

AKΦ

THE ALPHA KAPPA PHI REVIEW

ANNUAL JOURNAL OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH  
IN THE HUMANITIES

VOLUME VII  
SPRING 2021

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**VOLUME VII  
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## CONTENTS

Preface	4
Acknowledgements	5
<b>Landon Simmons</b> The Destruction of Identity in the Anthropocene	6
<b>Alexandra Wilson</b> Climate Refugees: An Analysis of Mohsin Hamid’s <i>Exit West</i> in Light of the Anthropocene	13
<b>Erica Smith</b> The Anthropocene and Human Rights	22
<b>Hannah Brown</b> I Said, Uhuru!	29
<b>Charlotte Archey</b> Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Foreign Language Education	37
<b>BethAnne Swick</b> Will I Survive? Impacts of Covid-19 on LGBTQ+ Individuals in Rural Areas	44
<b>Anna Ford</b> Subverting the Alignment of Women with the Body in <i>The Matrix</i>	51
<b>Jessica Armstrong</b> “How far are you willing to go for an evil white man?”: Psychoanalytic Film Theory in Netflix’s <i>You</i>	58
Notes on the Contributors	83

## 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.

This volume contains a broad range of student essays. These essays span a wide variety of topics and academic disciplines, including detailed analyses of works by major authors and solutions for pressing societal concerns that have major implications on our world today. All of the essays that appear in the *Alpha Kappa Phi Review* have gone through a rigorous peer-review selection and revision process resulting in the inclusion of only works that achieve the highest excellence. All of the essays rely on secondary research and/or extensive textual evidence to support their analyses and claims.

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 graduate students. In this historic year of the COVID-19 pandemic, several of this year’s submissions are interwoven with subjects directly or indirectly pertaining to the impact of the pandemic. This volume includes eight student essays on a variety of topics from human rights to literature to language and perception. The reader will find the essays organized thematically, not alphabetically, moving sequentially from planetary concerns to the internal world of the mind.

The first three essays explore the topic of the Anthropocene and its impacts on human society through literary analysis. Landon Simmons, Alexandra Wilson, and Erica Smith each provide an in-depth analysis of literary representations of the Anthropocene, focusing on how the climate crisis impacts the Global South and human rights. The next two essays analyze language as a powerful political and educational tool. Hannah Brown’s essay examines how language writes back to colonial oppression and the British literary canon through an analysis of Caribbean playwright Aimé Césaire’s rewriting of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Also focusing on language, Charlotte Archey’s essay persuasively argues for the value of a foreign language education. The final three essays in this year’s volume center on issues of gender and sexuality. BethAnne Swick gives a personal narrative and research investigation of the impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ discrimination and access to healthcare, especially in rural communities. Anna Ford considers the representation of women in *The Matrix*, arguing for a reevaluation of the role of gender in Western philosophy and Platonic discourses. Jessica Armstrong’s essay concludes this year’s volume with an in-depth, psychoanalytic analysis of the contemporary Netflix series *You*, focusing on gender and sexuality.

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.

—Justin Sturgeon and Jessica Armstrong  
Co-Editors-in-Chief  
April 2021



The editorial board would like to thank the following English, Political Science, and History faculty members for serving as Faculty Reviewers for this volume:

Ms. Mary Baker  
Dr. Rachel Carr  
Dr. Kara Mollis  
Dr. Matt Powers  
Dr. Kerry Robertson  
Dr. Elizabeth Tapscott

Each submission to the *Alpha Kappa Phi Review* undergoes an extensive review process in which it is anonymously evaluated by both student editors and faculty.

We are grateful to Dr. Paul Thifault for founding and establishing the *Alpha Kappa Phi Review* in 2015, then the sole undergraduate research journal at Lindsey Wilson College. We are also grateful to Dr. Tip Shanklin for publishing the third volume. Finally, the last five volumes of the *Review* would not have been possible without the mentorship of Dr. Steffens.



Critical essays in the Humanities, broadly defined as the fields of English, History, Women's and Gender Studies, Philosophy, Theology, Theatre, Film, Political Science, 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](mailto:steffensk@lindsey.edu).

## The Destruction of Identity in the Anthropocene

Landon Simmons

The Anthropocene, the geological epoch in which humanity is the single largest force impacting the planet's geological development, has been discussed by literary critics such as Rob Nixon as also being an era riddled by the deadly phenomenon of slow violence. Unlike war or terrorist attacks like 9/11, Nixon argues that the violence of climate change often happens at such a large, planetary scale and over generations that it is rendered invisible or difficult to imagine. This slow violence tends to be regarded by critics in a strictly physical sense—referring either to the destruction of the environment or the killing of the planet's most vulnerable populations as a result of that environmental destruction. The challenge for Nixon and other activist writers lies in representing this slow violence in literary form, so that the ecological and human toll of climate change can be adequately addressed as a serious issue. Amitav Ghosh, in his novel *Gun Island* (2019), takes a new approach with this concept of slow violence, speaking not only of the gradual destruction of the environment and the impact this destruction has on the world's poor, but also of our very notions of identity as individuals and as a species. I argue that for Ghosh, slow violence seeps far beyond the physical, and is an inherently psychological—and perhaps even spiritual—crisis from which no one is free. Ghosh takes on the mantle of writer-activist to illuminate the Anthropocene's role in deteriorating notions of what it means to be autonomous humans. For the purpose of this paper, I ask the following question: In what ways does Ghosh illustrate how the slow violence of the Anthropocene deteriorates our identities? This question is significant because it challenges literary critics to expand their understanding of the extent that the Anthropocene and slow violence play in our daily lives and how they are represented in literature. In *Gun Island*, Ghosh examines the roles that climate change, nationalism, and commodification play in fundamentally dismantling one's sense of individual autonomy and self-conception. He shows that Western notions of identity in particular are fundamentally flawed, and thus most prone to the Anthropocene's deconstructive tendencies.

In his introduction to *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Rob Nixon argues that writer-activists must accept the responsibility to address the Anthropocenic phenomenon of slow violence, a process by which the world's most vulnerable populations are being slowly and unnoticeably killed by human-caused pollution and climate change (Nixon 1-

44). In expanding upon what exactly this phenomenon is, Nixon writes that “[by] slow violence [he means] a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (2). While Nixon’s definition of slow violence may initially be interpreted as referring only to physical happenings that contribute, almost invisibly, to the deaths of certain populations, his definition also includes the psychological harm committed against given populations within the Anthropocene. This psychological violence, “[occurring] gradually and out of sight” and being a sort of “attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” is a type of violence that Ghosh gives particular attention to in *Gun Island*.

In his book *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, Amitav Ghosh makes the case that issues regarding the Anthropocene and climate change are of too large a scale for people to properly grasp, and that it should be the aim of contemporary novelists to not only raise awareness of these issues, but also to rectify the disjunction between the perceptions and realities of them (Ghosh 3-63). Critical to my argument is the following passage, in which Ghosh remarks on how future generations may react to our stark and remarkable lack of art and literature that should serve as indicators of the climate crisis we live in:

And when they fail to find them, what should they—what can they—do other than to conclude that ours was a time when most forms of art and literature were drawn into the modes of concealment that prevented people from recognizing the realities of their plight? Quite possibly, then, this era, which so congratulates itself on its self-awareness, will come to be known as the time of the Great Derangement. (11)

This passage provides key insights into a way in which conceptions of identity are destroyed by the Anthropocene. It illustrates that Westerners’ preconceived notions of self, particularly as beings that are self-aware, are proven to be false as they are increasingly shown to be blind to a catastrophe of their own making. Western society suggests that the world as they have industrialized it is sustainable, and they have thus constructed our identity as an “enlightened” civilization on a faulty premise. Clearly, Ghosh says, Westerners are not who they think we are. And for Ghosh to declare that they have so greatly deranged themselves and remain willfully ignorant in the face of mountains of evidence, indicates that to accept their current reality would be to face something of an identity crisis. This crisis of Western identity is both a symptom and a component of the slow

violence which Nixon describes, occurring in response to the worldwide violence and destruction, and the preconceived notion of Western identity becoming a casualty itself.

This issue is explored further through some of Ghosh's earlier novels. In "Tracing the Strong Green Streaks in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh: An Eco-critical Reading," Nazia Hasan underscores Ghosh's track record of addressing environmental issues in his various literary works (Hasan 182-193). Hasan also explores how Ghosh attributes the causes and effects of these various issues (182-193). In analyzing Ghosh's novel *The Glass Palace*, Hasan makes the following observations:

The later development of the novel shows that destruction of nature leads ultimately to self-destruction. These incidents devise and create an important pattern of man as the self-assumed master. They depict man as being reviled and berated by the so far 'neutral' nature, supposed to be just out there for man's use, need and enjoyment. (187)

Here, Hasan illustrates that humanity's nature-destroying activities in the book are complicit in the self-perception that assumes humanity to be the "masters" of the natural world. This cultivated identity is indicated by Ghosh to be fundamentally incorrect. Furthermore, this pseudo-identity is ultimately challenged by nature, which as an entity of its own strikes back at humanity and reestablishes its own dominance. Hasan argues that Ghosh represents nature in his novels as the true, yet forgotten and vindictive, master of the world. It can be understood that nature enacts this vengeance through the slow violence which Nixon describes, and that this slowly chips away the pedestal which humanity has placed itself upon.

Taken altogether, these three sources reveal a great deal about the Anthropocene's role in the deterioration of identity, especially collective Western identity. Rob Nixon's phenomenon of slow violence appears to be evident in two key processes which are indicated by Ghosh in his works: the construction of a false identity, and nature's retaliation against that identity. These are slow in the sense that these are processes that occur gradually throughout the course of the Anthropocene, and they are also violent in their own distinctive ways. The first process is a form of violence purported by humanity against itself: in constructing the false identity of supposed self-awareness and mastery of nature, as Hasan describes, humanity destroys its necessarily pre-existing identity of humility and respect for nature. The second process is a form of violence purported by nature against humanity: in response to humanity's construction of an identity which

is narcissistic and hegemonic, nature retaliates by reasserting its own dominance and consequently dismantling that identity. Ultimately, both processes of destruction are humanity's own doing, being the catalyst for the Anthropocene itself. The Anthropocene being an era in which the nature of human identity is frangible is a theme inherent to Ghosh's fiction. In his works, Ghosh illustrates the causes and consequences of this identity crisis and prods the reader to consider how Western conceptions of nature and the world might change in order to adequately respond to the larger climate crisis at hand. This is a theme that presents itself heavily in *Gun Island*, and the instances in which this is so shall be subsequently examined.

One passage in *Gun Island* in which the nature of human identity is shown to be corroded by the Anthropocene is the following, in which the novel's protagonist, Deen, describes the impacts that Cyclone Aila had on the Sundarbans:

Yet Aila's long-term consequences were even more devastating than those of earlier cyclones. Hundreds of miles of embankment had been swept away and the sea had invaded places where it had never entered before; vast tracts of once fertile land had been swamped by salt water, rendering them uncultivable for a generation, if not forever. (Ghosh 52-53)

While the destruction of any sort of human identity may not be entirely evident within the passage at first glance, further inspection reveals this theme to be a significant undertone. The nature of the passage, at one level, deals with the traditional understanding of slow climate violence as outlined by Rob Nixon, noting the impact of cyclones throughout time and remarking on the long-term effects of Aila on the land's fertility. Viewing the passage through the lens of Hasan's criticism, however, allows one to see how that slow violence is also committed against the previously-assumed identity of "man as the self-assumed master" of nature (Hasan 187). These are, after all, "long-term consequences" that render "vast tracts of once fertile land...uncultivable for a generation, if not forever" (Ghosh 52-53). The words "fertile" and "uncultivable" highlight humanity's role as "self-assumed master" of those lands, which had served the sole purpose of fulfilling humanity's agricultural needs and desires. Cyclone Aila's severe destruction of the region, however, seriously impedes the requisites for that domineering self-conception, and highlights just one aspect of the Anthropocene's ability to diminish that falsely constructed identity.

The Anthropocene is, aside from climate change, also intrinsically linked with transnationalism. This proves to be a prevalent theme throughout *Gun Island* as Ghosh explores the role that climate change, industrialization, and other aspects of the epoch play in the blurring of national boundaries and identities. One such example of this exploration comes towards the end of the novel, as the blue boat of refugees draws nearer to its destination of Italy. As Deen arrives with his fellow activists to the fleet of vessels awaiting the refugees, he makes the following observation:

As we closed on the vessels ahead it became clear that right-wing, anti-immigrant groups had indeed mustered by far the larger force, with many more boats and supporters than we had. On the evidence of the flags that were fluttering above their decks it seemed that some of their supporters had come a long way to support their cause - from Germany, Hungary, Russia, Singapore and Australia. (298)

The context of this passage proves to be critical to understanding its significance, as it illustrates that these protesters have amassed in order to prevent the destruction of their national identities—something they undoubtedly feel quite strongly about, as evidenced by the vast distances they have traveled. However, in attempting to prevent the formation of a new “transnational” identity (which would fundamentally mean the destruction of their currently conceived Western identity) they do this anyways by uniting with protestors from other nations. The conglomeration of protestors, while seeking to preserve their national identities, are not initially identified by their national origin, but are instead referred to collectively as “right-wing, anti-immigrant groups,” which are unifying ideals that they have allowed to transcend their nationalities. This isn’t an embracing of total transnationalism, for, as Deen later points out, the majority of these protestors want only “to preserve the whiteness of their own territories” (305). However, it is exemplary of the fact that the rigidity of these nationalists’ identities is weakening under the pressure of the Anthropocene.

The final passage that illustrates the extent of the Anthropocene’s destruction of identity also comes towards the end of the book. In this particular passage, Cinta is espousing her own wisdom on the very topic of this paper after Deen expresses his fearfulness of several recent uncanny experiences. Here, she elaborates on what she means by her implication that living in the Anthropocene has led people to become “possessed”:

‘Everybody knows what must be done if the world is to continue to be a liveable place ... and yet we are powerless, even the most powerful among us. We go about

our daily business through habit, as though we were in the grip of forces that have overwhelmed our will; we see shocking and monstrous things happening all around us and we avert our eyes; we surrender ourselves willingly to whatever has us in its power.’ (236-237)

Life in the Anthropocene, Cinta says, produces docility, leading “even the most powerful among us” to succumb to a perpetual state of nihilistic stupor. This phenomenon is the direct result of living in a world of, what Cinta refers to earlier as, “impersonal systems” (236). These systems, willfully overlooked by most, induce these lives of “habit” in which the “shocking and monstrous things” of the world rarely succeed in even phasing people. It is in living such lifestyles that individuals find that their “sense of presence slowly fades, or is lost or forgotten - it’s easier to let the systems take over” (236). These “impersonal systems,” which have become so entrenched in Western lifestyle and worldview, are the direct product of the industrialization that is inherent to the Anthropocene. They destroy Western identities, Cinta says, by isolating them, making them feel so powerless and insignificant to the point that they “surrender [themselves] willingly” to them. It is thus even more impossible for humanity to be the “self-assumed master” of nature, for it has become nothing more than a pawn of the Anthropocene’s many systems—humanity’s own creation.

All three of these passages from *Gun Island* indicate a vital way in which humanity’s conceptions of identity, as it relates to its place and significance in the world, are fundamentally diminished by the various facets of the Anthropocene. This is a process that is slow, simply due to the developmental nature of the centuries-spanning Anthropocene, but also one which is undoubtedly violent, in the sense of its conceptual and psychological destructiveness. The Anthropocene’s excessive propensity for destroying preconceived identities is not necessarily a bad thing in itself, as Ghosh illustrates that it succeeds in dismantling harmful Western notions, but it does highlight both the volatility of the era and the malleable nature of identity. Authors and activists such as Ghosh argue that it is up to us to recognize this and highlight through works such as *Gun Island* that we can and must reconceive our own identities in a way that is best-suited to tackle the unprecedented challenges that the Anthropocene bestows upon the world.

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## **Climate Refugees: An Analysis of Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* in Light of the Anthropocene**

*Alexandra Wilson*

The Earth is morphing under the hands of humans who cultivate, live, change, fight, migrate, and die on the planet. Anthropocene is a term for the resultant impressions that humans make on Earth and the proposed current geological epoch of the Earth in which humans have the single largest impact on the planet to the point of large-scale geological and climatic change. Climatic change, much like the impact of war, collides with humanity, forcing thousands to flee for survival. An example of this devastating collision can be seen in the overwhelming exodus from the Middle East, specifically in Syria, a country undergoing a civil war with a cataclysmic toll on human lives and the surrounding environment. The Syrian Civil War has forced millions of Syrians to become climate and war refugees. Mohsin Hamid explores these intersecting forms of transnational migration through the lens of the Anthropocene in his 2017 novel, *Exit West*. The novel is set in an undisclosed Middle Eastern country experiencing a civil war, similar to Syria's current crisis. Throughout the novel, black doors appear in locations across the planet and transport people to other places worldwide. In *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid explores the connection between war and the resultant human rights violations, such as refugee crises. In such contexts, not only are families and civilians devastated by war, but the environment as well. In civil wars, such as the Syrian Civil War, millions are displaced due to the fighting and thus become climate refugees from the ecological devastation of the land. In this paper, I analyze the connection between these themes, arguing that the novel presents climate refugees in the Anthropocene as the human rights crisis of our time. Ultimately, Hamid proposes a new way of relating to one another as a human species in response to the Anthropocene.

### **Context: The Anthropocene, War, and Transnational Migration**

Although climate change and the Syrian Refugee Crisis are serious, they are ultimately symptoms of a larger-scale, geological era that we have recently entered. The Anthropocene refers to a geological era in which humans are the single most significant impact on the Earth. This means that the Anthropocene goes beyond climate change and represents human impact at the level of deep time on a planetary scale. The value of considering the Anthropocene in addition to climate change, is that it allows us to extend the scale of the issue to be much more than about one war

and one refugee crisis. Paul Crutzen, the geologist who coined the term, addresses the longevity of the Anthropocene in his article, “Geology of Mankind.” He states, “Unless there is a global catastrophe - a meteorite impact, a world war or a pandemic - mankind will remain a major environmental force for many a millennia” (23). The Anthropocene is not going anywhere, and this geological era is not something that mankind can stop. Additionally, humanity will continue to have to face the consequences of choices that have been made throughout the decades and centuries. However, this seemingly dire state of affairs does not mean that effort cannot be put in to lessen the blow. Crutzen claims that “A daunting task lies ahead for scientists and engineers to guide society towards environmentally sustainable management during the era of the Anthropocene” (23). In addition to the work of scientists, literary writers have a role to play in imagining this planetary problem and guiding society towards a new state of mind in regard to issues in the Anthropocene. Mohsin Hamid does this in *Exit West* by providing an imaginative future of transnational migration that has the potential to unite humanity as a species rather than divide.

Through fiction, Mohsin Hamid invites readers to see how the Syrian Refugee Crisis is a global migration issue. This allows his audience to consider the ecological devastation and human rights violations in terms of civilization’s need to adapt in the face of the Anthropocene. Not only is the war impacting the people of Syria, but it is also impacting the environment. In his essay, “Learning to Die in the Anthropocene,” climate activist Roy Scranton relates his experience as a veteran of the Iraq war to the current climate crisis. He contends that climate change is one of the primary challenges facing the military today and observes, “From the perspective of many policy experts, climate scientists, and national security officials, the concern is not whether global warming exists or how we prevent it, but how we are going to adapt to life in the hot, volatile world we’ve created” (17). This “hot, volatile world” is dual purpose (17). Not only is the world more hot and volatile because of human choices such as “carbon-fueled capitalism,” but also because of the damaging impacts of war on the environment. Gar Smith supports Scranton’s argument in his book *War and the Environment*, in which he argues “armed conflicts have continued to cause significant damage to the environment—directly, indirectly, and as a result of a lack of governance and institutional collapse” (280). He later provides examples of how industrial sites are frequently bombed, releasing toxic chemicals, and how oil is often spilled in bombings which polluted water supplies in Kosovo and Jiyeh. Chemical contamination and oil in

the oceans are devastating to the environment and these are simply two examples of how wars exponentially increase the climate crisis.

In regard to the Syrian Civil War, PAX, a driving force behind a campaign that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017, illustrates how this ecological devastation is already happening. For example, after bombings in May 2014 and November 2012 in Aleppo, water pumping stations and pipelines were damaged to the point that “cities lost their water supply for several weeks, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. In Aleppo, damage to the sewage system resulted in the contamination of drinking water. This posed a serious risk to the population’s health, as the price of fuel has skyrocketed, limiting the ability to boil water” (29). All of these examples demonstrate how war and the environment are tightly knit with one another and how the climate is just another layer in terms of the consequences of this “hot, volatile world” as Scranton claims. The oppressive living conditions of the people that live in these communities points to the human impact that has ushered us into the age of the Anthropocene and the crises that are resulting from it.

Not only is the Syrian Civil War wreaking havoc on the environment, but it has also become a human rights crisis in regard to climate refugees. The Syrian Refugee Crisis is a direct result of the civil war that started in 2011. According to a BBC article titled “Why Is There a War in Syria?” as of 2018, 500,000 people have been killed or are presumed missing. Additionally, as of 2019, 5.7 million people are considered refugees. There are also 6.2 million civilians who are internally displaced within Syria due to the destruction of their homes. The Syrian Refugee Crisis is one of the most prominent examples of transnational migration and has dominated the Western News Media Cycles as one of the most pressing human rights challenges of our time. Although Hamid sets the novel in an unnamed Middle Eastern country, it is clear that the novel alludes to the Syrian Refugee crisis. By leaving the country unnamed, Hamid is better able to use his setting as a stand-in for the universal realities and effects that war has on the planet in the age of the Anthropocene.

Furthermore, the Anthropocene impacts the human mind as well as the Earth and human bodies. The result of the physical restructuring of the landscape is the cognitive restructuring of the human mind and how people see themselves in conjunction with the planet and each other. French philosopher Bruno Latour addresses this in his book *Down to Earth: Politics and the New Climatic Regime*. He states, “Now if there is no planet, no earth, no soil, no territory, to house the Globe of globalization toward which all these countries claim to be headed, then there is no longer

an assured ‘homeland,’ as it were, for anyone” (5). The Anthropocene is ravaging homes of communities throughout the globe, thus changing the physical landscape, and as displaced people search for somewhere to rest their heads, people worldwide have to grapple with the fact that their way of life is in danger of change. Latour goes on to suggest that, “It is a question of attachment, of lifestyle, that’s being pulled out from under us” (8). The “us” that he is referring to is the Western world. The West is attached to the way things have always been, and the idea of change evokes a sense of loss that causes distress and denial to those impacted by the Anthropocene.

In *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene*, Roy Scranton also addresses the closing of this chapter in civilization and the mental adaptation that he argues must occur. As he states, “The human psyche naturally rebels against the idea of its end” (22). Survival is imperative to any species, but humans not only want to live, they want to live how they have always lived. This goes back to the attachment of lifestyle on which Latour comments. However, Scranton builds upon Latour’s thesis by conveying a surprisingly optimistic message that, “this civilization is already dead” (23). This notion of a defeated and buried way of life swiftly executes the hope that “things will be fine.” With the death of one civilization, comes the birth of another that will progress humanity into the future of survival. To achieve that, Scranton proposes that civilizations turn away from finding solutions in politics, but rather finding their survival in adopting the military mindset of learning how to die.

Both Latour and Scranton present choices that they argue civilization is left with given the Anthropocene’s undeniable reality. Emphasizing the generalized dilemma that all societies must face, Scranton poses, “We can continue acting as if tomorrow will be just like yesterday, growing less and less prepared for each new disaster as it comes [...] Or we can learn to see each day as the death of what came before, freeing ourselves to deal with whatever problems the present offers” (27). He challenges the people of the world, especially those in the West and in elite class positions worldwide, to look at their attachment to their lifestyle and weigh whether it is worth the price of the habitability of the planet for present and future generations. Scranton also prompts readers to shift their perspective by changing how they “see each day” and being able to let go of the past and to move forward into the future. Latour poses a similar choice, but more specifically to the United States, “acknowledging the extent of climate change and the immensity of its responsibility, or [...] plunge further into denial [...] leading the rest of the world into the abyss – perhaps for good” (7). This passage provokes citizens of the United States and other western countries to

consider the impact that they are having on the rest of the world by setting a precedent and insisting on their attitude of denial and willful hindrance of climate change activism. The road is diverging, and the rest of the world has decided to acknowledge climate change and the threat it poses. However, the United States has to decide whether or not they will help lead the way into this new era of civilization. In contrast to Scranton, who addresses a much larger audience of civilians, Latour focuses on the political realm and challenges the Western powers of the world to be accountable for their responsibility in leading the world “into the abyss” (7).

The choice of how to respond to the Anthropocene is not the only philosophical and physical barrier that must be overcome. Latour recognizes a “universal lack of shareable space and inhabitable land” (9). This minimal amount of space leads to people feeling like, “the ground is in the process of giving way” (9) and this puts their “dreams of a secure identity in danger” (10). He reframes this issue by redefining land as “territory” (8), which then paints the issue of sharing land as one of possession and contention. This further addresses the attachment that people have to their lifestyle and the feeling of losing familiarity in their own home. People long for security and find comfort in their culture and the makeup of their communities. Furthermore, this is a security that people will fight for and has been the cause of countless wars. Scranton argues that war and the military are not the answer and he calls for a new Humanism that will unite, rather than divide humanity. Latour recognizes that globalization presents a threat to the consistency people are used to, and therefore why they rebel against the change. On the other hand, Scranton recognizes this conflict but rather pushes for people to “create a sense of collective humanity that exists beyond any one place” (25). The philosophy of a “collective humanity” is the stance that Hamid proposes in *Exit West*. Latour challenges this stance. He argues that, “Even a Diogenes has the right to barrel, as does a nomad to his tent, a refugee to her asylum” (11). This passage creates an unsolvable problem of limited space, too many people, and raises the issue of the collective versus the individual. All citizens deserve to have the peace of mind of knowing where they are to lay their heads at night. However, that poses the problem of should the nomad give up his tent in order for the refugee to have her asylum? In *Exit West*, Hamid calls for an Earth that adapts as it “[undergoes] considerable change” (179). As the world changes so do the habits and conditions of the people. The constant migration of Saeed and Nadia in the novel suggest that Hamid is advocating for a collective shift in humanities mindset and how they view territory. Latour and Scranton also

contend that humanity needs to change its perspective by redefining territory and learning to let go of the past.

While there may not be an exact answer to the philosophical problems posed by the Anthropocene, Latour and Scranton have proposed similar solutions. Latour advocates a cosmopolitan political system that can be attained by “multiplying viewpoints, [...] taking into account a larger number of beings, cultures, phenomena, organisms, and people” (12). Likewise, Scranton says that we need to “draw from our immense heritage of intellectual production, living and dead, exotic and close at hand: from the Iñupiat and from Islam, from Heraclitus and Zhuangzi, from the Torah and from the Buddha, from the Federalist Papers and from the Communist Manifesto” (24). Both Latour and Scranton agree that if we are to survive the Anthropocene, we need to have as many voices and viewpoints as possible. Scranton believes these new worldviews will come in the form of philosophy, while Latour turns to national and international politics. They both claim that humanity needs to work together and to learn from each other and history to overcome the evolving surface of the earth and the daunting questions about humanity’s future in the Anthropocene. In the wake of the human rights crisis of our generation, Hamid agrees that the human race needs to work together to find solutions for climate and war refugees alike.

Betty Fisher expands on Scranton and Latour’s arguments in “Doors to Safety: Exit West, Refugee Resettlement, and the Right to Asylum.” Fisher analyzes *Exit West* through the framework of the human rights issues of the refugee crises of the world. However, she does not explore how the environment is a factor in refugee migration or how refugee migration is a factor on the environment. She uses the plot of the novel to frame her argument that nations need to stop utilizing “refugee resettlement as a tool to limit asylum claims” (1119). In her argument, she goes into great detail regarding how the plot of the novel illustrates national governments denying asylum to refugees. Fisher builds upon Latour and Scranton’s conversation of territory and space. She claims, “For those who are able to flee from their own country, access to territory may not be enough” (1123). She argues that land is not adequate in ensuring the protection of refugees’ human rights. She identifies the three “durable solutions,” which are returning to one’s country of origin, local integration, or legal admission into the country in which they have sought refuge (1123). She analyzes these solutions in terms of their effectiveness and in the context of the novel. Fisher uses *Exit West* and the black doors to convey the urgency of those who are seeking asylum. She concludes that border security should not take priority over refugees seeking safety. She writes,

“Opening the smallest of doors cannot justify building walls” (1134). This coincides with Scranton and Hamid’s vision of the future of a Humanitarian mindset that unites rather than divides.

### ***Exit West and Climate Refugees***

In *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid argues that migration is not only about space and moving through physical locations, but also about moving through time. With this conception of migration, we can analyze the novel through the lens of the Anthropocene. Hamid establishes the importance of individuals needing to consider their planetary placement in the Anthropocene era early in his text. He sets the scene and describes Saeed’s apartment and how it is an optimal location that would induce a “premium during gentler, more prosperous times” but then quickly turns “undesirable in time of conflict” (11). The narrator answers, "Location, location, location, the realtors say. Geography is destiny, respond the historians" (11). The impact of this passage is felt more since it is backdropped by civil war happening in the streets. Hamid points out that so much of a person's life is grounded in their physical positioning on the planet and the accident of their birth into a particular country, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Location is everything. Those who live in lands that are peaceful and prosperous do not live in fear. However, those in locations that are being torn apart by violence, hatred, and destruction due to natural disasters are searching to change their destiny by relocating geographically. Realtors know the value of this fact and recognize that people are willing to pay unknown sums of money, just for the location of a property, because where a person is on this planet determines everything, including their future, safety, lineage, and peace of mind. Hamid argues that in the world as it exists today, in most cases, the geography of someone’s life determines their destiny. So, when the number of habitable places dwindles, due to the planetary change in the Anthropocene, then the necessity of transnational migration becomes apparent. People will scour the Earth to find the “location” that will grant them normalcy, or at the very least, survival. In the novel, Hamid imagines a world that takes this migration crisis to a global scale through the use of the doors and this forces the nations of the world to make a choice: war or adaptation.

Hamid illuminates the emphasis of one's position on the planet. However, he examines this issue through the scope of the Anthropocene that shifts the perspective to how time is also a factor in transnational migration. The narrator describes how, "Saeed's father would sometimes bring out the telescope, and the family would [...] take turns to look up at objects whose light,

often, had been emitted before any of these three viewers had been born - light from other centuries, only now reaching Earth. Saeed's father called this time-travel" (15). The deep time here that is being pointed out in the multi-generational existence of the stars reframes the narrative and connects the characters to the larger scheme of the Anthropocene. This time span calls to a form of time travel as another form of migration just as how the characters will later be migrating in a physical and geographical sense. The stars not only represent the deep connection to time, but it also is important in relation to space and transnational migration. This relationship can be seen when Saeed is talking to Nadia about "Darkened Cities," a photography collection in which a French photographer captures what the night sky above major cities around the world would look like without electricity. Saeed explains to Nadia that he did not get the cities to turn out their lights for the photos since "above these cities you can barely see the stars. Just like here. He had to go to deserted places. Places with no human lights. For each city's sky he went to a deserted place that was just as far north, or south, at the same latitude basically" (56). Stars here represent a time before the Anthropocene since the light they emit reaches us on Earth centuries after the star burns. The photographer had to go to a place untouched by "human lights" or by human impact. Seeing that the stars are vessels that represent time travel, this passage collapses the geographical migration (the photographer traveling around the world for the night sky) and temporal migration. Hamid thus raises the point that humans are not only injuring the present, but also endangering the future, and severing the ties that connect to the past.

In a later scene, Hamid envisions a mindset for the future that hinges upon an adaptation of the mind by unifying the human species in regard to migration through time. In one of the final episodes with the doors in the novel, Hamid depicts an American woman in California who has lived in one place for her whole life and is now witnessing the city outside her house dramatically changing due to the doors and the migrant crisis going global. Hamid writes, "and when she went out it seemed to her that she too had migrated, that everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same houses our whole lives because we can't help it. We are all migrants through time" (209). The "we" the narrator refers to transcends humanity and reaches even deeper to the migration that the Earth has made through time. "We" move from stage to stage through lifetimes, just as migrants move from location to location. Humans migrate from childhood to adulthood, to marriage, parenthood, differing phases along the way, until the final migration to death. This concept also applies to the Earth. The planet has migrated through the Paleocene to the Miocene and now has put roots into

the Anthropocene. Hamid is arguing that migration is an unavoidable truth, and to not be migrating in some capacity is to have reached death, a place with no time. Hamid is calling for what Scranton would define as a “collective humanity” mindset, where humans are connected through similarities of the human experience (25). Rather than resort to nationalism and dehumanization of migrants, Hamid argues that we should respond with acceptance and adaptation as a species. Just how the American woman accepted the shifting landscape of her neighborhood, Hamid is promoting his Western readers to make this shift in their minds and imagine a different form of civilization for the human species in the Anthropocene. This episode links back to Hamid and Scranton’s optimistic mindset in letting go of the past in order to create a better world in the Anthropocene.

Ultimately, through *Exit West*, Hamid presents an alternative future to the human rights crisis of climate refugees. The transnational migration of the people traveling through the black doors provides a human thought experiment as to what would happen if societies could not regulate migrants crossing borders. Saeed and Nadia symbolize the human rights crisis of people seeking refuge from both war and the ecological devastation of their homes. In *Exit West*, Hamid conveys that humans must keep moving to new geographical locations because to stay in an uninhabitable environment would destine them for death. Also, the magnitude of deep time represented in the stars and the desire to see them connects humanity to history before the effects of the Anthropocene. Moreover, the collective reality that all entities share by migrating through time paints a larger and more comprehensive picture of all the perspectives and challenges of migration, human rights, and the Anthropocene.

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## The Anthropocene and Human Rights

*Erica Smith*

Many geologists and cultural critics disagree on the starting point of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene, in simple terms, is the current geological era of the Earth; it is characterized by how the actions of humans are the most significant force changing the climate and the geological composition of the Earth. In general, these scholars analyze the impact humans have physically had on the environment dating back to the European discovery of the Americas and the Industrial Revolution. Both of these events were critical periods that started to accelerate climate change due to human activity. This paper will focus on how the Anthropocene, specifically as it relates to current climate change, threatens the human rights of those who live in the Global South. As the world is forced to adjust to the Anthropocene, with its cataclysmic weather events due to the warming planet, those who are most vulnerable are often those whose rights are most easily ignored or taken away. The struggle between human rights and climate change is illustrated in Amitav Ghosh's 2019 novel *Gun Island*. Ghosh uses both the characters and the narrative to depict capitalism's role in hastening the arrival of the Anthropocene, highlighting that the Western lifestyle is unachievable and unsustainable for everyone in the world. Expressly, he argues that it is hypocritical for the West to prohibit the Global South's means of industrialization in the name of climate change, while they do nothing to change their habits. I argue that Ghosh ultimately proposes hybridity between Western and Eastern traditions and religions as an alternative worldview to capitalism and a possible solution to climate change. Literature's ability to represent these alternate worldviews poses a more effective call to action than those presented by Western politicians and corporations.

Ghosh's novel, in illustrating the impact that colonialism and capitalism have had on those in the Global South, demonstrates the Orbis Hypothesis in geological studies of the Anthropocene. Simon L. Lewis and Mark A. Maslin, geography researchers at University College London, argue that the starting point of the Anthropocene is when the new world, the Americas, and the old world, Europe and Asia, collide; they named this the Orbis Hypothesis. They argue, "The arrival of the Europeans in the Caribbean in 1492, and subsequent annexation of the Americas, led to the largest human population replacement in the past 13,000 years, the first global trade networks linking Europe, China, Africa, and the Americas, and the resultant mixing of previously separate biotas"

(174). Essentially, before the European discovery of the Americas, the world was much more separated than it has been since imperialism. Once the Western Hemisphere was discovered, Europeans made it their mission to explore and conquer the land. Consequently, they began to tamper with flora and fauna to profit off of it. The Orbis Hypothesis is essential to *Gun Island* because Ghosh depicts the impact of postcolonialism and capitalism on places like the Sundarbans today. Although the novel does not discuss the Americas in the colonial era, most of the main characters are Indian or Bangladeshi. Due to colonization and British influence, many of the characters strive for a Western lifestyle. Ghosh demonstrates the catastrophic effects a Western lifestyle can have on the environment, particularly when considering the density of the populations in India and South-East Asia more generally. Piya, a marine biologist in the novel, explains, “Well, they’re [oceanic dead zones] these vast stretches of water that have a very low oxygen content--too low for fish to survive. Those zones have been growing at a phenomenal pace, mostly because of residues from chemical reaction that leads to all the oxygen being sucked out of the water” (104). Due to human involvement and the rapid industrialization of the subcontinent to compete in a Western capitalist market, certain parts of the ocean’s atomic makeup have been permanently altered. This is harmful to the animals in the ecosystem. This kind of damage is practically irreversible. As Ghosh shows through Piya’s research, all we can do now is prevent it from getting worse.

Ghosh further discusses the role of the West in climate change in his book, *The Great Derangement*. In analyzing the impact of colonialism and imperialism on climate change, he writes:

Proximity to the water is a sign of affluence and education; a beachfront location is a status symbol; an ocean view greatly increases the value of real estate. A colonial vision of the world, in which proximity to the water represents power and security, mastery and conquest, has now been incorporated into the very foundations of middle-class patterns of living across the globe. (36-37)

In other words, displaying specific characteristics of Western culture establishes a symbol of status. Ghosh argues that the development of coastal cities around the world that are most vulnerable to rising sea levels is a direct result of the intersection between capitalism and colonialism. Westerners do not need to worry about floods because they have enough security to live there comfortably and the capital to rebuild when extreme weather events destroy their

property on the coastlines. Meanwhile, those in the Global South constantly worry about monsoons, typhoons, and other extreme weather events, because they have the power to destroy their food sources, shelter, lives, and society. People in the Global South experience these natural disasters every year, usually without assistance from outside sources. Ghosh's character, Tipu, further explains the significance social media has had with the glamourization and idealization of Western lifestyles throughout the Global South. He claims, "Where d'you think they learn that they need a better life? Shit, where do you think they even get an idea of what a better life is? From their phones of course. [...] And the same phone that shows them those images can also put them in touch with connection men" (66). According to Tipu, social media plays a massive role in the Global South's current discontent and desire to migrate to the West. They can interact with people from the West or even people that have left their country. They see the lavish lifestyles of those who live in the West and they realize that they can and should have the same lifestyle. Thus, they become unhappy with their traditional ways of life; they recognize they deserve more than what they are given.

There is a moral dilemma when those in the Global South want to advance through the same methods as the West. In the Global South, people had been under Western rule for generations and have been disadvantaged because they did not have the same industrial resources as the West. After decolonization, many countries now have the means to industrialize and help their economy, but this industrialization is occurring at the same moment that the world recognizes that industrialization is extremely harmful to the environment and perpetuates climate change. This becomes a human rights issue because how can the West stop the means of industrialization for millions of people around the world in the name of climate change? Is it fair for the rest of the world to be denied the same opportunity for an Industrial Revolution like Europe experienced in the 19th century, which was the engine that drove imperialism? Tipu describes this dilemma from the perspective of someone from the Global South. He explains that in the area, there are a "bunch of dirt-poor, illiterate people scratching out a living by fishing or farming or going into the jungle to collect bamboo and honey. [...] So what are people supposed to do? What would anyone do? If you're young you can't just sit on your butt till you starve to death" (65). In essence, people are desperate for an escape. They feel that it is not fair for them to work to death and struggle to survive while the West lives comfortably. Consequently, they will stop at nothing to achieve a Western lifestyle. Ghosh illustrates the thought processes of climate refugees from the Global South instead

of dehumanizing them, thus contradicting the usual portrayal of migrants and refugees in Western media. This is essential for establishing empathy from Western readers for the refugees.

Ghosh explicitly makes the plight of migrants from the Global South today an issue of human rights in describing this dilemma through the reflections of the narrator, Deen. Upon looking at a boat of migrants on the Mediterranean trying to get to Europe, which is swarmed by marine animals whose migrations are disrupted by warming oceans, Deen thinks:

That tiny vessel represented the upending of a centuries-old project that had been essential to the shaping of Europe. Beginning with the early days of chattel slavery, the European imperial powers had launched upon the greatest and most cruel experiment in planetary remaking that history has ever known. (304-305)

In other words, industrialization and migration mean much more to the citizens of the Global South than it does to the West. The vessel represents the revolution against the past and current enslavement of the people of the Global South by the West. It was originally the image of their enslavement, but they have claimed it as their own. It will symbolize the true ending, or “upending,” of British colonialism. The “century-old project” (304) is colonialism and British imperialism, thus linking the refugees to the Orbis Hypothesis with its emphasis on the Anthropocene dating back to the European discovery of the Americas, the Middle Passage, and the genocide of indigenous peoples in the Americas. Europeans harvested crops from the New World, such as potatoes and corn, and introduced many different crops from the Old World, such as sugarcane and wheat. This eventually led to the Creation of the Columbian Exchange, according to Lewis and Maslin (174). Furthermore, Europeans took Africans and forced them to work on plantations in the Americas or the Caribbean. When Europeans realized that they would make more money by exploiting Africans through slavery, they began to move them by the masses. The people of the global south are finally defying the West’s restrictions that were superimposed on them and are still experienced today.

Although Ghosh emphasizes the past of the Anthropocene, he is inherently focused in *Gun Island* on the future and how we can respond to climate change. He attempts to reassure his readers that it is still not too late to take action against climate change. He recognizes that climate change will always be a political issue, but that politics would offer ineffective solutions. Consequently, he relies on religion to be part of the solution. Ghosh believes that religion can be a great way to motivate people to take action against climate change. James H. Thrall, professor of the study of

religion and culture at Knox College, has analyzed Ghosh's use of religion in his previous novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome*. Thrall observes, "In time, just as the very strangeness of foreign religions seen through Orientalist eyes would come to seem exotically attractive rather than reductively risible, the fortunes of alien religion in science fiction also improved" (292). In other words, science fiction authors, such as Ghosh, are more accepting of using religion to solve climate change. They see religion as a possible catalyst for change. People are more receptive to religions that are similar to their own beliefs. Thus, religion can have the power to influence people to work for the greater good. This is possibly why Ghosh relies so heavily on the Hindu religion but also Catholicism in *Gun Island*. Ghosh reiterates this in *The Great Derangement*; in this article, he observes, "For what it suggests--indeed proves--is that nonhuman forces have the ability to intervene directly in human thought. And to be alerted to such interventions is also to become uncannily aware that conversations among ourselves have always had other participants" (3[1] 1). Nonhuman forces, such as gods from religion, have the power to influence and govern society. Religion can be a method to spark discussion about present-day issues, for example, climate change and the refugee crisis. Religion can persuade people to take action for those specific issues because so many people base their decisions on religion. Furthermore, religion allows us to think on a much broader time-scale than that of the human life and imagine the "nonhuman forces" of the planet itself.

The novel's ending is optimistic because Ghosh wants to instill hope for the future in his readers' minds. During the climactic episode with the boat of refugees on the Mediterranean being swarmed by migrating marine animals and then flocks of birds, the narrator reflects on how "An awestruck silence descended on us at the dark mass came arrowing through the sky: it was as if some limb of the earth had risen into the heavens and were reaching out to touch us. Everything seemed to stand still, even the air" (306). Ghosh emphasizes what could happen if humans and nature are unified once again in this "awesome" and almost supernatural vision. It may not happen on this scale, but it will be just as beautiful. This is nature on its own, responding to the Anthropocene conditions created by humans, "reaching out to touch us." This also relates to the religious aspect as the description reminds readers of Heaven. He describes that it is like "some limb of the earth had risen to the heavens and were reaching out to touch us." Readers may interpret this figuratively; the earth is so peaceful at the moment that it seems to be unearthly. On the other hand, readers may interpret this literally; maybe one day we can restore the earth to its natural state

before the Anthropocene. The latter is unrealistic because of how deeply we are into the Anthropocene, but Ghosh encourages us to imagine what we can change instead of what we cannot change.

Thrall further studies Ghosh's perspective on religion. According to him, "Rooted simultaneously in the past, present, and future as it is, Ghosh's novel similarly makes the most of science fiction's pellicular traffic in 'visions of the future' that examine legacies of the past to 'imagine how life might be otherwise'" (301). Thrall has noticed a common occurrence in Ghosh's writing; he focuses on the past, present, and future of the earth and civilization. He utilizes this theme to give a glimpse of a possible future for humanity. It is a possible motivation for people to act against climate change. People feel more inclined to act if they have a little hope that the world will prevail. This is present at the end of the novel when Deen reflects on his friendship with Cinta. Deen realizes:

Now at last I had an inkling of why she had chosen to bestow her friendship on me: it was as if she had had an intuition that someday we would bring each other *here*, to this juncture in time and space--and that not till then would she find release from the grief of her separation from her daughter. In that instant of clarity I heard again that familiar voice in my ear, repeating those words from La Salute—*Unde Origo Inde Salus*—From the beginning salvation comes," and I understood what she had been trying to tell me that day: that the possibility of our deliverance lies not in the future but in the past, in a mystery beyond memory. (312)

He believes that his friendship with Cinta was not a coincidence. Fate had brought them to the same place, and they both needed each other to fulfill their goals--Cinta accepting the death of her daughter and Deen accepting the reality of what is happening in the world. He references salvation; he acknowledges that the past and future are closely related and that their actions will bring them to true salvation, a better earth. Then, they will be able to save the earth for the people of the future.

In sum, Ghosh recognizes how colonialism, British imperialism, and capitalism have perpetuated climate change and are the origin points for the Anthropocene. He acknowledges the effect they have had on those in the Global South and why they are so desperate to escape to the West. Ghosh empathizes with them and does not criminalize them for wanting to escape to a better life. Ultimately, Ghosh argues that religion can be used as a weapon against climate change and against the indifference the West exhibits toward the human rights of migrants and refugees.

Religion can be utilized to motivate people to take action, especially those in the West. He believes that the Earth has not reached the point of no return within the Anthropocene. The Earth can still be saved if people react now to prevent further damage.

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## I Said, Uhuru!

Hannah Brown

The bare, deconstructed definition of the Kishwahilian term, “uhuru,” is “freedom.” For most people, language involves much more than words used in casual discourse. Language stimulates the power of freedom as it allows one to express their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. It captures the entire essence and identity of a person or group of people. Unfortunately, for some, hegemonic restraints intend to threaten the freedom of language. The act of forcing a foreign language on a person or group of people is dangerous for many reasons. Not only does it strip the indigenous peoples of their identity, but it also silences them and imposes an alternative culture and worldview upon them. Caribbean poet and playwright Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest* (1969) is a direct postcolonial response to William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. The play highlights the racial oppression of the western colonizer to the indigenous, especially as it occurs in language. The former is a literary critique of the latter, exposing the racist depiction of Prospero’s slave, Caliban. In *A Tempest*, Aimé Césaire uses the language of the colonizer to critique colonial oppression within language. Additionally, he emphasizes how mimicry is a subversion of the colonizer’s power through the relationship between Prospero and Caliban. While many Western and European colonizers have used and continue to use language as their primary hegemonic source to “civilize” indigenous peoples, Césaire exposes how forced conformity, especially regarding language, can have a detrimental effect on both the colonizer and the colonized. By highlighting the relationship between language and power, Césaire criticizes the colonizer’s abusive power of language and ultimately reveals the colonizer’s mission to prompt and encourage discriminatory and prejudiced oppressive behavior.

Césaire’s *A Tempest* is a postcolonial critique of the colonial writing displayed in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. *A Tempest* specifically casts its Caliban as a black slave and its Ariel as a “mulatto” slave. The play’s focus shifts from that of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in that it primarily highlights the efforts of both Caliban and Ariel to escape their enslavement by their white, European oppressor, Prospero. In Shakespeare’s original, the main focus is on Prospero’s declining powers in old age and the romance between Prospero’s daughter, Miranda and Ferdinand. The relationship between Prospero and his slaves is a minor storyline in the overall play. This differs greatly from Césaire’s focus that brings Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel to the

forefront. Additionally, *A Tempest* exposes the difference in Prospero's treatment between Caliban, a black slave and Ariel, a mulatto half-white, half-black slave. This differs greatly from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in which Caliban is described as a "savage and deformed native of the island" and Ariel as an "airy spirit attendant upon Prospero" (Shakespeare 3055). This focus shift and change in character description is what allows Césaire to critique and write back to Shakespeare and his writing in *The Tempest*.

Prior to discussing *A Tempest*, the role of language in relation to subverting the colonizer's power is crucial to establish. In his essay, "Of Mimicry and Man," Homi Bhabha discusses the relationship between mimicry and colonialism. He argues that mimicry, or the indigenous people's attempt to appear like their colonizer but with a tone of mockery, questions the authority and the supposed 'superiority' of the colonizer. Bhabha explains that "Mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically" (128). In this statement, Bhabha clarifies that mimicry does not "harmonize" or "repress the difference" together as one (128). The colonized are forced to "resemble" the intended superior culture (128). Thus, they are expected to mimic the culture that is considered dominant. Bhabha takes his argument a step further by explaining that mimicry can work alongside mockery to reveal the true weakness of the colonizer's authority. He contends that "between the area of mimicry and mockery, the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double" (123). Here, Bhabha explains that the relationship between mimicry and mockery poses a great risk for the colonizer to maintain their control. The "reforming, civilizing mission" has the potential to fail if the colonized recognizes that mimicry of the colonizer's culture and language gives them an amount of power to use against the "superior" authority (123). Together, mimicry and mockery can expose the fragileness of the colonizer's culture and how easy both their culture and language are to imitate. Bhabha argues that the effortlessness of the colonized to mimic and mock the language of the colonizer exposes how there is no true superiority of the colonizer in comparison to the indigenous peoples. This is evident in *A Tempest* as Caliban exposes the ease of mimicking Prospero. Through the relationship between Caliban and Prospero, Césaire demonstrates Bhabha's argument that mimicry suppresses the colonizer's sense of power. Not only does mimicry suppress the colonizer's control, it also threatens their authority as the indigenous peoples could potentially become more civilized than the colonizer.

Steve Almquist argues in his essay, “Not Quite Gabbling of ‘A Thing Most Brutish,’” that Césaire presents the Africanized version of Caliban through the use of the single word, “uhuru.” The first interaction we see of Caliban and Prospero, in Act I, Scene I of *A Tempest*, establishes that the relationship between the two is defined solely on language. Almquist explains that when Caliban enters while shouting “uhuru,” Césaire has presented an African voice in a white, Prospero’s world. The use of the Kishwahilian word immediately poses a threat to the colonizer, Prospero. In Almquist’s own words, he explains, “Uhuru threatened to demolish the common representation of the childlike, faithful, and loyal African” (587). To extend Almquist’s argument, I argue that the threat that Caliban imposes on Prospero by speaking his indigenous language is what drives Prospero to force the colonizing language on Caliban in return. Prospero then uses language as his hegemonic source to “civilize” Caliban. As Almquist points out, through the shout of “uhuru” Caliban demolished the image of the “childlike, faithful, and loyal African” (587). Prospero, afraid to lose power and control, responds by forcing his language on Caliban. Additionally, I would argue that though Caliban does partially lose his African voice, the repetition of “uhuru” establishes that Caliban will never fully be colonized by Prospero because he refuses to truly trade his own indigenous language for the language of the colonizer. While Caliban is forced to learn Prospero’s language, he realizes that the colonizer’s language and culture are easy to imitate. Soon, he understands that the weakness of Prospero’s world is revealed through his own mimicry of the colonizer’s language. Once the realization occurs that Prospero’s language is not truly one of authority, Caliban understands that there is no superiority between Prospero’s words and “uhuru.” Caliban uses Prospero’s own language against him to reclaim his own identity and to expose the fragility of the colonizer’s language. Thus, confirming that while Caliban cannot truly gain power over Prospero, mimicry allows him to subvert Prospero’s power.

Rob Nixon begins his essay “Caribbean and African Appropriations of “The Tempest”” by explaining that an anticolonial movement in the Caribbean and Africa took place between the late 1950s to early 1970s due to an increasing rise of conscious awareness and the acknowledgment of oppressive white, European behavior. Césaire’s *A Tempest* was published in 1969. Nixon argues that in Césaire’s adaption, “Caliban’s culture of resistance is his sole weaponry as Césaire plumbs the depths of the slave’s African past to make him a more equal adversary” (571). Adding to Nixon’s argument, it is important to note that Caliban’s resistance to conforming plays a crucial role in his decolonization, but I argue his nonconformity would not be as powerful without the use

of mimicry of Prospero's language. Though he does refuse to conform, he is forced to learn Prospero's language and culture and eventually understands that the language he is forced to imitate is not as superior as Prospero claims it to be. Not only does he have to adjust to the colonizer's "superior" culture, he is also expected to imitate them as well. Through the imitation of Prospero's language, Caliban is able to exercise his weapon of camouflaged mimicry. He uses both mimicry and mockery as a subversion of Prospero's power and authority. The realization of the subversion of Prospero's power is what allows Caliban to truly resist conformity.

The relationship between Prospero and Caliban is built upon language. From the moment that Caliban enters in Act I, Scene II, Prospero demonstrates that his mission is to "civilize" Caliban. As Caliban arrives, he shouts:

CALIBAN: Uhuru!

PROSPERO: What did you say?

CALIBAN: I said, Uhuru!

PROSPERO: Yet another return to your savage tongue. I've already told you, I don't like it. You could be polite, at least: hello wouldn't kill you. (17)

The use of his native language was a thoughtful and smart move for Caliban. It demonstrates how he is refusing to conform as he continues to use his indigenous language while also learning the language of the colonizer. The repetition of "uhuru" is Caliban's way of mocking Prospero. Caliban is able to deconstruct Prospero's language, but Prospero does not have the advantage of understanding Kishwahilian. Caliban uses his knowledge of the two languages as an advantage to mimic and mock Prospero, ultimately proving that Prospero's language and culture is truly not "superior" to Caliban's. Prospero responds to Caliban by asking, "what did you say?" because he is unable to understand the meaning of "uhuru" (17). Caliban answers by repeating the word but he never actually explains the meaning of "uhuru" to Prospero (17). Nixon argues that "Césaire's Caliban cannot throw off European influences entirely [but] recuperation of a residual past is sufficient to secure his relative cultural autonomy" (572). Here, Nixon explains that although Caliban does have to imitate Prospero's language, the repeated use of his native language and culture establishes that Caliban will never be fully colonized. He points out that in using his indigenous language, Caliban "secures his relative cultural autonomy" meaning that Caliban demonstrates that he has a right to speak his own language and to express his personal culture (572). A significant phrase that Prospero uses within his final response to Caliban in regard to

“uhuru” is “savage tongue” (17). These two words deserve attention because they highlight how Prospero truly feels about Caliban. Césaire purposely added a distinct description of Caliban on the Character List given before Act I. Caliban is described as a “black slave.” This is crucial to the words that Prospero chooses to describe Caliban’s native language. The word “savage” is typically associated with an animal or something that is undomesticated. This description of Caliban’s language is degrading to Caliban and his culture. Using the word “savage” to describe Caliban exposes how Prospero feels that he has authority over Caliban and that Caliban must be tamed. This is the typical thought process of the white European colonizer to the African. The colonizer sees the African as an animal rather than a human. Here, Prospero admits that he sees Caliban as a “savage” that must be civilized. This extends Almquist’s argument that “uhuru” disrupts the authority of the colonizer. Therefore, Prospero imposes his language of Caliban and also attempts to belittle his significance. Prospero’s response obviously does not phase Caliban, as Caliban responds by mocking him once again. Prospero’s forced imitation of Caliban works more in Caliban’s favor than in favor of the colonizer as it allows Caliban to expose the fragility of the colonizer’s power, culture, and language.

Following this brief interaction, Prospero accuses Caliban of being unappreciative that he was taught how to speak “civilly.” Caliban responds by saying, “You didn’t teach me a thing! Except to jabber in your own language so that I could understand your orders: chop the wood, wash the dishes, fish for food, plant vegetables, all because you’re too lazy to do it yourself” (17). The tone that Caliban uses in this passage explains his frustration that Prospero forces him to conform to the colonizer’s language and culture. It demonstrates how Caliban is expected to trade his indigenous language for that of the colonizer. However, Caliban resists conformity and ultimately uses mimicry and mockery of Prospero’s language against him. Caliban explains how he has to, “jabber in [Prospero’s] own language,” which confirms that the imitation of Prospero’s language was forced upon him (17). Additionally, by using the word “jabber,” Caliban demonstrates how the colonizer’s language is quite easy to imitate as he diminishes the power of Prospero’s language (17). It is clear that Prospero’s language means nothing to Caliban as he mocks it in the above statement and downplays it to just “jabber” (17). Bhabha argues that mimicry is a subversion of the colonizer’s power and this is why Caliban recognizes the importance of understanding Prospero’s language. If he learns and understands the colonizer’s language, he can expose the lack of superiority. As Caliban explains, he was taught to “chop the wood, wash the

dishes, fish for food, and plant vegetables” (17). Through this accusation, Césaire expands Bhabha’s argument on mimicry. Caliban explains to Prospero that he was forced to mimic not only the language but the culture of the colonizer as well. Bhabha argues that the colonizer is determined to press their “reforming, civilizing mission” on the indigenous by forcing them to imitate the colonizer. Here, Caliban exposes how Prospero not only attempts to “civilize” his language, but his actions as well. Caliban describes the tasks that Prospero expects him to carry out such as chopping the wood, washing the dishes, fishing for food, and planting vegetables (17). Nixon argues in his article that Caliban “charges Prospero in that he has only been instructed in the colonial tongue so he can submit to magisterial imperative” (572). The imitated cultural expectations that Prospero has for Caliban demonstrate his greed for power. By barking orders at Caliban, Prospero forces him to “submit to magisterial imperatives” (572). As Almquist points out, Prospero expects Caliban to be a “loyal” and “faithful” African. Prospero wants to maintain his authority; therefore, he imposes conformity on Caliban as a power strategy to exert power over the indigenous. Consequently, the forced imitation results in the colonized using mimicry to suppress the colonizer of their power. Caliban accuses Prospero of only teaching him the language and culture needed to follow the colonizer’s orders. The tone and language that Caliban uses in the above statement is mockery. He mocks Prospero by exposing that the only reason he was taught the colonizer’s language was to work for Prospero. The persistent emphasis on conformity demonstrates how Prospero is exercising his “civilizing mission” through Caliban, in the hopes of achieving his desired, colonized product.

In the climax of the play, Césaire writes an important scene between Prospero and Caliban. During this scene, Caliban demonstrates how mimicry can subvert the colonizer’s power. Caliban says to Prospero, “And you lied to me so much, about the world, about myself, that you ended up by imposing on me an image of myself: underdeveloped, in your words, undercompetent that’s how you made me see myself! And I hate that image... and it’s false!” (62). This scene is quite profound as Césaire finally shows Caliban bluntly standing up to Prospero. Though he has stood up to Prospero through mockery, those conversations were never truly taken seriously by Prospero as he did not realize the risk that mimicry and mockery posed to his authority. Caliban explains that Prospero has “imposed an image” on him of himself (62). Caliban exposes how Prospero forced him to imitate both his language and culture. When the colonizer forces imitation, the indigenous peoples lose their sense of identity because they are separated from their own native

culture and language. Although Caliban entered yelling “uhuru” at the beginning, his journey to the above point in the play is nothing short of discriminatory and prejudiced oppressive treatment from Prospero. Caliban continues by explaining that Prospero claimed he was “underdeveloped” and “undercompetent” (62). Once again, he highlights how Prospero attempted to carry out his ‘civilizing mission’ by claiming that Caliban needed to be fixed or needed to be colonized. Prospero forced Caliban to believe that he was “underdeveloped” and “undercomptent” to deflect Caliban’s own self-image (62). This along with forced imitation was Prospero’s way to ensure that his authority would not be undermined. Caliban accuses Prospero of “imposing” a “false image” of him on himself (62). This is important to hear Caliban admit because he acknowledges that he has come to realize that Prospero’s view of him is prejudiced, discriminatory, and oppressive. His realization of this “false image” demonstrates his own understanding that he will never be fully colonized by Prospero. Finally, this scene is significant to the relationship between Caliban and Prospero because it demonstrates how Caliban actively uses mimicry throughout the play as a subvert to Prospero’s power. He eventually overcomes the oppressive language, thoughts, and actions that Prospero forces on him and he realizes through imitation that Prospero’s power is truly fragile. Though he is still under Prospero’s grasp, Caliban demonstrates in this scene that he now realizes that he will never be fully colonized because his language and culture are just as relevant and important as Prospero’s. It is through this understanding that Caliban is able to achieve a certain state of his own “uhuru.” Though he is not physically released from Prospero’s oppression, his mentality has shifted to one of peace and one that understands that his true identity will never be stripped away again.

To conclude, Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest* uses the colonizer’s language as a critique of one of the primary sources of hegemonic, civilizing power. His work highlights how colonial oppression not only silences the indigenous peoples, but also imposes an oppressive, alternative culture upon them. His emphasis on language in the relationship between Prospero and Caliban demonstrates how forced imitation of the colonizer can result in a subversion of the colonizer’s power. In such cases, the colonized has the potential to expose the colonizer’s fragility in authority and the ease of imitation of their language and culture.

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## **Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Foreign Language Education**

*Charlotte Archey*

Language is one of the best ways to connect with other people. Despite the seemingly endless number of languages spoken all over the world, the education system in the United States often does not focus on the importance of language learning. The United States is considered the melting pot of the world, yet strangely, students are not strongly encouraged to learn a foreign language. In an ever-changing, adapting world, with technology making the world more connected, the ability to communicate and understand other cultures is more important than ever. At first glance, American students and teachers may say that the workload is already too much and enforcing something as time-consuming as a foreign language will only weaken other aspects of their education. However, on closer inspection, a foreign language should be just as important as other subjects. Foreign language skills enhance the opportunities, academically and culturally of those who have them; therefore, foreign language education should be essential. Foreign language education needs more emphasis in the United States because it provides academic benefits, greater cultural appreciation, and job opportunities.

In the United States, the number of students studying a foreign language is gradually waning. There are many potential reasons for this, such as: a lack of interest, shortage of teachers, and insufficient funding. Few states require a foreign language credit to graduate high school. If students are not introduced to a foreign language from a young age, they are less likely to find value in it, and thus are less likely to put effort into learning it and reach a level of proficiency in high school. According to Amelia Friedman's article, "America's Lacking Language Skills," "less than 1 percent of American adults today are proficient in a foreign language that they studied in a U.S. classroom." This statistic highlights the poor effort given to foreign language education and acquisition despite the fact that, according to a national survey in 2008, 93 percent of high schools in the United States offered foreign languages classes (Friedman). Just because the course is available, that does not mean the content is actively engaging and producing students who strive to learn.

While lack of interest and funding may be to blame, in the article "Learning a Foreign Language Helps Kids Think and Make More Money. Why Don't American Parents Care?," author Cameron LeBlanc, suggests another reason: "We looked at language as an academic pursuit, not

an effort to really learn to communicate.” Regardless of whether or not English is one of the most learned languages in the world, the mindset that has been carried on in the United States about foreign language learning is that of indifference or one of a lower priority compared to other academic subjects. Similarly, the author explains, “Because it’s never been the norm in our country. We consider it something that only able people can do. We don’t have a mindset that we’re good at languages” (LeBlanc). Truly, this mindset is hard to change. “Changing direction in an established field is always difficult; it is especially difficult in education” explain authors Linda Crawford-Lange and Dale Lange in the journal article “Integrating Language and Culture.” Not only are languages underemphasized, some students are even discouraged from pursuing foreign languages. As Amelia Friedman writes in *The Atlantic*, “Students, especially those in college, are often discouraged from language courses or studying abroad” (Friedman). This discouragement may come from the idea that language courses and studying abroad are “extracurricular” and not valuable to an education. Regardless, the mindset that learning a foreign language is not as important in the United States needs to change.

When compared to other countries, the United States is lacking in foreign language education. Although foreign language education may seem to only concern a small group of Americans, such as those who intend to work overseas, it actually concerns anyone who hopes to keep up with changing times and create an environment so future generations will be able to connect with the world around them. Learning a foreign language has a lot of benefits, “however, to reap the rewards, language learners need patience, practice, awareness, and opportunity, especially in the early years of acquisition” asserts Kathleen Mohr et al. in “The Developing Bilingual Brain: What Parents and Teachers Should Know and Do” (18). These early years can start in the school system.

There are many academic and cognitive benefits of learning a foreign language. A study done by Kathleen Mohr et al. in the journal *Early Childhood Education* shows that bilingual people generally have improved memories, are more flexible using strategies, and are more field independent (13). The authors continued to explain that evidence shows bilingual people are superior in at least four executive functions: attention, inhibition, monitoring, and switching. These functions are associated with the ability to self-regulate learning. All of these benefits are connected to more successful learning. In early childhood bilingual development, some disadvantages do start to appear. As Mohr et al. demonstrate, young bilingual people generally

have smaller vocabularies in both languages and slower language processing compared to their monolingual counterparts. These disadvantages are just a small initial setback, however, because these issues only apply to younger bilingual people. As they get older, the problems do not persist in more proficient bilingual adults. In other words, “the advantages of bilingualism greatly exceed the disadvantages that are seen early in the language development process” (Mohr et al. 13). Ultimately, the long-term cognitive benefits of learning a foreign language from a young age are worth the initial challenges.

In addition, the age at which the foreign language is introduced, and the type of exposure are both important factors. The goal of learning a language is not perfect proficiency, but effective communication. It is a common understanding that in learning a foreign language, younger is better. This is true for certain aspects of language learning, such as pronunciation. However, Mohr et al. assert that “exposure should be as early as possible if parents can provide it, but language learners can still be successful if they don’t get to develop another language until they start formal schooling” (15). One method of implementing foreign language education in the schools is through dual language education (DLE) programs. Through the implementation of these programs, schools teach in both the native language and the target language. A study done by Kathryn Lindholm-Leary in *Theory Into Practice* discusses the successes and challenges of these types of programs. Middle and High School students in dual language programs, when compared with their peers, are as likely or more likely to enroll in higher levels of math classes, pass the high school exit exam, and are less likely to drop out of high school (257-258). Thus, implementation of a foreign language into the school workload is not only complementary, but it stimulates successful results academically.

Another benefit of the dual language education program is that they are capable of promoting academic performance for students of different backgrounds. For example, the employment of a dual-language program in schools may bring equal academic outcomes to students regardless of their economic or social backgrounds. Lindholm-Leary supports this claim by saying “In all this research, comparing DLE students to their peers (i.e., similar in the socio-economic or ethnic or linguistic background), who are typically in English mainstream programs, DLE students do at least as well, and often better than, their peers” (258). If schools can emphasize foreign language education, for example by successfully applying dual-language programs, then the students will receive additional educational benefits.

Learning a foreign language can also broaden horizons and promote a better understanding of other cultures. Especially in the modern age of technology, the world seems much smaller today due to the global accessibility made possible by the internet. Foreign language skills allow people to interact and better understand the different cultures around them. Learning a language should be emphasized not necessarily as an academic pursuit, as some people suggest, but as a way of connecting with others. Being able to speak more than one language can greatly improve one's ability to communicate with other people. In other words, as Mohr et al. argue, "bilinguals tend to become more readily aware of how language functions as a means to communicate emotional dispositions, which can support their social sensitivity and cultural awareness" (14). With the education of foreign languages, cultural awareness also increases. Culture and language go hand in hand. Similarly, Crawford-Lange and Lange, in their research about integrating culture and language, argue that "Culture is the act of becoming and therefore should be taught as process" (258). They assert that students acquire "the ability to interact successfully in novel cultural situations" (258). Better knowledge of languages extends into a better ability to appreciate other cultures. Furthermore, intercultural competence allows students to have "qualities as tolerance, openness and willingness to communicate," argues Liliya Mukharlyamova et al. in the article "Formation of the Intercultural Communicative Competence of Students in Process of Learning Foreign Languages" (231). To create a more tolerant and open-minded environment, future generations can be taught the significance of other cultures through language learning.

Not only do students who learn a foreign language gain a better understanding of other cultures, but they "gain knowledge of the language and culture of not only the country of the studied language but also their native country, as there is a tendency of people to consider and appreciate another culture from the perspective of the values and norms of their own culture" (Mukharlyamova et al. 233). In other words, people try to understand another culture through the perspective of their own culture, but learning a foreign language can help bridge that gap as students can view another culture through the context of the language with which they are more familiar.

In addition, as explained by Alison Organ, those who have the opportunity to use their learned target language in a work placement notice an improvement in their competence and an improvement in their understanding of cultural differences (44). The evidence shows that raising a new generation of students who place value in learning a foreign language and communicating

with others can also improve their appreciation of other cultures and improve their tolerance. In this fast-paced world, students must learn how to communicate with others and exemplify appreciation or they will not be able to keep up with the changing world. Even outside of an academic or work environment, cultural awareness gain will be applicable to other parts of life. Indeed, “this consciousness and understanding will be available to them later in life and transferable to other circumstances” (Crawford-Lange and Lange 261). Clearly, knowledge in a foreign language yields benefits for students and their lives after school.

In addition to a more successful school career, people who have foreign language skills tend to have better career opportunities. For example, if students reach a high enough proficiency, a whole new field of career options is opened. Foreign languages are one of the hottest skills sought after in the workforce. According to Cameron LeBlanc, “Employers are starting to articulate that they have a shortage of multilingual speakers and that it’s starting to hinder their ability to do business abroad and in this country (with employees that have a native language other than English).” A foreign language skill does not just increase the desirability of those job searching, it also opens up more job opportunities. According to Annalyn Kurtz on CNN Business, “Roughly 25,000 jobs are expected to open up for interpreters (who focus on spoken language) and translators (who focus on written language), between 2010 and 2020.” This statistic does not include the military, who are also actively looking for potential employees with foreign language skills. More and more job listings include the keyword “bilingual” (Kurtz). In order to keep up with the competitive international business market, the ability to communicate in a foreign language is undoubtedly valuable and practical. Consequently, the academic and cultural benefits that come from learning a foreign language also improve one’s employability. According to the study by Alison Organ, some soft skills that improved from students who were placed in a work environment of their target language include communication, time management, leadership, teamwork, and responsibility (43). In addition to the gained skills in the workplace, students from the same study also found an improvement in their autonomy and professionalism (Organ 44). Foreign language skills not only broaden one’s career opportunities but also enhances the skills desired in the workplace.

While there is no doubt that learning a foreign language is beneficial, everything brings challenges. The challenge that arises from foreign language education is implementation. Some might say that it is hard to start a program that will yield immediate results. While it is true that

the implementation of a dual-language program will have certain problems at first, the advantages that come from it outweigh the initial poor results. According to Kathryn Lindholm-Leary's research in "Successes and Challenges in Dual Language Education," in the early stages of the implementation, it may seem like the program is not working, because students in the program score below the comparison group peers in 2-3rd grades, and this might discourage continuation. She explains that "This apparent lack of progress in grades 2-3 can lead administrators to put pressure on the DLE program administrators and teachers to add more English or to eliminate the DLE program altogether" (Lindholm-Leary 259). However, after a certain period of time, students enrolled in the dual-language program will start to benefit greatly from the program (259). For successful implementation, the program must persist despite the initial lack of progress. As Kathryn Mohr et al. put it, "Parents and teachers should appreciate this process and understand that it takes a bit more time and sometimes falters" (16). Even if the reward is not immediately apparent, the mindset to continue must be established.

Another problem that arises is that American students and teachers may say that learning a foreign language is too time-consuming and is not as practical compared to other subjects. However, foreign language education is something that can be implemented and can complement the overall education that students in the United States receive. Having a heavier emphasis on foreign language is indeed possible, as is the case in most other countries. As an example, "the median percentage of primary and secondary students in European countries enrolled in at least one foreign language class is 92" (LeBlanc). Naturally, there are challenges to every new development or change to the norm, and the implementation of stronger foreign language programs is no exception. However, the evidence shows that the advantages of learning a foreign language are worth the initial problems that may arise.

In conclusion, academic benefits, cultural awareness, and career opportunities are improvements that can come from stronger foreign language education in the United States. Furthermore, academic benefits, cultural awareness, and career opportunities complement each other. One of the best ways to introduce stronger foreign language education is through the use of the aforementioned dual-language programs. The opportunities that are provided from the implementation of dual-language programs for students of all backgrounds are invaluable. Secondly, being introduced to the language, and therefore culture, of people that are different is a fantastic way of appreciating and gaining better understanding and tolerance. With the skills that

develop from learning a foreign language, career opportunities abound. It is for these reasons that foreign language education in the United States is so important. It is necessary to provide these opportunities for future generations. By allowing students to be familiar with the world outside their own, horizons are broadened.

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# **Will I Survive? - Impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Individuals in Rural Areas**

*BethAnne Swick*

## **Introduction**

I grew up as a young girl in the late 1960s – 1978 in a very metropolitan area of Cleveland, Ohio and experienced some of the cultural richness that a large metropolitan area can afford. In June of 1978, at the age of 11 years old, I moved to Newark, Ohio and quickly discovered the vast differences between a large metropolis and a rural area. One of those vast differences of this locale was the townfolks' intolerance to things and people that were different, especially anyone who identified as lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, or questioning of their sexual orientation, basically anyone who did not identify as being heterosexual (LGBTQ+). I soon realized that if I disclosed my sexual orientation of being a lesbian, then I would have most likely been publicly tarred and feathered. From that point until my mid 20s, I isolated myself and tried to fit into society by having a boyfriend. The isolation I felt was like a sickness that was draining my soul. Living in a small town where everyone knows everyone else's business tends to impair one's ability to develop their true identity. Desiring to be my authentic self, I moved from Newark to Columbus, OH because I heard through the "underground gay grapevine" that people in Columbus were more accepting of "gay" people.

Unfortunately, not everyone who is LGBTQ+ living in a rural area has an opportunity, as I did, to relocate, thus they remain isolated. This isolating sickness, if not addressed, can grow and become burdensome to many LGBTQ+ individuals residing in rural areas. The increased level of isolation for LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas brought on by the impacts of COVID-19 is creating a dangerous level of isolation, as well as other new threatening challenges to LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas (Banerjee and Nair, 2020).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Throughout history individuals who are LGBTQ+ have been victims of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, frequently having little to no means of positive social support. The civil rights movement sparked advocacy in the United State for equal rights for LGBTQ+ individuals. Although these efforts have been advantageous, numerous individuals of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly those residing in rural areas who lack adequate positive

resources slip through the cracks in society. This frequently results in those individuals experiencing isolation, anxiety and/or depression, homelessness, substance abuse, and suicide (Druemheller & McQuay, 2010; Pacey, 2016; Palmer, Kosciw & Bartkiewicz, 2012).

Research findings also indicated that LGBTQ+ individuals residing in nonmetropolitan areas specify the following needs: 1) reduction in isolation; 2) social acceptance and visibility; 3) emotional support and safety; 4) gender and sexual minority identity development; 5) affirmation, acceptance, and transparency from medical and mental health providers (Krigs, 2016; Milam, 2010; Pacey 2016; Palmer, Kosciw & Bartkiewicz; 2012). The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have posed additional threats to LGBTQ+ individuals residing in rural areas making it significantly more challenging to have those above needs met and creating new hardships (Banerjee and Nair, 2020). Research indicates that one method of gaining a better understanding regarding current hardships of a group of individuals is to become familiar with that groups' historical challenges, via a brief literature review (Jackson, 2015).

### **Historical Challenges LGBTQ+ Individuals Endure in Rural Areas**

B.J. Morris (2009) indicates that many historians concur there is substantiation of LGBTQ+ activity in every recognized culture throughout history, whether these relationships were positively acknowledged or oppressed. Morris (2009) describes how LGBTQ+ social movements developed as retorts to centuries of persecution by religious, state/political, and medical powers. Morris provides a concise account of the history of LGBTQ+ social movements beginning in the ancient Greek and Biblical eras through the mass shooting incident on June 12th, 2016 in Orlando, Florida at the popular dance club Pulse, which killed 49 and injured 50 individuals.

The report by Palmer, Kosciw, & Bartkiewicz (2012) underlines the challenges facing numerous LGBTQ+ students attending schools in rural area. The authors' (2012) findings indicate that the rural community attributes, such as cultural traditions, educational levels, income, and religious beliefs may negatively impact individual attitudes and beliefs towards LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas. Additionally, LGBTQ+ students in rural areas endure bullying, harassment, and lack of positive LGBTQ+ related school, as well as social support. These challenges adversely affect LGBTQ+ individual's academic, social, and vocational levels of functioning. The authors (2012) emphasize that although LGBTQ+ students in rural areas face numerous challenges due to their sexual orientation, these students also demonstrated a high level

of willpower and resiliency to utilize accessible resources to develop their school into a safer environment for all students.

Whitehead, Shaver & Stephenson's (2016) research emphasizes that most previous studies on healthcare challenges experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals have primarily focused entirely on metropolitan samples. The authors (2016) stressed that there are minimal empirically based research findings regarding the influence of LGBTQ+ stigma explicitly for rural areas regarding access to quality healthcare as compared to the availability to quality of care for LGBTQ+ individuals in metropolitan areas. The authors' (2016) results indicated that scores on stigma scales (related to lower utilization of health-care services) were higher for transgender and non-binary groups. Whereas higher utilization of health services regarding disclosure of sexual orientation was related to cisgender men. The study's (2016) results indicated that LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas face an increased level of stigma when trying to access healthcare services than LGBTQ+ individuals in metropolitan areas. The authors (2016) denote that there is a substantial need for interventions directed at decreasing negative stigma of LGBTQ+ individuals in rural-health care environments. Moreover, the authors (2016) emphasize that such types of interventions provide the capability of increasing both primary and preventative health-care services usage by LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas.

Kano, Silva-Bañuelos, Sturm & Willging (2016) discuss some of the healthcare challenges LGBTQ+ individuals face in rural areas. The authors' (2016) study set forth to prove that although LGBTQ+ individuals may share similar experiences regarding enduring negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination they each have unique health care needs which are predisposed to their racial/cultural background, as well as their rural experiences. Kano et al. (2016) indicate that when compared to heterosexuals, the population of LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas experience greater rates of the following health related problems: eating and body-related disorders; mental health and substance use/abuse disorders; poor diet and inadequate exercise; lack of preventative health-care services; lack of treatment for comorbid conditions; and sexually transmitted diseases. Additionally, the authors (2016) emphasize that LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas are more likely to remain isolated than LGBTQ+ individuals in metro areas due to negative stigma they receive from the heterosexual community. All of this data poses challenges to LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas attempting to access any type of health care that is receptive to treatment needs.

## **New Hardships LGBTQ+ in Rural Areas are Facing Due to COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has endangered public health on a global scale. Safety precautions and public health guidelines have led to restricted travel, sealed borders, curfews, educational institutions holding on-line classes rather than face-to-face sessions, and weakened economies (Banerjee and Nair, 2020). The impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected numerous individuals of the LGBTQ+ community, especially those residing in rural areas who often lack adequate resources. The pandemic has resulted in them experiencing heightened levels of isolation, anxiety and/or depression, substance abuse, homelessness, and suicide (Banerjee and Nair, 2020; Goldbach, Knutson, & Milton, 2020).

COVID-19 has also directly impacted healthcare, mental health, and alcohol and substance abuse services (Goldbach, Knutson & Milton, 2020). Most providers of these services have been forced to provide these services via telehealth due to maintaining the COVID-19 restrictions and precautions enforced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Unfortunately, internet service providers in rural areas tend to be significantly limited and frequently have unreliable internet connections. Thus, numerous LGBTQ+ individuals residing in rural areas have not been able to participate in telehealth services for healthcare, mental health, and/or alcohol and substance abuse services. The effects of having limited internet access in rural areas are causing further isolation and impeding the overall health and wellness of LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas (Goldbach, Knutson, & Milton, 2020; Movement Advancement Project, 2020).

Additionally, COVID-19's stay at home order has hit some LGBTQ+ individuals harder than others, especially individuals residing in rural areas. A question that is often overlooked by politicians and the general public during COVID-19 is *'What if it is not safe to stay at home?'* Approximately 25% of homeless young adults in metropolitan areas and 40% in rural areas are LGBTQ+, generally because their families reject them. Also, over 10% of LGBTQ+ individuals and 19% of transgender individuals have experienced domestic violence. Another aspect that appears to be overlooked by COVID-19's stay at home order is how it impacts LGBTQ+ individuals with Autism. Most individuals with Autism need to uphold a regular routine to maintain a consistent level of overall functioning. Often that routine includes daily events outside the individual's home. Another group of underrepresented individuals are LGBTQ+ older adults, in rural areas. In general LGBTQ+ older individuals tend to thrive from social interaction and going to social events. Current research concludes (Campbell, 2020) that older LGBTQ+ individuals who engage in social

interaction and develop healthy prosocial relationships tend to have an increased level of health, wellness, financial stability, and longevity. The COVID-19 restrictions of social distancing and stay at home orders appear to limit the amount of social interaction needed by older LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly those in rural areas. This appears to be causing an increase in depression and anxiety and a decrease in physical and emotional health, leading to an increased level of death as a result of COVID-19 in older LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas (Campbell, 2020). In all these situations, COVID-19's stay at home order appears to be impeding rather than protecting LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas (Banerjee and Nair, 2020; Campbell, 2020; Munir, 2020).

Another challenge that LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas face more often than those in urban areas, regardless of age, is negative experiences related to their LGBTQ+ identity (Drumheller & McQuay, 2010; Pacey, 2016). The stigmatization of the LGBTQ+ population in rural areas is reflected in informal beliefs about LGBTQ+ individuals. Furthermore, there is often an absence of more formal protections and resources for LGBTQ+ individuals. This stigmatization frequently results in LGBTQ+ individuals who reside in rural areas having heightened concerns regarding their health, wellness, and physical safety (Greytak & Diaz, 2009; Wilemon, 2015; Palmer, Kosciw & Bartkiewicz, 2012). One of the numerous consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic is the overall availability of healthcare access. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited the number of patients hospitals and healthcare facilities can admit. Many of the hospitals in rural areas are faith-based hospitals and reserve the right of who they can treat, generally refusing treatment to LGBTQ+ individuals. The refusal by faith-based hospitals to treat LGBTQ+ individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the overall level of discrimination LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas face (Banerjee and Nair, 2020; Goldbach, Knutson, & Milton, 2020).

Discrimination related to healthcare access is also related to general negative perceptions from one's community as well. Adults in rural areas are more likely to have unfavorable opinions of gay men and lesbians and be more uncomfortable around them. They are also more likely to oppose same-sex marriage as compared to residents in metropolitan/urban areas of the United States (Wilemon, 2015; Palmer, Kosciw & Bartkiewicz, 2012). Research indicates 74% of LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas experience discrimination in their daily lives (Pacey, 2016). Moreover, research indicates that LGBTQ+ households, especially those in rural areas, are more probable than non-LGBTQ+ households to experience losses in jobs, significant financial

problems, issues with gaining access to healthcare, and a higher level of challenges directing in-home learning for their children due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (Campbell, 2020; Movement Advancement Project, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Historically, pandemics incite fear, irrational thoughts, and violent behaviors. COVID-19 has portrayed all these ugly traits via individuals hoarding and looting essential supplies and increased discrimination and violence towards underrepresented minorities, including LGBTQ+ individuals residing in rural areas (Goldbach, Knutson, & Milton, 2020). While I was growing up in a rural area, I experienced hearing the negative slurs and talks about ‘bashing’ anyone who was LGBTQ+. While residing in and visiting rural areas prior to COVID-19, I have lost jobs, lost friends, have been ridiculed and have been bashed for “coming out” as a lesbian. During the COVID-19 pandemic I was at urgent care in a rural area and was wearing a necklace with an LGBTQ+ symbol. Consequently, I was told there were not anymore available walk-in appointments. When I ask when the next available walk-in appointment was, I was told that I could not have an appointment because they do not serve “my kind.” As a licensed professional clinical counselor, I have listened to the numerous new hardships my LGBTQ+ clients, especially those residing in rural areas, have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Underrepresented minorities, particularly LGBTQ+ individuals residing in rural areas appear to be at greater risk due to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (Banerjee and Nair, 2020; Campbell, 2020; Goldbach, Knutson, & Milton, 2020). Thus, during this COVID-19 pandemic it is imperative that we all become more aware of these negative impacts and reach out to LGBTQ+ individuals and provide them positive resources of social acceptance and visibility, emotional support, and safety and social acceptance to promote an increase in overall health and wellness to all people (Banerjee and Nair, 2020; Campbell, Goldbach, Knutson, & Milton, 2020).

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## Subverting the Alignment of Women with the Body in *The Matrix*

*Anna Ford*

Many critics interpret the Wachowskis' 1999 film *The Matrix* in terms of the Platonic ideas of reality and artistic representation of reality. These critics most often argue that the film follows the moral choice of truth or deception with Neo and the other rebels representing the move from ignorance to enlightenment. Beyond this application of foundational Western philosophy, recent critical interpretations have focused on the ways in which minorities and women are central parts of the human revolution. I will merge these two threads in the criticism in order to question the traditional alignment of women with the body and men with the mind in Western philosophy and how the Wachowskis challenges this foundational conception of consciousness through female characters such as Trinity and the Oracle. In *The Matrix*, the Wachowskis question foundational elements of Western philosophy, such as Plato's ideas of Truth and representation, by demonstrating how they are not timeless universals but rather part of a patriarchal tradition. The Wachowskis challenge this by presenting women as having equal understanding of what is "real" rather than associating this knowledge exclusively with a universal subject, typically coded as male, as is the tradition in Western philosophy. Ultimately, the Wachowskis argue that women are not relegated to the body and instead, subvert this essentialist philosophical tradition by aligning female characters like Trinity and the Oracle with the mind. In doing so, the present canonical philosophical ideas are revealed to question more than simply the essence of Truth and reality. These ideas represent the break from the "Matrix" of foundational Western philosophy and into post-foundationalist theory.

To establish a framework for analyzing the film, I will first discuss Plato's foundational ideas on reality and representation. In *The Republic*, Plato presents the idea of a Truth, a realm of Forms, that is the basis for the representation that humanity perceives. Reality, as it is viewed by those who Plato believes do not know better, is an imperfect representation of the truth. It is the "shadow of artefacts" which "constitute the only reality" people would recognize because they have not had the opportunity to see the artefacts themselves (61). The man-made representation of reality is imperfect and is only the shadow of the truth, the "shadow of the artefacts" in their true Form (61). For Plato, the ability to see the Forms and understand the Truth of reality is a long process of gradually growing closer and closer to the truth through reason and questioning. At its

end, the philosopher will be able to see not “the displaced image of the sun in water or elsewhere, but the sun on its own, in its proper place” (62). The sun, though originally painful to perceive, is the Truth that can be understood by philosophers who worked to see through the apparent reality. This system of reason and questioning which leads to seeing the “sun on its own” is the only way that a man may become a philosopher (62). The sun was chosen to represent Truth very deliberately as it is not only aligned with reason, but it has gendered connotations in its alignment with the Greek god Zeus. Plato is not describing the path for any individual to become a philosopher and see the sun; he is describing the process through which a man becomes a philosopher. To stop at any of the representations of reality such as the “displaced image of the sun in the water” leaves the philosopher unable to see the Truth (62). Plato makes it clear in the “Allegory of the Cave” that individuals who are unaware of the Truth will not seek out enlightenment when the philosopher seems unable to function in the world that is understood as reality. This unwillingness makes the philosopher part of a small and privileged group who undergo the necessary toil to seek Truth and he is then set apart by this understanding.

In the twentieth century, philosopher Simone de Beauvoir takes on traditional Western philosophy from a feminist perspective, tackling essentialist ideas in which women are understood as Other in relation to the male Subject. She argues that the term “woman” is defined by negatives and lack and is thus denied full subjectivity in philosophical discourse and Western culture at large. This has been attributed to a variety of secular and religious reasons, but it is this definition of woman against man that constructs the masculine and feminine dichotomy. Man is seen as the universal subject, comparable to that of Plato’s “thing itself.” Woman is defined against man, de Beauvoir argues, because it has been decided “there is an absolute human type, the masculine. Woman has ovaries, a uterus; these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature” (xxi). The standard for philosophy, and as a result culture more broadly, is male and women are therefore defined by the “peculiarities” which differ from the “absolute human type” (xxi). In other words, de Beauvoir argues throughout *The Second Sex* that women are defined solely by the body—by ovaries and a uterus—and this too is part of the feminine and masculine dichotomy she explores. Women are defined by essentialist notions of what inherent, invisible traits separate a woman from a man. The “limits of her own nature” keep women in their constructed place, never autonomous but instead wholly defined by the missing pieces of the standard. To expand the constructed opposition of the masculine and feminine, de

Beauvoir argues that the alignment of woman with the body must have a mirror. If women are defined through their physical bodies, then men must be defined by their minds. Without the concern of the physical form to limit and define the “human type” it is the mind which serves its definition (xxi). This alignment of the mind with men falls in line with Plato’s philosophy as well as Plato himself--a great mind who seeks out Truth through reason, a man who has gained an understanding of reality. However, it is de Beauvoir who addresses the question of where the great male mind leaves women.

Plato’s theory of reality and representation is based on the idea that there is a true essence which is not immediately perceivable. This essentialist notion of reality and Truth can be seen in the feminine and masculine dichotomy that de Beauvoir discusses as well. The essential notions of what is masculine and feminine are key to constructing the binary opposition that is used to other women. The “eternal feminine” is created as an excuse for women to be imprisoned “in her subjectivity” and circumscribed “within the limits of her own nature” (de Beauvoir, xxi). The eternal feminine is the fixed entity which creates the characteristics that are inherently feminine; it is the essence of “woman”. It is this essential nature of woman (the body) in opposition to that of man (the mind) which makes it possible to successfully other them. de Beauvoir questions this essentialist notion of masculinity and femininity and asks if femininity is “a Platonic essence, a philosophic imagination” (xix). As a female philosopher who is challenging the essentialist notions upon which philosophy is based, she concludes that it is not a “Platonic essence” nor a Truth which defines women (xix). These Truths that Plato is arguing underlie everything are simply constructions which allow the world to be categorized and they are based on a nonexistent essence. The Truth that Plato theorized as being the basis of reality is the same Truth that de Beauvoir is questioning as the basis of gender inequality.

In a traditional Platonic analysis of the film, Neo represents the philosopher who is making the journey from the darkness of the cave (the Matrix) into the light of Truth. The matrix humanity is trapped within is an embodiment of Plato’s theory of perceived reality being an imperfect construction of the Truth. It is a false construction of reality that most people within the program accept as real, but there are a few select individuals (philosophers) who see the “thing itself” or, as in Plato’s example, “the sun.” Neo’s decision to leave the Matrix and join the rebellion represents the step out of the cave and into the light. It is uncomfortable and painful for him as he learns to live outside the Matrix just as it is for the philosopher who is blinded by the light when

he first leaves the cave. By the end of the film Neo is able to see the Matrix as code from inside the program and this represents his ability to finally see beyond the representation of reality to the Truth. The moment when Neo looks up and sees lines of code constructing the building and the agents is the moment that Plato's philosopher is able to see the sun itself (Wachowskis, 2:05:35). This analysis creates a clear diagnosis of the film as a one to one correspondence with Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," but lacks acknowledgement of elements which subvert this understanding. Indeed, The Wachowskis, though drawing on this foundation of Western philosophy in the film, are subverting this tradition through the autonomy of female characters.

Throughout *The Matrix*, the Wachowskis challenge and explore the idea of opposing Truths through subversions of seemingly opposing choices. In "The Virtual Dialectic; Rethinking *The Matrix* and its Significance" David Gunkel argues that though the film seems to rely on essential binaries such as reality and illusion or good and evil, these binary choices are not as restrictive as they appear. It is possible for the characters to choose an option outside the defined limitations of what is accepted. In other words, Gunkel argues that instead of being a choice between choosing the red pill or the blue pill it is an issue of "inquiring about the terms and conditions by which this either/or logic has been generated in the first place" (213). This interpretation of the binaries in the film poses a challenge of the Platonic idea of Truth. More specifically, Gunkel's argument goes on to emphasize clear binaries that can also be applied to the gender binaries that the Wachowskis address in the film. Though women are often defined by the body, the film makes reference to these essentialist notions while subverting them in order to ultimately align women with the mind.

One such reference can be seen early in the movie when Neo and Trinity meet for the first time. The expectation and the reality of Trinity's identity depicts the masculine and feminine dichotomy which maintains men as defined by their minds rather than the constraints of the body. Neo's reaction to the identity reveal shows this:

Neo: Who are you?

Trinity: My name is Trinity.

Neo: Trinity. *The* Trinity? That cracked the IRS D-base?

Trinity: That was a long time ago.

Neo: Jesus.

Trinity: What?

Neo: I just thought, um... you were a guy.

Trinity: Most guys do. (10:15-10:35)

Without knowing the identity of a skilled hacker with the call sign of Trinity, Neo assumed that the individual was male. This assumed connection between the mind and that which is masculine represents the essentialist ideas of the masculine and feminine dichotomy. This assumption that Neo admits is an understood generalization of the assumption made by most hackers. This is further compounded by Trinity's statement that "most guys" assume she is a man because most hackers are men (10:35). The revelation of Trinity's hacking skills, which were well-known, helps to align her with the mind outside of her abilities to manipulate the Matrix. The revelation of these skills at the club is also very deliberately chosen to combat the alignment of Trinity with the body. Before Trinity walks over to Neo the rest of the club is shown. The club is dimly lit and occupied by the sensual press of dancing bodies (9:41-10:00). This space is aligned with the body and provides contrast to the interaction that occurs between Trinity and Neo. This contrast combines with the subject of Trinity's skills to align her character with the mind in much the same way that Neo's character is being defined by his isolation from the events of the club.

Another female character the Wachowskis use to subvert traditional Western philosophy is the Oracle. Jason Haslam presents a critical interpretation of her character in "Coded Discourse: Romancing the (Electronic) Shadow in *The Matrix*" to argue that she is used to highlight Neo's lack of power and is heavily tied to the racist and sexist stereotype of the mammy figure. The Wachowskis created her as an exaggerated "all knowing" and interfering figure to push the stereotype to its furthest point where she has become all knowing and all seeing in a very literal sense. Haslam notes that, "the Oracle appears to be more of a parody of the mammy stereotypes, and, as with Trinity, her support of Neo in effect shows his lack of power" (103). The unassuming introduction that the Oracle is given contrasts greatly with the knowledge she is soon seen to possess. Haslam argues that this contrast is meant to highlight the ways in which Neo is being supported by characters who the Wachowskis are using to break stereotypes. This is also a method of challenging essentialist notions of women by giving female characters increased autonomy through alignment with the mind. The ability that the Oracle possesses to speak prophecies and see into the future gives her abilities, associated with the mind, that are unparalleled even once Neo has become "the One." This is used by the Wachowskis to challenge the ways in which women are relegated to the body.

A critical aspect of the attempt to align the Oracle with the body is the setting in which Neo meets her. When Neo is asked to wait with the other “potentials” it is revealed that the apartment is full of children looked after by the Oracle who are able to manipulate the Matrix. The presence of the children helps to establish a very domestic setting which is continued through the time in the apartment (Wachowskis, 1:12:20). The maternal figure is evoked through the presence of the many children who the Oracle refers to as “my kids” (1:13:18). This evokes the essentialist ideas of women that de Beauvoir argues against where woman is defined by reproduction and motherhood. The image of the Oracle when Neo first walks through the doorway into the kitchen is also essential to creating the stereotypical depiction of an aging African American woman. She is sitting in front of the oven wearing an apron and her attention appears to be devoted entirely to what she is baking (1:12:33). This is not the expected introduction of a brilliant mind, but it is instead aligned with the body through the lingering focus on food and the depiction of a “woman’s place,” the realm of the mammy figure Haslam explores, where bodily needs such as eating are met.

It is the dialogue in the scene that the Wachowskis are using to subvert this image of a woman as a body rather than a mind. When Neo comes in and she is facing the oven, she knows who is behind her without turning around. Entire sections of the conversation throughout the scene occur when she is seemingly focused on the cookies rather than him. One example of this is when Neo breaks the vase:

Neo: You’re the Oracle?

Oracle: Bingo. Not quite what you were expecting, right? [pause] Almost done.  
Smell good, don’t they?

Neo: Yeah.

Oracle: I’d ask you to sit down but you aren’t going to anyway. And don’t worry about the vase.

Neo: What vase? [Neo knocks a vase off the table and it shatters]

Oracle: *That* vase. (1:12:41-1:13:10)

Throughout this exchange she is taking the cookies out of the oven and laying them to cool on a counter. She is openly displaying her knowledge of what is going to happen in a very casual manner. She is telling Neo what he will do (say no to sitting down and break the vase) while looking in his direction only twice before he breaks the vase. This lack of contact with him before

predicting his actions gives her abilities more legitimacy because it emphasizes that she is not predicting events based on the actions she is observing but instead is simply aware of what will happen. The majority of the conversation between the Oracle and Neo holds this casual tone and it underlines the image of the Oracle not as a seeker of truth on the same path that Neo and the rest of the rebellion is focused on but instead as someone who has already found a truth. She has the knowledge of what is beyond the Matrix and has insight into events that will come to pass. Though her introduction aligns her with the body by the end of her conversation with Neo, having revealed more and more information to him, she is defined completely by her mind and the knowledge she possesses.

In *The Matrix* the Wachowskis purposefully draw upon the foundations of Western philosophy to subvert the essentialist dualities upon which it is founded. The mind and the ability to understand truth in the tradition of Western philosophy are aligned with the male and would have been denied to characters such as Trinity and the Oracle. Instead, the Wachowskis aligned these women with the mind in order to subvert the very foundations of philosophy through their autonomy. A Platonic analysis of the film asks the viewer to step out of the Matrix and into Plato's Truth with Neo. To analyze past this understanding of the film asks the viewer to leave behind foundational Western philosophy and explore the possibilities outside its constraints of Truth and representations.

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**“How far are *you* willing to go for an evil white man?”:**

**Psychoanalytic Film Theory in Netflix’s *You***

*Jessica Armstrong*

Netflix’s recently aired series titled *You*, narrated in second person by the cunning and attractive protagonist, Joe Goldberg has gained much viewership and sparked conversation amongst audiences. Audiences rave about the mesmerizing quality of the show which has a love-struck serial killer/stalker as its protagonist and narrator. The series begins in the bookstore Joe manages. The viewer is instantly immersed into Joe’s point of view as he voyeuristically analyzes the woman who has just walked in. As the camera looks over Joe’s shoulder and shows him watching the woman, Beck, through a window in the store, he immediately starts commentating on her every move through voiceover narration. Joe examines everything from the shoes she is wearing to the fact that she pays for her order with a credit card and he comments with certainty what he assumes each thing means. To Joe, everything that Beck does is for him even before they interact. For example, because she pays with a card, Joe assumes it is so he will know her name and believes she is wearing bracelets that jangle because “she likes a little attention” (“Pilot” 00:00:40). Because Joe’s entire thought process is broadcast in voiceover, viewers are able to observe his motives and analyses, while Beck only experiences a flirtatious meeting void of commentary. Shortly after the flirtatious meeting between Joe and his love interest Beck, he goes on a deep internet dive to find out everything he can about her. Outwardly, Joe Goldberg presents as a caring, old fashion guy who takes care of women and watches out for children in his apartment building. However, Joe’s stream of conscious thoughts are broadcast using voiceover, allowing viewers of the show an insight into the inner world and motivations of the cunning protagonist.

Because of the formal devices of voiceover narration and explanation, viewers are made to empathize with Joe. In combining stalker-like camera work and self-centered assumptions with the caring exterior and motivation of love, the producers of the show provide striking commentary on societal norms surrounding romantic relationships and how people interact with social media. As the show continues, viewers learn that Joe is in fact an intelligent stalker who is cunning and convincing and will stop at nothing to be with his chosen lovers. However, externally Joe presents as an everyday man who believes he is doing well and rationalizes his choices through a frame of romantic love. Further, because of the use of the pronoun *you* the show becomes strangely intimate

and audiences are able to place themselves both in the mindset of Joe and in the role of Joe's love interest. Joe eventually takes extreme action, to the point of killing others to get to the object of his desire and keep her for himself. Ultimately, the Netflix show *You* has a profound emotional effect on its viewers and forces them to question how they are persuaded, not only in the fictional worlds that television presents but also in their lives outside of television shows. In examining this, one is able to explore why people are persuaded to empathize with problematic characters. My thesis will explore the idea that literature and film have a profound effect on readers'/viewers' emotions, which in turn causes them to sympathize with problematic characters. Drawing out sympathy is done through formal elements that allow the viewer to see themselves as part of the fantasy. I will explore this idea by employing psychoanalytic film theory to analyze the formal devices in film that cause spectators to react emotionally and authentically. Further, I will explore the use of the second person, voiceover narration that causes viewers to feel as if they are being spoken to directly and how this impacts their feelings towards the protagonist and his actions. This thesis will ask the question of how a television series about a love-struck protagonist became so popular and why viewers continually wish for the success of a white male protagonist who obsessively pursues his romantic desire even when that success is achieved through manipulation and murder. Further an inquiry will be made of how the form of the show effects viewers' reactions, namely, the use of second person narration, the pronoun *you* and the binge-watching format of Netflix.

*You*'s current two seasons revisit commonly held beliefs of the romantic comedy and horror genre. Showrunner Sera Gamble states, "We're doing a show that is a little bit *500 Days of Summer* meets *Dexter*" (92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y 00:49:30). In structuring the show in this way, viewers are able to see the tropes propagated in romantic comedies in a new, illuminating light that shows the danger of these tropes being reflected in real life. The writers of the show intended to complicate tropes common to romantic comedies and chick-flicks through the perspective of a stalker and serial killer protagonist. The show was formatted in this way to challenge the societal norms surrounding romance that are ingrained in culture due to the themes proliferated in romantic shows and movies where the male protagonist aggressively pursues his female love interest. As showrunner, Sera Gamble mentioned in an interview, "we have been programmed from a very young age from every movie and television show we have seen. Usually they star someone who looks a lot like Penn where they cross lines, chase you through airports, hold a boom box outside your window after

you've said no repeatedly" (BUILD Series Season 2 00:22:00). Because the man in these shows is acting out of a place of love and desire for the woman, and the couple usually gets a happy ending, audiences are taught to expect this behavior and root for the relationship to succeed. *You* disputes these motifs by over-exaggerating Joe's character in a way that causes audiences to immediately recognize the romantic comedy symbols in the show. However, general audience response brings into question the extent these notions are condemned and challenged, which also criticizes how deeply the tropes of the romantic comedy are ingrained in the culture's psyche at large. Movies and television shows centering on idealized relationships and persistent protagonists justify to audiences that the male's aggressive behavior is acceptable because of the happily ever after motif. The show *You* takes the happily ever after fantasy and pushes it to the extreme to pose the question, the tagline of the show, "How far are you willing to go for love?" In using the intimate nature of voiceover narration and the pronoun *you*, Netflix's *You* complicates the happily ever after narrative. Throughout both seasons, Joe is constantly speaking to the audience in voiceover narrative; in fact, Joe is speaking directly to his love interest as if she were a silent auditor listening to his inner monologue. At one level Joe is speaking to the show's female protagonist, Beck. However, it can be argued that at another level, Joe is speaking directly to audiences inviting them into the fantasy world that exists in his mind. The extension of this direct address to the larger audience is made explicit in the choice of the show's title. In using voiceover narration, *You* brings viewers into Joe's inner world and by extension makes viewers feel as if they have also become his love interest.

Second person narration has not been used as frequently in literature as it has been in television because of its ambiguous and difficult nature. In the article "Reconsidering Second-Person Narration and Involvement," Jamila Mildorf discusses second person narration in its relation to literature. Mildorf goes into specific detail about the context of the pronoun *you* and how literary context affects audiences more than the pronoun alone. Mildorf also argues the difference between what she calls "*aesthetic-reflexive involvement*" which "denotes a more intellectual response to, and pleasure taken from the (other postmodern playfulness of you-narration)" and "*affective-emotional involvement*" which denotes "what is otherwise labelled as 'empathy'" (148). Mildorf argues that the literary context and the pronoun *you* allows direct communication between the characters and the audience. She explains that the use of second person narration brings audiences into an involvement with the text. Mildorf justifies this by

specifically discussing different types of texts. She rationalizes that reading the pronoun *you* has a profound emotional impact on readers by saying, “These quotations suggest that one of the reasons why involvement is achieved is because you-narration employs direct address and thus creates a quasi-communicational set-up with real readers” (146). Here, Mildorf is arguing that readers become more involved in a text with direct address than a text with first- or third-person narration because they feel they are being directly communicated with in a more explicit way. Mildorf proceeds by referencing another theorist and she notes, “Zemanek (2010), who discusses five contemporary German examples of you-narration, even argues that readers become ‘victims’ of these texts because they are coerced into ‘participating’ in stories of violence and (mental) disturbance” (147). By placing readers in the position of direct addressee, authors are encouraging readers to engage with the content of the text more actively. Mildorf notes in the above quotation the possibility of a dangerous use of the second person narration, which is shown in Netflix’s *You* by the continual use of affective-emotional involvement between the serial-killer protagonist and viewers.

Theorists Dorothee Birke and Robyn Warhol apply the discussion of second person narration to the medium of television shows in their article “Multimodal You: Playing with Direct Address in Contemporary Narrative Television.” Birke and Warhol discuss the history of cinema and how the pronoun *you* has been used throughout film history. They focus heavily on the use of direct address in recent television series. In the article, three different modes of direct address are discussed: direct address in the narratorial mode, in the documentary mode, and in the dramatic mode. The distinct uses of direct address have diverse uses and differing influence on audiences. They argue that the varying forms of direct address have developed in recent television shows and reflect the influence that various forms of media have had on television series. Birke and Warhol argue, “The target viewer is someone who can occupy the fictive addressee’s imaginary position in the flesh; the series’ longevity suggests that advertisers believed for a long time that a substantial number of actual viewers were willing to do so” (145). Using direct address is helpful in the medium of a television series because it caters to the living audience member watching the show. Not only is the audience spoken to, but there is also someone for the protagonist to address. The use of second person narration has increased in recent years as writers challenge norms and elevate characters.

In the section “Direct Address in the Dramatic Form,” Birke and Warhol discuss the show *House of Cards* and its use of direct address. They claim, “Spacey’s Frank treats the fictive audience as a trusted confidant who will appreciate his little jokes at the expense of the other characters and who can be persuaded, cajoled, or even bullied into approving of his increasingly horrific actions” (152). Birke and Warhol argue here that second person narration in a television series forces viewers to empathize with problematic characters. Spectators’ empathy is made possible because of the way viewers are placed into a position of familiarity and friendship with the protagonist/narrator. The conversation about *House of Cards* continues, “Actual viewers are invited to reflect on their own reactions to Frank’s schemes and crimes and are possibly startled by their potential for cynicism” (Birke and Warhol 152). In using this form of narration, viewers can be surprised by their own emotions that arise out of the relationship that is established between audiences and narrator. Their observation is taken even further as Birke and Warhol describe an almost invasion of the viewer’s personal life and a loss of boundaries between the television show and reality. They claim:

The actor’s aside to ‘you’ seems to pierce the boundary of the television screen and enter the viewer’s domestic space, an effect that could not be achieved in a cinema or even a live theatre performance. In an even more pronounced way than in the narratorial mode and in the documentary mode, direct address in the dramatic mode both adds to and implicitly comments on the artificiality and anti-mimetic status of television programs while insisting on TV’s salience of everyday ‘real’ domestic life. (153)

Here, the theorists argue that a television series creates an intimacy that goes past that of a movie or play. In continuing to use direct address and the pronoun *you* week after week, the relationship between character and audience is strengthened. Not only is there a heightened level of intimacy in the direct address format, but also a level of nonchalance for the television series frequenter that keeps television characters as a staple and “an active presence in the lives of flesh-and-blood audiences” (154). Furthering Mildorf’s conversation about second person narration, Birke and Warhol affirm that second person narration in a television series creates a deeper level of empathy from the audience to the character that is not as easy to achieve in books or movies.

While other psychological shows, like *Dexter*, have voiceover narration and an anti-heroic protagonist, Netflix’s *You* is different because its narrator directly addresses the female protagonist

of the show, and by extension, the audience watching the show. It is important to note that *You* first premiered on the Lifetime channel where it received minimal viewing. According to A&E Networks, the Lifetime Channel is “committed to offering the highest quality entertainment and information programming and advocating a wide range of issues affecting women and their families.” While *You* may have fit into Lifetime’s genre guidelines, the show did not gain much traction on the channel. However, when the show moved to the streaming service Netflix, it became wildly popular and grew a large fanbase with social media presence and critical reviews. Greg Berlanti, the producer of the show, comments on the move to Netflix in an interview with New York Times saying, “It’s very often in direct proportion to how young they are. [...] The younger they are, the more they discuss the show as though it had never existed before Dec. 26” (qtd. in Koblin). It is important to note that the show’s transition to the streaming service Netflix brought about many younger viewers who binged the show and fell for a problematic protagonist. In fact, according to social media posts, many young people found Joe to be charming and compelling. The above quoted article went on to say, “Last week, Netflix declared ‘You’ had drawn the sort of audience to make it a ‘huge hit.’ The streaming service said that ‘You’ was on track to be watched by 40 million households within its first four weeks on the service” (Koblin). Further, in being able to access entire seasons at a time, audiences became immersed in the fantasy world of the show making it difficult to escape due to binge watching.

Psychoanalytic film theory is a growing school of film that exemplifies the effects that direct address has on audiences and discusses other ways in which the form of a text impacts readers/viewers. Psychoanalytic film theory builds off psychoanalytic theory, specifically on the work of analysts Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. This theory analyzes how film affects the unconscious mind and culture and conversely how culture affects film. Psychoanalytic film theory is a feminist theory made popular by Laura Mulvey who argues, “during its history, the cinema seems to have evolved a particular illusion of reality in which this contradiction between libido and ego has found a beautifully complementary fantasy world. In *reality* the fantasy world of the screen is subject to the law which produces it” (14). Meaning, the inner fantasies of culture are magnified and made clear in film. Rather than producing something for the culture, film reflects the culture. Psychoanalytic film theory provides a way to discuss the fantasy world that *You* exemplifies and challenges. The protagonist, Joe, brings audiences directly into this fantasy with his voiceover narration and direct address of his love interest which at times becomes

interchangeable with viewers. Psychoanalytic film theory provides the language needed for analyzing the visual effects of film. In addition, this theory provides commentary on the way the psyche is involved in creating and watching film.

Laura Mulvey is a founder of film theory whose ideas extend the male gaze of art and literature to the field of television and movies. Mulvey also applies Freud's narcissistic scopophilia to the medium of film. Her chapter "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in her book titled *Visual and Other Pleasures* provides information about the way psychological principles of pleasure are amplified when one is watching a film. In this chapter, Mulvey goes into specific detail about how film satisfies the desire that people have of voyeurism. Mulvey argues that film often brings viewers into the perspective of the male character and explains that this satisfies different pleasures people have. The male perspective puts women on display in a new and more in-depth way than previously seen in art, literature, and everyday life. In film, women can be looked at without punishment and without restrictions in a way that caters to the viewer. The pleasure viewing described above perpetuates the male gaze that is common in movies and television shows. In this chapter, Mulvey goes into specific detail about how certain movies exemplify these ideas. Mulvey's chapter will be used to analyze the way in which Joe views his female counterparts and places audiences in a position to adopt his male gaze and also become a surrogate for the female character. Mulvey's chapter bridges psychoanalysis and film by applying psychoanalysis to movie watching.

In her book chapter titled "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Mulvey applies psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's theories of the human psyche to film. Mulvey argues, "The cinema offers a number of possible pleasures. One is scopophilia. [...] At this point he [Freud] associates scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" (16-17). Here, Mulvey is talking about the Freudian theory of scopophilia, the pleasure of looking at other people. Mulvey argues that film makes this even more accessible because audiences are able to "take other people" as objects in a setting where it is acceptable and encouraged. In the darkened room of the cinema, taking people as objects and "subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" is considered solitary artistic entertainment in a public setting. In using Freud's theory, Mulvey is explaining that film satisfies human, primal desires to look at others. Film creators are often aware of this primal desire and use it to bring viewers into the fantasy world they are displaying. Mulvey continues her argument and analysis by saying:

Moreover, the extreme contrast between the darkness in the auditorium (which also isolates the spectators from one another) and the brilliance of the shifting patterns of light and shade on the screen helps to promote the illusion of voyeuristic separation. Although the film is really being shown, is there to be seen, conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world. (17)

In the above quotation, Mulvey explains that the setting of the cinema enhances the satisfaction of the previously mentioned primal desires. While watching a film, viewers are in their own “womb-like world” where they can watch the actions of other people without interruption and without repercussions. Because each person is isolated in the “darkness of the auditorium” they are forced into the fantasy world of the film displayed on the larger than life screen, a fantasy that feels like a “private world.” Mulvey’s argument can be further applied to the binge-watching world of Netflix. The same atmosphere popularized by the world of the cinema makes it not only possible, but also acceptable, to enter the fantasy world of a television series for hours on end in the comfort of one’s home. Previously when watching a film, the viewer was restricted to the movie theatre where they were in a strange public-private world. Or, as technology developed, people were able to rent DVDs for a certain amount of time and watch them in the comfort of their home. However, in this new world of streaming, the “womb-like world” of original film-watching has become an everyday occurrence that is accessible on laptops, television, and phone screens where there is no longer a time restriction on entering into this fantasy world. In fact, Mulvey’s argument can be furthered in its application to Netflix series, because the “private world” previously watched in the private-public sphere of the movie theater is now streamed intimately into every home.

Continuing her discussion of pleasure and cinema in the chapter “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Mulvey goes on to discuss the viewpoints perpetuated in popular film. Mulvey argues that films often favor the male point of view and propel the fantasy world into their viewpoint. She asserts, “The man controls the film fantasy and also emerges as the representative of power [...] This is made possible through the process set in motion by structuring the film around a main controlling figure with whom the spectator can identify” (20). Here, Mulvey is arguing that the male characters in film frequently control what the audience focuses on. She argues that this control happens because men are often placed in the powerful position of protagonist where their point of view becomes the dominant perspective. In turn, the audience can

then adopt the protagonist's viewpoint. When the male figure becomes the "controlling figure with whom the spectator can identify," the male character's private world becomes the audience's fantasy world. Mulvey continues her argument by stating, "cinematic codes create a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire" (26). The tropes represented in the film world "create a gaze," specifically the male gaze, which is held by the male characters, the cameras, and the viewers, which in turn tells audiences what to look at. Further, the "cinematic codes" represented in film bring viewers into a fantasy world that has been created by the makers of the film. Mulvey argues that "cinematic codes" also create an object for audiences to gaze at, which is often times the female protagonist. In creating these things, cinematic codes then "produce an illusion cut to the measure of desire," in which the world of cinema creates an atmosphere that is perfectly made to satisfy human desires. The so-called "cinematic codes" that Netflix creates bring this argument to a new level because of the easily accessible, highly consumable nature of the streaming service.

Jill Nelmes furthers Laura Mulvey's arguments on Psychoanalytic Film Theory and its relation to gender in the chapter "Gender and Film." Jill Nelmes is the editor of the book *Introduction to Film Studies 5<sup>th</sup> edition*, in which this chapter is contained and the author of this specific chapter. Nelmes has written many books on film and film theory, she is an expert in her field as well as a senior lecturer at the University of London, UK. This chapter, "Gender and Film" talks about how men and women are represented in a film and viewed by spectators and how culture impacts the way gender is depicted in film. Nelmes furthers Mulvey's arguments in saying, "The media, feminists argued, are manipulated by the ruling patriarchal ideology and what is seen as natural, as clear-cut and obvious, is in fact a construct produced by society" (Nelmes 270). Here, Nelmes is commenting on the impact of culture on film and vice versa. She points out that cinema can be mesmerizing, and it is easy to forget what is being said and who is speaking. The mesmerizing quality of film pairs well with the conversation about second person narration. In the same way that direct address manipulates viewers into bearing an intimate witness to a character's actions, film itself sways audiences into the writer's views of culture. Nelmes continues, "If film is to have a resonance for an audience it must contain elements with which they can identify or empathize and, at some level, must say something about the world in which we live" (Nelmes 263). For film to be convincing it must be, at some level, relatable. While film has typically always had patriarchal influences, it also has qualities to convince audiences of its legitimacy. The

relatability of a film is a double-edged sword; for film to remain relatable, it has to, in some way, manipulate its viewers into empathizing with it, but this can lead to problematic portrayals of the world and people. The chapter continues in saying, “Clover further argues that although the horror film is more overt in its manipulation of the audience, mainstream film makes use of similar tools to feminize the audience; we ‘surrender ourselves’ to a film, we expect to be manipulated, surprised and kept in suspense” (Nelmes 291). The horror film deepens the audience’s stance as influenced observer. The show *You* closely follows the horror film trope in which the audience is feminized. This is made especially evident with direct address placing the audience in a position of receiving and being manipulated. The horror genre trope is coupled with the romantic movie trope, which furthers the manipulation and surrender of the audience.

Another important distinction that Nelmes makes in her chapter “Gender and Film” is the different ways that a text can be interpreted. She says, “If a text has multiple meanings then this gives feminist film and cultural critics the opportunity to analyze audience response to texts as ‘open’ rather than ‘closed’” (276). In the same way that other theorists have argued that a text can have an impact on a viewers’ emotions, Nelmes’ chapter shows an audience’s response to be complicated and multi-faceted. Nelmes goes on to say:

Stuart Hall suggests there are three ways in which a text may be received: (1) as a dominate reading, as intended by its producer; (2) as a negotiated reading, when the text is generally accepted but is challenged in some areas; and (3) as an oppositional reading, when the viewer challenges the reading of the text. In fact, recent research argues for the possibility of a much more complex relationship between the reader and the text that had previously been thought. (276)

In some instances, an audience member may read a text in a way that differs from its intended meaning. Also, a text may be read as a negotiated reading when some aspects of the text are problematic, but the message can further a complicated conversation. Nelmes’ argument presented here can be applied to Netflix’s *You*, or any movie/show with an anti-heroic, problematic central character. *You* can be read in a negotiated way because of its problematic characters united with its social commentary.

The position of the audience is made even more evident in the discussion of how an audience is placed in relation to the film. Following Nelmes’ discussion of the relationship between film and culture, Patrick Phillips discusses the position of the audience in the chapter titled

“Spectator, Audience, and Response” in the book *Introduction to Film Studies 5<sup>th</sup> edition*. In this source, Phillips discusses the spectators of cinema and their emotional responses. He begins discussing the way that a viewer becomes a spectator through their position to the screen and how viewing film becomes a solitary action despite being surrounded by people. Phillips goes on to discuss response theories and how audiences respond differently depending on their cultural backgrounds and relation to the film. Phillips also discusses early film and how camera movements have developed to train audiences what to look at. Phillips defines Interpellation as referring “to the distinctive way the film spectator is, as it were, placed inside the fiction world of the film, placed by the apparatus and by the conventions of film form (such as in shot-reverse shot dialogue editing). Literally we are ‘hailed’ or called into a place we have no control over” (121). In watching a film, audiences are interpellated as spectators and interpellated into the fantasy world of the film. Next, Phillips identifies a Schema as something that “refers to a familiar pattern recognized by the mind that allows us to orient ourselves and make sense of what is in front of us” (127). Schemas help audiences to orient themselves in the position of viewing a film. Schemas, in turn, interpellate viewers into the film world. In recognizing familiarities, audiences are able to determine the genre of the movie or television show they are watching as well as the mood of the film. Often, because of the prevalence and universality of schemas, viewers can predict the outcome of the plot. Subsequently, “In the experience of watching a film we automatically look for the schemas we have become accustomed to from our previous experience of film” (Phillips 127). Furthermore, audiences approach films with their own cultural concepts and beliefs. These cultural concepts often work in tandem with a film’s schemas and facilitate an automatic empathizing with the film. Not only do schemas cause audiences to empathize with a film’s characters and arguments, moreover, schemas often create cultural beliefs in people groups due to the prevalence and impact of the cinematic world. Generally speaking, “Each of us comes to a film with our own personal ‘formation’ – the result of all our life experiences. These will predispose us to certain interpretations of character, certain attitudes towards moral and political issues and certain emotional responses to events” (Phillips 130). Next, Phillips empathizes what viewers are to do with the information presented to them in a film. Chiefly, what viewers are to do with their emotional responses to a film. He states, “The ‘passive’ spectator is seen as one who somehow surrenders completely to the film experience in a form of imagining which can only be compared to some sort of infantile regression. The ‘active’ spectator is seen as one who is able to be

simultaneously inside and outside the world of film” (138). The passive spectator is one who, as Phillips argues, is too moved by the film. Too mesmerized. Too manipulated. On the other hand, the active viewer is one who allows themselves to be moved by a film’s emotional impressions, but in turn questions why the film affected them in such a way and what the film was trying to argue. The active spectator can be caught up in the fantasy world but does not allow the illusion to make them forget who they are.

William Rothman’s *The “I” of the Camera* perfectly combines the conversation around schemas and the discussion of the gendered dynamic of film. Throughout his book, Rothman focuses on the location of the camera during filming. Not only does the camera apparatus act as a placeholder for the audience, but also as an eye itself, according to Rothman. Focusing particularly on films with a defined villain, Rothman argues that the camera plays an important role in illustrating an antagonistic character. He states, “When a villain meets the camera’s gaze, he presents himself to be viewed by the camera. We view him without his ‘false face’ and we are astonished” (79). Film creators make a conscious choice in how the actors in a film interact with the camera. Following the conversation of horror genre tropes, the positioning of the villain in a movie or television show is important for captivating an audience’s attention. As Rothman argues in the above quotation, when a villain looks directly into the camera, the illusion that the audience is looking in on a scene they are not involved in is broken. Rothman complicates this argument by saying, “yet this gesture is also akin to the camera’s suggestion that the act of viewing is villainous. Meeting the camera’s gaze, he reveals his knowledge of our viewing; this look by which he unmask himself denies our innocence” (79). By looking directly at the camera, the villain on the other side of it is suggesting that the audience is now part of the action. Which, in turn, invites the viewer into the villainous act. In drawing attention to this act, Rothman claims, “perhaps this spectator is not innocent. Perhaps no spectator is” (80). When a film containing a villainous character interacts with the camera, it specifies that the audience is not an innocent bystander, but rather an active participant in the schemas, tropes, and motivations behind a film. Rothman broadens this claim when he talks about a villain who is watching a woman. He states, “For a moment we are relieved. This man no longer seems to be a villain, but only an innocent spectator who takes pleasure in viewing Daisy, exactly as we take pleasure in viewing her (and in viewing him viewing her). Then it strikes us that perhaps this viewer is not innocent after all. Perhaps no viewer is” (Rothman 260). The camera implies the viewer’s guilt in that it reminds them of their

desires and motivations behind watching a film, similar to the way direct address affects viewers. The guilt the villain incites in interacting with the camera is made deeply evident in Netflix's *You*. Throughout the opening scene in the pilot, Joe Goldberg makes eye contact with the camera and observes the female protagonist, Beck. The interaction Penn Badgley, the actor who plays Joe Goldberg, makes with the camera interpellates viewers into a world where Joe's villainy is made obvious.

The pilot episode of *You* begins with an aerial shot of New York City and then cuts to the bookstore that the protagonist Joe Goldberg manages. The beginning of the episode is bathed in warm, inviting light with background music reminiscent of a chick-flick. The opening scenes immediately draw viewers into the fantasy world that the producers and actors have cultivated. Following the aerial shot of the city, the camera then invites the audience's view inside by using a large amount of backlighting making audiences feel as if they are inside the bookstore with the characters. Immediately after the viewers are placed in this position, the door opens, the bell rings, and in walks Beck, the female protagonist. The camera slowly pans up Beck's body as the audience hears the first words from Joe in voiceover, "Well hello there. Who are you?" ("Pilot" 00:00:15). As Joe is addressing Beck in voiceover, the camera is fragmenting her body as she walks through the bookstore, while Joe watches Beck through the office window. Here, the camera is looking over Joe's shoulder and then zooms in on Beck, forcing the audience into Joe's male gaze and inciting Rothman's argument of the audience being guilty because of their act of viewing. In combining this camera work with Joe's voiceover narration, the audience is immediately brought into Joe's fantasy world and persuaded to agree with his commentary. The "cinematic codes" Mulvey discusses are clear here as the lighting in the bookstore is warm and inviting and the world outside of the store is blurred. By using Joe's male gaze and commentary, audiences are brought into the fantasy world of the series and automatically want Joe and Beck to end up together in a romantic relationship. The male gaze is made even more clear in his assumptions about Beck's actions. He says, "You like a little attention. Okay, I bite. You search the books. Fiction, 'F' through 'K.' Now, hmm, you're not the standard insecure nymph hunting for Faulkner you'll never finish. Too Sunkissed for Stephen King" ("Pilot" 00:00:41). Instantly, Joe is interpellating Beck into his framework of who he assumes she should be. As Joe monologues, Beck is silhouetted by the sun shining through the windows and the emphasis remains on viewing Beck. In highlighting the male gaze, pleasure viewing, and Joe's interaction with the camera, the producers of the show

are wanting the audience to see Beck as something to be looked at. Further, Joe is shown as both a villain and cunning protagonist.

As the pilot progresses, Joe continues to comment on Beck's every move as the camera follows, which exemplifies Mulvey's argument of scopophilia in film. Not only is Joe's scopophilia desire satisfied, but the audience's desire is satisfied as well. The persuasion continues as Joe and Beck part in the first scene. They shake hands and the camera lingers on their connected hands and they both remain backlit. Here, Mulvey's argument of cinematic codes is made evident as the viewers begin to root for Beck and Joe's romantic relationship and the schemas of romantic television are introduced. The show *You* takes Mulvey's argument further by having Joe appear outwardly normal and caring while commenting in voiceover his actual thoughts. For example, in conversation after Beck leaves, Joe's co-worker Ethan comments, "I'd be googling the hell out of her right now. You know her full name." Joe responds, "that's pretty aggressive, Ethan" To which Ethan says, "what do I tell you? Always be closing that shit" ("Pilot" 00:04:22-00:04:27). This conversation is deeply ironic, because Joe leads Ethan to believe that he frowns upon looking people up on the internet. However, in the very next scene Joe is looking Beck up on every single social media platform he can think of. In adding this level of irony, the creators of the show are leading viewers to believe that they are included in something that people in Joe's daily life are not. Namely, the voiceover commentary that Joe's character provides brings viewers into an intimate relationship with Joe's inner thoughts. Furthermore, because Joe is directly addressing Beck, audiences are also indoctrinated into agreeing with Joe's opinions of Beck. At the end of the bookstore scene, the producers of the show emphasize even more explicitly Joe's male gaze and voiceover narration as Joe watches Beck leave the bookstore and head to the subway. In this scene, Joe watches Beck through the window of the bookstore as everything else around her is in soft focus. He is already addressing Beck in his voiceover narration as he states, "At the end of the day, people are just really disappointing, aren't they? But are you, Beck? Are you?" ("Pilot" 00:04:57). The emphasis on Joe's hope that she will be different leads viewers to focus heavily on Beck's actions and sympathize with Joe's hope that Beck will not be disappointing.

As the pilot episode progresses, Joe continues addressing Beck in his voiceover narration which continues to interpellate her, and by extension audiences into his thought processes. Audiences are not given Joe's commentary outside of the context of his relationship to Beck. In the scene following the bookstore meeting, Joe begins walking home. At this time, it is dark

outside, implying that it is much later in the day and Joe is still talking about Beck in his inner monologue. In this particular scene, Joe is talking to Beck/thinking about love. He says he has had his heart broken but he tries to stay open and look for “the one” (“Pilot” 00:05:30). Here, the writers of the show are recalling schemas of the romantic comedy by showing Joe as a guy who is not looking for love, but somehow stumbles upon a special girl and expects her to fulfill his every desire. As Joe walks up the stairs to his apartment building, he describes the dilemma of his neighbor, a single mom with an abusive boyfriend and a young son. When Joe arrives at the door to his apartment, this young son is sitting on the steps next to his mom’s apartment. Claudia, Joe’s neighbor, can be heard fighting with her boyfriend inside. So, in developing the character of Joe as someone the audiences can enjoy, the writers have Joe interact with the young son, Paco in a caring manner. Joe talks to Paco about books and selflessly gives him his dinner while Joe has no hot food to eat in his apartment. Building empathy through this relationship is essential to the visual format, because Paco, Claudia, and Ron do not exist in the book version of *You* due to the different format. As Penn Badgley, the actor that plays Joe Goldberg, says in an interview with Build series (season 2) in relation to Paco’s character, “It’s the audience that needs that character to see that part of Joe. It’s the clearest way in the present to see that there are moral lines that he won’t cross that make him a tenable character” (00:20:00). Without the romantic comedy schema of Joe being a character who has had his heartbroken, who is just looking for love, and the addition of the Paco character, audiences would not be able to sympathize with Joe as readily. Because audiences are encouraged to like Joe so early in the first episode of the show, they are encouraged to overlook his more problematic aspects. For example, directly following the interaction with Paco, Joe begins looking for Beck on social media, contradicting what he said to his co-worker. Through voice-over, Joe justifies that his research is to protect himself from heartbreak. He says, “A guy needs to protect himself. I had to be sure you’re safe” (“Pilot” 00:07:10). However, Joe takes “internet stalking” that has been normalized in a media driven culture, to the extreme. Joe researches where Beck is from, who her family is, where she went to college, what she majored in, past boyfriends, her current job, and her current address. Joe then says, in voiceover, “A proposal. Why don’t we spend the day together tomorrow? Just you and me” (“Pilot” 00:09:11). This would sound like an innocent suggestion if Joe were asking her on a date in real life; however, Joe then proceeds to follow Beck throughout her day wearing a hat that he thinks hides his identity.

Viewers remain interested because of Joe's direct address narration assuring them of his heartfelt reasoning.

After Joe follows Beck around through her daily routine, he sneaks into her apartment while she is away with the ruse that there was a water leak. He addresses Beck, in his head, by saying, "I just need to know who you really are" ("Pilot" 00:23:30). Here, placing Beck in the position of someone who must prove herself, which makes the audience automatically emphasize with Joe. The showrunner of *You*, Sera Gamble comments on this notion in a season two interview saying,

All of us who grew up on those great love stories, those romantic comedies we're kind of hardwired to root for the love story [...] we are as a culture very very quick to look for ways to judge women and forgive men in these stories so that is the fun mind trick of watching the game. (Build Series 00:12:30)

As the pilot episode progresses, there continues to be problematic aspects of Joe's narration and actions, but because he is doing everything for the coveted and proliferated "happily ever after," which well-versed audiences are familiar with, the plot continues. The pilot proceeds to center around the hope of a romantic relationship as the direct address narration remains present, the writers of the show capitalize on the schemas of romantic comedies with exaggerated lines like "it's crazy the lengths we go. We're a lot alike, Beck. The last of the true romantics" ("Pilot" 00:32:47) said by Joe in his inner monologue. Continuing the exaggeration of the romantic comedy, the show's creators also include highly ironic commentary on Joe through what he says in narration. For example, when Beck has a failed poetry reading where her boyfriend does not show up, she gets drunk and heads to the subway to leave. By happenstance, Joe is in the same subway station, after following Beck to her poetry reading. When Beck stumbles down the stairs to the subway, while looking at her phone, Joe addresses the audience/Beck in voiceover by saying, "Beck, you're too drunk to be alone. What if some sicko had followed you down here?" ("Pilot" 00:33:27). In adding this line, and others like it, writers are nodding to the fact that the show is meant to subvert the romantic comedy genre by combining it with the horror genre.

Following this, Beck loses her balance and falls on the train tracks while trying to catch her phone. Joe then saves her life by pulling her off the tracks. The camera captures the swift motion of Joe pulling Beck up and then Beck falling on top of Joe. As they land, the train passes and there is a gush of air as they look into each other's eyes. This is a highly romantic scene as the

man saves the woman in distress and there is an extended close up of the couple gazing into each other's eyes. Here, romance and reality collide as audiences expect this scene to end romantically due to the camera angles and lighting. However, this is subverted and cut short when Beck vomits on Joe's face. After this scene, viewers learn that Joe stole Beck's phone in the very same interaction where he saved her life. Here, romantic comedy tropes are disrupted and combined with tropes of the horror genre. Joe continues to justify his action in direct address saying that she falls for the wrong men.

The pilot episode of *You* exemplifies the power of direct address in television series that theorists Dorothee Birke and Robyn Warhol examine in their article "Multimodal You: Playing with Direct Address in Contemporary Narrative Television." The direct address in *You* is the very thing that makes the show consumable. In using this medium, audiences are more easily convinced to trust the problematic protagonist. By combining this mode that creates likeability with the over-exaggerated logic of the romantic comedy, the show's creators are inviting the larger culture into an analysis and conversation about love, social media, and persuasion. Showrunner Sera Gamble stated in an interview with 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y that, "It was so clear from the very beginning that the reason it was going to work is because I heard you [Badgley] talking just to me. It really feels like you strike this tone where you're speaking very intimately to one person. So, It captured for me that experience of being inside someone's head" (00:15:30). The intimate nature of the direct address allows viewers to overlook the trickier aspects of Joe's character. Near the end of the pilot episode, Joe narrates, "You are special. You're talented. You're passionate. You're smart" (00:40:00). While Joe is speaking about Beck in this situation, this language helps audiences to become enchanted with the protagonist and fixated on the idea that Joe and Beck would become a couple. When Penn Badgley, the actor that plays Joe looks directly into the camera at the end of the episode with a sinister smile he incites Rothman's analysis of the villain's view of the camera where, "meeting the camera's gaze, he reveals his knowledge of our viewing; this look by which he unmask himself denies our innocence" (79). Badgely's interaction with the camera brings viewers into the same position as Joe. Ultimately, the pilot episode interpellates viewers into the fantasy world of the show where they are pressured to empathize with Joe's ideas and motivations and at the same time place themselves in the position in which Beck finds herself.

The final episode of the first season finds the protagonists in a much different situation. Throughout the season, Joe makes Beck fall in love with him and they have a happy little romance.

However, there is much lying and manipulation from Joe and cheating from Beck. When Joe kills one of Beck's friends—unbeknownst to Beck of course—Beck seeks out help with a therapist. While this was helpful for her, it led Beck to cheat on Joe with her therapist. Coupled with Joe's lack of trust, this drives a wedge between the happy couple in the episode before the finale. Prior to the opening scene of the final episode in this season, Beck finds the souvenirs Joe has kept from his murder victims. Notably, almost all these murder victims had some level of relationship with Beck that Joe had to eliminate.

The episode opens with a cross-cutting of two scenes, one scene being a flashback to when Joe was a teenager and the owner of the bookstore threw him in the cage and one being the present when Beck is in the cage. The two scenes overlay each other as an example of why Joe thinks it is okay to put someone in the cage, the cage being the tempered glass room in the soundproof basement of the bookstore. Again, Joe thinks he is doing this for the sake of love. In a conversation between Joe and Beck, Joe says, "Everything I have done, I have done for you;" Beck asks, "Even this?" to which Joe responds, "Even this" ("Bluebeard's Castle" 00:04:04). In the second to last episode of season one, Beck finds the shoebox full of souvenirs in the ceiling of Joe's apartment. The box contains a stolen pair of Beck's underwear, a tank-top that belonged to Beck, the phones of people Joe has killed, Beck's stolen phone from episode one, and the teeth of Beck's former boyfriend. Joe claims that this is no different than Beck wearing his t-shirt to bed, he says, "you can't tell me that's crazy. It's the stuff of a million love songs" ("Bluebeard's Castle" 00:08:33). The line that Joe speaks here challenges the cultural dynamic of relationships and the way that people are interpellated into culture and persuaded to think a certain way. While Joe truly believes that what he is doing is justified, the spectators watching can, hopefully see the flaws in Joe's thinking. As Penn Badgley stated in an interview posted on SoundCloud, "Joe is eerily succeeding in following the logic of our culture in terms of the way we define love. The way we define love is not love, it is lust, infatuation, obsession" (Di Trolio 00:04:50). In this interview, Badgley references pop culture songs that sound obsessive, lustful, and creepy when the lyrics are dissected. The line spoken by Joe in this scene is one way that the show *You* brings attention to the problematic mindset of the culture at large which is seen in "the stuff of a million love songs." Throughout the season, Joe maintains his quest for love, stopping at nothing to obtain it. Here, the writers of the show are questioning the logic that permeates romantic comedies. As Penn Badgley states in an interview with Build Series (season 1), "[Joe is] following the logic that our pop culture

sets the standard of what love and relationships should be, but if you follow that logic too closely you may be disturbingly mirroring some of Joe's behavior" (00:06:55). The character of Joe personifies the logic that the culture has for romantic love. It can be argued that this logic is strengthened by the schemas of romantic television shows and movies.

Nevertheless, the final episode of season one continues to use formal devices to have spectators build empathy with Joe. As the episode continues, Joe's neighbor Claudia is sent to the hospital because of her abusive boyfriend Ron. When this happens, the police cannot find Claudia's son Paco with whom Joe has a positive relationship. In the following scene, Paco is found trying to steal a gun from the register of the bookstore. Throughout season one, Paco's anger and frustration builds, and he is seen trying to learn how to take care of his mom by taking revenge on his mom's boyfriend. Joe deters Paco from this action, and it is alluded to that Joe had a similar childhood and speaks from experience which allows him to keep Paco from making the situation worse. The relationship between Joe and Paco, as well as the allusions to Joe's childhood help to continue building the viewer's empathy towards Joe. In showing pieces of Joe's violent childhood as well as his childhood role models, viewers are able to justify why Joe takes the actions that he does. In seeing Joe's influences as well as hearing his motivations, audiences continue to root for his success. In a calmer scene in the final episode of season one, Beck says, "well you got your girlfriend locked up in a cage, a PI snooping around and you're worried about your neighbor's kid" ("Bluebeard's Castle" 00:17:12). Joe's worry and protection of Paco continues throughout the rest of the episode. In fact, as with most situations Joe is in, this care is taken to the extreme. When Joe is in the process of hiding his guilt from the private investigator, he finds an angry Ron looking for Paco. Before this scene, Paco has tried to take justice into his own hands by hitting Ron in the head with a baseball bat which leads Paco to run and hide. When Joe confronts Ron, he does not know that Paco can see their altercation. Joe kills Ron. Then Joe tells Paco how to hide the evidence and make it seem like Ron has gone into hiding. Joe then tells Paco, "Sometimes we do bad things for the people we love. Doesn't mean it's right. It means love is more important." ("Bluebeard's Castle" 00:34:55). This conversation is shown to have had significant impact on Paco as he turns a blind eye to Joe's violence towards Beck. The relationship between Joe and Paco is important to the form of the show, however, to display a dynamic and human side of Joe. Yet, Joe's mentorship leads Paco to justify violent acts.

While the interaction with Ron and Paco is happening, Beck remains locked in the cage in the basement of the bookstore. Joe provides Beck with a typewriter in order for her to have “the low-tech writer’s retreat she has always wanted” (“Bluebeard’s Castle” 00:12:21). In voice-over narration, as she is writing Beck says,

But the stories were in you deep as poison. If Prince Charming was real. If he could save you, you needed to be saved from everything. When would he come? The answer was a cruel shrug in a hundred fleeting moments. You learned you didn’t have whatever magic turns a beast into a prince. And then, right when you thought you might just disappear. He saw you. (00:22:05)

Here, Beck represents the damsel in distress and Joe, the Prince Charming who comes to save her. It is important to note that Beck also has preconceived notions about love due to the schemas presented in romantic television shows and movies. Beck, like many young girls who grew up watching fairytales, was looking for her Prince Charming. Her hope of love is similar to the search Joe mentions in episode one about his search for “the one.” In presenting the hopes and disappointments of both the male and female protagonists, the writers of *You* demonstrate the impacts that schemas have on both young boys and young girls. Not to mention, Beck only sees and hears the outward presenting Joe while viewers hear the motivations behind Joe’s actions and are shown scenes of Joe being violent. As Penn Badgley mentions in an interview with Build Series (season 2), “There are so many scenes where he is a good person if you just take away the voice over” (00:26:20). In the same way, fairytales and romantic movies show the outward presenting aspects of the characters and the happily ever after of the couple. This problem is made even more clear as Elizabeth Lail, the actress who plays Beck, comments in the season one interview with Build Series, “people want to label her [Beck] as naïve but I’m not so sure she is. He presents a really good case [...] they make a good match in some ways. She’s not thinking worst-case scenario” (00:14:00). Because Beck does not hear Joe’s commentary, she is able to give him the benefit of the doubt. Yet, because Beck does not hear Joe’s commentary, she is unable to forgive him. In this way, Sera Gamble’s commentary on the forgiveness of men and the blaming of women in society is shown to be true.

While Joe does everything he can to make his relationship with Beck succeed, ultimately Beck does not love him when she finds out he is a serial killer. Near the end of the episode, Joe tells Beck, “There’s not a line in the world that I wouldn’t cross for you” (00:40:00). However,

throughout the episode, viewers see Joe preparing to make Beck disappear while removing the blame from himself and destroying evidence that would link him to Beck. Despite Beck's best efforts to make it out of the cage alive, Joe ends up killing her. Beck attempts to make a way out for herself by writing an exposé framing her therapist for what Joe does. She describes her therapist the way she would describe Joe and tells Joe that her story is their ticket out. She tries to escape by convincing Joe that she loves him. Yet, this does not work, and Joe ends up killing her and sending in her story to be published which incriminates Beck's therapist. This action allows Joe to continue living and working in the same place free of a murder charge. At the end of the episode, Joe is still addressing Beck in voiceover narration and says, "In the end you couldn't love me. I feel at peace with that now because I loved you the absolute best I could. And I gave you what you wanted. I feel good about that" (00:45:37). Ultimately, the first season of *You* interpellates viewers into the delusional fantasy world of a white male protagonist who is in love with a girl and does everything he can to obtain and maintain a relationship with her. Throughout season one, the show exaggerates and challenges the schemas and tropes of romantic television shows and movies through the framework of the horror genre in a way that encourages viewers to question where their sympathies lie and examine how entertainment affects their outlook on life.

The second season of *You* further examines romantic television schemas. In this second season of *You*, the male protagonist Joe Goldberg is in a new city running away from a ghost of his past that returned to haunt him. Quite literally an ex-girlfriend Joe thought he had killed, returned to seek revenge. The opening line of the second season is, "Love, this is why you're not for me" ("A Fresh Start" 00:00:18). Staying true to form, Joe is speaking in direct address voiceover narration. While Joe is speaking to an unnamed auditor, this address is ironic because his soon to be love interest is named "Love" and, as a result, he is already addressing her. The second season deepens the use of formal devices as the script remains ironic and exaggerated. In the second season, Joe is determined to be single and does not seek romantic love. Nevertheless, as Joe is in a grocery store, he sees a beautiful woman. Automatically, the scene slows and romantic music swells. In voice-over Joe says, "Hello...you. No, fuck, no I'm not doing that I'm not gonna try to figure out who you are, why you look so concerned about the state of that heirloom tomato" (00:13:15). Despite this declaration, Joe immediately starts analyzing everything about her and comments everything in voiceover that he assumes about her. Deepening the comedic element of the show and beginning a new perspective, it is the woman who makes the first move. She says,

“Excuse me? Do you think this peach looks like a butt?” (“A Fresh Start” 00:14:20). The humor and irony of the first episode of the second season keeps viewers engaged with a season that has the same premise as the first. As Penn Badgley said in an interview with Alex Di Trilio, “If I didn’t balance humor and levity the way that it does it might not be what it has become. It might not be the thing that people want to watch as they have” (“A Fresh Start” 00:18:00). The writers of the show continued to make Joe relatable in a way that kept viewers engaged and interested in a second season.

Throughout the first episode of the second season, it seems that Joe is working hard to change. Joe has even started to tell people that his name is Will, in the hopes of having a fresh start, like the name of the episode suggests. Joe does not immediately research Love on the internet after they meet in the grocery store. After their first meeting, Joe says in voiceover, “Love, you are not for me” (“A Fresh Start” 00:16:00). He continues trying to avoid his normal relationship habits in a hope to change his destructive patterns. Joe focuses on his new job at the grocery store, bookstore combo “Anavrin.” Joe stays off social media and focuses on what he calls “addiction management” where he observes people for a few minutes a day without getting fixated on one single person. Despite what seems to be his best efforts, Joe succumbs to his damaging behaviors. Almost immediately after meeting Love at Anavrin, Joe starts to address her in voiceover. At the end of the episode he says, “You win, Love. I’ll stay” (“A Fresh Start” 00:47:00). Here, Joe continues his pattern of addressing his love interest in his subconscious narration and audiences are informed of his every contemplation. Continuing the combination of the romantic comedy and horror genre, the end of the opening episode of season two has a twist that shows Joe to be the same stalker that viewers saw in season one. In the last three minutes of the episode, it is shown that Joe has planned everything. The music and lighting change to suggest a sinister condition. The camera re-frames everything that Joe, now Will, has done throughout the episode to show viewers what was really going on. Joe now has a storage locker in Los Angeles where he has re-created the cage and is holding a man named Will hostage in order to steal his identity. The scene begins where Joe visits Will and asks why a man is looking for him and then shifts back to show Joe earlier in the episode where the re-framing begins. Joe says, “here’s the thing Love” and then begins a confessional direct address where audiences learn he has planned everything (“A Fresh Start” 00:46:00). Joe confesses that when he first got to LA, he was hoping for a fresh start, but then he saw Love. So, Joe believed it to be fate and manipulated his way into a job at the same

store where Love works and moved into an apartment where he had a view of Love's house from his window.

As season two progresses, the writers of the show continue to comment on the cultural aspects of the romantic comedy genre. Throughout the second season, Joe falls in love with Love and does everything he possibly can to win her over. The show continues to ask of the audience, "how far are you willing to go for an evil white man?" (Webster 00:19:00). The show continues to make Joe relatable and empathetic. In the second season, there is another young kid that Joe keeps an eye on, which continues to give viewers a reason to trust him. As Sera Gamble said in an interview, "the horror movie of it all is that you're [Joe] kind of trustable seeming" (92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y 00:13:00). The second season of the show takes the previously discussed tropes further with a twist ending. In the final episode of the second season, Joe learns that his romantic interest, Love is also a murderer. Joe learns this when Love follows him to the storage unit and sees someone he is keeping there. Love ends up murdering this person to keep Joe safe, which mirrors Joe's actions of doing absolutely whatever it takes to stay in a relationship with the people he loves. When Love learns about the problematic aspects of Joe's personality, she accepts him and even kills for him. However, when Joe learns that Love is similar to him, he is not accepting of her. He says, "A crazy person has locked me in a cage" ("Love, Actually" 00:12:00). Whenever Joe's actions are turned towards him, he cannot handle it. Love recognizes the double standard of this and says, "You know why this is happening? Because when I was seeing you, really seeing you, you were busy gazing at a goddamn fantasy. A perfectly, imperfect girl. You saw what you wanted to see. But I was always right here, the whole time" ("Love, Actually" 00:11:23). In the interaction where Joe is in the cage, he is shown what it feels like to be on the receiving end of his actions. Love comments what it is like to be expected to be the perfect girl. Here, Love's words are reflective of the expectations that schemas place on relationships. Joe further shows the audience his manipulation by saying, "It isn't hard to convince someone you love them. If you know what they want to hear" (00:13:20). In the same way that Joe manipulates people around him, television series and movies influence spectators into empathizing with problematic characters through the formal devices of interpellation, schemas, and camerawork.

In conclusion, Netflix's *You* uses formal devices to encourage viewers to empathize with a problematic protagonist. *You* exemplifies how a text can have a profound emotional effect on a reader/viewer. In interpellating the audience into the fantasy with the use of direct address and

camera location, Netflix's *You* encourages audiences to both empathize with the love sick serial killer protagonist and examine the ways in which they are persuaded to come to this place of empathy. The pronoun *you* differentiates the show from texts that have previously used direct address, voiceover narration. Further, in having this show on the streaming-service Netflix, audiences are brought into the "womb like" world of film in a new and less time sensitive way than in other venues. *You* asks the question of how much audiences are willing to be influenced by media. In examining the problematic aspects of the show in tandem with its cultural impact and social commentary, one can take a negotiated reading of Netflix's *You*. The protagonist Joe Goldberg accurately personifies an extreme following of the logic perpetuated by the schemas and cinematic codes of television and movies.

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