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Framed

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Journal of Undergraduate Writing
University of Oregon

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SPECIAL THANKS

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This year marks another year of forward momentum for the Nomad Mentorship Program and the *nomad* journal. Our theme, "Framed," drew in the largest cohort of undergraduate writers yet. This amazing group of students discovered a host of uses for the concept, evidenced in the topics featured here ranging from the phenomenology of Macbeth, to the framing of astrology for the modern reader.

The appeal of "Framed" was an interdisciplinary one that brought us students from all over campus including from Mathematics, Political Science, and our own discipline of Comparative Literature. Their dedication to this process and all of their hard work along the way led to a professional and engaging conference and an impressive collection of essays. We could not be prouder of our Nomad participants this year!

Of course, none of this would be possible without the tireless efforts of our Nomad Mentors who are the backbone of this endeavor. Their willingness to donate their time and energy to help these promising students develop their projects over the course of the year is a testament to their love of teaching and their willingness to help us build a strong Comp. Lit. community.

A special thanks goes out to this year's official Mentorship Coordinators and unofficial "hype squad," Elizabeth Howard and Bess Myers. Their organization, dedication, and positive energy kept this ship afloat all year.

In addition, I would like to thank Dawn Marlan, the newest addition to the Nomad team. She was integral in re-imagining our speaker's series and with her guidance we hosted two amazing speakers, Richard Griswold Dean of Students at Boston Architectural Center and Lan Samantha Chang, Director of the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

In addition to these two speakers, our featured talks by our Comparative Literature Professors Ken Calhoon, Karen Emmerich, and Michael Allan, paired with grad students Susi Gómez, Amanda Cornwall, and Andréa Gilroy offered our students exemplary models for scholarly work from a variety of perspectives and approaches and inspiration for their own projects.

While I'd like to maintain that this year was the best year ever, it follows on the back of the hard work of our previous editors with each year adding its own impression to the project. I look forward to seeing incoming Editor Sunayani Bhattacharya's work and can't wait to watch this program continue to grow.

Thanks for a great year!

EMILY MCGINN

KATHRYN BURNEY

Kathryn Burney is a sophomore studying Comparative Literature. She's interested in 20th century literature, women and gender studies, and popular culture.

Mentor: **Joanna Myers**

OPPRESSION IN “DAYDREAM NATION”

FOR CAROLINE WEXLER of the film *Daydream Nation*, being free of the expectations of chastity and passivity set for her by her closed-minded peers is the ultimate goal. She seeks to form a new identity through a construction of false confidence used to expand her sexual boundaries. She explains her changing identity in the first few minutes of the film as she walks down the hallway of her new school. She narrates “Don’t we all wanna be somebody different sometimes? Someone smarter and sexier and bolder than we really are?” Despite her desire for a sexuality defined by her independence, she submits to the control of the men in her life when she unknowingly takes on the role of a sympathized object. In *The Perverse Gaze of Sympathy*, Laura Hinton explores the notion that although the literature focused around sympathy is traditionally viewed as feminine, women are not inherently dependent. Through their sadomasochistic sentiments, they unwittingly allow themselves to be transformed into objects by the perverse male gaze. Analyzed through the idealized role of women in culture as presented by Hinton, Caroline Wexler of *Daydream Nation* is framed as an object of fantasy through the sadomasochistic gaze inflicted upon her by her boyfriends, therefore losing sight of the independent, sexually progressive woman she aspires to be.

Framing women as a means for pleasure is a device used to gain control. The objectifying gaze utilizes “perversion as a unifying device of power” by controlling through desire and abolishing a character’s subjectivity (Hinton 5). The scopophilic gaze, along with the perverted pleasure it derives from looking, is associated with, “taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze” (Mulvey 8). This gaze, though able to exist between any two parties, is often highly gendered. Laura Mulvey explains that “In a world ordered by sexual imbal-

ance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly” (Mulvey 9). This affects how the reader interprets the text and views the characters, opening up a wide possibility for discourse. When analyzing a text like that, character engagement, “may reinforce oppressive norms, but it may lead us to question them” (Smith 231). *Daydream Nation* allows for that opportunity. By examining this film’s impact on society, we find that “the way that particular films shape our perception of aspects of social reality can be contested in terms of their validity, relevance, and value” (Smith 235). An analysis of the film can challenge the image of the world this film creates. The film’s existence may fortify the very control it showcases by reinforcing these exploitative norms, but exposing that domination gives one the freedom to dismantle it.

Female characters with an awareness of their own objectification struggle to find a balance within the “culture at large that both demonizes and sentimentalizes women” (Hinton 2). Hinton explains this tension when she examines Clarissa Harlowe from the novel *Clarissa*, who leads a life guided by strict moral standards. In the hopes of resisting objectification by her primary pursuer, Robert Lovelace, she remains a virgin for the entirety of her life. By doing this, she recognizes her virginity as a commodity that has the possibility to signify either her ownership of herself, or once given away, a man’s ownership of her. Hinton examines this and comes to the conclusion that, “she uses her virginity as a moral weapon. Clarissa’s use of female virginity reflects traditional, patriarchal use of female sexuality: a commodity in the symbolic male network of property exchange” (Hinton 40). By clinging to her supposed purity, Clarissa confirms that this constructed concept has the ability to strip away her autonomy. Therefore, by being chaste, she unwittingly succumbs to male dominated ideas of sexual liberty. In turn, this event initiates her transformation into an object before any man has the chance to.

By contrast, Caroline seeks the goal of self-ownership through sexual promiscuity. Recognizing the objectification that occurs as a result of the fetishization of virginity, she hopes to maintain her existence as a subject by discarding her virginity and therefore devaluing her sexuality. The two men she sleeps with in the film, Mr. Anderson, her first boyfriend and English teacher; and Thurston Goldberg, her second boyfriend and classmate; are at first seemingly simple playthings with whom she initiates sex when and wherever she pleases, be that her classroom or the front seat of her car. However, as the film progresses it becomes clear that the men have been subtly dominating their relationships with Caroline and creating

a sympathetic object of her the entire time. By attempting to flip expectations and take ownership over her sexuality, Caroline acts outside of the social norms set up in her high school under the guise of positioning herself above her peers, whom she views as petty and boring. However, this attempt at breaking the system of objectification is fruitless because her boyfriends still condense her down to a fantasy.

As Clarissa’s attempt at escaping the force of her suitor’s controlling gaze through asserting dominance over her sexuality fails, so does Caroline’s. Though Clarissa controls her sexuality by refusing sex and Caroline controls her by willingly offering it up, both turn their bodies into commodities, which help to facilitate their own objectification. The effects of this are multi-faceted, as Hinton describes when she writes, “Clarissa’s own subject is bound up in the sadomasochistic contradictions between autonomy and dependency, aggression and desire. It is her natural law claim to rational autonomy and moral universality that denies but also belies her native dependence, and leads to the sadomasochistic dialectic” (Hinton 46). Here, Hinton identifies the sadomasochistic outbursts and loss of self that are the result of a contradictory society where women are told to be independent yet simultaneously reliant on men. Caroline is lost in a world where neither autonomy nor dependence is the right answer, evoking aggressive and harmful behaviors.

She uses her relationship with Mr. Anderson as an outlet for this destructive behavior. From the beginning it is neither healthy nor socially acceptable. The affair is initiated when Caroline turns in an essay to him describing her most admired figure. By choosing Monica Lewinsky, she is indicting that right from the start of this taboo pairing she will push the boundaries of acceptability to the limit. Due to the highly forbidden nature of their union as teacher and pupil their lust is secretive. As the nature of secret affairs places large importance upon the body and interactions with the body of the other, lovers in hiding, “take risks. Just at the moment when they should part to save his life and their honor, the lovers cannot restrain their passion and go at it again, a union that is described with greater physical intimacy than any others... They are lovers right on the brink of catastrophe” (Schultz 142). Their relationship is characterized by this reckless yet passionate risk taking. A turning point for Caroline is when she gains the awareness that Mr. Anderson does not view her as a whole complete person, but as an accommodating daydream who only exists to serve his ego and sex drive. This realization comes after she reads the first draft of his novel. As she reads, she realizes the novel is more autobiographical than fictional. She becomes greatly upset because she finally sees how he views her, yelling, “If you have the audacity, the inaccuracy to describe me

as ethereal, as some flawless perfect thing, then fuck you. No, fuck you! You don't know anything about me. The only reason you think I'm ethereal is because all we do is have sex, flirt, and have sex.” Surprised by her reaction, Mr. Anderson is unaware of the disparity between his perception of Caroline and her own self-image. Once she realizes the depth of her denial, she furthers her point, saying “I'm not here to save you. I'm the main character of my life.” As she was blind to his objectification of her, so was he.

Mesmerized by what he views as “ethereal beauty,” Mr. Anderson is ignorant of the person that exists beyond that beauty. This extreme dehumanization happens because, “woman as object is not just a figure of speech. Females are not merely thought of as objects, they are *literally seen* as objects... Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at” (Schur 66). This scene highlights Caroline's blooming consciousness of her existence as a thing. Her sexual journey is driven by the awareness of being seen. This objectification is an outcome of “fetishistic scopophilia,” which is pleasure derived from looking. It “builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself” (Mulvey 11). The pleasure he receives from his dominating gaze is satisfying enough to hold his understanding of her at a surface level, masking the dimensions lying beneath. After the confrontation about Mr. Anderson's novel, Caroline seeks both revenge and solace by having sex with fellow student Thurston and soon after officially begins to date the boy. In an attempt to free herself from Mr. Anderson's objectification, she instead flees into Thurston's arms, further blurring the line between autonomy and dependence.

Caroline hides within the safety of sex, believing as long as only her body is involved, no one can gain ownership of her. That fear of being turned into a possession of love is shown through interjections throughout the film of reports of a serial killer on the loose. Threats of him are sprinkled throughout couples' interactions and anytime he is brought up, the warning to always travel in pairs follows. Mentioned almost exclusively when couples are conversing, he represents the threat of a loss of autonomy brought on by love. During dates and hangouts this personification of Caroline's fear of the emotional destruction of love is often a present part of the conversation. This anonymous serial killer, seemed poised to jump at any moment, is a reminder that, “love represents a threat to one's life” (Schultz 103). Anytime Thurston attempts to be romantic, Caroline rejects it, keenly aware of the possibility of being objectified, which here is the equivalent of being loved. For instance, when she is still infatuated with Mr. Anderson, Caroline's dad forces

her to go on a date with Thurston, at the urging of Thurston's mother. Refusing to let it turn into something romantic, she pulls into an abandoned lot and immediately climbs into his lap to have sex with him, ready to ‘get it over with.’ Thurston convinces her to at least turn on music, although she finds even that nearly too sentimental.

Caroline is cautious of love because “the relationship of man to woman is like no other relationship of oppressor to oppressed. It is far more delicate, far more complex. After all, very often the two love one another. It is a rather gentle tyranny. We are subdued at the very moment of intimacy” (Schur 34). Unlike the brash hunger of her relationship with Mr. Anderson, this is a subtle, more nuanced interaction. The possibility of falling in love is leaving her feeling unstable and unable to control the situation. She tries to appear cold and indifferent but “hardness is not the absence of emotion, but a different emotional orientation towards others” (Ahmed 4). Thurston sees through her act of cold indifference and continues to chase her because he knows she is not actually heartless. She fights soft emotions and sentimental feeling, but her resistance eventually diminishes. After months of dating, she eventually allows herself to fully submit to Thurston by letting love win out over fear. She calls him while driving to tell him she loves him, and subsequently gets in a car accident with the serial killer, who then dies. When she chooses love, or the perception of love, over independence, the manifestation of her fear is killed.

The way that Thurston earns her love is also his path to control. For months prior to the events in the film, he pines after her. He relentlessly begs for her affection, making himself pathetic in her eyes in order to prove his devotion. He spends much of the film in this tortured lovesick state, waiting and hoping for Caroline, despite offers from a more willing girl. However, this is the very reason he is framed as a more worthy partner than Mr. Anderson. He eventually wins Caroline because “fashioning oneself as a consummate sufferer is a praiseworthy life's worth. Suffering itself is a thing of value” (Schultz 109). He turns this suffering and pain he experiences from his unrequited love into a commodity by subtly controlling their dynamic once it is returned. This is because “suffering that serves as proof of love can also be a form of leverage” (Schultz 108). He loves the idea of her for so long and with such pure devotion that he can use it as a source of power, yet he is viewed as more harmless than Mr. Anderson and thereby any control he exerts is subtle and goes unnoticed by Caroline. Because she is unaware of his control, she is also unaware of the damage it is causing. His displaced desires creates love

based on deception because, “love that is the plaything of the mind may also be a product of the mind - a fantasy, an illusion” (Schultz 112). The time he spends before Caroline reciprocates his feelings intensifies his ability to idealize her. As he spends hours and hours fantasizing over her, he places shallow conceptions of identity upon her.

Focused inward, Caroline is blind to this. Hinton characterizes the act of putting her on a fetishized pedestal as Thurston’s own sadomasochistic tendencies working to mingle fantasy and aggression. Hinton explains that for male characters, “aggression targets his female object through the idealizing gaze. But through his narcissism, aggression ultimately is aimed backward, toward the male ‘feminized’ self” (Hinton 77). By idealizing Caroline as an object of love, Thurston releases his aggression by controlling his image of her. On the first night they meet, he imagines taking her away so that the two of them could lead a simple life together, with him tending the garden and her being his dutiful housewife churning butter. He clings to this hope throughout the film, leading Caroline to eventually internalize this in a dream where they run away and live that simple life. However, due to the loss of self that comes with being objectified, Caroline’s dream ends with Thurston hiring a skywriter to write a muddled string of letters that only partially spell her name, leaving her disoriented. This hints at the idea that Caroline is somewhat aware that Thurston is idealizing her, if only in her subconscious.

Though his dream is what is currently plaguing her, Caroline internalizes the oppression of the male gaze right from the beginning. The first time she walks into the school, aware of every student watching her, and therefore highly aware of her existence as an object, she narrates: “I get defensive and weird and become the exact girl they think I am.” She is not being watched because she is a new student to the school. She is being scrutinized because she is a woman and therefore the students see it as their right to watch her. This form of oppression creates a stigma around womanhood. This is the “extreme endpoint of a stigmatization process, the devalued person’s ‘ultimate acceptance of deviant social status and efforts at adjustment of the basis of the associated role’” (Shur 39). Caroline internalizes, and subsequently unconsciously accepts her role as less-than. Without realizing it, she accepts the role of the other, of ‘thing.’ This starts at the beginning of the film and is only reinforced by her boyfriends.

Following the pattern Hinton set out, Thurston allows his narcissism and aggression to reverse and highlight his ‘feminized self,’ or his desire to submit to roles traditionally viewed as feminine. Though he holds the true power of the relation-

ship by controlling a careful balance of unseen power dynamics, he allows Caroline to think she occupies the dominant position. This willing submission is shown when Caroline decides when the two go out, where they go, and when they have sex. Once this domination is achieved, he experiences happiness for the first time in the film, and a depression that has haunted him for years finally lifts. However, that depression shifts onto Caroline, who is failing to cope with her confusion and loss of identity. Instead of becoming the powerful independent woman she aspired to be, she is a hollow shell of that, left with a sorrow so deep it becomes chronic.

The relationships she engages in are characterized by extremes; pure lust and idealized love. Caroline embodies both the idyllic couple and the secret lover. Easily framed as the picturesque high school sweethearts, Caroline and Thurston embody the concept of love as perceived by others. By succumbing to Thurston’s advances and leaving Mr. Anderson, she allows her personal identity to fall away in favor of participating in a socially acceptable couple. In opposition is the lustful secrecy of her affair with Mr. Anderson. Most of the scenes with him are shot in dimly lit places, including his classroom, signaling that their relationship hides under the veil of darkness and seclusion. Though on the surface countless differences can be drawn between the two, by closely examining the power dynamics, it can be seen that their impacts are harmful.

Under the sympathetic gaze of Mr. Anderson and Thurston, Caroline is made into a dependent object of fantasy instead of an equal partner in a relationship. However, the fantasies take on very different roles. In Mr. Anderson’s fantasy, Caroline is a condensed version of herself. He flattens her until she becomes a one-dimensional sex goddess. By contrast, the fantasy Thurston creates has many dimensions; the problem is they are not real. He constructs the depth he imagines for her. He does not actually understand her as a complex person. The men exist throughout the film without any awareness of their harmful fantasies, which perpetuates the creation of those ideals. Though Caroline briefly realizes what is occurring, she allows herself to fall back into the same pattern. As identified by Hinton, these themes of sadomasochism and objectification repeat time and again through stories of sympathy. *Daydream Nation* is no exception.

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JESSICA DILLEY

Jessica is a senior from the English department interested in modernism and literature from the early twentieth century.

Mentor: **Emily McGinn**

IMAGISM(E), VORTICISM AND THE FRAMING OF “OREAD”

THE FIRST PLACE I encountered H.D.’s “Oread” was in my copy of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Twentieth Century and After*. It was presented as an Imagist(e) poem but it was squished between Ezra Pound’s “A Few Don’ts by an Imagist(e)” and the anthology’s introduction to Vorticism. Already, in this publication the placement of the poem was blurred slightly. My copy of Norton’s anthology did not provide Ezra Pound’s “Vortex.” in its Vorticist material, so my realization that H. D.’s Imagist(e) poem “Oread” was used as a paragon of Vorticist poetry came about six months later. In finding “Oread” in *BLAST* the perception shifted from an Imagist(e) creation of a clear collagistic image into a Vorticist aggressive call to arms. This observation suggests that the format of publication in which a reader encounters a poem has the ability to affect their perception of it.

In “Making Modern *Poetry*: Format, Genre and the Invention of Imagism(e)” Bartholomew Brinkman offers a history of the little magazines like *Some Imagist Poets* and *BLAST*. Before magazines like *Poetry*, *Some Imagist Poets*, and *BLAST*, poems were often printed in popular magazines and newspapers, for example George Bornstein, a Professor Emeritus from the University of Michigan, points out that some poems by W. B. Yeats such as “September, 1913” drew meaning from the political and social content surrounding them in the newspaper they were printed in (Brinkman, 24). However, poems were consistently moved further and further from these contents until they were isolated to the back of newspapers and popular magazines (25). Brinkman claims it was only “a matter of time that a poem already isolated within the pages of mass-circulated magazines would wander out of these magazines altogether, finding its way into a little magazine called *Poetry*, where it could take center stage” (26). While this comment does pinpoint *Poetry* as the place where poems and poets come together, this is true of other small artistic

magazines. Where *Poetry* is a magazine that allows for all different types of poetry and artistry to exist in the same place, *Some Imagist Poets* and *BLAST* become even more isolated as they are anthologies focused on very specific aesthetics.

Brinkman also reveals how these magazines contributed to the objectification of poetry. He suggests "the poem was turned into an aesthetic object for contemplation... through the placement of the individual poem on the page framed by a border of white space (22). *Poetry* wished to elevate poetry into "poetic objects" and create "an ideal art exhibit" (Brinkman, 29). One way they achieved this was through the creation of a "fine book format" in which a single poem was placed:

on each page, framed by a border of white space. Isolating the poem has the affect of directing the readers attention to a single poem, literally closing off context (or in the white space providing a kind of empty context, a buffer zone) and limiting the possibility of the poem being contaminated through its interaction with other writing... Meaning is directed inward to the elements that construct the art-object. (30)

The poems then, no longer pull their meanings from the content they share a page with. They are self-contained objects, with no distractions. They also take on the appearance of paintings, physical art objects, in that they form pictures of words on a page that are framed by the white space that surround the word pictures.

Yet, even though they become self-contained art objects, Brinkman contends that the poems meanings are formed by the negotiation between the poem itself and the format of the magazine it was published in. Brinkman proposes "the format of these magazines and the... biographical characteristics [are important considerations] in the presentation of content and the negotiation of meaning" of poetry (22). He expounds on this in his theorization of why *Poetry* was "hands-down the vehicle for showcasing and dissemination of Imagism(e)" through a reading of Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (33). He claims that the placement of the poem on the page allows "the phrases [to be] taken as individual units of meaning, but also material fragments, as traces of ink that call attention to their place on the page" (36). *Poetry's* little magazine format was perfect for the production of Pound's poetry because the poem became isolated, unlike Yeats' poems within newspapers, and the "fine book format" gave it "the critical justification that this was indeed a poem worthy of such deep consideration" (36). *Poetry* also provided

the necessary biographical details to "make sense of a movement like Imagism(e)" through publication of pieces like Pound's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagist(e)" and F.S. Flint's "Imagisme," which would provide readers with the texts to understand new aesthetic visions. Yet, if a poem was published into two separate magazines these encounters could provide different ways to understand and read the poem. H. D. chose to publish "Oread" in the 1915 publication of *Some Imagist Poets*, the first Imagist(e) publication after Ezra Pound left the movement and Ezra Pound published H.D.'s poem in his Vorticist manifesto "Vortex." within Wyndham Lewis' first publication of *BLAST* in 1914.

To start off the exploration of how these different places of publication effect H. D.'s poem, I will examine the ways in which "Oread" negotiates its meaning with Imagism(e) and *Some Imagist Poets*. Imagism(e) was an artistic movement focused solely on poetry. Paul Peppis asserts that Imagist(e)s had an "anti-romantic aesthetic" and react to Futurisms desire to destroy all connections to the past because they insisted that "making poetry requires 'reconnecting it to a valued cultural tradition'" (32). However, the main purpose of Imagist(e) poems, as can be seen in the name, was that the poem must create a clear and concise image.

In analyzing "Oread" through an Imagist(e) lens, and particularly through the format of *Some Imagist Poets* there are two important documents to consider. One is Ezra Pound's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," which is an essay featured in the March 1913 issue of *Poetry* wherein Pound explains the poetic ideals of Imagism(e). The other is the "Preface" to *Some Imagist Poets* where readers would discover H. D.'s "Oread." The "Preface" reiterates the aesthetics and purpose of Imagist(e)s within their own magazine and to provide a separate statement of purpose after Ezra Pound left the movement. Both works describe Imagist(e)s creation of poetic images. The first sentence of Pound's "A Few Don'ts" proposes that "an 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" whereas the "Preface" of 1915 proclaims as their fourth mandate that Imagist(e) poets must "present an image (hence the name: 'Imagist')... we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities; however magnificent and sonorous" ("A Few Don'ts, 200; Aldington and H.D. vii). Pound's definition of an image is much more exact than the "Preface's" insistence for an image. Pound clearly defines his belief that an image should be both an intellectual and emotional moment paused as if for a person's observation. The "Preface's" initial mandate on this point simply asks for an image but quickly states that it should be an "exact" image.

In "A Few Don'ts" and the 1915 "Preface" Imagism(e) is explained as a movement of few, but clear, words, which is what made it so different from other poetry of the time. For example, the language of the Romantics was quite different. In his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* Williams Wordsworth explains that he will "adopt the very language of men" because "he must express himself as other men express themselves" (297, 303). Wordsworth then is not concerned with precision and clarity but using everyday language as seen in his "Tintern Abbey." He spends the first twenty-two lines describing a location that the speaker has returned to after five years. In its entirety it is over one hundred and sixty lines long. This poem's long pensive musings on the relationship between people and nature is in contrast with the Imagist(e) goal of creating a precise image. Instead it summons thoughts and questions.

In 1913, Pound wrote that a poet should "use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something" and the first precept of the "Preface" states that poets should "employ always the exact words, not the nearly exact, nor the merely decorative word" ("A Few Don'ts", 201; Aldington and H.D., vi). Pound's early description of Imagism(e) makes a demand for simplicity, for a poem that expects every word to add to the overall meaning of the poem, which is still relevant in *Some Imagist Poets* of 1915. The belief that poetry should be concise, and use few words is at odds with previous poetic movements. It does not allow poets the room to spend twenty lines to simply begin a poem, let alone over a hundred to actually write the poem. The wandering and questioning nature of Wordsworth's poem is simply not possible with Imagism(e)'s hard and exact language.

If one found H.D.'s "Oread" in *Some Imagist Poets*, one would notice how it upholds Pound's declarations found in "A Few Don'ts" as well as the mandates in the "Preface." The poem would be found centered and isolated on its own page with the title of the magazine and the poem above it and the page number below it:

Whirl up, sea—
whirl your pointed pines,
splash your great pines
on our rocks,
hurl your green over us,
cover us with your pools of fir (H.D., 28).

It is a short poem describing a nature scene, which summons an image. It is six lines long, of no particular meter. There is not an overabundance of words; it is almost abrupt for its lack of them. The first line is three words followed by

a dash, which indicates an unfinished thought, as if the line itself has been cut. This highlights H.D.'s minimal word usage, as unnecessary words are removed. H.D.'s condensed poetic form becomes especially apparent if one were to compare it to one of Wordsworth's Romantic nature poems. From the first eight lines of W "Tintern Abbey:"

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

Wordsworth also notices the interaction of water and land. Even the vocabulary Wordsworth uses points out the differences between these two aesthetics. Where H.D.'s sea becomes as hard as a pine, Wordsworth's water gently "rolls" and murmurs "softly." From an Imagist(e) perspective using these eight lines to begin a poem is too "soft," the image that the poet wants to present becomes clouded in an overly decorous and emotional language. Bernard Engel claims in "H.D.: Poems that Matter and Dilutions" that H.D.'s best work is noted by her "technique of selecting exactly the right, exactly sufficient detail to present the subject without giving excess attention to pictorial elements, without giving it more emotional or ethical import than it will bear" (508). H.D.'s poetry is one of few words, and thus one of restraint. It presents an image but does not force more into the image than exactly necessary.

To read "Oread" through Imagism(e), one couldn't ignore the separate images H.D. creates then merges in "Oread." Engel purports that H.D.'s best poems also "present concrete particulars with precise vivid imagery that brings to the reader a quick, accurate, and moving presentation of an observation" (512). In "Oread" H.D. creates an image of the sea and the land. However, these two images do not stay separate but merge into one clear, albeit bizarre, image. The sea is rising up; the land is made up of trees and rocks but the trees are not separate from the water; they stand amongst the rocks and become part of the sea. The waves are "green" made up of "pointed" and "great" pines. The sea and the land writhe so close together they become one. H.D.'s merging of images not only upholds Pound's belief that poems should create one clear image but also functions under what Peppis de-

scribed as "Imagism's strict poetics of juxtaposed images," which works in a similar way to Cubist collages. Objects and images are placed next to each other in order to create one image. H.D. uses a linguistic collage to create a single image. Through her words she takes two images that are quite different and makes one image out of them in the same way that Picasso takes seemingly randomly shaped cardboard cutouts and creates a guitar.

One reason this creation of an image is possible is because of the way "Oread" is isolated in the Imagist(e) anthology. *Some Imagist Poets* is similar to *Poetry* in that poems are isolated on a page, surrounded by a frame of white. So, "Oread" becomes the poetic art-object that Brinkman describes in that it is allowed to stand by itself, not surrounded by other text. The poem itself becomes an image of words and its meaning is not drawn from other content on the page but from the title and body of the poem within the frame of the white space. The image that H.D. creates is not influenced by other people's ideas and visions but is given the space to present itself to readers. The starkness of H.D.'s language and the image of H.D.'s poem are emphasized even more because they are alone. The white space that surrounds "Oread" provides evidence of H.D.'s sparse language but it also sets the stage. While some of the words provoke the vague notion of passion: whirling and splashing it is almost cold and definitely unemotional. Where Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" connects nature to human nature and emotions explicitly, H.D.'s poem lacks a named human speaker and therefore the land and the sea are left alone to form their own image, just as "Oread" is given the frame and space to make its own meaning.

Another important aspect of Imagism(e) is that it attempts to be timeless. Pound mandates that Imagism(e) should have a "sense of freedom from time limits and space limits" (200). He also refers aspiring poets to Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Milton, Chaucer, and Sappho. These references span the time from ancient to modern, the European continent, and even include men and women. Pound wanted Imagist(e) poems to be able to accomplish the same feat. They needed to resonate with the people in the immediate time and place they were published but also people across the English Channel and people in the future. They needed to overcome the distances of time and space as the great poets Pound referenced.

H.D.'s "Oread" creates a bridge through time through her title. The title of the poem refers to a nymph from Greek mythology that lived in mountains (OED). H.D.'s inclusion of ancient Greek mythology within "Oread" is an attempt to bridge time and space. As a mountain nymph, the titled oread could have been an ob-

server to the clashing of the sea and land. She would be outside of the event and also not quite human. That places the only semi-human participant of the poem as a clear outsider, she is outside of the image, as well as being outside of the poem itself. She connects with readers, as they are also outside the poem, only encountering it as whatever image they can summon in their own minds. Through this connection the ancient becomes contemporary, and the readers are transported to a different place and time.

However, if one were to discover this poem in the first edition of *BLAST* the title is actually missing, as it is placed within Ezra Pound's definitive text on Vorticist poetry. The rest of the text does not make explicit classical references so in withholding the title Pound erases the poem's connection to the classical texts. Therefore, the presentation of "Oread" in *BLAST* changes the perception of the poem. In *Some Imagist Poets*, "Oread" is presented like any other poem in the anthology. There is nothing spectacular that makes it stand out overly much. However, in *BLAST* "Oread" is not left alone surrounded by white. It is dropped at the very end of Pound's Vorticist manifest "Vortex." touted as the model for Vorticist poetry. The rest of Pound's "Vortex." is an aggressive playground of typography. There are several headings that are centered on the page, bolded and presented in all capitals: "THE PRIMARY PIGMENT," "THE TURBINE," "THE MAN," etc. (153). The rest of the text is aligned to the left, but some words are made to appear to jump out at the reader as they are also completely capitalized: "MECHANICS," "MOMENTUM," "CORPSES". H.D.'s poem is dropped into this text title less only with this comment: "In painting Kandinsky, Picasso. In poetry this by H.D." (154). Otherwise, it is mostly left alone, as it does not suffer through alterations in typeface. Yet, it is shrunken down and placed within a larger text. Amongst the new experimental lettering, the white space frame described by Brinkman is lost. It is no longer a sole poem framed with space and given room to exist by itself. Instead, it is a small piece of a bigger work.

"Oread"'s encounter with *BLAST* and "Vortex." specifically give it a new temporality and it must be read through and from these texts. It is not alone on a page of white; it is imbricated within another text. When found in its little space of *BLAST* it is suddenly given different contexts and connotations, simply because of its location. It is not allowed the isolation granted to it in *Some Imagist Poets* but is influenced by the text surrounding it. The words that Pound put before it must be, almost subconsciously, read with and through H.D.'s "Oread."

While Imagism(e) focuses on an image, precisely capturing one moment in

time Vorticism calls for endless energy and movement. Pound claims that "The Vortex is the point of maximum energy" and that Vorticist art is "the most highly energized statement" (153). He uses verbs like "rush," "charge," and "spend" to show how this energy is put into motion. Vorticism is not a still captured moment; it is a refusal to be captured, as it is energy and movement. The movement and energy described in *BLAST* transposes itself into H.D.'s "Oread." Her command that the sea "whirl up," is reflective of the movement's name itself: it is the Vortex, the center of all movement.

However, this energy is not used only for creative purposes; it echoes a violent destructive force as well and this violence transmutes H.D.'s poem. Vorticism demands art be not just energetic but energy itself. This energy has to be used somehow and some of the ways Pound portrays the usage of this energy are destructive instead of creative. In his attempts to define the vortex, Pound wrote, "All MOMENTUM, which is the past bearing upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID, NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE" (153). The momentum of the vortex has the destructive force to charge, or attack a future that Pound has decided is too tranquil. The energy of Vorticism is not used solely for creating art as it also can attack the less energized. H.D.'s poem becomes a portrayal of Pound's violent energy when it demands, the sea to "splash your great pines" and to "hurl your green over us." There is a sense of violent action and danger. There is a collision between the sea's waves and the rocks. It is no longer an interesting merging of time and space but a battle in which the victor "covers" and erases the rocks.

The language within Pound's "Vortex." also reveals the hyper-masculinity within Vorticism. In his Imagist(e) manifesto, Pound claimed that elaboration "dulls the image" whereas his Vorticist text claimed that it led to "flaccidity" (201, 154). These words inform readers that something is lacking. Something that is dull lacks wit or vivacity whereas flaccidity lacks firmness or vigor (OED). This would mean that too many words cause poems to lack the very things that make them beautiful. Yet, in "Vortex." Pound makes this failure reflect on a male's inability to perform, questioning not only a poet's ability to create but also a man's masculinity. The threat of flaccidity is not the only allusion to masculinity within "Vortex." One piece of evidence of Vorticism's hyper-masculinity is the bolded, capitalized, and enlarged "THE MAN." centered almost at the halfway point of the second page of "Vortex." (154). Under this heading the method of the Vorticist artist are outlined, but one thing is very clear this artist is emphasized as being a "man." In "Vortex." Pound claims "all the past that is vital... is pregnant in the vortex, NOW" (153).

This sets the Vortex and its art as something that can be filled and used to create. It would place the artists as the ones to fill and impregnate art. The artist is seen as the masculine creator, a rather patriarchal view of art and its creation.

Upon encountering H.D.'s "Oread" in Pound's "Vortex." the poem takes on these issues of masculinity. H.D.'s creation of waves comprised of "pointed" and "great" pines becomes a phallic association. With this association, the violent battle of the sea and land becomes a battle of masculinity. The splashing pines become a celebration of male vitality, of the possibility of male creativity. Yet, it also shows the suffocating properties of this hyper-masculinity in its last line, the land is "covered" with the waves. There is creation, a merging of land and sea, and yet some aspects of the land are lost forever, covered and forgotten.

This conceptualization of H.D.'s poem as a celebration of male-ness is complicated by H.D.'s own gender. She was a female poet, so the use of her poem to validate such an overtly masculine artistic movement is rather perplexing. It is further complicated by the fact that H.D. was very genuinely an Imagist(e), one of the first, and as seen by Pound's elevation of her in *BLAST*, considered one of the best. Yet, Pound has a history of using H.D.'s poetry to further his own poetic ideals. After H.D.'s arrival in London, Pound was so impressed with her poetry that he sent them to the editor of *Poetry* magazine signed "H.D. Imagiste" (Greenblatt, 2057). Peppis claims that H.D. was one of the first poets he "christened" as an Imagiste (32). Pound christens, and claims, H.D.'s poetry for Imagism(e) because her style is so similar to his ideals of poetry. In both Imagism(e) and Vorticism Pound uses H.D.'s name and poetry to support his goals.

While Imagism(e) and Vorticism shared many similarities one key difference between the two was their concept of time within poetry. Vorticism focuses on the present and the social conditions of that present. Lewis wrote in *BLAST*'s "Long Live the Vortex" that "We stand for the Reality of the Present—not for the sentimental Future, or the sacripant Past" (8). Lewis is mandating that Vorticist's write within and about their contemporary society. This focus on the present is found within Pound's "Vortex." through his references to important contemporary artists. He mentions Marinetti, the founder of the Italian Futurists; Picasso, the father of Cubism; Kandinsky, the founder of Abstractionist painting; and, of course, quotes his "A Few Don'ts." This is unlike Pound's references to artists of all time in "A Few Don'ts." However, "Vortex." and "A Few Don'ts" share an emphasis on an inclusion of artists from many places. In "Vortex." the references Pound made were to people he considered contemporary peers. There are not references to ancient cultures.

He focuses on the people that are important in that present, just as Lewis mandates that Vorticist artists focus on the "Reality of the Present."

Reading "Oread" in this lens becomes difficult because of H.D.'s title. Again the lack of title in Vorticism's printing of "Oread" becomes an issue. Since it immediately references ancient Greek mythology it is not aligned with Lewis' "Reality of the Present." The fact that Pound left off H.D.'s title the reading becomes much easier. Now, readers no longer have to negotiate Lewis' maintenance of a presently focused art with a poem that is titled after an ancient mythological creature. To put the present of "Oread's" publication in *BLAST* into context, the year was 1914 and the location was the United Kingdom. It is a time where the United Kingdom was beginning to make its avant-garde debut. It is a magazine that blatantly calls out other European movements: Futurism, Cubism, and Abstractionism. H.D.'s call for the sea to "whirl up" then becomes a call to arms, an invitation to British artists to step up to the new Vorticist standard. The flashy European avant-garde was no longer allowed to intimidate British artists; Vorticists dared them to "splash your great pines/ on our rocks" and "cover us with your pools of fir." Or to create art and unashamedly, energetically, present it into a European setting where through H.D.'s poetry Pound proclaims that they will "cover" their "pools" and essentially cover up and take over the European art scene.

While Vorticism's focus on the present initially seems to narrow its artistic scope, unlike Imagism(e), it was not solely focused on poetry or even other forms of literary art. There were other art forms involved like painting and sculpting. This meeting of physical and literary art allows wordsmiths to "explore language as a visual medium" and this helps formulate "a poetic abstraction that might contend with Cubist and Futurist painting" (Peppis, 34, 36). Vorticists take art even further through their mix of art and politics (Peppis, 36). They are not the distant, timeless, neoclassical poets of Imagism(e) but artists who use their creativity to comment on the social situations of their present. This makes H.D.'s poem not just a call to other poets but all the artists hidden in Europe's rather large shadow.

When one encounters H.D.'s title-less poem in *BLAST* it reads quite a bit differently because of the content that surrounds it. It's encounter with Pound's "Vortex" as well as Wyndham Lewis' intentions for Vorticism change H.D.'s subject-less depiction of an image into a call for artists outside of the eye of the European artistic storm to step forward and use their energy to create. However, this creative energy is violent and destructive with the destructive power of overwhelming and taking over the artistic avant-garde. The way "Oread's" encounter with Imagist(e)

and Vorticist anthologies and documents changes the perception of the poem supports Brinkman's theory that poems derive their meanings from the negotiation between the poem and the format of the magazine it was published in. This theory is important because it reveals some important factors to consider when reading poetry. The placement of a poem within a certain anthology, aesthetic, time period, document, or even website greatly affects the perception of a poem.

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UNIVERSALPOESIE AS ILLUSTRATED BY NOVALIS' "ATLANTIS TALE"

UNIVERSALPOESIE IS AN idealistic conception of the function and purpose of poetry introduced during the German Romanticism movement. Universalpoesie denotes a type of literature, which calls for the merging of not only all literary forms—poetry, drama, prose, etc.—but also, the merging of art and science. Universalpoesie is a philosophy that represents the highest aim of art: unification through poetic means. This philosophy grew to define the collective thought of early German Romanticism, as a reaction to the Age of Enlightenment attempting to reform thinking and reframe perspective. According to this philosophy, poetry has the ability to transcend all aspects of life and transform thinking for the purpose of unification and enlightenment. This form of poesy is well depicted in the "Atlantis Tale" found in Novalis' novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Through this text, Novalis illustrates the transformation of the world we know—which suffers the consequences of establishing binary categories for art and nature in opposition to science—to a Utopian society that recognizes the progressive nature of the unification of every aspect of life. This unification is achieved through poetic means; poetry serves as a communicative tool with the ability to transcend the arts, sciences and nature. Poetry serves as a mediator to the sublime or metaphysical.

Early German Romantic thought was characterized by the concept of Universalpoesie, which called for a re-evaluation of societal values and re-enchantment of nature through poetic means. This paper examines the Universalpoesie as

a call for the re-evaluation of societal values and perspective on the arts as well as the world as a whole. This is done through looking closely at the historical context in which this philosophy was born, evaluating the philosophy itself as outlined by its authors, and by looking closely at Novalis' "Atlantis Tale" for an illustration of this philosophy in action.

German Romanticism was the dominant movement in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The early German Romantics attempted to create a new synthesis of art, philosophy, and science by looking to the Middle Ages as a simpler, more integrated period. The early Romantics sought an epistemology that simultaneously valued criticism and escaped skepticism; that recognized the failures of foundationalism, a form of philosophical thought that concerns theories of knowledge resting upon certain known beliefs, while not accepting relativism, a form of philosophical thought that maintains that knowledge exists in relation to cultural and societal contexts and is not absolute. The early romantic aesthetic was concerned with transforming not only literature and criticism, but arts and sciences as well by breaking down barriers between art and life. The transformation of literature and criticism was a reaction to neoclassical literature of the 17th and 18th centuries; the call to reform thinking and unify arts and sciences came as a reaction to the Enlightenment's call for analytical reasoning. We see this in both the Romantic use of allegory and fragments.

Universalpoesie grew to represent much of the collective thought of the early Romanticism movement. Schlegel first discusses the concept of Universalpoesie in his *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms*, a collection of his philosophical writings written in the form of fragments. It is his belief that, "an aphorism ought to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world like a little work of art and complete in itself like a hedgehog" (Schlegel 143). In this way, the fragment's structure is an excellent fit for this collection of works. Fragments were favored as a writing style by Schlegel as a way to express the infinite finitely. These philosophical musings in form of fragment brought the infinite field of perception to one's level of understanding in representational form. Articulations of the Romantic ideals were thought to register at the level of the form of the work. Romantics felt best able to illustrate their idealism through the form in which they expressed their thoughts. The form of the fragment allows one to momentarily capture the transcendental insight, which the infinite offers while maintaining that the knowledge being transmitted is not ensured for all time. The Romantics saw value in the generative

nature of aesthetic form; form allows for both the transformation of the subject and the world.

Universalpoesie, as described in his *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms*, should, "render poetry living and social, and life and society poetic, poeticize wit, fill and saturate the forms of art with solid cultural material of every kind, and inspire them with vibrations of humor" (Schlegel 140). In fragment 116, Schlegel discusses Universalpoesie as a fusing of, "the poetry of art and the poetry of nature." Universalpoesie is a progressive phenomenon that denotes the unification of art and science in order to discover or create an enlightened reality. Thus, poetry functions as an agent through which this enlightenment can be achieved.

The Age of Enlightenment was a cultural movement of intellectuals that occurred during the 17th and 18th centuries, beginning in Europe and later moving to the American colonies. The purpose of this movement was to reform society using reason and advance knowledge through scientific thought and skepticism. This movement aimed to challenge ideas grounded in tradition and faith and encourage intellectual exchange as opposed to superstition. The Age of Enlightenment is tied closely to the Scientific Revolution and its discoveries that overturned traditional concepts and introduced new perspectives on nature and man's place within it. This emphasis on reason gave way to the development of the Romanticism Movement; a call for the re-enchantment with nature and an emphasis on emotion. What enlightenment means is redefined through the lens of Universalpoesie to now represent unification of universal ideals. Life, art, culture, and science contribute to a wealth of knowledge maintaining fewer sub-field distinctions allowing us access to a higher, more infinite knowledge (as contrasted to the finite principles we can learn of in specific subfields).

Poetry is the means through which this unification can be established and maintained. Poetry, in the Romantic sense, refers to song. Novalis believed music to be the foundation for the arts and nature, and poetry and music to be intimately intertwined. Novalis was an author, philosopher, and prominent force in the German Romantic Movement alongside Schlegel. In the Arion legend, found in chapter two of his novel, 'Heinrich von Ofterdingen', the merchants explain that, "music and poesy may pretty much be the same thing and perhaps belong together like mouth and ear, since the mouth is only a moveable and answering ear (24)." In this way, music and poetry are one for the Romantics. Poetry commands the power to enact change in the environment, to unify. Poetry, which we have established to be intimately related to song, corresponds best to the fluidity of the Romantic

philosophy of knowledge of reality being infinite; one is able to access the realm of infinite (or metaphysical) knowledge through music, as opposed to reason; and music is a unifying form that gives meaning to the world.

Early German Romantics endorse ontological and epistemological realism; the ideas that reality both exists independently of consciousness and that we do not possess, nor have the ability to possess complete knowledge of reality. For the Romantics, the world remains one unitary substance, preceding the distinctions between the mental and the physical, the subject and the object. The systematic process of a rational approach to obtaining knowledge operationalized by the intellectuals of the Enlightenment and by a long tradition of representation in Western philosophy, involves conceptual discrimination, contrasting one predicate against another. In this way, consciousness can only know of finite entities whose difference has been conceptualized through a process of contrasting them with other such entities. For the Romantics, we cannot cognitively attain this knowledge of being that is devoid of distinctions.

Universalpoesie presents us with access to this infinite knowledge of being through poetic means. The philosophy of German Romanticism that underlies Universalpoesie is that there are no certain principles from which knowledge can be derived. Romantics maintain that a complete knowledge of anything is impossible. For many individuals the modern age of Enlightenment marked a deep anxiety stemming from a separation of impression and reflection. The Enlightenment thinkers postulated an absolute foundation of knowledge, which could be explained through reason. Romantic poetry was called upon to heal the breach in modern consciousness by re-enchanting one with nature and the mythical. This expression of the infinite or metaphysical can only happen poetically. Poetry thus becomes the collective expression or presentation for that which is unrepresentable; that which cannot be expressed in the speculative analytical form that is the nature of philosophical writings. Philosophy, by nature, cannot set anything into motion. It is as if to express something is determined in such a way dissolves all of its determinacy. It is in poetry that philosophy finds its supplement, operating much like two halves of a whole. Schlegel notes the superior nature of poetry as a communicative form in fragment 48 of *Ideas*, stating that, "Where philosophy ends, poetry begins (261)". Even Novalis expresses in the first fragment of his *Poesie*:

X ^oesy elevates every particular through its unique coincidence with the remaining whole—and if philosophy,

through its legislation, prepares the world for the effectual influence of ideas, poesy nonetheless remains the key to philosophy, its goal and meaning; for poesy molds the beauty of society—the world family—the beautiful domestic order of the universe, (II, 533)*J

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Although poetry addresses itself to particulars in a way that philosophy does not (as in the case of the Romantic use of allegory), poetry still remains a participant in a greater whole. As it is also a function of philosophy, poetry tends towards the construction of larger units. Poetry's function differs from that of philosophy by approaching units as flexible and dynamic; promoting transformation among existing units. Poetry dissolves and transfigures bonds through its manipulation of language, providing it with an ability to transcend all aspects of life. This implies continuity between language and the world, assuming a function of poetry as a basis of society. A progressive Universalpoesie seeks to work organically and operate in accordance with a higher principle. Poesy/music in the Romantic view is not something that needs explanation by other terms, but something that acts as an expression of the essence of Romanticism. Music itself can become a source of new relationships between the world and ourselves.

Thus poetry surpasses the expressive power of all other forms and becomes the ultimate form of communication within this theory of Universalpoesie and within the Romantic Movement. Poetry serves as a form of reflexive thought. The German Romantic Movement operates under the assumption that thinking is reflective or cyclical and aims for a unity and multiplicity in works. For Schlegel, poetry was where ideas and forms of Romanticism converge. Transcending the convoluted nature of everyday speech, in the tale poetry operates as a mediator to the metaphysical realm of knowledge. Poetry's function is transpersonal and poetry contains a uniting power through which an enlightened form of reality and the individual psyche can be reached.

Novalis' Atlantis tale, found in chapter three of his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, serves as a fusing of nature and poetry. This tale implements the ideals encompassed in this theory, which became characteristic of the German Romantic Movement. Novalis worked adamantly to implement this philosophy of the need for a unification of all aspects of life in his own works. Novalis shared with Schlegel a similar philosophy towards art, life, and nature. Novalis' philosophy of nature centers on the re-appropriation and re-enchantment of nature. He opposes the

contemporary Western conception of nature and laments the rise of mechanistic science. Novalis held that this shift in attitude towards nature that occurred during the modernization of Western civilization devalued nature's symbolic and idealistic components.

The formal constructs of the philosophical language, or the method that philosophical writings employ, fails to represent the diversity of human experience that comes to manifest in literary and artistic works. Romantic philosophy strays from a reliance on analytical rigor to illustrate that the figural language plays a role in the search for truth and enlightenment. Articulations of Romantic idealism are found at the level of the form. Therefore, the form commands an endless number of transfigurations and in turn transforms the subject and the world through its generative aesthetic force. This is illustrated particularly well by Novalis in "Heinrich von Ofterdingen" as the literary aesthetic the author employs changes in each chapter of the novel. In chapter one of "Heinrich von Ofterdingen"; Novalis employs a simple narrative to introduce the protagonist. In the second chapter of Novalis' novel, he employs the aesthetic of the legend. Again in chapter three the aesthetic changes as Novalis directs the use of the tale, as well as the fairytale in chapter 4.

Schlegel and Novalis believed allegory to be a metaphorical imitation of the real. As philosophized by Schlegel, allegory offers specific representations of the infinite. Allegory provides an answer to those skeptical of philosophical faith in absolute idealism. Allegory is a means by which the transcendent is revealed to humanity. Allegory is, therefore, a manifestation of the unrepresentability of the infinite. Poesy [music] is so superior of form for it allegorizes the instability or temporality of this infinite [metaphysical] knowledge. This form of poesy found, "midway between the work and the artist," is well depicted in Novalis' Atlantis tale that the merchants present to the young protagonist on their way to Augsburg in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*.

In the tale, the old King is the embodiment of poetry itself. The King himself is described as having devoted his earlier years to the study of poetry. "From the days of his youth he had read the works of the poets with keen delight, devoted great zeal and vast sums to collecting poets of all languages, and had always prized the companionship of poets above all else" (36). The King's passion for poetry leads him to surround himself with poetry and the company of its masters; enchanted so intensely by the arts, to the exclusion of nature and natural sciences.

The Princess is not herself completely absorbed in fascination of the poetic

world like her father, but rather a being that embodies the King's conception of poetry. The Princess, "had grown up among singing, and her whole soul had become an exquisite song, a simple expression of sadness and longing" (36). The King's daughter becomes a living symbol of the precious and highly valued nature of poetry. Her body becomes the song of her people and her absence is felt throughout the kingdom. "The whole city and the whole country wept and lamented with him [the King] with all its heart" (47). The enchantment the King and the people of the Kingdom feel towards the Princess illustrates the function of poetry as a mediator to the realm of metaphysical knowledge. The kingdom can glimpse the ideals of Universalpoesie through her presence and in her absence all other aspects of life fall short.

The Youth and his father serve as the embodiment of science and nature; holding nature and natural sciences in high regard and studying them immensely. "The Youth was serious and devoted himself exclusively to natural sciences in which his father had instructed him from childhood" (38). Both the Youth and his father find passion in the study of natural sciences and experience an enchantment with these topics equivalent to the King's experience of poetry. Their devotion to the study of natural sciences is to the exclusion of recognition of the value of the arts.

Although both worlds are separately harmonious, neither the reality of the Kingdom nor the world of the Youth and his father can alone be true symbols for universal poetry. The central conflict of the story is inability to find a suitor for the Princess. The change that both the Youth and the Princess undergo upon meeting and falling in love represents the enlightened reality that can be reached through Schlegel's Universalpoesie. The young lovers' experience is described as a, "unique, dark-bright, wondrously stirring sensation of a new world" (40).** This sense of enlightened reality that is the true representation of Universal poetry becomes enhanced after their night in the woods and completes the unification of poetry (the Princess) and science (the Youth). At the end of the tale, the joining of the youth and the princess reflects the fusing of poetry and nature. The truest symbol of this concept of Universalpoesie is the union of the Princess and the Youth. Upon acceptance of this union by the King and his kingdom, all people experience this Utopian world through which a sense of higher enlightenment and education is felt.

This melding of poetry and nature creates a Utopian world and represents true progressive Universalpoesie. Schlegel claims that this Utopia, this Universalpoesie is, "capable of the highest most universal education; not only by creating

from within, but also from without.” Novalis illustrates in his Atlantis tale, how a world focused on the ideal of Universalpoesie would operate and illustrates or introduces us to the sense of enlightenment and education that can be achieved through entrance into this higher reality. Universalpoesie gives life more meaning and value by communicating through poetry the connection and appreciation of all aspects of life. Schlegel and Novalis work to re-enchant us with art and nature as well as give nature and art a progressive function through unification with science.

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TRANSLATION AS A FRAME: TRANSLATING MOLIÈRE FOR A MODERN AUDIENCE

AN 18TH CENTURY philosopher and scholar Gilles Menage coined the phrase “les belles infidels.” He stated : “Elles me rappellent une femme que j’ai beaucoup aimé à tours, et qui était belle mais infidèle” (Albir 231)¹ in reference to translation. This phrase expresses the idea that women can either be beautiful or faithful but not both and that the same applies to translation. Translation theory has long dealt with the question of the purpose of translation. Essentially, should a translated text work to preserve the intended meaning of a piece, including the grammatical and syntactic choices made by the author, or something else all together? Authors make choices while writing regarding every aspect of a work and a lot of these choices are the result of the author’s personal context. As if to only further complicate the issue, the connotation of words changes over time as a result of the ever-changing nature of vernacular speech. Should these cultural changes be taken into account through translation or should a translator assume that, because the author made those choices, the reader should be the one to adapt to the cultural disparities?

In David Greetham’s *Textual Transgressions* he argues that each time a piece is touched it is changed. Be it the photocopying of an instruction manual or the translation of a novel, there is a new piece produced. He argues that there is no

¹ I have translated this as follows, “She (translation) reminds me of a woman that I loved to the towers, who was beautiful but infidel”

such thing as creating an equal work. Greetham exemplifies the frame through which translation should, arguably, be discussed. Through this frame of looking at translation the piece will be changed regardless of method of translation so the translator need not worry about creating an exact duplicate. The way that a work is translated completely alters the way that it is understood and appreciated by its reader. Translation is the ultimate frame through which foreign texts are viewed. Using two different translations as well as the original French version of Molière's *The Misanthrope* (1666), I intend to argue that the preservation of tone and humor should be the intention when translating rather than focusing on a more literal translation.

Molière wrote *The Misanthrope* in the 17th century. Molière was known for his work influenced by the art of commedia dell'arte, focusing on the use of consistent caricatures within different stories. *The Misanthrope* is different from Molière's other plays in that the farcical quality that his audience is accustomed to is not as prevalent. The play was written for the French royal family in 1666 and was first performed at Theatre du Palais-Royale. Humor still exists within in it, but it's not quite as obvious and "side-splitting" as his other plays. This is because the French government had banned his two most recent plays, *Tartuff* and *Dom Juan*, because they satirized the French aristocracy in a way that made the family uncomfortable. For this reason, *The Misanthrope* is less farcical. I will be examining two translations, one written by Maya Slater, which is a more lexically equivalent translation as well as a translation by Richard Wilbur which values cultural equivalency. Richard Wilbur's translation of *The Misanthrope* is a stronger translation because it culturally adjusts the piece to maintain Molière's intended humor as opposed to Maya Slater's more literal version.

Though it is a literal translation, Slater's version is still effective. She states "Molière insisted that plays are written to be acted. I have kept this in mind when translating him, aiming to produce not just a reading text, but one that would work well in performance" (Slater XXIV). She criticizes the choices made by other translators to freely adapt the play to modern society. Slater explains that she attempted to maintain the period feel of the piece. When a modern reader spends time with the French text they are not experiencing a modern French text, they experience one that sounds as though it were written 300 years ago, because it was. It seems that through her translation of *The Misanthrope*, Slater is attempting to provide a historic equivalent.

Translation is never perfect because languages change and the individual

translator has a personal context for words different from both the reader and the author. In a perfect world, "a translator should have much the same background as the original author and if that is not the case should be able to adapt to that disparity" (O'Brient 85). To adapt a play to modern society allows a modern audience to experience the piece in much the same way that an audience in the 17th century would have experienced it by witnessing a culturally relevant and accessible piece. A literal translation may arguably be truer but it is by no means culturally equal. It boils down to the question of accessibility versus the preservation of text.

Roman Jakobson's *Linguistic Aspects of Translation* provides theory that helps to answer these questions. He argues that there are no exact equivalencies between two languages when translating but using circumlocution translation is possible. Jakobson states that language cannot always be completely equivalent by giving the example that cheese translated into Russian is unequal. This is because the Russian equivalent is not actually an equivalent since cottage cheese does not use the same word as Swiss cheese. Despite this discrepancy, Jakobson does believe that it's possible to find grammatical equivalents and those equivalencies should be used to produce a good translation. Jakobson's examples support the idea that a direct cultural translation isn't possible. Grammatical translations are, to him, all that is possible. Despite this way of thinking, Slater's attempts at lexical fidelity only hinder her translation's validity.

Slater discusses the importance of maintaining the allusions to 17th century Parisian life, including seventeenth century Parisian clothing, etiquette, and ways of life. Slater states that she adjusts the tone where necessary, saying speeches should sound lively but to use Middle English would make it sound stifled. Slater assures the reader that, when compared with the French text, her piece should overwhelmingly match line for line (Slater XXIV). One especially interesting choice made by Slater was the use of Alexandrine meter, which was the chosen meter of French theater at the time. The Alexandrine in English isn't the same as the classical French equivalent but because English and French are so different because of the cultural differences. An English speaking audience listening to a classic play expects to hear iambic pentameter, to maintain Alexandrine sounds foreign and uncomfortable to an audience with different expectations. Because of this discrepancy, such a correspondence is not to be expected.

Slater's choice to maintain the style of meter over the exact word equivalent is powerful in her discussion of how translation should be used:

Classic Alexandrine in French is a twelve-syllable line, each syllable being separately pronounced, and given equal weight. There is a subordinate stress on the middle syllable of each line, a stronger stress on the final syllable. There is a short break between the two halves of the line. For example:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
EpOUsEr Un-EsOtte | Est pOUr n'E-trE pOInt sOt . (Slater XXV)

Slater discusses the final E of 'une' would be silent in modern spoken French but is given the value of a syllable while the e in *sotte* is excluded. These are examples of adjustments made when translating a piece in non-modern French. The lines are often broken up between multiple speakers but the twelve-syllable rule applies throughout. An example of her use of English alexandrine is given as well.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
ThE wOm – An's mAd. TO hEll wIth hEr Ill – Us- I – Ons!
(XXVI)

Slater also chooses to use rhyming couplets. This is a very strong choice that is very true to the French version. Rhyming couplets are a well-known technique in dramatic writing, especially during Molière's time, so it's an understandable sacrifice of flow by Slater, for example: "Alceste: Prepare my case? Certainly not—don't make me laugh. Philinte: Which lawyer have you briefed to plead on your behalf?" (Slater 214.). These lines demonstrate a fidelity to the French version of the text that is simply not found in Wilbur's. Because this is a play, and therefore meant to be spoken, the fidelity comes from the rhyming couplets. The corresponding lines of the French text read: "Alceste: Je n'en donnerai point, c'est une chose dite. Philinte: Mais qui voulez-vous donc qui pour vous sollicite?" (1.1. 185-6) Slater's version is in opposition to Wilbur's text which omits the twelve syllable meter but includes the rhyming couplets. In Wilbur's version the translation reads as follows: "Alceste: I assure you I'll do nothing of the sort. Philinte: Then who will plead your case before the court?" (Wilbur 24). If a translator is writing with the intention of producing a piece that is similar to the original in style and in intent then these matching couplets are important. However, the words themselves in Wilbur's translation are more similar to the French words themselves. Wilbur defends his choice to leave out Alexandrine meter.

In Wilbur's introduction he states, "The translation of *The Misanthrope* does not fully reproduce the formulaic preciousness with which some of the characters speak of love" (8). He discusses the idea that a translation which seeks to avoid a "period" diction, as he does, cannot always find the correct equivalencies in English that take into account the quirks of language, as he's mentioned (Wilbur 6). Wilbur chose to keep the play in verse rather than prose in order to control the tone and maintain "the parodies of 'Cornelian tirade'" (Wilbur 8). This is a powerful choice made by both authors, but is still important to discuss. Wilbur writes his version of the play in iambic pentameter, the chosen meter of English theater at the time. It's a way to efficiently create a version of this play that allows the English speaking audience to experience it in a way that is closest to what an audience at the time would have experienced. It does, however, leave a clear mark on the play and change it at its core.

Breaking the Translation Curtin by Charles Bernstein quotes Walter Benjamin saying that "The mark of the translator should not be made invisible, or inaudible, in the translation" (qtd. in Bernstein 64). He encourages a sense of strangeness when translating saying that in his personal translation he works to maintain syntax, especially if goes against English colloquialisms, including noun genders. This is an interesting way of considering translation of plays. Plays are written to be spoken, so, maintaining similar sounds is an incredibly valid goal. Neither of these translators focuses on homophonic translations specifically but Slater does make a noted effort to maintain at least the rhyming couplets of the piece. They aren't the same phoneme for phoneme, but they are the same rhyme schemes.

An important choice made by both translators is the use of verse rather than prose to display the high comedy aspects of the original play. It's important to understand Molière's context and that he was a man who worked for the French aristocracy and was paid to produce high comedy. At the time there was a strong distinction between high comedy and farce, sophisticated diction choices and ordinary speech, complex characters and simple characters. Verse helps to create these distinctions with an understanding of seventeenth century culture. He provides an excellent example in defense of using verse. As follows is a brief example of the French lines, then the prose, English, version of the same.

Madame, l'Amitié doit sur tout éclater
Aux choses qui le plus nous peuvent importer;
Et comme il n'en est point de plus grande importance

Que celles de l'honneur et de la Bienséance, ...
(1.4. 879–882)

Madam, friendship should most display itself when
truly vital matters are in question: and since there are no
things more vital than decency and honor... (Wilbur 9).

Even without an understanding of the French text, it is clear that the prose version lacks any sort of rhythm and that sense of nobility that's found when reading verse.

Additionally, Wilbur chose to use a careful mix of modern and old language. Words like “phlegm” are modern and are used where a classic substitute couldn't be found. Wilbur says that he used the occasional vulgarity but only when there is precedent. Adding more wouldn't have made sense understanding that the play was written for aristocrats and not genteel.

Both Slater and Wilbur produced valid and entertaining translations. They both made conscious choices to maintain or omit features of a three hundred year old play. Ultimately, there is no loss in translation, there's only gain. *The Misanthrope* would not be accessible to an English speaking audience without people like them to provide a frame through which the classic play could be viewed. The way that both translators choose to go about changing this piece lead to two completely different versions based on the same text. Linguist and biblical translator Eugene Nida argues in *Principles of Correspondence* that the most important aspect of translation is not word-for-word because “no two languages are identical, ... it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. Hence, there can be no fully exact translations” (Nida 153). He continues with the belief that translating in a way that gives a modern audience a similar experience that the original audience would have gotten should be a priority. Richard Wilbur does this brilliantly and, therefore, creates a better translation. He writes a play that is both entertaining and accessible to a modern audience, it may be further from the original but a play written to be entertaining in the past should still be entertaining in the present.

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REDEFINING THE FRAME: *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES* CHALLENGING THE STRUCTURE OF FEMALE FRIENDSHIP FILMS

FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS HAVE been in the spotlight of many films throughout the decades, with a majority of these films focusing solely on the companionship found amongst women as they endure emotional hardships. This style of film has become recognizable by the way it causes the viewer, typically a young woman, to identify with the main characters through common themes and issues that women address as they mature and maneuver their way through adolescence and young adulthood (Hollinger 84). However, despite their ability to connect with large female audiences, Karen Hollinger, author of *The Female Friendship Film and Women's Development*, claims that this genre of film lacks the ability to critique societal conditions. She asserts that though these films provide hope to women and usually follow a heroine on a "quest for self identity and fulfillment," they are too contextualized to make commentary applicable on a societal scale (89). Despite Hollinger's claims, I believe that powerful friendships amongst women in film can, in fact, offer commentary on a generalized social order. Through the female relationships in the film *Fried Green Tomatoes* one can consider director Jon Avnet's production a female friendship film. While the usual format for this type of film typically does not allow for commentary or critiques on society and its customs, I will argue

that *Fried Green Tomatoes* does. Detouring from the traditional format, Avnet uses Fannie Flagg's frame story, from her novel *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*, and stretches it to challenge the typical structure of female friendship films. He does so by framing Evelyn Couch's personal transformation as part of a greater social modification, and as a demonstration of the strength women can gain from friendships in order to change the state of their stereotypical patriarchal societal roles.

Fried Green Tomatoes is the frame story of Evelyn Couch, an 80's southern housewife, and her relationship with the elderly Mrs. Threadgood. Affectionately known as Ninny, Mrs. Threadgood, recounts the heartwarming tales of Idgie and Ruth, two close friends who ran a Café in southern Alabama during the Depression. As Evelyn listens to her stories and befriends Mrs. Threadgood, she begins to change. Taking strength from both her new companion and the women in her stories, Evelyn develops a new sense of self and a renewed personal confidence. Similar to many female friendship films, *Fried Green Tomatoes* ends "on a note of victory and empowerment" (Hollinger 84) with Evelyn Couch as her newly proclaimed self taking on the world with her head held high and a renewed sense of purpose. In this paper I address not only how this film portrays Evelyn's transformation, but also how the director goes beyond the scope of the merely personal and uses this piece to challenge the limitations that usually characterize female friendship films.

Unhappy in her current situation, Evelyn Couch first appears to be a rather weak character. Avnet creates this association between Evelyn and weakness by highlighting her lack of will power and combining that trait with her heavily ingrained submissiveness. Evelyn's lack of will power is conveyed by not only direct dialogue about how much she eats, but also, in a much more subtle way, by the use of shot-reverse shots between Evelyn looking downward sheepishly and a variety of treats ranging from candy bars to doughnuts (Scene 4). This technique allows the audience to subconsciously associate sweets with Evelyn feeling ashamed. This understated method leads the viewer to see Evelyn as a slave to her cravings and as a person lacking control in her life. Of course, this same message is conveyed much more directly later in the film when Evelyn sobbingly admits that having one or two candy bars isn't that bad but that she normally gives in to ten or eleven in a given day (Scene 18). Evelyn's submissiveness also is conveyed through both direct dialogue and via more elusive cinematic techniques that subconsciously tell the viewer how her passive personality affects her role in her life and marriage. The first obvious demonstration of her submissiveness is given in the form of a

verbal description from Evelyn's good friend. While leaving a seminar on how to improve their marriages her friend declares, "What we really need is an assertiveness class for southern women, but that is actually a contradiction in itself, isn't it? Especially you, honey, you are living in the dark ages!" (Scene 9). This line is very important because it serves two purposes. First, it demonstrates the usual societal role of southern women in the 80's by saying that assertiveness goes against the very meaning of being a woman; thus trapping Evelyn and all women by placing them in a position that either hinders the development of or completely hides their self-assurance and confidence. The second part of this quotation is vital because it places Evelyn in a position of inferiority amongst her peers when thinking on the level of assertiveness. This, in essence, is a crucial line that the director uses to set up Evelyn's transformation as a representation of a change for all women.

Evelyn's original submissiveness is further displayed in the positioning that is done in most of the scenes with her and her husband. At the beginning of the movie any time Ed and Evelyn Couch are in the same frame Ed is positioned to the right and either slightly in front of or above Evelyn [see figure 1]. This not only draws the eye of the viewer to Ed, who is in the foreground, but it also establishes the relationship between husband and wife by putting him in a position of power. Evelyn's relationship with her husband is paralleled very well with the lack of power Ruth, Idgie's best friend and one of the heroines from Ninny's stories, has in her marriage. Beaten and abused, Ruth runs away to the town of Whistle Stop with the help of Idgie and some friends. However, even when out of the state, Ruth is not safe. When her husband breaks into her house and catches a glimpse of their child, the director positions him so that he is shown lit in the foreground in a menacing position. His stance leaves Ruth standing in his shadow and cinematically moving deeper into the shot while she desperately grips her baby's crib (Scene 23). Here Ruth is in a position of weakness, emphasized in the lighting and, once again, in the physical positioning. Despite the differences in these two shots, both Ruth and Evelyn are portrayed as being helpless in their individual situations. This parallelism allows Director Avnet to make a subtle commentary on the way patriarchal marriage roles have not changed over time despite their substantial contextual differences.

This initial depiction of Evelyn is harshly contrasted by the portrayal of the young Idgie Threadgood who Ninny describes to Evelyn in her stories. As a young lady in the depression era, Idgie doesn't exactly fit in. She refuses to conform to the usual role that society, and often times even her family, has set for her. While most

white women displayed in the film have long hair and wear dresses on a day to day basis, Idgie is consistently portrayed with a short bob-like hair cut and wearing jeans or coveralls, typical men's clothing. She is also consistently seen down at the River Club drinking and gambling with the men. The overall portrayal of Idgie creates a background that allows the director to highlight her disregard for authority and the expected level of respect for men. For example, when the town Sherriff tells her that she is going to be arrested for murder, he encourages her to sneak out of town in the middle of the night and let Big George, her colored man, take the fall. Idgie is irate at the idea and stands her ground shouting, "I can't do that. Take me to jail if you have to!" (Scene 30). However, despite Idgie's clear violation of "womanliness" in asserting herself and ignoring the Sherriff's advice, she never loses her other more typical female attributes, as they are continuously displayed in her care-giving nature. It is important that she maintains these feminine qualities so that she retains her femininity and does not take on a male role in the film. This is key because it gives the audience, both the viewer's and Evelyn, an example of a strong woman. At the beginning of the movie the viewer discovers that Idgie devotes her evenings to feeding the homeless and destitute, a quality that continues in her kind actions towards Smokey Lonesome, a vagabond who frequents the café over the years. However, the most notable display of her feminine caring nature was probably when she stood trial for a murder that she did not commit to protect a close family friend who would have surely hanged if accused (Scenes 31–33). The characterization of Idgie works on breaking down the preconceived notion that assertiveness cannot be seen as a feminine trait which in turn allows Evelyn, as part of the audience, to be more assertive in her life without worrying about losing her femininity. The contrast of Idgie and the submissive Evelyn that the viewer meets at the beginning of the film is highly important because it provides a structure by which to measure Evelyn's metamorphosis.

In the latter half of the movie Evelyn Couch is a new woman. She is someone who is not to be reckoned with; her whole character has been reshaped to a point that is almost unrecognizable. All of the initial weaker characteristics that were seen in her at the start of the film have been revamped and replaced. The new Evelyn is a very strong, confident, and independent woman- descriptions that no one would have thought to give the woman hiding in her purse of candy bars at the beginning of the movie. This transformation is displayed through her wardrobe, the dialogue in the script, and through the contrast in her positioning relative to her husband. When Evelyn is first shown in a full shot by herself, she is wearing

all pastels and floral prints and has little to no make-up on (Scene 3). It is a very soft, non-threatening outfit that very accurately depicts her personality. During the second half of the movie, Evelyn is seen mostly in power colors: red, blues and blacks. The most notable case of these power outfits is seen in scene 27 where she is proudly displaying bold red lipstick and a black and white polka dot blouse [see figure 2]. This is also the first scene in which Evelyn asserts her new self.

Previously in the movie, Evelyn is seen crying in the middle of the Wynn-Dixie parking lot after a young boy pushed her and then called her several slanderous names (Scene 18). At that time, Evelyn just sat there wondering why he was so mean to her and feeling helpless because she had no way to react to it in a good natured southern womanly way. However, in scene 27 when two young girls verbally taunt her after taking her parking spot at the same grocery store, Evelyn has a very different reaction. Laughing to herself and calling out her warrior cry, she rams into their car five times. While her actions may be extreme, it marks the era of a new Evelyn. It is a transition into a position of control in her life. Instead of sitting there and feeling helpless, she decides to take charge and stand up for herself. In this scene, it is evident to the audience that not only has Evelyn decided to make a change in her life, but that it is a change that has been heavily influenced by Ninny and her stories. For the warrior cry that Evelyn shouts out is “To Wanda!” which is a direct reference to the repeated line that Idgie cries when she does something a little crazy. For example, after threatening to kill Ruth’s husband if he ever hit her again and loading Ruth into the car, Idgie shouts, “To Wanda! The amazing Amazon woman!” (Scene 17). This is a significant moment because despite the harsh contrasting of the characters at the beginning of the film, we now see Evelyn start to parallel Idgie’s character and independent spirit. Since Evelyn’s character has already been set up as a representation of a typical southern American housewife during the 1980’s this scene and her overall metamorphosis takes on greater social significance. If Evelyn Couch can take charge in her life and draw strength from other women who lived decades before, what is stopping any woman from taking that same strength from Evelyn or from friendships in their lives? The director essentially is setting up the audience to realize that this domino effect can have the ability to reshape the customary roles American women are subjected to.

Evelyn reshapes her original role using her newfound confidence and friendship. She has transitioned into a woman who will stand up for herself and not tolerate anyone that will try to stop her, even when that person is her own husband. Evelyn was placed both to the left and back of her husband Ed Couch in the

beginning part of the film to display her submissiveness. However, when Evelyn decides that she wants Ninny to move in with them, towards the end of the film, and Ed says “No,” she makes a noticeable transition. Director Avnet strategically has Evelyn cross from the left background into the right foreground of the shot during their argument (Scene 39). This is a pivotal moment in their relationship and the audience can sense the power shift that is occurring between Evelyn and Ed. By having Evelyn move from left to right, a motion that is considered to be cinematically in the positive direction, the viewers are subconsciously cued in on the dynamic shift that is occurring [see figure 3]. This shift once again parallels the stories of Idgie and Ruth. Ruth was abused by her husband and for years did nothing about it. However, after declaring her independence and moving out on her own, Ruth realizes that she has the power and, “if he ever tries to take [her] child, that [she’d] kill him” (Scene 26). Again the severity of these two situations are extreme, but the underlying principle remains; both women initially accepted their situations only to later realize that the best way to gain control is to simply take it into their own hands. Even though Ed is not seen again in another shot, it is clear via the extreme contrast of positioning that Evelyn has moved herself both figuratively and literally into an independent position, no longer blocked by her societal role as a southern housewife in the 80’s. Avnet uses this scene and general parallelism to frame Evelyn’s personal transformation in a way that not only allows for commentary on the changing roles for women in American society, but also as a challenge to the definitions of the genre of a female friendship film.

Evelyn makes the transition from being solely devoted to taking care of her son, who is now out of the house, and her husband, to an independent individual who has her own career and goals. In Avnet’s movie this is explicitly expressed as Evelyn takes on a career in cosmetics and tells Ed, “I make my own money now,” encapsulating her independence through her new found monetary contributions (Scene 39). Evelyn has elevated herself to a place where she has not only realized that she has the capability to make her own decisions but that she now has the resources as well. Director Jon Avnet beautifully connects this metamorphosis with Evelyn’s friendship with Ninny by having Ninny be the one to recommend Evelyn get a job in cosmetics (Scene 18). This empowers the female friendship and shows the audience the impact that it has on the continued development of women, once more categorizing the film into its genre.

Hollinger’s definition of a female friendship film defined as a film that “emphasizes the importance of a female role model on the health of female maturation”

(80), can be applied to Jon Avnet's film, as the whole frame story circulates around Evelyn Couch's personal transformation that is guided by Ninny. We can see that Evelyn is going through a transformational change at this stage in her life, and it is often referred to as a mid-life crisis and then some form of rebirth. As Jane Polden discusses in her work *Regeneration*, the growth and pain that is endured during the mid-life crisis is often a necessary journey that leads the individual to make great gains in their life (334). Evelyn clearly endures these pains and triumphs as we saw in the previous analysis of iconic contrasting scenes such as the events that occurred in the Winn-Dixie parking lot. Polden describes, "once the self is no longer divided by conflict or denial, an energy arises which is a powerful force, being more self-aware, calmer, more resilient, and more focused..." (341). The audience can not only see but feel the energy that Polden is referring to as they watch Evelyn's character blossom. She is bolder, brighter, and taking hold of her life. She now commands attention when she walks into a room verses hiding from it as she did in the beginning of the film. Evelyn's remarkable metamorphosis and friendship with Ninny unambiguously places *Fried Green Tomatoes* in the category of female friendship films.

According to Hollinger, films in this genre are significant in their methods of expressing the importance of female relationships with regards to personal development and maturation; however, they lack the ability to comment on a larger issue. Hollinger explicitly explains that this particular genre of film cannot "offer challenge to existing social order," because the stories are too individualized and highly contextualized (84). She argues that because the viewer gains knowledge only from a particularized example that the stories themselves inhibit the audience from extrapolating a larger societal critique or comment. However, I believe that Director Jon Avnet pushes this boundary in order to do just that. As we have explored throughout this paper, the struggles Evelyn faces in the outer frame story nicely parallel some of the struggles Ruth experiences in the inner story. Through this connection, Fannie Flagg, author of the novel, and Jon Avnet, director of the film, correlate and express the connectedness between all women living in a patriarchal society, explicitly in male dominated households. While this film is limited to the scope of these two stories, it opens up a personal level of connection, much as if the audience were experiencing it with them and having access to their views of the places they are in.

Other works have been analyzed for their ability to make such connections across time and society. For example, in the book *New and Improved: The Transfor-*

mation of American Women's Emotional Culture, authors John Spurlock and Cynthia Magestro, compile and analyze the diaries of middle-class American women over a series of decades. None of these women knew one another and they came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Patrick Ryan, a critic of historical works, assessed their publication in a book review and offered an analysis of Spurlock and Magestro's work. Ryan offers support for the idea that individualized women's stories can be used to make a greater commentary on society as a whole. While each woman's story remains unique and often completely unrelated to the other ones, Ryan emphasizes that the novel should be studied and highlights the book's ability to "bring historical and moral significance to the everyday words of women." If it is so, and we buy into the ability for a collection of women's stories over a period of time to be representative of the culture and experiences that society gives women as a whole, then it is not a far stretch to claim that *Fried Green Tomatoes* does the same thing. This novel and movie take several personal stories of women and highlight the significance in the ability to take charge in one's own life. Now, while these stories are fiction and therefore, not completely comparable to the diary entries Ryan refers to, the general principal still holds.

Thus, *Fried Green Tomatoes* challenges Hollinger's definition and does, in fact, allow for a critique of greater society. Specifically, Avnet continuously displays the hindrance that women in a patriarchal marriage can suffer from by highlighting the growth and happiness that is achieved by the same women when they break outside of the typical roles. Ruth was physically abused in her marriage and lived in fear of her husband, and Evelyn was depressed from the lack of control in her relationship. Yet, with the help of a female role model and friend to guide them in their journeys, Idgie for Ruth, and Ninny for Evelyn, both women were able to overcome their original states and find their inner-strength and confidence. Avnet's commentary speaks even more strongly, though, because Evelyn's character was specifically set up to represent a larger group of women. Evelyn's excessively submissive initial role, as pointed out by her friend, was more dramatic than that of her peers. Therefore, when dramatic changes are made with such an extreme case, such as Evelyn's therein lies the potential for a ripple effect to travel inwards and provide similar metamorphosis amongst her peers and women in general. Hence, we see that *Fried Green Tomatoes* maintains the role model constructs of a female friendship film while stretching Hollinger's definition, allowing Avnet to give commentary on American society and also to redefine the limits of a female friendship film.

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



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DREAMING OF DREAMS: INTERTEXT AND TEXT IN NEIL GAIMAN'S *THE SANDMAN*

COMICS ARE ALWAYS framed literary experiences because the medium is built upon the interplay of the panel, bubble, and icon. Comics were historically relegated to the classification of genre and were conflated with the traditionally dismissed genres of science fiction, fantasy, and what is now called young adult literature. Yet comics are a visual and literary medium because they encompass any narrative that is told with images and text. The idea of the graphic novel comes from the attempt to elevate comics to a literary level, but as Marjane Satrapi, author of the autobiographical comic *Persepolis*, has said comics are a medium just as painting or poetry are mediums, within a medium are norms and traditions, but a medium is never confined to one particular style or genre (Satrapi 2010). The critical perspective of comics has often been reductive and viewed comics as an inherently lower form of literature, but this has been changing due to the new field of comics studies and the literary success of many comics. One of the most influential writers of comics is British writer Neil Gaiman who started the serial comic series *The Sandman* in 1989. During its 88 issue run and many spin-offs, and mini-series, Gaiman tells the story of Dream, also known as the Sandman, and his life as the King of the Dreams. Dream is the third eldest of the Endless, a family of beings who are the literal incarnations of and rulers of the ideas of Destiny, Death, Dream, Desire, Despair, Destruction, and Delirium.

In *The Sandman* the narrative is structured like a set of nesting dolls, each issue and series have self-contained stories that are functioning inside of the greater narrative of Dream's journey from captive to King. Narrative framework operates distinctly in comics compared to other forms of fiction because of the interplay of the visual and textual elements, and the vocabulary of comics determines some of these differences. In *The Sandman*, and specifically in the *World's End* series and the issue "The Golden Boy" these narrative frames interact with the visual frames of the comic to create multiple layers of meaning and reality. As Comic Studies theorist Scott McCloud explains:

These icons we call panels or 'frames' have no fixed or absolute meaning, like the icons of language, science, and communication...the panel acts as a sort of general indicator that time or space is being divided. The durations of that time and the dimensions of that space are defined more by the contents of the panel than by the panel itself (99)

The images and words determine how the panel is operating temporally and narratively, "In learning to read comics we all learned to perceive time spatially, for in the world of comics, time and space are one and the same," (McCloud 100) but the framing of the panel itself creates its own meaning. In multipart comics like Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* panels are only one of the many frames that reveal the world of the Sandman (or Dream, or Morpheus, or the King of Dreams), each issue and volume operate within their own thematic frames, and the narrative itself is constantly framed and reframed through the conceit of dreams. Dreams and fantasy exist as different realities than the main plot of Dream reclaiming and ruling his kingdom, but they are no less real, and this creates constant tension within the stories.

Throughout *Sandman's* 88 issues the ideas of the story and storytelling are explored, as in *World's End* which begins with mortal Brant Tucker driving his coworker Charlene to Chicago where they get caught in a storm and take refuge in an inn called World's End. The storm is revealed to be a "reality storm" caused by an unknown cataclysmic event that is explained by the innkeeper, "Sometimes big things happen, and they echo. Those echoes crash across worlds. They are the ripples in the fabric of things. Often they manifest as storms. Reality is a fragile thing, after all," (*World's End* 5) and the strange patrons assemble together to tell

stories until it passes. The six issues each focus on one of the stories, and the return to the inn in all of them is the structural frame that relates the disparate tales to each other. Reality is subjective within the individual stories because of the role of the narrator in molding their stories and the constant reexamination of reality that occurs in *the Sandman* through the use of dreams.

X

The distinction between ambiguity and dishonesty is slippery within the collection as the reader must confront Gaiman's construction of an unreliable narrator, and his authorial presence underlies all the stories that are told, which ultimately operates as yet another frame, that of the storyteller telling stories of storytelling. In "The Golden Boy" Brant Tucker takes a break from the large table of the storytellers and runs into another guest who claims to know a story from one of the many Americas, that of Prez. In this story Gaiman reimagines a Bronze Age comics character Prez Rickard, the eighteen year old President of the United States in an America where the age of the presidency was changed to eighteen when the voting age was. Prez is born in an alternative universe America where he is named Prez, short for President, because his mother knows "that names have power" (*World's End* 3). Prez's name becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and the panels use the iconography of the American flag to foreshadow his achievement of his namesake, as well in the last panel to introduce the dark moral elements of the story. The images of Prez's birth and childhood are drawn with bright, warm colors that contrast with the inky blackness of the skyline in the first panel and pure blackness in the background of the last panel, which associates the rippling American flag with the darkness that is developed thematically throughout the story [see Figure 1]. The narration of the storyteller is always inked as boxes, and always colored gold to distinguish between the information that is being told by the storyteller, versus the information that is contained within Prez's story. This narration is broken up visually to emphasize the tension between the idealism of Prez and the corruption that Boss Smiley later represents, with "Prez Richard knew that already" ending the page, separate from the reference to Kennedy's famous inaugural speech of civic duty.

Boss Smiley is a character that speaks to Prez, but cannot be seen by the other characters in the story. His face is a large yellow smiley-face and his body is rendered as a businessman's complete with slick colorful suits and ties. Boss Smiley is slowly revealed throughout the story to be a mystical figure and is shown offering to guarantee Prez the presidency when he is running for office as an adult, but in return Prez must agree to serve him. Prez declines and wins the presidency

on his own, but Boss Smiley returns again to offer him reflection and offers to bring his recently assassinated fiancé back to life. Their interaction is layered with multiple elements, first, Boss Smiley appears in a television in Prez's bedroom and is established as a creature with powers of omnipotence as he shows Prez his dead fiancé trapped in some kind of prison Smiley controls. The art zooms in on Boss Smiley's face, which is developed through the shadows and alignment of his cartoonish face, to reveal his ultimately evil intentions and the power he wields over Prez's America [see Figure 2]. Yet, Gaiman challenges the narrative and the reader's understanding of the narrative by making the last panel, colored in muted beiges and grays, establish that the previously shown events were a dream Prez was having. However, because this story is being told to the character of Brant Tucker in the Worlds End Inn, the validity of the dream is complicated, and the framing of the story holds tension between the character and the overarching narrative of *The Sandman*, which can reveal things through dreams and metaphysical narrative that cannot be known by anyone besides Dream and Gaiman himself.

Prez does not make a deal with Boss Smiley, but when he dies, Death (Dream's older sister) brings him to heaven, or what she says is one of the many heavens, and adds that they are not all run by a creator (*World's End* 54). This makes Boss Smiley's power contingent upon the universe he belongs to, and that universe is one of many, whereas Dream is the incarnation and King of dreams in every universe. Boss Smiley and Prez operate within the framed narrative of the other America and that frame is encompassed within the overarching narrative frame of Dream and the *World's End* story of storytelling. When Prez dies and comes to heaven and finds Boss Smiley in charge of it Prez realizes the nature of the many worlds, and decides he does not want to belong to any of them, but travel between them. Boss Smiley does not want to let Prez leave, but the Sandman intervenes and offers his protection in the Kingdom of Dreams, and Prez is able to travel between worlds and help people in need. Boss Smiley's heaven is fully of bright colors and butterflies in fluffy clouds, and Prez fits into the scheme with his primary red sweater and warm-toned features. Yet when Dream appears, he is colored in his characteristic black, white, and grey in stark contrast to the rest of the page, and takes Prez out of Smiley's universe into the dreaming. Boss Smiley who has served as the story's main antagonist and oppressor to Prez becomes comically non-threatening, as his face is rendered as a simple happy face without facial details and sweat droplets and zigzags indicate his anger as Dream usurps Prez from him. The images show how the power dynamics have changed when Dream appears as proportionally larger. Dream's

placement in the center, straddling two panels, displays his power over Boss Smiley, who is contained within the physical frame as he is within his universe. While Dream, however, is able to break the visual boundaries of the frame as well as the metaphorical boundaries of Boss Smiley's world.

This story introduces the multiple operating parallel universes that populate the DC universe (of which Sandman is canonically contained within under the Vertigo imprint) and the world that connects them all, that of the dreaming. The character of Prez was originally created in the seventies as an imagination of a world with an eighteen year old president and his character was not utilized for very long until the Sandman, which resurrects the character and re-canonizes him under the auspice of the "many Americas." In Gaiman's version, Prez gets elected at twenty and is given unsolicited advice while running from President Nixon:

Nothing you do in the White House matters. You know why not? Because as far as the mass of voting morons is concerned, while you're in office, you'll still be the worst single president they've ever had until you stop. Then it's some other poor bastard's turn. And even that doesn't matter; because ten, twenty years later, they'll look back on you, and wonder why they didn't appreciate you when they had you...You don't get to make a difference. You don't get to do jack shit. You know what you get? ...You get an entry in the history book, and every 15 minutes, every day at Disneyworld, an animatronics puppet wearing your face will wave or nod when the spotlight hits it (*World's End* 52).

The historical frame is used clearly in this issue, as the characterization of Nixon, the oppressive, nonhuman entity of Boss Smiley, and Prez's idealism mirror the fractured nature of the American 1970s. Prez's character is quintessentially moral; he refuses the tainted aid of Boss Smiley even when he has the option to be reunited with his murdered fiancé [see Figure 3]. The fact that the corruption and quasi-demonic presence of Boss Smiley follows Prez to his grave is indicative of Gaiman's moral construction of this other America and serves as a metatextual political commentary of the American 1970s where Prez's character strives to maintain morality while being controlled by "Big Brother" or Boss Smiley. Prez's character in his first iteration was defined by his idealism and ability to unite youth

under a "cool" President, but in Gaiman's version Prez cannot prevail against totalitarian authority until death, and his presidency is a combination of his will and his self-fulfilling destiny.

After Prez's story is concluded and the narrative switches back to the World's End and Brant Tucker. Brant Tucker's perception is changed when the guests at the inn look outside and see a funeral procession in the sky, of huge spectral figures that become more clearly defined as the panels progress [see Figure 4]. The reader knows that this is a funeral of the Endless, because Destiny (The Sandman's older brother and the eldest of the Endless) and Death are walking in front of the pall bearers, but Brant Tucker sees Death and falls immediately in love with her saying:

I think I fell in love with her, a little bit. Isn't that dumb? But it was like I knew her. Like she was my oldest, dearest friend. The kind of person you can tell anything to, no matter how bad, and they'll still love you, because they know you. I wanted to go with her. She probably didn't even know I was there. But I'll always love her. All my life.
(*World's End* 57)

The dynamic between reader and character is carefully developed by Gaiman, as the irony of Brant Tucker rhapsodizing about Death is rendered with delicate layers of awareness. The page focuses on Brant Tucker's words by using similar images of Death in a sequence that gets progressively smaller and less detailed, and the moon hanging above her head changes from dripping with blood to becoming almost completely red. These panels are able to function metaphorically and literally because the reader knows that this funeral is happening in the sky, and also that Brant Tucker is recalling a memory that may have been ultimately a dream. *The Sandman* is dense in its writing and dense in its artwork because both of these elements are heavily layered with framing. Framing is so complexly utilized in Gaiman's comic visually and narratively that what is text and what is intertext becomes murky, and reality is dependent on the reader's interpretation and association. The collection begins in the ambiguity of the "reality storm" complicates notions of reality, and then circles back into the mortal world, the frame it began with, but a frame that has been changed and reoriented to accommodate a notion of all reality as one of many subjective, interacting stories.

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4



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FRAMED IN NARRATION: IS THERE A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO ASTROLOGY?

THERE IS A CONTEMPORARY approach to astrology that is to the study of celestial objects in their relation to human events. Some people condemn astrology as a matter of superstition, unfit for “modern” subject. Others are more considerate with their secular critique of a belief in the correlation between stars and earthly events. Astrology a mere matter of belief, is also a science, although for some, it does not fit in either of these categories. To elaborate on these statements, this paper will adopt the following structure. First, I will give an historical account of astrology and its critique, as predominantly uttered by both the church and the scientific community. Second, I will turn to psychology as that discipline which, until today, draws scientific value from astrology as a human phenomenon, even though under different presuppositions than classical astrology. Finally, I will perform a close reading of a contemporary horoscope, in order to show how astrology functions on the level of language, and as a piece of literature.

I HISTORY

First, it is helpful to distinguish what exactly the term “astrology” signifies, and the history that may add to its cultural significance. Astrology can be defined as, “the study of how positions of the stars and movements of the planets have a supposed influence on the events and on the live and behavior of people”(M.W. dictionary). Astrology is thought to originate, as an ancient ideal, in Babylonia in

the 4th century B.C.. Shortly after, it was introduced to Greece and quickly adopted by famous scientists and philosophers including Plato and Aristotle. Interestingly, during this time, there was no distinction between astrology and astronomy—instead astrology was approached as science. Indeed, in a scientific manner, early astrology was put into practice to foresee weather conditions and patterns, and natural disasters, both of which are still domains of science. Astronomers were able to identify twelve cycles (commonly known as months), and during each cycle the sun, moon, and planets assumed differing positions—resulting in the creation of zodiac signs which correspond to specific lunar cycles. The planets were associated with two zodiac signs, and each sign corresponds to a God or Goddess.

It is from this belief that contemporary horoscopes stem. Horoscopes, defined as, “a diagram of the relative positions of planets and signs of the zodiac at a specific time (as one’s birth) for use by astrologers in inferring individual character and personality traits and in foretelling events of a person’s life” (Merriam Webster). Today, horoscopes no longer predict natural disasters, but have turned to the prediction of the life of the individual. This function is characteristically not a precise prediction of future events, but is characterized by openness toward interpretation. Contemporary horoscopes, if they are perceived to have a certain value, can, then, be best described as a framing device that defines the conditions of an individual’s future possibilities.

This idea of an individual being framed by the stars has its critics. One of the larger groups in opposition to astrology is the Church (Catholic and Christian). There are Gods and Goddesses who correspond to each zodiac sign (Venus, Goddess of Taurus, Apollo, God of the sun) which conflicts with the Church’s belief of God as the sole creator and “playmaker” of a person’s fate. The church argues that any foretelling of future events provided by anyone other than God is rejected because of satanic or demonic origins, and those predictions made are false prophecies to be wary of.

Another challenger of astrology is the scientific community. 20th century philosopher, Karl Popper, critiqued astrology as a science for its lack of testability. This directly coincides with his preference of empirical falsification; which suggests that theories cannot be tested but merely falsified or disproven. Astrological predictions or hypotheses are too vague to either confirm or deny (with certainty) a conclusion, and thus fall outside the realm of science. Popper felt astrologers failed to recognize the lack of testability as a fault nor jeopardizing to the astrological credibility: “Moreover, by making their interpretations and prophecies sufficiently

vague there were able to explain away anything that might have been a refutation of the theory and the prophecies been more precise” (Popper 48–49). Naturally, this comment sparked counter-counter arguments and so forth.

Famous prophesier, Nostradamus, is a further interesting case. Emerging at the gateway to modernity, his readings of the stars represent a hybrid of both spiritual and scientific approaches to astrology, geared towards both the individual and to world history. Consider, for instance, following quote from the preface to his prophecies. Here, Nostradamus gives an account of the necessity of astrology as a complementary science in an increasingly rationalized world:

...the intellective soul can grasp things both present and distant if they are not too closed off: but the perfect knowledge of things cannot be acquired without divine inspiration, seeing as how all prophetic inspiration derives its prime moving principle from God the creator, then from good fortune and nature. (5)

In search of what Nostradamus calls “the perfect knowledge,” we must, according to him, adhere to some divine inspiration. The intellect as we find it in the rising “sciences” is, according to Nostradamus’ model, in need of a fusion with what he calls “divinity”—we may, perhaps, refer to it as a matter of “magic” or “enchantment”—in order to gain what he calls perfect knowledge. Nostradamus suggests the study of stars as a perfect means to the obtainment of “perfect knowledge.” The stars are both “present” and “distant” and both well-observable and, simultaneously withdrawing themselves from an insight into the “first moving principle.” To Nostradamus the stars therefore illustrate the need of a synthesis between intellective soul and prophetic inspiration in our analysis of the world, and it is in the study of the stars that this synthesis can be acquired.

II. PSYCHOLOGY

If it was said that the scientific community is in agreement that astrology cannot be a science for its lack of testability, an exception must be made for psychology. Psychology continues to have scientific interest in astrology, however, under different presumptions than classical astrology. It studies astrology as a cultural rather than natural phenomenon, which allows us insights into the workings of the human psyche. In other terms, astrology has been introduced into psychology

as a means of predicting an individual’s life by laying out laws for the development of character, also known as psychological astrology or astropsychology. The horoscope in astropsychology, thus speaking still serves as a means to predict the future, however, rather than being based on the assumption of a divine inspiration it assumes the workings of the psyche can be abstracted from the study of the phenomenon “astrology.”

Allow me to draw on the case of a friend of mine in order to illustrate ways in which contemporary psychology engages with horoscopes as a “cultural” phenomenon. My dear friend Sag (as I will call him in reference to his zodiac sign, a Sagittarius) for instance. He has studied astrology for many years and is very familiar with the traits and tendencies associated with persons of varying astrological signs. So much so, that if one were to tell him of a friend or family member he may be able to guess which of the signs that person “belongs” to. Or visa versa, if one were to tell him just the biological sex and birthday of a close friend or family member he could name some personality characteristics that a person with that sign inherently possesses—of course understanding there is individual variability. People might ask the question how it is that his “belief” has real-life, sensible affects. Psychology might argue that, because “Sag” has a familiarity of the personality traits and tendencies of a person’s sign, he may think he knows more about that person than he or she herself does, and therefore frame his interaction with said persons differently (better or worse) because of the astrological “framework” through which he looks at them.

Psychology offers various conceptualizations that explain the phenomenon as seen with “Sag.” When a person is enumerating characteristics that you supposedly fit, there is a natural reaction to search our bank of memories for situations that fulfill that trait. Viki Helgeson explains this tendency in regards to stereotypes, but it can be applied to astrology too: “People with strong stereotypes tend to have poorer recall for stereotype-inconsistent information and tend to misremember inconsistent information as consistent with the stereotype” (Helgeson). In psychology there are two ways in which we access our knowledge, recognition and recall. One is easier than the other, namely, recognition because it can operate without having to engage the second system thinking (more elaborate processing system). Through recognition we are able to instantaneously call upon the instances that hold true to x, y, and z, as they should according to the zodiac sign you fall under. At the same time, we momentarily forget about so many other traits and tendencies that do not fit into that astrological categorization.

What about the instances that do come into our frame of mind that do not support the said traits of a sign or reading? Helgeson provides further insight: “Conversely, if we see a man playing with a baby, we are more likely to decide that situational forces constrained his behavior (e.g. someone told him to play with the baby) because attentiveness to children is not-consistent with the male gender-role stereotype” (92). Helgeson refers here to gender roles, and not astrology. However, the concept can be applied to astrology effortlessly. When an instance or event rises to the forefront of our mind that is inconsistent with our astrological assignment, we assume that it disagrees for another reason other than the fallibility of the astrological prediction. Either way, in confirmation of, or denial of, we are affected by the reinforcing of said trait or reinforcing the negation of said trait, serving as a frame in one way or another.

The provided examples so far were of past-tense interpretations of astrological predictions. Next, let’s take a look at what may be happening when the horoscope has yet to be “fulfilled.” A widely recognized psychological theory that pertains to horoscopes’ validity (or invalidity) is the self-fulfilling prophecy. The self-fulfilling prophecy is as follows: “a statement that affects events to cause the prediction to become true” (Feist 57). With this theory in mind, an individual could read their projected horoscope or personality traits (as suggested by their zodiac sign) and consciously, or subconsciously, modify their behavior and personality in a way that would confirm the horoscope. Essentially, psychology argues that only we have the power to give horoscopes “credibility.”

III. LITERATURE

In the next step, let us look at the language at work in contemporary horoscopes. We encounter horoscopes in newspapers such as the *Seattle Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, even the University of Oregon’s very own *Daily Emerald*, just to name a few. Different newspapers stimulate different expectations and inhabit a different level of credibility in the reader’s imagination. The horoscopes are not consistent across sources and are catering or framing a different demographic depending group of age, race, class, or interest. Sometime in mid January, I flipped over to the horoscopes in the *Daily Emerald*. The employed terminology caught my eye. Allow me to show why.

The following passage from the *Daily Emerald* featured for the Sagittarius sign: “You strive to be self-sufficient emotionally, financially and physically. For you, being sure of this is your freedom. It allows you to say “no” and “yes” to

whomever you want” (Mathis). College students have to complete numerous college applications, personal essays, cover letters, and resumes throughout their educational quest. In doing so, there are certain techniques one is taught to implement into writing samples to convey a message that appeals to whomever it concerns. One strategy in particular is the use of action verbs that cater to your target audience (an administrator or potential employee); examples are: “achieved,” “earned,” and “hypothesized.” Each of those words implies a certain characteristic or trait that is valued in our modern day work environment. The word “achieved” implies triumph of an extent over a trail. “Earned” implies hard work ethics, perseverance, and determinism. And “hypothesized” implies the use of critical thinking. While there are action verbs that display desirable characteristics, there are also action verbs that cater to values college students. By emphasizing the values of the modern-day college student in the western culture, horoscope writers are able to relate to the readers.

The horoscope featured in the *Daily Emerald* for the Sagittarius is especially applicable to the values of college students. One of the first action verbs particularly pertaining to college students is “strive.” Striving is a concept at the very heart of the idea of college education. One of the main purposes of the institution of high school, is to have students strive to do well so that they can attend college. As college students they, then, strive to do well in classes, sports, and extra activities so that they can “bulk up” resumes and get hired at a good job post graduation, or get into the grad school of our choice. “Striving,” then, can be understood as any future-oriented activity with a particular place in American culture: it is, in itself, a value.

The next word that feeds into the ideology of a typical western culture college student is “self-sufficient.” Many college students move away from the comfort of their homes, to the big and bad dorms or off campus housing. The act of moving usually takes place under the guiding star of supposed “independence.” The college experience coincides with the time in which young adults desire and are expected to establish independence. In fact, the horoscope specifies “self-sufficiency” to take place in three distinct ways: emotionally, financially, and physically. Independence for the college student is, as we see here, a complex condition involving both “cultural” and “physical abilities” For some students, going away to college whether is 1,000 miles away from home, or ten minutes away from home, can create some degree of emotional independence. Also, this may be a time where students are trying to find their first jobs, or just new jobs to put themselves

through school, or to pay rent and bills, or maybe just a little spending money that is not coming from mom and dad (or caregiver). Lastly, there is the physical self-sufficiency, which encompasses diet as well as physicality. Students no longer rely upon parents to go shopping for dinner, let alone prepare that meal, and in turn, are required to do so (if they want to eat).

If the reader didn't already pick up on the theme of the horoscope, the author reasserts the western value of freedom, by literally stating that "for you, being sure of this if your freedom." However, there are several curiosities emerging from the horoscope's asserting voice. First, the question occurs whether or not it is actually possible for anyone, and especially a 20 year old student who recently moved out from his or her parents home to be entirely self-sufficient, whether emotionally, financially, or physically. For still he or she will have emotional relationships to others, will rely on parental financial support and/or student loans, and will need to eat and sleep. What is exactly meant by the idea to be "physically" independent remains, after all, mysterious considering that we can, under no known circumstances, leave our physical bodies behind to assert our independence and freedom somewhere outside of it. Can we, then, conclude that the horoscope merely throws vague ideals at its reader, which are irreconcilable with any student's reality, in other terms: can we conclude that horoscopes are ideological lies?

Significant is, ultimately, the final line: "for you, being sure of this if your freedom." In this passage we are being told that independence and freedom is, ultimately, nothing other than our belief or "being sure of this" that we are striving towards freedom and independence—regardless of whether we rely, in fact, on student loans from third parties, the grocery store, or the emotional support of our best friend. In that this assuredness or, put differently, illusion of our freedom, as we are told next, allows us "to say "no" and "yes" to whomever you want" the circle is finally completed: we can, in the guise of our "being sure" to be free make choices that further assert our independence.

This framing of our independence, freedom, and choice matters because the horoscope is a distinct literary genre in that it has an inherent self-referential function. An author writes the horoscopes. Yet, they are read by ourselves to ourselves. The "you" speaking, that is, is ourselves as both addressee and addressed. In a way, horoscopes, such as this, serve as a device that offers ourselves a frame, in which we then frame ourselves. In this case, we are both the "you" speaking and the "you" receiving such framing words of affirmation. The self-fulfilling prophecy theory (as previously mentioned) is introduced on a textual level. We read the horoscope

that assumes our voice for its own, and in doing so, serves as a reinforcing tool. We then apply the horoscope to ourselves to see if it holds any truth. But there is no way that it cannot because we have already told ourselves it is such, simply by reading the horoscope. And by reading and applying it to ourselves, we engage in reinforcing the frame, which we are telling ourselves, resulting in an internal confirmation bias. The horoscope is not prophesying the future but rather providing a present narration of ourselves at the very moment we are reading the horoscope. Furthermore the horoscope acts as a device that offers us a frame in which to frame ourselves.

Ironically, this horoscope gives you permission "to say "no" and "yes" to whomever you want," with the exception of the horoscope itself because striving and free are what you already are. This normative horoscope communicates these American values in a very disguised manner. Thus creating two types of frames at work: the visible frame of the stars, and the invisible frame of the literary and psychological instruments at work. This notion of two types of frames relates back to Nostradamus's idea of two types of knowledge. One is very obvious, and the other subtle, refiguring the divine inspiration.

Ultimately I argue that astrology serves as a frame for the human experience on at least two levels. First, in that star constellations, for the believer, set the frame through which events are being perceived and evaluated. This first framing is what psychology rationalizes and explains as a matter of "self-fulfilling prophecy." However, as I show this "psychological" explanation does not take into account a second framing, which is only revealed on the close level of language. Contemporary horoscopes, that is to say, reveal a mode of narration that serves as a framing device for an inner dialogue with ourselves. In doing so horoscopes work, in fact, in a similar manner as a piece of literature. This framed dialogue does not only negotiate the possible conditions for our future but, much more, also our present and our past. Read this way, I argue, horoscopes may be looked at as a document of self-negotiation which gives rise to our identity, however, without entirely attempting to rationalize this complex process, as psychology does. The frame of horoscopes, read this way, is more open than psychological explanations of horoscopes as "future-framings" allow for. Horoscopes, read that way, represent "magic" frames that adhere to the secret workings of identity formation as it occurs in literature.

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FRAMING AND MANIPULATION IN *THE LAST OF THE INNOCENT*

RILEY, THE LEAD CHARACTER in the crime comic *The Last of the Innocent*, is a charming, narcissistic man with a talent for framing others for his own bad behavior. Written by Ed Brubaker and illustrated by Sean Phillips, *The Last of the Innocent* creates a narrative based upon the characters created in the comic classic *Archie*. Riley is the comic's twisted Archie character, Felix is Veronica, Liz is Betty, Freakout is Jughead, and so on. The comic uses the characters and relationship dynamics in *Archie* as foundational, yet perverts the iconic *Archie* universe and subjects the characters to a maliciously manipulative principal character. While the family-friendly *Archie* lacked “violence, sadism, and hot sex” (Glasberg 26), *The Last of The Innocent* delivers generous helpings of all three. The comic imagines a twisted world where the Archie figure, Riley, is a psychopath who killed his wife Felix (Veronica) to ensure that he was able to inherit all of her money, rather than lose his resources in an impending divorce. The plot unfolds from there. Unlike his good-hearted original, Riley exhibits classic signs of psychopathy. He, like most psychopaths, tends to make a good first impression on others, yet is “self-centered, dishonest and undependable,” maintains “callous interpersonal and romantic relationships,” and has difficulty inhibiting his impulses (Lillienfeld). While Riley appears charming, successful, and above all else, “normal” on the exterior, the comic makes the reader privy to his deceitful and self-centered nature. He displays an alarming lack of empathy throughout the novel, killing his wife with ease, and later

only suffering a temporary pang of guilt after murdering his best friend Freakout to protect his secrets. He also manipulatively takes over his father-in-law's business, frames his former high-school rival for his wife's murder—and rather than feeling any semblance of guilt, he displays an exaggerated sense of self-satisfaction. Not even feeling sadness at his father's funeral, Riley instead calculated coldly how long it was expected for him to stand there after the service. Riley exhibits all of these traits in *The Last of the Innocent*, and yet his story (told within panels literally and metaphorically colored by Riley's perspective) manipulates the reader into perversely rooting for him, despite the insight offered by Riley's first-person narration. The illustrations, colored and informed by Riley's perceptions, shape not only the reader's ability to understand Riley and his actions clearly, but all the other characters as well. The portrayals of the primary female characters in the comic, Felix and Liz, are carefully constructed to subtly justify Riley's unconscionable actions by visually attaching social values and stereotypes to each.

The Last of the Innocent is a study of Riley's ability to manipulate the reader into sympathizing with him, despite being fully informed of his misdeeds. The primary device of this manipulation is the immediate impact of the illustrations, juxtaposed against the latent impact of the text in the panels. Scott McCloud speaks of this contrast in his book *Understanding Comics*, defining images as receiving information compared to words whose meanings must be perceived (McCloud 59). By this definition, images transmit their messages immediately, even to the passive reader, whereas words require an active participant to comprehend their meaning. Comics are formally unique in that they “depend on a dialectic between what is easily understood and what is less easily understood; pictures are open, easy, and solicitous, while words are coded, abstract, and remote,” (Hatfield 133). While this simplistic view of the functions of image and text in comics does not always apply so succinctly, as “words can be visually inflected,” while pictures can become as “abstract and symbolic as words,” (Hatfield 132) this binary view of the function of image and text in comics fits well with the formal attributes of *The Last of the Innocent*. Thus, the comic offsets Riley's relentlessly disturbing dialogue by using preemptively received visuals to disguise and distract from his true nature.

Particular drawing styles and color palettes are utilized to coerce a sympathetic view of his adult circumstances visually, as well as evoke a nostalgic identification with his quest to reclaim the lost happiness of youth. There is an apparent stylistic binary contained within the comic, which reflects the divergent story lines of Riley's past and present. Riley's present reality is illustrated in a gritty, dark, high-

contrast, and detailed manner. These illustrations of the present evoke imagery in the tradition of film-noir with generous hatchwork and a muted color palette. The flashbacks to Riley's youth are illustrated as an *Archie* pastiche, using a simplified, 2-dimensional drawing style with bright colors, happy pastels, and clean lines. The overt simplicity and optimism of the flashback imagery evokes an empathetic identification within most readers; yearning for past youth or idealized moments in time is something most have experienced.

The flashbacks to his youth illustrate an unshakable nostalgia that infects not only Riley, but the reader as well. In a particularly wrenching panel sequence, we see the adult Riley physically present and moving through his idealistic recollections of the past. He is still drawn in the gritty, dark style associated with adulthood, and he appears painfully out of place against the bright, clean backdrop of his youth (Brubaker Part 1). His face is constricted with a painful longing, and he reaches his hand out as if to touch the vision of his youthful face. Young Riley does not realize that his future incarnation is there however, and remains contently reading what appears to be a comic book with a smile on his face, unaware that his future is staring at him. It is at this moment of longingly regarding his former self that the adult Riley bemoans, “I wish I could be back in the warmth of those endless summers,” [see figure 1]. This image of longing resonates with the sympathetic reader; they too are shown the vision of those endless summers and the bright and happy panels of Riley's glory days. Through the experience of seeing through Riley's eyes, the reader begins to empathetically long with Riley, perhaps unconsciously, because his perspective shapes everything in the comic.

The comic takes advantage of the reader's probable familiarity with the comic classic *Archie*, and models Riley's flashbacks to youth on *Archie* both stylistically and in content. The blatant conflation between Riley's recollections of his youth with one of America's most beloved comics is calculated to foster feelings of warmth and familiarity in the reader. These feelings of nostalgia cause readers familiar with *Archie* to be more sympathetic to Riley's own nostalgic longings, forming a point of connection between the empathetic reader and the psychotic character. The bright color palette and clean, simplistic, two-dimensional drawing style is largely discordant with the content of the recollections, yet it fosters feelings of warmth and recognition regardless. Riley is not only able to manipulate, deceive, and charm other characters in the comic, he is equally capable of manipulating the reader emotionally through his visual representations of the past and present. Upon closer examination, Riley's idyllic golden days of youth are resplen-

dent with recollections of sex, drugs, and violence. However, like the deceptively cheerful melody of the children's rhyme "Ring-Around-The-Rosie," its tone often masks what lies beneath—such as lyrics about the bubonic plague. Masked by the bright colors and cheerful "tone" of his recollections, the content of Riley's youth goes largely dismissed by readers. The style and colors make an immediate, visceral impact on the reader before they carefully read each panel and discern what is precisely happening. A unique function of comics, when the reader turns a page they get a view of all the panels and a glimpse of the "big picture" before they read the panels chronologically and construct the plot in their heads. For this reason, the reader sees the happy colors and clean style of Riley's recollections and is influenced by these markers of happiness and wholesomeness, and these feelings remain past the revelations of their unwholesome content. This creates a stark contrast to the horrors of Riley's present, which are not only disturbing in content, but more importantly, are upsetting visually. The comic's reader is influenced visually and emotionally through Riley's youth's familiarity, optimistic colors, and cheerful tone in a positive way, and desire to escape the discomfort of experiencing Riley's present almost as much as the character himself does.

Riley not only employs the *Archie* style and its emotional affects to manipulate readers, he utilizes the power of cultural norms and stereotypes. For instance, Riley depicts his wife Felix as a wealthy whore that others might enjoy seeing punished, due to her seeming immorality and elevated social status. *The Last of the Innocent* is divided into three sections, each section heralded by a two-page visual spread whose detailed art offers the reader insight into Riley's mind and attitude. Part One opens with a spread of Felix, erotically displayed at what appears to be a party [see figure 2]. She is the closest to the foreground, far larger than any of the figures on the periphery. Her red dress emphasizes her womanly figure, her cleavage exposed and waistline slim. Her mouth is parted suggestively and her candy-apple red lips shine as though they are lacquered. Her arms are raised above her head in dance, her elbows bent and her wrists crossed above her head as she presumably sways seductively to music; her sensual pose reminiscent of pin-ups. The scene is washed in blue, with her red dress and lips standing out against the melancholic palette. Riley stands behind Felix to the right in the background, contemplating his wife. There is another man on the periphery, on the first page of the spread on the far left side of the foreground, who stares pointedly at Felix's sensual display, his eyes seemingly fall upon her cleavage. Her eyes do not meet the gaze of the reader, and instead stare into a distant space the viewer is not privy to [see

figure 2]. Felix's lack of direct eye contact with the reader, and her male viewers depicted in the image, are reminiscent of Renaissance nudes where the female subject rarely met the male gaze of the audience; passively being looked upon rather than actively looking.

This opening spread brings to mind Laura Mulvey's commentary on the gaze and erotic objectification in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." She describes the opening scenes of two movies where the woman is featured as the object of "the combined gaze of spectator and all the male protagonists in the film... isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualized," (Mulvey 6). Mulvey examines this pleasurable gaze that subjects the object to a controlling and curious surveillance and provides a source of visual sexual stimulation in the realm of cinema, yet the same applies to the comic form. Both the reader and Riley's gazes fall upon Felix in the same way, mutually objectifying her. The pleasurable act of gazing at Felix, as portrayed in this isolated and sexualized display, subjects Felix to an erotic objectification where the constructs of male desire are projected onto her and embodied by her.

An enormous amount of information about Riley and Felix's relationship and their individual characterizations are encoded in this initial image. Their distant marriage can be inferred from their physical distance and the blue tone of the scene. Felix's seemingly willing, erotic self-display lays the foundation for her future establishment as the comic's resident "bad-girl." In narrative representations of females, using any medium, women who aren't maternal figures are often reduced to occupying either the role of the "virgin" or that of the "whore." The virgin is an innocent, modest creature that exists in an exalted state of purity. The virgin's counterpart is the whore: a wicked Jezebel with a temptress persona and a dangerous sexuality. She is considered impure, and therefore not valued but vilified in the hypocritical culture that both loves to imagine, view, and experience female sexuality—and subsequently punish it. With the men in the image and the reader simultaneously objectifying and culturally coding Felix as a "whore," a male/female power imbalance is immediately established. This power is split between the active, powerful male and the passive, disempowered female. As the reader is placed into the position of perceiving Felix from a dominant, presumably hetero-normative perspective, the reader's own personal perspective on Felix can be overridden. Sharing the perspective of the "active male" in this spread also forms another subconscious point of identification between the reader and Riley, regardless of the reader's gender. Felix's erotic display heralds the various visual and narrative

techniques the comic uses to portray Felix archetypically as the “whore” from the virgin/whore dichotomy

The virgin/whore dichotomy is inextricably predicated on their mutual existence: the bad girl defines the good girl, and vice versa. It is through the juxtaposition of their behaviors that their identities are secured, and Liz and Felix conform to this dichotomous heritage. It is Felix’s act of sleeping with her husband’s old high-school rival, which establishes her concretely as the comic’s “whore.” The tales of her sexual escapades in high school further reinforce Felix’s role as the comic’s resident “bad girl.” Liz is Felix’s foil, the “good girl” counterpart and the comic’s resident sweetheart. The reader experiences Liz—as well as the entire comic—through his subjective perspective, and thus the reader can’t help but idealize her as well. At one point Riley wonders of Liz, “How did she stay so pure?” (Brubaker Part 1). Being firmly placed into the “whore” category culturally negates much of Felix’s value as a woman, whereas being placed in the metaphorical “virgin” category establishes Liz’s.

Felix and Liz are aesthetically constructed and illustrated in ways that emphasize their differences. Felix is usually depicted in reds or pinks in the flashbacks to Riley’s youth, and typically drawn in black or dark, saturated reds in adulthood. Felix wears form-fitting, stylish, curve-accentuating clothing, often dressing in a manner one could label “sexually provocative.” The color choices most often used to represent Felix, red and black, symbolically connote lust, violence, blood, and death. In fashion and cinema, red and black are associated with femme fatale characters and vixens, such as cartoon sex symbol Jessica Rabbit. It is not only Felix’s actions that identify her as the “bad girl” of the comic, but also the symbolic and cultural stereotypes she is visually associated with through color and wardrobe. In contrast, Liz is usually shown in earth tones, blues, or grays throughout the comic. She also dresses significantly more modestly and less fashionably than her counterpart. Liz is not depicted as possessing a “dangerous sexuality,” as Felix is. In adulthood, Liz is most commonly seen in an Oxford style button-down shirt in varying earth tones. She possesses a simple, unpretentious, and average wardrobe that symbolically represents her innocence and ubiquity as the “good girl next door.”

Their vastly different wardrobes also represent their socioeconomic differences. Felix is wealthy, and while remarkably little information is given about Liz, she is likely middle class like her *Archie* original, Betty. Their class difference represents the prevalent cultural ideology that the middle class possesses a solid moral character while the wealthy do not. Despite the moral condemnation of the

wealthy echelon of society, they are simultaneously glamorized, idolized, and envied for the luxuriously sinful lives they are imagined to have in the cultural conscience. The characterization of Felix and Liz presents these stereotypes in a microcosm.

A cultural desire to punish “whores,” exists in contemporary society, and has existed for the bulk of recorded history. The practice of shaming and humiliating women for possessing a “dangerous” sexuality, for engaging in sexual activities, or even for manners of dress considered “provocative,” has been coined as slut shaming. The cultural proclivity for slut shaming is exemplified in many works of literature, such as *The Scarlet Letter*. The pleasure people take in slut shaming persists with a vengeance in the contemporary, digital age. It can be perceived in the countless “revenge porn” videos of ex-girlfriends online. It can also be seen in the websites, blogs, and other social media outlets devoted to the practice, where countless Facebook posts exist digitally devoted to humiliating wives that attempt to arrange an extramarital sexual rendezvous. These women find themselves not only rejected, but also publically condemned and humiliated as hundreds or thousands of people comment self-righteously on such posts. It is because punishing “whores” is culturally normal, and perhaps even considered moral, that Felix’s murder does not completely alienate Riley from the reader. Before Riley murders his wife, à la ice pick to the eye, Felix is illustrated as a promiscuous girl in her youth and an adulteress in her adulthood. The reader can, subconsciously or perhaps consciously, justify Felix’s murder as the punishment of a “whore;” perhaps even experiencing voyeuristic pleasure in her “getting what she deserved.”

Felix’s foil, Liz, is arguably the only character Riley displays any affection towards, yet even this affection is superficial. Liz’s character is devoid of any individual characterization from Riley’s perspective; she exists as a passive object for his possession, a means to fulfill his happiness. For Riley, Liz represents a means to reclaim the golden years of his youth; he idealizes her without ever really attempting to know or understand her as a person. Budd Boetticher commented on this narrative feature in relation to cinema, stating,

What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance (Mulvey 5).

It is not only Liz that functions merely as an objectified plot device in this comic however; Felix functions identically, yet inspires opposite feelings within Riley. For Riley, Felix used to be a sex object and ultimately became a means to wealth while Liz remained an object yet to be acquired as a means to happiness. Liz eventually also becomes a sex object to Riley, yet her value is not diminished nor does she bear the burden of the label “whore” for it—essentially because she makes him wait more than two decades before she allows him to consummate their relationship.

In the last sequence of panels in the comic, Riley is shown as having gained everything he wanted: He has wealth, Liz, and successfully wracked up a body count that ensures anyone who could have threatened what he desired was eliminated. His “having it all” is a direct violation of what critic Ronald Glasberg identified as the “*Archie* code,” by which he means “the key by which one may relate the many stories, situations, and jokes to a basic underlying pattern,” present within *Archie* (Glasberg 27). He identifies the “*Archie* code” as being predicated on the fundamental love triangle between Archie, Betty, and Veronica. In this code, the women present a fateful choice for Riley: if he chooses Veronica, he will have her wealth and resources at his disposal, but must contend with the possibility of her inconstant love, and if he chooses Betty he will be assured of her affections but have to do without her resources (Glasberg 28). The most important part of this code is that one cannot attain both, and it situates itself within an “eternal adolescence” where Archie veers back and forth between Betty and Veronica, representing youth as freedom of choice. Glasberg writes that:

America, as a youth culture, idealizes this moment which is eternally poised on the threshold of choice and would wish to extend this moment throughout the course of life. The wish, never or rarely to be fulfilled, is that one can have it all within the structure of capitalist competition—an authentic and loving intimacy as well as material success. The difficulty of envisioning this situation in concrete terms leads to a kind of dream-like atemporal preservation of the adolescent state. (28)

Riley, however, has plotted a devious course towards ultimate wish fulfillment, and succeeds. Rather than making the “fateful choice” between material

prosperity (Felix) and intimacy (Liz), Riley takes what is valuable from both. Rather than making a “fateful choice” and displaying maturity, Riley conspires to have it all in a psychotically adolescent fashion. His obsession with his past youth relates directly to his past days when his life was perched on the perilous peak before choice and commitment, when all things were possible and the wish could yet be fulfilled. And as an adult, he finally manages to live without any compromise of his desires, as he dreamed of as an adolescent. Perhaps this is why, in the last panel of the comic, he visually portrays himself once more in the two-dimensional, bright, and clean style previously relegated to visions of his youth.

Riley’s transformation in the final panel is visually disturbing. Throughout the comic the two dominant drawing styles alternate. The clean, bright, simplistic, *Archie* style associated with Riley’s bygone glory days contrasted against the gritty, dark, liney, high contrast and muted colors of the present. However, these styles merge in the final panel and the conflation yields a jarring result [see figure 3]. Riley and Liz are shown holding hands, drawn in the iconic, bright, and simple *Archie* style formerly reserved for their youth. Liz’s smile is wide and bright as a toothpaste ad as she glances to her right and above, facing the reader, while Riley looks smilingly ahead to the future. That Liz becomes two-dimensional and undergoes a stylistic transformation as a result of Riley’s self-actualization could be read in many ways, but it certainly indicates that he views her as an extension of himself rather than an individual with agency. Liz’s character is far more archetypal than tangible, due to the utter lack of characterization beyond details emphasizing her purity and beauty. This general lack of characterization supports that Liz is merely an object in Riley’s eyes, and she is now flattened out fittingly. Given the misogyny Riley employs throughout the comic to aid his manipulation of the reader, Liz’s lack of agency preceding her stylistic transformation is unsurprising. She remains an object and extension of Riley’s projected desires, subjected to major transformations through Riley’s self-actualization. The mutant-hybrid panel appears painfully out-of-context, and jars the last of the innocent readers out of their empathetic stance toward Riley; hopefully causing them to question not only Riley’s actions but also the misogynistic perspective they have internalized by experiencing Liz and Felix through Riley’s eyes.

It is only he and Liz that have morphed; their background remains the dark, Three-Dimensional, gritty space associated with the present throughout. Given that the clean *Archie* style represents all that Riley desired to reclaim and achieve, that Riley portrays himself and Liz in the style associated with his golden years

symbolically represents the attainment of his goals. He has gotten away with it all, and he's thrilled with what he perceives as his total success. The implications of the narrative in terms of social commentary interesting—it seems to be satirizing the cutthroat methods one must employ to truly “have it all.” The comic seems to satirize the “American Dream,” asserting that in order to attain it, you must become a monster. Certainly the transformation seems to render Riley and Liz more monstrously out of place against the contemporary background. Their two-dimensional, cleanly rendered figures do not brighten up the image, but instead seem eerily superficial against the dark background. Their facial expressions appear strangely flat against their realistic surroundings [see figure 3]. The image seems to be visually depicting the delusional, begetting the realization that the reader had been drawn into Riley's dangerous deceptions all along.

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



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Mentor: **Xxxxxx XXXXXXXXX**

CINEMA VOYEUR: HITCHCOCK'S CRITIQUE OF SPECTATORSHIP IN *REAR WINDOW*

ALFRED HITCHCOCK IS notorious for pulling in viewers in such a distinct and seemingly effortless way that often manipulates viewers into feeling and acknowledging their own internal, unethical desires that are depicted in his films. With sex and murder being two major themes that can be traced throughout his films, it goes without saying that Hitchcock wants his audiences to examine their own perversions concerning these subjects through his filmmaking.

Rear Window (1954) is regarded as “a film that is ‘about’ the cinema, a film that serves as the director’s ultimate statement about his or her craft” (Belton 10). Made during the spread of Technicolor and the growing interest in the spectacle aspect of a film, Hitchcock took what was popular and created a critique on his own viewers. Hitchcock not only confined viewers to the massive widescreen aspect ratio (1.66:1) as a window into Jefferies’ world, but as a window of opportunity for personal reflection based on his own opinion on the tendency of spectators to be situated as voyeurs. Hitchcock believed that *Rear Window* displayed “every kind of human behavior” through the use of voyeurism, both in Jefferies and the audience (Truffaut 216). On the surface, this film tells a story of a snooping, temporarily paralyzed man who believes he witnessed his neighbor Thorwald commit a murder in an apartment across the courtyard of his complex. However, through the enclosed and often claustrophobic compositions within the frame joined with diegetic sounds from an unseen source, *Rear Window* turns into an apparatus that

entraps viewers and forces them to confront their own complicity in relation to voyeurism.

One of the most crucial scenes in *Rear Window* that highlights the voyeuristic self-reflexivity that Hitchcock set out to address is that of the discovery of the murdered dog in the courtyard. This scene begins with a fade from black to a medium shot on Jefferies in his wheelchair. At this point in the film, Jefferies has already convinced himself, his nurse Stella, and his girlfriend Lisa that a man across the courtyard had committed murder by killing his wife. With the blinds closed, both Jefferies and the audience are cut off from any visual of what is happening outside of the apartment, yet the sounds coming in remain.

The opening six-second shot of Jefferies is lacking in movement and in dialogue, with only Jefferies’ glass and eyes moving. In this moment, Hitchcock is able to pull the audiences’ attention away from where Jefferies’ attention is, and towards the only element of the frame that does have some form of movement—the sound. The loudest sound element is the Walla track, which is “defined as the unintelligible conversations of a crowd that you can hear in the background of a scene” (Viers 235). The Walla track is placed front and center of the frame without the source being visibly present. Not only is it the only element of full body movement, but also the levels of this sound are increased significantly.

The film cuts to a long shot of Lisa revealing her nightgown to Jefferies, and suddenly the Walla track is thrust back into the background. As the sound level of the Walla track is lowered, Lisa’s dialogue takes over the sound of the scene. The lowering of the Walla track connects the camera once more to Jefferies, as we are both listening and hearing the moment just as he is. By providing us with Jefferies’ point of audition, the viewer is guided into witnessing how Jefferies experiences Lisa rather than experiencing her as if the viewer were Jefferies, thus splitting the viewer from Jefferies in time for the objective moment in the courtyard. Although point of audition can function in either a spatial or subjective sense, the point of audition in subjective with the viewer tied to Jefferies through the camera tied to Jefferies through the camera.

In the middle of the conversation between the two, the sound from outside of the apartment reclaims its dominance over the scene with a loud female scream. At nearly 30 seconds into the scene, the camera jumps abruptly to outside of Jefferies’ apartment and begins to rapidly cut from one apartment balcony to the next. Going from neighbor to neighbor, the audience sees the people they had been previously watching with Jefferies with their own point of view. The camera has

broken its subjective language and became objective, as it is no longer confined to the frame of Jefferies' window. This ninety-second segment of the scene is the only moment in the film where the camera breaks free from Jefferies' apartment [See figure 1].

The first shot from the newly freed camera is that of the couple whose dog had been killed. It was this woman who had screamed, as she continues to sob outside of her balcony with little regard to being seen in such a vulnerable state. The camera then cuts to Jefferies' window through which both he and Lisa can be seen, thus reminding the viewer that they too are like the characters contained by the frame and that the camera is a separate entity from Jefferies. The scene continues through a series of reaction shots of each neighbor.

The cuts between each neighbor and Lisa and Jefferies are fast paced, allowing the audience to feel the sense of urgency, confusion, and initial adrenaline rush that each of the neighbors is experiencing in reaction to the scream. To further push the idea that this is the audience's point of view rather than Jefferies', each neighbor is shot from a different angle and perspective point in contrast to Jefferies' usual straight angle line of vision. In fact, each reaction shot is done "from angles that could only be shot from the center of the courtyard" (Howe, 28). This being said, the camera's positioning reinforces the idea that it is not Jefferies' point of view, but rather a separate perspective that chose to follow Jefferies.

Dialogue comes back into the scene with the proclamation that the dog's neck had been broken, proving that it was not an accident and that he was in fact killed. The film then cuts to a wide shot, revealing the courtyard and neighbors rubbernecking off their balconies. It is at this point in the scene where the owner of the dog begins to call out to all of her neighbors, questioning who would kill "the only thing in [their] whole neighborhood who liked anybody." She leaves those around her who are listening and watching with the simple question, "Did you kill him because he liked you?" which most simply shrug off as they return to their evening events. This scene ends with the camera tracking back inside the frame of the window and reuniting once more with Jefferies himself. Throughout this scene, "the emotional charge... distracts us" from the main narrative concerning Thorwald, as the commotion of the woman's yelling remains a dominant element once it begins (Howe, 29). By the end of this scene, Hitchcock has successfully drawn the viewer away from Thorwald, thrust them out of the confines of Jefferies' apartment, and put them in the position of self-examination.

The window of Thorwald's apartment is blacked out during the wide shot

of the apartment complex. However, during the dog owner's monologue and the multiple cuts between the different neighbors, the camera never points directly at Thorwald's window. Hitchcock, who believed strongly that the viewer should never be left without any information they needed to solve what questions were being answered in a film, made sure that the lack of what was in the frame supported what was happening within the frame. With a brief, indirect look at Thorwald's apartment followed by the blatant lack of attention to what was happening at his balcony, Hitchcock offers oblique support for the theory that Thorwald is in fact a killer. It isn't until the camera is connected to Jefferies again that it is clearly outlined for the viewer that Thorwald is responsible for this incident.

In order to fully grasp what Hitchcock is doing in this scene, the storyline of the character nicknamed Ms. Lonelyhearts must first be examined. Ms. Lonelyhearts is used as an instrument in outlining both the positive and negative aspects of prying on neighbors, as she "constitutes a whole-hearted condemnation of curiosity, prying, voyeurism, libido sciendi and delactatio morose" (Wood 100). Up until the scene of the discovered dog, there have been several moments of everyday tragedy seen through multiple apartments' windows. Ms. Lonelyhearts stands out, with the most dreadful of circumstances happening with no one to help her. After a date with someone we can assume she has never been with before, she is attacked and the man attempts to rape her. It is this moment that is meant to solidify the argument that it is unethical to pry on our neighbor's life, with Jefferies and Lisa acting awkward about watching it unfold rather than trying to help. With Ms. Lonelyhearts' attempted rape in mind, the scene of the discovery of the dead dog becomes a moment for the viewer to either defend or renounce the act of spying on neighbors. However, it is clear that Hitchcock was guiding the viewers to renounce such an act, with the monologue that contests those who have been watching from the apartments and doing nothing about what they had seen.

In addition to utilizing Ms. Lonelyhearts' character to further understand the self-reflexive moment, the camera language and the soundtrack must be established as elements that support the connection between Jefferies' and the viewer, yet reject their being one in the same. In order for Hitchcock's plan to trap the viewer in the courtyard for them to recognize their own ethical standing on voyeurism, the visuals have to support the feeling of being confined as well as convince the viewer that they have in fact been participating on their own accord with Jefferies' prying. In the small apartment living room where Jefferies himself is trapped, the only visual exit that the audience is able to access is his window. There is no entering or

exiting of the living room, and the subjective camera uses the window through the means of Jefferies' own attempt to leave the space.

In the beginning of the film, Lisa and Stella oppose Jefferies' spying as a means of escapism, but once the film progresses, they become increasingly interested and involved to the point of forming stories of what they believe they see unfolding across the way. The inability for any action between the three to happen outside of the living room has pushed the two women to participate in the voyeurism insofar as that is all they have to perpetuate the action between them in the film. This involvement of the female characters supports this idea that in order for the viewer to enjoy the time they spend in the theater watching, they too must submit to Jefferies' voyeuristic habit. The camera follows Jefferies and soon attaches itself to his point of view, much like Lisa and Stella. By having the camera subjectively show the scenes unfold in the way Jefferies' wants them to, it is difficult for the viewer to assume that anything else could be happening. The underlying perverse and dangerous connotations Hitchcock expresses in regards to the camera and its ability to delve into another's life fill *Rear Window* from beginning to end, and it is this same camera that momentarily pulls viewers out of the narrative in order for them to recognize their feelings regarding voyeurism in both its visual and auditory forms: people watching and eavesdropping.

The framed window that Jefferies obsessively peers through "serves as the camera's pivot point... so that we are acutely aware of when that line is being crossed" (Toles 237). By crossing this threshold, leaving the apartment through the window frame, the camera breaks with the already established framework of the subjective camera. By doing so, the camera places the viewer outside of Jefferies' apartment, outside of the restraining frame of his window, and outside of his mind-set. As it was previously stationed inside of the apartment, the camera provided a subjective outlook on what was happening outside of his apartment, but now turns to a much more objective point of view. This "self-aware, creative force" that the camera has taken on detaches the viewer from Jefferies as well as from the narrative" (Toles 237). The effective of this sudden change creates a moment for the viewer to pause in their voyeuristic experience at the movies as reflect upon their own ethical standings when it comes to peering into the lives of others.

In addition to the visuals of the scene, the soundtrack plays a significant role in Hitchcock's art of luring his viewers towards indulging in their bad habits, then leaving them to defend themselves for their actions. The soundtrack in *Rear Window* was designed to direct the viewer towards the act of eavesdropping, the

second half of the prying act of voyeurism. According to film sound theorist Michel Chion, at the outset of the two-minute scene, "*Rear Window* included much passive offscreen sound... [that] cued the ear into contextual setting of the scene without raising questions or calling for their visualization of their sources" (86.) Chion describes this passive offscreen sound as "sound [that] creates an atmosphere that envelopes and stabilizes the image, without in any way inspiring us to look elsewhere or anticipate seeing its source" (Chion 86).

That being said, the sound of the city and the neighbors talking in *Rear Window* are initially regarded as merely stabilizing elements that assist in the centralizing of the audiences' point of view. However, *Rear Window* takes advantage of this offscreen sound in the discovered dog scene by making it more than just background ambience by raising its audio level significantly in the mix. By drawing our attention to the unseen, freed from the onscreen sources of sound, viewers find themselves "being encouraged to believe that the audiovisual space is literally being extended into the theater," thus leaving the frame in which they are viewing themselves (Chion 84). With the sound that is used only to give the viewer a stable place heightened to such an unreal extreme, Hitchcock quickly connects the viewer to the scene that is about to unfold as his own voyeur. It is as if Hitchcock were preparing his viewers by disconnecting their audio reception from Jeffries' as he waits to see Lisa reenter the room.

Through "the combination of extreme (visual) tension and lose (auditory) meandering," *Rear Window* places the viewer in a position where their only separation from Jefferies' apartment is through the audio (*Film, A Sound Art*, 286). Because of the confinement that is Jefferies' apartment and the stabilizing yet invisible sounds of the city, viewers are able to station themselves within the frame of the living room without losing interest in the small space. The sounds of the city and the reoccurring singing remind the viewers that there is more to this created world than what Jefferies or they themselves can see. Throughout this film, Hitchcock only brings in the city sound effects that help guide the narrative. In this particular scene, the sounds of the city are brought up significantly higher to draw attention to outside of the apartment, although the visuals remain inside. This breaking apart between locations and elements of the *misé-en-scène* supports the break from Jefferies and the viewers' interests. By doing so, the camera can cut into the courtyard and offer this objective moment in such a subjective film.

Not only does Hitchcock take this stabilizing sound element and turn it into a separation from Jefferies, he uses it to betray the viewer by quickly breaking

the stability and comfort of the world that exists outside of the apartment with the shrill scream from the neighbor. The scream seems to come from nowhere, as there was no visual indicator that it would happen, nor any audio cues that would hint that something dreadful is happening outside. The startling sound, followed by the abrupt change in the camera language, pulls the viewer away from what the film had been about up until this point. The foundation of sound that the viewer depended on collapsed on the viewer, leaving the viewer with no support from the fictional world to stand on.

With the temporary cut from the fictional world of *Rear Window* and the stories Jefferies, Lisa, and Stella formulated concerning Thorwald, the viewer must reflect on what is left, which is the monologue of the woman across Jefferies' apartment. Her dialogue eerily nears breaking the fourth wall without actually ever addressing the audience. All of her comments on watching people and not doing anything to understand those in other apartments can be applied to those outside of the films, i.e. the viewers.

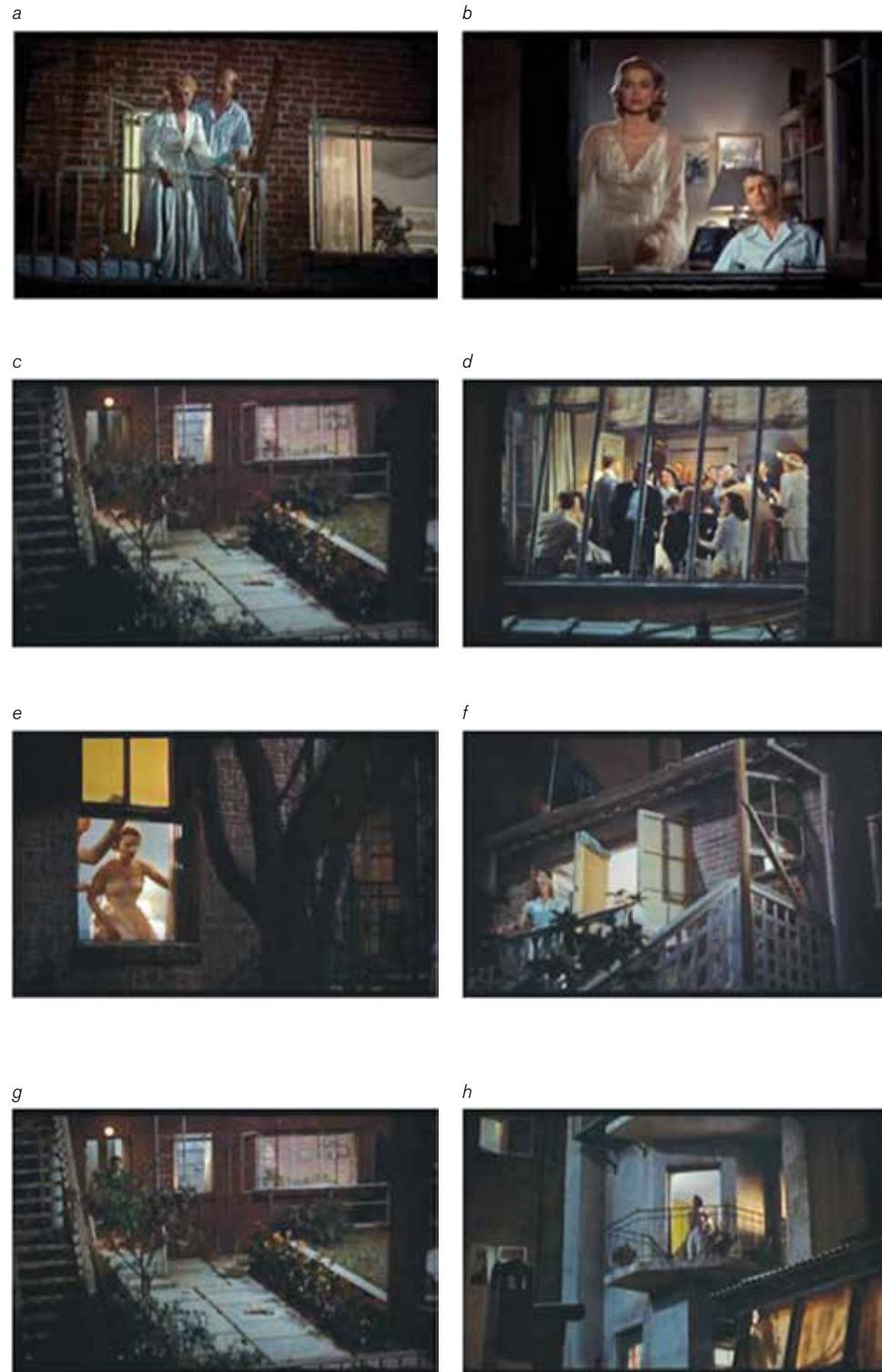
Only a few minutes after the scene of the discovery of the murdered dog, the attention is pulled once more to a emotionally charged scene featuring Ms. Lonelyhearts. In this scene, Lisa, Jefferies and Stella witness Ms. Lonelyhearts attempted suicide. Lisa calls the police department to report it, and they do come in time to save her from herself. Just after Hitchcock decided to show the viewer that they are not in the right by taking part in Jefferies' peeping, as well as their own voyeuristic tendencies, the viewer is given proof that there is some good that can come of keeping an eye on your neighbor. Had it not been for Jefferies', Lisa's and Stella's interest in Thorwald's personal life, Ms. Lonelyhearts could have easily been another casualty in the neighborhood that had gone unnoticed.

It is through Hitchcock's subjective camera that "we are made to feel far too uneasy, in the course of the film, about the morality of prying, [and] to find it really pleasurable" (Wood 100). Although it is general agreed upon that prying on others' lives is unethical, what Hitchcock does is force his audiences to challenge that with the positive outcomes that happen because of people watching. After seeing extremely personal moments of Ms. Lonelyhearts' daily life, followed by the screaming insults of becoming "a race of Peeping Toms" by the childless woman, we are invited "to go outside and look in" on ourselves (*Rear Window* 1954). While none of the characters in this film follow up with doing such an act, the camera does, and therefore pulls the viewer into a self-reflexive state concerning the subject of voyeurism, the very act they have been exhibiting since the film began. After

the audiences have established a greater sense of voyeurism being unethical, they are once again made to question if they fully believe in their stance. With proof that there is a positive outcome in spying on others, the ethics of being a peeping tom become grey.

This conflict of pros and cons in the act of watching people to cure our own curiosity is what drives *Rear Window's* self-reflexivity and hypocrisy. There is no obvious answer as to whether or not we as humans find it acceptable to pry on others' lives, and it is the goal of this film to let the viewer understand that they themselves are no better than the peeping toms in the small apartment living room that they have been watching with.

FIGURE 1



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Mentor: **Tera Reid-Olds**

SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY IN *LA SCIENCE DES RÊVES*

THE CONTEMPORARY FRENCH film director, Michel Gondry, known for his innovative and experimental style, challenges the boundaries between imagination and reality, self and other, and manipulates linear time lines in his music videos, short films, and full-length narrative films. According to film scholar Stephen L. White, Gondry's most significant contribution to film lies in the "manipulation, construction, or creation of the image within the frame" (96). Gondry's unique ways of manipulating and reframing the world are especially apparent in his 2006 film, *La science des rêves*, or *The Science of Sleep*.

In *The Science of Sleep*, Gondry challenges traditional filmic constructions of subjectivity and objectivity, removing the divisions between them. As the protagonist of the film, Stéphane, shifts from the position of subject to the position of object, the film challenges the explicit, permanent, unalterable division between subject and object. By portraying the protagonist, Stéphane, as alternately both a subject and an object, the film suggests that a distinct and permanent division between subject and object does not exist. Rather, the film reveals that subjectivity and objectivity depend upon the framing of one's perspective, making it possible to be both a subject and an object simultaneously.

Stéphane is the hero of the film, a misunderstood genius-type who yearns to be an artist or inventor, a creator, essentially. Throughout the film, Stéphane

struggles to gain agency, or subjectivity, in his life. Subject, in this analysis, refers to the one who is the agent of action, the one who is primary. Stéphane's desire to create, invent, and produce reflect his yearnings to have subjectivity and agency in his life. Yet again and again, the film shows how Stéphane's ability to gain agency is limited by the restrictions of his life. He desires to be an artist, and accepts a job at a calendar company, with the anticipation that he will be a graphic designer. Yet ends up performing repetitive, low-level menial tasks, thus limiting his agency in his life. Stéphane thus becomes more object-like, performing repetitive tasks each day, with no room for the freedom of creativity, a key component of subjectivity.

Outside his work, Stéphane's life is also constrained with limited opportunities. The film begins as Stéphane moves back into his childhood home, a cramped apartment in a nondescript city in France. He sleeps in his childhood bedroom, in a bed that is far too small for him, further exemplifying the limited agency Stéphane has in his life, as he appears reduced and confined, and almost childlike, as he is forced to curl up and lay awkwardly in a bed far too small for him. So while the world around him restricts and reduces him to the position of an object, even physically as his childhood bed does, Stéphane seeks to assert his subjectivity, to become an active, independent, self-directing agent in spite of the limitations imposed by the real world around him. Stéphane's desire for subjectivity manifests itself in his great creativity, as he seeks to alter the world around him. In his free time, Stéphane is a creative genius inventing countless objects that alter and manipulate the world, or even creating new worlds of his own.

Stéphane is joined in his creative enterprises by another character whom the film alternately portrays as both subject and object: Stéphanie, Stéphane's next door neighbor, who is equally as imaginative as Stéphane. Stéphane and Stéphanie grow close and Stéphane even falls in love as the two collaborate on various creative projects, demonstrating their desire to create and to control and manipulate objects in the world around them. While the film has the potential to develop into a story of the traditional male hero-subject pursuing his object of desire, for an essential part of establishing subjectivity is differentiating oneself from other objects, it does not, but rather shows Stéphane and Stéphanie collaborating, expressing their creative agency and subjectivity simultaneously.

But it is not only the content of the film's plot which creates this tension between subjectivity and objectivity, rather formal aspects of *The Science of Sleep* particularly, and film as a medium itself, create, complicate, and deconstruct divisions between subjectivity objectivity. Namely, the frame is the starting place

for the establishing of subjectivity and objectivity in film. As film theorist Hunter Vaughn writes, “the frame provides us [the audience] with the first differentiated subjective position,” as the audience is forced by the perspective of the frame to identify with first one character, then another, “the frame providing a system of reference, an implied subject of the gaze through which the visible is seen” (39). The location of the frame, and the characters’ perspectives with which the frame identifies reveals to the audience the subjectivity of one character or another. Thus the frames of film “provide the condition for the construction of subjectivity” and opposed to these subjects film creates, also provide the condition for the construction of objectivity (39). Film as a medium complicates the idea of whether there can actually even exist any subjects within film because “cinema provides us with a viewing subject that is also a viewed object,” as Vaughn argues (18). While the film comments on the shifting, indistinct and impermanent subject-object division, Stéphane already is objectified as a character for the film audience’s viewing before he is anything else.

In *The Science of Sleep*, life-less, inanimate objects gain primacy and subjectivity while human characters such as Stéphane and Stéphanie are reduced to mere background objects; the film accomplishes this via framing, as seen in the film stills. In this scene, Stéphane and Stéphanie work together on a creative project with a small model boat. Stéphane sits on the couch in conversation with Stéphanie, who sorts through her craft projects until she finds the toy boat for which she was looking. The medium-close up shot of Stéphane looking off-screen emphasizes his conversation and connection with Stéphanie. The film cuts to Stéphanie from a medium-long shot perspective of Stéphane, looking at her from across the room. Thus, a hierarchy is established as the audience identifies with Stéphane’s gaze as the primary subject, while Stéphanie wavers between object of Stéphane’s gaze and subject for herself, as she exerts her agency on her creative project.

But then, switching the framing from an extreme close-up of the boat, looking out at the room and Stéphane and Stéphanie, the film turns the boat into the subject with which the audience’s gaze identifies, and Stéphane and Stéphanie become, in Vaughn’s language “objects to be understood” (39) [see figure 1]. This rapid alternating of position of subject to position of object occurs just from the camera’s perspective, from changing the framing of the scene. The object of Stéphane and Stéphanie’s creative projects develops a subjective position of primacy itself, thus diminishing Stéphane and Stéphanie into objects. The ability of film to switch perspectives, or frames, so quickly, first establishing a subjective view and

then tearing it down by switching frames leads to, according to Vaughn, “deconstruction of the totality or unilateral isolation of any one system of reference,” or deconstruction of any single subjective perspective (98).

Throughout the film, *The Science of Sleep* performs this delicate act of revealing the fine boundary between subjectivity and objectivity, especially through its portrayal of Stéphane’s wildly vivid, fantastical dreams. While Stéphane as the protagonist of the film would seemingly hold a subjective role, and the dreams the creative objects he produces, that are at the whims of his impulses and desires, rather the dreams take on an independence and agency of their own. Within the fantastical world of his dreams, Stéphane becomes nothing more than another object, manipulated and controlled by the dreams, forced even into performing deeds he does not wish to do. The fight in Stéphane’s dreams to control his actions reflects his struggle for subjectivity and agency in his own “real” waking life.

Stéphane has one particularly life-affecting fight in his dreams in which the dream compels him to deliver a letter to Stéphanie in which he writes in jumbled, nonsensical language that he does not truly care for her, but would like the phone number of Stéphanie’s best friend Zoé. Stéphane, according to his actions in waking life, would clearly never say such a thing to Stéphanie, but he loses his subjectivity in the dream, and becomes an object. By this point in the film, Stéphane and Stéphanie know each other quite well. Stéphane has just returned home late at night after visiting Stéphanie, and falls asleep while taking a bath, awakening to find his co-worker Martine, a recurring character in his dreams, passionately kissing him.

Stéphane’s struggle for agency and subjectivity appears at first in this sequence through his interactions with Martine, who in “real life” is a worker at about the same level as him. But in the dream, Stéphane directs Martine’s actions, ordering her to type the letter he wants to write for Stéphanie, thus making himself into a subject and Martine into the object he can control. The setting of the dream further reveals Stéphane’s desire to assert his subjectivity. The bathtub in the dream takes the place of the desk of the head of the company for which Stéphane works, a place symbolizing great authority and control. Additionally, some of Stéphane’s own paintings decorate the walls of the office, further highlighting agency and creativity.

But the most persuasive evidence that Stéphane’s behavior in the dream was not under his own direction occurs when he awakens, falling down into the cooled bath water after having delivered the note under Stéphanie’s door in his dream.

The ominous music after he awakens and notices first the notepad, then the wet footprints leading from the bathroom out of his apartment reveal Stéphane's negative feeling toward what he did. The music creates a sense of distress and disturbance, alerting the audience of Stéphane's shock and regret at actions he performed under the power of the dream that were out of his control. While initially in the dream, Stéphane sought to assert his authority over Martine by ordering her to type the letter; ultimately the dream compelled Stéphane to write the letter, thus making him an objective character no better than Martine.

Stéphane seeks to regain agency and subjectivity and his life through his retrieval of the letter, and his success in retrieving the letter quickly after he delivers it seems to reveal that Stéphane is successful at this. With his retrieval of the letter, seemingly before Stéphanie has read it, Stéphane seems to reassert his subjectivity, his control over his own life, although he demonstrates intense emotional upset, cursing in French upon reading the letter after he recovers it. Yet later, through replaying these events through a new frame, the film challenges its claim that with regaining the letter, Stéphane also regains his subjectivity. In "The Film and the New Psychology," philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty discusses film's unique ability to replay an event from a new perspective or frame, and how "the expressive force of this montage lies in its ability to make us sense the coexistence, the simultaneity of lives in the same world, the actors as they are for us and for themselves"—and, I argue, as the actors are for each other. *The Science of Sleep* employs this filmic technique by returning to this dream of Stéphane's later in the film, as Stéphanie recounts her side of the story to her friend Zoé while the two are at work together.

By returning to the sequence of Stéphane delivering the note to Stéphanie, the film reveals Stéphanie's "coexistence," and the way, to use Merleau-Ponty's language, she simultaneously lives in the same world as Stéphane, and views her own self as a subject as well. By giving Stéphanie the opportunity to recount the events from her perspective, though, the film further displays Stéphane as an object, while also elevating Stéphanie to a role of more subjectivity. The film does this most in two particular ways: through Stéphanie's voice-over narration, and by showing how Stéphane did not retrieve the letter on his own, but rather with the assistance of Stéphanie.

Through Stéphanie's story-telling, Stéphane becomes just a character in his story, albeit the main character. In Stéphanie's story, Stéphane has no agency to act any other way; his actions are dictated by the way in which Stéphanie tells the story through her voice-over narration. According to film theorist Vaughn, voice

over in film "[aligns] the visual content as an expression of the speaking subject's verbal agency" (110). The voice-over highlights Stéphanie's power and agency to tell the story however she so chooses. She has a position of subjectivity, while the story is her object. Whatever Stéphanie says happened appears to happen, because the events that the film shows: Stéphanie awakening, hearing a noise at the door, seeing the letter slipped under the door, seeing Stéphane in the hallway for the first time and then again returning for the letter—all appear exactly as she describes them in the voice-over as she tells the story. Thus, Stéphane becomes an object in Stéphanie's story, as we see purely his strange external behavior, with no indication of any thoughts or self-directing that may have gone into his actions. The voice-over, however, as Vaughn says, "opens the human agent to us" and "allows entrance to the interior of the character," in this case, Stéphanie, as the audience is told of the motivation and self-directedness of each of the actions she takes, thus revealing her subjectivity.

In Stéphanie's recounting of the events, the audience discovers a twist in the plot: while from the initial shots of the events, Stéphane appeared to successfully reclaim the letter before Stéphanie had the opportunity to see it, in Stéphanie's story, the audience learns that in fact, Stéphane can only retrieve the letter because Stéphanie assists him. This new piece of information the audience becomes privy to powerfully reconstructs subject-object relations. Previously, Stéphane's reclaiming of the letter seemed to be a reassertion of his subjectivity in his external waking life, after submitting to objectivity in his dreams. Yet now the audience discovers, that Stéphane gained only the semblance of subjectivity to himself, but in fact was objectified for Stéphanie, who truly controls all that occurs between them with the letter.

Yet the framing of the shots stands somewhat in contradiction and tension with this placement of Stéphanie as subject over Stéphane as object. The framing of both Stéphane and Stéphanie as they kneel at their doors is exactly the same, the camera equidistant, with the same overhead, slightly off-center angle. When Stéphanie reads the letter, the frame maintains this distance, composing a shot comprised of Stéphanie's full body and the letter she holds. When Stéphane reads the letter, however, the camera switches to an over-the-shoulder shot, which forces the audience to identify with Stéphane's perspective, as we seem to be reading the letter alongside him, over his shoulder. This effect increases the sense of Stéphane's subjectivity, as we identify our own gaze with his, and the letter adopts the role of the object. The film seems to desire to initially fully convince us of Stéphane's sub-

jectivity, but then, showing the same series of events through a new frame, reveal his simultaneous objectivity [see figure 2].

But perhaps the most powerful assertion of Stéphanie's subjectivity over and against Stéphane's objectivity are the shots depicting Stéphanie looking through the peephole of her door and the fish-eye camera lens that creates the distorted peephole effect. Although Stéphane, framed by the peephole, is seemingly spotlighted in the center of the screen, the fish-eye lens distorts his body and shrinks him, making it seem as though he is much farther in the distance than he is in actuality. These distortions give the sense of Stéphane as an object at the mercy of Stéphanie's gaze, with which the audience identifies. By depicting first Stéphanie looking through the peephole of her door in a medium shot, and then depicting the shot with the fish-eye lens, creating the appearance of looking through the peephole, the audience has the sense of having directly taken up the position of Stéphanie. The film makes clear that the audience now sees exactly the view that Stéphanie has, thus raising awareness of Stéphanie's agency as a viewing subject outside the frame in contrast to Stéphane's lack of agency as an object to be viewed inside the frame [see figure 3].

Film theorist Christian Metz calls the film audience the "transcendental subject," the spectator who is "the condition of the possibility of being perceived" and who "comes before every there is" (707). He would likely argue that in this scene, by identifying the audience's gaze with Stéphanie's, the film attempts to elevate Stéphanie closer to this level of "transcendental subject," without whom Stéphane could not be perceived. The position of the "spectator-subject," according to Metz, was akin to the "all-powerful position which is that of God himself." And so, Metz identifies the film audience with God, and by syllogism, the film identifies the audience with Stéphanie, and so Stéphanie takes on characteristics of the ultimate subject and agent, God. At least according to Metz's argument that the "transcendental subject" in film is the audience, and the more the audience's perspective matches the character's perspective, the more subjective the character becomes.

The Science of Sleep, however, I believe disproves Metz's argument that a character with whom the audience identifies becomes the transcendental subject. Rather, the film reveals the significance of a different transcendental subject that creates "the condition of the possibility of being perceived" and of perception itself: the frame. For even as the film establishes Stéphanie's subjectivity as a viewer outside the frame, the film also reveals the way in which subjectivity does not necessarily entail complete omniscience or total perspective at all times. On the contrary, by

making so obvious the distortions to Stéphane's appearance caused by the peephole, and the limited frame of vision it allows, the film highlights the power that a frame has over the viewer's ability to perceive. Framing mediates and alters subjective perspectives. Stéphanie does not ultimately decide what she sees; rather, the frame of the peephole on her door determines the boundaries of her perspective. The frame exerts a subjectivity and power even above that of Stéphanie's as a self-determining agent. Kaja Silverman alludes to this effect as she argues, "as soon as the spectator notices the frame-line, he or she becomes aware of visual constraint, and hence of an unseen agency of control" (11). This visual constraint is the frame, in this case, the peephole of Stéphanie's door. The frame has an agency and controls even Stéphanie, who appeared to be holding the highest role of subjectivity. And just as Stéphanie's agency and perspective is limited by the frame, so too is the audience limited.

Later the film returns to another of Stéphane's dreams, but this time reveals how his world is bigger, and he seemingly has more agency within his dream than without it. And this time, Stéphane narrates his dream, talking to Stéphanie on the phone as he falls asleep. While she is framed in a medium close up, in the corner of her room, curled up sitting on her bed, the film crosscuts scenes of her speaking on the phone with Stéphane with him in his dream. Stéphane seems to become a character within the story of his dream. Yet at the same time, because he is talking to Stéphanie and thus still connected to the "outside" waking world, and thus not purely confined within his dream, he has a degree of autonomy, and can decide what actions he takes within his dream. At the very least, he can decide what aspects of the dream he chooses to note and report upon.

Although he still holds the phone in his dream, he is initially centered in an expansive long shot, with a grey sky and large green fields stretching behind him. The scope of the landscape framed behind Stéphane greatly contrasts with the claustrophobic close quarters in Stéphanie's small bedroom in her little Paris apartment. The huge world in Stéphane's dream appears to stretch far beyond the limited cinematic frame. The expansive of landscape fading into sky in the distance behind Stéphane evokes the sense that there is much more of the world beyond him that stretches beyond the limits of the visual frame-field. In contrast, in Stéphanie's apartment, the shot is so cluttered and close and dim, that it gives the sense of smallness. Stéphane's dream scene feels larger and grander and more alive than what is supposedly real life.

The distinction between reality and dreams is further complicated when the

small felt pony that Stéphane and Stéphanie had been crafting together gallops past Stéphane across the expansive fields of his dream. This shot challenges the traditional idea that what is in dreams is imaginary and unreal; rather, the pony in Stéphane's dream is a lifelike, life-size galloping horse that looks almost real as it gallops past, whereas the pony in Stéphanie's apartment is a little, messy hand-made toy. The horse has increased subjectivity, freedom, and agency in the dream, whereas in the real world, it is a small object that is manipulated and created.

The structure of the dream sequences also parallels the way in which the shots of Stéphanie in her apartment on the phone with Stéphane feel cramped and close, the real life pony is similarly small. But in his dream, Stéphane's world and the pony feels life-size, or perhaps even larger than life. The film in this sequence of shots, shrinks and dims what is actually reality, and highlights dreams as having a truer, more evocative reality. As the film continues to crosscut between Stéphane exploring the world of his dream, running over a bridge and passing an old farmhouse, and Stéphanie, sitting on her bed with her knees to her chest on the phone. The camera gradually zooms in closer and closer to her, increasing the sense of smallness and closeness in real life. Stéphanie asks Stéphane, "Is the water cellophane?" The film cuts to Stéphane kneeling beside a small creek, full of apparently real waving green grass, and a running creek of blue water. Holding the disconnected phone up to his ear, he enthusiastically responds to Stéphanie, "No, it's not cellophane! It's real water!"

Then abruptly, the film cuts back to Stéphane asleep in his bed, still holding his old, corded white phone to his ear, and slowly the camera zooms out to show his whole body lying in bed. This reflects a return to reality; the audience is gradually being removed from the world of Stéphane's mind, and the camera distancing the audience from Stéphane's physical body reflects the simultaneous distancing from his internal mind and dreams. Within the frame of Stéphane's dreams, the audience witnessed seemingly unfiltered thoughts and emotions. Stéphanie, unlike film viewers, could not actually experience the vividness of Stéphane's dreams; she could only experience it through what he described to her. The film audience, however, by entering into Stéphane's dreams along with him, feels as though a frame is removed. The story within his dream becomes just as real as the story outside of his dream—if not even more real.

The abrupt cut to the next scene, after the gentle, slow zooming out of the camera accompanied by soft music in Stéphane's dim bedroom is jarring, as it switches to a nightclub, densely packed, following Stéphane as he weaves his way

through the thick, close crowd to Stéphanie and her friend, Zoé. This cut only accentuates the claustrophobic nature of reality, and the narrow frame of vision one has. The audience has a significantly obscured view; primarily of the back of Zoé's head in between Stéphanie and Stéphane, further highlighting the idea of the limited scope of vision in reality, in total contrast with the expansiveness of the world in Stéphane's dream. Although this particular dream is just a brief sequence framed within the larger real-life narrative, it reveals a world that is real in its own way and reaches beyond the confines of its frame.

The film also reveals the way that subjectivity and agency are reflected in the scope of view one has, the wideness of the frame. With a broader, larger scale of vision, there is a sense of much more agency and self-determinacy as in Stéphane's dream. Although in actuality he is confined within sleep in his bed, in his small childhood bedroom, in his dream, he has increased agency and freedom to move around the giant, seemingly endless landscape around him. In contrast, in the real life scene in the bar, there is little room to move around, the frame of the camera is closely zoomed in and there is a sense of loss of agency or subjectivity, of being pushed around, and at the limit of the camera, or Stéphane's limited perspective to be able to move about in the world.

The end of the film returns to Stéphane's dreams, as he and Stéphanie ride off into the stereotypical sunset on the life-size, animated pony. As film scholar Robert Flaherty says, "people never get tired of seeing a horse gallop across the plains" (263). But this is no ordinary hero riding off into the sunset. Thus, both the opening and the closing of the film take place within the world of Stéphane's dreams; what the film establishes as the real modern day world, is framed within the fantastical places in Stéphane's fantasies. The film frames what is real within what is fantastic, distancing the audience from the real world, thus making that world a little less real. This situating of the "real world" of the film at the center, inner core, while dream sequences are scattered throughout and frame both beginning and end, force the audience to remember our limited perspective. As Merleau-Ponty writes, "movies are [not] fated to let us see and hear what we would see and hear if we were present at the events being related," thus films do not make the audience purely a viewing subject and the film itself a viewed object. The audience, just as much as the characters within the film, has a limited perspective, is at the mercy of what the frame decides to show.

Were it possible for the audience to be physically present in the final moments of the film, people would see, like Stéphanie, simply the sleeping body of

Stéphane in her apartment, and have no insight into the dreams occurring within his mind. The film, however, reveals Stéphane's dreams, lets us inside of his subject-mind and allows us to see and hear something that does not exist in the real external world of the film. The film as a whole, through its form, reveals the limits of subjectivity by manipulating what the audience experiences. This film at once establishes and then destroys subjectivity, questioning the traditional simplistic subject-object divisions. In the end, *The Science of Sleep* goes even farther than just revealing the often-times non-existent separation between subject and object, and reveals how the frame has a power and agency above all other subjects, by creating the possibility for the condition of subjectivity in the first place. Contrary to how Metz describes the "spectator-subject [as] an all powerful position which is that of God himself," the film spectator actually is at the mercy of the framing of the film, as Vaughn writes, "the frame is responsible first and foremost for constructing the relationship between visible subjects and objects" (41). Ultimately, the frame of film creates the possibility for subjectivity and objectivity by creating divisions between subjects and objects.

The Science of Sleep concerns itself primarily with Stéphane's struggle for subjectivity even as his real world and the world of his dreams repeatedly reduce and control him. But the film reveals the way one can be a subject to oneself, such as Stéphane appearing to regain subjectivity by reclaiming the letter, yet simultaneously an object for others, as the audience later sees Stéphanie enabling Stéphane to retrieve the letter. Thus, the film reveals the way in which the framing of perspective gains the ultimate agency and authority, because it is the frame of film that not only creates subject and object divisions and then deconstructs and challenges them, but even more, the frame creates the possibility for any perception at all. While a character in film may waver between subjectivity and objectivity, the frame, whether perceptible or imperceptible, always creates and organizes the world, holding the ultimate position of subjectivity.

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



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edit down?

Mentor: **Elizabeth Howard**

THE DECONSTRUCTION OF
NARRATIVE FRAMING IN DAVID
MARKSON'S *WITTGENSTEIN'S
MISTRESS*

"IN THE BEGINNING, sometimes I left messages in the street," writes David Markson in his novel *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. The novel depicts a woman living in a world utterly devoid of other people or animals. Over the course of the novel, our narrator sits at a typewriter, writing what thoughts come to mind. Scattered throughout these musings are snippets of our narrator's life. More often than not these are anecdotes about things she has done in the absence of human companionship, but on occasion she rewards the reader with details about her life before isolation. In this way, *Wittgenstein's Mistress* is an example of a story which breaks out of the confines of the relatively rigid frame of the typical narrative: an easily recognizable pattern of rising tension, climax, and falling action. Furthermore,

Wittgenstein's Mistress is an example of how the narrative framework can be dismantled even while it is being utilized to tell a story. In this novel Markson uses tools such as rewriting, erasure, and an indefinite timeline to deconstruct the narrative frame as readers have grown accustomed to seeing it, hiding elements such as characterization and story within a maze of the narrator's thoughts. By using a broken framework to tell the story of *Wittgenstein's Mistress's* narrator, David Markson effectively informs the reader of her broken mind.

Before we can understand how *Wittgenstein's Mistress* is constructed with the pieces of a broken narrative framework, we must first know how to define that framework. In his *Technique of the Drama*, playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag identifies elements of drama, such as characters, action, and scene, and analyzed dramatic structure. Drama, he says, "rises from the *introduction* with the entrance of the existing forces to the *climax*, and falls from here to the *catastrophe*. Between these three parts lie the *rise* and *fall*" (114–115). These events unfold across the passage of time, creating the basic framework known as Freytag's Triangle or Pyramid. In this model, a narrative is constructed out of basic elements that typically take their places within this structure. This typically begins with the introduction of character and is accompanied by exposition. Tension arises from conflict and builds to the climax. The climax is then followed by "falling action," or the fallout of the climax leading to the story's resolution. Through this theory, Freytag defined a classic narrative framework that represents a story-telling tradition older than classic Greek tragedies such as *The Odyssey* and *Iliad*, and continues to be heavily relied upon in narrative today.

Within this framework we have many elements at play in addition to the characters and their accompanying exposition (back story and characterizing information and motivation contained therein). These characters operate in a physical and temporal setting and are driven forward through the story by some conflict or tension that lends to the rise in action toward the climax. Many stories often have a distinct narrative voice, which can contribute to characterization or a particular authorial style. In literary fiction the conflict typically arises out of a situation in which a character is forced to change or see themselves in a new light—this process can be described as the story forcing the character to look at something which she does not wish to see, something the narrator of *Wittgenstein's Mistress* struggles with throughout the novel. Many, though perhaps not all, of the elements of narrative framing can be found in *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. We have a character: our isolated and nameless narrator who sits at her typewriter. As for setting, our

narrator finds herself in an abandoned house on an unspecified beach in an unspecified time. The novel's tension arises out of the narrator's relationship to her memories and meandering thoughts, where exposition is located which can be drawn together to formulate the basis for the novel.

The change in character is so vital to the functioning of literature that Jonathan Culler asserts in *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* that "a plot requires a transformation. There must be an initial situation, a change involving some sort of reversal, and a resolution that marks the change as significant...A mere sequence of events does not make a story. There must be an end relating back to the beginning—according to some theorists, an end that indicates what has happened to the desire that led to the events the story narrates" (85). This is how we have come to understand stories on the most basic level, and we can see this functioning in the most familiar of classic tales. Take *Cinderella*, for example: Cinderella acts as servant to her stepmother and stepsisters but, upon winning the heart of a handsome prince, becomes herself a princess while her stepsisters (who, long before Disney toned the story down, mutilated their feet in an attempt to trick the prince by fitting into Cinderella's slippers) are reduced to beggars by the end of the story (Zipes 79–48). Here we can see that the transformation and the accompanying role-reversal for the characters in the fairytale are what make this a satisfactory story. The same elements, Culler argues, are a necessity for literary fiction, although the change is hardly ever as explicit as the rags-to-riches transformation of Cinderella.

But how can a story be driven forward when there doesn't seem to be any discernable story? This is where the breakdown of narrative framing begins to play a role in *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. Because the conflict lies in the past, or more specifically, in the memories the narrator so rarely and tentatively peers at only to look quickly away from, the story might be somewhat lost on us. As we will establish, the elements of the story are present, but they are not cohesive: they have been broken apart and scattered throughout the text and the exposition (which is where the story of *Wittgenstein's Mistress* lies) has been further dismantled and scattered. In addition to this structure, many details of such exposition often do not coincide with details of other memories. Even recollections of the same events occurring in different spaces of time fail to remain consistent across retellings. In fact, time itself seems to fail in the context of this narrative: where we are in time at any given point in the story is a mystery and how much time passes between those moments can be difficult if not impossible to discern. The result is a story woven within

multitudes of smaller, seemingly unrelated stories and the memories of a highly unreliable narrator who seemingly operates in a space outside of time. In this way, the story isn't immediately discernable, or even immediately identifiable.

As is the case with most works of fiction, time is an element in the narrative frame of *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. The reader is hardly aware of progressing through time with the narrator, save for moments in which she points out its passage: "In fact, I have perhaps omitted that that was yesterday" (83). To the reader of *Wittgenstein's Mistress*, these moments that mark the passage of time are few and far between and often meaningless. Françoise Palleau Papin in *This is not a tragedy: The works of David Markson* asserts that the situation is more dire for the narrator: "Once she no longer has any objective, once her gestures mechanically follow one another, why should she still try to find a reason for what she is doing? ... The day after tomorrow and tomorrow become the same, as nothing singles out the moments in their endless succession" (189–190). The present is lost in the course of the narrator's rambling and the few thoughts given to the consideration of the future never extend past a tentative plan for the following day. The only solid space of time that exists is the past and even this is fragmentary at best, for it is reliant upon her memories: memories of a dead son, mother, father, and a husband she parted from. Thus, it is only these moments in time, these memories that the narrator so frequently looks away from, that carry any meaning at all, and even these are difficult if not impossible to place in a time any more definite than "the past." The timeline does not disintegrate because it was never complete or constructed to begin with—rather it always existed in pieces and the reader is merely allowed to glimpse those pieces throughout the course of the novel. In this way Markson shows us time losing its meaning in isolation and grief; he has disabled the element of time as a function in narrative framing.

Sitting at her typewriter while the passage of time marches on unnoticed and unmarked, our narrator's voice comes to us clearly, crisp and distinct. Part of this voice is developed through self-correction or over-analysis of the structure of a sentence she has just written or the multiple potential meanings of a word she has used:

As in the case of Guy de Maupassant, who ate his lunch every day at the Eiffle Tower.
Well, the point being that this was the only place in Paris from which he did not have to look at it...

...When I said that Guy de Maupassant ate his lunch every day at the Eiffel Tower, so that he did not have to look at it, I meant that it was the Eiffel Tower he did not wish to look at, naturally, and not his lunch. One's language being frequently imprecise in such ways, I have discovered. (42)

This pattern of over-analysis or self-correction is repeated throughout the novel. This contributes to the narrative voice by allowing the narrator to interact with her voice, calling attention to her word choice and making alterations to her own sentence structure, pointing not only to the imprecision of language but the imprecision of *her* language specifically. In addition to pointing to the fact that the reader ought to be suspicious of the narrator's ability to communicate, her language use contributes to her characterization: in her self-correction and close analysis of the structure of her own thoughts we see the severity with which she is caught within the workings of her own mind. This pattern both represents the isolation of the narrator and further develops a sense of her madness within the context of that isolation. With no one to talk to she talks to herself through the words on the page, physically acting out the looping of the thoughts in her mind, so focused on the processes of her inner world that she not only notices confusing syntax or word choices but is driven to correct and analyze them rather than, say, writing about the death of her son—an event which the narrator is almost incapable of communicating to the reader.

This narrative voice contributes much to our understanding of our narrator, or her characterization, just as do her recollections about the odd things she has done since her isolation. While we often see her as flighty or distractible due to the rapidity with which her mind skips from subject to subject, seemingly unable to focus on any one thing for any great length of time, we also see moments in which the narrator can't seem to pull herself away from a given topic. Notably, almost all of these moments of extended focus are given to retellings of the lives of others or Greek classics such as *The Odyssey* or *Iliad*. Her focus on these subjects exceeds simple repetition of the stories or even close or analytical readings of them and grows into a rewriting of the stories—most notably her rewriting of Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon.

While in these moments of devoted focus we can see the narrator continuing to look away from the conflicts and tensions of her own life, perhaps it is her

rewriting of such moments which, in fact, allow her to look at these conflicts, albeit through an obscured lens. "...I am frequently just as annoyed at how Clytemnestra is blamed for certain things as I am about Helen, to tell the truth," she writes, continuing:

This would be in regard to when Clytemnestra stabs Agamemnon in his bath once he comes home from the same war, of course.
Needing some assistance. But nonetheless.
Although what I am really saying is why in heaven's name wouldn't she have?
Well, after the way Agamemnon had sacrificed their own daughter to raise wind for those identical ships, I naturally mean. (196)

This is the third time our narrator has mentioned Clytemnestra murdering Agamemnon and the second time she has mentioned grief as a factor in the murder. Considering the knowledge we have of her son's death, perhaps we can understand the repetition of this theme as pointing to the madness of grief. If we pursue the passage farther, we see our narrator rewriting this passage from classic Greek literature:

Daddy murdered our sister to raise wind for his silly ships, being what any person in her right mind must surely imagine that Electra and Orestes would have thought.
Mommy murdered our daddy, being all that they think in the play instead...
...In fact what I have more than once suspected is that the whole story about the two of them taking revenge on Clytemnestra was another lie altogether. More than likely all three of them together would have felt nothing except good riddance. (197–198)

Beyond this rewriting, the narrator continues to re-imagine the story past the point in the narrative where the texts leave off, imagining a scenario in which

Clytemnestra's children are not only understanding and forgiving of her grief-induced rage but they "lived happily together ever after, even" (198). Furthermore she re-imagines a story in which Clytemnestra is able to re-establish a family unit made up of other cast-off and injured women featured in *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Helen and Cassandra. Not only does her intense focus on a rewriting of the story in which Clytemnestra's grief and subsequent rage are understood allude to her own grief at the loss of a child, the fabrication of the establishment of a close-knit family unit made up of the survivors alludes further to the narrator's isolation: what she fantasizes on behalf of Clytemnestra, Helen and Cassandra is something which she, in her empty world, is incapable of creating for herself.

Here we begin to see the act of rewriting as a driving force in our narrator's understanding of the lonely world she occupies. Classic literature is not the only thing at the mercy of our narrator's unsteady mind or her desire to rewrite. The close reader will notice details of repeated anecdotes about her own life which change with different retellings: "I can think of no reason why this should remind me of the time when having my period caused me to fall down the central staircase in the Metropolitan and break my ankle" (49), our narrator writes describing her ascent of the stairs while carrying a large canvas and the fall which she calls "making believe I was Icarus." A hundred and thirty four pages later, she notes her ankle once more: "This would be the ankle I broke when I unexpectedly got my period in the middle of carrying a nine-foot canvas up the main central staircase in the Hermitage and fell, that I am talking about" (183). The detail may seem insignificant, but even such a minor thing as recalling different locations to the same event can tell us not only that she's not a trustworthy narrator but that the reason she is untrustworthy is because rewriting isn't a thing she confines to classic literature: it's something she does to her own memories.

In addition to her rewritings of literature and memories, the repetitions in the narrator's thoughts gives us a glimpse into her values and obsessions—her fascination with erasure, for example. In discussing another of David Markson's novels, surreptitiously titled *This is Not a Novel*, Laura Sims describes the thoughts of the protagonist, Writer, as being fragmented and fleeting, much like the thoughts of Markson's narrator in *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. She observes that "...fragments by and observations about artists, writers, musicians, fictional characters and historical figures flit through his head...intermingling to tell us who Writer is, what he thinks, feels, and believes, and successfully taking the place of traditional character development" (61). This pattern of thinking is replicated in the narrator of *Witt-*

genstein's Mistress. Much as we are able to determine “that Writer is obsessed with death” with the aid of brief but recurring thematic thoughts of death, we know our narrator has a fascination with erasure due to her own recurring thoughts about Robert Rauschenberg and his infamous “Erased deKooning” in addition to accounts of her own acts of erasure.

Erasure represents another form of rewriting, with a focus on the removal of content as opposed to the addition of content our narrator was partaking in with her reimagining of Clytemnestra's fate. The process of erasure— that is, the process of removing elements from a pre-existing piece of art, be it painting or literature, to effectively rewrite it or create something entirely new within that limited framework—is a process which is arguably mirrored in our narrator's relationship with her memories. Her awareness of Rauschenberg's “Erased deKooning” allows the reader to understand that the narrator knows about erasure as an art form. Her observation and comparison of some of her own acts of erasure allows us to understand that she is well aware of the destructive quality of such a work: “One day that house, too, will look as if Robert Rauschenberg had gotten to it,” she says, referring to a house down the beach which she has been systematically dismantling for firewood (79). The deliberate destruction of this house may stand as a mirror to the narrator's destruction of another house mentioned early in the novel:

Even if I have burned two houses to the ground, over the year.
The most recent, as I have noted, was accidental.
Why I burned the first one I would rather not go too deeply into. I did that quite deliberately, however.
That was in Mexico, on the morning after I had visited poor Simon's grave.
Well, it was the house we had all lived in. I honestly believed I had planned to stay on, for a time.
What I did was spill gasoline all over Simon's old room.
Much of the morning I could still see the smoke rise and rise, in my rearview mirror. (14)

While she dismantles one house to burn it slowly, she burned the house she had once lived in with her husband and son in one massive, violent act of erasure.

In so doing she rewrites the very landscape, removing a landmark which holds within it memories from a time before the death of her son.

We can see the narrator's fascination with erasure and her own acts as symptomatic of her determination to erase and forget aspects of her past which bring her grief, namely the death of her son. Much like her destruction of her old home, her most telling acts of erasure are ones she takes against her own memories. We have the opportunity to glimpse one of the minor, individual acts of erasure which occur within the narrator's mind to build toward the greater attempt at erasing the memories of a dead son:

Well, perhaps what I am more truthfully feeling is a kind of depression. The whole thing is fairly abstract, at this point.
In any case, doubtless I was already feeling this way when I stopped typing. Doubtless my decision to stop typing had much to do with my feeling this way.
I have already forgotten what I had been typing when I began to feel this way.
Obviously, I could look back. Surely that part cannot be very many lines behind the line I am typing at this moment.
On second thought, I will not look back... (70–71)

The act in and of itself cannot be called erasure. This intentional looking away from the source of tension could constitute an act of suppression: as a result of her continuous looking away, she begins to forget and misremember. It is the forgetting as a result of her looking away (suppression) which becomes the narrator's pivotal act of erasure. Furthermore, she is not blinded to this fact of her existence: “One forgets,” she writes matter-of-factly: “There is an unwitting loss of baggage, too” (19). Because she chooses to behave in ways that allow her to forget, we see the narrator become an erasure of herself.

The combination of rewriting and erasure in the context of *Wittgenstein's Mistress* is a potent one. Through her acts of self-erasure via looking-away from her own past, the narrator begins to effectively rewrite herself, much as she has rewritten the life of Clytemnestra. The erasure in her memory manifests in a palpable absence on the page: the details of her life remain mostly absent, so we are inca-

pable of fully mapping how she came to this point. Moments when she mentions this story (the death of her mother, the death of her son, the split from her husband) not only drive the novel forward, they make us aware of its near absence by gripping us and pushing us forward, toward the next mention of her son's grave or her mother's illness. Through her mentions of erasure and the huge gaps that exist between memories of her life before her isolation, we become aware of the degree to which *Wittgenstein's Mistress* is itself a work of rewriting and erasure. As a result of this the reader wonders what else in the narrator's recollection of her life has been rewritten and what else has been erased and, furthermore, to what degree. Rewriting and erasure here serve to establish the narrator as unreliable while the narrator's unreliability becomes one of the primary forces behind the dismantling of the narrative framework.

As a result of the role of erasure and rewriting in the narration the reader is privy to very little of the exposition which typically serves as the backbone of literary fiction. When exposition does occur it comes to us in fits and bursts. These are the moments when our narrator discusses memories of her family: her son, her husband, her mother and her father. These moments of exposition often don't last long and are badly fragmented. When gathered together the reader can draw a rough estimation of the life of a woman who has lost those she has loved. Her mother died of illness in her early fifties and it seems her father tried to hide away reminders of her mother's long, slow death (such as a mirror which her mother used to keep on the bedside). She herself married a man with whom she had a child, a little boy who died of unspecified causes, and sometime after that she and her husband split up.

Our very first glimpse of such exposition comes quite early in the story, when she mentions visiting the grave of her son:

Then again I am not at all certain I was mad when I
drove to Mexico, before that.
Possibly before that. To visit at the grave of a child I
had lost, even longer ago than all this, named Adam.
Why have I written that his name was Adam?
Simon is what my little boy was named. (9)

Here we get not only our first true snippet of character-developing exposition, but we also see the instability of her memories as a result of her consistent

looking-away. Furthermore, it is in these moments of exposition that a literary sense of conflict begins to arise: we can clearly see the tendency toward suppression in moments such as her choosing to not look back at what she had written, which is reminiscent of her tendency to look so quickly away from other memories, particularly memories of her husband and son. We see her doing this often, as her mind drifts to her son and the memory is abruptly cut off in favor of considering something entirely different—could the *Illiad* have been written by a woman? Is there another copy of *Life of Brahams* in this house? The moment above, in fact, is diverted by the narrator's attempt to discern how old she now is. Through this treatment of exposition the reader is able to sense a tension between our narrator and her memories. This tension moves the story forward though it is difficult to recognize as a result of the degree to which the narrative frame has been broken apart.

Simon is the first character our narrator mentions who is not a historical figure or a character out of a Greek tragedy. Of the family members she thinks about in the course of her writings, he is also the most infrequently mentioned. When she does dare to dredge up memories of her son they are often indirect—musings on whether or not photos of him still exist, recollections about a cat he owned which was never properly named or visitations to his grave. Though he is arguably one of the most driving elements of the narrative, Simon himself remains little more than a ghost to the reader, undefined and uncharacterized because our narrator, in her stubborn refusal to look directly at his memory, prevents the reader from ever seeing him.

The closest the reader is allowed to get to Simon is also the moment when the proverbial floodgates break:

There being surely as many things one would prefer
never to remember as there are those would wish to, of
course.
Such as how drunk Adam had gotten on that week-
end, for instance, and so did not even think to call for
a doctor until far too late.
Well, or why one was not there at the house one's self,
those same few days.
Being young one sometimes does terrible things. (225)

Here is the first and last time the narrator gives in to looking at the one event she's been avoiding throughout the entire novel. She still talks around the incident, not telling us directly what it was that killed her son—an accident? A sudden illness?—and holds herself at a distance from that incident by indirectly referring to herself as “one” rather than “I.” She goes on to muse about whether Adam was drunk because she had taken lovers, or if she had taken lovers because of Adam's drinking, then proceeds to dismiss the entire recollection:

And none of what I have just written having been what really happened in either event. Since both of us were there, that weekend. (226)

At this point the reader is unable to determine where the rewriting begins and the truth ends, or vice versa. What follows is a tumble through gathered bits of exposition which give us a rough timeline for our narrator's life: sometime after her son's death and her split from her husband her mother died, followed by her father a year later, ultimately leaving her in a state of intense isolation with no familial support system to fall back on, and no friends or friend groups important enough to be worthy of mention.

Much of the information we see here is a repetition and consolidation of the moments of exposition we have gathered throughout the novel, though in this moment, in the wake of the most direct memory of her son's death we will get, they are strung together with the nonsensical logic of madness until she wonders:

But then what is there that is not in my head?
So that it is like a bloody museum, sometimes.
Or as if I have been appointed curator of all the world.
Well, as I was, as in a manner of speaking I undeniably
am. (227)

Indeed, in her world of ultimate isolation the narrator has, in a manner of speaking, become its curator. Throughout its course we have followed her attempts to determine what could remain in the “bloody museum” of her head and what shall be disposed of like so much excess baggage. Up until this point in the novel the narrator has been struggling to repress her memories with various degrees of

success, living in a state of loneliness and grief in which time has no meaning and using tools such as rewriting and erasure to enable her to look away from this key point of tension in the narrative. Here, when her carefully constructed strategies of suppression begin to fail, we see her begin to consider giving up her writing entirely: “In fact when I finally did solve why I had been feeling depressed what I told myself was that if necessary I would simply never again allow myself to put down any of such things at all” (228). In other words, if the writing is no longer enabling her acts of rewriting and erasure in the effort toward suppression, then it is simply more baggage to be done away with.

The effect of placing the majority of the conflict, tension, and action in a distant and undefinable past is to distance the narrator from those events. The broken narrative serves a similar purpose: by taking the story and breaking it apart then hiding the pieces in no discernable order throughout the rest of the text and in a setting of ambiguous and meaningless time we, the reader, are put at a disadvantage for drawing close enough to the story to be able to understand it and its implications for the narrator. The narrator, after all, is the one structuring her story this way: she is the one holding herself at bay (she is writing to no one but herself, after all, believing herself to be the only person in the world), and by extension she holds us at a distance. It is the narrator dismantling the narrative, both relieving time of meaning and breaking apart and scattering the rising tension of exposition through the pages, in an effort to lose and forget those pieces herself. In so doing, the broken framework performs the narrator's madness. In utilizing the distance of the past in tandem with the broken narrative, David Markson effectively creates a thought provoking story in which a woman attempts to refuse to look at something which she can't look away from: the death of her son.

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“TO PRICK THE SIDES OF MY INTENT”: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MCBETH

IT WOULD BE simple to cast Macbeth as insane. His phenomenological apprehension, or the externalization of his actions and behavior made available to the audience provides the evidence supporting this characterization. Macbeth witnesses and responds to hallucinations that are to be seen only by him, which we categorize as an act of insanity. The continuation of his outrageous actions reinforces the frame of Macbeth's madness as the protagonist in the play. This frame of neuromenology represents the notion of the tangibility of objects. What is present and concrete in physical space provides evidence of a recognized experience. Because the characters in the play cannot see or hear what Macbeth does, the audience doubts his perception of reality allowing them to identify his absurdity and madness. Thus, labeling Macbeth as insane eliminates the complexities in attempting to analyze his actions. Because the classification of being crazy is associated with outwardly ridiculous behavior, Macbeth's exhibition of absurd conduct provides a sense of closure for the audience. The investigation of Macbeth's demeanor ends after the closing of the play. The audience and diagnose Macbeth as psychologically insane, whose lunacy explains the reason behind his visions, hallucinations, and actions. However, by re-interpreting Macbeth's behavior and actions in a phenomenological frame, we cannot discredit what Macbeth conceives to be real as a

consequence of the fact that in phenomenology, reality exists in the mind of one's perceptual intentionality.

By reexamining Macbeth's identity in his role as the main character, we are able to notice how his emotions and self-doubt caused him to exhibit certain phenomenological methods preceding and following his murder of King Duncan. Such methods include his visual and auditory phantasms that portray him as a maniac and do not leave room for an alternative frame of his character. However, he exhibits these behaviors in order to reconcile his guilty conscious with his driving ambitions—his ethics with his politics—as means of solidifying his abstract feelings of inner guilt, converting existential perception into metaphorical symbols of culpability. Thus, a phenomenological frame provides an alternative framework to explain Macbeth's actions because it demonstrates that the insignificance of the space between reality and perception, but rather his intentionality that lead to his demise.

Edmund Husserl defined phenomenology as “the science of the essence of consciousness, centered on the defining trait of intentionality, approached explicitly in the first person,” (qtd. in Smith 1). The notion of intentionality is the conspicuous structure of conscious decision-making. In the perspective of Maurice Merleau-Ponty “the phenomenological notion of intentionality posts the human as a project of the world, meant for a world, which it neither embraces nor possesses, but toward which it is perceptually directed” (Anton 39). Essentially, phenomenology depicts how consciousness effects the way phenomena appear to us in the world. Furthermore, Husserl refers to the *noema*, which coincides with the philosophy of phenomenology in that the noema represents “The way the object appears to conscious perception, his judgment and memory” (Smith 1). In the frame of phenomenology, an object is perceived and apprehended as it appears according to one's personal experience of it. Thus, the phenomenon as it presents itself according to one's intentionality, transitions into the noema as the object becomes the reality as one intended it to be.

Shaun Gallagher's definition of phenomenology “suggests that the intentional structure of consciousness as informed by bodily movement and kinesthetic sensation will shape our phenomenal and aesthetic experiences” (1). Macbeth's hallucinations exhibit the phenomenological method that “points to our action-oriented way of being-in-the-world as determining how we experience the things around us, and it emphasizes the important role that embodiment plays in perception and cognition” (Gallagher 1). The way people see objects in the world is according

to their individual perception of them. Such a perceptual experience sparks the formation of a conscious intention. This conscious intentionality is demonstrated by the way in which people make decisions to adapt to the environment they created for themselves. Fundamentally, the phenomenological frame of reality is our individual intention of it. For example, the idea that Macbeth subjectively chooses what he wants to see in the world around him. In order to understand Macbeth's behavior and actions, we need to appreciate the idea that we all live in many different worlds. Though these worlds do overlap, the establishment of one perception does not favor anyone, nor give valuable meaning that resides in Macbeth's phenomenological experiences.

The equivocal words of Macbeth's destiny spoken by the witches in the opening act provide the beginning point of analysis of the construction of a phenomenological framework of the play. The line “fair is fowl, and foul is fair,” is a paradoxical expression of the ambiguous notion that “what is good is bad, and what is bad is good,” (1.1.11). Banquo, who never actually verified whether he had actually seen the witches, questions their physical existence and their ability to predict Macbeth's future as the Thane of Cawdor. He skeptically states “But 'tis strange, / And often time to win us to our harm / The instruments of darkness tells us truths, / Win us with honest trifles to betrays / In deepest consequence,” (1.3.123–126). However, Brayton Polka recognizes that “Macbeth has found the supernatural soliciting of the witches to activate within him the horrible imaginings that, in overwhelming his fear of (or respect for) human existence, suppress the difference between good (the divine) and evil (the satanic),” in that his encounter with the witches cannot be articulated through language” (Polka 53). Macbeth's words lack clarity, but introduce the idea of the freedom of individual perception. His inability to explain his encounter with the witches represents the beginning of his attempt to find meaning in the ineffable through a transmutation of physical objects and situations into phenomenological concepts. Hence, the simplicity in stigmatizing Macbeth as being insane is due to the lack of certainty that the witches actually exist because he is the only who can see them. What is of paramount importance is Macbeth's perception of this experience that initiated the formation of his intentionality. Jose Ferrater-Mora suggests that intentional acts are real acts of thinking, meaning, and knowing; these acts are real insofar as they are acts of subjects, and specifically of persons” (133). Whether Macbeth saw the witches or not becomes irrelevant, rather the formation of his perception into his subjective

The focal point of the initial analysis of Macbeth's experience with the witch-

es is the formation of his desires that establish his intentionality to pursue the prophecy. Alice Rayner suggests, “the presence of the witches for Macbeth provides the images for the depth and force of desire that makes ethical terms like *ambition*, ‘over determined’ that she then explains cannot be reduced” (65). This noema of his consciousness is his intention to plot his murder of King Duncan, with the idea that supernatural powers exist in his favor. He says aside to himself “my thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical / Shakes so my single state of man / That function is smothered in surmise,” (1.3.140–3). Macbeth’s desire to become the thane gave him direction to form his intentionality in which he sought to kill the king. However, he mentions in an aside “If chance will have me king, why, chance may / crown me / without stir,” (1.3.144–146). Macbeth’s intentions of bloodshed were never able to be fully developed, evident in his reference to the power of fate. His indecisiveness, combined with his desire to acquire the crown, lead him to communicate his wavering doubt to his wife.

In a letter to Lady Macbeth, explaining his condemned fate, Macbeth reveals his personal desires with his wife regarding his intentions to pursue his prophecy. Lady Macbeth develops a shared aspiration for her husband to become the thane, however, she possesses intentions that differ from those of her husband. Macbeth seeks to inherit a permanent legacy of the crown, while his wife craves the power such a title would bestow upon her. This shared state of subjective desires complicates Macbeth’s individual intentionality, causing him to question his original motives. Macbeth’s self-doubt allows his wife to actively include her feelings of greed by establishing a forced inter-subjectivity of her desires, clouding his intentions in order to mold them to hers. Unlike Macbeth’s conscious reflection about the consequences of murder, Lady Macbeth prays for features of masculinity that would inhibit feelings of culpability that would stop her from seizing the crown. Thus, the establishment of inter-subjective desires manifested into the Lady Macbeth’s intentionality symbolizes her character as Macbeth’s driving ambition to acquire the crown despite the ramifications there of.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the notion of consciousness evokes the idea that palpable objects with auditory and visual qualities are pre-destined to enter one’s life. In the frame of phenomenology, the character of Lady Macbeth demonstrates the external force that changed the course of Macbeth’s destiny. Ponty inquires “how can the word “I” be put into plural [. . .] how can consciousness which, by nature, and as self-knowledge, is in the mode of the *I*, be grasped in the mode of Thou, and through this, in the world of ‘One’” (348). Lady Macbeth acts

as a vehicle to Macbeth’s behavior in this viewpoint, which complicates her husband’s intentions and perception of his objective thoughts.

Macbeth’s fate of becoming thane and the formation of his intentionality exhibit the phenomenological methods of the significance of subjectivity and meaning. In contrast, the strength of Lady Macbeth’s character exemplifies a challenge to Macbeth’s individuality and his perception of his environment. The application of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological framework suggests “the other person transforms me into an object that denies me,” in which there is no room for inter-subjectivity in the realm of individual perception (Merleau-Ponty 361).

Because Macbeth and his wife shared the same desires, Lady Macbeth was able to manipulate and mold his intentions in accordance with hers. She seizes control over the “shared” intentionality by plotting for her husband to kill King Duncan, completely disregarding Macbeth’s formal and loyal commitment to him. Lady Macbeth also demands that Macbeth must maintain an innocent persona and expression, leaving the rest of the plan under her authority. As Merleau-Ponty states “as soon as the existence of inter-subjectivity collects itself together and commits itself to some line of conduct, it falls beneath perception” (361). After Macbeth agrees to carry out the murder of the king, he comes to the realization of his wife’s overwhelming intentions and begins to doubt himself in his ability to perform an undetectable murder.

Though homicide was Macbeth’s initial idea, he did have some confidence in his belief that time and fate could work in his favor by eventually granting him the crown. He even established conditions to the action of murdering the King in his soliloquy

If it were done when ‘tis done, then ‘twere well/ It were done quickly. If th’ assassination/ Could trammel up the consequence and catch/ With his surcease success, that but this blow/ Might be the be-all and the end-all here, / But here, upon this bank and shoal of time, / We’d jump the life to come. But in these cases/ we still have judgments here. . . (1.7. 1–8).

Macbeth realizes there are judgments and consequences to his actions, altering his intentionality in the rise of personal self-doubt. Merleau-Ponty discusses the suspension of judgment, a period of liminality due to the lack of certainty about a

situation. Because Macbeth has not made a conscious decision to kill the king, he is not able to form his specific intentions regarding his objective for the end result. Macbeth's expression of his feelings of uncertainty to Lady Macbeth about whether he can go on with this plan provokes the response "Art thou afeard/ To be the same in thine own act and valor/ As thou art in desire?" (1.7.39–41). Through her establishment of an inter-subjective intention to unethically murder the king allows Lady Macbeth to furtively corrupt her husband's courage and self confidence. By instilling her strong desires of obtaining the crown, Lady Macbeth utilizes her shared desires of royalty with her husband, reshaping his intentions in accordance with hers. Through the establishment of inter-subjective intentionality, Lady Macbeth symbolizes Macbeth's driving ambitions.

If Macbeth had given fate a chance to run its course, perhaps he would not have experienced emotions of guilt surfacing into physical space. As noted, the brute force of Lady Macbeth's threatening domination plays the additional role that initiates the exteriorization of Macbeth's penitence. Moments before Macbeth slays the King, he inquires "Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand? / Come, let me clutch thee / . . . A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?" (2.1. 33–39). The sensation of touch is what tactilely unites the body and the mind that results in a perceptual and fully involved experience. The recognition and prominence of Macbeth's guilt was a result of his perception of his embodiment with the dagger moments before he was to murder the king.

As Macbeth gazes at the dagger, he incites the reality of his intentions to kill King Duncan that directs its attention not at the behavior of the body itself, but at the object itself as suspended. Moments before Macbeth murders King Duncan, he sees a dagger in front of him, causing him to question the reality of his intentions. Thus, the direction of Macbeth's thoughts are not directed at the behavior of the body itself, but toward the object itself as suspended, and his pre-logical knowledge and relation to it. In the frame of phenomenology, Jose Ferrater-Mora poses that "the tendency toward meaning is exhibited primarily through the actualization of intentions," (qtd. in Edie 138). The dagger represents the lack of Macbeth's intentions due to his hesitance to accept its existence in physical reality. Thus, the dagger is given to the object of Macbeth's intentions, and the way in which he assigns physical properties to clarify its physical presence is the way in which he attempts to mitigate his feelings of guilt. Due to these increasing feelings of culpability, Macbeth experiences the phenomenological idea explained by Merleau-Ponty as

"To Prick the Sides of My Intent": The Phenomenology of Macbeth

Depersonalization and disturbance of the body image are immediately translated into an external phantasm, because it is one and the same thing for us to perceive our body and to perceive our situation in a certain physical and human setting, for our body is nothing but that very situation in so far as it is realized and actualized. (339–40)

As a result of the lack of external verification of the existence of the dagger, audiences are able to characterize Macbeth as insane because his experience of hallucinations are ones that society associates with mental illness. However, reality in the phenomenological view disregards the noumenon and is defined as the full co-existence with the object and the association of senses towards the phenomena. Merleau-Ponty refers to this idea as a "sensible appearance," which introduces the notion of individual credibility of a sensitized experience, refers to this and the perceptions of observable signs we see before us (Merleau-Ponty 319). Thus, in the frame of phenomenology, audiences cannot discredit Macbeth for questioning the concrete presence of the dagger because "the constancy of forms and sizes in perception is therefore not an intellectual function, but an existential one, which means that it has to be related to the pre-logical act by which the subject takes up his place in the world," (Merleau-Ponty 303). Essentially, Macbeth's perception of the dagger is associated with his guilty conscience and as embodied by the phenomenological ideology that "any perceptual constancy refers back to the positing of a world and of a system of experience in which the body is inescapably linked with phenomena" (Merleau-Ponty 304). Macbeth's full mental involvement in his perception of the dagger calls for communication with himself in order to apprehend his experience.

In this notion, "significance and existence are one" (Merleau-Ponty 323). The unification of the body and the dagger result in the form of behavior, or the intentionality of Macbeth, to hesitantly carry out the murder of the king (Merleau-Ponty 319), insofar as "the significance of a thing inhabits that thing as the soul inhabits the body: it is not behind appearances" (Merleau-Ponty 319). Significance is given by one's perception and one's embodiment in it. Macbeth speaks with the dagger in order to be able to perceive its reality. We perceive our environment, and when Macbeth sets out to kill the king, the environment he creates for his circumstances include "everything of which the existence or non-existence, the nature

or modification counts in practice for me [him]" (Merleau-Ponty 321). Because Macbeth is coerced by his wife's demands, he knows that he must carry out the murder, which sparks his personal realization of his inability to suppress his feelings of guilt.

Shortly after Macbeth successfully murdered King Duncan, he hears a knock within the castle. Though he believes it to be a figment of his imagination, it is actually the Porter who says

Who's there, in' devil's name? / Faith, here is an equiv-
ocator that could swear in both / the scales against
either scale, who committed treason / enough for God's
sake, yet could not equivocate/ to heaven. O, come in,
equivocator. (2.3.7–11)

As Kenneth Burke notes, Macbeth's perception of the knock triggers an inner process, thereby "objectifying something so private as the harsh knock of conscience" (52), leading to the emergence of his culpability as a result of his violent actions. Roger Brooke affirms this idea, noting that "guilt is always lived as an inarticulate, embodied feeling before it is understood and known reflectively, or consciously" (177). What Macbeth perceives to be an auditory hallucination embodies the notion that his experience of this phantasm is abnormal, but it is the way that his senses and his perception of guilt creates the suspense of the knock in a mysterious environment that he creates through his relation to it. To most individuals, a knock is a signal to open the door upon the arrival of company. However, Macbeth's intentionality in this scene is fogged by feelings of guilt and regret represented by a knock of Macbeth's inner conscious in the wake of murder. Alice Rayner suggests that Macbeth's "own motives [. . .] are happening to him, in the consciousness where fate and desire collide. He opens himself to the occurrence of a willed accident that partakes no less of chance than hope [;] patterned chance, however, starts to appear as intentionality" (76). Macbeth is merely experiencing disembodiment in his inability to decipher what is real and what his mind has tricked him into thinking is real. He has both disembodying and super-intellectualizing experiences that drive him in and out of the actual experience. Thus, the sound of the knock brings him back to a corporeal reality, forcing him to hear the knock as a sound that is real.

However, just when Macbeth thinks he has been brought back into the ex-

istence of reality, he sees the ghost of Banquo. Macbeth's hallucinations are the way that he apprehends his physical and emotional circumstances because he cannot relate his visual and auditory thoughts to reality (Merleau-Ponty 339). When Macbeth speaks to the ghost, he is conceptualizing, through hearing and sight, "a system of phenomena which makes up not only a private spectacle, but which is the only possible one for me and even for others, and this is what is called reality" (Merleau-Ponty 338). The ghost, the dagger, and the knock all represent reality to Macbeth; phenomena we cannot discredit in the frame of phenomenology. Macbeth's world is not only his own reality, but also the paradigm through which the behavior of others takes shape, including his own consciousness and the consciousness of others (Merleau-Ponty 338). In the view of phenomenology, hallucinations are "implicit and inarticulate experiences," which explains why Macbeth has so much trouble communicating with the ghost and apprehending what he sees, whether with his eyes or in his imagination (Merleau-Ponty 339). The stimuli Macbeth receives in seeing the ghost motivates his "crazy" behavior. By applying the frame of phenomenology, we can take a step back and attempt to explain Macbeth's actions in a more rational way.

The frame of phenomenology provides an alternative rationale to reinterpret his apparent acts of lunacy by presenting the challenges Macbeth faces in a new light, resolving the conflict between his intentionality and his feelings of guilt. Audiences tend to characterize Macbeth as insane due to the misconception that everything is determined in the world, ignoring the phenomenology of perception that marks the importance of subjective reality. The phenomenological methods displayed by Macbeth, such as his mood, emotions, and perceptions of his experiences, exhibit the indication of how

Depersonalization and disturbance of the body image are immediately translated into an external phantasm, because it is one and the same thing for us to perceive our body and to perceive our situation in a certain physical and human setting, for our body is nothing but that very situation in so far as it is realized and actualized. (Merleau-Ponty 339–40)

The world is not pre-determined within the frame of phenomenology, providing credence to Macbeth's perception of his auditory and visual hallucinations.

When we incorporate the frame of phenomenology, Macbeth's lack of a clear intention allows for the external and forceful influence of power seeking on the part of his masculine wife, which motivates him to carry out the murder.

The establishment of the inter-subjectivity of Macbeth's intentionality in accordance with his wife ultimately leads to the ethical demise of Macbeth's character. His tragic flaw is evident by his death at the end of the play, in which he was never given the legacy he was promised. In the view of the philosophers Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Leder, the shared state of intentionality “underlies our motility and our skillful manipulation of tools, our affects and emotions, our sensorimotor powers of perception and speech, as well as our cognitive and theoretical activities” (Brooke 45), posing a challenge in phenomenology with regard to the notion of existing in a world with others.

Macbeth's reoccurring apparitions discredit any reference to his individual perception, and leading audiences to believe that he is merely experiencing a distortion of an already determined reality. However, when utilizing the frame of phenomenology, we understand that reality is not as concrete as humans determine it to be. As Hegel asserts, nothing is absolute. Classifying Macbeth as insane because of his externalization of, and attempt to apprehend, his apparent hallucinations is an oversimplified way of interpreting his actions. This neumenological frame that necessitates physical existence ignores the significance of the value of subjective reality. As Corey Anton suggests, “we must not, therefore, wonder whether we really perceive a world, we must instead say: the world is what we perceive” (38). Every experience is real within the frame of phenomenology due to the formation of intentionality, which makes it real. The uncertainty of the world provides certainty, and to question the reality of a situation is “the failure to understand what one is asking, since the world is not a sum of things which might always be called into question, but the inexhaustible reservoir from which things are drawn,” (Merleau-Ponty 344). This “inexhaustible reservoir” of Merleau-Ponty includes phenomena derived from reflection, and—as such—cannot be judged adequately in terms of the external appearances and actions available to the play's audience and readers. Thus, whatever certainty we hope to achieve in evaluating Macbeth's psychological state must necessarily remain partial and undetermined, defying simple and arbitrary categorizations such as sanity or insanity.

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PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST AS AN AUTHOR: THE CONSCIOUS FRAMING OF ISAAC BABEL AS HIMSELF

AN AUTHOR AFTER his death can be many things, an inspiration, a hero, a legend, what he can no longer be, is an author. The author function grows in his place. Michel Foucault's author function is a frame placed around the figure of an author in order to indicate artistry, limit the viewable scope of the author, organize the collection of the author's texts and separate the work framed from the onlooker. Theoretically, the function frames the idea of the author for the shielded yet visible interpretation of what lies beneath. If the author function is integral in the preservation of an author's work and personhood through time, then knowledge of the author function during an author's life can allow him to change the parameters of remembrance. Isaac Babel was aware of the difference between his self and his function; he used his art to manipulate the latter. Isaac Babel's work must be viewed through the frame of an authorship function, because his autobiographical texts and fictitious writings blend together to create a self-conscious self-portrait.

Isaac Babel was a Russian journalist, playwright, translator and prose writer who came to prominence in the early part of the twentieth century. He was born to a middle class Jewish family in Odessa in 1894. His three collections of short stories along with a few of his plays earned him fame within his lifetime. He was captured, interrogated and tortured by KGB officers in 1939 and was presumed to be dead in 1940 (allegedly executed by Joseph Stalin personally), though records of his body and his death have not been found. Most of his belongings including all manuscripts housed with him at the time of his arrest were confiscated and remain

locked in a KGB archive. He lived and died mysteriously and maintains prestige as one of Russia's seminal authors of the early twentieth century.

In Michel Foucault's "What is an Author?" he defines the author function as a "characteristic of a mode of existence, circulation and functioning of a certain discourse within a society" (Foucault 108). There are four characteristics of the author function, the first being that the function serves to specify ownership of works when interacting with the judicial system. This aspect originates from the historical shift from discourse as an act, to discourse as a thing that could be owned, bought and sold. Foucault's time frame for the shift from act to thing is ambiguously stated as when, "authors became subjects to punishment" (Foucault 108). Isaac Babel was living and writing under a regime that employed censorship, indicating that his authorship is affected by this part of the author function, due to the transgressive nature of his texts and their ability to incur punishment on Babel himself.

The second characteristic of the author function is that it does not affect all discourses in "a universal and constant way" (Foucault 109). The author is received differently based on the contemporaneous political and cultural climate. This characteristic is illustrated through time by the change in normative attributive practices between scientific and literary texts. In the middle ages, literary texts and orations, whether true or imagined, did not require an authorial designation in contrast to their scientific counterparts in order to be "received as statements of demonstrated truth" (Foucault 109). The reversal of the characteristic occurred in the seventeenth century when scientific discourse was received with an air of established truth and literary discourses were already endowed with the subject of scrutiny to discover the author function. Within the timeline of Babel's writing in the beginning of the twentieth century and during my analysis of his work in the early twenty-first century, literary discourse has continued to necessitate authorial scrutiny, which essentially makes both Foucault and my own essay viable interpretive texts in application to Babel's work.

The third characteristic of the author function is that it is not born through simple attributions at one time, but by complex and varying operations.¹ Foucault asserts here that authors are projections of the operations we force their texts to go through and these operations are variable through time, space and discourse (Foucault 110). An author function is a unification of a collection of texts; in-

¹ The subjectivity of my analysis of Babel's work is indicative through this characteristic.

terpretation within the function through different lenses can distinguish different commonalities with in the represented texts, which are always the author function but never the author. My interpretations as well as the assertions I attribute to Babel himself are operative additions to the larger function locked in time and context. This characteristic is especially important in examining «Справка» and «Мой Первой Гонимой» due to their varied implicative attributions being unpublished and published and stylistically separated as indicated by translator MacAndrews in his footnotes, “[Answer to an Inquiry] is close to the stories of the early twenties, the Red Cavalry period” (Babel 16), “My first Fee... indicates by its narrative method that it belongs together with stories of Babel’s later period” (Babel 21).

And finally the fourth characteristic of the author function is that it does not indicate a real individual. The last characteristic is rather abstract. It does not imply that the person being ascribed to the function is not real, but instead that the function cannot capture a real person. It can only capture several selves and interpretations of the person. My interpretation of Babel’s work is that he was, consciously in his lifetime, creating selves to be perceived sporadically and alternatively through time in order to obscure the real self, which was punishable for the texts produced.

In 1924, Babel’s autobiographical note was included in a series published in Moscow delineating the popular Russian authors of the time. This three-paragraph glimpse is the only autobiographical account retained for the public view attributed to Babel (aside from his semi-autobiographical fiction). The year of its publication is the year in which Stalin succeeded Lenin as head of the Soviet Union and less than a decade after two successive political upheavals. The regime was moving against intelligencia (the Russian artistic and intellectual elite) and religiosity; so the well-educated Odessan Jew, Babel, needed to subdue his treacherous background in light of his growing influence. The autobiographical text in question is far less extravagant and exaggeratory than his prose. The subtlety seems to hint to Babel’s consciousness of the necessary manipulation of his own frame. In the first passage unpacking his early life there is no mention of the nineteen hundred and five Odessan pogroms (violent riots directed at the persecution of ethnic minorities) to which he was witness at age eleven, also the increased financial prowess of his father during late youth is absent. These two stigmatized Jewish buzzwords stay hidden, replaced by the small admittance that “My father insisted that I study Hebrew” (Babel xi). The second authorial characteristic dealing with political reception guides this autobiography away from danger in the time of its reception. Also conspicuously absent is the problematic multiple rejections Ba-

bel faced, from the University of Odessa due to the limited spots available to the Jewish community. Babel glides by without mention of higher education onto his urban experiences. His account here seems unmarred by concealment, though the last paragraph is ultimately problematic.

“For seven years—from 1917–1924 I was out in the world” (Babel xii). In introduction to the manipulation, Babel implies that Maxim Gorky, his close friend and literary mentor, encouraged him to go into the world to experience more and therefore succeed (as a writer) by other means than accident, though this interaction is verifiable, the personal danger Babel faced while living in Saint Petersburg (then Petrograd) is glazed over. His Jewish heritage as well as his regular contribution to an anti-Lenin newspaper in the unstable revolutionary environment of 1917 drove him out into the world. By his account he seems, instead of fleeing, to have been bust becoming a military hero, his experiences are extensively accounted for including the false claim of his serving in the Cheka (Babel xiii). His previous rejection from military service (due to poor health) is absent and the totality of his military career is not listed (which amounted to seven months). This representation however paints the portrait of a spry young communist, who gained his experiences through serving the red fertile soil of the motherland. At the end of this time in the world, Babel states that, “Only in 1923 did I learn to express my thoughts clearly and concisely” (Babel xii). Subtly implying that his indoctrination into soviet milieu lead to his literary organization and agency (as no other examples of ‘being out in the world’ are mentioned). Babel goes further into defining his own authorial frame when in his last sentence he declares that his literary career began in 1924 (the year the text is being written). This fact helps the show of indoctrination and conspicuously cancels out his Anti-Bolshevik writings from 1917 and 1918. Also his brief schoolboy experimentation with French stories is absent. He is distancing himself from French, which was hitherto associated with as the language of the elite or intelligencia. His explanation for his abandonment of the French stories is that, “[his] peasant characters and [...] various reflections as an author turned out to be colorless” (Babel xi). The missing color, it is safe to assume, must have been red. This autobiographical note is a precise and calculated introduction of an alternative self into the author function within Babel’s lifetime, today this self stands distinctly apart from his school and military records as well as the recorded recollection of Babel’s daughter Nathalie.

In terms of Authorial function, the avoidance tactics employed in Babel’s autobiography are explainable as his understanding of the varying affect of his

own authorial portrait in varying political climates. By 1924 Babel had personally witnessed the persecution of his ethnic minority during the pogroms. His personal background heeds caution, the raucous and violently new political climate in place by 1924 is temperamental and by the early twenties had chewed up and spit out one wave of intelligentsia through trial and exile. To be a Russian writer in the early stages of soviet nationalism meant to be wholly Russian and entirely passable under censorship. And thus to gain the authorial aura of Russianness, Babel manipulated and condensed himself into a standard soviet, hardworking, militant, not without fault and altogether inspired by his own countrymen.

To create an author function beyond the first person account of a life, complex and variable operations must be put in place. Before time gives academics the interpretative power to alter an author function, an author can use his art to operate on the frame himself, changing the parameters of his own death. Any biographical account of Babel will be sure to mention Babel's "delight in playfully mixing fact and fiction" (Babel xiii). The three collections of stories published within Babel's lifetime include *The Red Cavalry Tales*, *The tales of Odessa*, and *Autobiographical tales*, are clearly connected with his personal experiences. His stories are always grounded in his own life, he is able to weave together realism so stark within parameters so obviously personal that fact and fiction can scarcely be distinguished. This art does more than just captivate audiences; it changes the function of how an audience can perceive him.

Babel's short story titled «*Мой Первый Гонрар*» (My First Fee) is dated 1928, and thematically falls into the last collection of semi-autobiographical tales (Babel 21). This story is an autobiographical story, that was successfully published, that ultimately indicates Babel's authorial intent throughout his life. The narrator is an unnamed twenty-year old man who finds himself in Tiflis and in love with a local prostitute. When he finally collects enough money for her fee, he spends an evening with her and spins a tall tale of a woeful youth so convincing that the morning after the purchased company, the prostitute refuses his money and embraces him as a sister. The title gives the indication that the money saved on this prostitute was in fact the first literary fee ever received by the narrator. The narrator is ultimately painted as deceitful, and freely untruthful in his personal account, which gleamingly reflects the account of Babel given by his daughter. Thus a mischievous, deceitful author constructs a mischievous and deceitful protagonist, reflecting on a youth so full of stories and yet still unfulfilled in expression. His nationalistic awareness as well as a personal framing is imagined and reasserted

after this passage when he states, "I thought it was a waste of time not to write as well as Leo Tolstoi" (Babel 22). The self-conscious framing that encloses an author within time and style is conjured here, drawing back to the autobiographical exclamation of organized thoughts and a self-inflicted authorial start date. Babel is tying this storyteller to the most beloved and arguably most Russian writer of all time invoking the second authorial characteristic and being aware of his red-hearted audience. He is also indicating that operatively his writing varies in value based on his comparative standards, which correlates with the third authorial characteristic.

The fourth characteristic of authorial function is examined in a quote that compares creating stories to creating objects or selves through time because of their decorum, "My stories were intended to survive oblivion. Fearless thoughts and consuming passions are worth the effort spent on them only when they are dressed in beautiful clothes. How can you make these clothes?" (Babel 22). Here of course the all-consuming passions of Babel's stories seem to necessitate his selves dressing up in fine clothes. For how indeed can he enthrall an audience without an authorial function decadent and prepared? Supplying vast and varied avenues to pursue? The truth is disguised in this quote, stories that withstand oblivion, are accompanied by authors immortalized and draped in our fancy of what they could be. Babel through his narrator is showing his hand, and stating that the time he spends on his work is worthwhile if it lasts and alas he must last with it or at least some version of himself.

To add to the complexity of the attributive nature of the function, further in the story «*Мой Первый Гонрар*» Babel gives another explanation for his manipulation. "O Gods of my youth!—Five of my twenty years had been spent in making up stories thousands of stories, which gorged themselves on my brain. They lay on my mind like toads on a stone. Dislodged by the force of loneliness, one of them fell to the ground" (Babel 26). A repeated portrait of compulsive creativity is explored here, giving more flesh to the author framed. This lecherous toad-like nature of prose makes the author's talent unquestionable and on the verge of burdensome. This quote also forgives the author for untruths, as they arise naturally and gorge themselves until they are freed. Spinning stories is the process by which the protagonist creates another self; adding to his operative chain of being perceived by a community, and as such by creating a character so endemic with creation Babel is revealing one of his selves beneath the layers necessitated by time and space. Lying seems to be only natural and entirely excusable, and how could a lonely man

be begrudged a little lying? Here indeed is an artist framed by his seemingly innate and compulsive abilities and so rightly being paid for them.

The Soviet Union's liquidation led to a tentative release of some KGB records, and it was through this process that the unpublished «Справка» was discovered and identified as an unpublished early draft of the short story «Мой Первой Гонорар». The translator's notes under each text indicate that «Справка» and «Мой Первой Гонорар» were likely written in Babel's earliest and latest periods of writing respectively. «Справка» is translated as "Answer to An Inquiry", but connotatively the word is heavily associated with surveillance, implying the text of the story to be a sort of self-reflective report written by a person answering an inquiry or interrogation of an authority. That title coupled with the fact that this version of Babel's plot was never published in his lifetime points to rumination on the punitive association of an author with his stories. The title playfully implies a practiced recitation of a witness statement. This title is the driving evidence in my argument for Babel's awareness of his malleable author function, the paranoia and acute awareness of potential interrogation are revealed in a word. This story was not published but instead remained in the writing desk drawer until it could mutate to the more cryptic and flowery late style of Babel that is characterized by the injection of fantastic fiction into his own youthful memories (ex. "Guy de Maupassant", "First Love"). «Справка» is written by an authorial self, too sensitive, and too closely resembling frightful reality to be revealed, but now in retrospect and comparison it separates and indicates how two selves can write the same story and why.

This sense of regurgitation and justified explanation is just as present in the prose of «Справка» as it is in the title; all descriptions are concise and necessary to convey the origin of the protagonist's literary career. Most notably however is language designated to authorial creation, there are no lecherous toads or words masked as prostitutes in this version only "invention[s] of a lazy mind" (Babel 18). This aids in the judicial and mannered sense of the account and also points to the fascination and inclusion of authorial pontifications in the later version. If «Справка» is a snapshot, «Мой Первой Гонорар» is a painting, expressive and confidently utilizing the range of the artist's arsenal. Babel published the self that was art and made himself art, this theory manifests itself in «Мой Первой Гонорар» When he states, "A well devised story needn't try to be like real life. Real life is only too eager to resemble a well-devised story" (Babel 26). Here is the statement of the integration of truth and untruth to create the semblance of an author,

an author function. With this mentality, «Справка» is plain and straight forward and too much a risk to the danger of the first and second authorial characteristic to be published in a scrutinizing political environment. «Мой Первой Гонорар» is created by a presentable self and authored to frame the truth with the art.

The crucial divergence of the two plots exists as the confusion of love. «Справка» speaks of love once in the second line, "I was drawn to [a literary career] by natural bent and by my love for a woman" (Babel 16). Ultimately implying that sex was the real goal and the result was a career or at least a real knack. But love and loneliness are themes woven around the repeated authorial ruminations in «Мой Первой Гонорар», "There was nothing to do but look for love" (Babel 22), "this love I wanted now seemed like an enemy" (24), "How different it was this business, from the love of my neighbors on the other side of the wall" (25). The title implies the same result of «Справка» namely the start of a career, but the language pollutes the purpose. Why Love? Because we love love, we examine it in texts, theorize and categorize and can conclude that Love is an energetic purpose for a text itself. This published work with arguable driving forces leaves the reader perplexed as to which self is presented and keeps the author concealed. Babel operatively arranged his story to split the protagonist as an author and a lover, an addition added later to his original construction as indicated by the existence of an early draft. Love is a tool in the craft of an author function.

The authorial painting of Isaac Babel was sealed with glass upon his death and remains framed and only interpretable by onlookers. The intricate strokes of its façade were the processual culmination of his life's work. I see this painting as Babel's careful enrichment and concealment of the snapshot beneath. Though who can say that the creation and manipulation of an author function is not unlike one of Babel's stories, created with the knowledge that reality would eagerly resemble it. Perhaps the painting was always a better likeness than the snapshot.

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Mentor: **Andréa Gilroy**

ORYX AND CRAKE & THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD: ANTITHETICAL NARRATOR PERSPECTIVE AND THE GOTHIC FRAME

“Power after all is not real, not really there, people give it to each other.”

—Margaret Atwood

IN THE YEAR of the Flood and *Oryx and Crake*, the first two books in the Maddadam trilogy, novelist Margaret Atwood portrays a futuristic world run by powerful corporations of scientists, where genetic engineering and scientific mutations are the norm, and much of what seems ‘natural’ today has ceased to exist. A known environmental activist, Atwood explores the frightening possibilities that mankind faces if they continue to abuse and take advantage of the Earth. In an attempt to rid the world of what he sees as bungling and weak humankind, Crake, a top scientist at one of the corporations, creates a group of genetically engineered humans called ‘Crakers’ through the secret Paradise Project. He then distributes a deadly virus called ‘JUVE’ across the Earth which systematically kills off the major-

ity of the human population, in theory leaving only the Crakers to live on as the ideal—and only surviving—human race. Narrators Jimmy, Ren, and Toby tell their story of survival in the post-apocalyptic world.

Throughout both novels, Atwood sets up a dichotomy of perspective that equates female narrators to realistic depictions of creations outside their control, while male narrators focus on created aspects of the world which they see as within their control. This polarity within the text of the male and female perspectives defines the power relationships, and Atwood explores how control is gained and lost when the society that traditionally governs an individual no longer remains. Both narrators, while antithetically portrayed, experience a loss of sexual agency in society before the fall, or “pre-flood.” This shared experience falls apart after the flood, when society is destroyed, and the characters exhibit differing gendered responses defined by the lack of control they experienced pre-flood. The struggle for power is brought on in part by the remaining influence of dominant societal ideologies, but more so by the complete helplessness everyone experiences in this post-apocalyptic world. The narrators’ struggle for control pre and post flood mirrors the themes and characterization of the Gothic novel, which also reinforces the stark distinction between gender roles when carried out to their extreme. The gothic frame invites the reader to question existing patriarchal ideologies within an abject world.

Gothic literature emerged in the 18th century, and brought together elements of horror and romanticism. As the genre evolved, it began to take up political and social issues within the traditional ‘pleasurable horror’ trope. The gothic emerged as a genre that allows the interrogation of hegemonically normalized values. It allows the questioning of the entrapment of women in a patriarchal society. The Gothic asks how terror of the repressed exerts itself on the real lives of characters by portraying social issues as horrifically distorted to the extreme. Kelly Hurley explores the modern gothic, positing to, “situate the *fin-de-siècle* revival of the Gothic... centrally concerned with the horrific remaking of the human subject, within a general anxiety about the nature of human identity” (5). Atwood specifically addresses this anxiety regarding the nature of human identity from an all too real futuristic perspective. *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* look at the trajectory of modern scientific development, and the resulting effect on human nature through the construction of individual autonomy and identity.

The narrator of *Oryx and Crake* has split his identity into Jimmy, the man who existed before the apocalypse, and Snowman, the man who lives after the dis-

integration of society somewhat bereft of conventional mental faculties. When the deadly JUVE virus killed off the rest of the human population, Snowman became responsible for the inhabitants of the Paradise Project. Because Crake and all other scientists working on the project are dead, Snowman must lead the Crakers to safety. Despite the fact that they were created by Crake with the intention that they would be incapable of developing a belief in God, Snowman presents to them their creator Crake and female teacher Oryx, both now dead, as all knowing god like figures. The women frequently tell Snowman about their communication with Oryx, which he believes must occur through some sort of prayer or invocation. In spite of the genetic alterations intended to remove the belief in God—“Crake thought he’d done away with that, eliminated what he called the G-spot in the brain. *God is a cluster of neurons*, he’d maintained” (OC 157)—the Crakers have developed a belief in Oryx and Crake as deities of a sort. Through Snowman’s instruction and consistent portrayal of Oryx and Crake as all-knowing, invisible, otherworldly beings, the Crakers have developed a sense of reverence that they were not originally intended to have. Snowman’s description of the Crakers’ religious practices frames them in the context of what can be controlled. By manipulating their beliefs and entirely determining their understanding of religion he thus maintains power over that portion of his life after the flood.

Interestingly, the Jimmy’s main focus as a narrator besides to the Crakers is his romantic relationship with a woman named Oryx. He first saw Oryx as a child being sexually abused on a porn website years ago. She reappears in his life as he grows up, and he develops an obsession with her innocent beauty and confidence. When he finally meets her as an adult, he torments himself asking her questions about her past, forcing himself to relive the pain and sexual abuse she experienced throughout her life: “In those days he’d wanted to know whatever it was possible to know about Oryx... He’d wanted to track down and personally injure anyone who had ever done harm to her... He’d tortured himself with painful knowledge. The more it hurt, the more—he was convinced—he loved her” (OC 135). Regardless of the fact that he is completely powerless to change any of what happened to Oryx, he tortures himself with the knowledge of her brutal sexual past. Rather than hunt down and maim the men who abused her, or gain control over her with sexual violence, Jimmy develops a paternalistic desire to mother and protect her. Oryx consumes Jimmy’s life, as he becomes obsessed with discovering as much about her past as he can in a sentimental attempt to protect her from ever experiencing it again.

Jimmy's loss of sexual agency and his transition to sentimentalism towards Oryx reflects the traditional role of the male Gothic hero. In *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, Maggie Kilgour identifies the male hero stock character as, "a sensitive and rather ineffectual hero" (Kilgour 4). Before the flood, Jimmy embodies a sensitivity that is not traditionally found in his society, which continually fetishizes sexual violence. This sensitivity, when contrasted with Oryx's command of sexuality for her own gain of power, only reinforces Jimmy's lack of control and his inability to inhabit the role of the traditional male. As the JUVÉ virus spreads across the world, Crake appears with Oryx and Jimmy, unsuspecting, "watched, frozen with disbelief, as Crake let Oryx fall backwards over his left arm... Then he slit her throat" (OC 329). Completely powerless, Jimmy watches Crake, who was like a brother to Jimmy growing up, kill the woman he loves and has become so obsessed with protecting. Despite his overwhelming desire to protect Oryx from violence, his emotional vulnerability ultimately leads to his inability to save her, and thus he fully embodies the gothic male hero. In *The History of Gothic Fiction*, Markman Ellis argues within the gothic tradition, "examples of powerless fathers suggest that the sentimental man of feeling... is dangerously frail, scarcely able to offer protection from the threats and plots of patriarchal tyrants" (Ellis 64). Jimmy embodies the paternalistic male hero, and his sentimentalism indeed ultimately causes him to be ineffectual, as he cannot save Oryx from the tyrannical villain Crake. The fact that Crake, a man who was like a brother to Jimmy, is characterized as Jimmy's enemy again drives home Jimmy's characterization as the gothic hero, as Kilgour asserts that often gothic conflict is based on fraternal rivalry.

One of the hallmarks of the gothic genre is its collocation of terror and pleasure, as Ellis argues the inseparable connection between sexual pleasure and fear of violent retribution mirrors the complexity of gothic fiction: "[it] does not excite terror itself, but rather this curious hybrid, the pleasure of terror... between distance and enchanted otherworldliness and realistic portrayal of terror" (11). Even when lacking an obvious supernatural element to excite terror in the reader, picturesque language is often used to achieve this same curious effect. Atwood's framing of sex in the futuristic society in part causes this distorted sexual relationship, as sexual pleasure and violence are consistently intermixed and brute sadism is reinforced as a means of control for men over women. Atwood describes Jimmy and Crake as children after school, "watching the executions and the porn... an underwater ballet of flesh and blood... groans and screams, close-ups of clenched teeth, spurts of this or that. If you switched back and forth fast, it all came to look like the same

event" (OC 86). Atwood's striking diction evokes a vivid image, which embodies the gothic incongruity of pleasure and terror. Referring to the spectacle as an "underwater ballet" romanticizes the image, which followed by the guttural and violent nouns "groans and screams" generates an uncomfortable hybrid image. Atwood's articulation of the image in and of itself reflects the incongruity of pleasure and horror as explored within the gothic.

Within Jimmy's culture, sex and brutal violence become tangled together in the minds of men to establish a system of abuse that directly relates pain and sexual desire to control over women. However, Jimmy does not fit this culturally constructed mold. After watching such images, he feels as if he had no control over what had been 'done to him' and is confused rather than stimulated. Throughout his adult life, he controls the women he has sexual relations with not through sexual violence or domination, but instead by manipulating their emotions. Reflecting on the women he dated Jimmy says, "He hated being dumped, even though he himself had maneuvered the event into place. But another woman with intriguing vulnerabilities would happen along shortly" (OC 191). While his emotional manipulation is a type of violence, and therefore reproduces the role of men as dominant to women, from a gothic perspective this characterization in fact questions patriarchal masculinity. The gothic male hero, highly attuned to interpreting emotions, loses control and power over women through his very emotional nature.

Embodying the traditional gothic hero, Jimmy was unable to gain power over his romantic relationship in the world before the apocalypse. Powerless to reconcile his behavior to the norms reinforced by patriarchal society before the virus, and coerced into a position of paternalistic protection because of his sentimentalism, he surrendered his power to those who could successfully navigate within the sexually determined system of power in society and watches helplessly as Crake murders Oryx. He exists within the rhetoric of the male Gothic, in which, "the focus of the narrative is on the individual... who is so extremely alienated that he cannot be integrated into society" (Kilgour 37). Not only does his initial sentimental nature alienate him from society, but even after the apocalypse he also is forced into alienation by the destruction of the world he knew. Unable to regain power through his sexual agency before the apocalypse, he now controls his circumstances as Snowman through focusing on the created aspects of the remaining world. The framing of his power, which emerges after the apocalypse but not before, reflects the societal influence of the exchange and manipulation of power.

Before the apocalypse, Jimmy lost his control and power through loss of sexual agency and in essence took on the role of a Gothic hero.

Atwood switches from a male perspective in the second book in the series and presents two female narrators in *The Year of the Flood* in order to explore aspects of the more modern 'female gothic.' While Snowman focused on both the created aspects of the world in a frame that allowed him control after the apocalypse in contrast to the sexual relationship and environment that unknowingly stripped him of control, Ren and Toby describe their past realistically, and recognize the aspects of the world that exist outside of their control. The two female narrators tell the story of how they survived the "waterless flood" that destroyed the earth, killing most of humankind, and make a plan for their survival on the ruined earth. Both Toby and Ren focus on nature as it exists, and maintain control in an uncontrollable situation by attempting to preserve natural growth. Before the virus, Ren and Toby were both members of the religious greenie cult called "God's Gardeners," a group of individuals who anticipated the fall of Earth and sought to preserve natural plant and animal life.

Instead of elevating people from their past lives as gods to be worshiped, both Ren and Toby attempt to maintain a level head amongst the ruined earth by recalling the religious celebrations traditionally carried out each day, and their corresponding saints. On Mole Day, April Fish, the day of Saint Dian, Martyr, and countless others, Toby provides a sermon given by the head priest of the Gardeners "Adam One," and follows with a song of celebration. In remembering these habits from her life before the waterless flood, she grounds herself within an uncontrollable environment, and is at least able to create a sense of order for her existence by reconstructing her days to reflect how she lived before.

Like Toby, Ren also uses old Gardener rituals to ground herself in what she can control about the present. After the initial spread of the virus, she remains trapped in a "sticky zone," or air tight bio-form free room, in the sex club Scales and Tales that she worked at. While praying her childhood friend Amanda will come discover her and free her before she runs out of food, she remembers Gardener philosophies: "You create your own world by your inner attitude, the Gardeners used to say. And I didn't want to create the world out there: the world of the dead and dying. So I sang some old Gardener hymns, especially the happy ones" (*Year* 315). Rather than focus on the fact that she has no control over the passing of days, or the state of the earth, she remembers the religion that was real to her for her entire life. This realistic memory grounds her and gives her the attitude that

she needs to survive. In a sense, this very act gives her control of her circumstances and she is able to accurately track how long she has been captive, and the food she has left. Unlike Snowman who seeks to control his circumstances by controlling those around him, Ren, like Toby, seeks to control herself and thus maintain power in a situation that leaves her otherwise powerless.

Toby similarly uses her memory of the Gardener celebrations and Saints to ground herself in her current life. Instead of losing herself in an unrecognizable world of mutations and manipulations of nature, Toby preserves natural growth and praises nature as it exists. Her desire to restore nature as it was before reflects a common theme of gothic literature, as Kilgour claims it "is especially a revolt against a mechanistic or atomistic view of the world and relations, in favour of recovering an earlier organic model. The gothic is symptomatic of a nostalgia for the past..." (11). Her response to the flood becomes gendered to reflect the characterization of the nostalgia of the female gothic protagonist. She nurtures and maintains a hive of bees and stash of mushrooms, even after the virus spreads across the Earth. She valorizes nature as it should exist by contrasting it with the genetically mutated abominations that have populated the earth. Scientists developed large pigs that could be injected with human DNA in order to grow organs that would be a perfect match for the highest paying human in need. With no scientists left to regulate the pigoons, the human DNA began to take over and they developed an eerily human like intelligence: "but pigs? Usually they'd just eat a dead pig, the same way they'd eat anything else. But they haven't been eating this one. Could the pigs have been having a funeral? Could they be bringing memorial bouquets? She finds this idea truly frightening" (328). The shocking turn that nature has taken in contrast with the view of nature she seeks to preserve terrifies Toby, and yet she recognizes this fact upfront. Instead of framing such genetic mutations as Snowman did by reinforcing the successful scientific manipulations and their importance to mankind, she condemns them as abominations of nature. She overcomes her fear, and continues to tend the bees and attempts to restore nature to its previous 'natural' existence. Despite the genetically mutated organisms that have gained control of the planet in the absence of humans, Toby maintains control of her small rooftop ecosystem.

Before Toby was a member of the Gardeners, she worked in a fast food restaurant to make ends meet. The manager was violent and sexual, and shortly after Toby started working there he chose her to be his personal sex toy. She recalls:

She'd been Blanco's one-and-only for less than two weeks, but it felt like years. His view was that a woman with an ass as skinny as Toby's should consider herself in luck if any man wanted to stick his hole-hammer into her... Day by day she was hungrier and more exhausted. She had her own bruises now... She could see where this was going and it looked like a dark tunnel. She'd be used up soon. (Atwood 38)

Toby is directly controlled by Blanco's violent sexual behavior, and realizes that she does not have the power to stand up to him and survive the experience. She does not sugar coat her treatment. She recognizes that if the behavior continues, she will die. While at first such an outlook seems to reinforce her lack of control, the very fact that she recognizes openly how dire her situation is allows her to take advantage of an opportunity to escape when it presents itself. Her realistic perspective regarding her loss of sexual agency allows her to be aware that she exists within a system of abuse. When the Gardeners come to demonstrate at the Secret Burger and offer to take her with, she is able to take advantage of their offer and escape to safety. Gothic heroines are traditionally portrayed as succumbing to the plights of their life based on the simple fact that they are female, yet Toby represents a realistic aspect of the female Gothic, which enables an oppressive system to be questioned.

While both female characters have been victims of sexual abuse by men, they retell their loss of sexual agency within a system of normalized patriarchal violence in a realistic fashion. Rather than mystify the consequences, they tell in vivid detail the ramifications of falling victim to socially constructed notions of power. The honesty and recognition which frames the way Ren and Toby talk about sex gives them control, and often the strength to remove themselves from such situations. By bluntly addressing the power imbalance, and refusing to accept inequality as the norm, Toby and Ren successfully question the dominant ideology. The two female characters create their own autonomous individuality, and are able to maintain enough control to survive their circumstances. Rather than falling victim to their circumstances, Toby and Ren use their spirituality to remove themselves from a passive position and break free from social norms. Their experience in the struggle to break free of social norms reflects the social aspect of gothic literature.

Serving as a critique of the way things are, "often the gothic provides a plot of feminine subversion... the gothic is not an escape from the real but a deconstruction and dismemberment of it" (9). By refusing to succumb to the dominant ideologies of society, Toby and Ren deconstruct for the reader the notion that men control women through indisputable sexual agency.

Many of Atwood's earlier novels have been studied through the gothic, however the society described in *The Year of the Flood* better reflects a modern, female Gothic frame. The futuristic society in which Toby and Ren live is extremely patriarchal, and the relationship between sex, violence, and power systematically subordinates women to men. However the women in this novel are not typical 'damsels in distress.' The female narrators navigate the sexist society in which they live by relying on the Gothic focus of reality and sensibility. In *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction*, Donna Heiland claims that, "gothic novels explored the working of patriarchal politics through an aesthetic based in the subjective realities of sensibility... with 'sensibility' referring to a capacity for strong and generally sympathetic feeling" (Heiland 5). Both Ren and Toby cope with their circumstances and gain a semblance of control through this gothic 'sensibility.' Ren recalls her friend Amanda telling her a story from her youth: "I tried to hitch, but I only got one lift... He pushed his hand between my legs; you can tell that's coming when they breathe funny. I stuck my thumbs in his eyes and got out of there fast." She made it sound like thumbs in the eyes was normal in the Exfernal world" (*Year* 85). Her tone when describing the story is extremely honest, and rather than focus on the fact that she was sexually abused, she frames the narrative as a learning experience. Her comment about recognizing sexual abuse from the change in men's breathing is said almost anecdotally, and is intended to instruct Ren on how to avoid the very real and common violent behavior of men. The Oxford English Dictionary defines sensibility as the quickness and acuteness of apprehension or feeling ("Sensibility"), and here Ren truly exhibits these qualities. The response to, and successful navigation within, the patriarchal society and its system of sexual abuse of the female narrators reflects the heroine in modern Female Gothic literature. This parallel reinforces the narratorial frame of the text, in which women gain control based on their ability to realistically perceive emotions outside of their control, and adapt it to their circumstances.

While both male and female narrators experience a loss of sexual agency and control in their world before the flood, they regain a sense of power by manipulating the aspects of the world that they can control after the apocalypse. By

reflecting the Gothic narrative tradition, Atwood further dichotomizes the roles of male and female narrators, and highlights their gendered responses. This has an important effect on the reader, as Kilgour argues, “The gothic was seen as encouraging a particularly intimate . . . relationship between text and reader, by making the reader identify with what he or she read” (6). By reflecting aspects of this narrative style, Atwood subtly engages readers not only with the environmental issues raised in the texts, but also the role violence and sexual aggression play in maintaining power difference between men and women. Atwood deals with the gothic and the female gothic in different ways, and uses the contrasting gender tropes to engage the reader with real world issues.

Despite the distinct portrayals of the male and female gothic throughout the texts, at the end of *The Year of the Flood* the two narrator sets meet up. Ren and Toby manage to safely leave the city and arrive at the beach where Jimmy and the Crakers reside. Gothic pressures and expectations have taken a toll on Jimmy. Ren and Toby find him injured, helpless, and hopelessly muddled. Ren and Toby essentially rescue him, and ensure his safety. In bringing together the two antithetical narrators in the conclusion of the second work, Atwood implies that one of the gender models taken up in the text works better than the other. The female sensibility allows Toby and Ren to navigate and regain control within a male dominated society. Toby and Ren’s awareness of their reality moves them from a passive position into one removed from the cultural pressures that define, and ultimately break, Jimmy.

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