narrative as one that acts as a "harbinger of the future" (16). The content and nature of this future is by no means spelled out for the audience, but the implication is made that there is futurity to be explored following the final page of this story. Here, implication is the operative word: within the context of the lesbian narrative, the utopian is hardly a guaranteed state that can be reached, if it is to be reached at all, but rather a concept hinted at by the narrative, then left up to exploration by the audience and characters.

In Greg Johnson's *The Situated Self and Utopian Thinking*, Drucilla Cornell states that the utopian is "an 'opening' to the beyond as a threshold we are invited to cross....Utopian thinking demands the continual exploration and re-exploration of the possible and yet also unrepresentable" (24). This invitation to cross into an exploration of the "unrepresentable," the indeterminate, is precisely the suggestion of futurity to which Farwell alludes as being characteristic of lesbian narratives.

Bechdel extends an invitation to us to engage in precisely this type of exploration in the conceit of Icarus and Daedalus that she uses to frame her relationship with her father. This conceit is introduced on the first page of *Fun Home*. We see Bruce and a young Bechdel playing airplane: she lies with her body taut and her limbs outstretched on the support beams that are her father's sturdy, crouched legs. She is firmly held by him in the air. The name of this balancing act in acrobatics is "Icarian games" (3), but although Bechdel is the one suspended in air and her father, the artificer, must then be Daedalus,

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she informs us that “it was not me but my father who was to plummet from the sky” (4) – an allusion to his eventual suicide when she reaches her early twenties. All at once, Bechdel establishes her and her father’s plots as being “inverts of one another” (98). Where her father employs these constructions in addition to a therapist to help him with his ‘sickness’ in order to thinly veil and repress his identity, Bechdel advances forward using this conceit to explore hers. And so, when Bruce is compelled to commit suicide and ‘Daedalus’ begins his plummet, she does not decide to end her story on a note of eulogy for her lost father, but rather reintroduces us to her conceit:

What if Icarus hadn’t hurtled into the sea? What if he’d inherited his father’s inventive bent? What might he have wrought? He did hurtle into the sea, of course. But in the tricky reverse narration that impels our entwined stories, he was there to catch me when I leapt.” (Bechdel 231-2)

Herein lies the heart of our argument for *Fun Home* as lesbian narrative: Bechdel does not rest in the present or attempt to sketch out a clear future, but she does open the door and invite us over the “threshold” into the indeterminable space that can bring utopia. Note that for both the myth and Bechdel’s own story, the ending is intertwined with the beginning, and beginning with ending; in keeping with the utopian tradition of exploration, then re-exploration, Bechdel compels us to read her and her father’s end-beginning in the open a manner that she establishes. Moreover, one interpretation is never the final one, but another in a series of explorations.

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It is not clear whether any future leap the author will take will end in her being caught; who's to say that she won't inherit her father's psychological games and succumb to the same internalized homophobia that wracked his psyche? To attempt to answer this or any of the questions posed above would be to defeat the purpose of the utopian potentiality Bechdel has introduced. As Drucilla Cornell states in *The Future of Sexual Difference* in her interview with Judith Butler, the mission of the utopian is to "create openings...[to reveal] that there is a beyond to whatever kind of concept of sense we have" (20). Bechdel steps beyond the sense she had of her father and her own identity at the beginning of *Fun Home*, and continually re-explores this identity. she has embarked on a journey that is beyond the intellectual scope of any code or hegemony, and her lesbian narrative navigates the vast landscape of the unrepresented, the potential utopia.

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To Quote *Nazareth*, "Love Hurts"

Kristen Oldja

When the concept of love is discussed at a dinner party, in a classroom, or at a slumber party, the first reaction is often one of wistful reminiscence, butterflies, or hope. Rarely do one's thoughts drift immediately to the inevitable outcome of all loving relationships: pain. Whether a relationship reaches its conclusion by a breakup, unrequited love, or death, pain is undoubtedly experienced by all those who find themselves in love. Despite the changing, complicated nature of love, this emotional pain serves to link together all loving relationships, both mutual and unrequited, creating a common ground amongst those who may otherwise experience love in completely different ways.

The relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* effectively shows the ways that a relationship between two people who love each other can still be riddled with emotional pain. Popular culture suggests that the worst pain in love stems from not being loved back, but Catherine and Heathcliff demonstrate that sometimes the ones you hurt the most are also the ones you love the most. Although they both openly love each other, the pain that they cause each other is more intense than anyone, whether readers of the novel or characters within the novel, expects. There is a kind of pain that they inflict on one another that isn't entirely cruel, but rather based on the fact that they do in fact love each other. It is a symbiotic pain, dependent on the other's feelings and coming from a feeling of connection. When Catherine expresses her troubles to Nelly, the housekeeper, regarding her intended marriage to Edgar and her unrelenting love for

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Heathcliff, she cries, "My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning" (Brontë 84). Growing up with Heathcliff and loving him as her own self, Catherine experiences pain whenever he does; she expresses her belief that they are the same soul, and this makes it impossible for her to separate herself from any kind of despair he may experience. Catherine feels this interdependent pain even more seriously when she is the cause of Heathcliff's pain. When Nelly reveals that she believes Heathcliff has overheard a part of this secret conversation that would greatly upset him, Catherine has an interesting reaction. She waits outside for Heathcliff to return, pacing back and forth and refusing to return home even when a storm comes. "But the uproar passed away in twenty minutes, leaving us all unharmed; excepting Cathy, who got thoroughly drenched for her obstinacy in refusing to take shelter, and standing bonnetless and shawl-less to catch as much water as she could with her hair and clothes" (Brontë 87). Catherine is punishing herself. Knowing she has hurt Heathcliff drives her into a kind of madness which motivates her to turn the pain back to herself in any way possible. She refuses to take shelter during a storm, proving her loyalty to Heathcliff (as she is only outside to await his return) and expressing her twisted hope that hurting herself might atone for what she has done to Heathcliff.

Heathcliff expresses a similar inability to protect himself from Catherine's sorrows. On her deathbed, Catherine begs Heathcliff's forgiveness for all the times she has wronged him. His reply shows a deep pain on behalf of his beloved. "It is hard to forgive, and to look at those eyes, and to feel those wasted hands,' he answered. 'Kiss me again; and don't let me see your eyes! I forgive what you have

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done to me. I love my murderer – but yours! How can I?” (Brontë 158). Heathcliff’s reluctance to forgive no longer rests upon the pain she has caused him, but rather on the pain she has caused herself. His final remark implies that Catherine has brought this deadly sickness upon herself by way of a broken heart; when she marries Edgar, and every time she snubs Heathcliff or does him wrong, ironically, she damages herself in the process. Heathcliff can look past the ways that she has hurt him, but feels most betrayed by Catherine’s self-inflicted injuries. Here, Catherine’s experience is like that of a rebellious child grown into an adult, with Heathcliff playing the role of a parent. Parents can look beyond the ways a child has either intentionally or unintentionally hurt them, but they find that the true pain lies in seeing that child experience guilt and regret over decisions that have irrevocably devastated his or her life. Heathcliff’s deepest pain is witnessing Catherine murder herself with her own actions.

Despite this more selfless facet of their encounters with pain, Catherine and Heathcliff still doled out their fair share of intentional backstabbing and offense. Catherine marries Edgar Linton, even though she loves Heathcliff, because “It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now” (Brontë 82). Although she goes on to declare her love for him, Heathcliff overhears only her objection to being with him, and this knowledge drives many of his decisions for the remainder of his life. He goes to extremes to have his revenge on Catherine and Edgar, marrying Isabella Linton and treating the entire family with cruelty and resentment. Catherine is angry that she does not get the best of both worlds; she wants the security of marriage with Edgar and, at the same time, the indulgence of her romance with Heathcliff. When

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Heathcliff does not comply, this hope is shattered. By marrying Edgar, Catherine both confirms Heathcliff's inadequacy and shows that she values her status more than their love. The two characters create a tangle of betrayal and pride that marks the remainder of their lives with the pain and heartbreak of knowing what could have been between them, and the companionship they have lost along the way.

Dante's *Vita Nuova* is a novella that also exemplifies the relationship between love and pain. Dante unrequitedly loves his lady Beatrice from afar, but parallels can still be drawn between his pain and the pain Catherine and Heathcliff feel with their mutual love. Years after Dante has overwhelmingly fallen in love with Beatrice, her father dies and she is stricken with profound grief. As a result, Dante too is affected when he hears the ladies who keep Beatrice's company reflect on what a desolate state the death of her father has caused her. "Among these words I heard 'Truly she grieves so, that whoever were to see her were to die of pity.' Then these ladies passed by me, and I was left so full of sorrow that tears kept running down my face, forcing me to cover my eyes with my hands" (Dante 43). Hearing that his beloved is in such pain sends Dante into a similar state of sorrow. He cannot bear to hear of anything that has made Beatrice sad, and the news leaves him powerless to control his own emotions. Catherine and Heathcliff experience this same kind of pain when they communicate that their hearts break when the other is hurt. This desire to keep the beloved happy is not exclusive to those in mutually loving relationships; Dante feels Beatrice's pain just as deeply as Heathcliff feels Catherine's and vice versa.

Beatrice's father's death sends Dante into somewhat of an existential crisis – he becomes acutely aware of the brevity of life and how absolute death really is.

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These thoughts produce a dream of Beatrice's death that makes him delirious and causes him to have hallucinations. Later, Dante reflects on this incident in his poetry:

Love wept within my heart which is his home; // and then my startled soul
went numb with fear, // and sighing deep within myself, I said: // 'My lady
some day surely has to die.' ... I seemed to be aware of dreadful things: // of
ladies all disheveled as they walked, // some weeping, others voicing their
laments // that with grief's flame-tipped arrows pierced my heart. // and
then it seemed to me I saw the sun // grow slowly darker and a star appear,
// And sun and star were weeping; // the birds flying above fell dead to
earth; // the earth began to quake (49).

This imagery is reminiscent of the state of Jerusalem after Jesus Christ had been crucified. The sky goes dark and the earth shakes; the loss of Beatrice is as painful to Dante as the crucifixion of Christ. Even the *idea* of a world without her puts him in a frenzy, and it becomes clear that the world is an unfriendly and unrecognizable place without her. He experiences consuming and unbearable pain when faced with the fact that she will die one day, an idea that renders him awestruck and powerless.

This feeling is, of course, not unknown to Heathcliff, as he has to live through the death of his beloved as well. He expresses his desolation when someone utterly irreplaceable (Catherine) has departed from this earth: "I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!" (Brontë 164). Catherine's death, like Beatrice's, leaves her beloved helpless and feeling as though the world is a sinister place without her. Death is the ultimate denial of love, the only circumstance in which

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there is no hope for soothing the pain aside from the belief that one day time will begin to bandage the wounds. If a beloved rejects a lover, either by ending the relationship or never initiating one in the first place, lovers can deceive themselves into thinking that there is still a possibility for the relationship to exist in some distant future; but when the beloved dies all hope is lost and there is no way to convince oneself that there will be a reunion (at least not in this life). Heathcliff and Dante experience love's final scorn with similar intensity – it makes little difference that Heathcliff knew that his feelings were reciprocated and that Dante's were not.

While emotional pain is something that many people spend their lives attempting to avoid, no one completely succeeds. The heartbreak caused by a lover is among the most intense feelings of sadness humans can experience. To love someone so deeply, only to have those feelings met with an agony that runs just as deep, changes a person – sometimes temporarily, and sometimes forever, when remnants of heartache are felt throughout that person's life. Heathcliff, Catherine, and Dante all love fiercely and prove that with real love comes real pain no matter the status of a relationship or mutuality. Emotional pain connects these characters in a way that it connects people in real life today: heartache is something that everyone in love can relate to and has experienced or will experience, at one point in his or her life.

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Madame Restell: A Bridge Between Purity and Impurity in Nineteenth-Century New York

Sarah O'Connor

Introduction

In nineteenth-century New York City, the idea that a person should maintain a sense of purity was pervasive. In this stifling Christian society, an individual could be ruined completely by committing an “impure” act. Women, assumed to be the purer of the two sexes, had to be particularly careful about their actions. One wrong act would taint their pureness forever. Risking one’s purity meant risking one’s moral standing in society. By ignoring society’s patriarchal standards of purity, women risked being ostracized.

However, though people were expected to follow the guidelines of society and accept its strict standards, they often did not. One of the main struggles women faced was the prevention of unwanted pregnancies: having a child out of wedlock was enough to permanently characterize a woman as impure and, amongst married women, having too many children would make a wife seem sexually promiscuous. So women sought methods of birth control to help prevent pregnancy. If birth control did not work, women might then induce miscarriages or procure an abortion.

One person who provided nineteenth-century women with birth control products or medical services was the midwife Anne Lohman who eventually adopted the name Madame Restell. When her activities entangled her with the criminal justice system, she was labelled “wicked.” Her job title, “female physician,” served as code for abortionist, and her business establishment thrived for over forty years. While the desperate women who reached out to Madame Restell used her services to escape society’s judgment of

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impurity, Restell herself was instantly deemed to be tainted. By examining the public's perception of Restell, the financial gains she made as a result of her impure choices, and the use of morality as well as the appeal to purity in her courtroom trial, it becomes apparent that Restell served as a bridge between two spheres in this world of conflicts. She understood the necessity of purity and was able to use society's values to her own advantage. Furthermore, she understood that her impure actions strengthened and contributed to the façade of purity that permeated New York City. She conformed to some womanly expectations, yet also exhibited some traits considered masculine and impure. Restell's ability to encompass these two spheres allowed her to profit immensely and live a comfortable lifestyle until her untimely death in 1878.

Historiography

The discussion among historians of women's sexuality in nineteenth-century America began in the late 1960s, simultaneously with the emergence of the feminist movement. Before this, the lives of these everyday women were not written about or addressed. Excluding this information resulted in historians missing a large piece of history. Barbara Welter was the first historian to recognize the long overlooked topic of women's daily life at the time. In 1966, Welter wrote the journal article "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," to address the subject of separate spheres which asserted that men and women are inherently different; while men were able to go out into the impure world, women remained at home. Though it was argued that these separate spheres were restricting for women—they needed to conform to the standards of the cult of true womanhood—as the investigation of this subject progressed, historians discovered that if women adhered to these cult standards, of "piety, purity, submissiveness and

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domesticity,” they could find a sense of power in society.⁴ Virtuous women were viewed as essential assets to society.⁵

In 1973, the historian Charles E. Rosenberg published “Sexuality, Class, and Role in 19th-Century America,” arguing that in order to be viewed as middle class, a woman had to abide by these ideals of womanhood.⁶ Furthermore, Rosenberg stated that being a true woman did not come without its own pressures. Middle class women had to constantly abide by these virtuous standards to ensure that they maintained their pure reputations and “Christian personality.”⁷ Purity became equated with self-control and in essence became a middle class ideal; sexual limitations existed even within marriages.⁸ Rosenberg made it clear that the responsibility to be “pure” was one which a woman held throughout her lifetime.

In 1982, Christine Stansell wrote “Women, Children, and the Uses of the Streets: Class and Gender Conflict in New York City, 1850-1860” which revealed that middle class women had an easier time maintaining their purity than other groups of women, since these true women had the financial means to maintain their womanhood. Lower class urban women had to work outside the home to support their families, automatically exposing them to an immoral world. Additionally, they faced more challenges in their efforts to keep a tidy home and raise their children. “The supposedly neglectful ways of laboring mothers reflected badly not only on their characters as parents, but also on their

⁴ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 152, doi:10.2307/2711179.

⁵ Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 157.

⁶ Charles E. Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America," *American Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (May 1973): 143, doi:10.2307/2711594.

⁷ Rosenberg, “Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America,” 137.

⁸ Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America," 139.

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very identity as women.”⁹ Stansell reveals how greatly this concept of purity permeated society.

Historians have argued that the declining birthrate of the nineteenth century is proof of women’s willingness to remain pure—and therefore have a good reputation— by practicing abstinence. Though this discussion of power through purity was prominent among scholars, in the 1990s, Janet Farrell Brodie challenged this assertion. In *Contraception and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century America*, she argued that because of this concept of purity, women, even if they were sexually active, were not comfortable expressing their sexuality, and so, even within marriages, “sexual intercourse was simultaneously an occasion for an intimate bond and a time of dread and anxiety.”¹⁰ Admitting to any sort of sexual desire brought a woman a sense of shame, and having impure thoughts meant that a woman was not a true woman. Women, assuming they were having a sexual relationship with their husbands, had to find ways to prevent pregnancies. Women had to find the perfect balance between embracing the joys of being a mother— with the correct number of children—and being perceived as overly promiscuous.¹¹

Farrell, while drawing attention to the sexual dilemmas of women in the nineteenth century, argued that the more logical explanation of the declining birthrate was that women began relying more on birth control.¹² Various forms of birth control were used: withdrawal, the rhythm method, douching, and breastfeeding in order to prevent back-to-back pregnancies were among the most popular strategies. As the century progressed, information about birth control became more widespread. However,

⁹ Christine Stansell, "Women, Children, and the Uses of the Streets," 321.

¹⁰ Janet Farrell Brodie, *Contraception and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 26.

¹¹ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 35.

¹² Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 4.

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Farrell claims that, like all sexually related topics, birth control was only discussed discreetly; ads for contraceptives used code words to inconspicuously advertise to consumers.¹³ Though everyone knew what these advertisements actually were, nineteenth-century social notions of purity required sex to be discussed with subtlety. Some women, if they could not prevent a pregnancy, might have to decide if they wanted to cause a miscarriage or get an abortion.¹⁴ Abortions, like every other aspect of sexuality in society, were private affairs. This research on women's sexuality reveals that women would turn to these strategies—birth control, forced miscarriages, and abortions—for the perceived betterment of their families and society.¹⁵

Research done since the 1970s has allowed current historians to look past the general attitudes of the period and study how the morality of the era directly affected particular sections of society. Using this prior research, the historian A. Cheree Carlson, in her book *The Crimes of Womanhood: Defining Femininity in a Court of Law*, explores the concept of purity more fully, determining how the concept of morality impacted court decisions in the 1800s. She analyzes the court cases of six women and examines how people's projections of a woman's proper character impacted the perception of the women on trial and how those expectations affected the verdict of each case.¹⁶

This paper focuses on Carlson's research of Madame Restell. Carlson examines how Restell, a midwife, famous in New York for being an abortionist, was brought to trial multiple times because of the work that she performed.¹⁷ She explores how Restell

¹³ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 5.

¹⁴ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 86.

¹⁵ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 112.

¹⁶ A. Cheree Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood: Defining Femininity in a Court of Law* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 12.

¹⁷ Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood*, 111.

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was able to escape serious convictions multiple times until Anthony Comstock, a moral crusader, began to demonize her.¹⁸ This paper will analyze Restell's courtroom testimony to examine how she – knowing that she was viewed as impure—still tried to associate herself with standards of purity during her trial as a strategy for her defense. While Carlson focuses on the public perception of Restell as impure, this paper will argue that Restell understood this public perception, and so, attempted to appear as pure as possible during her trial to convince the public that she was not as tainted as they had assumed.

Since new information on this subject has come to light, historians can now reinterpret older secondary sources. For instance, Allen Keller's book, *Scandalous Lady: The Life and Times of Madame Restell: New York's Most Notorious Abortioneer* was written in the 1980s before the contributions of such scholars as Farrell and Carlson. Yet, this source remains essential, as it is the most detailed historical account of Madame Restell. With the contributions of Farrell and Carlson, the information from Keller's source can be reanalyzed to better understand the life and times of Madame Restell. These newer sources strengthen the assertions made by Keller while also providing a way to re-examine this particularly useful source with a fresh viewpoint. While Keller provides a general history of her life events and styles Restell as “obviously amoral by profession,” Farrell and Carlson make it possible to understand further how her life embodied the tensions between purity and impurity during this time.¹⁹ The ideas of these historians will be expanded in order to address how Restell defied her times, functioning

¹⁸ Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood*, 130.

¹⁹ Allan Keller, *Scandalous Lady: The Life and Times of Madame Restell, New York's Most Notorious Abortioneer* (New York: Atheneum, 1981), 14.

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as a bridge between the feminine and masculine spheres, benefitting from both purity and impurity, at a time when a woman was supposed to reap benefits solely by being pure.

The Public's Perception of Madame Restell: Understanding her "Impurity"

Madame Restell was perceived as impure by her fellow New Yorkers; however, before understanding why this was so, it is essential to recognize the general mindset of a nineteenth-century American. First, during this time there was a complete separation of the two sexes. Each gender was supposed to fit into one of two designated spheres. While men had lives outside of their homes, and ventured out into the tainted, immoral public world, women were meant to remain in a domestic sphere, making their homes a "a cheerful place, so that brothers, husbands and sons would not go elsewhere in search of a good time."²⁰ Since men were considered the impure sex, it was assumed that they needed to be guided by virtuous, respectable women.²¹ Women, then, not only had to make sure that they upheld the set moral standards, but also had to keep their husbands in check. Women were supposed to be the moral compasses, always guiding the men to act as righteous citizens. In order for a female to be considered a true woman, she had to be uphold the values of "purity," "piety," and "submissiveness."²²

The maintenance of purity was particularly important for women: "Without it she was, in fact, no woman at all, but a member of some lower order. A 'fallen woman' was a 'fallen angel,' unworthy of the celestial company of her sex. To contemplate the loss of purity brought tears; to be guilty of such behavior, in women's magazines at least,

²⁰ Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," 163.

²¹ Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," 156.

²² Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," 152.

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brought madness or death.”²³ The fact that this message was spread in magazines which targeted women as their main consumers shows just how frequently women must have been bombarded with this message. This idea is further revealed through an examination of the guidebook, *The Whole Duty of Woman*, published anonymously by a female author in 1812. The author devotes a section to the discussion of a woman’s virginity, and declares that if a woman is a virgin, “[s]he approacheth the excellence of angels, her state is that of the most perfect innocence of morality.”²⁴ In other words, if a woman remained chaste, she would be revered in society. Purity was equated with being saintly.

To further complicate her life, a woman was not free from the constraints of purity after she was married, but rather had to remain pure for the entirety of her life. Though she obviously was no longer a virgin, she could still be judged based on the way she conducted her sexual relationship with her husband:

Women, on the one hand, were warned that excessive sexuality might cause illness— and, at the same time, that sickness, physical unattractiveness and lack of sexual responsiveness might well lead to the loss of their husbands' affection to ‘other women.’ Most men seem to have desired sexually responsive wives, yet feared that ‘excessive’ sexuality might lead either to infidelity, or less consciously, to dangerous and demanding impositions upon their abilities to perform adequately. As the century progressed, the term nymphomania was applied to degrees of sexual expression which would be considered quite normal today.²⁵

Rosenberg’s statement reveals that women had to constantly grapple with their sexuality, trying to find the perfect balance between being a pleasing wife and one who was overly promiscuous. Intimacy, then, would obviously become an issue for a couple, as the

²³ Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 154.

²⁴ *The Whole Duty of Woman* (Philadelphia: Edward Earle: Fry and Kammerer, Printers, 1812), 59.

²⁵ Rosenberg, “Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America,” 139.

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woman would always try to determine how much sex was *too* much.²⁶ Additionally, sexual acts were supposed to be satisfying for her husband; admitting that she had her own sexual urges would brand a woman as impure even if she did not act on them. A sexual relationship was part of her duty as wife, but it was not supposed to be a way for her to find pleasure. The contradictory duties of women are neatly captured in the section of *The Whole Duty of Woman* entitled “Marriage:” “Neglect not the little arts of endearment; but let the charm which captivated the lover, secure the attachment of the husband.”²⁷ Here the author encourages women to remain desirable, since it is through this intimacy that a wife can secure her husband’s love, and ensure that he will remain satisfied with her. However, shortly thereafter, the author warns: “Forget not the elegance of thy virginity, but appear every morning as at the morning of the bridal day.”²⁸ Though a woman is no longer a virgin, she must remain as close to this state of innocence as she possibly can; she should act as a “bride-to-be,” excited about her love, however not yet wed, and so remaining untainted by the foreboding wedding night.

Motherhood was another measure of a woman’s purity. While being a mother was critically important, much like a woman’s marriage, there were conflicts surrounding this duty. To be a good mother, a woman had to take into account how many children she had: the more children a woman had, the less care she could take of them. A wife might “base her attempts to space out and restrict her pregnancies in part on her sense of maternal duties, her concern that more children would interfere with her ability to nurture those already born.”²⁹ In other words, in order to provide a good home and create a

²⁶ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 26.

²⁷ *The Whole Duty of Woman*, 67.

²⁸ *The Whole Duty of Woman*, 67.

²⁹ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 35.

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domestic sphere that would provide a child with a proper upbringing, a woman should either restrict herself from having sex too often, since this chastity would obviously prevent future pregnancies, or she must take responsibility for this action and find some effective form of birth control. “Reproductive control became part of a woman’s duty to her family.”³⁰

If birth control methods did not work, this might push a woman to seek out other options, such as induced miscarriages or surgical abortions to terminate her undesired pregnancy.³¹ Although using birth control or having an abortion was not something that would ever be discussed or approved, there still existed a silent acceptance that women might have to resort to birth control as a way of maintaining this ultimate façade of purity. Women, if they acted in a way which would threaten their purity, would have to take care of this issue discreetly. Nevertheless, the way they dealt with this matter was impure. A woman might commit this one impure act, in secret, as a way of keeping herself from being deemed impure for the entirety of her life.

Since women could be stigmatized for using birth control measures or having an abortion, the person who provided these products or services would certainly not be held in high regard. This was true of Madame Restell, who, for over forty years, worked as an abortionist in New York City. Born in 1812 to a low-earning farming family, she was given the name Anne Trow.³² She kept this name until marrying her first husband, Henry Summers; soon after being wed, the new couple decided to move to New York City in 1831. Anne bore Henry a child, but this life with Henry was cut short when he contracted

³⁰ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 79.

³¹ Farrell, *Contraception and Abortion*, 86.

³² Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 10.

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typhoid fever and passed away in 1833.³³ She remained a widow until 1835 when she married Charles Lohman.³⁴

Though it is only speculative, there is some belief that during her two years as a widow, “she practiced midwifery, perhaps with occasional ventures into less respectable sidelines,” to earn the money to support herself and her child.³⁵ If this is the case, it suggests that from the beginning of her career, Madame Restell was balancing the two aforementioned spheres. She was forced to act in a masculine way, by working outside of her home. Yet midwifery was in essence, a feminine job, since it centered on a woman’s role as caretaker and on nurturing people back to health. Additionally, she was doing this to support, not just herself, but her child, and so she was trying to be a good mother. Yet, her possible “ventures into less respectable sidelines” indicate that in order to make the money to give her child a decent upbringing, she was making choices that society would regard as questionable. In other words, from very early on in her life, she committed acts which would be manly in the public’s eye.

Very soon after her second marriage, Lohman’s husband began discreetly advertising his wife’s business in local newspapers; it was in these ads that the alias “Madame Restell” first appeared.³⁶ This was perhaps a way of keeping her “legal name from being bandied in the streets” or, in other words, a way for her to maintain a good reputation.³⁷ She was clearly aware that having her name associated with this career would taint it. This could have also served as a way for her to distinguish her two selves—Anne Lohman, was the domestic wife and mother, while Madame Restell was

³³ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 11.

³⁴ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 11.

³⁵ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 11.

³⁶ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 11-12.

³⁷ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 12.

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the “unwomanly” woman who went into the public sphere and worked in a job that dealt with the impurities that resulted from an unspoken topic: sex.

In many ways, Restell’s work went directly against what was expected of her gender. Instead of saving her husband from immorality, she exposed him to it. To make matters even more drastic, Restell conducted this offensive business within her home—the place where a woman was expected to create the idealistic domestic setting that provided the ultimate comfort and escape from the impure outside world. This was completely offensive in nineteenth-century society in which there should have been a complete separation between the public and the private sphere. Restell openly welcomed this “impurity” into her home and then went further by profiting from it. Her roles as a wife and as a creator of a comfortable home environment, two things that defined a woman’s character, were in direct contradiction with her work.

In New York City illicit activities went on quietly: everybody knew, but nobody mentioned them. The city had found a balance between pure and impure, and Madame Restell was initially part of this balance. There was an understanding that she was necessary; women needed her to discreetly rid themselves of their reputation-damning mistakes and so “[m]any New Yorkers viewed her not as an evil presence but as a necessary evil.”³⁸ The existence of her business for so long reveals the wide acceptance of the belief that in order to maintain purity one must turn towards something a bit impure. However, though there might have been a silent acceptance of Madame Restell’s profession, this did not mean that she attained good standing in society. When her profession was brought to light and publicized in 1847, she was tried on five counts of

³⁸ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 9.

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manslaughter for performing a surgical abortion on a woman, and was openly condemned by her fellow New Yorkers.³⁹

Interestingly enough, she was not challenged by a city resident; rather, the case involved a woman named Maria Bodine from “a small Orange County town” which indicates that the impurities of the city were not often challenged by those who resided there.⁴⁰ When the morality of their city was called into question however, the citizens who had turned a blind eye now had to show that they found Madame Restell deplorable. This immediate disdain is evident when examining how challenging it was for the court to find jurors for Restell’s case—typically an easy process. The judge considered over one hundred candidates and took three days to fill the nine seats.⁴¹ People admitted that they were not completely unbiased. Though this courtroom case will be analyzed more deeply at a later point, it is important to note that New Yorkers clearly had preconceived notions of who Restell was as a person and these negative perceptions existed from very early in her career.

Capitalizing on Impurity

Madame Restell made the most of her conviction by capitalizing on her crime. Restell viewed her 1847 trial to be a positive not a negative experience since it served as an effective way to advertise her business. Keller remarked that the publicity from her trial was “easily worth \$100,000 in advertising.”⁴² Her name would have appeared everywhere, especially as a headline in newspapers. Though Restell “had had nothing to

³⁹ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 34.

⁴⁰ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 33.

⁴¹ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 37.

⁴² Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 69.

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do with the publications...she could not have devised a better way to keep her name, and practice, in the public eye.”⁴³ Her business booming to new heights, Restell gained a clientele large enough to make her one of the wealthiest individuals in New York City by the end of her life.

It is clear though, that she understood the importance of purity to this business even through the ways she advertised to her clients. In an 1840 advertisement, she marketed “Preventative Powders” not to unwed women, but to married women, who feared there would be repercussions for expanding their family too quickly.⁴⁴ Commenting on the benefits of these powders, she wrote: “The results of their adoption to the happiness, health, nay, often the life of many an affectionate wife and a fond mother, are too vast to touch upon within the limits of an advertisement—results that affect not only the present well-being of parents but the future happiness of their offspring.”⁴⁵ Restell coaxed women to purchase her product by appealing to the duty of being a good wife and mother. By using words such as “affectionate” and “fond” she suggests that women maintain these feminine qualities by using her powders; these products could preserve a woman’s pure reputation. She again appeals to this idea, later in her advertisement, when she asks: “Is it not wise and virtuous to prevent evils to which we are subject to simple and healthy means within our control? Every dispassionate, virtuous, and enlightened mind will unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative.”⁴⁶ Having too many children would mean contributing to an “evil” society and therefore breaking away from one’s role as a true woman. If a woman was truly “virtuous,” or truly “wise,”

⁴³ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 63.

⁴⁴ Madame Restell, "To Married Women," advertisement, *New York Herald*, April 13, 1840.

⁴⁵ Restell, "To Married Women."

⁴⁶ Restell, "To Married Women."

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she would confidently use the preventative powders and help, not only her, but her family, remain pure. Restell understood a woman's fears about being impure and therefore used this type of language in her advertisements to reassure women that this birth control method would not mean that she was breaking away from her role as a true woman, but was actually protecting it.

Considering that Restell's customers went to her for abortions because they knew that one impure act that became public could spoil their lifelong reputations, it becomes easier to understand why Restell never felt morally obligated to end her career and do something that was purer by society's standards. Society viewed Restell as impure by virtue of her career. Since the idea of redemption was not prevalent in nineteenth-century New York, Restell never would have been able to redeem herself and attain a "good" reputation, especially after her highly publicized trial in 1847, and so it would make no sense to also sacrifice her profits. She opted for profits over reputation.

Madame Restell was an astute woman who clearly saw that her business was one which would prosper. There was "a rapid decline of the crude birth rate in the last three quarters of the century. In Thompson and Whelpton's estimate, it was 52·8 in 1820, in 1850 it was 43·3, and in 1890 it was 31·5."⁴⁷ This was not due solely to a decline in fertility levels, but also because more women were turning to birth control methods and actively controlling how many children they would have. This can be argued because "[p]aralleling the decline of fertility was an almost geometric increase of abortion literature during the second third of the century, and most of it reported a large increase

⁴⁷ R. Sauer, "Attitudes to Abortion in America, 1800-1973," *Population Studies* 28, no. 1 (March 1974): 59, doi:10.2307/2173793.

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in the use of abortion.”⁴⁸ What this indicates is that Restell’s customer base expanded as the years went on. Abortionists were in high demand and women would look to get abortions whether or not Restell was open for business. If she would not provide them with her services, women simply would have found somewhere else to go.

While her business was, much like her, considered immoral by the majority of New York residents, in actuality Restell’s business serves as a representation of how she functioned as a bridge between two spheres, embracing a feminine spirit or a masculine spirit when it best suited her. Some of her business practices reveal that, even in this degrading business endeavor, she possessed feminine, womanly qualities and acted in a nurturing, motherly way. Perhaps the best example of this was her willingness to accept payment on a sliding scale, depending on a woman’s financial standing.⁴⁹ A wealthy woman was able to pay more and so she would be charged more. Though this arrangement can be viewed as purely profit-driven—it could be assumed that she wanted to earn as much money as she possibly could—this actually reveals that Restell had compassion for the poor women who feared being burdened by the financial strains of having a child. By charging the women who could afford the procedure more, she was making it possible to accommodate as many women as possible, since she would have the financial means available to help poorer women at a low cost.⁵⁰ In this way, she was seeking to protect as many women as possible—she was nurturing them in a sense, the way a mother would. Restell’s motherly inclinations are further revealed in her 1847 trial. It is noted that the night after she performed a medical procedure on her customer, Maria Bodine, she held the woman through the night, since she knew the woman was in a lot of

⁴⁸ Sauer, “Attitudes to Abortion in America,” 59.

⁴⁹ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 76.

⁵⁰ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 31.

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pain.⁵¹ In addition, she gave the woman money for her travels and for food when it came time to leave; she gave her \$1, for a journey that would cost the woman about twelve cents.⁵² She apparently showed some concern for the women for whom she provided services.

However, as compassionate as Restell seemed in some aspects of her business, she also acted in an immoral fashion—as men might more acceptably act. She certainly exploited and took advantage of women during her time as a female physician. Nowhere is this demonstrated more clearly than in the case of Mary Applegate. This young woman, unwed and pregnant, had been sent to Restell's so that her problem could be taken care of. However, she decided that she did indeed want to have her child; yet, a couple days after her delivery, she found that her child was missing.⁵³ Afterwards, the woman did something that was out of character for nineteenth-century women—she admitted that she was a patient of Restell's and reported the situation to the authorities.⁵⁴ Considering that this woman had decided that she would keep her child, it makes sense that she had no fear of sacrificing her reputation if it meant getting her child back. She would already, upon returning home with a child, have been deemed impure. Restell was questioned by authorities and told them that she had given the child up for adoption. Though charges were filed, Restell never went to trial and the case seemed to be dropped. Applegate's father came to New York from Philadelphia and demanded that Restell give the child back. Restell would not give them any information until after they had paid her

⁵¹ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 39.

⁵² Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 40.

⁵³ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 17.

⁵⁴ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 17.

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five thousand dollars.⁵⁵ Not above taking advantage of somebody if she saw the opportunity, Restell had no sympathy for the mother who desperately wanted to find her child. She simply used these circumstances as a way to profit as much as possible. By relying on the purity of the times and people's desire for utmost discretion, Restell could take these chances because people feared losing their anonymity. By being this disconnected from her sex, she seemed less womanly and therefore more like a man.

Purity and the Court System

When Madame Restell went to court again in 1847, she was found guilty. Earlier, in 1840, Restell was accused of playing a role in the death of Maria Purdy who, on her deathbed, confessed that she went to Restell about a year earlier to have an abortion.⁵⁶ During this time, New York law stated that “a fetus was not actually alive until ‘quickening’—the moment when the mother felt it moving in the womb.”⁵⁷ If a woman received an abortion with a quick child, which was about four months into a pregnancy, it was considered second degree manslaughter. However, having an abortion before this happened was not illegal. Yet, it was ultimately decided that the woman's deathbed testimony was not admissible, and so Restell avoided facing any sort of punishment.⁵⁸ However, in the years between her first and second trials, anti-abortion laws got tougher. In 1845, while performing an abortion after quickening remained a felony, performing an abortion before quickening was now a misdemeanor, and an abortionist would face a year

⁵⁵ Keller, *Scandalous Lady*, 19.

⁵⁶ Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood*, 118.

⁵⁷ Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood*, 116.

⁵⁸ Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood*, 120.

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in prison for performing this surgery.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the woman who had gotten the abortion would also face charges. She would have to pay a fine of up to \$1000 and possibly face time in prison.⁶⁰ Although women continued to receive abortions, after 1845, the stakes were made much higher.

In the case of Maria Bodine, Restell was unable to escape prosecution; she was found guilty of a misdemeanor and sentenced to one year in prison. By examining how Restell presented herself in court, it becomes possible to see that, even though she was perceived as masculine and immoral, she tried to present a different image. Understanding the extent to which Restell's bad reputation adversely affected her in court is made possible by examining the images included in the published court testimony, written for the *National Police Gazette*. The full court testimony was circulated and read throughout New York City as a form of entertainment. The cover featured a "Portrait of Madame Restell."⁶¹ She was presented in a masculine way—her face was plain, her lips were thin, and drawn in a straight line, with no upward curve. She looked expressionless, cold and callous. This is not necessarily what Restell looked like, but it does reveal how the public viewed her: a bitter, emotionless person.

Another image, on the back of the pamphlet, also reveals just how negatively the public viewed Restell. It depicted her as the devil's right-hand woman. Restell, with her plain face, looks to the left; in front of her a devilish creature with large bat-like wings sinks its pointy teeth into a small, dead baby.⁶² Instead of being a nurturing mother, this woman was portrayed as a monster – immoral, impure, and the devil's ally. Meanwhile,

⁵⁹ Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood*, 122.

⁶⁰ Carlson, *The Crimes of Womanhood*, 122.

⁶¹ *Wonderful Trial of Caroline Lohman*, 1.

⁶² *Wonderful Trial of Caroline Lohman*, 39.

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in the same publication, Maria Bodine was pictured in modest attire, a floor-length dress. She stands somewhere highly elevated, and behind her, the artist drew a scenic landscape.⁶³ Bodine's expression makes her look gentle and feminine, the victim of this "evil" abortionist's acts.

These images show that, even though Restell was found guilty of only one misdemeanor, the public still associated her with immorality. The images show that she faced tremendous bias against her when she went to trial. In fact, the prosecution's strategy was to constantly refer to Restell's immorality throughout the court proceedings; additionally, while the prosecutors presented their client Bodine as pure, the defense presented her as impure and vagrant, as a way of proving that she was no more innocent than the abortionist.⁶⁴ "The Restell trial was framed as a contest between two women," as both sides attempted to cast the other as impure and immoral.⁶⁵ The historian Carlson points out: "The strategies on both sides seem odd. After all, the law did not care whether Bodine was ill or Restell incompetent. All that mattered was whether there had been an abortion and whether it occurred before or after quickening. But the lawyers obviously believed that the jury needed to hear these arguments."⁶⁶ In other words, the lawyers knew that winning this case depended, not on facts or evidence, but on condemning the other woman as impure.

Restell's attorneys, James Brady and David Graham, were helped when Bodine was revealed to be a prostitute who "had for years, constantly and habitually, indulged in

⁶³ *Wonderful Trial of Caroline Lohman*, 40.

⁶⁴ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 122.

⁶⁵ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 122.

⁶⁶ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 122.

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the habits of prostitution.”⁶⁷ The word “indulged” suggested that the woman was so tainted that she viewed this job as something satisfactory and enjoyable. There was no consideration that this woman might have faced desperate circumstances, feeling as if she had no other choice but to enter this profession. Though Bodine, at the time of the trial, was quite ill, the defense drew upon her past career to show that she was sick, not because of Restell, but from syphilis.⁶⁸ The defense also argued that this woman of deplorable character could have lied about ever being pregnant at all. As a result of these factors, the defense claimed: “That witness is guilty as much as the accused, and ought as much to be tried.”⁶⁹ By claiming that the woman was as “guilty” as the accused, it then implied that Restell was in fact “guilty;” not of this crime, but of living an impure life. The trial very much became about impurity versus impurity.

Even though the trial featured Madame Restell, ironically, historians have neglected discussing her role in the proceedings. While she was on trial for her impure actions, she presented herself in a womanly manner, appealing to the standards of the cult of true womanhood. This is shown clearly through testimony which stated: “The prisoner was attended by Lohman, her husband, and appeared much dejected and downcast.”⁷⁰ This is significant, as Restell made her court entrance, not as a confident woman who was unapologetic, but as a submissive wife who seemed distraught suggesting that she was not the independent, malicious person that the press suggested, but rather a scared woman dependent on her husband for support. This becomes even more important when her role is contrasted with that of the complainant who was certainly not able to present herself as

⁶⁷ *Wonderful Trial of Caroline Lohman*, 9.

⁶⁸ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 126.

⁶⁹ *Wonderful Trial of Caroline Lohman*, 9.

⁷⁰ *Wonderful Trial of Caroline Lohman*, 3.

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a submissive wife; Bodine was a prostitute with no man to stand by her side and help her through the proceedings.

Restell further appealed to the values of a pure and virtuous woman by remaining silent; she did not once take the stand during the trial. She sat, almost as if she were an observer, and watched as other people spoke and argued for her. That is, she was acting as a proper woman might be expected to; she did not want to participate in this court event in the public sphere, when a true woman was meant to remain in her domestic sphere. Therefore, she let the men do all of the explaining. By speaking, Restell would have been taking a larger role, forcing herself further into this immoral male sphere, and therefore, equating herself more with the opposite sex. In this way, Madame Restell is once again revealed to be a bridge between these two spheres. While on trial for committing an act that was the antithesis of feminine, she presented herself as ultra-feminine, clearly understanding that this would be the best way to convince the courts that she was not guilty.

After being found guilty of performing an abortion before quickening and going to prison for a year, Restell avoided further prosecution for decades. Ultimately, it was not any of Restell's customers who would lead to her final brush with the law. Instead, it was a man named Anthony Comstock, "moral reformer," who wanted to rid the city of all things that he considered vice.⁷¹ His major victory in ushering in a new era of purity was achieved when the Comstock Law passed in 1873 making it a "federal offense to sell, lend, publish, or give away any information that the government deemed 'obscene.'"⁷² Birth control products or material on abortion were considered "obscene." Essentially

⁷¹ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 129.

⁷² Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 130.

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every aspect of Restell's business was now illegal. However, this new law did not convince Restell to close her business. This angered Comstock, who did not want the New York custom of secret vice to continue. In this city, where Restell thrived on helping people maintain a façade of purity, he wanted to establish true purity. To finally bring Restell down, he went to her in disguise, pleading for birth control pills to give to his wife, because he was concerned that having another child would be bad for her health.⁷³ After she sold him the pills he had her arrested.⁷⁴

As Comstock's influence rose, Restell lost the ability to depend upon both spheres. It was the beginning of a new era, a time where vice and morality could not so easily exist concurrently. Her ability to balance both spheres was offset—a woman must now truly be moral and pure at all times, not just be able to present herself as such. Restell, with “her negative reputation now firmly cemented in the public mind” must have recognized that, unlike in her earlier trial, there would be no chance of receiving a light sentence or being found not guilty.⁷⁵ As an elderly widowed woman, nearing the age of seventy, she would have had to spend her last days in prison. Therefore, the night before her trial, on April 1, 1878, Restell was “found dead in her bathtub, a suicide.”⁷⁶

Restell had been a woman who, for forty years, worked as a bridge between two spheres, using purity and impurity as each would best benefit her. Additionally, she understood that her impure acts actually served the ideals of this pure society, since women would maintain their façade of purity by going to her. In the end, however, society changed.

⁷³ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 130.

⁷⁴ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 130.

⁷⁵ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 131.

⁷⁶ Carlson, *Crimes of Womanhood*, 131.

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Conclusion

At a time in which “impurity” severely limited a woman’s role in society, Madame Restell found a way to circumvent its limitations and benefit from it for most of her life. As shown by examining the public’s perception of Restell, her capitalistic gains through impurity and her actions in the courtroom, Restell can be understood as a bridge between two spheres, balancing the qualities associated with men or women depending on the situation in which she found herself. As an abortionist, she went against the ideals of motherhood, yet she nurtured her patients as if she were a mother. Women could maintain their “pure” status because of her, even if this purity was merely a façade. Restell understood this dichotomy yet she knew that it worked to her benefit. In actuality, she was neither pure nor impure, but embodied both feminine and masculine characteristics. She broke out of the standards set by this artificially structured world and revealed that, in a period where women would supposedly find power through purity, the opposite could happen. Madame Restell, a woman deemed immoral and reprehensible, recognized a schism in a society that placed appearances above reality and profited greatly by operating inside that gap.

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Anxiety and Caffeine Correlational Study

Angela M. Schickling

Abstract

The purpose of this correlational design study was to determine the correlation between anxiety levels and caffeine intake in undergraduate students. Given previous experimental research, it was hypothesized that the correlation would be positive. Caffeine intake and anxiety levels were self-reported in the form of an online survey. Caffeine levels were quantified in relative caffeine in a cup of coffee, and anxiety was scored on the Zung Self-report Anxiety scale. The correlation was found to be positive but too modest to be statistically significant. Therefore, there may be other influential factors, such as subjective levels of caffeine intake, and further related research should be done in this area to determine the best way to alleviate personal distress in anxious populations.

Introduction

The correlation between caffeine intake and anxiety levels has been researched previously in experimental designs. Anxiety is a common psychiatric disorder, and personal distress of those who suffer can be lessened by a variety of factors other than just psychotherapy. If reduction of a substance as common as caffeine could lessen the distress of those who suffer from anxiety, this topic should be researched further. While

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previous studies have been done in this area as experimental designs, this study adds new information to the field by being a correlational study. Furthermore, this study contributes new information on the topic by restricting its population and focusing only on undergraduate students, ages 18-22 years.

This study attempts to answer several questions surrounding the correlation between caffeine intake and anxiety levels. Will this correlation be positive as other studies have suggested? If so, how positive will this correlation be? Is it possible that caffeine intake is predictive of anxiety levels? Caffeine intake will be measured in relative cups of coffee, and the Zung Self-report Anxiety Scale will measure anxiety.

Several experimental studies have demonstrated the positive relationship between anxiety levels and caffeine intake under controlled circumstances. For instance, in David M. Veleber and Donald I. Templer's "Effects of Caffeine on Anxiety and Depression," normal subjects took the Multiple Affective Adjective Checklist before and after caffeine injections (0 mg, 150 mg, and 300 mg). A significant positive correlation was found ($r = .335$) between caffeine dosage and post-anxiety scores (Veleber & Templer, 1984). This was an experimental design in which caffeine was administered to participants, as opposed to the correlational design of this study in which the participant's daily caffeine intake was self-reported in an effort to make the study more naturalistic, improving external validity.

Literature reviews have also supported this positive relationship between anxiety levels and caffeine intake. One literature review by Broderick (n.d.) examined several studies, focusing on the effects of caffeine on a variety of psychiatric symptoms, one of which was anxiety. This review stated that not only could caffeine heighten anxiety in

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those already experiencing an anxiety disorder but caffeine could also cause anxiety in normal individuals (Broderick, n.d.).

The population for this study was carefully selected, because undergraduate students are commonly thought to be a population with high stress and high anxiety levels. One study estimated that there was a 15.6% prevalence of either anxiety or depression among undergraduate students (Eisenberg, Gollust, Goldberstein, & Hefner, 2007). Therefore, this population was selected as a group with probable high prevalence of anxiety.

The purpose of this research was to examine the correlation between anxiety levels and caffeine intake in undergraduate students. A very strong correlation would provide pertinent information to those who suffer from anxiety, who may consider cutting down on caffeine intake in order to alleviate personal distress. The alternate hypothesis (H_1) was as follows: There will be a positive and statistically significant correlation between anxiety levels and caffeine intake in undergraduate students. The null hypothesis (H_0) was as follows: There will be a neutral or not statistically significant correlation between anxiety levels and caffeine intake in undergraduate students. The results would be considered statistically significant at alpha level .05 (i.e. a less than 5% probability that the results occurred by chance). Since this study was a correlational design, both of the variables were dependent variables. Caffeine intake was the predictor variable, and anxiety levels was the outcome variable.

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Methods

Participants

The population was 37 undergraduate students ages 18-22 years of age from various colleges in the United States. The population included both males and females. Although the sample size was relatively small, n was greater than 30, ensuring the probability that the sample was reflective of the population. Given the aforementioned high anxiety levels of college students and the amount of caffeine that college students drink, this was a logical population in which to study this correlation.

Participants were obtained on a completely voluntary basis via an online survey posted to social media on the Internet. Participants were not recruited. Responses were completely anonymous. No compensation was offered for participation.

There was little to no foreseeable risk to participants in the normal population. The study was determined to be exempt from examination from the Institutional Review Board at Adelphi University due to its minimal risk. Since the survey is completely anonymous, responses could in no way negatively affect a respondent's reputation. Furthermore, no questions surrounded especially sensitive information, such as illegal behavior. The only foreseeable risk would be associated with those with very high anxiety levels; to minimize risk to those with very high anxiety levels who would be made uncomfortable answering questions about anxiety, the title of the study was clear that the survey would ask about anxiety—using no deception. Furthermore, before participants began the survey, they were instructed to stop completion of the survey at any time if they felt in any way uncomfortable by the questions, and the online design of the survey ideally allowed participants optimal comfort.

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Materials/Apparatus

The survey consisted of two different measures. The first part (the Zung Self-report Anxiety scale) measured anxiety levels. The second part measured caffeine intake. In total, the survey consisted of 24 questions and generally took under five minutes to complete.

The first part of the survey was the Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale. This measure was selected based on the literature that supported its internal validity. Dr. William W. K. Zung, M.D. established the test when he was an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Duke University Medical Center. Zung designed his scale as a way to standardize measures of anxiety levels, providing high inter-rater reliability across tests. Zung was adamant about being inclusive of a variety of symptoms of anxiety, which came from the most common characteristics of anxiety. He also kept the scale “short and simple,” with only 15 somatic symptoms and five symptoms surrounding affect. In order to ensure that participants continued to pay attention to the test and in order to avoid demand characteristics, Zung inverted the answer choices for five of the questions (i.e. a participant trying to answer the highest levels of anxiety for each question would actually be marking the lowest level of anxiety for five of the questions). For example, item five stated, “I feel that everything is all right and nothing bad will happen;” a four on this item will be scored as a one to indicate the smallest level of anxiety. Zung developed the scale so that the participant’s self-reported answers would be scored on the same criteria that a clinician would use to assess the status of the self-reporter (Zung, 1971). To test the validity of his own test, Zung used the test with 225 psychiatric patients and 343 nonpatients; the scale had high internal validity with a .66 correlation, which was even higher at .74 for patients (Zung Self-rating Anxiety Scale (SAS) - Statistics Solutions,

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n.d.). Therefore, the Zung Self-rating Anxiety Scale has previously been proven to have high construct validity.

This scale was chosen, because it was well-established and had been proven to have high internal validity. Many other anxiety scales have been created, but it was important that this particular scale be self-report. Furthermore, this scale had fewer questions than other scales, which was important for this design; as an online survey about a potentially anxiety-provoking subject, participants should not have been subjected to an excessive amount of questions if it could be avoided. While this particular scale looks at the symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), caffeine can also affect those with other anxiety disorders, such as possibly being able to “trigger a panic reaction” in those with Panic Disorder (Hughes, 1996).

The Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale consists of twenty close-ended questions. The twenty questions are all symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder, which the participant scored on a level from one to four to indicate how often the symptom was felt by the participant: one indicated “none or a little of the time,” two indicated “some of the time,” three indicated “good part of the time,” and four indicated “most or all of the time.” The symptoms ranged across physiological and cognitive symptoms, such as “I feel afraid for no reason at all” and “I feel weak and get tired easily.” Then, the numbers were added up to a total. The Zung Self-report Anxiety Scale considers participants with a score of 36—out of a possible 80 points—in need of further assessment for Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Responses were recorded whether participants met the criteria for GAD or not so as not to bias the sample to only include those with high anxiety levels.

The second part of the survey examined caffeine intake. Three questions were asked about how much coffee, soda, and chocolate the participants consumed on a daily

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basis on average. Coffee and soda were measured in “cups,” and participants were instructed to count larger drinks as more than one cup (i.e. a 16 ounce drink counts as two cups). Chocolate was measured in ounces, and participants were informed that an average Hershey’s chocolate bar was 1.55 ounces. The questions were multiple-choice from 1-5 cups (ounces for chocolate) with an “other” section as the final choice. The final question addressed “other” significant sources of caffeine (eg caffeine supplements) to be inputted manually by participants.

Since questions about caffeine intake were not part of a well-established survey, the questions were carefully created to provide the most accurate and least biased information. All of Dillman’s suggestions for creating survey questions were followed. Since participants were only asked about their caffeine intake on the average day, the behaviors being asked about were easy to recall. No questions were double-barreled; each question only asked about one specific caffeine source (excluding the opportunity for participants to list other significant caffeine sources). Questions were clear, simple, and unambiguous (Dillman, 2000).

Design

The design was an anonymous online survey for undergraduate students ages 18-22 years. The study was a correlational study in which both the Zung Self-report Anxiety scale score and the caffeine level score were the dependent variables. The Zung Self-report Anxiety scale was measured using Zung’s coding and scoring system. The caffeine levels were measured in relative cups of coffee. No variables were manipulated since the study was a correlational study.

The survey consisted of two parts: the first part examining anxiety levels and the second part examining caffeine intake. The Zung Self-report Anxiety Scale made up the

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first part of the survey. The “Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale” measures anxiety levels on a close-ended interval scale similar to the Likert scale (“one” being “none or a little of the time” and ranging to “four” being “all or most of the time”). The second part was a series of questions about caffeine intake, regarding intake of coffee, soda, and chocolate intake. It also provided a space for “other” significant sources of caffeine. Caffeine intake was measured on a ratio scale, putting all caffeine consumption in terms of caffeine levels in a cup of coffee; for instance, a cup of soda was counted as 1/6 a cup of coffee, because an average cup of soda contains 1/6 the amount of caffeine as a cup of coffee. Similarly, the caffeine in an average ounce of chocolate is equivalent to 1/8 the amount of caffeine in a cup of coffee. The summation of the caffeine intake was rounded to the nearest ten thousandth of a cup.

The study was distributed online, posted to social media on the Internet, and potential participants had the choice to take the survey or not. The use of the Internet potentially allowed the survey to reach a larger and more diverse group than recruiting a sample would have. Ideally, given the relatively sensitive nature of the topic of anxiety levels, the design of the survey being online would make participants feel more comfortable stopping the survey than they would feel in a face-to-face survey. It was of utmost importance to the researcher that no participant be put in a compromising position; with an online design, in the event that someone felt anxious while being questioned about his/her anxiety, s/he would have been able to step away from the survey to return to normal anxiety levels and/or discontinue the study without feeling potential pressure from a researcher in a face-to-face setting. Also, by designing the study as an online survey, the social desirability bias was avoided since there was no researcher present, and responses were completely anonymous.

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Procedure

No participants were selected or recruited by the researcher. Therefore, there was no bias in who was selected to take the survey. Potential participants were told where they could locate the study via word of mouth but were not recruited or encouraged to take the survey in order to keep the participant pool relatively random. A possible limitation of this method was that those in contact with the researcher might have been more likely to see or hear about the study; however, the survey being public and being shared to several pages minimized this limitation. Therefore, participants were not limited to any single university or group. By opening the survey to undergraduates at several universities, the results had a higher external validity than results restricted to only one university, a restriction that would have presented many confounding variables.

Once participants accessed the online survey, they completed the questions. Participants were instructed—via the instructions at the top of the survey—to choose the answer that best applied. Furthermore, participants were instructed to stop completion of the survey if they felt uncomfortable at any time. First, they completed 20 close-ended response questions—the content of the Zung Self-report Anxiety scale. Then, they answered four multiple-choice questions related to their caffeine intake. All responses were self-reported. Then, the participants submitted their survey online. In total, the survey took participants very little time, generally from one to three minutes. The longest any participant took to complete the survey was six minutes and 54 seconds. No follow-up was necessary of the participants.

Results

The data from 37 participants was analyzed. A one-tailed hypothesis test was run to determine the Pearson correlation between the two dependent variables, the Zung Self-

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report Anxiety scale and the score corresponding to caffeine intake. The Pearson correlation was a .169, which is a weak but positive correlation. The one-tailed significance was .159, which is higher than the alpha level of .05 (although only moderately higher). Since the p-value was greater than the alpha level of .05, the results were not statistically significant.

The range of the caffeine scores was 7 (measured in relative cups of coffee), and the range of the Zung Self-report Anxiety scale scores was 34. The mean of the caffeine scores was 1.50, and the mean of the Zung Self-report anxiety scale scores was 43.24. The descriptive statistics are shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the Pearson correlation. Figures 3 and 4 show graphics associated with the Pearson correlation.

Discussion

Findings

While the correlation was positive as the alternative hypothesis suggested, it was a small correlation that was ultimately not statistically significant. Therefore, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis. While this was to be expected given previous research, the researcher had thought that a higher correlation might have existed. There are many reasons why this correlation may not have been as large as was expected. For example, those with anxiety may actually be consuming less coffee due to their sensitivity. Additionally, caffeine may have a greater impact on those that already have existing symptoms of an anxiety disorder but may not have as much of an effect on those who do not have an existing condition. These possibilities are discussed further under “Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research.”

Although this was not the purpose of the research, it was found that in general participants had very high anxiety levels, which is a cause for concern. The Zung Self-

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report Anxiety scale specifies that scores over 36 should be evaluated further for Generalized Anxiety Disorder. However, the mean score was a 43.24; therefore, on average, most participants should be evaluated further for GAD. In fact, only 24.32 % of participants did not qualify for further evaluation. Approximately three-quarters of participants qualified for further evaluation for a potential diagnosis of GAD. Granted, the scale only assesses for those that need further evaluation and is not a diagnosis in itself. However, assuming that the Zung Self-report Anxiety scale is as accurate as it has proven to be in the past, it seems clear that undergraduate students are suffering from more symptoms of anxiety than the general population. This both points towards an avenue for further research and encourages efforts towards relieving symptoms of anxiety in undergraduate students.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

A limitation of this design involved the limitations of any self-report; there was a chance that participants were incorrectly reporting their intake. However, the self-report design has benefits that outweigh this limitation; a self-report design avoids the lower external validity that comes from an experimental design and the Hawthorne effect that comes from an observational study. Therefore, a self-report design was the best choice for this particular study. Furthermore, measures such as the “other” option were put in place in order to allow participants the most freedom and accuracy in reporting how much caffeine they ingest. However, further research could be done in which caffeine intake is observed by a researcher—without intake being manipulated and without participants knowing they are being observed—in order to ensure that caffeine intake is accurately reported.

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While this correlation was not especially strong, these findings do provide suggestions for further research. For instance, it has been suggested that caffeine's effect on symptoms of anxiety are more severe in those who are already anxious. One literature review, conducted by Smith, determined that caffeine had generally positive effects on behavior, such as decreasing fatigue while increasing alertness. However, negative effects could occur both when caffeine intake is excessive and in "sensitive groups," such as those with preexisting anxiety disorders. In those with anxiety disorders, caffeine was shown to increase anxiety and make it difficult for sufferers to sleep. Furthermore, due to this anxiety, motor control can be impaired. Therefore, caffeine may not lead to negative behavior in the normal population but may lead to an increase in anxiety in those "sensitive groups" and/or in cases of excessive intake (Smith, 2002).

In other words, caffeine may not have a very strong effect on the normal population but may have a very strong correlation between caffeine intake and anxiety levels in those who are already suffering from symptoms of anxiety. Therefore, this study could be conducted again with an initial screening for anxiety. Those who exhibit normal levels of anxiety would be in one group and those who exhibit high levels of anxiety would be in a different group; then the correlation between anxiety levels and caffeine intake could be compared between normal populations and populations who already exhibit anxiety.

Other research suggests that those with anxiety disorders are biologically sensitive to caffeine levels and, therefore, can experience higher subjective levels of anxiety when drinking the same amount of caffeine as someone in the normal population (Lee, Cameron, & Greden, 1985). Therefore, it is possible that participants were feeling higher subjective levels of caffeine than their self-report of caffeine intake would suggest. Since

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research has shown that those who suffer from anxiety disorders, specifically panic disorders, may have higher sensitivity to caffeine (Boulenger, Uhde, Wolff, & Post, 1984), it may be necessary to differentiate between how much caffeine is being ingested versus the subjective caffeine levels that the participant is feeling the effects of. Even those in normal populations may have varying levels of sensitivity to caffeine (i.e. some may have higher caffeine tolerances than others). Therefore, further research could be conducted with a measurement of subjective levels of caffeine intake rather than an objective rating scale.

Another suggestion for further research surrounds a limitation of this study. This study could be conducted again with subjects specifying what types of caffeine they are drinking (i.e. a coffee order could include an extra shot of espresso, one brand may have more caffeine than another, etc.). This limitation was especially difficult in the “other” section where participants may not have been clear about the exact amount of caffeine in those sources, forcing the researcher to estimate. For the purposes of this study, it was more important to keep the survey of a manageable length rather than get overly specific about types of caffeine; additionally, since no participants indicated type of coffee (both those drinking highly caffeinated coffee and those drinking lowly caffeinated coffee) this limitation applied to all responses and should therefore not greatly affect the correlation. However, this could make for an interesting follow-up study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study were consistent with previous research and showed that there is a positive correlation between anxiety levels and caffeine intake in undergraduate populations, although the correlation is too modest to be statistically significant. This correlation study diversified the previous data on the topic that had been

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drawn mainly from experimental designs. The weakness of this correlation presents suggestions for further research on the topic, such as screening for anxiety before testing to compare those who are already predisposed to anxiety. Further research on the topic could yield interesting findings and help to alleviate the personal distress of those with high levels of anxiety.

Figures

Figure 1. Descriptive Statistics. This figure illustrates the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of the results. The relatively high mean of the Zung Self-report Anxiety Scale score should be noted.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CaffeineScore	37	.0000	7.0000	1.5009 68	1.5018886
ZungScore	37	27	61	43.24	9.275
Valid N (listwise)	37				

Figure 2. Pearson Correlation. This figure illustrates a positive, small Pearson correlation of .169. This figure also illustrates a significance (1-tailed) of .159, making the results not statistically significant at $\alpha=.05$.

Correlations		
	CaffeineScore	ZungScore
CaffeineScore	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.169
	N	.159
ZungScore	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.159
	N	37

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Figure 3. Zung Score and Caffeine Intake Scatterplot. This scatterplot visually illustrates the weak but positive correlation between caffeine intake and anxiety levels.

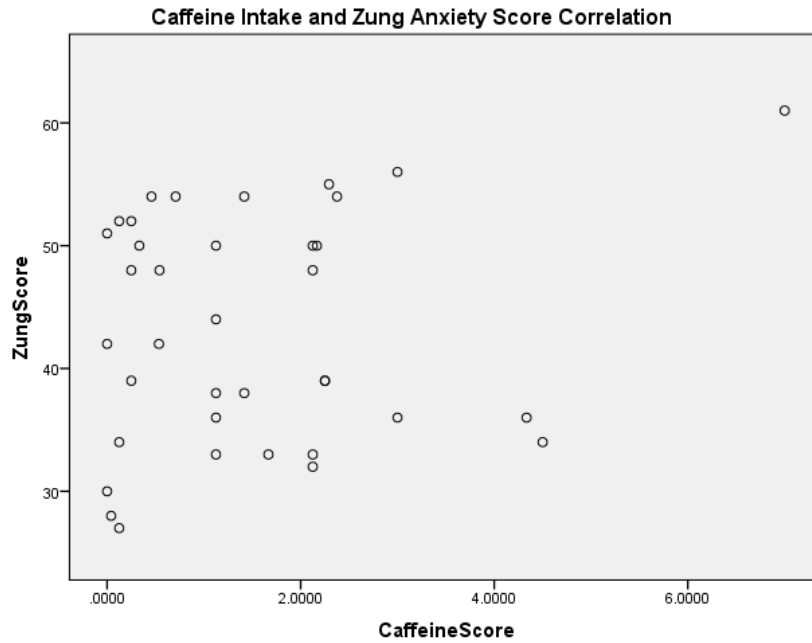
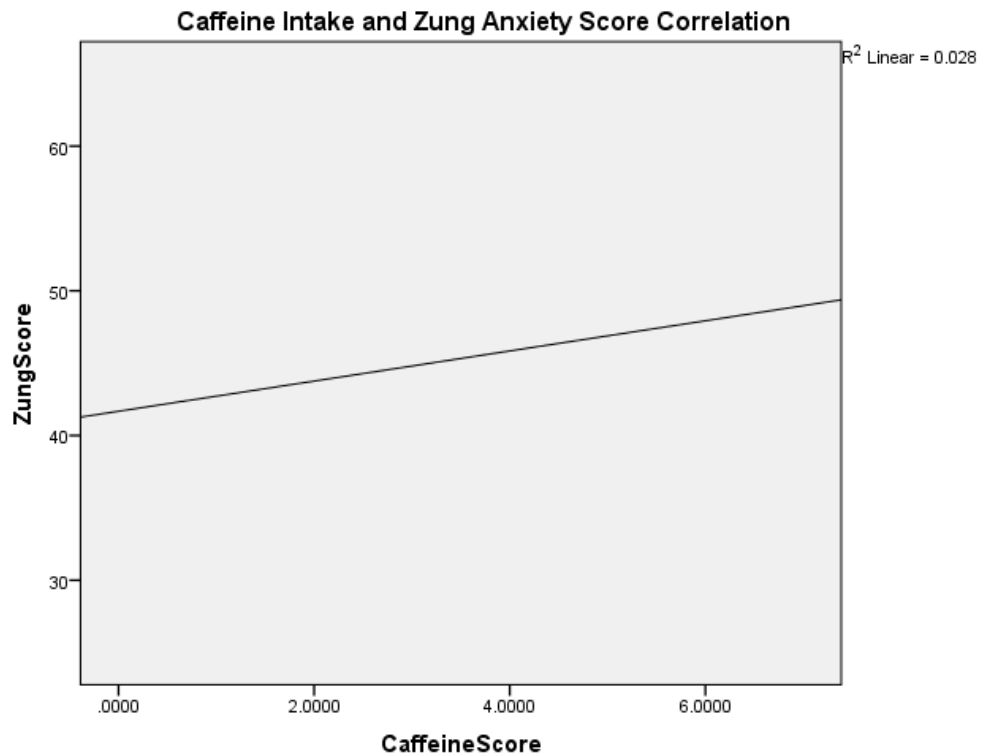


Figure 4. Zung Score and Caffeine Intake Line of Best Fit. This graph shows the modest, positive slope of the line of best fit of the scatterplot in Figure 3.



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