

AKΦ

THE ALPHA KAPPA PHI REVIEW

**ANNUAL JOURNAL OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
IN THE HUMANITIES**

**VOLUME III
SPRING 2017**

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PREFACE

An institution puts forth a mission statement to capture its primary purpose, center of attention, and dedication. Lindsey Wilson College shows the depth of its love for education and the student body with its statement, “Every Student, Every Day.” The *Alpha Kappa Phi Review* is an extension of this mindset, with an interest in the work of all students at Lindsey Wilson College.

Contained within, the reader will find a broad range of student essays, spanning detailed analyses of major authors to solutions for a variety of pressing concerns that plague society today. Having gone through a rigorous selection and revision process, one can rest assured the works within are of the highest excellence, relying on secondary research and/or extensive textual evidence.

The *Review* has sought to include a wide variety of writing from Lindsey Wilson’s student body with this grouping, encompassing the work of sophomores to recent graduates. The reader will find the essays organized thematically, not alphabetically. The first five essays—by Rebekah Sanders, Emily Gunberg, Rebecca Sanders, Samuel Kiger, and Alex Ferrell—examine world literature and film, primarily through the frameworks of gender, sexuality, race, and religion. The next two essays—by Aaron Goode and Jimmy Temples—turn to the United States to explicate issues within the American Gothic, particularly the work of H.P. Lovecraft. We then shift to historical analyses by Kathryn Brown and Hannah Warren Burney, both of whom investigate women who played a significant role in furthering the cause of women writers or in the American debate over suffrage, respectively. Finally, the two essays that conclude the volume, by Rebekah Mitchell and Sarah Calhoun, discuss and intervene in contemporary political debates within the United States.

The *Alpha Kappa Phi Review* is devoted to publishing the best student scholarly work that Lindsey Wilson College has to offer. We believe the broad range of topics and arguments within this volume showcase the excellent writing and research skills of Lindsey Wilson’s student body.

—Trevor Stonecypher and Hope Poe
Co-Editors-in-Chief
April 2017



The editors would like to thank the following English and History faculty members for serving as Faculty Reviewers for this volume:

Dr. Tim McAlpine
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We are grateful to Dr. Paul Thifault for founding and establishing the *Alpha Kappa Phi Review* in 2015, the sole undergraduate research journal at Lindsey Wilson College. Special thanks also to Dr. Tip Shanklin for continuing his legacy by editing and publishing the second volume.



Critical essays in the Humanities, broadly defined as the fields of English, History, Women's Studies, Philosophy, Theology, Theatre, Film, and Art, are welcomed and encouraged from current or recently graduated Lindsey Wilson College students.

For more information, please contact Dr. Karolyn Steffens, Assistant Professor of English and Faculty Editor: steffensk@lindsey.edu.

Rejoining and Re-breaking:
Repetitive Reenactment of Trauma in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*
Rebekah Sanders

“They had known each other before Life began” (310). This description of Estha and Rahel in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) appears just before the twin brother and sister engage in grief-stricken incest at the end of the novel. These twins share a bond that transcends time, but their relationship, like their lives, is also fractured. Despite the significance of this sexual encounter as the linchpin to Roy's novel, this event has been largely overlooked or receives passing mention in critical work on *The God of Small Things*. Critics tend to discuss Roy's novel either through trauma theory or postcolonial theory, both of which are productive lenses to employ. However, rather than view these as separate interpretations, by fusing these two lenses, we can gain a deeper understanding of the function Estha and Rahel's incest plays in the novel and what the traumatic repetition seen in that act reveals about postcolonial trauma.

Although Estha and Rahel only have sex once in the novel, this single act is rich with repetition, both in their re-breaking the Love Laws (in this case, the taboo against incest) and in rejoining themselves to reflect their relationship in the womb. Their violation of the Love Laws is considered a *re*-breaking since their mother had previously broken the Love Laws by embarking upon a sexual relationship with Velutha, an “Untouchable” in the strict caste system of Kerala, India. Therefore, it is fitting to consider their incestuous encounter as a significant example of the repetition compulsion, which shapes the novel throughout. But the implications do not stop there. Through the twins' deeply symbolic act of incest, Roy expertly blends the universal and the particular to both mimic the symptoms of a traumatized psyche and to reflect the trauma caused by the Love Laws' division of people into castes as well as colonialism's division of India into fragmented parts. Though Estha and Rahel attempt to regain a sense of unity through their sexual union, they are ultimately trapped in sharing “hideous grief” (Roy 311) and cannot rectify their traumatically shattered past.

Throughout *The God of Small Things*, Roy illustrates human responses to trauma, particularly the response of those who are unable to process and heal from their traumatic experiences. According to Clinical Psychologist Michael Levy, after experiencing a traumatic event, “[m]any individuals re-create and repetitively relive the trauma in their present lives. These phenomena have been called *reenactments*” (227). Traumatic repetition is a central

concern in Roy's novel, as various motifs and phrases that are related to "the Terror" appear again and again throughout the text. Literary critics L. Chris Fox and Joanne Lipson Freed both discuss the novel's illustration of the repetition compulsion (the name Sigmund Freud gave to the phenomenon) at the level of plot and narrative structure. The novel's fragmented, nonlinear form mirrors the twins' response to the traumatic events of their childhood: they are unable to process the events in a cohesive manner and rather are subject to perpetual reenactments of the past in a failed attempt to understand and progress. While critics such as Fox and Freed have discussed the traumatic repetition present in the novel, they have neglected to fully explicate the significance of Estha and Rahel's incest within this framework. This act of incest between the twins serves as one of Roy's richest illustrations of traumatic repetition in the novel and therefore warrants further critical analysis. The twins' incestuous union is imbued with symbolic reenactments, which are especially worth our attention. We can effectively think about their union and the reenactments therein in terms of unified wholes versus fragmented parts.

Estha and Rahel are described from the start as a single whole which is also divided, as "physically separate but with joint identities" (Roy 5). This paradox of wholeness versus separation is maintained throughout the novel. Despite the fact that Estha and Rahel are described in joint terms, especially initially, as Laura G. Eldred notes, in her essay "Breaking the 'Love Laws': Sibling Incest in *Midnight's Children* and *The God of Small Things*," "[T]he novel's narrator reminds us, again and again, of differences between the twins, of their two-ness despite the appearance of a single soul—that they are, after all, separate people and brother and sister" (71). Though the two share a womb and view themselves as "a rare breed of Siamese twins," (Roy 5), they are divided at birth and grow to experience an "irreconcilable far-apartness" (89). The two interconnected souls who knew each other before life began are divided into parts, marked by difference (most obviously seen in their opposite genders).

In Chapter 3, an adult Rahel gazes on Estha's exposed body in the bathroom after many years apart, searching "her brother's nakedness for signs of herself" (88). This chapter occurs during the present day and is interrupted by flashbacks to the twins' childhood and the death of their cousin, which ultimately leads to the demise of the family. The sexual encounter toward the end of the novel is foreshadowed in this earlier passage as the roles of the two as siblings are blurred: "A sister a brother. A woman a man. A twin a twin" (89). As in the later passage, here, the two appear as strangers who "met in a chance encounter" (89, 310). In both passages, these

twin souls are characterized as strangers and as individuals who had known each other “before life began” (89, 310). Although these are seemingly incongruous descriptions, they fit the irreconcilable contradiction of their wholeness and separateness, an unresolved paradox that has existed since their birth. The twins experience a new level of separation when, following the Terror, Estha is sent away. In the twins’ sexual union, then, one of the things they recreate is the prenatal bond they shared, a bond that was pure and unified. These two parts of the same whole, twin brother and sister, use sex as a means of fitting themselves back “together like stacked spoons” (311).

This concept of reenacting the prenatal connection through sex is one reflected in the story of Yama and Yami in the *Rigveda*, a collection of hymns that is one of four sacred Hindu texts. While incest does not appear to be a common theme in Hindu mythology, this rare example of incest, notably, centers upon a twin brother and sister. Yami, the sister, desires her brother sexually and claims that there is nothing wrong with the two engaging in such a relationship, since it would be no different than the relationship they already shared in the womb. “Shall we do now what we ne’er did aforetime? Even in the womb God Tvaṣṭar, Vivifier, shaping all forms, Creator, made us consorts,” she contends (“Hymn X”). While Yama is not convinced by his twin sister’s rationale, Estha’s and Rahel’s relationship seems to lend credibility to Yami’s perspective. While they may grow into seeing themselves in more separate terms, the twins reenact, in this passage, their fetal bond and embrace a oneness that is no longer just in identity but in physicality as well.

A second repetition to consider is the twins’ reenactment of the source of their trauma: Ammu and Velutha’s breaking of the Love Laws. A clear allusion is drawn to Ammu and Velutha’s previous sexually taboo act when the narrator, speaking of Estha and Rahel’s sexual union, notes, “once again they broke the Love Laws” (311). The twins remain trapped in an ongoing cycle of dysfunction and grief brought on by the Terror, and their sexual encounter serves as a repetition of the immediate source of their trauma. Estha and Rahel, in the present-day sections of the novel, including the incest passage, are approximately the same age as their mother when she died, “a viable die-able age,” as it is described repeatedly (88, 154, 310). Physical descriptions of Rahel in this section and in other present-day chapters directly compare her to her mother. While previous passages, such as when Rahel gazes on her naked brother’s body, both compare and contrast Rahel with her mother, the incest passage nearly equates Rahel

to her mother, Ammu. In the description of her through the eyes of Estha, who reaches out to touch his twin sister's mouth, Rahel's mouth becomes "[t]heir beautiful mother's mouth" (311). While the twins are certainly distinct from their mother and Velutha in that they violate the Love Laws through the taboo of incest rather than through the taboo of cross-caste relations, like Ammu and Velutha, they act on instinct and violate the "laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much" (33). The Love Laws, notably, are all about division; they serve to stratify a people into distinctive castes, based primarily on class and racial difference. In the case of Ammu and Velutha, this difference in caste is the reason their sexual relationship is considered unacceptable. In this way, Estha and Rahel's relationship mirrors the caste system itself, as they are originally a single unit, but are divided into parts marked by difference. Their sexual union, then, can also be seen as an attempt to reunify themselves into a single unit. Though Estha and Rahel's sexual encounter is taboo for different reasons, they repeat the breaking of the Love Laws and attempt to reunify themselves as the Indian population might have been unified before the laying down of the Love Laws, so long ago.

While the Indian caste system has premodern origins and can certainly be considered a homegrown problem inherent in Indian society (though British colonialists further reinforced its influence), colonialism repeats this traumatic division of a single country into multiple parts. In the first half of the twentieth century, a once unified country was divided on more than one occasion into distinct parts, based primarily on religious difference. While Indians who differed religiously, linguistically, and culturally had previously coexisted peacefully, the fragmentation of India, particularly Partition in 1947, traumatized the stability of the country and caused extreme amounts of violence in its wake. Thus, it is crucial to consider the national and cultural context of Estha and Rahel's experience. Their trauma is not just personal but national; they are "[t]rapped in the bog of a story that was and wasn't theirs" (224). As Fox aptly points out, *The God of Small Things* is not simply the story of a particular family; "it is a chronicle of a society, a nation; of 'an era imprinting itself on those who lived in it. History in live performance'" (Fox 42, Roy 293). In a manner similar to the Kathakali performances, which reenact Hindu mythology from the *Mahabharata*, the narrative of Estha and Rahel's traumatic experiences is not solely their own; it is also the narrative of a traumatized culture and nation. Through their sexual union, then, Estha and Rahel not only attempt to regain a sense of wholeness within their present-day relationship as interdependent twin brother and sister, but they also illustrate the

traumatic separation which characterizes their fractured nation.

Because of the relationship between personal trauma and national trauma exhibited in *The God of Small Things*, both postcolonial theory and trauma theory can provide us with a productive means of analyzing the novel. While most critics tend to stick to using either trauma theory or postcolonial theory, Freed employs both theoretical lenses in her essay, “The Ethics of Identification: The Global Circulation of Traumatic Narrative in Silko’s *Ceremony* and Roy’s *The God of Small Things*.” Freed focuses on how Roy engages in a debate over what degree readers or outsiders should empathetically imagine themselves in the position of a victim of trauma. Although this is an interesting debate, the more relevant aspect of her essay for our purposes is in the way she links the personal forms of trauma experienced by individual family members with forms of postcolonial trauma. As Freed explains, “Roy’s novel [...] makes clear that the seemingly personal or private forms of trauma it depicts, like the abuse or rejection that take place within a family, are shaped and informed by social structures such as class, caste, nation, and empire” (224). Notably, the two forms of trauma are not mutually exclusive; the twins’ traumatic experience of separation on a personal level is deeply tied to the traumatic separation of Indian society as a whole. The problems either introduced by colonialism or intensified by it have a direct effect on Estha and Rahel’s lives and, especially in the case of the Love Laws, they can even be seen as the original source of their trauma.

Though Roy appeals to all readers with the universality of the twins’ experience of and response to trauma in general, she also highlights the particularity of their experience in the setting and cultural influence in the novel. As Freed observes, “In *The God of Small Things*, the legacies of British colonialism in India are inseparably intertwined with the competing and at times contradictory logics of caste and class privilege, as well as the specific regional identity of Kerala, a space marked by religious, political, and linguistic difference within the Indian nation” (220). The setting of the novel and its characters are marked by political unrest as well as racial and caste tensions, and the traumatic disunion in their society is reflected in the traumatic disunion Estha and Rahel experience when they are separated. Giving critical attention to their act of incest illuminates this relationship between universal (human psychological response to trauma) and particular (India and Kerala’s response to national trauma) in Roy’s portrayal of trauma. Although Freed effectively uses trauma theory and postcolonial theory in her discussion of *The God of Small Things*, she omits a full explication of the incest in the novel, thereby

missing a primary example of the intertwined nature of personal and national trauma.

Though India may have ceased to be a colony when it gained its independence from Britain in 1947, problems introduced and intensified by colonialism remain to this day. India could not simply shake off all traces of British imperialism in their culture; colonialism shaped the history and the present state of the nation. In the case of Roy's characters, it leaves behind, as Chacko puts it, "a family of Anglophiles. Pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their own history" (51). This concept of being locked out of one's own history is significant as well, since it can also be understood in relation to trauma theory. Part of being trapped in a cycle of repetition is that the victim cannot make sense of his or her situation. As Freed puts it, "Despite the power of the traumatic events to intrude into and control the life of the trauma sufferer, [...] they remain beyond the reach of his or her understanding" (221). Just as they have "been locked out" (Roy 52) of understanding their own history, the twins are locked out of understanding and processing their trauma. The narrator, beginning to relate the twins' sexual encounter, demonstrates the inability to understand or articulate such an event in the statement that "[t]here is very little that anyone could say to clarify what happened next" (310). The twins are unable to put words to their traumatic experience, so they engage in a means of communication that is void of words, void of explanation. They exchange articulation for a universal form of physical expression.

Sadly, as with the repetition compulsion, the traumatic repetitions in Estha and Rahel's act of incest remain unresolved. They merely illustrate the source of their grief in their reenactment, without productively working through and healing from their problems. As the narrator says of their sexual encounter, "what they shared that night was not happiness, but hideous grief" (311). Just as Estha and Rahel know what to expect from the Kathakali performances, just as they know that the violence and discord acted out in the stories will never be resolved but simply reenacted, so they are doomed to reenact the sources of their trauma without resolution or healing. Their sexual union not only represents their desire to console one another and reunite themselves into a unified whole, but also demonstrates their compulsion to relive their traumatic past. Though the novel ends with the inherently hopeful invocation of "tomorrow," tomorrow will only bring more traumatic reenactments for these twins who try and fail to find healing.

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A Shot in the Dark:

How Antisocial Personality Disorder Affects Gender Roles in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*

Emily Gunberg

Throughout the history of Western culture, women have had to contend time and time again with the dangers of becoming known as a madwoman. Hysteria came in endless forms, unpredictable and unavoidable for those who did not conform entirely to the rigid structure of patriarchy. This characterization has evolved in literature from William Shakespeare's Ophelia to Charlotte Brontë's first Mrs. Rochester, Bertha Mason, to the more contemporary vision illustrated by Sylvia Plath's Ester Greenwood. This idea of the madwoman continues to evolve, with more and more female characters in popular culture portraying a kind of unhinged complexity that challenges traditional female gender roles. Repeatedly, the figure of the madwoman exists as a vehicle to address the dangers of patriarchy, the rigidity of the role of "true womanhood," and the impossibility of living as an unconventional woman. In one of his most iconic plays, *Hedda Gabler* (first performed in 1891), Henrik Ibsen has created a character who does not fit into patriarchal society's view of womanhood by displaying overtly masculine characteristics as well as exhibiting symptoms of a mental illness typically thought to be the antithesis of femininity: Antisocial Personality Disorder. Though some have seen her as a feminist role model, the feminist aspects of this play rest in how Hedda's incongruence stems from her inability to conform to the restrictive norms of her gender, which cause her to create a false façade of normalcy while a monster forms within.

From the very first moment that Hedda is described, it is clear that she is unlike the ideal woman in patriarchal culture. The stage directions upon her first appearance read: "she is a woman of nine-and-twenty. Her complexion is pale and opaque. Her steel-grey eyes express a cold, unruffled repose. Her hair is of an aggregable medium brown, but not particularly abundant" (7). All of the stereotypical attributes of a young and attractive woman are absent; she does not give off warmth, fragility, and affection, and the details included about her eyes convey her defiance of submission. The steely color of her eyes is also a significant nod to her hobby of playing with her father's pistols, which defines her in multiple ways. The gun is primarily a man's weapon for many reasons, including its phallic nature and typical use in masculine fields such as war or hunting. This makes Hedda's fixation with her pistols even more fascinating from the perspective of gender; they represent all of the aspects of manhood that she has always

coveted, including dominance, control, and immediacy. This description of her eyes as resembling her weapon of choice maintains not only the importance of the pistols, but also the depth of her relationship to them—it is as if they are physically a part of her.

This first appearance comes amid flurries of conversation about her from her new family, her husband's aunt hinting that Hedda may be pregnant while her husband, George Tesman, remains happily ignorant of this possibility. The ambiguity surrounding this presumed pregnancy is extremely significant, primarily because of Hedda's explicit hatred of the concept of motherhood. Throughout the play, she never directly confirms or denies if she is pregnant, as if her sheer power of will can determine the baby's existence. Likely because of a combination of her denial and his own self-absorption, George is entirely unaware of the situation. Hedda quickly quiets him when he refers to her weight gain, and she scrambles to escape when Miss Tesman calls her lovely and tries to kiss her. While to a modern audience, this reaction of an expectant mother may not seem terribly unusual, in the late nineteenth century it would have been shocking. Hedda refuses to fulfill the motherhood aspect of true womanhood, which was extremely taboo at the time. As literary critic Jenny Bjorklund states, "in a society where every woman's calling was thought to be marriage and motherhood, rejecting motherhood was tantamount to denying one's femininity" (6). Hedda fiercely distances herself from nearly every aspect of conventional femininity, even to the point of refusing to accept physical reality. While the conclusion of the play negates this question, it is likely that she certainly was pregnant. Hedda may not have known for sure, intentionally avoiding taking measures to confirm her own pregnancy in the delusional hope that it was impossible. She must have felt that losing independence over her own body and unintentionally sharing it with another was the last straw. Whether she was intentionally keeping it secret or if it remained an uncertainty for her, this situation would have magnified her feelings of entrapment and driven her rebellion against strict gender norms to more extreme lengths.

The first act is filled with instances of this refusal to play the part of dutiful and doting housewife. When George excitedly shows her his slippers that his aunt saved for him, she turns away saying "thanks, I really don't care about it" (8) and then quickly changes the subject to a jab aimed at Miss Tesman, perhaps with the intention to bring her visit to a close. In this moment, the power dynamic between husband and wife is clear: George may have control over his life outside the home, but Hedda rules over her tiny domain within their home. It seems that

George's comfort within the home, which was considered the women's domain in the nineteenth century, portrays a femininity that serves to make Hedda's contrasting masculinity seem that much more extreme. Even the physical home itself is a signal of her dominance over him, since she declared on a whim that she wanted the house and he poured every bit of his savings into procuring it for her. This should have felt like a triumph for Hedda, and surely it did at first, until she realized that she actually had to live with this man in a house she never truly wanted. The moment they returned home, she realized that she had dug her own grave and she was being slowly buried in it.

The other women in the text serve mostly as foils to Hedda, as if to highlight the areas in which she fails to achieve femininity. Mrs. Elvsted is the most direct foil to Hedda due to their similar age, backgrounds, and predicament of loveless marriages. Her existence emphasizes Hedda's lack of interest in her role as wife and mother; Mrs. Elvsted's entire life revolves around caring for men. She married a man she did not love in order to be a mother to his children, and then when she encountered Eilert Løvborg, their relationship was defined by her servitude to him, first as an assistant in the creation of his manuscript, then as a woman risking her own security and reputation in order to chase him down and ensure his delicate sobriety. Mrs. Elvsted is also physically the opposite of Hedda: she has innocent and doe-like blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and beautiful, full, blonde hair. She embodies the characteristics that are both celebrated and sought after, all of which refer to natural gentleness and innocence that are assumed to be innately feminine. This archetype is also seen in Miss Tesman. Though she is unmarried, she too has spent her life in service to others. She plays nurse to her dying sister and dotes on her nephew, despite his age and recent marriage. She clearly is clinging desperately to the idea of Hedda's pregnancy so that she can have another person in her life for which she can care. Miss Tesman remarks with a false casualness, "heaven grant I may not lose her yet awhile! For if I did, I don't know what I should make of my life George—especially now that I haven't you to look after anymore" (4). There is a certain helplessness about this; though she is the one who makes sacrifices for others and cares for them, she has no sense of self or independence. She relies on others entirely to give her life meaning rather than feeling some intrinsic value. Both Mrs. Elvsted and Miss Tesman's identities revolve around defining themselves as caretakers, often abandoning their own needs in order to better watch over those they have decided to mother.

Amid all the focus on the significance and consequence of femininity, Ibsen also represents three distinctly different yet familiar patriarchal archetypes of men. The most prominent of these is George Tesman, who represents a kind of childishness that often accompanies the ease of privilege. He approaches the subject of Hedda's possible pregnancy with a blissful ignorance, as if he was unaware of the realistic results of reproduction. He also allows Hedda to boss him around without hesitation. In sum, according to Bjorklund, "Tesman represents a kind of boyish masculinity. He still allows his aunt to take care of him and spoil him, just like when he was a child, and he seems unable to take care of himself" (10). His character is oddly similar to Hedda's in certain ways, because he too is unable to fulfill several aspects of his role as a man and has all the fondness for domesticity that Hedda lacks. This is especially apparent in the moment when he cherishes his slippers given to him by his aunt; it is as though he would more than willingly trade places with Hedda. He craves the safety of being tethered to the home, exalting in shoes that are created to never leave the house. He is a thoughtful and timid man who would rather spend his time quietly working on his studies in the comfort of home, while Hedda feels as though this same home is a prison. They are both inwardly drawn to a life that their gender roles do not allow them to pursue.

The two characters that represent more traditionally celebrated models of masculinity are Eilert Løvborg and Judge Brack. Løvborg has spent a great deal of time enjoying the excess allowed a man, to the point of becoming an alcoholic. Despite these faults, he is a celebrated author and is forgiven his weaknesses by both Mrs. Elvsted and the public at large. This freedom to participate in the exciting and pleasurable parts of life and still be forgiven for the consequences is something that Hedda deeply covets, and it is the reason that a relationship between them exists; she drinks in his stories greedily, living vicariously through his rambunctious adventures. When reminiscing on times past, Løvborg exclaims:

"Yes, Hedda, and when I made my confessions to you—told you about myself, things that at the time no one else knew! There I would sit and tell you of my escapades—my days and nights of devilment. Oh, Hedda—what was the power in you that forced me to confess these things?" (39).

It is as though she has bewitched him; though he may regret his choices to divulge his sins, he still revels in the intimacy he believes they shared. Judge Brack also gives her a taste of this life, but in a different way. They often have honest conversations that betray Hedda's true nature, and

he does not rebuke her for it. After her return from her honeymoon, she confesses to him, “I had positively danced myself tired, my dear Judge. My day was done—(with a slight shudder.) Oh no—I won’t say that; nor think it either!” (27-28). He recognizes her intelligence, and often initiates conversations with her that would be considered inappropriate by her husband and his moralizing family. However, this relationship sours when he alone recognizes that she had the capability of being involved in Løvborg’s death; there was a high price to pay for Hedda revealing even a small part of her true self.

One interpretation of Hedda’s personality that has only recently become popular is reading her as a “masculine woman.” This does not mean that Hedda is a man or desires to be one in a physical sense, but rather expresses the notion that her identity is comprised of masculine characteristics, thus forming a new type of masculinity in the late nineteenth century. Though many have commented on her rejection of femininity and her masculine traits, it was not until Jenny Bjorklund published her essay that critics directly characterized Hedda in this specific way. In her introduction, Bjorklund says “Over the years, the character Hedda has been interpreted in many different ways: as unreal, as a defective woman, as vicious and manipulative in nature, as a failed New Woman, or as a woman who is afraid of sex” (1). This summary of previous scholarship gives an excellent account; critics and audiences alike have found Hedda to be a contradictory character, indefinable by any standards that existed at the time. This is at once significant and alluring, and is likely why Ibsen’s play is still so hotly discussed over one hundred years later. Bjorklund connects this elusive character with the newer concept of the masculine woman, asserting:

The gender roles in the middle and upper classes in the late nineteenth century were narrow and strictly polarized, and I argue that Hedda’s behavior is not intelligible as femininity within the gender dichotomy that Ibsen’s play rests upon. When we read what Hedda expresses as masculinity rather than femininity, Hedda becomes more comprehensible as a character. (2)

Though this reading still leaves some aspects of Hedda’s personality in shadow, such as her true motivation for growing close to Mrs. Elvsted, it also gives a name to what many have perceived within Hedda. Most critics and audience members see the rejection of gender norms and sense Hedda’s incongruence with her gender, but it had not been explicitly framed before in terms of

this twentieth-century conception of gender performativity. This terminology helps readers to understand Hedda on a deeper level, even if there are still some aspects that remain ambiguous.

While some have seen Hedda as unlikable and unnerving, others have denounced her, demonizing her, and calling her crazy. This cannot be entirely surprising; she engages in reprehensible behaviors and, thereby, she represents the type of person that women are never supposed to become. She is spiteful, manipulative, and selfish, and has few redeeming qualities to make up for these negative ones. However, the play raises the question of why she has become this way, and why she ultimately ends up making the decision to end her own life. According to Linda Louise Rohrer Paige:

Hedda Gabler is not an Antigone, “dying” to uphold the laws of the gods, nor is she an Ophelia, retreating to madness and death in order to still patriarchal waters: she doesn’t die for someone else or out of love for someone else; her concern is for Hedda, not the gods, brothers, fathers, or even lovers. If, indeed, she is “mad,” then her “madness” is one of anger and rage at the world of patriarchy. (23)

Hedda became a monster because she was born into a world that could never accept or understand her. She is not feminine or nurturing or placid or gentle. Instead, she is proud, strong, intelligent, and independent—all characteristics that made life difficult for a woman in the Victorian era. Had she been born into a different time or as a man, she would likely have blossomed into a successful person, but after a lifetime of being restrained and pigeonholed, her soul festered like a blister and eventually burst. Hedda is not a role model, nor is she a representative of the feminist movement. The text in which she stars, however, demonstrates the challenges and dangers of non-conformity in a rigid patriarchal structure, and is a beacon for readers of all backgrounds who struggle to fit into this crippling system.

Although literary critics rarely have diagnosed Hedda with any type of mental disorder, many aspects of her confusing and conflicted character become clarified when interpreting her through the symptomatology of Antisocial Personality Disorder. Quite often, this disorder is equated in the media with being a psychopath, but that is in fact incorrect. Psychosis is a specific, occasionally related issue that defines the state in which an individual is disconnected from reality. Hedda may have had a very skewed understanding of the world around her, but she was invariably lucid; her disorder instead manifests itself in her lack of emotion, reckless behavior, and inhumanity. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) describes

the criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) as an individual who routinely exhibits three or more of the following symptoms:

1. Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest.
2. Deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, or conning others for personal profit or pleasure.
3. Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead.
4. Irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fights or assaults.
5. Reckless disregard for safety of self or others.
6. Consistent irresponsibility, as indicated by repeated failure to sustain consistent work behavior or honor financial obligations.
7. Lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing. (DSM V 301.7)

It becomes clear upon investigation that Hedda blatantly displays several of these characteristics. For example, she is regularly deceitful to her husband and manipulative towards her old classmate, primarily out of spite. She feels no remorse about her actions and has no emotional reaction to Eilert Løvborg's botched suicide, which concerns her only because she realizes that her guilt has already been discovered. Death is beautiful to her, and any distress she may have felt came from a disappointment in his lack of grace during his death. When her husband's beloved aunt is dying, she refuses to accompany him when he discovers her closeness to death, saying, "No, no, don't ask me. I will not look upon sickness and death. I loathe all sorts of ugliness" (51). Her own lack of interest in the situation and predisposal to disrespect ungraceful forms of death is more important to her than her husband's clear suffering. She also exhibits extreme impulsivity, from the beginning of the play when she mocks Miss Tesman's bonnet to the final scene in which she shoots herself in the temple.

Of course, when Ibsen was writing this play he would not have been aware of this disorder. He was writing in the late nineteenth century when psychology was in its infancy. This disorder was not characterized formally until at least fifty years after this play's publication. However, one must consider the fact that this disorder predates the official diagnostic categorization; Ibsen may have been drawing from personal experience or he may have simply been fascinated by such stories of "madness," but it is clear that he has a true depth of understanding far beyond his time. What is truly remarkable about Ibsen's character is that she is

a woman. Statistically it is incredibly rare to have ASPD, roughly 1.1% of the population, and even within this tiny group those affected are almost exclusively male (Skodol 140). For Ibsen to have made the decision to create a female character with these tendencies was revolutionary, and certainly contributed to the controversial nature of the play and the endless debate over Hedda's character. To put it simply, Hedda was a complete stranger to her audience, unlike anyone they previously had encountered.

It is unnecessary to formally "diagnose" this fictional character with a psychological disorder. It is illuminating, however, to study from a feminist perspective the ways in which Hedda displays tendencies of Antisocial Personality Disorder, in terms of how the symptoms affect both the interpretation of her character and the events of the play. One moment that immediately sets the tone for the rest of the play occurs in the beginning of Act One, when Hedda insults Miss Tesman's new bonnet. She intentionally mistakes the bonnet as belonging to the servant, remarking that she won't put up with her leaving "her old bonnet lying about on a chair" (9). Some time later, Hedda confesses her behavior to her friend Judge Brack, saying that she intentionally mistook the bonnet even though she knew it was Miss Tesman's because she was unhappy. She says that her motivation is that "these impulses come over me all of a sudden; and I cannot resist them [...] Oh, I don't know how to explain it" (30). This entire episode is an excellent example of both impulsiveness as well as lack of remorse, which are both key aspects of ASPD. It is clear that Hedda is desperately bored by her surroundings, and her reaction is to cause trouble for her own amusement at the expense of others. While this particular incident is fairly innocuous, this same pattern of behavior leads to tragedy.

One of the most important, yet elusive, facets of ASPD is causation. Psychologists are still unsure of the exact reasons for causation, which for most disorders typically has something to do with a traumatic event, prolonged stress, or hereditary. ASPD seems to be a combination of several, which means that no direct causation has yet been officially established. However, it is understood that some people have the innate possibility of developing these tendencies, and some do not. Those that have these tendencies have essentially two options: either they are raised in a healthy family environment with no stressors and they will never fully develop these characteristics, or they are raised in an environment or are exposed to events that cause their disorder to germinate and grow into something dangerous. The latter pertains to Hedda. She was born a female of high social class during the Victorian era, and thus was forced into a notoriously

restrictive model of femininity. This becomes clear almost immediately during Act One, when the stage directions describe her as “[walking] about the room, raising her arms and clenching her hands as if in desperation. Then she flings back the curtains from the glass door, and stands there looking out” (10). Though she may have the capacity to camouflage herself almost completely into her role of Victorian womanhood, there are times when she is unable to stifle this type of quiet outburst. She longs to be like a man all her life, to be able to truly live rather than be forced to live for others. First she wanted to be her father, the successful and respectable general; she looked up to him and learned how to shoot a pistol even though that was considered a very peculiar hobby for a woman. As a school child, she bullied other students, like little Thea Elvsted, taking her frustration out on them before she learned to keep it buried deep inside herself. Then as an adolescent, she kindled a friendship with Løvborg who told her all his secrets about the shadowy and fascinating aspects of a life she would never have. All of this repression and frustration finally comes to a climax during the events of the play, when she is finally cornered with no way out.

One of the most controversial aspects of the play concerns Hedda’s sexuality. Several critics contend that Hedda is a lesbian, and is feeling a confusing attraction to Mrs. Elvsted. Jenny Bjorklund introduces several arguments concerning this subject, one of which asserts, “Hedda’s obsession with Mrs. Elvsted’s hair and her generally unpredictable behavior toward Mrs. Elvsted are grounded in homosexual desire” (5). While this argument has merit, it does not seem to fit with Hedda’s character as a whole. When considering her tendencies towards ASPD, it is far more likely that all of her interactions with her old classmate were built on strategic manipulation in order to serve her own needs. The clearest indication of this is when Hedda mistakes her name. When attempting to develop trust with Mrs. Elvsted, she says “I shall say *du* to you, as in the old days, and call you my dear Thora” to which Mrs. Elvsted responds, “my name is Thea” (15). If Hedda had truly been interested in Mrs. Elvsted, she would likely have remembered more details about their time together in school and would not have made the blunder of mistaking her name. She also tries repeatedly to persuade Mrs. Elvsted to say *du* to her, which is the less formal way of addressing someone. She is blatantly trying to create a foundation of trust with this woman, built on a reinvention of their past relationship and forcing her to overcome her own discomfort.

However, it is apparent that Mrs. Elvsted doesn't quite buy into Hedda's story; she can sense something is not quite right with Hedda and retains a small amount of fear and intimidation towards her for the remainder of the play. Mrs. Elvsted is essentially the only character in the play with some clarity towards Hedda. Judge Brack and Løvborg both see her as charming and mischievous, while the Tesmans view her only as George's beautiful, well-bred new wife. Though Mrs. Elvsted lacks the confidence or intelligence to entirely trust her misgivings towards Hedda, she has an inkling of her true self to which the others are blind. This can be seen in multiple scenes, but namely in this initial scene and then once again when the two are left alone together while the men go out to a party. Initially, when Hedda is trying to create the connection of their time at school together, Mrs. Elvsted is very hesitant because of the impression she got of Hedda when they were younger. She remarks, "oh, how dreadfully afraid of you I was then!" and then she describes the way Hedda used to bully her by pulling her hair, saying "once you said you would burn it off my head" (15). This is beyond typical teenage conflict, and both women know it. However, Mrs. Elvsted backtracks by calling herself silly and making excuses for Hedda, either out of self-doubt or in order to remain on Hedda's good side. Later on, when the men are preparing to leave for Judge Brack's party, the women are to be left behind until Løvborg returns to escort Mrs. Elvsted home. Once again, she exudes desperation saying "*(softly and imploringly)* Oh, Løvborg, don't do it!" (43). At a surface level, it seems that perhaps she says this in an attempt to keep him from attending a party where there might be drinking, but it goes deeper than this. She is imploring him, who knows her best, not to leave her alone in Hedda's clutches, a situation that clearly makes her anxious and uncomfortable. Keeping these points in mind, the very concept of Hedda being sexually interested in Mrs. Elvsted is somewhat problematic, because there is clearly something dangerous about Hedda and assuming her sexuality is "different" only because she shows unusual behavior is inaccurate.

Hedda seems distracted or pointedly uninterested any time a romantic or sexual relationship is brought up, even to the point of openly admitting to more than one character that she does not love her husband. While some critics have interpreted this as a hint of her homosexuality, this seems flawed. To Hedda, love of all types is a laughing matter, and she makes it abundantly clear that although she favors some people's company over others, she does not have a great deal of affection for anyone, especially if they bore her. It would be impossible to entirely understand her inner feelings about romantic interest from the small glimpse into her

life that the play affords, but there is no clear indication that Hedda has a serious attraction to any of the characters in the play, and her goals have nothing to do with relationships of any kind unless they serve her in some practical way. She is irresponsible with the feelings of others and turns away from any social norm (such as attempting to love one's husband) that does not suit her. This flippant attitude towards others is a reoccurring theme throughout the play, with Hedda again and again exhibiting a surprising and unconventional perspective on her priorities.

Another even more contentious aspect of this text is Hedda's suicide and her encouragement of Løvborg's botched suicide. At the height of Løvborg's crisis over the thought of losing his life's work, he tells her he plans to end his life, to which she responds "Eilert Løvborg—listen to me. —Will you not try to—to do it beautifully?" (59). This rather enthusiastic encouragement of his imminent death is met by his promise to do his best. When he gets up to leave she hands him one of her twin pistols, which are her prized possessions. In this mission however, Løvborg fails. His death is brought on by a clumsy shot to his body; he bleeds to death rather than experience a clean and quick death. The classical critical analysis of this incident is described succinctly by Mary Kay Norseng: "conventional, critical wisdom maintains that Hedda thus puts the second pistol to her own temple and pulls the trigger, finally bringing about the thing of beauty that not only Eilert could not 'arrange' for her but that has eluded her all her life" (1). While this may be a portion of the whole story, Norseng's analysis can be extended to address the depth and complexity of Hedda's character. Hedda desires far more than just beauty, and the death of Løvborg was disturbing to her for more than just its graceless brutality.

According to Jenny Bjorklund:

the original Norwegian text that refers to where the shot hits Løvborg—"det traf ham i underlivet" —is vague, and the English translation takes the ambiguity even further: "in the stomach—more or less". The word "underlivet" literally means "below the waist" and can refer to the area below the waist in both men and women, specifically the genitals. The phrasing "i underlivet" thus indicates that Løvborg has been shot in his genitals and, in a sense, emasculated. (12)

Løvborg's misfired shot and botched death is incredibly disappointing to Hedda, and the majority of critics contend that this is the reason for her suicide at the end of the play; she wanted to complete the circle of a beautiful death, a task in which Løvborg fails but she succeeds. This

reading has merit, because earlier in the play she makes many remarks about her hatred of anything ugly in addition to alluding towards her appreciation of a beautiful death.

This reading, though popular in the literary community, does not tell the whole story. While this illusion of grandeur may express a portion of her reasoning, it does not seem like enough of a reason for a person as strong and willful as Hedda to kill herself. Instead, Bjorklund's reading is much more holistic. She asserts that Hedda's enabling of Løvborg's suicide is an attempt for her to grasp the control that she has been lacking throughout the text:

this effort to direct the other characters can be seen as her way of gaining control over the course of events and power over the other characters. When Hedda fails, realizing that she does not have power over anyone and, instead, that Brack has gained power over her, she sees no way out other than suicide. She refuses to be powerless and in someone else's power. (9)

Hedda's frustration has been coming to a slow boil throughout the play; she is bored with her husband and his family, she feels trapped in the house that she never really wanted, and she feels lost knowing that she will never experience the social freedom that the men in the play flaunt in front of her. Perhaps she believes that if she could not have autonomy, she could at least use her influence over a man to control what she sees as the most important moment of his life: his death. When his attempt fails, not only does she feel further frustration at her inability to have authority over Løvborg, but she also recognizes that she has lost even more of her own autonomy. Brack knows that one of her pistols is missing and that it was found with Løvborg. While he does not exactly threaten to expose her, he does insinuate that she should repay him in some way for his silence, a suggestion that she is not in a position to refuse.

This reading is foreshadowed in Act Three, when Hedda is conversing rather playfully with Judge Brack. She says “(*her smile vanishing*) I see you are a dangerous person—when it comes to the point [...] I am beginning to think so. I am exceedingly glad to think—that you have no sort of hold over me” (54). Brack responds to this with laughter, remarking that it is true “who knows what I might be capable of?” (54). Hedda's loss of power to Brack is something that she has already considered and feared. This only makes her eventual decision to kill herself that much clearer. She was already drowning because of the lack of control she had over her own life, especially with the possibility of her own unwanted pregnancy, and she knows from this single interaction with him that she will never regain the tiny amount of power that she once had. There

is also an aspect of this that is even more demeaning. Though he does not say it explicitly, there is an understanding between the two characters that a sexual relationship will be required in order to ensure his silence. This is something Hedda absolutely will not bear; though she is flirtatious in nature, she is extremely uninterested in both sex and relinquishing control. This impasse combined with the impulsivity that defines ASPD was more than enough to inspire her to end her life.

Hedda Gabler is arguably one of the most elusive characters in the literary canon, because every reader sees someone different within her. Some see a monster who is inhuman and undeserving of compassion, others see a feminist heroine who was unafraid of saying the ultimate “no” to the patriarchy, and still others see a character who embodies everything wrong with the female sex. While every reading has its significance, perhaps these interpretations miss Ibsen’s larger point. What if it isn’t Hedda herself that matters, but what the text says about women in patriarchal culture? Hedda is an extremely important character, but not because of who she is or the choices she makes. She is important for having existed at all.

Over the course of the twentieth century, Hedda has been an effectual character for many cultural movements. During the suffrage movement, *Hedda Gabler* was still fairly contemporary and held a prominent place within popular culture, with many women rallying behind Hedda as a symbol of empowerment. However, even in this cultural moment she was a source of conflict. As Penny Farfan asserts, famous actresses who chose Hedda as a heroine were walking a thin line since:

on the one hand, Hedda Gabler signified that the actresses’ professional reliance on popularity with audiences prohibited them from expressing more directly and assertively; and Hedda’s anger, together with her brilliance and desperation, had immediately established her as one of the great roles for women in the dramatic repertory. On the other hand, Hedda hardly qualified to marshal feminist followers toward their goal of emancipation, since she lacks the courage and conviction of the many suffragists who endured such hardships. (59)

The incongruity of Hedda’s character at once makes her alluring and frustrating, because at her core she is problematic. However, despite this conflict it is not unreasonable to see why early feminists wanted to rally behind her; she is unapologetically flawed and has a kind of internal independence and strength that makes her likeable for those who seek the same autonomy that

she does. For this reason, while there have been many cultural shifts since this time, Hedda Gabler is still a highly sought-after role in the theater canon, and directors are more inspired than ever to deconstruct and even remold the original play into something new.

Even today, Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* is transformed into something new and challenging. For instance, Elissa Blake describes Adena Jacobs's 2014 production of *Hedda Gabler* in which Hedda was played by a male actor. This is not intended as drag; instead it is a male playing a female character, and the intention is to evoke a deeper and different understanding of Hedda that would cause the same disorienting experience for modern audiences as Ibsen intended for his first audiences in the late nineteenth century. Ash Flanders, the actor who portrayed Hedda, said that his goal was to make the audience forget that he is a man (Blake 2). Ultimately, it appears that this casting choice is meant to be a visual representation of what was going on inside of Hedda; she is conflicted, does not fit into society, and embodies many masculine characteristics despite her restrictive role as a woman. However, this was a somewhat controversial move—what some see as inspirational, fresh, and poetic, others see as problematic. Are audiences today still so uncomfortable with the idea of Hedda being a woman, that a man has to play her?

The reaction to Ibsen's play when it premiered in 1891 was immediate and harshly negative. The overwhelming opinion was that “the language was too realistic, the protagonist was too unreal” (Templeton 204). One literary critic from Norway even went so far as to say that Hedda was a “monster created by the author in the form of a woman who has no counterpart in the real world” (Templeton 204). Hedda was so far removed from the “real” women audiences all over the world had encountered that Ibsen was critiqued with extreme hostility for creating a character who absolutely could not exist and had no place in the nineteenth-century world. However, simultaneously, he was lauded in feminist circles, despite his multiple proclamations that he was not a feminist and was instead interested in the exploration of the human mind (Johnson 437). However, whether he recognized it or not, this statement conveys his identity as a feminist—he saw women as complex, human beings who were whole and worthy of study. He may not have been aware of the long-term significance of his own work to feminism, but the essence of his philosophy conveyed by *Hedda Gabler* has affected the world of both theater and literature irrevocably. Most importantly, the play demonstrates the dangers of denying women's capability for complexity.

When contemporary audiences consider the concept of the “madwoman,” images of a hysteric and frenzied woman being locked away in the attic are brought to mind. This is not because it is inaccurate; women for centuries have been hidden away the moment they display any signs of mental illness, even if that sign is merely disobedience. While this idea may be changing, as our culture better understands the variety and symptomology of mental illnesses, a bad taste still lingers in our mouths. The most acceptable reason for avoiding or criticizing a woman is still to call her “crazy,” no further explanation necessary. However, Hedda challenges the identity of the madwoman in every way. She is not hysterical, illogical, or overly passionate. She does not do anything out of misplaced love or a leap to conclusions. Instead, she is rational, cold, calculating, powerfully manipulative, and, without exception, the sharpest person in every room. She craves control, the one thing she can never have. Hedda embodies a mental illness that is the antipathy of femininity, and because of her unconventional nature she lacks the ability to be understood in a patriarchal culture’s frame of mind. Audiences should not look to Hedda for a heroine; instead they should consider the text as a source of empowerment and scrutiny. Rather than criticizing Hedda, one ought to consider why she became that cruel and damaged person, and how those same patriarchal systems still affect women today.

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Sexual Violence and Hysteria in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Rebecca Sanders

Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a retelling of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) from the perspective of Bertha Mason, Rochester's first wife. Although the novel was published in 1966, it only achieved a firm place in the canon of postcolonial literature in the past thirty years. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha has very little backstory, primarily functioning as a foil for Jane. She is depicted as subhuman throughout, due to her status as Creole, or colonial other. Rhys gives voice to her perspective on the events that led to Rochester locking her in the attic at Thornfield Hall. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys renames Bertha Antoinette (showing how Rochester gives her the name "Bertha" against her will) and tells the story of her childhood and adolescence. Rhys also elaborates on the character of Antoinette's (Bertha) mother, Annette, both women having undergone horrendous experiences throughout their lives in the Caribbean. They were both treated horribly by the men around them who were supposed to have taken care of them but instead ended up doing unforgivable things to them, including sexual assault. Because mother and daughter were labeled mentally ill or "hysterics" in the nineteenth century, those around them did not take their legitimate concerns or protests seriously. From the perspective of the twenty-first century, we now know that individuals who experience psychological and physical trauma will eventually show outward signs of the abuse. Ultimately, the men around Annette and Antoinette justify their acts by dehumanizing them as nothing more than hysterical women.

The novel is layered with many different and important themes when it comes to the treatment of women, all centering upon mental illness and sexual violence. Importantly, during the nineteenth century, women were essentially the property of their husbands: if a husband deemed his wife "crazy" or "hysterical," she did not have access to legal rights to fight such a diagnosis. Although marriage politics have drastically changed since then, some of these gender stereotypes persist in today's culture. Men today frequently accuse women of "overreacting" or "being crazy," notably in conjunction with, what they see, as a time when women seem to be menstruating. Such sexist accusations illustrate how these ideas have survived well into twenty-first century culture and society. While these sexist and demeaning remarks may not seem significant, I argue that they can be traced directly back to the history of hysteria, with the root of these ideas lying in the dehumanization and degradation of women like Annette and Antoinette in

Wide Sargasso Sea.

Although the majority of the novel is narrated from Antoinette's perspective, Rhys includes an unnamed male narrator's point of view in the second part of the novel, a narrator often interpreted as Rochester. It is obvious in part two that this unnamed male narrator is very concerned with himself, and not much else. Literary critic Victoria Walker argues that the marriage between Antoinette and Rochester is to the financial advantage of the husband, although Rochester feels himself to have been bought (505). This assertion shows how Rochester becomes resentful of being owned by Antoinette's family, even though that was the common lot of women in the nineteenth century, who lost all of their rights and inheritance to their husbands regardless of how they felt about the situation. The idea of being in the same position as a wife is extremely uncomfortable for Rochester. In the novel he looks at Antoinette as a means to an end, rather than as a person he should love and care for. He is consumed with concern about what he can get from Antoinette and he does not really give her well-being a second thought. He is selfish and greedy in every aspect of their marriage, especially in regard to their sexual relationship. For instance, soon after they have been married, he describes how "Very soon she was as eager for what was called loving as I was—more lost and drowned afterwards" (55). Here, Rhys hints that there was some form of sexual violence involved, because when they started to have sex, she didn't seem to be as "eager" as he was in lovemaking, so some form of rape or non-consensual act is depicted here. Notably, Antoinette did not want to go through with the marriage and only does so after being pushed into it by Rochester and her stepfather. Walker also argues that rape and sexual abuse are implied in the novel, stating, "The brutal nature of the couple's relationship is exposed in the Rochester character's descriptions of his own savage desire and by the marks that Christophine discovers on Antoinette's body" (506). Rochester incriminates himself in his own thoughts and feelings in the novel, even though he does not exactly admit to himself the horrendous thing that he is doing to Antoinette. Whenever they were done engaging in intercourse she is seen as being "more lost and drowned afterwards"; this could be because she is dealing with the traumatic event that he just put her through. The male narrator, however, obviously does not even begin to think he did anything wrong. Rochester is sexually mistreating her and this kind of abuse is bound to cause mental anguish in Antoinette, to the point that she literally feels like she is losing herself, that she is "lost and drowned," even though Rochester seems to believe that she is just drunk from his lovemaking. Due to the egotistical and possessive

nature of the male narrator, the perception of Antoinette is more proof that he would take whatever he wanted from her and would be too blind to see the harm it could cause her. Walker also argues that; “Antoinette’s ‘death’ is not her own experience of orgasm—*la petite mort*—but rather his perception of her. Her willing admission of subservience to him—‘say die and watch me die’—acknowledges his power over her” (506). Although she argues that he is viewing her die in a figurative sense because she is willing to do anything for him, I believe that this part of the novel is literal because he is killing her slowly with the way he is treating her throughout the novel—culminating in locking her in the attic of Thornfield and, ultimately, causing her suicide.

Just as there is an implication of sexual violence against Antoinette, we later discover that her mother, Annette, was also assaulted. When Annette is committed to a mental asylum after experiencing a series of psychologically traumatic events (including the death of her son and the destruction of her house by the former slaves on the island), she is not treated like an actual person. Her experiences and how deeply she felt them lead to her mental breakdown. In the second part of the novel she is described as a far off character who, at times, appears to have no substance. The reader only learns about Annette’s experience through Christophine’s description to the male narrator. Christophine, the black servant who has been with the family for Antoinette’s entire life, tells the male narrator about how “In the end—mad I don’t know—she give up, she care for nothing. The man who is in charge of her, he take her whenever he want and his woman talk. That man, and others” (94). Here, Christophine shows how Rochester would not understand what happened to Annette and how none of the men she was surrounded by could even begin to understand, because they would never be in the position of powerlessness that they forced these women into. She also does not refer to Annette as “crazy” or “insane” because that is a diagnosis given to women by men. This quotation implies that the man who was supposed to take care of Annette at the mental asylum, was instead taking advantage of her, even raping her or “taking her whenever he want.” Because of this additional trauma, Annette retreats further into her mind. The man taking care of her does not see her as a person; he sees her as a thing and he can take whatever he wants from her because he is in a position of power over her. Christophine’s conversation with Rochester about Antoinette’s mother and the loss of her will to fight or live anymore, clearly foreshadows what will happen to Antoinette at the end of the novel.

Towards the end of part two, the male narrator does the same thing that Christophine describes in the mother to Antoinette, the daughter—he diagnoses his wife as “mad” and links

sexuality (and sexual violence) with madness. He thinks, “She’ll moan and cry and give herself as no sane woman would—or could” (99). Here, he justifies taking Antoinette back to England by projecting this idea that Antoinette will sleep with absolutely anybody as no normal or sane person would, making her insane to him. But, the reality is that he is shaming her to make his actions seem less appalling, even though he does not even address them in the novel, at least not blatantly. Rochester was the one who got Antoinette interested in sex—“eager for what was called loving”—and then he shames her for enjoying it. The shaming of Antoinette by Rochester illustrates the patriarchal idea that it is only acceptable for men to enjoy sex, while women are supposed to just withstand the act of it. Somewhere the narrator realizes that what he has done on some level is wrong and he cannot accept that fact, so he projects the fault onto Antoinette. Rochester believes that Antoinette’s madness is hereditary, but he is lying to himself because he knows what he has done is wrong. He is too concerned with his selfish wants, however, to admit that to himself or to Antoinette. He knew what her mother later became, since Christophine tells him about the trauma she experienced; yet he only saw what he wanted to see.

Diagnosing women as “hysterical” has a fraught history in the nineteenth century that is caught up in patriarchy and gender norms. Elaine Showalter describes this history in her book *The Female Malady*, arguing, “Freud links hysteria to bisexuality—the hysteric identifies with members of both sexes, cannot choose one sexual identity” (160). We see this in the novel since Rochester links Antoinette’s sexual promiscuity to her insanity and uses it to dehumanize her, as if she is deserving of the way he is treating her. Showalter discusses how nineteenth and early twentieth-century psychiatrists would rely on the sexuality of female patients for a diagnosis of madness, “how often sexual ideas and feelings arise and display themselves in all sorts of insanity” (75). For discovering and exploring something (sexuality) that women naturally have, they are deemed insane because apparently it was only thought natural for men to explore and recognize their sexuality. Freud linking hysteria (insanity) to bisexuality is similar because he argues that the root of a woman’s mental illness is a sexual taboo, which is equated with the taboo of a promiscuous woman. Both types of women—promiscuous and bisexual—are demonized because of their sexuality and were thought by patriarchal society to have the “female malady,” or hysteria. Showalter describes how “Victorian psychiatry often seems like an effort to postpone or extirpate female sexuality” (75). In other words, women were not allowed to be sexual beings, and if they seemed to enjoy their sexuality they were deemed hysterical, a word

only used to describe “insane women.” The extent of female sexuality was reproduction; woman was seen as a sexual object only to be used for reproduction, which was an “Enforcement of an ideology that restricts female sexuality for reproduction” (77). Women being sexual just for enjoyment of the act were seen as animals exhibiting behavior that was in dire need of a cure. The demonization of women for having an active sex life still exists in today’s culture. Calling a woman a “slut” for having more than one sexual partner is not that far of a cry from Freud’s theories of hysteria or the diagnosis Rochester makes about Antoinette.

Both Antoinette and Annette had what little rights they had stripped away in the novel. Those around them abused them for reacting like normal human beings to sexual violence. What they suffered was what many women suffered during the Victorian age. An extreme example of this gendered oppression at the hands of psychiatrists is Showalter’s description of the “most extreme and nightmarish effort to manage women’s minds by regulating their bodies was Dr. Isaac Baker Brown’s surgical practice of clitoridectomy as a cure for female insanity” (75). This doctor linked a woman’s insanity to masturbation and believed that removal of the clitoris could cure them of such insanity (75). He thought if he removed parts of their sex organs then they would not be ruled by their sexual desires, thus being cured of hysteria. Showalter infers that “We can only speculate on the depths of shame, misery, pain, self-hatred, and fear that Brown’s patients experienced” (76). No one will know exactly what hysteria patients went through in their “treatment” and how they were sexually abused beyond measure, just as no one knows exactly the depths of the abuse that Annette and Antoinette suffered at the hands of their captors. Both Showalter and Rhys, however, do a service to contemporary women by giving voice to these experiences that historically have been silenced.

Antoinette and her mother were both the victims of sexual violence by the men who had power over them, just as hysteria patients were at the mercy of the male doctors in control of their lives. Both women were thought of as inhuman or less than human because of their mental illness, whether it was a clinical case in response to trauma (Annette) or a diagnosis imposed by men to control them (Antoinette). If the men in their lives had actually protected and respected them as human beings, rather than objects, they would not have fallen further into madness and they would have been able to recover from the horrendous experiences they had both been through. When one is put through extreme mental and physical pain, the individual will eventually exhibit signs of being mentally unwell. The perpetrators in *Wide Sargasso Sea* justify

their actions against the women in the novel because they delegitimize their pain by labeling them as “hysterical women.” Such a diagnosis is easier for them to deal with than to actually believe they have inflicted pain on an equal, another human being. That is also why they shame them as animals that are incapable of controlling their impulses and urges, just as Victorian doctors treated women in asylums. Such doctors believed that women had to be cured of their hysteria by whatever means possible. The idea of the “hysterical woman” and patriarchal ideas about sex very much trickles down into the twenty-first century. Women are shamed for being promiscuous and somehow they are also shamed for being assaulted. These nineteenth-century patriarchal ideas about women and sex very much impact the way the current generation views its girls and women, causing women to hold themselves to a different standard than men. These ideas are toxic and yet are so ingrained in today’s culture that one may not even notice them unless they were to take a step back.

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The Cultural Impact of Religion in World Literature

Samuel Kiger

Throughout human history and in diverse cultures across the world, people have desired to discover the meaning of life. As a result of this desire, various cultures have developed religions that provide their respective communities with a purpose for life. For example, in “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings: A Tale for Children”, Columbian novelist Garbriel García Márquez illustrates a culture that depends on supernatural and scientific worldviews in order to explain certain phenomena. Devdutt Pattanaik, an Indian physician, further supports Márquez’s view that separate worldviews can coexist in his TED Talk “East vs. West: The Myths that Mystify.” Although religion mainly exists as a means to explain the meaning of life, it has also developed into a force that has impacted education and tradition tremendously in various cultures, forcing individuals in such communities to develop a sense of hybridity. In “Chike’s Schools Days” for instance, Chinua Achebe stresses the impact that the Christian religion has had on traditional Nigerian education due to colonialism. Similar to Achebe’s short story, Lebanese writer Hanan Al-Shaykh illustrates in “The Women’s Swimming Pool” how Islam has powerfully shaped Lebanon, specifically in terms of the impact it has had on Muslim women. Across these four diverse texts, religion serves as a way for various cultures to subjectively explain life, or what they perceive as truth. In doing this, religion, often through an imperialist agenda, has tremendously affected education and tradition in many cultures, particularly in the case of the Christian and Islamic faiths. In response to the major impact that the imperialist ideology of such religions has had, the authors above illustrate how individuals of diverse cultures often develop a sense of hybridity in their communities to reconcile traditional forms of knowledge with these new systems of belief.

To begin, Gabriel García Márquez illustrates in “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” how humans cling to different systems and worldviews such as science and religion in order to explain certain phenomena. The first hint of this theme comes from the following quote: “Nevertheless, he [Father Gonzaga, a Catholic priest] promised to write a letter to his bishop so that the latter would write to his primate so that the latter would write to the Supreme Pontiff in order to get the final verdict from the highest courts” (358). In this letter to the highest courts of the Catholic Church, Father Gonzaga is requesting an answer to the question of whether the

“man with enormous wings” is genuinely a supernatural figure, or simply a mortal man. Márquez uses this quote to support his belief that humans cling to different systems and worldviews in order to explain phenomena by showing his audience that the Catholic townspeople in the story went directly to the Clergy for the final verdict concerning whether or not the “man with enormous wings” was supernatural or not. The townspeople, in other words, relied on their religious beliefs to present them with a solution concerning the “man with enormous wings.”

Contrary to this explanation, it is evident that others living in the same community relied on a scientific explanation concerning the “man with enormous wings.” This idea is evident in the depiction of the doctor who “couldn’t resist the temptation to listen to the angel’s heart, and he found so much whistling in the heart and so many sounds in his kidneys that it seemed impossible for him to be alive. [... The wings] seemed so natural on that completely human organism that he couldn’t understand why other men didn’t have them too” (360). In this quote, the doctor taking care of Pelayo and Elisenda’s child decides to check out the “man with enormous wings.” The doctor examines empirical evidence of the man such as his “kidneys” and “heart”, and comes to the conclusion that the man is a “completely human organism.” Márquez supports his theme of humans using different systems and worldviews to explain phenomena by illustrating that the doctor in the story utilized a course of scientific observation in determining a conclusion of whether the “man with enormous wings” was a supernatural being or not. It is clear from both quotes that Márquez is promoting the diversity of worldviews in the same culture; in this case, both the supernatural and scientific views exist simultaneously and the narrator does not privilege one over the other. In other words, Márquez is encouraging the hybridity of different worldviews in the same culture.

Márquez’s depiction of multiple worldviews coexisting in the same community can also be seen in a radically different cultural text by Indian author Devdutt Pattanaik. A reoccurring theme in Pattanaik’s TED Talk “East vs. West: The Myths that Mystify” is that there is not one absolute “true” religion; instead, they are all accurate according to the subjective view of the believer. This theme is evident in Pattanaik’s statement, “Depending on the outcome, choose your paradigm. You see, because both the Paradigms are human constructs, they are cultural creations.” Here, Pattanaik explains how, because humans have developed all religions, there is not a single completely accurate faith. Similar to Pattanaik, as seen in the previous text, Márquez also promotes the idea of cultures relying on a diverse number of worldviews, not one all-

encompassing belief system. Both authors prefer employing multiple worldviews to partially explain different phenomena. Like Pattanaik, Márquez encourages the notion that different belief systems should coexist; in Márquez's case, supernatural and scientific views exist simultaneously. In similarity to Márquez, this theme is significant because Pattanaik grew up in an Indian culture that held true to the Hindu religion, a religion that believes in "many Promise Lands." In this quote, Pattanaik stresses that, similar to the Hindu religion having multiple worldviews that are acceptable, it is vital that all cultures are open to different belief systems. Pattanaik's reason for various communities evolving into more accepting cultures, concerning religion, is supported by the fact, as Pattanaik states, that we "live in the subjective truth, and so do [our peers]." Again it is evident, as also seen in Márquez's text, that the hybridity of different worldviews existing in the same culture should be encouraged since all such views in themselves are cultural inventions. In other words, according to Pattanaik, because we as individuals all live in the subjective truth, it is vital that we respect the religious beliefs of our peers and decipher a way to balance the diversity of various worldviews.

Although religion exists primarily to give various cultures a meaning for life, religion has also evolved into a force that has had a tremendous impact on education and tradition in various cultures, primarily through colonialism. In response to colonialism's "civilizing mission," many cultures are forced to become hybrid. In the short story "Chike's School Days," Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe illustrates this theme in the following quote: "Chike was brought up 'in the ways of the white man', which meant the opposite of traditional" (827). From this quote, it is understood that Chike has been raised by a family living in their native land, but following the tradition of the colonizer, "the white man." Diction used throughout the text such as "baptism," "prayers," and "hymn-singing" (827) suggest a Christian faith as the new belief system for Chike and his family. In other words, because of the Christian religion brought to Chike's homeland by colonizers, he [Chike] and his family, have rejected the old religious traditions of their own culture and accepted the new traditions. Achebe's theme that religion had a tremendous effect on tradition in early colonized communities is significant because he too grew up in a hybrid culture like Chike; many members of the Igbo society continued to follow African traditions while others conformed to the religious traditions of the colonizers and still others found a way to synthesize these different religious practices. Secondly, this theme is further supported in the following quote: "Being so young, Chike was sent to what was called the 'religious class' where

they sang, and sometimes danced, the catechism. He loved the sound of words and he loved rhythm” (829). Achebe uses this quote to illustrate that Chike is attending a school where British education is being taught, including religion class. According to the quote, we see that this education includes a religious course that uses the English language instead of the Igbo language of Chike’s traditional community. Furthermore, we see from this quote that Chike has found a way of balancing the traditional beliefs of his culture with the new Christian beliefs that he was brought up in; Chike, due to colonialism, has developed a sense of hybridity. Achebe clearly shows this by illustrating the fact that Chike called the non-traditional educational course the “religious class” which implies that it was not of native Igbo tradition. Although it is implied that the “religious class” was non-traditional, it is evident that Chike does not reject it, but actually incorporates it into his traditional beliefs, and ends up loving the “sound of words” (829) of the English language, if not the content of what is being taught. Again, it is clear that Chike has become a hybrid; raised in the Christian faith brought by colonizers, but maintaining some traditional Igbo values.

Similar to how the Christian faith has a major impact on the tradition and education of various cultures through colonialism, it is also apparent that the Islamic religion has affected the traditions of multiple cultures, especially in terms of gender. Contrary to how Achebe is able to find hybridity in the face of colonialism and Christianity, Hanan Al-Shaykh argues that the Islamic faith has impacted women in an oppressive and restrictive way. For Al-Shaykh, the imperialism of the Islamic faith in Lebanon since the 1970s has not offered a sense of hybridity, but instead requires cultures to be homogeneous concerning the worldview they hold true to. In “The Women’s Swimming Pool” Al-Shaykh illustrates this theme in the following quote: “in this heat I still had to wear that dress with long sleeves, that head covering over my braids, despite the hot wind” (1168). In this quote the narrator, a young Muslim woman, describes her struggle to stay cool in the heat of Beirut. Although the narrator describes intense heat concerning the temperature, her family’s adherence to strict Islamic law requires her to wear a head covering and dress with long sleeves, most likely the chador. Al-Shaykh’s theme that the Islamic religion is a source of restriction towards women is significant because, as clearly seen in the quote, it [Islamic law] forced the young Muslim woman in the story to wear clothing that caused her to be extremely uncomfortable. The clothing that Muslim women were required to wear, in accordance with Islamic custom and practice in her rural Lebanese community, restricted the narrator from

wearing clothing that would have been more desirable and suitable for her considering the intense heat. Contrary to Chike in Achebe's story, it is evident that the young Muslim woman in this text does not have the choice to balance her traditional beliefs with the modern views of her society, in this case, the cosmopolitan city of Beirut. Instead, the young Muslim woman is required to follow the strict Islamic traditions of her family and disregard her desire to dress in a modern way that would allow her to be hybrid.

Secondly, not only has the imperialism of strictly conservative Islamic doctrine developed into a source of restriction towards women, it has also turned into a source of oppression, negatively affecting the way the less conservative and orthodox citizens of Beirut in the story view the orthodox Muslim narrator and her grandmother. This theme is clearly seen in the following quote: "There was contempt in the way she looked me: Was it my southern accent or my long-sleeved dress?" (1171). In this quote, the narrator is preparing to enter the "women's swimming pool." Before she can enter though, she must pay a set amount of money. As she is paying the entrance fee, she notices that the lady accepting her money showed "contempt in the way she looked" (1171) at her. Al-Shaykh's theme that Islam is a source of oppression towards women is significant because, as evident in the quote, conservative Islamic women are viewed negatively simply because of the way they dress. Because the specific Islamic traditions of her family and community required the woman in the story to dress a particular way, she wore a head covering along with a long dress. When the woman from Beirut accepting the narrator's money noticed the type of clothing she had on, she immediately gave the woman a look of contempt. Because the narrator was wearing certain types of clothing in order to conform to her religious dictates, she was undermined completely. Again, although the Muslim narrator is frowned upon by the more modern citizens in Beirut due to the clothing she is wearing, she is restricted by Islamic law from developing any sense of hybridity so that she may be looked upon in a more accepting fashion. In other words, in contrast to Chike, the Muslim woman is unable to live a lifestyle that is hybrid due to the sect of Islam her family follows.

Furthermore, the theme of oppression and negative perception of people in a modern cosmopolitan city like Beirut towards women of the orthodox Islamic faith is present in the following quote: "I saw my grandmother standing and looking up at the sky. [...] she was praying right there in the street [...] I looked at her again and saw the passers-by staring at her" (1171). Here, the young woman's grandmother has dropped to the ground in the middle of the

street to pray. As the narrator is about to enter the “women’s swimming pool,” she turns and notices that her grandmother is praying in the middle of the street. Because the grandmother is required to pray at certain times during the day, she literally has to drop to the pavement of a major street to pray. Here, the narrator sees her grandmother through the eyes of the less orthodox, more cosmopolitan citizens in Beirut, who stare and judge the grandmother. The young narrator admits in the text, soon after her grandmother begins praying that “For the first time her black dress looked shabby to me [...] I approached her and she again put her weight on my hand” (1171). The narrator, as evident in the text, has begun to see her Islamic faith as a burden, rather than a benefit. The burden of her faith is illustrated symbolically when she says that her grandmother “again put her weight on my hand” (1171). Not only does this quote show the burden of the Islamic faith on the Muslim narrator, it also illustrates the fact that the narrator is unable to have any sense of hybridity due to the weight of tradition. Unlike Chike, the narrator here is forced to accept the traditional belief system of her family and community; she cannot, like Chike, form a balance between tradition and modernity.

In response to the previous texts, it is apparent that many cultures have developed a sense of hybridity in response to the conflicting forces of tradition and modernity in the context of religion, except for women in Islamic cultures. For example, Márquez, Pattinaik, and Achebe each show how diverse cultures find ways to balance their traditional belief systems with new worldviews brought by various colonizers or foreigners. In both Márquez and Pattinaik, the promotion of hybrid cultures existing with various belief systems is clear. This is also evident in Achebe’s story, where Chike is able to balance the traditional beliefs of his culture with the modern worldviews brought by colonizers. In contrast to these texts however, it is apparent that issues of gender and religion, specifically Islam as represented by Al-Shaykh, restrict the development of hybridity. Furthermore, it is important to note that even though in most cultures hybridity is acceptable, some religions, in this case, certain sects of Islam, force and restrict individuals, particularly women, from attaining a hybrid status. Overall, as depicted in the previous texts, religion serves as a way for various cultures to develop an explanation for the meaning to life. In serving as a source that offers meaning, it is clear that religion has also impacted education and tradition in various cultures. This impact, as brought upon by various colonizers or imperial forces, results in different cultures becoming hybrid, in an effort, however tentative or unsuccessful, to balance their traditional beliefs with modern worldviews.

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Overcoming Oppression in *Pan's Labyrinth*

Alex Ferrell

Critical interpretations of Guillermo del Toro's film *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) have predominantly focused on social, cultural, and psychological readings of both the film and its historical context. While these interpretations are important, there has been little detailed analysis of the effect of Fascist oppression on gender and religious norms. I argue that del Toro illustrates fascism as an oppressive, masculinist system that insists on conformity to its narrow beliefs at the expense of everyday cultural norms, including those of gender and religion. Del Toro uses the female characters Ofelia and Mercedes to illustrate how one can resist fascism. Ultimately, del Toro argues that women and traditionally feminine traits are the best way to overthrow a hyper-masculine dictatorship, due to the dismissal of such traits by unsuspecting and unfounded beliefs that femininity equates to weakness.

The plot of the film centers on a young girl, Ofelia, in 1930s fascist Spain. Ofelia is trying to cope with her mother marrying a cruel Franco regime general, Vidal, while also learning that she is not of this world. She trades the everyday reality of fascism for a fantasy world in which she meets a faun in a labyrinth who advises her to take on three magical tasks to prove that she is still worthy to return to her kingdom and rule as princess of the underworld. To masterfully bring this tale to life, del Toro employs critical details such as character developments, cinematic techniques, cultural references, and symbolic objects. Because of his cinematic talents in portraying his stories, he has been praised internationally for his attention to detail and his ability to portray his historical and cultural messages in a wondrous way. Many critics who have written about del Toro have discussed how the stories were masterfully written and full of meaning to be explored.

Cultural representation and accurate depiction of historical reality are the main points upon which criticism of *Pan's Labyrinth* predominantly focuses. Paul Smith, a professor of Hispanic culture, points out that it is a celebrated point that the film is able to "reveal that, given sympathy and attention, films based on local events can have immediate and profound significance for global audience" (4). Here, Smith clearly conveys that the film's importance, culturally and historically, is its lessons regarding fascism and its repression of Spanish culture, particularly in terms of how the entire country adapted to such a severe time in their history. Per Smith, no other Hispanic film depicts the Spanish Civil War as authentically as del Toro does.

This alone would boost the film's significance regardless of what lessons or interpretations are taken from it. In accordance with Smith, Jack Zipes, a Professor Emeritus of German at the University of Minnesota, believes the film is honorable and brilliant because of del Toro's dedication to, "not eschew politics and dare to depict the gruesome atrocities in life in horrifying detail" (239). Honesty in the historical depiction is what these two authors believe truly sets *Pan's Labyrinth* apart from other Spanish films; however, Zipes believes the film's divided attention to not only focus on the fantasy world, but also the historical reality of war-torn Spain is what gives the film its abstract beauty. It is not surprising that both Zipes and Smith have interpreted the film's graphic detailing of the war as a message to learn from our mistakes. Seeing the horrors that Vidal and, by extension, Franco's regime have forced on the Spaniards is enough to send chills up anyone's spine, let alone the thought of such a dictatorship happening again. The significance for the film's premiere in 2006 is the startling awareness of people continuously repeating historical mistakes, despite our ability to look back and see where these mistakes lead us. Del Toro has set up a perfect warning and reminder against such oversights.

In conjunction with the historical critique in the film, one would be hard pressed to not see the clear portrayal of oppression caused by powerful norms of masculinity, as represented in Vidal and his disregard of woman and their health. Vidal's masculinity is hostile towards anything feminine, placing itself alongside the pressures of being manly in the context of war and duty. Within the film, there are many moments in which women are clearly oppressed, such as the many times Vidal places his hands on Mercedes in offsetting or hostile ways, even before he believes she was an informant for the rebels. Vidal is the villain of the film and is depicted as extreme in his stifling need to project masculinity in all forms, a trait that becomes the fatal flaw in his character and results in the end to his reign of power. Smith defines Vidal's dislike for women as an, "embodiment of masculinity so exclusive it barely acknowledges the existence of the feminine" (6). Smith argues this is made clear when Vidal approaches Ofelia and her pregnant mother and, in Spanish, says welcome in the masculine form because he is so definite in his assumption that the mother will give birth to a baby boy that he refuses to accept any chances otherwise. Similarly, when the doctor taking care of Carmen, the pregnant mother, asks Vidal what made him so sure the baby was a boy, Vidal responds "Don't fuck with me" (del Toro). Vidal's actions, obsessed with power and masculinity as they are, are why Caesar Montevecchio, theology and psychology professor at Mercyhurst University, states "Vidal's

victimization of Ofelia and his exploitation of her mother demonstrate a mythic connection between totalitarian social control, violence, and masculinity” (11). Monteverchio argues this because he can see that Vidal is a symbol of oppression and hyper-masculinity, uncaring about those who he deems weaker and subsequently feminine. Zipes also analyzes Vidal, arguing that one can see the clear display of power and dictation and the unquestionable air of righteousness that represents the entirety of the hyper-masculine fascist beliefs. In this character, Zipes contends, “Del Toro wants us to penetrate the spectacle of society that glorifies and conceals the pathology and corruption of people in power” (236). Here, Zipes explains his belief that del Toro dramatizes an explicit and vivid warning to always question the authority of leaders, regardless of gender. This is correct but I also argue that there is a clear need to focus on the way Vidal represents this power in the form of oppressive masculinity, one of the most dominant and controlling forces.

As hyper-masculinity explains many of the hardships women suffer within the film, it is also clear that Vidal may have more than just his obsession with masculinity wrong with him. On many occasions Vidal shows his compulsion to hide any sentiment no matter how minute, such as removing his hand from Carmen’s at dinner and denying the existence of his diseased father’s watch. These compulsions could be a direct result of Vidal’s overly exertive attempt to suppress not only his sentimentality and femininity but also all similar characteristics around him. Similar to Smith’s argument about Vidal’s overbearing dictation, Roger Clark and Keith McDonald, professors of English and Media and Film Studies, respectively, believe that Vidal is in fact controlling and obsessive to a degree that not only affects the characters around him, but also the psychological definition of the film itself. Clark and McDonald argue that control within the film is “symbolized by the pervasive presence of time pieces, locks, keys, and uniformed soldiers” (54). All of these items are under the control of Vidal, who is so obsessed with time that it alters the way he performs any and all of his tasks. The explicit presence of time pieces and organization shows the truly compulsive nature of control and the inability to relinquish said control that Vidal and, by extension, the oppressive rule of Franco had. Such obsessive compulsions stem from their fear of not fitting perfectly into the stereotypical masculine role.

When considering the inequality and abuse both Ofelia and her mother are subjected to at the hands of Vidal, it is clear that the fascist general has put them through this oppression because they are female and represent the sentiment he wishes to crush. Zipes would contend

that such gendered oppression is expressed in such a vivid way through the medium of a “prosecuted young heroine, generally a teenager or prepubescent girl” (239). Such a casting choice is representative of the stereotypical social belief of girls representing helplessness and fragility. Where Smith sees Vidal’s obdurate refusal to accept femininity in any form as a hyperbole of sexism, Zipes and Montevicchio believe Vidal’s masculinity acts as a symbol of patriarchal society’s continual underestimation of what is considered traditionally weak and unimportant, particularly when it concerns one’s own masculinity and power. While all three authors are correct, there is no denying the many scenes that support the abhorrent male dominant obsession throughout the film with women being undermined and underestimated only to find that they are the key to defeating the oppressors and eradicating what is seen as masculine dictatorship. The best example of this is Mercedes, the head servant under Vidal’s command and an ally to the guerilla fighters hidden in the forest. As Vidal becomes more and more sure that there is a traitor among his *men*, he does not once assume that Mercedes could be the culprit stealing supplies and secrets from right underneath his nose. Because she was overlooked so easily due to her sex, and consequent stereotypes of being weak and obedient in the presence of men, she was able to retrieve supplies and support the rebellion for as long as she did. When the time came, she led an army straight into Vidal’s headquarters, winning the climactic battle between Vidal and the guerillas.

While the main points of the film discussed thus far are oppression against women and the self-hatred that leads to hyper-masculine dominance in the form of fascist dictators, it is also worth mentioning the religious aspect of this theme. In the beginning of the film there are scenes of a devastated landscape with the camera tightly focusing on ruined cathedrals. Further in the film Ofelia is faced with a priest who completely agrees with Vidal on everything, including taking from the poor and possibly starving them in the name of winning a small battle. These examples of the destruction and corruption of religion, respectively, are symbolic of destroying and persecuting those who maintain different beliefs than the oppressor. As the people are oppressed and chased away from their own beliefs and ideals, they are losing what they used to hold dear. Jefferey Overstreet, novelist and critic, concludes that the film makes one “Consider the suggestion that those who become too focused on their own suffering will forget their true heritage and home” (3). Overstreet illuminates the more spiritual exploration of *Pan’s Labyrinth* in his query about who we are in our historical time and how we impact the world, and vice

versa. The central focus on Ofelia, who has discovered her placement on earth was not as she thought it was and has lost herself as a result, could symbolize personal religious practice being killed off in the minority under dictatorship. As she discovers, in her previous life as princess of the underworld, she was not content with her life and went where she was told not to because of her dissatisfaction. As a result, she died only to be reborn in war-torn Spain as the present-day Ofelia. This introduction of multiple time periods and dimensions to the narrative is del Toro's way of representing the risks both in religion and life. It also illustrates how some risks are necessary and hardships are meant to be endured, perhaps for eternity in multiple lives. Del Toro's intent is to have his audience question the possibilities of everything, to wonder and take second looks at what we perceive as normative values. Perhaps not even in existential situations but also when perceiving social, religious, and political constructs.

In addition to this existential vein within criticism of the film, another primary interpretation of the film focuses on escapism through the presentation of two worlds to Ofelia. Zipes believes "It is the fairy tale that gives her [Ofelia] the courage to face the darkness of her times" (238). Here, he forwards the psychological interpretation of the film; Ofelia retreats into a fantasy world to make her surroundings less scary so that she may be able to make decisions and survive the harshest realities in her position. He also explains how after Ofelia loses her mother, her only anchor to what she sees as the real world, her imagination proceeds to go wild to compensate for everything in her reality beginning to crumble. Once the guerillas begin their attack on the mill, for instance, Ofelia completely withdraws into her fantasy world and persistently focuses on the task given to her by the faun rather than the dangers around her. Not only is she unduly engaged in her imagination during the maelstrom of attacks, but for the first time in the film we see her fantasy world and the real-world crossover when Vidal sees her speaking to nothing but the air when she is speaking to the Faun in her mind. This shows the possibility that Ofelia's fantasy world is entirely her imagination. Another interpretation, is that the two worlds are both different and the same. Children have been known to experience and see things from a starkly different perspective when compared to the adults around them. Overstreet puts forth a religious interpretation of the film, describing del Toro's take on child-like sight and arguing that del Toro considers faith from the eyes of a child facing hardships beyond her years. In his words, he suggests the film is, "about the power of childlike faith to guide us through a darkening world" (5). Overstreet counters the dominant interpretation of Ofelia dealing with the

war and oppression around her by escaping into her imagination, with the contention that she simply delves into her faith with a sense of flair. It could very well be that the Faun and fairies are there to guide her much as an angel or god would. This theory has potential, especially with the Faun claiming to be all knowing and guiding Ofelia in strange and challenging ways. However, there is very little other than Faun and the fairies to suggest that the mythologized world is celestial or overtly Christian. Ultimately the fact that Ofelia has full faith in the Faun and the fairies, despite anyone else being able to see them, may suggest psychological denial or the power and safety of religious faith, both of which Ofelia persists in no matter who believes her.

While personal faith is certainly important and hard to obtain under oppression, it is also hard to find one's self while being spurned at every attempt for individualism, a primary target of dictators and totalitarian regimes. Such a young girl like Ofelia trying to figure out exactly who she is as an adult, or an individual, has a fragile sense of self that could very well crumble when faced with an entire adult world willing to force their individual ideological vision onto others through violence. Juliet Rhode-Brown, a licensed psychologist in Santa Barbara, brings her profession to bear on *Pan's Labyrinth* in reviewing the film, rather than analyzing it like the previous literary and film scholars. Rhode-Brown proposes, "*Pan's Labyrinth* can be represented as the wounded psyche's journey towards individualism" (167). By this, she is referring to Ofelia and how she is struggling to find who she is and where she belongs in a world that has been seemingly torn to shambles. This interpretation differs from the other authors, and is rather important, because reveals a new aspect of the impact totalitarian systems have on childhood psychological development. I find myself agreeing with the difficulties of finding an individual identity during such a harsh and cruel time. I do not think the entire movie is meant to represent this one idea of suppressed individualism, as there are too many symbols pointing to the feminine struggle, but it is an important perspective.

Ultimately, Del Toro's representation of the power of traditionally feminine characteristics when challenged by the undermining force of a hyper-masculine dictatorship is one that earns all the praise that it has received. The story of Ofelia and Mercedes is not only one of magic but also of liberation: from young Ofelia, who defiantly insists that her father is not Vidal, to Mercedes, whose love for her brother and country drove her to dig deep and find the courage to face the dangers of a masculine dominant leadership. One of the hardest and most

dangerous moments for these characters within the film is when they are directly faced with Vidal's forceful and cruel oppression. Although Ofelia's rebellion leads to her death, ultimately, she is resurrected and praised for her sacrifice after she refused to hurt an innocent. In contrast, Vidal is reviled for having no problem hurting whomever he saw fit. When Mercedes stands up to Vidal's insults that she was "just a woman," she puts it simply, "That's what you always thought. That's why I was always able to get away with it. I was invisible to you" (del Toro). Even with this warning to Vidal's face, he is so arrogant and sure that his masculinity trumped her femininity that she, once again, is able to get one over on him. She is not searched like the other male prisoners and so retains her paring knife, which she uses to cut her ties and then stab Vidal twice and slash his face after declaring "You won't be the first pig I've gutted." Not only is she able to escape and defeat Vidal, but she also is able to mock her obsessed, controlling abuser. She wins both her personal battle against oppression and also the larger battle as she and the remaining guerillas kill Vidal and his men. Everything that the fascist dictatorship tried to suppress had bent until it snapped, lashing out and defeating the belief that they were weaker and less. Del Toro's overall goal is to represent how the oppressed can overcome the oppressor through their feminine and traditionally devalued characteristics, in a historically accurate manner that is overlaid with fantasy.

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**A Continuance of Chaos:
The Ongoing Criticism of Enlightenment Reason in American Gothic**

Aaron Goode

Let others draw from smiling skies their theme,
And tell of climes that boast unfading light,
I draw a darker scene, replete with gloom,
I sing the horrors of the House of Night

Philip Freneau

The gothic has been a problematic genre since its inception in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Not confined to any sort of social or literary movement, the Gothic has found its home under the collective bed of society, where it draws from many and varied sources to create an outlet for the anxious or disillusioned to give voice to their fears and criticisms. As Jerrold Hogle points out in the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, “the conflicted positions of central Gothic characters can reveal them as haunted by a second ‘unconscious’ of deep-seated social and historical dilemmas, often of many types at once” (3). The gothic was born of, and maintains, a desire to polemicize accepted social ideas and institutions.

This kind of social tension and awareness is a common thread that runs through all Gothic literature, forming one of a few commonalities in a genre that resists traditional means of demarcation by continuing to evolve with the societies that produce it. One such society that has produced particularly poignant works of Gothic fiction is American society. Eric Savoy notes in “The Rise of American Gothic,” that in America the role of the Gothic:

has been entirely paradoxical: an optimistic country founded upon the Enlightenment principles of liberty and “the pursuit of happiness,” a country that supposedly repudiated the burden of history and its irrational claims, has produced a strain of literature that is haunted by an insistent, undead past and fascination by the strange beauty of sorrow.

(167)

Accepting that America adopted and, in many ways, typifies the natural culmination of Enlightenment philosophy, and given that Gothic literature has, as Leslie Fiedler claims, always been ““a pathological symptom rather than a proper literary movement”” (qtd. in Savoy 168), it becomes evident that Enlightenment ideology is integral to American culture. As a result, the

American Gothic cannot help but act as a form of continual critique of Enlightenment philosophy. Despite this, however, critical work on the American Gothic as it relates to the Enlightenment has seen a decline over the last few decades. This has occurred because literary critics, on one hand, disagree about the influence of the Enlightenment on the founding of the United States and, on the other hand, have begun to focus on, what they deem, more contemporary and pressing issues such as race and gender. In response to these trends in the criticism, I argue that the Enlightenment was the primary catalyst for the birth of America, thus informing all aspects of American society following the Revolutionary War, including the formation of the American Gothic. In demonstrating this thesis, I examine three influential works of American Gothic fiction—Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland; or, the Transformation* (1798), Edgar Allan Poe's “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843), and H.P. Lovecraft's “The Dreams in the Witch-House” (1933)—to establish the ongoing criticism of the Enlightenment enacted by Gothic writers. Finally, I move to an analysis of modern Gothic criticism, particularly in terms of why contemporary critics largely neglect the Enlightenment when discussing the American Gothic.¹

The Enlightenment and the Birth of America

The true system of the world has been recognized, developed, and perfected... In short, from the earth to Saturn, from the history of the heavens to that of insects, natural philosophy has been revolutionized; and nearly all other fields of knowledge have assumed new forms.

Jean le Rond D'Alembert

When considering the founding of the United States of America, one is hard-pressed to escape the pervasive influence of the Enlightenment. Thomas Jefferson once said, “Enlighten the people, generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like spirits at the dawn of day.” This kind of thinking informed not only the War for Independence but the foundation of the American society that followed it. While most would find the importance of the Enlightenment to the creation of America to be axiomatic, there are dissenting voices that must be addressed before attending to the main body of this paper.

The primary issue that critics of the American Enlightenment have posited as evidence of the absence of Enlightenment ideals in at least the early Republic is the acceptance and

¹ For the purposes of this paper, the term Gothic refers to American Gothic unless otherwise noted.

perpetuation of the practice of slavery (Caron and Wulf 1075). Truly, this does fly in the face of what we would consider an enlightened society; no one can argue that. What I believe these critics have done, however, is to employ a presentist definition of “Enlightenment,” as opposed to the definition that the founding fathers would have claimed. To understand how the birth of America can be considered Enlightened despite the existence of slavery, we must first examine the primary *philosophes* that provided the precedents for the new system of thought.

Of these thinkers, John Locke is arguably the most influential, and the most misunderstood. Those who would say that America never really embraced the Enlightenment point out Locke's ideas about the equality of mankind and personal freedom. George Thomas stresses this aspect of Lockean philosophy in his article “John Locke's America.” He employs these ideas in defense of the efforts of social activists who are now campaigning for increased personal freedom in America (Thomas 1). While personal freedom and equality are certainly key tenets of Locke's philosophy, this understanding excludes other key aspects of Locke's work. In “John Locke and the Myth of Race in America,” Theresa Richardson points out:

Locke viewed American Indian culture as disorderly and uncivilized. Locke argues that given the correspondence between the state of nature and disorder the true “liberty of man in society” can only be established by subordination to a higher authority, obtained when individuals voluntarily gave up the “state of nature” and put “themselves into society” (*Two Treatises of Government, The Second Treatise* 8). Consensually giving up one's natural freedom becomes the true freedom of living under a social contract, the building block of a civil society. In a Lockean view, the superiority of the English as a civil people was a sound defense for the efficacy of English imperialism and colonialism. (103)

If we grant that African culture would likely have been even less relatable to Locke than American Indian culture, the provision was already made within Enlightenment philosophy to allow for slavery as a means of “civilizing” Africans. This would have been a way to allow them entrance into a kind of social contract, thereby satisfying the requirements of Locke's Enlightenment.

Another claim made by those who would argue that the European Enlightenment did not influence America, is that the United States was the progenitor of its own philosophical revolution independent of any influence from Europe. This is another issue of presentism,

however, and one that stems not so much from historical grounds as it does cultural reactionism. Nathalie Caron and Naomi Wulf provide a rough timeline of the development of this ideology in their article “American Enlightenments: Continuity and Renewal.” It was during the 1960s, during the Cold War, that Daniel Boorstin renounced “the myth of the American Enlightenment” in favor of a markedly nationalistic view of history that placed the entire emphasis on precedents set by Puritan ideas and legislation rather than European thought (Caron and Wulf 1077). This speaks to a desire to promote American Exceptionalism more than a desire to accurately represent history. In fact, one need look no further than the Declaration of Independence to find stark evidence of the influence of the European Enlightenment on early America. Thomas Jefferson openly borrowed from Locke's *Second Treatise Concerning Civil Government* for the unalienable rights that precede the body of the Declaration. Ernst Cassirer observes in *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* that:

the American declarations themselves are under the prevailing influence of the new spirit of natural law. They are not the roots from which arose the demand for human and civil rights. They are rather but a single branch, a development of the general ideas of natural law determined by particular motives and fostered by historical circumstances. (249)

So, while there may still be a debate as to the degree of influence, it is reasonable to accept that the Enlightenment which began in Europe and privileged individual reason, autonomy, and classical education was indeed a key factor in the creation of the United States and continued to inform the social conventions of the fledgling country for many decades, even up to the modern day.

American Gothic Versus The Enlightenment

... a literature of darkness and the grotesque in a land of light and affirmation.

Leslie Fiedler

Now, operating with the understanding that the Enlightenment provided the philosophical framework for the founding of the United States, I will begin a discussion of the key American Gothic works that illustrate this relation to the Enlightenment, starting with Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland; or, the Transformation* (1798). Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) was born into a turbulent period of American history. At the time of his birth, America did not exist—though the seeds that would eventually grow into the new nation already had been planted.

Growing up in a time defined by tension and conflict, Brown was exposed to the dynamic struggle between the traditional social order of England and the radical new ideas being promoted by his enlightened countrymen. John Matteson writes, “The Americans who grew up alongside Charles Brockden Brown were a generation whose ideas were shaped by the Revolution and solidified during the making of the Constitution” (iii). Brown was in a singular position, to be among the first generation to grow up in the newly minted United States. This position, however, was not without its own hardships. This period is perhaps best defined by its dichotomies: the new country was a beacon of liberty although slavery was vital to its economy; it was highly rational and scientific although most members of society held to a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture; it was a nation that had thrown off European political control while embracing European philosophical movements. An outsider looking in at the infantile country observed that it was “a country in flux; that which is true today as regards its population, its establishments, its prices, its commerce will not be true six months from now” (Wood qtd in Matteson vii). Understandably, the seeming contradictions and uncertainties surrounding the United States required a new lens through which to deduce the consequences of such upheaval. To this end, Charles Brockden Brown created what is widely accepted as the first American Gothic work, *Wieland; or, The Transformation*.

In *Wieland*, Brown paints an overtly pessimistic portrait of what he sees as the future of the United States, as extrapolated from his perception of the natural progression of Enlightenment philosophy. The Wielands of the story, Theodore and Clara, embody in vivid detail the ideals of the Enlightenment. The Wielands effectively sequester themselves from the discomfort and conflict of the rest of society, which was in the throes of the French and Indian War, and spend their days in leisurely intellectual pursuits (Lloyd-Smith 40). In their idyllic existence, Brown parodied the United States’ own self-concept, which, according to Jean Baudrillard, was “a utopia which has behaved from the beginning as though it were already achieved” (Qtd in Lloyd-Smith 38). Brown entertained great trepidations concerning the grand experiment of America, and he saw the privilege afforded to Enlightenment reason as part of the danger—not the solution that many others held it to be.

In many ways, Theodore Wieland can be understood as a caricature of the “Enlightened” man. With his wife, sister, and close friend he spends his time in constant study, continually seeking to improve his own understanding and that of his company. In true Enlightenment

fashion, he does this with no accountability to any authority, trusting to his own abilities and reason to discern truth. Clara Wieland writes, “Our education had been modeled by no religious standard. We were left to the guidance of our own understanding, and the casual impressions which society might make upon us” (Brown 19). Wieland's private pursuit of truth was in keeping with Brown's Godwinian leanings, illustrating how Brown shared at least a small portion of his contemporaries' ideas about authority and self-education (Matteson v). This is important to note, because it implies that Brown was not simply criticizing a viewpoint that opposed his own. Rather, he was voicing concerns he held about a movement of which he could be called a member. Perhaps as a form of escapism, Theodore Wieland was written to enjoy the lifestyle that Brown himself had longed for in his adolescence. Coerced by his family into studying law, Brown quickly grew disillusioned with the profession and yearned for the higher pursuits of science and literature (Matteson v). While Brown revered these pursuits as the natural extensions of an Enlightenment mind, he also held some reservations due to their contingency upon one's own reason. In his novel, *Wieland*, Brown illustrates profoundly that “it is the flimsiness of reason, not the titanic power of its opposite that is the true cause of alarm” (Matteson xi).

This flimsiness of reason is strikingly and tragically demonstrated in *Wieland* the novel, as well as in Wieland the titular character. Over the course of the novel, Brown's paragon of Enlightenment reason and education is reduced to a murderous fugitive, widowed by his own hand and eventually doomed to commit suicide as penance for his crimes. But how may one so steeped in classical literature and sheltered from the conflicts of the wider world be brought so low? The obvious answer lies in the subversion of his reason by the infamous Carwin, Brown's unique antagonist gifted with the power of ventriloquism. However, in spite of Carwin's scheming and manipulation, one could argue that the true antagonist of the tale is Theodore Wieland, or, perhaps even more so, Wieland's Enlightened faith in his own reason and sensibilities. Carwin employs his gift to his own benefit without regard for those who may have the misfortune of falling in his path. Of itself, this is in keeping with the meritocratic values of the Enlightenment, making Carwin a resolute survivor almost to be applauded rather than reviled (Matteson x). Carwin's selfish machinations concerning Clara Wieland lead him to destroy her relationship with Theodore's friend, Henry Pleyel, for whom she has long entertained romantic feelings (Brown 96). Carwin takes advantage of Pleyel's senses and reason to deliberately mislead him, setting the precedent for his subversion of Theodore Wieland's reason. Pleyel, like

Theodore, trusts only to his own senses and reason, and cannot conceive of himself having been duped.

Wieland, however, is manipulated to far greater consequences. As Clara observes, “If the sense be depraved, it is impossible to calculate the evils that may flow from the consequent deductions of the understanding” (Brown 31). It is through Theodore that Brown makes his most profound indictment of the Enlightenment; for although Carwin may be the puppeteer in the dreadful show, it is Theodore who willingly allows himself to be manipulated, discounting the counsel of others and adhering to his own quest for truth no matter the cost. In chapter 19, for instance, Wieland is given voice to explain the process by which he came to murder his wife and children, and it is in this testimony that we find the shortcomings of Enlightenment reason portrayed in petrifying clarity: “My days have been spent in searching for the revelation of that will; but my days have been mournful because my search failed” (Brown 152). Wieland's desperation to reach a higher level of reason and understanding precludes the possibility of happiness and contentment in this life, and it is this desperation that Carwin exploits to disastrous ends. Wieland's stolid determination to attain a new level of understanding is matched only by his determination to do so on a completely individual basis. Theodore answers to no authority in his self-education, and he works largely independent of his family and friends. Certainly, this is an extension of the meritocracy inherent to the Enlightenment (Bodrogean 64). If Wieland did not discover truth for himself, how could he know it to be fully truth? We see his exultation in his belief that he finally received the answer he had been so fervently longing for when he describes (or fails to describe) the adynatonic experience of hearing the voice that gives him the divine mandate to kill his family. He says, “As it spoke, the accents thrilled to my heart” (Brown 155). Even later, as he looks down at the corpse of his wife, he is so ecstatic with his accomplishment that he erupts in laughter and applauds himself (Brown 160).

The singularity of the chain of events that lead to Theodore Wieland's descent into madness and eventual suicide may lead us to believe that this must be a unique case among American Gothic tales. Surely, reason may not be so twisted or so fragile as to allow more than one to commit such horrific acts in its name? Not only does this happen more than once, the subversion or destruction of reason is in fact a common theme of American Gothic, as the genre provides an ongoing criticism of the Enlightenment. Leaving 1798 for 1843, we find that Edgar Allan Poe provides us with another troubling example of a man so deluded by his own reason

that he commits a terrible crime with not remorse but exultation.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) boasts a place of the highest esteem in American Literature and beyond, exerting influence over authors of dark and weird tales worldwide. Of Poe, H.P. Lovecraft writes:

In the eighteen-thirties occurred a literary dawn directly affecting not only the history of the weird tale, but that of short fiction as a whole; and indirectly moulding the trends and fortunes of a great European aesthetic school. It is our good fortune as Americans to be able to claim that dawn as our own, for it came in the person of our illustrious and unfortunate fellow-countryman Edgar Allan Poe. (“Supernatural” 1065)

This is high praise coming from the man who arguably occupies the same position in the 20th century that Poe occupied in the 19th. Edgar Allan Poe is a household name for most Americans since he “is turned into film, television and comics, albums even, and his influence continues to shape much of the American Gothic. He is familiar before we actually read him” (Jones 41). Poe is not included in this story for his marketability, though—he is included for the critical nature of his work in codifying ideas of American Gothic. The work that began with Brown was perpetuated and improved by subsequent authors, of which Poe is an invaluable example (Lloyd-Smith 15). Poe is also included because of where he falls on the timeline of American Gothic. “The Tell-Tale Heart,” was published in 1843, at a time when the Enlightenment had waned from public favor and was being replaced by the Transcendental and Realist movements (Shook). In spite of this, Poe's story demonstrates that the American Gothic can be characterized by an ongoing criticism of Enlightenment dependence on reason, even after the Enlightenment itself has fallen from prominence.

In Poe's unnamed narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart,” we see exercised the same privilege of reason over basic human rights that motivated Theodore Wieland's actions. The narrator also demonstrates the same selfish drives that informed Carwin's actions. Poe differs from Brown in that he frames the influences that drive his narrator to murder as coming from within himself, rather than from an external force. Poe wrote of himself, “my terror is not of Germany, but of the soul” (Qtd. in Lloyd-Smith 32). In actuality, Poe's narrator serves to play the roles of both Wieland and Carwin. In that way, the narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart” represents an amalgamation of Wieland and Carwin—the hyperactive reason of Wieland fueled by the egocentric mentality of Carwin.

We know that the narrator places great emphasis on his reason from the outset of the story. Multiple times throughout the tale, he draws attention to “the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded – with what caution – with what foresight – with what dissimulation I went to work!” (Poe 1). This is almost an echo of Theodore Wieland’s self-description after he had come to terms with murdering his wife. He states, “I thank my God that this degeneracy was transient, that he designed once more to raise me aloft. I thought upon what I had done as a sacrifice to duty, and *was calm*” (Brown 160). Both characters exhibit the sociopathic detachment that one might expect of highly rational individuals who dedicate themselves to their own improvement at any expense. The dedication to self-improvement is an interesting comparison to draw between “The Tell-Tale Heart” narrator and Theodore Wieland. We see exemplified in these two men the kind of narcissism that both Poe and Brown saw as inherently problematic within the American ideal. Each man seeks to improve his situation—Wieland by deeper understanding, Poe’s narrator by ridding himself of an old man’s bothersome eye. This narcissism is reflected when Theodore Wieland addresses his captors: “You say that I am guilty. Impious and rash! thus to usurp the prerogatives of your Maker! to set up your bounded views and halting reason, as the measure of truth!” (Brown 164). Wieland precludes the possibility that his jailers could possibly have a more accurate understanding of the situation than he does. The narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart” voices a similar sentiment of perceived persecution during his interview with the policemen who speak to him following the murder of the old man:

Almighty God! – no, no! They heard! – they suspected! – they knew! – they were making a mockery of my horror!— this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! (Poe 3)

Both men, who previously embodied intellectual superiority, are reduced by their own reason to the state of madmen, imprisoned and doomed to the gallows.

Stemming directly from the Enlightenment idea that society is on a path toward utopia, both authors suggest a much more dismal outlook. Through their characters, Poe and Brown introduce an “anti-utopian thematic of perversity,” effectively undermining the fantasy of an American utopia in which rational individuals are free to exercise their agency toward whichever end they deem to be most in their interest (Lloyd-Smith 48). Another term for this is “The

American Dream,” which is a standing monument to Enlightenment philosophy. Gothic literature has found its place in the canon by taking the collective dreams of a society and turning them into nightmares. For American society, this means taking the foundational principles of the Enlightenment and turning them on their head—particularly the emphasis on individual reason and self-betterment. The preceding authors have sparked and defined the American Gothic movement, respectively, and their styles and thematic elements inform the generations of writers that follow them. Alan Lloyd-Smith suggests, “Brown and Poe had already forged an American Gothic—or rather Gothics since their directions were quite different—that shows how the culturally specific anxieties and tensions of the new country could determine alternative settings and plots to renew the genre” (26). One such writer who was profoundly influenced by Brown and Poe was Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) wrote largely for pulp fiction magazines during the 1920s and 30s. A devoted student and critic of Gothic fiction, Lovecraft was keenly aware of the conventions of the genre and held himself to the standard that he perceived to be set by authors such as Brown and Poe. While this self-imposed discipleship led Lovecraft to produce what he saw as highly derivative or mimetic works early in his career, critics agree that his later work possessed a language and style uniquely his. One such story is “Dreams in the Witch House,” a tale first published in 1933 that represents the culmination of the literary critique of the Enlightenment begun by Brown and refined by Poe. “Dreams in the Witch House” is the unfortunate narrative of Walter Gilman, a student of folk studies and mathematics at Miskatonic University in Arkham, Massachusetts. Gilman is, like Theodore Wieland and the narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart,” an extremely rational thinker, given to excesses of research at the expense of his own well being (“Dreams” 859). In multiple instances throughout the text, Gilman's friends and colleagues attribute his deteriorating condition to negligence in the name of study (866). Gilman follows the example of Theodore Wieland and Poe’s narrator, as each of these men denied their physical needs for sleep and sustenance while attempting to realize their goals. Gilman also, like the previous characters, seeks to better himself and his situation through his own means, by his own independent study. His forays into new areas and forms of mathematics impressed his classmates and professor, as Lovecraft writes, “Gilman's handling of this theme filled everyone with admiration, even though some of his hypothetical illustrations caused an increase in the always plentiful gossip about his nervous and solitary eccentricity” (864). The

gossip concerning Gilman's anxious condition reinforces the observation that his insatiable quest for enlightenment is fundamentally damaging to himself and his relationships with others.

Until this point, the emphasis has been on the subversion of reason or the twisting of reason to suit some sort of malignant scheme. Theodore Wieland leaves himself vulnerable to the sinister machinations of Carwin, and Poe's narrator uses his heightened rationality to plan and execute a murder. Lovecraft's story represents not only the culmination, but also the progression of the pattern of criticism the American Gothic has maintained concerning the Enlightenment since its inception. One hundred and thirty-five years after the invention of the American Gothic during the height of the Enlightenment, the Gothic has come to a point where rationality itself is demonized. Even as Walter Gilman struggles against evil in his quest to gain more knowledge and a complete understanding of the universe, his new knowledge leads not only to his own death, but the damnation of his soul and the death of an infant (883). Essentially, Walter Gilman's mad obsession with deeper knowledge has led to the same result that has plagued mankind since the dawn of time—a destruction of innocence.

This is the true fear of Enlightenment reason that American Gothic authors seek to articulate. For the infantile United States to so boldly seek new knowledge and new ways of viewing the world, the question must be asked: what will they find? Brown would say they would become gullible, falling prey to whatever suitable truth was offered. Poe would argue that they would become cold, detached from their humanity by a hyper-rationality that disallows such weak attachments to hinder their pursuit of something better. Finally, Lovecraft would posit that blind pursuit of higher reason will result in a loss of innocence that can never be regained. On a foundational level, the American Gothic presents a distinct and powerful critique of the Enlightenment ideals of reason and the individual's self-education in pursuit of ever-increasing knowledge and understanding.

Contemporary Negligence of the Enlightenment

The Gothic has lasted as it has because its symbolic mechanisms, particularly its haunting and frightening specters, have permitted us to cast many anomalies in our modern conditions, even as these change, over onto antiquated or at least haunted spaces and highly anomalous creatures. This way our contradictions can be confronted by, yet removed from us into, the seemingly unreal, the alien, the ancient, and the grotesque.

Jerrold E. Hogle

Now, presented with evidence of the Enlightenment's vital role in the foundation of the United States, as well as evidence of the perpetual criticism of the Enlightenment to be found throughout Gothic texts, one may begin to wonder how scholarship on the American Gothic can neglect to mention the Enlightenment. I believe the answer lies partially in the uncertainty about the role of the Enlightenment in America's creation, but even more so in a desire to project contemporary fears and issues onto works of Gothic fiction.

Gothic literature has always been seen primarily as a source of casual *jouissance* for a non-academic audience. The proliferation of pulp-fiction magazines during Lovecraft's lifetime is a testament to this, as is the preeminence of Poe in various forms of popular culture. Lovecraft observes of Poe, "The public for whom Poe wrote, though grossly unappreciative of his art, was by no means unaccustomed to the horrors with which he dealt" ("Supernatural" 1069). Essentially, Poe, like most Gothic writers, was able to articulate the issues and anxieties of his countrymen even if they were not immediately aware of it. Yet, despite these consistent discrepancies between writer and reader, the American Gothic has maintained its critical edge. It remains "in essence a reactionary form, like the detective novel, one that explores chaos and wrongdoing in a movement toward the ultimate restitution of order and convention" (Lloyd-Smith 5). It is this reactionary nature of American Gothic that I believe has lent itself to the negligence of Enlightenment ideals in contemporary criticism of the Gothic. Similar to the presentism committed in applying modern definitions of "enlightenment" to the Enlightenment of the 1700s, modern critics often seek to attribute meaning to aspects of Gothic works that may not take into account the historical context or the impact of Enlightenment philosophy on the author or the text. This can limit the understanding and implications of a work by perpetuating an overly reductionistic reading and disallowing connections to be made between certain texts. For example, the prominence of issues of sexuality and race in modern society has led to an explosion of Gender and Race Studies in English discourse communities. In turn, many American Gothic critics focus solely on issues of race or sexuality in works such as *Wieland* and "The Tell-Tale Heart," isolating the works along arbitrary boundaries, even though the works remain connected through their common critique of reason and the Enlightenment.

All three works are subject to this type of criticism in contemporary scholarship. In the case of *Wieland*, some critics have posited that the primary issue at play in the work is Clara's awakening sexuality. For example, Lloyd-Smith contends, "Wieland's brutal destruction of his

wife and children, and his projected murder of Clara, suggest clearly enough a pattern of repressed incestuous desire, emerging explosively at the point when Clara moves toward independence and sexual initiation” (42). Regardless of how much credence I give this reading, Lloyd-Smith has effectively reduced *Wieland* to what he perceives to be a novel of Freudian undercurrents and tension. This reading, which focuses on the Id rather than the Superego that Theodore spent most of his time cultivating, disconnects Brown’s text from Poe’s work. Regarding Poe, his work is typically, and understandably, privileged in discussions of race. Given the proximity of his writing to the Civil War, it is only natural that race should be examined in Poe’s work. Eric Savoy notes, in “Rise of the American Gothic,” that “several of his [Poe’s] most celebrated texts are rightly understood now as profound meditations upon the cultural significance of ‘blackness’ in the white American mind” (182). There is much validity to this, but I would argue that reducing blackness in Poe’s work to a question of race disconnects Poe from Brown in an unjustifiable way. By the same token, categorizing Lovecraft’s stories by his renowned xenophobia only serves to increase the stigma surrounding his work and further alienate it from modern writers of Gothic and weird tales. It is an accepted opinion that much of Lovecraft’s work is racially charged, but disregarding other facets of his writing to favor the racial aspect serves only to increase the stigma surrounding his work and further distance him from modern Gothic authors because the common thread running through both, the criticism of the Enlightenment, is discounted.

The American Gothic, like other Gothic forms, is a mechanism of social critique and inquiry. In light of that, it is natural to interpret the issues present in older Gothic works in terms of issues facing our society today. After all, have these issues not always been present? Of course they have, but I would argue that ideals of the Enlightenment have also always been present. Given how integral the Enlightenment was to the birth of the United States, and thereby the American Gothic, divorcing the two unnecessarily and unjustifiably limits our understanding of the scope and connectedness of American Gothic. Roger Salomon writes in *Mazes of the Serpent* concerning Gothic fiction, “It is relentless and categorical, offers only narrow perspectives, and can be (and too often is) ignored, easily vulgarized, and explained away. All kinds of distortion and denial, of course, are possible, if we are so disposed” (149). The importance of the Enlightenment to the American Gothic must not be ignored or explained away, nor should it be distorted or denied in favor of contemporary topics of criticism.

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The Shadow Over Lovecraft: Racism and Xenophobia in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth”

Jimmy Temples

The life of Howard Phillips Lovecraft was one that was undoubtedly rife with unnatural horror. The monstrosities he created are pure representations of many of the ideas that he held close. Perhaps the most important philosophy to crawl from the “Recluse of Providence” was his idea of cosmic indifference and the endless wonders and horrible revelations the universe might offer. Unfortunately, his weird tales also illustrate the savage racism and xenophobia that plagued his life and were all too common in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. An explanation for the hate of the Other that saturated Lovecraft’s life is not an easy one, but one that must be attempted. Despite the amount of research that has been conducted on Lovecraft and his tales, little has been directed toward the influence that his life had on his work (Mayer 117-32). One way to explore this influence is through a psychoanalytic interpretation of his short story “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” (1936) since this text, in particular, exhibits strong indicators of biographical influence. Lovecraft completely pushes away the notion of the implied author and consequently, his personal thoughts and feelings bleed through to the public eye. This is problematic because Lovecraft has had a prodigious influence on pop culture and modern horror literature, without acknowledgement or awareness of his racism and xenophobia. In conducting a psychoanalytic interpretation of this story, I will analyze both the life of the author and the text, in order to explicate the ways in which Lovecraft’s life influences his art.

H.P. Lovecraft was born in the year 1890 to Winfield Scott Lovecraft and Sarah Susan Lovecraft in Providence, Rhode Island (Cannon xiii). Lovecraft spent the majority of his life in the town of Providence, leaving rarely. This behavior earned him the title the “Recluse of Providence.” His reclusion most likely influenced his racism, due to his lack of exposure to others, but the causation is the key to understanding it. Lovecraft was a brilliant child, mostly self-taught until his secondary education, during which Lovecraft suffered from what he called a nervous breakdown, presumably from his inability to accomplish higher mathematics and thus not being able to pursue his chosen career path in astronomy (Woodward, Frank). This very well may have led to an identity crisis in Lovecraft. In his letters, Lovecraft also places much of the blame for his isolation on his mother as she became extremely overbearing after the death of Lovecraft’s father who, tragically, perished in the depths of a mental institution of tertiary

syphilis. Her overbearingness could possibly be attributed to Winfield's contraction of the STI in addition to his death. His father's death surely had a traumatic effect on Lovecraft as a child. After his father's death, Lovecraft, led by his mother, went to live with his grandfather Whipple van Buren Phillips (Cannon xiii). Lovecraft's mother became increasingly more extreme in her supervision and protection of him even going so far as demanding strangers bow to them as they walked down the street so that they could not grab at him (Woodward). Looking back "Lovecraft would later relate that, raised by a sensitive and overprotective mother, he grew up in relative isolation, believing he was unlike other people" (H.P. Lovecraft Collection, 2). While Lovecraft's mother initially created and reinforced his isolation, he later preferred it to face-to-face interaction. In fact, due to his reclusiveness, Lovecraft became a prodigious letter writer, writing over thirty thousand letters in his lifetime. Though her intention was to protect Lovecraft, her intervention may have caused irrevocable harm to his psyche. His fear of others stemmed from his isolation because he was taught that other people could harm him, though the fear was mostly irrational.

Lovecraft's isolation led to what Sigmund and Anna Freud would call projection and sublimation. Projection is "the act of attributing to another person, animal, or object the qualities, feelings, or intentions that originate in oneself," while sublimation is "the process whereby energy originally directed toward sexual or aggressive goals is redirected toward new aims" (Frager and Fadiman 28-33). Both sublimation and projection are classified as ego defense mechanisms. Projection deflects poor feelings that one may have about him/herself onto a "safe" target to protect the ego, while sublimation reroutes them into something that is productive, such as literature in Lovecraft's case. Due to his isolation, Lovecraft developed a hate that teetered on loathing for immigrants and people of color. This hate can be seen in many of his works including "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" and a poem entitled "On the Creation of Niggers." This type of behavior is not inherent but rather is learned, at least from a psychologist's viewpoint. Lovecraft's reclusiveness fostered these feelings because his mother made him feel that he was different from others, even superior to them. This difference led to racism, xenophobia, and Lovecraft's view of himself as an outsider. In addition to isolation, it must be said that the period in which Lovecraft lived was a tumultuous time for race relations and immigrants seeking refuge in America in the wake of WWI. The U.S. Department of Citizenship and Immigration reports, "between 1900 and 1920 the nation admitted 14.5 million immigrants"

(Mass Migration and WWI). Lovecraft was drawn to a more conservative viewpoint, even going so far as to publish his own magazine called *The Conservative* to voice his concerns about these incoming “others.” Lovecraft perceived immigrants displaced by the war as a threat, due to his isolationist ideology developed from his upbringing.

Concerning his early twentieth-century conservative views, Lovecraft postulated that “the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is the fear of the unknown” (Lovecraft, “Supernatural”). Lovecraft realized that he was afraid of the other, projecting his existential fear of the unknown onto immigrants, thus illustrating his xenophobia. In order to cope with the feeling of self-hatred that he obviously detested, he projected onto immigrants and racial others a loathing that in his mind had solid foundations. Lovecraft’s isolation and alienation are the basis for many of his stories, and it can be seen prominently in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth.”

When he was asked what his favorite animal was, Lovecraft explains that it is the cat, but he goes on to say that “I have no active dislike for dogs, any more than I have for monkeys, human beings, negroes, cows, sheep, or pterodactyls” (Mayer 117). This list is troubling to say the least, but it provides evidence of Lovecraft’s casual racism. This is the sort of theme that “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” conjures for readers in the twenty-first century. “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” was one of the few tales that were published before Lovecraft’s death in 1937. It was also one of the key elements of the Cthulhu mythos, the stories from Lovecraft and those in his circle that take place in a single collective universe centered around Lovecraft’s “Great Old Ones,” primordial beings who influence the universe in an unintelligible number of ways. For example, Azathoth, a deity Lovecraft conjures who is also known as The Idiot Chaos, would destroy the infinites or the universe by simply waking up. “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” is set in the fictional New England town of Innsmouth. The tale revolves around the mystery of the inhabitants of the town who have been corrupted by the “Deep Ones,” an ancient race of sea-dwelling, fish-like humanoids who have the ability to interbreed with humans and are the servants of Dagon, who is one of their figureheads. The narrator of the weird tale is horrified by this revelation and flees Innsmouth. Soon after, however, he learns of his own monstrous ancestry connecting him to Obed Marsh, who was responsible for initially calling the “Deep Ones” to Innsmouth, thus corrupting the town and its inhabitants (Lovecraft 345-98).

This horrifying tale paints a clear picture of Lovecraft's xenophobic and racist tendencies, specifically his need to separate his white Anglo-Saxon ancestry from others that he deemed inferior. The first major instance of this is the way that Lovecraft describes "the Innsmouth look" (358). It should be noted that the corrupted Innsmouth natives and "Deep Ones" are the analogs to the immigrants and people of color that Lovecraft detested. He describes the Innsmouth natives as follows: "some of 'em have queer narrow heads with flat noses, and bulgy stary eyes that never seem to shut, and their skin ain't quite right, rough and scabby, and the sides of their necks are all shriveled or creased up" (348-9). By giving the Innsmouthians a repulsive description, Lovecraft projects some of his own insecurities onto them. In addition to the racist overtones of this description, Lovecraft remembered vividly how his mother described him in the same sort of negative manner as he describes the Innsmouthians (Woodward). She must have said it enough that it left a lasting impression on him, to the point that it resurfaces in the text as he stagnates in his neuroses. Her comments about his physical appearance no doubt fed into his isolation, which caused him psychological damage. When combined with his racism, the description of the Innsmouth natives further cements his identity as an outsider.

Lovecraft appears as an outsider in "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" by placing the narrator into a situation where he is the Other, keeping in mind the bleeding between life and fiction that Lovecraft creates. Upon arriving in Innsmouth the narrator finds that most people have "the Innsmouth look," marking himself out in stark contrast to the natives of Innsmouth (358). Lovecraft, through projection and sublimation, is placing onto the Innsmouthians (the other, the unknown) feelings about himself that he finds repulsive. Lovecraft was looking for a way to maintain the distinguishing factors about himself that his mother instilled in him as a child, of being greater and different from others. While growing up it could be seen that Lovecraft may have been losing grip over the "power" that he had been given, because of the death of his mother in 1921 (Cannon xiii). In order to keep his "power", Lovecraft resorted to racist ideologies and thus gave in to the fear of the unknown that he has made exceedingly famous. Lovecraft's loss of identity is an obstacle that many other xenophobes would likely have had trouble overcoming, just as Lovecraft could not. The aforementioned corruption of Innsmouth by the "Deep Ones" is the sublimated literary equivalent of Lovecraft's existential crisis and the bridge that his racism walked across into his work. In *The Age of Lovecraft*, Michel Houellebecq argues that Lovecraft's hatred of the other is akin to "the brutal hatred of a trapped

animal who is forced to share his cage with other different and frightening creatures” (qtd. Mayer 123). This is likely how Lovecraft felt about his neighbors from elsewhere just as his protagonist does in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth.” Lovecraft was afraid that his livelihood would be taken away from him with the assimilation of the other into “his” environment. This shares many qualities with twenty-first century xenophobia. Some common phrases one might hear today in relation to this include (but are not limited to): “They’re taking our jobs,” or “they bring crime, they’re rapists, and some, I assume, are good people” (NPR).

Fear of assimilation and growth is the key example of racism in Lovecraft’s weird tale. In “The Shadow Over Innsmouth,” it is very clear that the “Deep Ones” have irreparably changed the look of the town, the people, and even the economy (345-98). After their mutations, the Innsmouthians begin worshipping Dagon who rules over the rest of the “Deep Ones” in the tale. They eventually change the nature of their churches from traditional Protestant places of worship and the lodges of Freemasons to buildings devoted to The Esoteric Order of Dagon, all in adherence to the demands of the “Deep Ones” who integrate themselves into the community (357). The Innsmouth look comes about because of interbreeding between the fish-folk and the humans of Innsmouth. The result is, of course, people who appear to be not-quite-human. The economy dwindled just before the arrival of the “Deep Ones,” but after they arrive it gets slightly better (347). These changes, particularly the interbreeding, are common fears among xenophobes and racists, who attempt to blame the “other” or the new heterogeneous additions to a community as a scapegoat for socioeconomic trouble. In his tale, Lovecraft paints the “Deep Ones” in a negative light (they are quite horrifying), as invaders and monsters whose purpose is to corrupt and take. However, considering the real-world analog to the fish men, it is a foul and decrepit illustration that devalues human beings for what they are: human, regardless of skin color, national origin, or beliefs.

This xenophobia was deep-seated in Lovecraft, and it has evolutionary origins. Due to this, it is important to discuss the ancestral lineage of the main character in the “Shadow Over Innsmouth.” As mentioned previously, the protagonist of Lovecraft’s tale is a descendant of Captain Obed Marsh. Marsh, in fear that his home would perish from a dwindling economy, sought out the “Deep Ones” and made a deal with them on Devil’s Reef where they dwelt (347-8). Through this pact, he saved the town but ultimately changed its inhabitants (including himself) into fish-men/human hybrids. This represents another fear that Lovecraft most likely

had about assimilation, in that it was terrifying to think that he was descended from something less-than-human like Neanderthals or apes. This fear of Darwinian origins of man again supports his need to categorize dark skin as non-human.

Sigmund Freud believed that stories and tales were to be interpreted much like a dream would be; they concern the expression of unconscious desires just as a dream does and should be thought of as such (Bressler 149). This psychoanalytic idea shows that texts like Lovecraft's can reflect the unconscious thoughts and desires of the author. Lovecraft's xenophobia clearly bleeds into his work, a projection of the unconscious compounded by his isolation. Lovecraft made no attempt to mask these tendencies, since they can be seen in many of his works such as "The Rats in the Walls," in which he makes use of prejudicial language to describe the main character's cat (Lovecraft "The Dunwich Horror and Others" 33-52). However, in "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," it could be thought that Lovecraft was penning a pointed critique of the negative race relations in New England that he would have seen throughout his life. That was not the case, however, as evident by his publication of *The Conservative* and his comments therein in addition to his racist poem and casual racism. Lovecraft feared that society was moving away from its homogeneous (and in his mind, pure) nature due to what he described as the "noxious example of the sub-human, Russian Rabble," that being one example of his real world xenophobic tendencies (Woodward).

It is important to discuss Lovecraft's racism and xenophobia because of the implications it has on today's culture. Lovecraft has a following, and it is no longer just a cult following. Lovecraft's fans permeate many facets of pop culture, from literature and movies to music and games. Very few areas have been left untouched by the prodigious feelers of great Cthulhu and his master, Lovecraft. His racism is troubling because his readers are willing to dismiss his attitude due to his work being so captivatingly horrifying. Lovecraft was very much a product of his time, but that was only one aspect that attributed to his neuroticism. He was isolated, abandoned quite early by both his mother and father and was fascinated with a number of things such as British colonialist authors and imperialists, whom he sought to emulate (Woodward). These are some of the factors that made Lovecraft who he was, a racist with an affinity for horror and the macabre.

Ultimately most of the work for any psychoanalytical interpretation of literature falls to the author who wrote it. Their unconscious drives, desires, and experiences influence their work

whether they realize it or not. It is the duty of the interpreter to spend as much time researching the life of the author as they do interpreting the work. Only then can one have an idea of what the author was attempting to accomplish. Only then can a work of literature be accurately interpreted in a way that illustrates how an author felt about their surroundings. Ultimately we take in a massive amount of information during our lifetimes, and one's subjective knowledge is determined by the environment in which he/she dwells. Racism is a low and infirm reality among the cosmic dwellings of our universe and we as human beings must come to understand that there is no threat from one another, but that there is a clear and primordial threat that plagues us: ignorance. Should we ignore its influence, we will surely find ourselves in the depths of a new dark age.

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Margaret Cavendish: A Trailblazer of Her Time

Kathryn Brown

Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673) was a truly singular author of the English Renaissance. She has been referred to as “a blazing comet,” the Duchess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Mad Madge, “some giant cucumber,” a poet, playwright, scientist, philosopher, aristocrat, fashion icon, novelist, proto-feminist, and an obscurity for centuries. Margaret Lucas Cavendish was the first in many arenas for female writers and is considered, in contemporary scholarly consensus, a pioneer of literary invention for her era. Cavendish wrote and lived in a culture that did everything it could to silence the voices of women, but she dared to speak, write, and live louder, crafting life as an elaborate pageant over which to marvel. A woman unconcerned with the limitations of societal expectations, Cavendish dared to delve into genres and realms that were considered risky (even for men). She wrote extensive volumes on topics of natural science, history, and philosophy, but she also produced work in more traditionally literary fields such as poetry, prose fiction, and closet dramas (plays meant to be read rather than acted). The content of her writings varied dramatically, ranging from treatises on marriage and gender roles in *Sociable Letters* (1664) to an outlandish science-fiction utopia in *Blazing World* (1666). Arguably the most prolific female writer of the English Renaissance, Cavendish published fourteen separate works that appeared in twenty-two published editions during her active years from 1653-1673, and she wrote much, much more that never went into print (Fitzmaurice, *Women Writers*, 151). Cavendish was a woman who sought fame above all else and found her pen and her eccentricity to be the avenue to that goal.

It was through this search for fame that Cavendish pushed the envelope of literary culture in seventeenth-century England, cementing her legacy as one of the most prominent voices of the English Renaissance. As previously discussed, Cavendish was indisputably one of the most prolifically published female writers of the English Renaissance, but her dedication to the realm of publication gained her more contemporary critics than it did fans. Literary expressions of personal opinions, thoughts, or feelings, outside of those concerned with matters of faith or the Crown, were considered an improper, especially for women, and an overly assertive display of personal grandeur. The act of women publishing such personal expressions was harshly viewed as a mixing of the “private and public [spheres of] activities and spaces” (Fitzmaurice, *Women*

Writers, 15). Women who chose to publish their work rather than circulate it in manuscript among friends and family or through private writing circles were put under additional scrutiny by their society, as if facing criticism for participating in the male-dominated literary tradition wasn't enough. Cavendish did more than just send her work off to a publisher; she actively worked to circulate her writings, personally and unapologetically sending copies of her publications to "several [notable] university libraries and literary figures" (Narain 69) so that her readership would be as widespread as possible. Above all, Cavendish wanted her work to be seen and acknowledged, and she did everything she could to make sure that her writings were accessible to everyone and anyone who had the ability to read them.

This pursuit of fame bordered on obsession for Cavendish. More than anything, she wanted for her literary legacy to last beyond her lifetime, cementing a permanent place for herself in history. In "Notorious Celebrity: Margaret Cavendish and the Spectacle of Fame," Mona Narain argues "Cavendish acknowledged that she was deeply concerned with fame in her numerous prefaces, letters, prologues, and epilogues, and in her autobiography. [...] She knew that her desire for fame violated seventeenth-century gender norms for female behavior, yet she felt morally compelled to pursue it" (70). For Cavendish, notoriety was the only guaranteed form of an afterlife, and she wanted more than anything to be remembered and recorded in history. However, this unbridled desire for acknowledgment was not conducive to the expectations of demurity and subservience assigned to women of the time period. The more she published and the further she ventured into the public sphere, the further Cavendish distanced herself from the societal definition of "woman" and the private sphere within which women were expected to operate (Fitzmaurice, *Women Writers*, 15).

The unique combination of circumstances in which Margaret lived enabled her to pursue her literary ventures on such a wide and varied scale. Cavendish's husband, William Cavendish, was instrumental to her success. His title and rank as the Duke of Newcastle-upon-Tyne provided Margaret with a social cushion against the public backlash toward her work, as there was no one socially above the couple in the British aristocracy save for the King and the royal family. This privilege of class and rank gave Margaret a greater degree of personal autonomy and allowed her to pursue writing and publication without fear of the immediate effects of public backlash. William also wholly supported all of her publishing ventures, funding her publication fees and often writing prefaces to accompany her work, serving as a "coauthor" in many respects (Billing

94-6). The chief reason that contemporary scholars have such an extensive archive of information about Cavendish is because she not only wrote prolifically, but also published prolifically. Because so many of her works were preserved through the publication process, scholars today have access to a wide breadth of her work, rather than just a few examples from surviving manuscripts. If it weren't for her husband's enthusiastic support in her publishing and the social clout that they held collectively, it is likely that none of Cavendish's works would have survived to the modern era.

Even with the vocal, public support of her husband, Cavendish still faced some errant public ridicule and criticism of her work and her character. Whitaker argues that "by the end of her life, Margaret [had] become a prominent figure of the Restoration world and, like all celebrities, she had attracted ridicule and criticism as well as admiration" (347). One of her most vocal critics was Samuel Pepys, another prolific writer and fellow science enthusiast who is best known for his detailed, private diary that documented much of the English Restoration period from his own experience (Jones 756). Pepys not only criticized Margaret and her works, but also wrote ill of her husband for "permitting" her to write and behave in such unconventional ways. For example, in 1667, Margaret published *The Life of William Cavendish*, a lengthy and dramatic biographical account of her husband's life. The work took a more romantic and fantastical approach to describing William's heroism as a royalist general than what was typically considered appropriate for an historical account. Pepys scoffed at her biographical attempt, pronouncing Cavendish "a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman" whose "whole story [...] is a romance [...] all she does is romantic" while at the same time denouncing William as "an ass to suffer her to write what she writes to him, and of him" (qtd. in Jones 757). Pepys was not alone in his evaluation, either. Margaret and William both gained an unconventional, and, in some cases, infamous celebrity because of Margaret's publications.

Margaret prided herself on her own literary ingenuity, taking great stock in the power of "fancy" to influence her work ("Fancy and the Family" 200). While her writing seems unpolished at first glance, it is unquestionably self-inspired and driven by a sense of imagination and individual artistry that makes her style exceptionally unique. In her poem "An Apology for Her Poetry," Cavendish herself writes that she knows her poetry is untrained and erratic, yet she implores the reader to have an open mind: "Be just, let Fancy have the upper place / And then my verses may perchance find grace" (17-18). Deciphering Cavendish's work requires a certain

degree of open-mindedness and imagination as it can be difficult to follow in both the sheer volume of her publications and the unconventional organization of ideas. According to James Fitzmaurice, however, “it is very clear that the kind of writing she produced while under the power of fancy was very much in line with good composition as practiced in the style of [French] romance” (“Fancy and the Family” 200). While Cavendish wished to portray herself as a sort of solitary genius, producing content that was uniquely her own through methods that were inspired and personally driven rather than traditional and systematic, there are many similarities to the works and formats that other established Renaissance authors employed. Thus, Lara Dodds argues that, despite Cavendish’s surface claims to unadulterated literary genius, her contributions to English literature were actually heavily influenced by and modeled after the works of many of her male contemporaries and predecessors. Taking a close textual analysis approach to Cavendish’s works, Dodds devotes each chapter of her book, *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish*, to exploring how Cavendish’s works fit into the greater literary narrative of the many genres and formats that she contributed to and how, while unpolished, she imitated and appropriated many of the themes and styles of established, male Renaissance writers (e.g. Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, and Milton). Even so, it is undeniable that Cavendish was certainly unique in her own voice and that she was exceptional among her few female contemporaries.

Although the critical consensus is in her favor today, some would argue that, at least during her lifetime, Cavendish’s writing was not actually what garnered her the most attention. While her publication ventures were certainly scandalous and were the primary contributions to her public notoriety, it was the pageant-like spectacle of “Mad Madge” that drew the rest of her onlookers. In “Notorious Celebrity: Margaret Cavendish and the Spectacle of Fame,” Narain argues that Cavendish’s celebrity was comprised of a carefully constructed public persona that Margaret herself meticulously crafted through a combination of both “textual and bodily performances.” Narain illustrates how the eccentricity of Margaret’s actions and lived experience were deliberate choices that Cavendish made in order to intentionally construct a memorable, outlandish public persona that would secure the public notoriety and recognition she craved while also excusing herself from having to conform to normal societal expectations. Internalizing the “stylized performance aspects of power and hierarchy” (80) that she would have learned during her time as a lady in Queen Henrietta Maria’s court, Cavendish crafted her public conduct

in such a way that she deliberately exploited her role as an eccentric and spectacle in order to circumvent the societal constraints placed upon her by her gender (69-83).

Cavendish was widely known for her outlandish fashion choices, often designing her own outfits so as to best create a visual spectacle for herself that could match the spectacle of her writing. There are stories of the Duchess attending a public theatre completely bare-breasted, and, more commonly, cross-dressing in jackets and breeches intended for men (Narain 84-7). Cavendish made every public appearance an event to be talked about, and the visual display of her fashion choices was enough to spark conversation and gossip among the general citizenry. One of Cavendish's most controversial appearances was her 1667 visit to the Royal Society. Cavendish, as a writer and enthusiast in the field of science, was invited to attend a meeting of the Society, which in and of itself was scandalous enough as she was venturing into the male-dominated discourse of scientific study. In true grandiose fashion, though, she arrived late to the meeting with six female attendants, wearing an elaborate gown with a train of at least eight feet, a wide-brimmed cavalier hat, and a male sports jacket (Whitaker 299). This visit to the Royal Society was representative of Cavendish's dedication to crossing gendered boundaries, not only with her clothing, but through her writing, into spaces and discourses usually reserved for men. Her privilege as a member of the aristocracy also gave Cavendish an additional level of protection against public criticism. Cavendish's eccentricity would never have been accepted in a woman of lower class, and it is ultimately Margaret's social privilege that opened the gateway for her spectacle of life. By presenting herself as larger than life, neither completely woman or completely man, Cavendish created for herself the space and the freedom to exercise her voice without being restrained to a set of arbitrary and oppressive patriarchal expectations and standards.

Rebecca D'Monte explores a similar theme in "“Making a Spectacle’: Margaret Cavendish and the Staging of the Self.” D'Monte describes how Cavendish's public persona of “Mad Madge” served as an extension of the liberated, non-conforming female characters that Cavendish routinely wrote into her plays and other works of fiction. While Cavendish herself was still constrained by the gender constructs of the patriarchal society she lived in, she was able to move more freely within those constructs by putting on a “masque” of autonomy through transforming her everyday conduct into a theatrical display. By taking control of her own image and physical appearance, she began to reappropriate her identity as a woman, redefining what

constitutes femininity and individualism in her time period (D'Monte 115-21). "Mad Madge" was a role that Cavendish played for her audience to garner fame and recognition, but more importantly, her performance was really more for her own liberation.

Margaret's devotion to the concept of whimsy and her self-perception of exceptionalism created the character of an eccentric, solitary genius, out of league and out of touch with any of her contemporaries, especially her fellow female writers. In "Fancy and the Family: Self-Characterizations of Margaret Cavendish," James Fitzmaurice explores the ways in which she tempered her unbridled, wild public persona with the seemingly conflicting role of the devoted wife. He argues, "although Cavendish liked to dress in eye-catching clothing, she was not simply a public fool" (202). Cavendish represented herself as a woman both devoted to her family and to her imagination in not only her writings, but also her public character, manipulating her contemporaries into viewing her as a "harmless eccentric" (203) through her self-characterization as a solitary genius and devoted wife. Her continued devotion to William (exhibited by their continued co-authorship and mutual respect through publication), and her willingness to portray herself as an obedient and willing participant in a traditional power structure (serving as the Duchess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne) helped to offset the extravagance and unconventionality of the rest of her character. While she certainly had her critics, this carefully constructed public image helped Cavendish to avoid the widespread public backlash against her published work that some of her female predecessors (most notably Mary Sidney Wroth) suffered (Fitzmaurice, "Fancy and the Family" 199-209).

Since Cavendish has begun to be studied more closely in academia, as part of the wave of feminist recovery of women writers, the scholarly attitude towards her work has shifted drastically over the last few decades. For centuries after her death, Cavendish's writing was treated with the same general dismissal that it received during her lifetime. She was but an obscure footnote in the limited list of female authors to whom scholars had access from the English Renaissance. As increasing numbers of works by women writers have been recovered, however, academic opinion of Cavendish has shifted. Virginia Woolf was one of the first feminist theorists to analyze Cavendish's work in her popular extended essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Woolf's essay is generally considered to be one of the most monumental works of feminist literary criticism in the English language to date, and is studied widely today even though it was first published almost a century ago. Woolf's extended essay explores through a

narrative format the roles of women in the landscape of English literature as both creators of and subjects in works of fiction. She argues that due to the denial of access to education and the relative poverty of women in questions of both money and freedom, female writers have always been limited by the patriarchy in their personal liberty to create great literature. Woolf spends a significant portion of her essay chronicling the progression of women writers up until her point in history, exploring their contributions and how they have paved the way (or failed to do so) for female authors such as herself. In the fourth chapter of the essay, Woolf briefly discusses Cavendish's writing, likening her untrained, overly-abundant, and eccentric works to a "giant cucumber" that "choked to death" the work of any other women who may have been trying to write in the same time period (2124), effectively setting women writers back in gaining a foothold in the male-dominated realm of literature. Woolf writes in regard to Cavendish, almost from a place of pity:

What could bind tame or civilize for human use that wild, generous, untutored intelligence? It poured itself out, higgledy-piggledy, in torrents of rhyme and prose, poetry, and philosophy which stand congealed in quartos and folios that nobody ever reads. She should have had a microscope put in her hand. She should have been taught to look at the stars and reason scientifically. Her wits were turned with solitude and freedom. No one checked her. No one taught her. (2124)

Woolf represents one of the more skeptical critics of Cavendish's work; she pigeonholes Cavendish into the realm of obscurity and eccentricity without acknowledging the gravity of the Duchess's contributions to furthering the participation of women in the English literary landscape. When Woolf wrote her essay in 1928, she, of course, did not have access to all of the manuscripts and information that the academic community has access to today. While her view of Cavendish's work is very limited, Woolf's treatment of Cavendish represents the old school of academic thought and the views of many of Cavendish's contemporaries who dismissed Margaret's writings as "folly" on the basis of her unconventional use of language and the seemingly general indiscretion with which Cavendish chose to publish her many literary works.

The academic community has since come to celebrate the same qualities that Woolf and Cavendish's contemporaries once criticized. Lara Dodds writes in *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish* that "Woolf's undisciplined, untutored, and overly subjective aristocrat is now read as a complex (and conflicted) profeminist, a proponent of the unfettered imagination,

and a prescient critic of scientific empiricism” (9). Cavendish’s unpolished, seemingly unedited writing style is now lauded as a mark of her genius, even being described as an early precursor to late nineteenth and early twentieth-century stream of consciousness, of which Woolf herself was an innovator (Dodds 228). The Duchess actually prided herself on pushing traditional and standard writing forms to the wayside, claiming that they only stifled her unbridled imagination. In her view, editing and adherence to traditional formal devices was a detriment, tainting the purity of her creative works and diminishing the influence of “fancy” and the uninhibited inspiration that she is known for so widely.

While Cavendish was truly exceptional in her behavior and literary works, her motives were purely self-propelled. Her devotion to the pursuit of fame and recognition in history was enough to drive her efforts, without ever viewing herself as a champion of women’s rights or academics. Without intending to, though, her over-the-top exceptionality and ambition inadvertently and irrevocably empowered the female collective. By daring to break the societal expectations placed on women of her era, Cavendish opened the door for more women to follow in her footsteps. Daring to publish unapologetically and creating a bold spectacle of her life, Margaret Cavendish became a trailblazer of her time, even if she never really got to appreciate what that would mean. If anything, Cavendish certainly earned her place in history and, after centuries of obscurity and criticism, has finally achieved the level of glory, recognition, and praise that she always deserved.

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**For or Against Our Sex:
Bringing Clarity to the Anti-Suffrage Movement through the Eyes of Sallie Sturgeon**
Hannah Warren Burney

The views expressed in this essay are not representative of the author, the college, or the Alpha Kappa Phi Review. Instead, they are intended to educate and inform the reader about a past era through the genre of narrative history.

The author hopes that this narrative of “true womanhood” at the turn of the century in American history, written in the voice of Sallie Sturgeon, will illuminate the origin of some issues and debates still relevant to women’s studies today.

In this era, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the women’s suffrage movement presents its ideology as representative of all women. Suffragist Susan B. Anthony has said, “Suffrage is the pivotal right.”² However, what she fails to consider is that not all women want this right. Yes, although it may come as a shock, it is not just men who are against women’s suffrage. Not all women believe this is something they must experience in order to live a full life. Women’s suffrage is not a pivotal women's right, and, in my opinion, should not be so. My name is Sallie Lewis Stephens Sturgeon, and I am an anti-suffragist who has taken a stance against women voting.³

Before we get any further, let me tell you a little bit about how I think of myself as a woman. I was born in Missouri in 1870, but I consider myself to be an Oklahoman. I moved to Oklahoma City when I was 24.⁴ I ended up settling more permanently in Ardmore, which is approximately 99 miles south of Oklahoma City.⁵ Here, I became a career woman. I entered the field of journalism as a reporter for two local newspaper companies: the *Statesman* and the *Daily Ardmoreite*.⁶ Working as a journalist was not a common career for women of my generation. Entering this field brought me independence and a voice. Throughout my career, I created, published and sold the magazine, *The Oklahoma Lady*. I expanded my outreach and journalistic

² “Susan B. Anthony Quotes.” *Brainy Quote*, accessed October 20, 2016, brainyquote.com/quotes/author/s/susan_b_anthony.html.

³ Christine Pappas, "Sturgeon, Sallie Lewis Stephens," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Accessed October 12, 2016. <http://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=ST057>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Google Maps. 2016. “Ardmore.” Accessed October 20, 2016. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Oklahoma+City,+OK/Ardmore>.

⁶ Christine Pappas, "Sturgeon, Sallie Lewis Stephens.”

voice by moving back to Oklahoma City in 1910.⁷ Here, I created the Sturgeon News Service and also wrote a book called, *Sketchbook: Fourth Legislature Oklahoma*, which was published in 1913.⁸

My socioeconomic status throughout my life was varied, and will appear vague to historians, I am sure. The connections brought about by my husband's position in the state helped bring me to prominence, giving me freedom to become more vocal. Thomas was a former deputy in the Oklahoma Supreme Court. After his shocking death in 1919, the governor of Oklahoma, James B.A. Robertson chose me to be the state health inspector for the Oklahoma State Health Department. I was the first woman to hold this type of position in the United States.⁹ With this official government appointment, I became vocal in ensuring that businesses of all types became more clean and sanitary. "Clean up or close up!", is what I always said.¹⁰ I met quite a lot of resistance from men who did not believe that my job was appropriate for a woman. However, I loved this job. I knew it was what I was supposed to do, because I found purpose and motivation in it every day. In this job, I actually felt that I could make a difference and do good for others.¹¹ So, I ignored the naysayers, and continued on with my work. In 1930, I was able to help make a difference in the lives of those struggling in the face of the Great Depression when I became a social worker. I worked in a small migratory community that was established in Oklahoma City.¹² Here we attempted to decrease the vast amount of poverty that individuals and families were facing at the time.

When it comes to values, throughout my life, there were two main ideals I held onto. One of these, as I have discussed, was making people's lives better through improving the overall cleanliness and sanitation of public businesses. The other was anti-suffrage. My experiences during the First Wave Feminist Movement were different than many others because I believed, and still do, that women should not have the right to vote. In the following, I will attempt to explain and defend the various ideas that coincided to push me to be active in this stance and anti-suffrage movement.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Christine Pappas, "Sturgeon, Sallie Lewis Stephens."

First, let me explain the foundation of the women's anti-suffrage movement. It originated in Massachusetts in 1868-1869, after the state legislature attempted to legalize women's suffrage.¹³ A strong, early voice for the women's anti-suffrage movement was found in *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazines*. Here, a group of nineteen women published an editorial as a petition to the U.S. Congress against women's suffrage.¹⁴ The anti-suffrage movement was our answer to, what we perceived as, an incorrect ideal of expanding women's rights. In Oklahoma at this time, more and more people were becoming supportive of the women's suffrage movement. The anti-suffrage movement existed initially in state associations, of which I became involved. The Oklahoma Anti-Suffrage Association was organized in 1918. I became the president.¹⁵ From 1912-1918, there was even a national organization for the anti-suffrage movement called the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS).¹⁶ Both the suffrage and the anti-suffrage movements progressed and grew at the state and national level.

Today, as I narrate this from the vantage of the 1950s and my old age, many are confused by the fact that women organized themselves to support a cause that seems to be against a woman's own interest.¹⁷ There are several reasons I can provide to solidify our argument in favor of women not gaining the vote. The following quote briefly, yet thoroughly, summarizes the main points that we adhered to:

[T]hat God ordained women to serve the desires of men; that women consented to obey men in exchange for protection, thereby creating an inequality; that women voting would not be able to fulfill their role as the caretaker of the family; and the belief that women are "good persons" which made them ineligible to become "good citizens" since good citizens occasionally have to engage in bad behavior.¹⁸

These ideas find their root in the ideal of the "true woman." At the core, women are completely different than men. Their ideology is different. Their purpose is different. My belief is that

¹³ Artour Aslanian, "Use of Rhetoric in Anti-Suffrage and Anti-Feminist Publications," *LUX: A Journal of Transdisciplinary Writing and Research* 2, no.1 (2013): 1, <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/lux/vol2/iss1/2>.

¹⁴ Aslanian, "Use of Rhetoric in Anti-Suffrage and Anti-Feminist Publications," 1.

¹⁵ Tally D. Fugate, "Anti-Suffrage Association," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, accessed October 12, 2016. www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=AN014.

¹⁶ Aslanian, Artour, "Use of Rhetoric in Anti-Suffrage and Anti-Feminist Publications," 2.

¹⁷ Catherine E. Rymph, review of *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign Against Woman Suffrage*, by Susan Marshall, *The Annals of Iowa* 58, 1999, 97, <http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=11067&context=annals-of-iowa>.

¹⁸ Aslanian, "Use of Rhetoric in Anti-Suffrage and Anti-Feminist Publications," 3.

women should remain different from men, and that in order to be a true woman, one must not cross certain lines. Women must remain focused on motherhood and the home.¹⁹ Women are also to be the religious and moral compasses for the family.²⁰ Stepping into the realm of politics would destroy the morality and purity of women and inhibit them from completing their important family duties. By filling a political role in any way, a woman would neglect the duties her family requires of her. Is not that of greater importance? Is not that the ultimate goal of womanhood?

Also, as partners, designed to serve the male figures in our lives, we already possess a vast amount of political power. In fact, gaining the vote would be an inferior power in comparison to the power we have through our relationships to male political or business leaders, or our volunteer and charity work.²¹ It is through these relationships and positions that we already have political power. If we truly want to be involved in politics, perhaps we should focus on swaying our husbands toward the candidates and ideas that are best. Instead of suffrage, we should trust that our husbands will accurately and adequately represent us in politics.²² They are the heads of the home and that is one of their responsibilities.

Aside from removing women from representing true womanhood, there are several other reasons I believed that women should not be given the vote. Suffragists and feminists have ideals that coincide with one another. Feminist leaders are believed to be connected to socialism. Along with this, feminists are extremely radical.²³ These radical and socialistic ideas that suffrage and feminism promote do not compliment Republican ideals. The women's suffrage movement is a revolt against the entire political system upon which the United States government is structured.²⁴ Socialism is an unnecessary evil, which we do not need to have infiltrating the politics in our country, and these radical ideals should not be promoted.

I enjoy an independence that many women do not. While I believe that some independence is appropriate, I did not believe that women should have been given voting privileges. I represent the values and perspective of true womanhood. I believed that suffrage

¹⁹ Ellen DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016), 156.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 157.

²¹ Rymph, Review, 98.

²² Aslanian, "Use of Rhetoric in Anti-Suffrage and Anti-Feminist Publications, 14.

²³ *Ibid.* 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 8.

would destroy the value and identity of true women, and create the fall of Republicanism. Suffrage is not healthy for women, their families or the country. The subject is controversial and weighty. Please do not take the issue lightly. Contemplate the arguments that have been laid before you and consider the implications of the anti-suffrage movement for today's politics. True womanhood must survive.

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To Feed or Not to Feed: The Sexualization of Breastfeeding

Rebekah Mitchell

All over the world women give birth and face two choices regarding how they want to feed their babies: breastfeeding or formula. While some women have no choice but to formula feed due to lack of nutrients in the mother's diet, the baby rejecting the milk, or even being personally uncomfortable with breastfeeding, society ultimately needs to respect a mother's choice. American society often sexualizes women through the media, which historically portrays women as sexual beings, most commonly focusing on their breasts—a trend which continues today. As a result, everyday Americans, especially men, have become uncomfortable when a woman unbuttons her shirt and begins to feed her child. Women who choose breastfeeding need support from their families, friends, physicians, and society. Breastfeeding is often viewed as “dirty” because it involves the breast. I argue that society needs to stop sexualizing women because this cultural attitude and stereotype creates a stigma against breastfeeding that makes it difficult for mothers to breastfeed their children, both in public and in private. Today's media needs to embrace the naturalness of the breast and of breastfeeding, and educate the public about the benefits that breastfeeding gives to both mother and child.

Although many American women lean toward formula-feeding their babies for a variety of reasons, there can be many long and short term benefits for both mother and child when it comes to breastfeeding. Catherine Pound, a pediatrics specialist at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, and Sharon Unger, Neonatologist at the Hospital for Sick Children and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Toronto, illuminates how breast milk has a unique bioactive matrix of compounds that cannot be replicated by artificial formulas. In their article, “The Baby-Friendly Initiative: Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding,” Pound and Unger state that breastmilk “contains the live cellular components, immunoreactivity substances and hormones, and other nutritional components needed for optimal growth, health, and development in the newborn” (Pound and Unger). In other words, breastfeeding one's child can increase the newborn's immune system, lowering the likelihood of the baby becoming sick. Breastmilk can also help with newborn development, which can keep the child on the right developmental track in terms of sensory development, walking and crawling, and talking (Pound and Unger). Furthermore, Pound and Unger discuss how women who breastfeed have lower risks

of developing breast and ovarian cancer. In agreement with Pound and Unger, Allison Stuebe and Eleanor Schwarz, in “The Risk and Benefits of Infant Feeding Practices for Women and their Children,” explain both the risks and benefits of breastfeeding for both women and children. Stuebe, a specialist in maternal-fetal medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, and Schwarz, a specialist in Internal Medicine, Family Planning, Health Services Research, Obstetrics and Gynecology, emphasize that a woman “who has never breast-fed has a 1.4-fold increase of breast cancer, compared with women who had breast-fed for a lifetime total of 55 months” (156). They also cite a study about ovarian cancer risk by Danforth et al., which “found that women who had never breast-fed faced a 1.5-fold risk of ovarian cancer, compared with women who breast-fed for 18 months” (156). These statistics agree with Pound and Unger’s contention that breastfeeding can be a preventative health measure for women. I agree with this critical consensus, arguing that women can and should take charge of their health by breastfeeding their children. Stuebe and Schwarz also detail how breastfeeding can help prevent many childhood diseases, specifically focusing on obesity since breastmilk contains adipokines, which may have a role in regulating energy intake and long-term obesity risk (158). Brian Moss and William Yeaton, Professors at the University of Michigan, similarly explain that “breastfeeding and delaying introduction to solid food until 4 months were associated with lower obesity rates and higher healthy weight status rates (typically 5-10%)” (1224). Obesity is a major problem in the United States and no mother wants their child to grow up to have cardiovascular weight problems when it could have been helped simply by breastfeeding. If the media would educate the public about these benefits, then the American public would have a better understanding of why women should breastfeed rather than formula feed, if they can.

For mothers and children to benefit from these positive health effects of breastfeeding, they will need support from their families, friends, and physicians. An article in *Morbidity & Morality*, a weekly review published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), discusses long and short term effects breastfeeding has on mothers and infants; it also describes what hospitals should be doing to support mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies. The CDC argues that more hospitals should use the “Ten Steps” system to help support breastfeeding mothers during their stay at the hospital facility and after. This system is outlined as follows:

Ten steps to successful breastfeeding are existence of a model breastfeeding policy, staff competency assessment, prenatal breastfeeding education, early initiation of

breastfeeding, teaching breastfeeding techniques, limited provision of non-breastmilk fluids for healthy breastfed infants, rooming-in, teaching feeding cues, limited use of pacifiers, and post-discharge support. (CDC)

The CDC argues that US hospitals should adhere to this system because they believe that when mothers are supported in breastfeeding, they are more likely to continue past the first six months of an infant's life. For the many women who are not introduced to breastfeeding before having their child, these ten steps will make them more comfortable with breastfeeding. Stuebe and Schwarz also explain how important it is for clinicians to have a role in the breastfeeding process. They explain that "8% of the physicians felt that their advice was important, while 33% of mother's thought the information provided was very important" (159). Physicians play a critical role in how women, especially first-time mothers, view what they're doing as important. If the woman has not received prenatal breastfeeding instruction, the first person to typically explain breastfeeding to a new mother is her physician. Given the status of physicians in the hierarchy of a hospital setting, a mother expects that what physicians say about the nutrition of their baby is important. Physicians are experts in their fields and have studied the benefits of breastfeeding, whereas most women don't know what the benefits are and therefore rely on their physicians to lead them in the right direction. In the article, "Breastfeeding and the Good Maternal Body," Cindy Stearns describes a variety of experiences women have had regarding this dynamic with their physicians. Stearns is a Professor of Sociology at the University of California, specializing in reproduction, gender, work, health, childhood, mothering, and the body. She cites the case of a woman named Jody who shares an experience she had with her father while she was breastfeeding:

"He told me he was comfortable with it but I, I kind of felt when it came time, when everyone knew it was time for her to eat um, you know, he's kind of looking up and off and trying to find something in the room to fix his eyes on. I always put a receiving blanket or something over, I put a receiving blanket over my shoulder." (317)

Even though her father tried to be supportive, he was still uncomfortable with the fact that she was breastfeeding, even after she covered herself and the baby. Stearns attempts to make her readers aware of other women's experiences breastfeeding. She analyzes all aspects of the topic, including how woman notice the reactions of men, whether they state they are comfortable with breastfeeding or not. Ultimately, these case studies illustrate how men are often uncomfortable

when they see breasts doing what they were made to do, largely because of the constant sexualization of women by the media, in my opinion. To promote breastfeeding in a positive light, the media could go as far as showing pictures of celebrities breastfeeding, using such models as a way to educate people about the benefits of breastfeeding.

Clearly women need support when it comes to their private feedings, but it is also very critical for them to be supported publicly. Stearns explains how “the average newborn nurses about every two hours. Unless a woman stays at home for several months and is able to only breastfeed at home, and in private, most women must think about how they will go about breastfeeding in front of others” (311). Many Americans do not realize these are the circumstances a lot of nursing women face. Every two hours she has to feed wherever she is because the baby is hungry. Kelly Wallace, a television journalist for CNN, describes how a mother “in Beverly Hills says she was escorted to the bathroom at an Anthropologie store when she was breastfeeding her six-week-old baby. Outraged, she took to social media and less than a day later more than 100 women staged a ‘nurse-in’ at the store to protest” (Wallace). It is not fair for women to have to nurse in a cramped, uncomfortable, and unsanitary bathroom. When society discriminates against breastfeeding women, viewing them as “dirty,” they become angry and can mobilize to protest, as in this case. In my opinion, the only thing about breastfeeding that is “dirty” is forcing them and their babies to feed in public restrooms; public restrooms stink and they are unsanitary. Similarly, Stearns describes how the public “bathroom was frequently the bottom line for women on their willingness to accommodate” (Stearns). For one, women don’t want to sit in the bathroom while other people are using the bathroom, that is not fair to the mother or her baby. Second, people eat in restaurants—what is the difference in a baby eating compared to someone else eating their food? If society really does not want to see women breastfeeding, they should invest in breastfeeding rooms that provide a clean, sanitary, and comfortable place where no one can see breastfeeding mothers except other mothers. If the media showed more support toward breastfeeding or supported such a campaign to raise funds for breastfeeding rooms in public spaces, then women wouldn’t be asked to go to the bathroom to feed their children, because they wouldn’t be breaking any “social norms” our society has created for women.

Ultimately, for women to get the support from their families, friends, physicians, and society, the media needs to stop sexualizing women. In addition to the Beverly Hills example,

Wallace also cites a woman named “Lee, who lives in Atlanta and hosts a blog called *Vain Mommy*” who “believes people’s ‘uneasiness’ with breastfeeding in public stems from the perception of women as sexual objects” (Wallace). Wallace argues that women buy into the idea that breasts are only used as objects of “play” (Wallace). When women routinely see scantily-clad celebrities in the media being defined as the epitome of “sexy,” they internalize that message and think of themselves as objects of “play,” leading to feelings of self-consciousness about their own bodies. American society needs to stop viewing women’s bodies exclusively as sexual and made for “play.” Similarly, Stearns illustrates how “Breastfeeding women fear that the exposure of their breast will be misread as a sexual invitation to male strangers and they fear potential consequences of that misreading. Some women would define the men who were looking as having problems, specifically that the observer was being sexually inappropriate” (316). It is unfair for women who are breastfeeding to feel sexually exposed while feeding their child. We as a society need to veer away from exclusively viewing breasts as sexual objects of play and instead view them as natural and biological organs, which provide nutrition to infants. To put a new view on breasts, the easiest way to start setting new standards is through media and celebrities.

I argue that one of the most effective methods to end the sexualization of breasts is using the media to educate the public about the benefits of breastfeeding. As Lee states in her interview with Wallace, “As silly as it sounds, we need to educate the community on the fact that breastfeeding is indeed normal, natural and okay” (Wallace). The easiest way to begin educating the community is by using the media as an outlet to show celebrity role models, such as actress Olivia Wilde, breastfeeding. Those images can then be used to spark a conversation intended to educate the wider public about breastfeeding’s health benefits. Many Americans find breastfeeding “taboo” when it should be viewed as a natural process that can be a preventative health measure for both mothers and children, leading to a healthier life for both. Similarly, Stearns contends “Given the strong cultural preference for sexualized breasts, women who breastfeed are transgressing the boundaries of both the good maternal body and women-as-(hetero)sexual object” (309). When American society thinks of these women as sexual objects they have to break “boundaries” that have been set up for them. Our society needs to step back and look at the whole picture of breastfeeding women. They aren’t breastfeeding for “sexual

pleasure,” so how is it a sexual act? US society needs to break down these stereotypes of the breast, starting with the help of our media and celebrity moms.

If the public is educated about breastfeeding, it would not be so difficult for nursing mothers to breastfeed in public. While some women believe they should try to be as discreet as possible when breastfeeding in public, Wallace quotes Lee’s argument that “the way to make public breastfeeding more acceptable is to make ‘working breast more visible’” (Wallace). Lee is referring specifically to your average American mother, while it should be every mother, of every race, and every class. In other countries, breastfeeding is the norm because often there is no other option. If the media showed all of these different women breastfeeding, maybe the norm in our society could shift to accepting those mothers who choose to breastfeed, instead of shaming them for nursing publicly. Stearns contends “Breastfeeding is a learned activity for both mother and baby. Trying to get a baby positioned correctly while simultaneously hiding all parts of the breast is not always easy for the new mother” (312). Sometimes individuals are going to see a slip, but the mother can’t always help it. The mothers are just as embarrassed for themselves, as the one who is seeing it happen. This can be prevented if establishments would invest in nursing rooms, rather than make women go to a public restroom to feed their baby. Public feeding should not be something that nursing mothers are embarrassed to do, and society should not view it as taboo due to sexist attitudes about the breast only being used for “play.”

Due to the fact that women are shamed frequently for public breastfeeding, American society needs to be supportive of women no matter their choice. Because we live in a patriarchal society, women are going to be shamed regardless of what they choose to do with their body. Some women are incapable of breastfeeding for different reasons, but we still need to support their choices. A woman named Noehren tells Wallace, “Through my personal experience I learned to be less judgmental of parents’ feeding choices because I realize that sometimes not breastfeeding isn’t even a choice; it’s simply not possible. I also think that women who choose formula from the start, for whatever reason, should not be made to feel guilty” (Wallace). We need to respect women’s choices because it is their choice; a woman shouldn’t feel guilty because she’s breaking a stereotype that patriarchal society has set up for her. Just as we should make public spaces more accepting of breastfeeding mothers, we should implement a respect for all choices by not throwing “breast is the best” in women’s faces. Ultimately, it is all a matter of respect for one another as a society.

In conclusion, our media should educate the American public to counteract the decades of sexualization of women's breasts, using its influences to redefine breasts for their natural use. The public needs to be educated on the benefits of breastfeeding, so we can diminish the idea of public breastfeeding as being taboo and instead inform the public about the challenges women face as new mothers when deciding how best to feed their babies. Women should not make the decision on how to nurture their baby due to gendered stereotypes or out of fear of being judged by society for their choice.

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Death, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: The Debate over Physician-Assisted Suicide

Sarah Calhoun

Physician-assisted suicide (PAS) is a widely debated topic in the United States and has been since the 1990s. It is defined as “the voluntary ending of one’s life primarily by taking a lethal substance prescribed by a physician” (Friend 110). The debate began when Dr. Jack Kevorkian performed his first public assisted suicide in 1990 on a woman diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease just the year before. This event sparked a national conversation about death with dignity. Currently, only Montana, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington have legalized physician-assisted suicide. While the argument for patient liberties and autonomy can be made, physician-assisted suicide should not be legalized in any other states because of its potential abuses and negative effects on the medical profession. With the legalization of PAS, advances in the medical field and care for the terminally ill could be ignored and inhibited. Also, when a practice, such as PAS, that would have such a large effect on the medical field is brought into our legal system, it will most likely go down a “slippery slope,” leading to this practice being expanded to patients outside of the current qualifications through the constant change of laws and restrictions. Rather than offer terminally ill patients a way to end their lives, improvements and advances should be made in the field of palliative, or end-of-life, care.

The main argument supporters of PAS make is that of bodily autonomy. This concept states that a human being has a right over his/her body and the freedom to choose what happens and is done to it. However, there is much gray area in this argument and it is very subjective, particularly surrounding the issues of coercion, the medical field, and the slippery slope. When it comes to coercion, proponents of PAS, like Dan Brock, Professor of Medical Ethics in the Department of Social Medicine at Harvard University, claim that there is little evidence of vulnerable patients being pressured in PAS (544). They also claim that offering PAS as an option would provide reassurance and a sense of peace for dying patients, since they would know they had a way out if they truly desired one. Carl Wellman, a Professor of Philosophy at Washington University, is a proponent of this. In “A Legal Right to Physician-Assisted Suicide Defended,” he states, “Surely medical practitioners have some more responsibility for the avoidable suffering they impose on those patients” (30). Proponents also cite the multiple safeguards and restrictions included in PAS legislation to prevent this practice from being over-expanded and made available to patients who do not meet current qualifications. Lastly, proponents do not believe

legalizing PAS would undermine or change palliative care. Rather, they argue that it would be cause for improvements and advances to be made in this field of medicine. Supporters of PAS make valid and reasonable claims, but the arguments against legalizing PAS in these areas far outweigh the arguments in favor of it.

Although there are many safeguards that are implemented in legislation for PAS, legalizing this practice throughout the United States would create too great a risk for potential abuses. In “A Critique of 3 Objections to PAS,” Dan Brock states, “One very important factor affecting the potential for abuse for any practice is what safeguards are erected to guard against the abuses more feared and likely” (539-540). He follows this with a list of these safeguards, including that the patient must be an adult, diagnosed as terminally ill, properly informed about their diagnosis and prognosis without treatment, offered possible alternatives, and more (540). However, this will not sufficiently defend against the abuses that could take place. A significant abuse that could take place if PAS was legalized throughout the entire United States is premature death. PAS opponent Ezekiel Emmanuel, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and Chair of the Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy, contends, “properly utilized euthanasia and PAS are ‘last ditch’ interventions, interventions that can be justified only after appropriate palliative options are attempted” (639). He follows this by presenting multiple facts that show that many patients who have received PAS are not undergoing any palliative, or end-of-life, care. For instance, “60 percent of patients were not receiving hospice care” and about 10 percent of cases consisted of patients who had not undergone a psychiatric evaluation for depression (639). These two statistics go directly against two of these “protective” safeguards, which state that the patient must be evaluated by a mental health professional to make sure the patient’s decision is not a result of clinical depression and that they must be offered alternatives to PAS, specifically hospice and end-of-life care (Brock 540). Clearly, even with the multitude of safeguards that are included with PAS legislation, premature death occurs more than proponents of PAS would like to admit. Yes, I do agree with Brock when he argues that safeguards would help prevent abuses from happening. However, according to Emmanuel, even Brock agrees that safeguards cannot eradicate the possibility of abuse (630). In my opinion, these potential abuses, specifically premature death, pose too great a risk for legalizing PAS, even with safeguards in place.

In addition to the risk of premature death and many other abuses, the one that poses the largest concern is that of coercion. This is when a patient chooses PAS because they are

pressured into believing that it would be better for them to refuse life-sustaining treatment and receive lethal medication from their doctor to end their life, rather than become a financial and/or caregiving burden on their family members. I argue that this is the greatest potential abuse involved with PAS and is a significant reason to not legalize this practice. According to the safeguards that are included with legalizing PAS, one is specifically directed at the potential for coercion. It states that the patient be “making an enduring and voluntary (free from undue influence) request for PAS” (Brock 540). Even with this protection in place, however, coercion is inevitable. According to Emmanuel, data suggests that only 8.6-24% out of 1 million dying patients inflict great financial burdens. Also, 16-34% of 1 million dying patients inflict great caregiving burdens on their loved ones (638). Data like this indicates that these pressures alone predispose family members not to desire treatment for their terminally ill relatives (637). Feeling as though they are a burden is second only to depression as a significant predictor for dying patients having seriously considered PAS (638).

Although supporters of PAS argue that safeguards would protect against pressure being applied to dying patients and that there is not substantial evidence to prove it occurs, they are ignoring the cases in which coercion has been the primary cause of a patient’s decision to follow through with PAS. The DeLury case is a prime example of how the pressure of being a “burden” to family members has a strong influence on a patient’s decision when it comes to choosing between fighting and ending their life. In this case, which occurred in New York, “the husband was convicted of pressuring his wife to intentionally end her life” (Emmanuel 637). His own journals stated that his motive was to eradicate the immense caregiving burdens he was experiencing from her battle with multiple sclerosis (637). This case illustrates how coercion can and does play a very significant role in a dying patient’s decision to go through with PAS, rather than begin alternative treatments and palliative care. These patients feel as if they are doing a favor to those around them by choosing PAS. Although many would argue that relieving the burdens patients are inflicting on their families is a valid reason to choose PAS, it could also persuade patients who would rather undergo life-sustaining treatments to choose PAS anyway because they feel that it is what is desired of them. Yes, supporters of PAS, like Brock, are correct in contending that safeguards could possibly help reduce coercion, but it would still happen on a wide scale. In my opinion, to eliminate this potential abuse of PAS, it is better to not have it as an option.

Through choosing PAS as an attempt to avoid being a burden to their loved ones, dying patients basically bypass medical assistance and treatment and ignore the medical field's purpose altogether. As a pre-nursing student, I continually wonder how this legislation will affect current and future nurses in their careers. In her article, "Physician-Assisted Suicide: Death With Dignity?" Mary Louanne Friend, Assistant Professor of Nursing, discusses the affects this practice would have on the medical profession. A significant emphasis in the essay is non-maleficence. This term refers to the proverb "above all, do no harm", which is also a variation of the Hippocratic Oath, the oath all physicians must take before beginning their practice. The Hippocratic Oath states, "I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but will never use it to injure or wrong them" (113). By this oath, physicians are not meant to prescribe lethal medication to their patients for any reason; it would go against their basic purpose as a physician. Proponents of PAS, like Wellman, would make the argument that it is the physician's duty to assist their patient in avoiding suffering and pain. He contends in his article that it would be a physician's responsibility for imposing avoidable suffering on their patients (30). Wellman and those who support PAS would argue that PAS upholds the Hippocratic Oath by humanely granting patients dignity in their death when their quality of life has deteriorated to the point of suffering. I disagree with such critics, instead arguing that the Hippocratic Oath, above all, depends on the principle of non-maleficence, which would make a physician unqualified to perform PAS.

Another major effect that legalization of PAS would have on the medical profession is the patient-physician relationship. If physicians were to begin allowing this practice, it could put tension on that relationship and possibly cause the patient to have some apprehensions about their physician. In her article, Friend states, "The unique ethical relationship among physicians, nurses and other licensed health care professionals with their patients involves a basic fiduciary responsibility to do them no harm, and this relationship must be preserved" (110). In contrast with this statement, supporters of PAS would argue that the medical field has changed and that this way of thinking is prohibiting advances and is not going along with the changes. For instance, Wellman contends, "how a physician ought to treat her patients changes as new medical technologies become available and the medical problems of her patients change" (30). I completely disagree with Wellman; the purpose of the physician never changes. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), a physician is "a healer; a person who cures moral, spiritual,

or political ills.” To go even further, the definition of the word “heal”, according to the *OED* is, “to make whole or sound in bodily condition; to free from disease or ailment, restore to health or soundness; to cure.” By these definitions, a physician’s primary purpose is to do whatever they can to restore their patient’s health. As far as I am aware, giving an individual the means of killing themselves is not restoring their health.

There is a reassurance that a patient has when entrusting a doctor with his/her health and well-being, so by legalizing PAS, not only would the purpose of the physician change, it would also put a strain on the physician-patient relationship. Proponents of PAS, like Wellman, would argue that having PAS as an option would create reassurance for the patient. Wellman states, “It is much more likely that patients will be reluctant to admit themselves to hospitals for fear that they will be unable to escape the clutches of the physicians legally required to keep them alive no matter how pointless life has become for them and how great the agony they must endure” (31). There is some truth in his statement; no one would really enjoy spending a large portion of his/her life in a hospital. However, that does not mean PAS is the solution to this fear of terminally ill patients. Going against Wellman, Emmanuel presents some very convincing data that he and his colleagues discovered, illustrating how “19% of cancer patients and 26.5% of the public would change from physicians who discussed...PAS with them” (637). Those statistics are substantial enough to raise question of how reassuring the option and discussion of PAS really is.

Along with undermining and changing the medical profession, legalizing PAS would also cause the medical profession to start down a “slippery slope.” This means that qualifications for determining patient eligibility for PAS would expand and the purpose of PAS would slowly change. Friend poses this question in her article, asking “will PAS become a viable option for patients who do not have a terminal illness but instead are crippled by conditions such as cerebral palsy, Alzheimer’s disease, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)?” (114). This is a very reasonable question that cannot be ignored. However, I will take it a step further and pose the argument that this practice could be expanded to those who are mentally ill. And why shouldn’t it? When depressed and other mentally ill individuals attempt suicide it is, a majority of the time, because they feel like a burden to those around them, they believe everyone would have an easier and better life without them, or they believe their lives are worthless. If one of the main reasons for PAS is to relieve a patient of suffering and to give them an option when they no longer see

that their life is worth living, then it would make sense that it would eventually expand to those who suffer from all kinds of mental illnesses. Of course, proponents of PAS would counter this by presenting the ever-so-precious safeguards that they continually cite. But, like all laws and restrictions, they can be changed. If PAS were legalized at the federal level, it would only need a short amount of time to become popular and, one can imagine, how soon enough there would be patients asking their therapists and psychologists for the same thing that these dying patients are asking for. Then, with enough votes or enough petitions or harassing of legislators, change would come for those suffering from mental illnesses. Proponents of PAS would respond with more safeguards that apply to mentally ill patients, for example, how long they have been depressed, the severity of their depression, and so on. To prevent this “slippery slope,” I firmly argue that legalizing PAS is not worth the risk of it spreading like wildfire to all areas of the medical field, not just the terminally ill.

Choosing PAS would hurt the medical profession as a whole, but to be more specific, it would have a significantly negative impact on palliative care, or end-of-life care. Under the World Health Organization’s definition, palliative care does not intentionally hasten death (Pereira et. al 1074). Palliative, according to the *OED*, refers to treatment that “alleviates or mitigates pain, disease, and suffering.” By ignoring this field of medicine, this practice will begin to weaken altogether and would be consistently overlooked by terminally ill patients and their families as a valuable option. Supporters of PAS would argue that the reason people would choose to end their lives instead of going through treatment and hospice care is because the palliative care area of the medical field is inadequate for most terminally ill patients. They may be correct in saying that palliative care needs to become more available, affordable, and adequate for patients in need of it, but that is not a reason to offer ending their life as a reasonable alternative. Proponents of PAS would contend that it is not fair to force patients into care that is undesirable and lacking for their needs as a dying and suffering individual. Wellman is one of these proponents and claims that “it is cruel to deny physician-assisted suicide to those patients who are terminally ill or enduring intolerable suffering [...] for whom adequate hospice care [...] are not yet available” (38). I have to disagree with Wellman on this statement. Offering PAS is not a solution to the problem of inadequate end-of-life care. The solution to that problem is to improve the quality of end-of-life care. Legalizing PAS would only slow the improvements of palliative care and ultimately ignore the problems that exist there since PAS would become the

more popular and logical option.

If PAS were offered in palliative care, it would completely undermine and change the purpose of that field of medicine. Because of the definition given by the World Health Organization, which is given above, in their article “Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia Should Not Be Practiced in Palliative Care Units,” J. Pereira et al. come to the conclusion that assisted suicide should not be a part of palliative care. They state, “Offering assisted suicide within palliative care units would therefore mean the endorsement of a policy that runs counter to international norms and standards of palliative care practice” (1074). Allowing this to occur would cause many issues, both with doctors, nurses, staff, and patients within these units. In response to this, proponents of PAS would argue that this practice does not have to occur within palliative care units. However, in the list of safeguards for this practice, it states that patients considering PAS must first be “offered other alternatives, in particular, hospice care and other palliative services that might improve the patient’s condition and change the desire for PAS” (Brock 540). If this safeguard is true and is to be followed, discussion of PAS could not come up prior to being offered these other services or in these care units, as being unfair to and undermining this field of medicine. As a result, the answer to the problem of inadequate palliative care is not to offer the hastening of death in terminally ill patients. Rather, it is to work to improve and advance these care units and their services. I contend that legalizing PAS would halt and inhibit any such improvements to palliative care.

Rather than legalize physician-assisted suicide, improvements, advancements, and expansions to palliative care should be made. Palliative care should be made more available and affordable to those dying patients who need it. PAS presents far too many potential abuses and severe negative effects on the medical profession to be offered as a positive option to these patients during their most difficult times. Although proponents of PAS would contend that the safeguards that go along with legalizing PAS would significantly reduce these abuses, this cannot be factually proven. On the other hand, opponents of PAS have statistics that show that patients with terminal illnesses considering PAS do not always meet those safeguards concerning alternative options and psychiatric evaluation. Also, data shows that many could be coerced due to the financial and emotional burdens they place on their families. There is even a specific case in which a husband influenced his wife to choose PAS because of the significant caregiving burdens she was causing for him. Clearly, these safeguards cannot be as effective as proponents

would like to believe they are. Contrary to what proponents of PAS claim, with the legalization of PAS and the growing practice that would follow, the needed improvements for palliative care would most likely be ignored and, therefore, would continue to diminish this care for dying patients. Lastly, one of the most important arguments of all against PAS concerns the negative effect it would have on the medical field. Legalizing PAS would not only inhibit advances in palliative care, but advances in all areas of medicine. Also, it would begin to undermine and change the whole purpose of the physician and other professions in the medical field. A physician is meant to be a healer by restoring a patient's health; providing patients with a means to kill themselves is not healing. This fact would disrupt the physician-patient relationship and cause tension and distrust. Over-extension of this practice to other patients would also take place. Because of this, mentally ill patients could foreseeably begin to desire PAS as well. If their life seems so worthless to them, then it would make sense to them that they would also be allowed to end their lives. I cannot deny that proponents of PAS make viable and convincing arguments and some of them are difficult to refute, but in the end, these three arguments are the most relevant in this debate today. If there is even a risk that this practice would be abused or bring about negative effects on the medical field or patients, the solution should be to improve palliative care to give these patients the desire and will to continue their life.

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NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

Kathryn Brown currently serves as the Secretary and SGA Club Representative for LWC's Sigma Tau Delta chapter. She is pursuing a BA in English Education and a non-degree course of study in Vocal Music with plans to graduate in December 2018. This essay is her first academic publication.

Hannah Warren Burney is a senior Media Studies major with an emphasis in journalism and minors in History and Communication. She is passionate about sharing stories through writing and photography. In her time at LWC, Hannah has worked as an editor for *Raider View*, the student newspaper, and has performed in several piano recitals. Currently, she is a writing consultant for the Writing Center and a contributor for Odyssey Online. Hannah is a coffee snob, who loves to spend time having adventures with her family.

Sarah Calhoun is a sophomore Begley Scholar majoring in Nursing. She is actively involved in campus ministry and has been involved in mission work in the Dominican Republic since 2006. She is currently the leader of the 2017 Lindsey Wilson College Dominican Republic Mission Trip, taking place this July.

Alex Ferrell is a sophomore majoring in art, with a theatre minor at Lindsey Wilson College. She has been involved in several LWC theatre productions, including the current production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She hopes to pursue a career at a media studio creating concept art and would like to write books when not working. This is her first academic publication.

Aaron Goode graduated in May 2016 and is currently teaching English at Adair County High School. At Lindsey, he had critical work published in the *Alpha Kappa Phi Review* and creative work published in *Orpheus*. Aaron also presented an essay at the English Majors Colloquium in 2014. He has accepted a teaching assistant position with the University of Dayton and will begin work on his English Masters in the Fall.

Emily Gunberg is a senior majoring in English and Human Services and Counseling and is President of Alpha Kappa Phi, the Lindsey Wilson College Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. In addition to being published here, she also presented her essay at the Sixth Annual LWC Women's Studies Conference in April 2017. She is the recipient of the 2015 Delorah Jewell Moore English Scholarship and is the English Program's 2017 Student of the Year.

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Rebekah Mitchell is a sophomore pursuing a degree in Human Services and Counseling, with a Minor in English. She is a Resident Assistant and a member of the Band at Lindsey Wilson College.

Rebecca Sanders is a junior majoring in English and Human Services and Counseling. She is a member of Sigma Tau Delta. In addition to having her essay published, she also presented it at the Sixth Annual LWC Women's Studies Conference in April 2017. She wants to use both her degrees to help people and to make the world a better place.

Rebekah Sanders graduated with an English degree in Spring 2016 and is currently pursuing a MA in Writing at the University of Dayton. She was a Begley Scholar and an active participant in the R.V. Bennett Honors Program during her time at LWC. Additionally, she is a member of Sigma Tau Delta and was the English Program's 2016 Student of the Year.

Jimmy Temples is an English major who emphasizes the importance of pop culture in the literary canon. He is an active participant in the R.V. Bennett Honors Program at Lindsey Wilson College. He is the recipient of the 2017 Delorah Jewell Moore English Scholarship. After receiving his BA, he plans to pursue a PhD in English and continue his career in academia.