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Editor's Note

The past few years have seen some dramatic shake-ups in the format of the *KPR*: when I took over as editor in 2019. I produced, for the first time, a double issue of our journal that included the proceedings of both the 2018 and 2019 meetings of the KPA. At that point I was excited to be starting my tenure with double the number of excellent essays on a variety of academic and pedagogical subjects, as well as pertinent book reviews honoring authors from the region of Appalachia. That volume also included, for the first time, outstanding creative work from our organization's members, reflecting the important role of creative work in our annual meetings. Once that double issue was published, I figured that things would be smooth sailing going forward.

Then COVID-19 happened. When, in September 2019, we were planning our 2020 meeting at Campbellsville University, no one could have imagined what was on the horizon. Barely a week before anyone had heard the word "lockdown," our association's members met during what was, unbeknownst to us at the time, the last normal weekend that any of us was to experience for the foreseeable future.

For me, and for many others, the weekend of March 6-7 2020 was the last time we saw colleagues face-to-face, attended scholarly papers and creative presentations in person, discussed our opinions in a collegial way in the same room without wearing masks, and ate together during a casual business meeting without first disinfecting our surroundings and sitting 6 feet apart. I feel humbled and privileged to have been part of this conference in Campbellsville and so grateful to have seen my colleagues in fine form, reading incisive papers and sharing their stellar creative visions before the pandemic forced us into isolation.

Because of the unimaginable events of the past months, this version of the *KPR* is again an extraordinary one. As we are unable to meet in person for our 2021 conference, volume 35 of the journal will be published as an electronic document on our website (thekpa.org) before our March 2021 conference, which will be held entirely online. The papers and creative work selected for publication from the 2021 meeting will comprise volume 36 and will be added to this document and, if all goes well, both volumes will then be published in paper format and made available to attendees of our 2022 conference, which we all fervently hope will take place face to face in a different world from the one in which we are presently living.

In spite of our current situation, some things have not changed: once again, I would like to thank all our contributors; our authorship includes people from every echelon of the profession, from emeritus professor to undergraduate student; this opportunity to publish alongside each other, share scholarship, and learn from each other has always been one of the special and distinguishing characteristics of our organization.

I would also like to extend my warmest thanks to the members of the editorial board and to my two jewels of editorial assistants for all their help during a time when faculty members are virtually relearning their jobs and students are being educated in a way they never bargained for. Our learning curve has been steep in both cases, and this makes me even more grateful for the time that these KPA members have sacrificed to contribute to the selection and editorial process in order to make the *KPR* the best journal it can be. Thank you all so much.

Above all, stay safe.

Karen Taylor
Morehead State University

2020 Presidential Address: The History of Garbage

By David Powell
Union College

An old joke: Garbage is garbage, but the *history* of garbage is scholarship.

Like any good joke, it has a few possible angles, all of which have a grain of truth. We—scholars—make careers of making seemingly unimportant things important. Garbage, like most human expression, is ephemera bound for the landfill. We're the smudged salvage crew, picking through the refuse, saying, "wait a sec ... this one's not quite done for. And in fact, when you consider it in light of this other little bit that got thrown away, we can build a whole narrative about how we live and perceive!" We scholars channel that human compulsion toward understanding beyond the big-ticket items to take note of how the little stuff—the letters, the apprentice works, the pop culture—come together to make the big cultural moments vital.

The joke could, of course be read in a less flattering light. We—scholars—are thought by some to spend our careers making something out of nothing. To the chagrin of many laypeople, we *overanalyze*. We're the ones that ruin movies and can't find simple pleasure in John Grisham novels. We don't just look at a picture and feel its impact; we start to break the image down into its parts to understand why it has the impact it does. We notice problematic representations. We tend to be blasé because any lack of originality hits us harder. We habitually pick at consciousness rather than simply inhabit it. It's a process that can be difficult to explain, must less justify, to those outside the academic humanities. Our squabbles and fixations are at best esoteric to outsiders, often, no doubt, silly. I, personally, have been witness to a conversation that approximated a shouting match that came nigh on to fisticuffs over whether *The Red Badge of Courage* was best classified a work of Realism or Naturalism. As a result of this conversation, not one word of the novel changed.

The authors to whom we devote our careers are themselves often skeptical of the usefulness of humanities scholarship. Michael Chabon, the 2001 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, has argued that "there is no more useless activity than that of periodization, in particular cultural history, into discrete eras—the Jazz Age, the Greatest Generation, the Eisenhower years, the Sixties" because "such periods can never be honestly articulated without recourse to so many demurrals and arbitrary demarcations, and the granting of so many exceptions, as to render them practically useless for any kind of serious historical purpose" (199). He was piggybacking on Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote that "historically, there is thought to be a

difference in the ideas which predominate over successive epochs, and there are data for marking the genius of the Classic, of the Romantic, and now of the Reflective or Philosophical age." Emerson noted that due to his "views [...] of the oneness or the identity of the mind through all individuals, [he did] not much dwell on these differences" (66). This compulsion to break the history of human expression and thought into discrete periods, to taxonomize so as to understand, is foundational to our work. And yet we are cautioned against it by those we seek to classify. They are territorial. As Emerson elsewhere cautioned: "Shakespeare is the only biographer of Shakespeare, and even he can tell nothing except to the Shakespeare in us, that is, to our most apprehensive and sympathetic hour" (256). Or the poet Billy Collins, who asks "Would anyone care to join me / in flicking a few pebbles in the direction / of teachers who are fond of asking the question: / 'What is the poet trying to say?' / as if Thomas Hardy and Emily Dickinson / had struggled but ultimately failed in their efforts— / inarticulate wretches that they were, / biting their pens and staring out the window for a clue" (60). So what are we scholars to do?

Kentucky's recent governor was no diplomat in office, as even his supporters will concede. Matt Bevin had a particular habit of butting heads with teachers at all levels. Most famous, perhaps, was his dust-up with educators over the state's troubled pension system, but his administration also had a habit of poking at the relevance of the liberal arts in higher education. His Lieutenant Governor, Jenean Hampton, ruffled feathers by noting that one shouldn't major in history "unless you have a job lined up," comments that echoed Bevin's earlier assertion that "there will be more incentives to electrical engineers than to French literature majors" and that "all the people in the world that want to study French literature can do so, they are just not going to be subsidized by the taxpayer like engineers" (Bruggers).

On one level, such comments aren't problematic. Indisputable is the fact that appropriations for humanities education should account for somewhere between zero and one hundred percent of the state budget. The precise point along that spectrum that best serves the interest of society is difficult to pin down, and certainly red-versus-blue entrenchment isn't helpful in figuring out where that point is. But the governor's statement wasn't made in a vacuum; it represents, even if incidentally, a problem that the humanities has with popular perception in general. Bevin lined up a humanities discipline against engineering—and not just any humanities, but French literature and not just any engineering, but electrical. Electrical engineering doesn't make a bridge or generate artificial intelligence. It's a discipline of pure application, without theory, emotional expressiveness, or philosophical caution. And it was levied against French literature. Not literature in general—and not American literature, certainly—but a foreign literature typically without immediate application in Kentucky. And while it's troubling that a state leader might express hostility toward French literature—which, of course, drains a fraction of a percent of state education funding—what should bother each of us far more is that he was expressing a common exasperation. The fact is that our jobs don't produce comfort or security, certainly not in the obvious ways that engineering or medicine do. Higher education has now, for the better part of two centuries, inched toward practical relevance as a measure of success, a process accelerated by the ubiquity of public funding, which entails a demand for justification for funds explicable to the public. In education, populism inherently glares at refinement because, at the end of the day, when you have a heart attack you want the person sitting next to you to have a bachelor's degree in nursing more than a bachelor's degree in poetry.

Pragmatically, many have tried to justify literary studies in practical terms. “Learn history to avoid the mistakes of the past” some have said, yet atrocities happen often in educated societies, and often as a direct result of familiarity with past events. Some suggest that the humanities, in their mental gymnastics, train more powerful and flexible minds, but no data yet show that humanities are the best or only method of doing so. Some have asserted that studying literature can make us better people in some moral or ethical sense, that they can make our sense of empathy more acutely felt, but those who work in the field know that humanists, the best-read people on earth, are sometimes the least humane, that there is little correlation between being well-read and being kind. These attempts at objective justifications are not only inadequate to defend the humanities, they erode the subjective central mission of art and literature—the pursuit of a truth beyond literal expression. Explaining them in literal terms, we can expect, will remain a fruitless endeavor.

Several years ago, when I was a graduate student at the University of Georgia, the Southeastern Conference negotiated a multi-billion dollar television rights deal with ESPN. My father was outraged on my behalf. “They’ve got all these billions of dollars,” he said, “and they pay you twelve grand?!” (or whatever the going rate was for an English TA). “Well, yeah,” I replied, well aware of the situational pragmatics, “but how many football games did you watch last year?” “A lot,” he said. “And how many books did you read?” He declined to answer. My dad doesn’t lack intelligence or curiosity by any means, but he is in line with much of our population. Studies have noted a precipitous decline in literary reading among even the educated. Americans are more likely to have kept a garden in the previous twelve months than to have read a single novel. The reading that does happen tends not to be difficult reading.

We’re in a tough place, an apparently perpetually tough place. Well established is the fact that the humanities have always been met with skepticism. Classical rhetoric is replete with attempts to justify itself. Jesus communicated in parables, but Philip Sidney still had to defend the power of truth in ostensible lies. Today, humanities majors are outnumbered by vocational majors roughly ten to one nationwide. Many of us have “doctor” in front of our names, but we have to explain that we don’t save lives. It’s nice to tell someone you’re a professor, but as soon as “English” precedes it, you’re met with the response “oh, my grammar is awful.” Because that’s what we do. Our work is neither easily explicable nor concretely beneficial. But that’s okay. It’s not supposed to be.

In the 1930s, American author Willa Cather faced criticism that her writing lacked pertinence. She wrote about common things mostly, but did so with an eye to art and to classical forms. She did not, as was the mode of the moment, write in the belief that the author’s obligation was to precipitate social change. In short, she was crotchety. But she was nearing the end of a decorated, and still under-rated, career, and had earned the right to be so. Facing her critics, she published a letter in *Commonweal* magazine in 1936 that read in part:

When the world is in a bad way, we are told, it is the business of the composer and the poet to devote himself to propaganda and fan the flames of indignation ... [b]ut the world has a habit of being in a bad way from time to time, and art has never contributed anything to help matters—except escape. Hundreds of years ago, before European civilization had touched this continent, the Indian women in the old rock-perched pueblos of the Southwest were painting geometrical patterns on the jars in

which they carried water up from the streams. Why did they take the trouble? These people lived under the perpetual threat of drought and famine; they often shaped their graceful cooking pots when they had nothing to cook in them. Anyone who looks over a collection of pre-historic Indian pottery dug up from old burial-mounds knows at once that the potters experimented with form and color to gratify something that had no concern with food and shelter. The major arts (poetry, painting, architecture, sculpture, music) have a pedigree all their own. They did not come into being as a means of increasing the game supply or promoting tribal security. They sprang from an unaccountable predilection of the one unaccountable thing in man. (968)

Cather built a career exploring this idea of the “one unaccountable thing in man.” Cather was also a woman of business, and the term “unaccountable” would have been meaningful to her. It would represent a liability balanced against an asset. For her, the human compulsion to art wasn’t balanced against something explicable. Aesthetics don’t need to be justified. And, in fact, justify them or not, they are inevitable.

Humans can’t create anything purely utilitarian. What was Cather’s “pre-historic Indian pottery”? Artisan-grade craftwork to be sold for \$200 each in upscale Santa Fe gift shops? No. They were dishware. Bowls. Pots. Plates. Ladles. Used as long as they were useful and then set aside. As garbage. And yet they held experiments with “form and color to gratify something that had no concern with food and shelter.” Consider our own dinnerware for tonight’s banquet. These plates were round. They didn’t have to be. They could have been square. They had decorative gold fringes. Why? The decorations don’t make the food any more nourishing. To make something useful, we must also make decisions about how that usefulness fits into our unaccountable compulsion toward art. The designs on those earthenware pots were declarations of humanity. Art is precisely—to the smallest fraction of a percent—as inevitable as people. We don’t do things randomly, and we don’t make anything without choices as to how that thing will represent us. And as long as there is art there will be people like us that guard and explore it because others will always want to understand it, let popular skepticism and budget dollars fall as they might.

Consider that the collected work of Johann Sebastian Bach takes up 155 CDs. Alexandre Dumas published nearly 300 works in his life. Shakespeare’s total output covers nearly 1,000,000 words. All of these, even the B-sides, are the work of interesting human minds that had the courage to express themselves and the capacity and circumstances to make significant impacts. *Hamlet* is less than 30,000 words. Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in d minor is less than ten minutes. Who tends to all the rest, the brilliant and overlooked remainder, if not humanities scholars? In recent years, two books by Walt Whitman—a temperance novel and the quirky and fascinating “Guide to Manly Health and Training”—have been recovered and published thanks to an enterprising literary studies grad student (Schuessler). Ten years ago, they were garbage. Cather published around half a million words of criticism and commentary within about a year of graduating from college; the vast majority of this content was published anonymously or pseudonymously. Without the hard work of just a few Cather scholars, picking through old newspapers, these writings and the invaluable perspective they provide on Cather’s work would be left in the junkheap of cultural history. The Greek playwright Sophocles was thought to have written 123 plays. Seven survive. We wouldn’t be down 116 important plays

had we had more drama professors. How many Sophocleses have we missed altogether? The writer Charles Chesnutt seems to have halted an otherwise prolific fiction career upon joining the leadership team of the newly-formed NAACP in 1910. Is there anyone in this room who really believes a great writer can just walk away, that there's not a box of Chesnutt's late stories locked up in a forgotten cabinet in the back of an antique store somewhere in rural Ohio? It's out there. And without the trained eye of a literary scholar, those stories, like the thousands of other essential artifacts of human culture waiting to be brought out of the dustbin of history, remain refuse. Think of the importance of us looking for the overlooked, especially in the context of an expanding canon.

And it's not just the lost artifacts that we represent. I'll go to my grave believing that "The Old Man at the Bridge" is Hemingway's best short story, that *Flags in the Dust* is Faulkner's best novel, that Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* is more than a warm-up for *Gatsby*, that Irwin Shaw is one of the top American fiction writers, full stop. But without me making those claims, without each of you shining lights into your own corners of human culture, much of who we all are and have been will remain lost to history. And that's why we—scholars—are here, to get the individual angles on how humanity works.

Garbage is garbage. But the history of garbage is scholarship. And scholarship is what ensures the good stuff doesn't get thrown away for keeps.

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Of Death and Poetry in Homer's *Iliad*

By *Valerio Caldesi Valeri*
University of Kentucky

In the proem, the ominous nine verses opening Homer's *Iliad*, death looms large.¹ Conjuring the voice of a goddess to aid with his feat, the poet promises casualties of unparalleled magnitude in the Greek ranks stationed at Troy, painting those losses as a dreadful consequence of Achilles' rage. As the narrative reveals in the course of the first book, Achilles, the most accomplished Achaean fighter, will resolve to withdraw from the battlefield, a rage-fueled decision following his altercation with the commander-in-chief Agamemnon. Achilles' absence will in turn result in an increased death rate for the Achaean Greeks. The text of the proem reads as follows:

μη̄νιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρὶ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε,
πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
ἡρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν
οἰωνοῖσι τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή,
ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε
Ἄτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
τίς τ' ἄρ σφωε θεῶν ἔριδι ζυνέηκε μάχεσθαι;
(Homer, *Iliad* 1.1-9)

The rage, sing o goddess, of Achilles son of Peleus,
the hateful rage that caused the Achaeans immeasurable anguish,
flung into Hades many valiant souls
of heroes and made them prey of dogs
and all sorts of birds, and the plan of Zeus was accomplished,
since the very first time they parted in disagreement,
the lord of men, son of Atreus, [Agamemnon] and godlike Achilles.
Who among the gods set them to wrangle against each other?
The son of Leto and Zeus [the god Apollo].²

The proem dwells on the incalculable toll exacted by the loss of human life, drawing attention to the metaphysical aspects as well as the physicality of death: the brutal and rapid departure of brave souls plunged into the realm of the Underworld is evoked along with the defilement to which the unburied corpses of mighty Achaean heroes are exposed. The thematic promise foregrounded in the proem, however, remains unfulfilled for a good fifth of the entire poem. In actuality, not a single demise occurs in the main narrative time for some two thousand five hundred verses until the Greek king Elephenor perishes, stabbed by a spear piercing his side (*Iliad* 4.467-70). After this prolonged delay, the work finally realigns with the expectations generated by the proem, detailing fifty-two deaths of Achaean heroes in the remaining twenty books.³

The present essay explores a possible rationale for the poet's momentary choice to shrink away from treating death after suggesting extensive and immediate coverage of it in the proem. That Homer toys with the expectations of an audience who is already somewhat familiar with the epic material is a point that scholars have long recognized.⁴ In 1992, for instance, James Morrison dedicated a book-length monograph to the topic of what he termed 'Homeric misdirection,' concluding that Homer's poetic craft relies precisely on destabilizing his public's knowledge of established storylines (109-118). One could argue that hardly any *locus* within a text can occupy a more prominent position for a case of misdirection than its prologue. While Morrison did not discuss the Iliadic proem, Brian Satterfield has more recently focused on contradictions between what is announced in the proem and the story that unfolds in the rest of the poem. Like Morrison, Satterfield interprets those discrepancies as a device meant to underscore the author's break from tradition and his ability to introduce new and bold concepts such as the acknowledgment that even enemies are entitled to burial (6-7). Combining the two approaches, this piece contends that, in the proem of the *Iliad*, Homer builds up the audience's anticipation of the kind of subject matter that would be appropriate for epic poetry, death, only to dissolve the genre conventions. In delaying the death of the Greek heroes for four entire books, the poet seems to offer a virtuoso demonstration that the kind of martial poetry he composes does not need to feature manslaughter in order to provide entertainment for his audience.

In and of itself, the very first book gives a taste of the broad range of situations that the epic poet can cover. First, the book progresses from the human to the divine realm, beginning with the all-too-earthly confrontation between Achilles and Agamemnon (*Iliad* 1.121-303) and concluding with the banquet that the gods held on the peak of Mt. Olympus (*Iliad* 1.601-611). Second, the sheer number of circumstances upon which the book touches between its inception and ending is quite impressive.

The poet begins by describing in detail the practices in use for the ransom of a war prisoner: namely, the entreaty speech of Apollo's priest who attempts to secure his daughter's return home, the Greek army's positive response to it, and Agamemnon's final and spiteful decision to reject the ransom (*Iliad* 1.12-32). The slighted priest's prayer to Apollo is then quoted, thus illustrating the utilitarian outlook that the Greeks had on religion, a mere tool to obtain favors from the gods (*Iliad* 1.37-42). Thereupon follows Apollo's punishment of the Achaeans struck to death by his darts (*Iliad* 1.43-52):⁵ the deity's response signals at once the importance of paying respect to religious figures, the gods' dominance over men and their ability to interfere with human life.

Next, the poet moves on to giving the audience an insight into the dynamics taking shape within the Greek army: he lingers on the negotiation of power relations

The gods gathered at the banquet crave and enjoy the musical performance of Apollo, who plays with his lyre a tune enriched by the Muses' verses. In an effective ring composition technique that connects beginning and end of the book, Apollo and the poet identify with one another. A mirror and divine counterpart of the poet, Apollo is also openly acknowledged as the initiator of the storyline (*Iliad* 1.8).⁶ By slaughtering the Achaeans, the god, in fact, precipitates the assembly of the Achaeans that led to the dispute pitting Achilles against Agamemnon. The god, thus, aptly encapsulates the dual function of the poet as entertainer as well as engine of the narrative. Moreover, Apollo enters the narrative as a slayer of men. The excerpt reads as follows:

(Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων)
 βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων χωόμενος κῆρ,
 τόξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων ἀμφορεφέα τε φαρέτρην·
ἔκλαγξαν δ' ἄρ' ὅϊστοι ἐπ' ὤμων χωόμενοιο,
 αὐτοῦ κινηθέντος· ὃ δ' ἦϊε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς.
 ἔζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν, μετὰ δ' ἰὸν ἔηκε·
 δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγῇ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο·
 οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπώχετο καὶ κύνας ἀργούς,
 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἔχεπευκὲς ἐφίεις
 βάλλ'· αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί.
 (Homer, *Iliad* 1.44-52)

(Phoebus Apollo)
 stepped down from the peaks of Olympus furious in his heart
 bearing on his shoulders the arrows and the quiver closed on both sides;
 darts rattled/vibrated (*klazō*) on the shoulders of the angry one
 as he moved; he was coming down like the night.
 He then settled away from the ships and fired one arrow;
 frightening was the vibration (*klangē*) of the silver bow;
 at first he was attacking mules and swift dogs,
 but then at the men themselves his piercing arrow
 he began to aim; heaps of corpses were incessantly burning on pyres.

The terms employed for the vibration of the arrows and bow assume particular significance in the context. The verb *klazō* applied to the arrows collected in the god's quiver is usually understood to denote a rattling sound. It must be observed, however, that the verb is also an appropriate choice for the sound that the musician can produce by playing the lyre (Euripides, *Ion* 905) as well as the sound that the god Pan elicits from his pipes (*Homeric Hymn to Pan* 14). Belonging to the same semantic range as the verb, the noun *klangē* in the *Iliad* describes the vibration of Apollo's bowstring, but once again is also used of musical instruments in 4th-century BCE lyric poetry and comedy (Telestes 4 and Mnesimachus 4.57) and of a song in 5th-century tragedy (Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 208). The tools that Apollo wields to engender death, arrows and bow, are therefore closely associated with the musical instruments that the poet plays. The language strongly suggests that the accoutrements of Apollo, the lyre and bow, are not as incompatible as one may think at first sight and confirms the intimate connection between poetry and death: in Apollo, they coexist one with the other, inseparably. As Apollo brings death upon the Achaeans, he is accomplishing, from a metapoetic standpoint, the task expected of the poet.

Whereas Homer seems to identify with the portrayal of Apollo as masterful entertainer and shaper of the plotline, the bard ultimately parts ways with the very nexus that he ascribes to Apollo, that between death and poetry. After setting up the traditional focus of epic poetry on death in the proem and through Apollo in the narrative, the poet shifts gears, momentarily but significantly, challenging that very notion in the first and the next three books. It is a bold move and a programmatic statement meant to vindicate a far more expansive role and scope for the poet's work. The broad spectrum of disparate circumstances that the poet explores in the first book constitutes a powerful illustration of the immense potential of death-free epic poetry. The poet reminds the audience that his poetry, far from being narrowly confined to the final moment in men's existence, is capable of capturing and replicating the *totality* of human experience.⁷ Homer, thus, redefines the latitude of epic poetry suggesting that, through it, the poet can explore the complexity and multiplicity of reality. The model represented by Apollo, at once poet, slayer of men and entertainer, implicates a connection between death and the entertainment value of poetry. Certainly, Homer will follow that model for most of the *Iliad*, delighting his audience with the goriest descriptions of death scenes one could ever imagine: heads severed but still dangling from the neck through a flap of skin (*Iliad* 16.335-41), eyeballs rolling out of crushed skulls (*Iliad* 16.737-50), and spears piercing necks and internally slashing the root of tongues (*Iliad* 5.290-293). In the initial books of his poem, however, the ancient bard provides a healthy reminder that entertainment can equally derive from the astounding power of his art to represent the totality and complexity of life.

Notes

¹ The centrality of death in the *Iliad* is a by-product of the Homeric conception of heroic life. Death on the battlefield has been unanimously construed as an imperative for the Iliadic heroes, who, while aiming to survive the continuous frays, can paradoxically claim everlasting fame for themselves only through a glorious demise. See, most recently, Horn, 381-82 with bibliography in note 101. On life and death as themes vital to the *Iliad*, see Garland, 52-53 and Morrison (1999), 142-143.

² All English translations from the Greek provided in this article are the author's.

³ Figures along with other statistics in Garland, 43.

⁴ Quoting Donald Lateiner, "oral story-tellers succeed by both frustrating and fulfilling face-to-face audience expectations" (14).

⁵ Note how the mass murder Apollo deals the Achaean Greeks here is *not* the slew of deaths that Homer had promised his audience in the proem. There, the poet qualified Achaean deaths as the result of Achilles' rage, a rage which arises only later in the first book. In this context, we are not in the main narrative time, rather in a flashback that accounts for the genesis of that rage. Hence, I would read the summary, yet powerful description of Apollo's mayhem of the Greeks with its haunting image of pyres consuming corpses in the flames (*Iliad* 1.52) as a tease on the poet's part aimed at building anticipation for later descriptions of deaths resulting from Achilles' rage.

⁶ The agency of Apollo in triggering the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon may be understood to be at odds with the proem's indication that the plan of Zeus was at work in the genesis of the men's argument: see the discussion in Satterfield (14-18). Zeus, in fact, seems to play no direct role whatsoever in the strife. For our purposes, the glaring discrepancy could ultimately serve the purpose of redirecting attention to Apollo, a pivotal figure for the poet.

⁷ The totality in content coverage to which epic poetry seems to aspire matches its tendency to subsume all other genres. For the concept of epic as ‘super-genre’ or ‘omnibus genre,’ see Foley and Martin, respectively.

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Verona as Collina: The Idea of the Vestal Virgin in Early Modern Literature

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Setting aside very loose adaptations such as *The Lion King* and fanciful biographies like *Shakespeare in Love*, the two highest grossing Shakespeare films of all time are Baz Luhrman's 1996 *Romeo+Juliet* and Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 *Romeo and Juliet* (Adamczyk). This is the one Shakespeare play the majority of my first-year students have read in high school, as I first encountered it myself; if my students are to be believed, many have substituted a viewing of one the films above for actually reading the play, and I can attest that this tradition reaches back at least to my own school days. Given this, chances are that the last three generations of Americans are largely unaware of one of the most wrenchingly horrific scenes in this most famous play, as neither director includes it in his respective film. Juliet has a soliloquy in Act 4, Scene 3 as she prepares herself to drink the death-mimicking potion provided by the Friar, entertaining a litany of mental terrors of what may follow. She first imagines what will happen if the potion doesn't work, and resolves to kill herself rather than be married to Paris the next day; then, she considers that perhaps the Friar's potion will kill her outright, saving him from any retribution for marrying her to Romeo in the first place. Her last fear is the most potent, however, and deserves quotation at some length:

How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point.
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or if I live, is it not very like
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place...
Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
So early waking, what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad—
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains? (4.3.30-54)

Being buried alive might well be the most horrific fate imaginable; while modern funerary practices have mostly eliminated any chance of it happening today, even the most cursory research into the topic reveals it as a widespread fear up until the modern age. This paper will explore how the threat of live burial became a potent motif associated with a young woman's exercise of sexual choice outside the paternal and religious boundaries meant to contain it in two of the more popular texts of the Early Modern period: *Romeo and Juliet* and Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*.

It is easy to understand why Zeffirelli and Lührman would cut Juliet's monologue about live burial; a twentieth century audience is far more familiar with knives (or guns, as Lührman uses) and even poison as means of death. Being buried alive conjures images of Edgar Allan Poe and nineteenth century melodrama, which does not fit the tone of either film. However, for Shakespeare's contemporary audience, the live burial Juliet so fears would perhaps have resonated as powerfully as connected to punishment for the exercise of female sexual choice as the cup or dagger, as they had a direct example referenced in some of the most popular works of the day: the historical legend of Rome's Vestal Virgins, and the particular way this legend became entwined with erotic literature contemporaneously popular with *Romeo and Juliet*.

The first account we have of the Vestal Virgins comes to us from Plutarch's "Life of Numa Pompilius." He begins by describing the office of the *pontifex maximus*, and has Numa founding the order of the Vestals under that high priest's direct and sole supervision. Their chief role was to ensure a flame be kept perpetually burning in their temple in the Forum, in imitation of similar perpetual flames in Athens and at Delphi. However, while those flames were tended by widows past the time of marriage, the Roman Vestals were held to a different standard of sexual purity; according to Plutarch:

The statutes prescribed by Numa for the vestals were these: that they should take a vow of virginity for the space of thirty years, the first ten of which they were to spend in learning their duties, the second ten in performing them, and the remaining ten in teaching and instructing others. (Para. 15)

Plutarch goes on to note that while the Vestals could marry after their thirty-year term had ended, very few did so (Para. 16).

In compensation for this sacrifice of their sexual prime, the Vestals did receive many privileges, attested to by Robin Lorsch Wildfang in her book, *Rome's Vestal Virgins*. In many ways these privileges made them the legal equal of a man (they could make their own wills and administer their own affairs) (64) and in other ways making them far more than the common man: they attended gladiatorial games in a box next to the emperor (44), lived in a palace near their temple in the forum, had a limited power to pardon condemned men, and were granted the very rare privilege of being buried within the city of Rome itself. While a woman in Rome could gain great favor by becoming the consort of the Emperor or another politically powerful man, the Vestals achieved their status through their virginity. If there were any doubt that their status depended on the denial of their sexuality, Plutarch's description of the punishments they were subject to immediately quells it:

[S]he that has broken her vow is buried alive near the gate called Collina, where a little mound of earth stands inside the city. The culprit herself is put in a litter, which they cover over, and tie her down with cords on it, so that nothing she utters may be heard ... the prisoner, being still covered, and

placing her upon the steps that lead down to the cell, turns away his face with the rest of the priests; the stairs are drawn up after she has gone down, and a quantity of earth is heaped up over the entrance to the cell, so as to prevent it from being distinguished from the rest of the mound. This is the punishment of those who break their vow of virginity. (Para 16)

Wildfang posits a two-fold reason why the punishment for the breaking of the vow was so horrific. While the religious significance of the Vestals to Rome's image of itself cannot be overstated (1), the insistence on virginity ensured that the privileges attached to the Vestals could not become associated with any single Roman family and was equally important (61). For the Romans, the denial of the free sexual will of these priestesses was a matter of both societal self-fashioning and serious financial, religious, and political importance. As this history becomes subject matter for the poetic and dramatic fictions of the Early Modern period, the threat is transferred into areas of importance to Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

There are many paths by which Plutarch's account could have reached the authors of the Elizabethan age, but the surest for the widest range of authors was via Ovid. While nearly all of Ovid's works were widely known, as he formed part of the backbone of a basic education, his *Metamorphoses* (in the translation of Arthur Golding in 1567) and *Amores* were wildly popular among the generation of poets coming of age in the 1580s and 1590s, attested to by the sheer number of imitations and translations. It is in Book 4 of the *Metamorphoses* that Ovid makes his most direct reference to the fate of the Vestal Virgins in the tale of Leucothoe, a young woman with whom the Sun falls in love. After the Sun has had his way with her (seemingly against her will in Golding, more ambiguously in the original), one of Leucothoe's rivals makes sure that the affair is known to all. In shame, Leucothoe's father,

cruell and unmercifull would no excuse accept,
But holding up hir handes to heaven when tenderly she wept,
And said it was the Sunne that did the deede against hir will:
Yet like a savage beast full bent his daughter for to spill,
He put hir deepe in delved ground, and on hir bodie laide
A huge great heape of heavie sand. (92)

That Shakespeare knew this passage there is little doubt; the story of Leucothoe follows immediately upon the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, which he would use to great comic effect at the conclusion of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Ovidian tales of erotic love were such the rage in the 1580s and 1590s that they spawned the genre of the epyllion, or 'little epic.' While the term "epyllion" has been a bit slippery throughout literary history, "in Renaissance poetry they tended to be a kind of erotic treatment of a mythological narrative. For example, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Thomas Lodge's *Scillaes Metamorphosis*, and Francis Beaumont's *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*" ("Epyllion" 248-9). While today they are mostly encountered, if at all, in upper-division English courses, they were among the most popular texts of the time, often printed rather than circulated in manuscript due to their length. The literary quality is undeniable, but it would be hopelessly naive to overlook the more prurient interest some of the original audience would have taken in these poems. Perhaps in contrast with similarly titillating material today, "much erotic verse of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, on the other hand, acknowledges—even obsesses over—autonomous female sexuality" (15), according to Ian Moulton, to whom we shall

return shortly. The most famous epyllion today by far is Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, left unfinished at his death in 1593 and later completed by George Chapman. It is in Marlowe's poem and Chapman's continuation that we find the most conspicuous reference to the fate of the Vestal Virgins in Early Modern literature, and the first instance of the major shift in meaning that it will take in response to the sexual standards of the time.

Marlowe first introduces us to Hero, a beautiful young priestess of Venus who has somewhat paradoxically sworn a vow of chastity. Like the Vestals, her sexual prime is not her own to dispose of as she chooses. Perhaps due to the fact that Marlowe's version of the poem hadn't progressed much beyond Hero and Leander's first sexual encounter at the time of his death, he doesn't have a great deal to say about the consequences of Hero breaking her vow; however, George Chapman, in his continuation of Marlowe's poem, dedicates the entirety of the fourth sestiad to Hero's fruitless attempts to atone for becoming, in Chapman's term, 'devirginate.' Tantalizingly, Chapman even names the Swan that speaks to comfort Hero Leucote, and her comfort is ultimately revealed to be as cold as her namesake's tomb. The breaking of Hero's vow has disgraced Venus, who has thereby lost a bet with Diana that even a single devotee of Venus could live chastely. While this sets in motion a series of events that will end with the drowning of Leander, followed by Hero casting herself into the sea, Marlowe's version of the poem emphasizes Leander as the surrogate who will die for Hero's choice.

He does so through a curious segment of the poem that occurs the first time Leander swims the Hellespont to visit Hero at night. During this swim, Neptune is overcome with desire for Leander, and nearly drowns him in the process of trying to possess him sexually. Neptune's attempts paint Leander as distinctly female: "He clapt his plump cheekes, with his tresses playd" (2.181), to the point that Leander cries out "You are deceav'd, I am no woman I" (2.1.191). Neptune's response makes clear that he is not interested in Leander as a man, but as an effeminate boy, telling him a story of the seduction of a young boy by a shepherd. In any event, Leander escapes, talks Hero out of her vow of chastity, and is preparing to swim home as Marlowe's poem ends. This raises two questions: why does Marlowe figure Leander as feminine in the scene? And why will the first punishment for Hero's broken vow of chastity fall upon him?

We can answer these questions by reference to both humoral theory and Early Modern fears about overt female sexuality and the emasculating effect it could have on a man. In the section of his work *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* dealing with epyllion, Moulton suggests that "Commonly accepted humoral theory posited that men were 'hotter' and 'drier' than women, whose bodies were relatively 'cold' and 'moist.' It is not surprising, given the patriarchal nature of early modern society, that men's hot, dry bodies were seen as superior to women's" (16). The danger arises from intemperate sexual desire, which, through the combination of humors, rarifies the female body while debasing the male. Female sexuality must be contained and turned to socially productive ends, such as the conception of children; allowed free rein, female sexual desire would render the man effeminate. As Moulton points out, effeminacy was often understood literally: "An effeminate man's body would be physically womanly: he would lose body hair, his muscles would soften, and he might become impotent" (16). From this point of view, Leander has been made effeminate, and Neptune's passion will render him ultimately cold and moist. Not only has Hero's sexual desire debased him; it has made him a surrogate for the punishment she would undergo for transgressing her vows. His live burial, in this sense, is the most womanly punishment he could undergo, forever trapped under the sea.

One more element connects Leander's drowning both to a sense of effeminacy and Roman religious punishments. As Wildfang notes, the live burial of the sexually impure Vestal Virgin is of a piece with other punishments for those the Romans felt were religiously impure; they were a way for the punishers to shunt off direct responsibility for the death, allowing that ultimately the gods were the ones who imposed it. After all, the Vestal Virgin would die of starvation, not suffocation. While live burial was reserved for the Vestals, though, the other punishment decreed for the impure was indirect drowning: "hermaphrodites, for example, were sent out to sea" (58). Leander, then, is thoroughly enmeshed in a web of associations of sexual debasement and punishment traceable back to the Vestal Virgins.

While Juliet does not have the explicit religious connection to the Vestal Virgins that Hero does, her situation is the Early Modern secular equivalent. Her sexual choices are not allowed to be made for love or pleasure; they are rather to be dictated by the "public" (family, in this instance) good and overseen by a man wielding only slightly less power to punish than the *pontifex maximus* of the Vestals.

Juliet's sexuality, including her virginity, is certainly not prized in and of itself; her father is only slightly hesitant to bargain it away, despite his initial reservations about her age. The connotation is clear; Juliet's virginity is not hers to dispose of as she chooses, but is held in trust for the public good of her family and its betterment. The conflict arises because Juliet, like Hero, is devoted to something other than what she has been marked out for: love, in its romantic, erotic, and spiritual dimensions. The Nurse, uselessly pragmatic as she is, points out this distinction between the sexual marketplace for which Juliet is meant and the love Juliet desires, when she advises Juliet after Romeo's banishment: "since the case so stands as now it doth, / I think it best you married with the County. / O, he's a lovely gentleman!" (3.5.217-9). After all, the matter in the play for which Juliet and Romeo will ultimately pay for with their lives is not premarital sex; they are duly, if perhaps irresponsibly, married by Friar Laurence. Nor do I feel the issue is even necessarily a marriage between a Capulet and a Montague; their deaths seem to bring about the end of the feud easily enough. The real issue seems to be that their marriage is strictly a lateral move for the Capulets; the two families are 'both alike in dignity,' after all. However, the marriage to Paris would have been a step up for her family, and her sexual agency must be diverted away from private desire and towards the public good. That Juliet was far from unique in this does not lessen the parallels towards the Vestal Virgins of Rome; while many other women may have taken Juliet's path, none of them were specifically buried alive in a famous play as a direct result.

That Romeo shares her fate is not surprising, given what we know of Leander's surrogate burial in Hero's stead. Romeo has also been shown as emasculated throughout the play by his propensity towards love rather than honor or war, beginning with his absence from the violent encounter which begins the play. When Benvolio later finds him, he is enveloped in a lover's melancholy and complains of an estrangement from himself: "I have lost myself. I am not here. / This is not Romeo, he's some otherwhere" (1.1.195-6). Even Friar Laurence notes how emasculated Romeo has become, upbraiding him specifically in the language of gender norms:

Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art.
Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast.
Unseemly woman in a seeming man,
And ill-beseeming beast in seeming both! (3.3.108-112)

Although Romeo has been living an epyllion rather than spending his time reading them, the end result is the same. Like Juliet, he walks into his place of burial a living being, never to walk out again.

All of the young lovers in the texts we have examined here suffer for the exercise of female sexual will, whether contrary to a vow or to the needs of a *pater familias*. The young men are shown to be made effeminate by joining themselves to that will, and ultimately die as a result; the young women are left to take their own lives, all other agency stripped from them. While no longer bodily thrust alive into the tomb by a high priest or angry father, the transference of the power over these women's sexual agency to the sexual standards of Early Modern England dooms them to an early burial just the same. The fate of a Vestal Virgin remains a potent allusion and symbolic shorthand for poets and audiences over 1500 years later.

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Missing Queequeg: “I Have Not Told Half [I] Suffered”¹

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*Through ritual, our grief becomes entwined in love.
Grief is a wound, but it's also an opportunity.
As the thirteenth-century poet Rumi says,
'The wound is the place where the light enters you.'*
—Elaine Mansfield, “Good Grief! What I Learned from Loss.”

1. Grief and Narrative Distancing

Of the many avenues worth exploration in one of the greatest American works of literature, a poignant one is the question of Queequeg. In a country so firmly steeped in Eurocentric Puritan heritage, Queequeg's importance in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* is his exemplification of the highest Christian principles—brotherhood, fidelity, communion, and sacrifice. The heathen harpooner quickly enchants the narrator Ishmael, and their transformative relationship unveils the human condition in its most elevated forms. Yet the final chapters barely mention Queequeg, whom I would call the best man in the whole book. For all the chapters on whale skulls and blubber, loose and fast fish, and the vivid description of squeezing spermaceti, what could be the purpose of the pointed absence of a relationship that so greatly embodies Melville's themes of community and companionship?

My hope is to explain Queequeg's diminished role in *Moby-Dick*'s final chapters. I dare not label it a failing of the author, nor does the novel's shift to focus on Starbuck and Ahab's relationship completely fill this evident lacuna satisfactorily. Rather, the explanation that best honors Queequeg as a crucially significant character and that validates the narrator's development from angry, suicidal runaway to a man fit for meaningful social bonding is the most deeply human: grief. Queequeg's influence establishes a deep spiritual bond, the loss of which moves Ishmael to mourn in the only ways he can. Various distancing techniques show how his impulse to mourn is repressed in a setting where he cannot easily follow nineteenth-century grieving customs, even at the height of the Victorian cult of mourning. With his seafaring tale, Ishmael commemorates his relationship with Queequeg, the transformational effects of which act as a buoy, guiding him into a life ready for traditional social and familial commitments.

2. The Cult of Mourning

To understand the strangeness of Ishmael's reticence in discussing Queequeg in the later part of the novel, one must be familiar with bereavement culture around the time Melville wrote *Moby-Dick*. The mid- to late-nineteenth century was the height of the so-called cult of mourning. Karin J. Bohleke explores photographs from the 1850s and 1860s that demonstrate the social pressures to mourn using ritualized etiquette. Style guides defined and redefined the stages, length, and rituals of bereavement for both women and men. Bohleke maintains that these culturally enforced traditions were valuable in that they allowed people to come to terms with the different psychological stages of grief: "More than anything, nineteenth-century mourners realized that grief requires time, and they generously allowed that time" (190). Ishmael does not follow conventional Victorian mourning etiquette, but I would argue that, as he pens his maritime story of the *Pequod*, one can find evidence of his grieving.

One notable aspect of Victorian bereavement culture is that it isolated those grieving. Bohleke explains that widows "were forbidden to partake in any social function and allowed out of the house only to attend church services and visit close relations"; in a sense, widows were "social outcasts for the first year and one day of deep mourning" (169). In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael is similarly isolated. Named for a Biblical outcast, Ishmael's trajectory begins when he is a young man dissatisfied with his life and ready to step "into the street, and methodically [knock] people's hats off" or to kill himself with "pistol and ball" (Melville 18). His melancholy and irritability drive him to the sea, in hopes that a sailor's life will bring him relief. But Ishmael's choice to alienate himself from the society he knows conflicts with an unconscious need for community.

After meeting Queequeg in the Spouter Inn, the misanthropic Ishmael comes to admire the harpooner for his generous, loving, and serene nature, and humorously describes him as "George Washington cannibalistically developed" (Melville 55). Soon, Ishmael finds himself powerless to reject Queequeg's sincere pledge of devotion. Queequeg and Ishmael are "married" as "bosom friends," "in our hearts' honeymoon, ... a cosy, loving pair" (Melville 56-7). As a kind of spirit guide archetype, Queequeg initiates Ishmael's evolving understanding of and desire for community and kinship.

Unfortunately, the story ends with Ishmael alone again, cast out from the vortex that took his self-selected family. Ishmael's status as an orphan is founded on the loss of his spiritual partner, the community he has come to embrace, and the whaler's life that he chose for himself. As the *Rachel* approaches to rescue Ishmael, the reader is left to question whether he will isolate himself again or if the lessons he learned aboard the *Pequod* will travel with him. I suggest that they do, in the form of his tale woven with threads of both transcendent spiritual awakening and subtle expressions of profound grief. Ishmael's need to grieve can be traced through *Moby-Dick* in the narrative choices he makes to commemorate the death of his closest friend, and these choices show Ishmael's attempt to quantify the spiritual evolution that Queequeg initiates.

3. "Gulp Down Your Tears"

Before *Moby-Dick*'s celebrated opening, we meet the narrator in the "Etymology" and "Extracts" sections. Even in this prefacing material, hints of Ishmael's grief appear. As the narrator acknowledges an assistant (or "sub-sub") librarian who compiled the many whale allusions, he toasts a sarcastic "fare thee

well, poor devil of a Sub-Sub” (Melville 8). But the narrator’s tone moves from irony to shades of sympathy: “But gulp down your tears and hie aloft to the royal-mast with your hearts; for your friends who have gone before are clearing out the seven-storied heavens” (Melville 8). Here, in admonishing all unappreciated sub-subs to hold back their tears, the narrator strives to suppress his own grief for loved ones lost, and before chapter one even begins, Melville establishes grieving as so essential to Ishmael’s story that it must weave itself through even the preface material, where “here ye strike but splintered hearts together” (8). Later, we find out, a mere 15% of the way through the novel, that it is Ishmael’s beloved harpooner friend for whom he mourns, Queequeg whom Ishmael is devoted to until “poor Queequeg took his last long dive” (Melville 64).

4. “I Have Not Told Half [I] Suffered”

Analyzing repressed grief in written texts is difficult because of its subtlety, but history affords us plenty of examples. There are correlations to Ishmael’s stifled mourning in the journals of women bound West in the early- to mid-nineteenth century. Carey Voeller examined the journals of women traveling the Overland Trail and found that the “tendency of these writers to suppress and minimize grief thus results in another ritualized, generic form of textual mourning” (152). For journeys like this, marked by extreme hardship, he observed that travelers in unstable, deadly conditions use omission, minimizing, and suppression to shift the focus away from overt expressions of grief. One of the diaries Voeller studied belonged to Elizabeth Dixon Smith, who traveled from Indiana to Oregon with her family in 1847. Most of her diary is a mundane log of miles traveled, weather conditions, what parts of the wagon broke, and so on, but after her husband sickens, she reveals a whisper of explicit emotion. Voeller states:

[S]he closes this entry, ‘I have not told half we suffered. I am inadequate [sic] to the task...’ She hints that much more hardship has occurred than she admits in the text, but her inadequacy proves a rhetorical tool that ultimately . . . mutes the hardship and allows Smith and her narrative to continue moving—through what remains unsaid. (153)

Smith’s avoidance of grief is reminiscent of Ishmael’s, but these migratory mourners use another tactic as well: distraction. The women journaling their harsh experiences on the Overland Trail “treat death briefly and momentarily, and their loss and mourning rarely serve as focal points in their narratives . . . [r]ather, writers distract their audiences (and most likely themselves) by providing a whirlwind of other information” (Voeller 150). If one looks at the scope of Ishmael’s tale, it is clear that he augments his story with a mountain of data, discursions, and digressions in an effort to make sense of his place in the world and the nearly unfathomable nature of life and death. In *Moby-Dick*’s cetology chapters about blubber, brit, pitchpoling, quadrants, and ambergris, Melville evokes a rhythm—similar to what Voeller found in the Overland Trail journals, “a cadence of repetition” (155)—that distracts both Ishmael and the reader and lulls us away from something important. It is the discussion of death that Ishmael skirts, a very personal death that he most struggles to minimize.

It is interesting to note that, of the Overland Trail journals Voeller studied, many were written after the journey, when the authors’ environmental conditions were less perilous. Similar to Smith’s real-world journal, Ishmael’s minimalist account of his mourning is written after the fact of his trauma, “the full gravity of which cannot be expressed, [and] must be swallowed up by the ocean of novelistic and societal

propriety” (Greven 45). Though Melville sets his narrator’s writing of his story years after the events that caused his loss, we get a sense of the scope of Ishmael’s grief by examining the omissions, distractions, and narrative distancing woven throughout *Moby-Dick*.

5. “What Untattooed Parts Might Remain”

Another subtle marker of Ishmael’s grief is his tattoos. In “Body Art: Sacred and Secular Text in Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*,” John Norton unravels the layered meanings woven in the tattoos of Ishmael and Queequeg. In these body texts, Norton reads both a catalog of trauma and Ishmael’s effort to reconcile it; a reminder of a journey that is physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual; and a desire to unfold and comprehend a numinous mystery. Ishmael spends much time discussing Queequeg’s extensive tattoos, given to him by a revered tribal prophet, which detail “a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth” (Melville 366), and his reverence for these mystical truths is highlighted when he spends hours carving his coffin lid with the patterns of these tattoos.

One short paragraph in chapter 102, however, points to Ishmael’s own use of tattoos as an external expression of grief. In “A Bower in the Arsacides,” Ishmael recounts the story of his stay with the king of Tranque, during which time he closely examined the skeleton of a sperm whale preserved in a temple served by venerated priests. As he prepares to share with the reader what Norton terms the “sacred mystery” of the skeletal dimensions he observed (2), Ishmael confesses that they are “copied verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed” (Melville 346). Throughout the novel, Ishmael wrestles with the scope and magnitude of a whale’s physical proportions and philosophical meanings, so the significance of tattooing the whale’s dimensions is more than mere body art: Ishmael inks onto his body his search for meaning.

Even though the priests object to him taking these measurements—“Dar’st thou measure this our god!” (Melville 346)—the whale tattoo may be a less significant one than is his plan for a future tattoo. Ishmael says, “I was crowded for space, and wished the other parts of my body to remain a blank page for a poem I was then composing—at least, what untattooed parts might remain” (Melville 346-47). If Ishmael’s skin is “crowded for space,” he is almost fully tattooed, like Queequeg. But he plans to fill his remaining blank skin with a poem, a literary expression of the ineffable. Could it be that the poem he is composing to fill his empty spaces is another search for meaning—a representation of his spiritual journey with Queequeg? Both Ishmael and Queequeg are marked by their own truths, and the truths revealed by their catalytic relationship are “a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume” (Melville 367). Queequeg makes no claim to understand the markings put on his body by his tribe’s seer prophet, and he is perfectly content that “these mysteries were therefore destined in the end to moulder away with the living parchment” (Melville 367). In contrast, Ishmael seems less at ease that the mysteries of ultimate truth “be unsolved to the last” (Melville 367). Since he already marked himself with dimensions that try to define and delimit the sperm whale, Ishmael’s planned tattoos can be read as an attempt to represent his entangled trauma and wonder in a memorial to the man who is the catalyst for Ishmael’s discovering the redemptive power of fellowship. Marking his skin this way would allow Ishmael to wear the text of his grief openly, a part of his very self, and making this admission hints that he wants to do so, yet with no evidence that his planned poem is ever inked into his flesh (and without even an admission that the poem would be about Queequeg), Ishmael’s grief remains hidden and repressed.

6. “I Clove Like a Barnacle”

What is troubling about Queequeg, if he is the protagonist’s closest companion, is that he seems to disappear after chapter 110. Why would the novel’s best model of masculinity on the ship—brave, compassionate, calm, selfless, hardworking—go missing from the final twenty chapters, without even a word in acknowledgement as the final vortex “carried the smallest chip of the *Pequod* out of sight” (Melville 426)? To answer that, I turn to the last scene in which he plays a major role, “Queequeg in his Coffin.” Here Starbuck finally convinces Ahab that they must stop the ship and repair the oil casks that have begun leaking in the hold. Ishmael quickly becomes concerned because Queequeg, after toiling in the dark, cold hold, catches a “terrible chill which lapsed into a fever” (Melville 363).

Consider Ishmael’s language in this chapter. When introducing Queequeg’s role in this anecdote, Ishmael calls him “my poor pagan companion,” “fast bosom-friend,” and “poor Queequeg!” (Melville 363). Ishmael lays claim to Queequeg with the possessive *my*. Additionally, this intimate and loving language echoes chapter 10, where Ishmael details the early blooming of their friendship: “that henceforth we were married; meaning, in his country’s phrase, that we were bosom friends; he would gladly die for me, if need should be” (Melville 56). In chapter 110, Ishmael quickly re-establishes that close bond, as close as the one that held them fast to one another in chapter 72, “The Monkey Rope”: “so that for better or for worse, we two, for the time, were wedded . . . an elongated Siamese ligature united us. Queequeg was my own inseparable twin brother” (Melville 255). This language of close connection, however, soon begins to change.

In chapter 110, Melville makes significant shifts in the way characters speak about each other and themselves, especially in the usage of pronouns. What is strange about this chapter is the manner in which Ishmael’s language begins to strip his place entirely from the scene. He starts the chapter clearly admitting his emotional and literal closeness to Queequeg, the connection that throughout the story he says that he will not abandon, as when he declares in chapter 13, “I clove to Queequeg like a barnacle; yea, till poor Queequeg took his last long dive” (Melville 64). But this possessive, intimate language changes as Queequeg’s health worsens. As the days pass, Queequeg wastes away, “till there seemed but little left of him but his frame and tattooing” (Melville 364), and surely his boon companion would attend his bedside. But Ishmael’s language places the reader there, rather than admit his own place at all: “An awe that cannot be named would steal over *you* as *you* sat by the side of this waning savage” (Melville 364, emphasis added). Certainly, Ishmael’s narrative choice creates deep pathos in his audience, but it is also driven by his unwillingness or inability to re-experience and express his grief more overtly. Ishmael, in recounting Queequeg’s deadly illness, cannot place himself in the scene so near the potential loss of his soul brother.

This distancing continues, yet Ishmael is compelled to soften it with loving paeans:

“Let us say it again—no dying Chaldee or Greek had higher and holier thoughts than those, whose mysterious shades you saw creeping over the face of poor Queequeg, . . . the rolling sea seemed gently rocking him to his final rest, and the ocean’s invisible flood-tide lifted him higher and higher towards his destined heaven.” (Melville 364)

Ishmael’s forced narrative detachment nearly substitutes hypothetical foreigners, “Chaldee or Greek,” in the place of his friend, but Ishmael still cannot hold back his devotion to Queequeg. Here Ishmael’s language—the “higher and holier thoughts” and

“destined heaven”—honors Queequeg’s spiritual nature that has awakened Ishmael so forcefully throughout the novel. Earlier, in chapter 72, as Ishmael is connected by the monkey-rope to Queequeg, he recognizes that he is likewise connected to the brotherhood of humanity and “every mortal that breathes . . . has this Siamese connexion with a plurality of other mortals” (Melville 255). Then, in “The Grand Armada,” Ishmael’s boat is drawn to the calm center of a raging vortex of whales, where at the side of Queequeg, “amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy” (Melville 303). In the midst of chaos and danger, Queequeg brings Ishmael peace, joy, and connection, and as his spiritual guide, allows Ishmael to be privy to “[s]ome of the subtlest secrets of the seas . . . divulged to us in this enchanted pond” (Melville 303).

But Queequeg’s illness worsens, and the whole crew believes he will die. Ishmael recounts that Queequeg “called *one* to him . . . taking *his* hand” (Melville 364, emphasis added). Ishmael’s distancing is even more distinctive here, forcing the audience to fill in the gaps and omissions. He no longer uses second person point of view, and yet cannot place himself in the scene with even a pronoun. This unnamed *one* can really only be Ishmael, who as closest companion would seek to stay near Queequeg to provide aid and comfort. The fading Queequeg shares a dying wish with Ishmael, one that likely recalls an earlier time, perhaps the days they spent at the Try Pots Hotel just before they boarded the *Pequod*: “while in Nantucket he had chanced to see certain little canoes of dark wood, . . . and upon inquiry, he had learned that all whalemens who died in Nantucket, were laid in those same dark canoes” (Melville 364). Rather than be buried in his hammock and tossed to the sharks, Queequeg wishes to be buried in one of those coffin-canoes, which are similar to a whale boat and reminiscent of burial customs of his own people, “who, after embalming a dead warrior, stretched him out in his canoe, and so left him to be floated away to the starry archipelagoes” (Melville 364). By calling up an event from their shared past but avoiding naming himself within the memory, Ishmael is again placing yet displacing himself in the scene. His language moves intimately closer, metaphorically linking Queequeg to a slain hero floating off to the “blue heavens,” and then pulls away (Melville 364). It is obviously Ishmael who communicates Queequeg’s wishes for a coffin, but he will only admit that “when this strange circumstance *was made known* aft, the carpenter *was at once commanded* to do Queequeg’s bidding, whatever it might include” (Melville 364, emphasis added). Like the use of pronouns to create a sense of detachment, the passive verbs “was made known” and “was commanded” and the description that “from these dark planks the coffin *was recommended* to be made” (Melville 365, emphasis added) create a greater space between Ishmael and this scene, distancing him from even voicing the possibility of loss. His reluctance to reveal his own presence and agency contradicts his desperate tone which betrays a sense of urgency—“whatever it might include”—especially as Queequeg’s death grows nearer and nearer (Melville 364).

Ishmael continues to make similar linguistic and narrative choices, erasing himself even further as *someone* answers Queequeg’s demands for his harpoon and *someone* lifts Queequeg into the coffin-canoes. Queequeg tells “*one* to go to his bag and bring out his little god, Yojo” (Melville 365, emphasis added). Two characters do make an appearance: Pip (a young low-ranking sailor) holds Queequeg’s hand momentarily while he chants and rattles a tambourine, and Starbuck (the first mate) speaks from above, “gazing down the scuttle” (Melville 366). But Ishmael employs no narrative distancing for these characters; they appear on scene, play a small part, and exit,

leaving that Indefinite Ishmael (the unnamed *someone* who must be Ishmael) hiding in plain sight.

Once Queequeg decides that he is satisfied with these preparations for death, he begins to improve. One last pronoun expresses distance—“*Some* expressed their delighted surprise”—but within a paragraph, Ishmael calls him again “*my* Queequeg” (Melville 366, emphasis added). This linguistic shift back to a first-person possessive pronoun occurs only when Ishmael no longer has to admit the immediate possibility of Queequeg’s death. Yes, Ishmael mentions, as early as chapter 13 before they even reach Nantucket, that Queequeg dies, but the closer he gets to that event, the less he can give voice to his grief.

After Queequeg’s practice-run funeral, he is mentioned a handful of times and only casually. When the ship finally sinks down into an implacable vortex, dragging all the remaining crew down to their deaths, Ishmael does not mention Queequeg at all. Unable to name his searing grief, his alternative form of mourning—one marked by omission, distraction, and repression—represents what David Greven describes as a “self-defining sense of pervasive loss coupled with a refusal to recognize that loss” (37). Psychologically, his suppression is an act of self-preservation from a consuming despair. Since he sees himself in a spiritual union with Queequeg, in which he “perceives that [his] own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two” (Melville 255), the loss of Queequeg could rob him of an important part of himself.

7. “Let Us Squeeze Hands All Round”

Ishmael begins as a social outcast, a runaway hoping to avoid the despair that would lead to suicide, but his desire to alienate himself from his old life actually leads him to communion and fellowship with a new life. Linda Cahir explains that characters like Ishmael “understand that their deep propensity to solitude, privacy, and self-reliance occurs in simultaneity with their equally deep need to be understood, to understand another, and to be integrated into a meaningful bond of fellowship” (2). Queequeg’s relationship with Ishmael is so compelling because of the hope it offers us: “In a life so permeated with loneliness, there are rich instances of communion with another” (Cahir 89-90). If a grump like Ishmael can learn to love and appreciate his fellow man, surely, we all can.

Throughout the novel, Ishmael is compelled to eulogize Queequeg, and his greatest memorials are the moments when he speaks the most freely and fervently, resounding fully in “A Squeeze of the Hand.” Ishmael and his crewmates squeeze the solidifying spermaceti back into liquid form, in what begins as comic enthusiasm: “Squeeze! squeeze! squeeze! all the morning long; I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it” (Melville 322). However, the sincerity with which Ishmael praises this liquescent ceremony elevates the moment to one of near divinity: “I felt divinely free from all ill-will, or petulance, or malice, of any sort whatsoever” (Melville 322). This hallowed, mystical experience mesmerizes and transforms him, drawing him ineluctably toward his community of brothers in a spiritual consummation:

“I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers’ hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say, - Oh! my dear fellow beings, ...Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.” (Melville 323)

Even his understanding of true happiness changes. “Attainable felicity” is no longer an abstraction, one withheld from the depressed young Ishmael on Manhattan Island; for the older Narrator Ishmael, scarred by trauma and saved by love, happiness exists in the concretely physical, “in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fire-side, the country” (Melville 323), physicality that can really only be found in connection and kinship with others. David Greven explains that Ishmael’s tale becomes “a freely . . . homosocial space of cooperation and care” in which “this utopian vision of communal, mutually comforting male bonds shimmers like an oasis in a sea of despair” (49). This transformation could only have happened through Ishmael’s profound relationship with the nurturing Queequeg.

When the ship’s old, rotted life-buoy sinks into the sea, Queequeg offers his coffin-canoe to be caulked closed as replacement. Coffins have special significance and bookend Ishmael and Queequeg’s relationship: the landlord Peter Coffin introduces them, and Queequeg’s empty coffin acts as “an immortality-preserver” (Melville 396) that saves Ishmael when the *Pequod* is fatally damaged by the enraged White Whale. The site of a vicious, mortal battle between whale and man just moments before, the ocean now takes on the peaceful tranquility of heaven at the appearance of Queequeg’s coffin; Queequeg’s devotion to Ishmael works a similarly divine effect. In preserving the narrator, the life-buoy allows Ishmael to immortalize Queequeg’s redeeming influence.

8. “Call Me Ishmael”

In the end, his *Pequod* family is lost, and Ishmael is alone, an “orphan” (Melville 427). Like another Biblical character, Job, Ishmael’s faith is tested, but with Queequeg, that faith is restored. As Ishmael reflects on sharing a bed and a smoke with the friendly neighborhood cannibal and squeezing the spermaceti of human kindness with a fraternity of whalers, Cahir suggests that he comes to realize that, “in a universe as implacable and inscrutable as the white whale itself, . . . the moments of meaningful contact we make with other people provide joy and significance in our lives” (93). When the *Rachel* finally rescues him, Ishmael is a “fast-fish,” tethered fast to Queequeg’s memory as if by a whale rope—but he is also a “loose-fish” (Melville 308), one free and available to new bonds because his relationship with Queequeg taught him the value of connection and prepared him for commitment to a new community. Ishmael’s transformation and subsequent salvation by the *Rachel* signal his possible readiness to enter traditional society. It is worth noting that the ship that rescues him has a woman’s name, perhaps to hint at more conventional Victorian ideals of heterosexual family bonds.

Much of the novel is driven by Ishmael’s growing recognition that human connection has the potential to spiritually elevate us. As Ishmael recounts the relationship that blooms with Queequeg and struggles to communicate the profound grief he must relive as he approaches the retelling of Queequeg’s death, he shares with the reader all the deeply moral and spiritual questions and answers that he found through this intense homosocial bond. The sole survivor of the *Pequod* disaster, Ishmael holds these lessons just as tightly as he ultimately holds the life-buoy of Queequeg’s empty coffin. We can find evidence of his transformation in the famous first line of chapter one: “Call me Ishmael” (Melville 18). The grieving former misanthrope invites us to connect.

Notes

¹ Citation from Voeller 153

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Richardson's *Pamela* Models How Shakespeare Can Inspire Creativity for Women Writers

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Richardson used his correspondence to promote the respectable status of women as writers and to encourage them to write both commercially and informally

—Louise Curran

Scholars writing about Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* no longer focus on the treatment in Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* of "its formal unity and its peculiar combination of moral purity and impurity" ("Love and the Novel" 42). Scholars now supply contextual commentary—the social, material, and literary contexts for discussions of Richardson's fiction. The emphasis is on cultural discourse in the eighteenth century.

To fit this shift in emphasis,¹ I will replace not only the Watt-inspired reading of *Pamela* as a character relentlessly protecting her virginity to gain a husband from a wealthier class, but also John Zang's 1991 deconstructionist reading. My new reading of *Pamela* as Richardson's encouragement for women to write, whether informally or to create a potential novel, will bring details from Richardson's cultural context and the focus of his female audience to the forefront. Because *Pamela*'s letters frequently refer to her paper, pen and ink, I will focus on the impact of these tools used in the letter writing of the Shakespeare Ladies Club, founded in 1736, which initiated new eighteenth-century literary discourse.

As noted by Curran in *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter Writing*, Richardson was part of a culture "in which quotations were routinely classified to register affective reading and display patterns of knowledge" (161). Therefore, Richardson borrowed quotations from theatre and drama, a very popular genre during the eighteenth century, as well as poetry, fables and fairy tales, and humor books and perhaps Edward Bysshe's *Art of English Poetry*, initially printed in 1702 with frequent reprints in following years. Recent scholar Stephen Jarrod Bernard claims Bysshe's alphabetical headings for his listing of quotations from famous writers "sound the 'moral and social expectations'—and the aesthetic—of his day" (118). Abigail Williams also indicates that thought-provoking quotations enriched parlor room conversations in Richardson's day. However, as Kate L. Rumbold explains, when characters quote from Shakespeare, "what is most significant is not the original context of the borrowed words, but the act of quotation itself" (7). As I will show later when analyzing *Pamela*, Richardson incorporates this appreciation of the act of quotation itself in scenes such as that in which Mr. B compliments

Pamela for being well-read when she rebuffs his unwanted advances with details from Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*.

Richardson's character Pamela highlights that aspiring female writers must gain inspiration from their most revered dramatic writer, Shakespeare. In *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth Century Home*, Williams indicates that Richardson's *Pamela* was published in the wake of the Shakespeare Ladies Club's letter-writing campaign, initiated three years earlier in 1736 to convince the major theaters in London to bring moral Shakespeare to the stage to replace immoral Restoration Comedies and frivolous Italian operas.² In *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660-1769*, Michael Dobson even details the focus of the letter-writing campaign by the Shakespeare Ladies Club with a quotation from their writing: "And once again let Shakespear [sic] bless the Stage; / Soul-Soothing Shade, rouz'd [sic] by a Woman's Pen, / To Check the impious Rage of lawless Men" (152). Theatre records show that by 28 February 1737, the Shakespeare Ladies Club's efforts resulted in a command performance of *Hamlet* at Drury Lane. Just days later on 3 March 1737, the *Grub Street Journal*, known for its satire on popular journalism and hack writing, supported the Shakespeare Ladies Club campaign by including a letter purported to be by Shakespeare, Jonson, Dryden, and Rowe addressed to "all judicious Frequenters of the Theatres" in which the ghosts of the four dramatists, acknowledge "Tis a great pleasure for us to hear, that the Ladies begin to encourage Common Sense; which makes us have hopes that the Gentlemen will follow their example" (Avery 155). The powerful effects of the Shakespeare Ladies Club's focus on the works of Shakespeare is evident in theatre records, which show that by the 1740-41 season, the year *Pamela* was published, more than 25% of productions in London theatres were works by Shakespeare. However, in my analysis of *Pamela* which comes later, I will show that Richardson's heroine Pamela renews Dryden's Restoration era practice of borrowing from and then revamping features from Shakespeare's works to reflect current issues.

Recognizing the success of the epistolary campaign waged by the Shakespeare Ladies Club, first to persuade theatre managers to bring Shakespeare to their stages and most recently to give a benefit performance of *Hamlet* to support efforts to place Shakespeare's statue in the corner of Westminster Abbey, Richardson constructs his novel *Pamela* (1741) as a series of letters written by a young woman. As I will show later when analyzing *Pamela*, Richardson incorporates numerous details from *Hamlet* made popular by that benefit performance. However, his *Pamela* re-contextualizes and revamps Shakespeare's details about Ophelia's death and about death the leveler from *Hamlet*'s scene with Yorick's skull in his hand.

My evidence slightly modifies Rumbold's assertion in *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* that "overt quotation of Shakespeare and other authors begins in earnest in the works of Samuel Richardson and is repeated, adapted, and adjusted in later texts" (6). In reading *Pamela*, I found no actual quotations from Shakespeare, although Richardson does adapt and adjust details from Shakespeare's poetry, comedies, and tragedies. By researching Richardson's overt quotations, such as those in the chapel scene in *Pamela*, I discovered the source for the twenty-third psalm as recited by Pamela's father to be William Whittingham's hymnary (331), and his Psalm 117 to be Thomas Norton's Laudate Dominum hymnal (332).

I will now turn to my evidence that Richardson's character Pamela is a portrait to show that a woman writer, especially one caught up in producing the fanfare for Shakespeare, ought to direct the power of her pen to composing her own story (i.e.

writing and submitting a realistic novel for publication). Richardson initially portrays Pamela as being inspired by reading unnamed authors. In an interim narrative section of the novel, following LETTER XXXII, Mr. B, perhaps a shadow of Richardson, has one of the servants give Pamela access to his library. Pamela then takes books from which she hopes “to receive improvement as well as amusement” (114) from her master’s library to her closet. Although Pamela tells her story as she knows it in her letters to her poor rural parents, she is aware that her male master Mr. B judges her writing to be “invention,” not literal truth. She overhears his male perspective: “The girl is always scribbling; I think she may be better employed (15).” “[I]f she stays here, that she will not write the affairs of my family purely for an exercise of her pen, and her invention” (23). Richardson’s Mr. B clarifies: “I could give you an instance, where she has talked a little too freely of the kindnesses that have been shewn her from a *certain quarter*, [referring to himself, a male],” and has imputed a “few kind words, uttered in compassion to her youth and circumstances, into a design upon her, and even dared to make free with names she ought never to mention”(22). Here Richardson’s Pamela, who believes her letter writing reports what naturally occurs in her everyday life, hears a conflicting male opinion about what constitutes credible realism. Women writers in Richardson’s day encounter this issue when dealing with male editors that control whose writing gets published.

Richardson’s Pamela then turns to another female, Mrs. Jervis, also a servant in Mr. B’s household, requesting her opinion. Mrs. Jervis coaches, “Well Pamela, you have made our master, from the sweetest tempered gentleman in the world, one of the most peevish. But you have it in your power to make him as sweet-tempered as ever; though I hope you’ll never do it on his terms” (44). Mrs. Jervis encourages Pamela, like any female writer, to maintain control of character change and development as her plot unfolds. Her advice also hints at the importance of ending each segment by leaving the reader in suspense curious to see what will happen next. In Richardson’s day, this was an essential for all novels because many were printed in magazines segment by segment as each issue came off the press. In contrast to following the advice to maintain control of her plot that Mrs. Jervis gives to Pamela, some authors of the popular serialized novels in Richardson’s day followed the advice of the readers for where they would like the plot to turn next.

Richardson’s Pamela also draws from the richness of the everyday reading and social life shared among the women Richardson encourages to write for publication, Richardson’s Pamela draws from the thought-provoking Shakespearean entertainment the Shakespeare Ladies Club had brought to theaters and drawing room conversation, which Pamela as Richardson portrays her could only know about through her reading. However, his Pamela needs only one Shakespearean poetic detail to set the stage for a scene in her story: Mr. B places a kiss on Pamela’s neck when they are alone in the garden house, a first step in the libertine behavior found in Restoration comedies and Italian operas which the efforts of the Shakespeare Ladies Club had greatly reduced on the stage. Then Mr. B’s concise dialogue “Whoever blamed *Lucretia*?” (26) needs no mention of Tarquin’s rape in Shakespeare’s poem to speak volumes about his intentions, to which Pamela responds by alluding to Shakespeare’s ending “May I, *Lucretia* like justify myself with my death, if I am used barbarously?” (26) to make clear that her dialogue is prompted by Shakespeare’s poem *The Rape of Lucrece*. Although Shakespeare’s Lucrece sends her servant for paper, ink and pen (line 1289) so she can inform her husband that Tarquin has abused her, Richardson’s Pamela eliminates the context of complex reasoning that leads Shakespeare’s Lucrece to commit suicide. Pamela plays to eighteenth-century respect for one’s ability to quote, as is evident in Mr. B’s

response, “O my good girl! Tauntingly, you are well read” (26) “and we shall make out between us, before we have done a pretty story in romance“ (26). When Pamela shares this garden house scene with Mrs. Jervis, she outlines the rest of Mr. B’s widely used and therefore predictable “romance” plot which she as a female writer sees through and will avoid if possible when continuing her own story. Influenced by her reading from an earlier age, Pamela instead posits a moral turn for her story, “And I have read that many a man has been ashamed of his wicked attempts, when he has been repulsed, that would never have been ashamed of them, had he succeeded? (37).

Richardson’s Pamela also borrows from Shakespeare’s tragedies. Thanks to the pens of the Shakespeare Ladies Club, the 1737 season at Drury Lane opened with a command performance of *Hamlet*, which continued to be popular. Therefore, Pamela, in her diary record of her passion at being held captive by Mr. B, transforms imagery surrounding Ophelia’s drowning in Shakespeare’s tragedy *Hamlet* to picture the results if she were to commit suicide at the pond. She poetically imagines, “when they see the dead corpse of the unhappy Pamela dragged out of those dewy banks, and lying breathless at their feet, they will find that remorse to soften their obdurate hearts ... for the unfortunate Mr. Williams will ... order me a decent funeral, and save me ... from the dreadful highway interment” (181). Pamela replaces the shock expressed by Shakespeare’s gravediggers that Ophelia will be given burial in the courtier’s graveyard instead of outside the city as required for suicides with her own moment of eighteenth-century moral self-reflection which deters her: “this act of despondency is a sin, that, if I pursue it, admits no repentance” (182).

Richardson’s Pamela even revamps the context for sack, a sweet fortified wine, and the trademark drink of Shakespeare’s greatest comic character, Falstaff. In *Henry IV*, first revived through the efforts of the Shakespeare Ladies Club at Covent Garden 14 April 1737, Falstaff spends time drinking in the tavern and even carries sack with him on the way to the battlefield, resulting in his arriving too late to fight. Then in *Henry V*, first revived at Covent Garden 23 February 1738, Falstaff’s friends report that he continued to cry out for sack as he lay dying. Servant girl Pamela, by contrast, reports the powers of sack as a household medical restorative. One day she writes that she worries that Mr. B is “very ill indeed,” that he had been upon the bed most part of the day “(267). Then as her story continues, she happily writes on the next day that Mr. B, “Having drank plentifully of sack whey, had sweated much; so that his fever had abated considerably” (267). Here Richardson’s Pamela, child of religious conservative rural parents, innocently reveals class differences in perspective and response to Shakespearean theatre details. Thus, Richardson encourages women from any realm of society to write using details from their everyday lives.

Richardson’s Pamela also combines allusions to frequently quoted passages from both Shakespeare’s comedies and tragedies to communicate the resolution for her story: man-made class barriers become insignificant in the big scheme of things. Pamela highlights her theme by transforming Shakespeare’s “All the world’s a stage.” In Shakespeare’s comedy *As You Like It* (2.7.138) Jacques uses this line to introduce his seven ages of man monologue. After Mr. B confiscates Pamela’s letters and detains her, Pamela paraphrases Shakespeare as she judges that class disparity barriers exist because “these proud people never think what a short stage life is” (271), perhaps hinting she wants her story to move toward the marriage and happy ending of the Shakespearean comedy. She reiterates the insignificance of class barriers by revising Hamlet’s reflection (5.1.184-199) on Alexander the Great as he holds the skull of poor Yorick in his hand: in Shakespeare’s tragedy *Hamlet*

with “and true said the philosopher, when he looked upon the skull of a king, and that of a poor man, that he saw no difference between them” (271). To give her own story a marriage resolution as in Shakespeare’s comedies, Pamela next uses Jacques’ pattern of listing and describing what happens in each age of man as she pens Mr. B’s account of how his love of Pamela’s writing has changed him. Now as an educated man, Mr. B explains the cause for the common disquiet in marriages. First nurses humor the child and thereby encourage rather than check insolence. Then at school, the child is rewarded for boisterous behavior. Next, the child tortures the parents with undutiful and perverse behavior towards them. Eventually, we marry for convenience, birth, or fortune with affection being the last if at all consulted (470-471). However, Pamela ends her story by having Mr. B show he has learned to love and respect her by providing a contract with 48 true partnership terms for their marriage. Because ability to quote was popular in Richardson’s day, Richardson would dismiss as unlearned those who summarize Pamela’s ending with “all for love,” an echo of Dryden’s title in his revision of Shakespeare’s tragedy *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1667). Such judgments were obviously borrowed from Bysshe’s *The Art of English Poetry*. As Bernard reports from Bysshe’s preface, Bysshe composed his book of quotations, in each case followed by author’s name, to promote “expression of judgments” (119). Bernard provides evidence that Bysshe is a fan of Dryden, crediting 1201 quotations to him compared to next highest source Pope with 155 quotations and Shakespeare 118 (122). However, Richardson’s novel reflects that the Shakespeare Ladies Club had transformed the theatres to make Shakespeare the primary source for quotations that triggered thoughtful discussion and allusions in writing.

Richardson himself, the Master of the Stationers Company (the guild for the book trade), believed he had an important role in bringing women’s writing into print. Because he had earlier composed and published a behavior guide for youth while learning a trade, *The Apprentice’s Vade Mecum* (1734), and a government-commissioned collection of letters that “might serve as models for country readers,” brought together with title *Familiar Letters* (1741), Richardson inserts in *Pamela* a mirror of his own role in teaching country women as his Pamela to write letters. Mr. B, master of the house in which Richardson’s character Pamela, the letter writer, is employed, believes his exercises have helped Pamela refine her style, “I have a title to see the fruits of your pen” (242) and as co-writer: “I must assume to myself half the merit of your wit, too; for the innocent exercise you have had for it, from me, have certainly sharpened your invention” (243). That Richardson, Master of the Stationers Company, was presumptuous enough to include a master in his novel that takes credit for providing exercises that sharpen Pamela’s writing seems a thinly veiled bow to his sense of the importance of his own *Familiar Letters*. That Pamela’s letter writing skill wins her advancement from servant class to wife of her master also hints at the advancement that Richardson’s guide for young apprentices promises.

Having observed the powerful changes in public theatre entertainment brought about by members of the Shakespeare Ladies Club taking pens in hand, Richardson sees reason to create a female character, Pamela, to model how women can use their pens to expand the arts by composing their own stories based on real life events. Richardson’s Pamela emphasizes the importance of having access to writing by others. To create her own story, Pamela begins by setting up her conflict with a male in the more powerful position as master. As she writes, she shares details with other

females in her own servant class, who reassure her that as writer she has control of character and plot line development. As Pamela expands her plot, she revamps key details from Shakespearean theater, the topic of the day in Richardson's London. Pamela's writing wins praise and love from her master Mr. B who makes a marriage contract giving her equal footing. But did Pamela's guide to features of her writing that were successful in the eyes of Mr. B serve Richardson's general desire to establish the respectable status of women as writers and encourage them to write both commercially and informally? Not exactly. Women do not generally read a novel expecting to find pointers for how to write one. However, Richardson's *Pamela* did trigger at least one woman, Eliza Haywood, to quickly turn out a new novel.

Richardson's portrayal of the upward mobility of Pamela led to immediate controversy. Among the parodies that appeared shortly after *Pamela* was first issued is Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* (1741), which, ironically, was published by Richardson, in his role as Master of the Stationers' Company. Recently, Leslie Morrison claims that "like other critics of Richardson's novel, Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* depicts Pamela as a performer who manipulates the reader, as well as Mr. B, into seeing her as an appropriate match for a gentleman. For Morrison, the collapse of the distinction between the real social world of Richardson's day and that performed in the novel—in terms of both character and narration—is at the heart of the controversy surrounding *Pamela* (26). Although Richardson had written other "how to" books, the female readers of his *Pamela* did not immediately begin to create realistic novels with plots drawn from their own everyday conflicts expressed with lines and images from their reading or the playhouse culture that the Shakespeare Ladies Club letter writing campaign had achieved. As Williams notes:

It has often been said that what really marked Richardson's *Pamela* out from its fictional predecessors was the public respectability of its consumption, the 'Pamela Vogue.' ... [Women] readers wanted to be seen with their new book. ... Thanks to the burgeoning trade in themed merchandise, readers could flutter a *Pamela* fan, play a hand or two with *Pamela* cards, pour their friends tea in *Pamela* themed tea cups, display Joseph Highmore's *Pamela* prints on their walls, see the waxwork of their heroine in Shoe Lane, or dine at Vauxhall in the newly decorated *Pamela* pavilions (225-6).

If Richardson did set out to encourage women to write, taking advantage of the success of the Shakespeare Ladies Club, he certainly succeeded. His *Pamela* thus becomes a significant cultural document as well as a landmark in the development of the novel.

Notes

¹ This approach is highlighted in annual "Recent Studies in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century" found in each summer issue of *SEL: Studies in English Literature*.

² See Emmett L. Avery's "The Shakespeare Ladies Club" for more details and the breakdown of the percentage of London theatre performances during each of the seasons up to Richardson's publication of *Pamela* that were devoted to plays by Shakespeare.

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Sympathetic Education in *Anne of Green Gables*

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When Anne Shirley first appears in L. M. Montgomery's 1908 novel *Anne of Green Gables*, she is being met by the laconic Matthew Cuthbert, whose first goal is to find out why Anne, and not the boy that Matthew and his sister Marilla had requested the adoption agency to send, has come to Avonlea. When Matthew approaches Anne, she unleashes what the reader experiences as a wall of words. Anne, as she readily acknowledges, talks incessantly, but the repetition of particular words can take on special importance by emphasizing the qualities and ideas that Montgomery values most. One word in particular stands out in Anne's vocabulary: *imagination*. Anne uses some variation of *imagine* or *imagination* twenty-four times in the first chapter in which she appears, and the word suffuses the novel.¹ Imagination might be said to be the quality that defines her, but the status of imagination is somewhat unstable in the novel. We might see it as a quality that opposes Marilla's no-nonsense approach to life. "Nonsense"² is one of Marilla's favorite words to describe Anne's actions, and though Montgomery never explicitly equates "imagination" and "nonsense," Anne's imagination can be seen as impractical, even harmful. Gabriella Åhmansson has argued that the word imagination in the early twentieth century could be a rough synonym for lies (370-2), so that the particular threat that Anne's imagination represented for contemporary readers was one of dishonesty. More recently, the essayist Jia Tolentina, in a piece on female heroines of children's literature, dismisses Anne quickly as "ridiculous," apparently because she attempts to dwell too much in her imagination (101). Modern readers often see imagination as something that Anne needs to outgrow; growing up is a process of letting go of make-believe to accept the real world.

However, most recent criticism on imagination in *Anne of Green Gables* works to emphasize the novel's positive uses of imagination. Mary Rubio aligns Anne's approach to imagination with the Romantic literary tradition, arguing that in Romanticism and in *Anne of Green Gables* "the vision of the individual imagination [gives] existence and shape to the external world" (35). Gabriella Åhmansson follows Rubio by arguing that Montgomery wants readers to see that Anne uses the word as the Romantic poets would, as part of the gift of nature (374). These readings are useful correctives to the idea of the dangers of the imagination in the novel, and I find Åhmansson's connection to Romanticism especially compelling as a reminder that Anne, who might have stepped out of a Wordsworth poem, uses

nature as a way to establish better human connections. More recently, Paige Gray argues that imagination is the force of liberation, “a vehicle of self-determination” (173). But I want to take Montgomery’s use of imagination back a little further, to an eighteenth-century thinker who found imagination to be a key component of our moral capacity. In his 1759 book *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith conceptualizes sympathy³ largely as a product of imagination, and in this essay I argue that L. M. Montgomery emphasizes Anne’s imagination so insistently to reinvigorate Smith’s conception of sympathy and to teach readers about the moral responsibility of imagination as a tool for creating sympathy.

Before examining imagination too much further, I first want to focus on a passage that tends to illustrate how carefully Montgomery approaches the word “imagination” and keeps it separate from concepts that could be similar. In Chapter 29 of the novel, Anne convinces her friends to dramatize Tennyson’s poem “The Lady of Shallot,” with Anne drifting down the river in a flatboat as the lily maid. After a few minutes, “something happened not at all romantic,” as the boat begins to leak (179). Shortly after, the boat sinks completely, and Anne is left clinging to a tree until Gilbert Blythe floats by and saves her. Anne’s attempt to live the poem feels like a clear lesson: imagination is a leaky boat, and we can’t dwell there permanently. Then, at the end of the chapter, the solidly practical and unimaginative Matthew Cuthbert offers up some of the most famous lines in the novel, advising Anne to practice moderation. As Anne regrets the foolishness of her plan to live out the poem, Matthew warns her not to regret too much. “Don’t give up all your romance, Anne,” he whispered shyly, “a little of it is a good thing—not too much, of course—but keep a little of it, Anne, keep a little of it” (184). This passage is perhaps especially interesting for what it does not say: Matthew advises Anne to hold on to her “romance,” not her imagination. It is easy to conflate words like “romance” and “imagination” in this novel because they all feel like part of Anne’s dreamy, larger-than-life, free-spirited personality. But Montgomery carefully preserves imagination from being read as a dangerous force because of its moral importance. “Romance,” for example, might be said to be Montgomery’s word for an escapist use of imagination; in this moment, “romance” conjures up the possibility Quixote-like delusions—which, after all, resulted from reading romances. A close look at an earlier passage illustrates how Montgomery presents imagination’s moral power in the novel.

In Chapter 19, Anne and her best friend Diana have the chance to attend a debating club concert, which is described as some sort of mix between bad community theater and worse community theater—but which is entirely thrilling for Anne. After the evening out, Anne is given permission to spend the night with Diana, in Diana’s guest room, a proposition which holds unspeakable joy for Anne, who has never stayed in a guest room before. As such, when the girls return home, they take a running start and dive into bed, only to land on Diana’s grumpy aunt Josephine Barry, who visited unexpectedly while the girls were out.

When Anne goes to apologize the next day, Miss Barry is reluctant to forgive:

“You don’t know,” says Miss Barry, “what it is to be awakened out of a sound sleep, after a long and arduous journey, by two great girls coming bounce down on you.” “I don’t *know*,” said Anne eagerly, “but I can *imagine*. I’m sure it must have been very disturbing. But then, there is our side of it too. Have you any imagination, Miss Barry? If you have, just put yourself in our place. We didn’t know there was anybody in that bed and you nearly scared us to death. It was simply awful the way we felt. And then

we couldn't sleep in the spare room after being promised. I suppose you are used to sleeping in spare rooms. But just imagine what you would feel like if you were a little orphan girl who had never had such an honour." (130; italics in the original)

The first sentence appears to set the words "know" and "imagine" in opposition, but that opposition turns out to be different from what we might expect. Imagination is in fact a way of knowing in *Anne of Green Gables*, as a passage from Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* helps make clear. This passage feels like an unlikely comparison, as Smith asks how we can feel sympathy for a man being tortured, but the emphasis on the imaginative capacity of sympathy predicts Montgomery's approach to imagination in *Anne of Green Gables*.

Smith asks us to imagine "our brother upon the rack," a tortured body with whom we have no immediate sensory experience (9). He notes that even when not in the presence of the suffering, and even though we have never undergone the same suffering, we will sympathize. Smith writes, "our senses will never inform us of what he suffers," for they "never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations" (9). If we return to the passage from *Anne of Green Gables*, we note that Anne explains that "it was simply awful the way we *felt*" and then asks Miss Barry to "imagine" what an orphan girl might "feel" (130). In Montgomery as in Smith, sympathy functions in the absence of sensory experience, in the mind of a spectator who remains at a distance. Further, sympathy happens not in the moment of experience, but over time, as a product of reflection. And, crucially, Anne does not ask Miss Barry to feel what she feels: she asks her to "imagine" what she feels, to intellectualize the experience of another's emotion.

Another passage from Smith helps build the case for sympathy as an intellectualized response over time rather than, for example, a spontaneous overflow of emotion. Smith writes of sympathetic experiences:

In all such cases, that there may be some correspondence of sentiments between the spectator and the person principally concerned, the spectator must, first of all, endeavor, as much as he can, to put himself in the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer. He must adopt the whole case of his companion with all its minutest incidents; and strive to render as perfect as possible, that imaginary change of situation upon which his sympathy is founded. (21)

Again, this passage is important for what is missing; that is, it is important for what sympathy is *not*: it is not, in Smith's theory, a simultaneous emotional response to the moment at hand. Instead, sympathy is a process of thoughtful reflection that unfolds over time, an intellectual and imaginative and *willed* response rather than, for example, a bodily response, or a direct response to the intensity of the moment.

If we return to the passage from Montgomery, it is fair to say that Anne invites Miss Barry to go over "the whole case" (Smith 21) including "all its minutest incidents" (Smith 21) to instruct Miss Barry on how to sympathize. Anne has set into motion the mental process of sympathizing that Miss Barry needs to undertake. And because this is a novel, the lesson works perfectly. Immediately after this explanation by Anne the narrator reports, "all the snap had gone by this time. Miss Barry actually laughed" (130). Miss Barry then responds, "I'm afraid my imagination is a little rusty—it's so long since I used it" (130). This last sentence

feels comfortable for modern readers because it seems to place imagination as a quality especially associated with children. But I would suggest that we should focus instead on the idea that Miss Barry's imagination got rusty, *not* because she is older, but because she did not *practice* the act of sympathy, which in Smith and Montgomery's view is not an emotion but a process, even a mechanism, that combines intellect and will.

This intellectualizing of sympathy, as Rae Greiner has shown, is especially pertinent to the realist novel, where writers like George Eliot adopt Smith's model of sympathy as a "subject [actively] reflecting in time," at least in part because Smith's version of sympathy has "a fundamentally narrative design" (298), particularly in its temporality. A more emotional or somatic understanding of sympathy might fit better with the sentimental novels of the eighteenth century or sensation fiction of the Victorian era. As we can see even in the short passage above, Montgomery follows Smith in suggesting that sympathy unfolds over time, in the imagination of a spectator who is at some distance. I borrow from Greiner again in suggesting that Smith's concept of sympathy earns primacy of place in the realist novel because the form of Smithian sympathy is essentially narrative and particularly readerly. That is, the process of sympathy unfolds over time in the mind of a spectator who is not actively involved in the sensory experience of the subject. Good readers make good sympathizers.

At least, that is the hope of many readers and of many literature professors. In her book *Empathy and the Novel*, Keen interrogates the arguments for the novel's efficacy in teaching empathy, ultimately suggesting that this might be a misplaced faith. But the idea that literature can teach readers to be better people—defined specifically as more empathetic—seems essential to Montgomery's project in *Anne of Green Gables*. My argument does not, however, go so far as to try to establish that the novel succeeds in teaching empathy but instead focuses on how Montgomery builds an argument for the power of imagination: *Anne of Green Gables* presents imagination not as a childhood indulgence but as an essential moral capacity that allows us to practice sympathy.

Further, the novel's argument for imagination and sympathy also marks an important shift in thinking about how a child's imagination can affect others. In *Reading Children's Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Carrie Hintz and Eric Tribunella argue that Anne is a transitional figure between the useful child, who brings economic benefit to the family and "the sacred child whose function it is to bring parents joy, to be an object of emotional investment rather than an economic contributor, and to be nurtured and served by parents rather than the reverse" (37). That formulation seems to me to be reasonable and justifiable, but Montgomery is not quite done with the idea of the useful child. One of her contributions is to rewrite the idea of useful—instead of farm labor, Anne exists in large part to perform the emotional labor that Marissa and Matthew Cuthbert have been unable to perform for themselves. They are siblings, not a married couple, and they need Anne to complete the sympathetic connections that can create a family. Further, Anne is the one who does the nurturing and serving more often than not, so that in the history of children's literature we might think of her as the transitional figure who begins a new era of children teaching adults to be better.

Comparing *Anne of Green Gables* to a few other nineteenth-century novels featuring (or written for) children helps make Montgomery's innovation clearer. The tradition of seeing the Romantic child as the educator of adults does not hold up across the nineteenth century as well as some might think. Charles Dickens's perfect children often highlight the inadequacies of adults, but Little Nell, David Copperfield, or Flo Dombey hardly teach adults to be better—they simply expose

adult inadequacies. Does Marmee really learn anything from Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy? In *Little Women* Louisa May Alcott sees Marmee's role as one of educating the girls; they need her guidance on how to act as moral beings in the world, and Marmee essentially has nothing to learn. Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* perhaps gets a little closer to the idea of children as teachers, for Dickon Sowerby—that rural child who seems to have sprung from the soil as surely as the seeds that he sows—serves as source of sympathetic education, but only for the other children in the novel, Mary and Colin. By looking backward to the eighteenth century, *Anne of Green Gables* marks a turning point in children's literature by attempting to use narrative not only to teach young readers the practice of imaginative sympathy but also by enacting imaginative sympathy to morally improve adults in the novel. While the twenty-first century reader might value children's imaginative capabilities for their contributions to creativity and wonder, *Anne of Green Gables* invites the reader to remember that sympathy for others is an imaginative capacity, one worth cultivating for both children and adults.

Notes

¹ A search for “imagin,” which gives hits for both *imagine* and *imagination*, in the Gutenberg Project's full-text version of *Anne of Green Gables* turns up 176 uses in the text and one in a chapter title. For the sake of comparison, “roman,” which gives hits for *romance*, *romantic*, and *unromantic*, appears 45 times (the word *Roman* does not appear in the novel). *Avonlea*, the name of the town in which the novel largely takes place, appears only 92 times.

² “Nonsense” appears eighteen times in the novel; fourteen of those uses are direct quotes of Marilla or references to what Marilla was thinking.

³ Throughout this essay, I use the term sympathy. Empathy is first recorded in English in 1895, where it is proposed as a psychological term. Its use as a replacement for sympathy to mean an identification with the feelings of others is recorded for the first time in 1909, a year after *Anne of Green Gables* is published. Further, sympathy, with an etymology of “feeling together” rather than empathy's etymology of “putting feeling into something,” seems to me to fit Montgomery's mission in *Anne of Green Gables* much more clearly; additionally, it's the word that Smith uses, and the word most available to Montgomery when writing her novel. That said, the best synonym for Smith and Montgomery's conception of sympathy might be *cognitive empathy*. Keen's discussion of terms in *Empathy and the Novel* (see pp. 37-64) offers a robust consideration of the intellectual history of sympathy, sensibility, and empathy. As mentioned later in this essay, her study focuses primarily on novels written after the word *empathy* has entered the English language and on how novels might create empathy their readers, whereas this essay focuses on how Montgomery creates an argument about the power of sympathy within the novel (while also implying that readers can learn sympathy from the novel).

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Child Abuse in J.K. Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy* and *The Sorcerer's Stone*

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In *The Casual Vacancy*, J.K. Rowling's first novel after the Harry Potter series, readers become familiar with various families in the English town of Pagford. Among the many characters we meet, two children stand out: teenager Krystal Weedon and her much younger brother Robbie, the children of Terri Weedon, a single parent and heroin addict who is ultimately unable to break the cycle of addiction. Two other youths in the community suffer neglect or actual abuse from a parent as well. Andrew and Paul Price suffer at the hands of their abusive father and also witness his constant verbal abuse of their mother, although the Price boys do not share as hopeless a situation as Krystal and Robbie Weedon. Moreover, throughout *The Casual Vacancy*, students periodically experience bullying and even physical abuse at the hands of their schoolmates.

These painful stories of child neglect and abuse might seem an unlikely focus from the author of the Harry Potter series of novels which delighted children and teens as well as adult readers, and clearly Rowling's first post-Potter novel seems to have surprised or shocked and perhaps disappointed some readers who had loved her earlier books. In fact, bookstores across the country had hosted crowded, well-attended parties before the midnight release of the books in the Harry Potter series, and therefore many readers may have expected *The Casual Vacancy* to be more like the series of Potter novels they and in most cases, their children, had come to love. Some early promotion for Rowling's new novel included Kristen Mascia's enthusiastic (at times effusive) call to readers of *People Magazine*: "**J.K. Rowling** obsessives, get ready: Her new book is on the way!" Then in a short summary, Mascia describes the plot of "The Potter scribe's first novel for adults," which she says "is set in an idyllic English town called Pagford, which is thrown into turmoil ... after the untimely death of a parish councillor" (45).

In fact, many, if not most, readers would reject Mascia's description of Pagford as "an idyllic English town," agreeing instead with Lev Grossman's early review of *The Casual Vacancy*, in which he described Rowling's new work as "not so much an extension of the Harry Potter books as their negative image. It's a painfully arbitrary and fallen world that, bereft of the magic that animates and ennobles Hogwarts, sags and cracks under its own weight." Grossman makes clear that although he had "expected a kind of aged-up, magicked-down Harry Potter, showcasing the same strengths the Potter books did," he "instead find[s] in *The*

Casual Vacancy “a magnificently eloquent novel of contemporary England, rich with literary intelligence and bereft of cant.”

Clearly, *The Casual Vacancy* would be an unlikely reading assignment for children or tweens. On the other hand, the Harry Potter novels were loved by children, promoted by teachers as works that would help hook children on the pleasures of reading, and turned into films which many more children enjoyed viewing. Child abuse and neglect, however, is a major theme within both the Potter novels and Rowling’s more realistic later novel. How then does the magical world of Harry Potter work as children’s literature, while the more graphic depiction of similar neglect or abuse in *The Casual Vacancy* makes it unlikely that parents today would be proud to announce that their grade-school or middle-school child was currently reading Rowling’s more recent novel?

First of all, child neglect and abuse were clearly depicted in the stories of the young wizard, Harry Potter. Not counting the brief sighting in the opening chapter of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* of “a baby boy, fast asleep” with a “tuft of jet-black hair” which covers “a curiously shaped cut, like a bolt of lightning” (11) who is being delivered to the Dursleys by Dumbledore and Hagrid, readers first see Harry as a ten-year-old wearing his cousin’s hand-me-down clothes and sleeping in the spider-ridden cupboard under the stairs. Moreover, he is sometimes punished by being locked in that cupboard for misdeeds he has not committed, as when Aunt Petunia cut his hair so that he was “almost bald,” but the hair grew back overnight, and Aunt Petunia had punished him with “a week in his cupboard for this” (19). In fact, being locked in his cupboard has evidently been a frequent punishment for Harry, who is threatened by his Uncle Vernon on Dudley’s birthday: “I’m warning you,” he had said, putting his large purple face right up close to Harry’s: “I’m warning you now, boy—any funny business, anything at all—and you’ll be in that cupboard from now until Christmas” (19). Yet Vernon Dursley is the closest thing Harry has to a father figure up until age eleven when he first learns about his actual parents and heritage and receives the invitation to come to school at Hogwarts. Despite his growing awareness of a new, better world at Hogwarts and a growing sense of his own powers, Harry is still subjected (although less directly) to some abuse and neglect during summer vacations spent with his muggle family members, his only surviving relatives who sadly have no love for him.

Moreover, readers soon become aware of bullying by classmates, even at Hogwarts. For example, we learn that “Harry had never believed he would meet a boy he hated more than Dudley, but that was before he met Draco Malfoy” (118). Yet in one of his first encounters with Malfoy, Harry acts out of compassion for Neville, who has just broken his wrist in his (and Harry’s) first flying lesson. Neville is taken off to the infirmary, and Malfoy (whose name of course translates as “bad faith”) has flown above the other students carrying poor Neville’s Remembrall (a glass ball Neville has recently received from his grandmother). High above the others, Malfoy tosses the glass ball with the taunt “Catch it if you can, then!” (123). Determined to retrieve the Remembrall for Neville, Harry gathers “speed in a steep dive, racing the ball” before he “stretched out his hand—a foot from the ground” and caught the Remembrall “safely in his fist” (123). Having been the mistreated victim in the first eleven years of his life while staying with his muggle aunt and uncle and their incredibly spoiled son, Harry begins already in his first year at Hogwarts to stand up against such bullies, and here he chooses to stand up for poor Neville. Flying on his broomstick for the first time, Harry not only stops a bully like Malfoy, but “in a rush of fierce joy he realized he’d found something he could do without being taught—this was easy, this was *wonderful*” (123). Professor McGonagall, having delivered Neville to the infirmary, returns in time to see

Harry's flight and his easy catch of the Remembrall, which is only "the size of a large marble" (119). Recognizing Harry's potential as an athlete, she arranges for him to join the Quidditch team, even though it will mean "bend[ing] the first year rule" (125) for him to play. After spending eleven years as an outsider with his aunt and uncle, who had refused to speak of Harry's late mother and father, Harry hears from Professor McGonagall that "Your father would have been proud . . . He was an excellent Quidditch player himself" (125).

While there may be bullies, demanding teachers like Snape, and sometimes difficult situations at his new school, Hogwarts is nevertheless a haven for Harry compared to those early years of his life spent with his aunt, uncle, and cousin Dudley. Readers have sometimes questioned how an orphan boy mistreated and neglected and seemingly mistrusted by the adults responsible for his care throughout the first eleven years of his life could turn out so well. One such reader, Karl Smallwood, has even suggested that Hogwarts "was all in Harry's mind." According to Smallwood, Harry, a victim of child abuse and emotional neglect, begins to cope at age eleven by "escaping into a fantasy world"—the world of wizards and Hogwarts and Quidditch games—as he imagines a giant like Hagrid coming to rescue him. Smallwood theorizes that the "Harry Potter universe" is actually a "carefully woven tapestry of lies that eventually unravels as Harry slowly starves to death in his abusive uncle's cupboard"—a theory incidentally which Rowling has strongly denied and rejects. Clearly, Harry is actually a transcender who seems able to develop intellectually and emotionally despite the abuse and neglect he has experienced in the Dursley home.

By contrast, *The Casual Vacancy* offers readers a much more realistic view of the effects of abuse and neglect on children. We first see Krystal Weedon at school, where her surname is for her classmates both byword and dirty joke" (26). Readers learn through another student, Andrew, that "Krystal was sometimes present, often not, and that she was in almost constant trouble" at school (27). Readers learn more about Krystal when she meets with Tessa Wall, the head of guidance at Krystal's school. Krystal is angry on the day of their meeting, angry at having been given detention which she feels she did not deserve, and Tessa, who has worked hard in her role as counselor to develop a relationship with the girl, realizes that "Nearly two years of gossamer-fine trust, laboriously spun between them, was stretching, on the point of tearing" (43).

While Harry Potter is able to transcend the decade of poor treatment he received from the Dursleys, Krystal is clearly the product of an unfortunate home life, causing her to experience neglect and abuse, which she will never be unable to overcome. Living with her mother and brother, Krystal at age sixteen finds herself often taking care of her little brother, Robbie Weedon, since their mother is a recovering heroin addict who is eventually unable to "keep off the smack," (80), as a member of the Child Protection team observes. Krystal herself repeatedly expresses anger at her mother's failure to stay drug-free or to get Robbie to preschool, fearing that "Robbie would be taken away again, and this time he might not come back. In a little red plastic heart hanging from the key ring in Krystal's pocket was a picture of Robbie, aged one" (109).

Deirdre Donahue, writing a review in *USA Today*, makes the case that in *The Casual Vacancy*, "Rowling depicts a world of misery at every economic level: abusive fathers, suicidal teenagers, adulterous husbands," and she warns that the novel is "not for children or [for] adult readers who don't enjoy dark, gritty drama." Irene Visser and Laura Kaai speculate that had the book not been penned by the author of the Harry Potter series, *The Casual Vacancy* "would not have become a

fast-selling bestseller, and conceivably might not have made it to the bestseller lists” (205).

In some respects, however, *The Casual Vacancy* stands almost as an alternate telling of the Potter story—minus the magic and the supernatural powers of Harry and others around him. Without magic and the accompanying wisdom Harry develops at Hogwarts, the Harry Potter story would have remained a tale of abuse, neglect, and lies. In many ways, Krystal Weedon is to some extent a female version of Harry—or at least, what Harry Potter might have become, had he never received those “letters from no one” which ultimately freed him from the Dursleys’ control. Harry, however, has several advantages over Krystal.

An orphan with no memories of or information about his parents, at Hogwarts Harry finds his birthright and his identity as the son of the late Lily and James Potter. That new identity magically replaces the neglect and abuse he had experienced with the Dursley family. No longer simply an unwanted orphan and a burden to his only living relatives, Harry is given a new set of values to replace those of the Dursley family, and a new positive self-identity. Significantly, Harry’s first notices of his acceptance to Hogwarts come shortly before his eleventh birthday, and despite Vernon Dursley’s attempts to interfere, Harry meets Hagrid on his eleventh birthday, so that he doesn’t continue to experience the severe neglect and abuse from the Dursleys into his adolescent/teen years. Through Dumbledore, his primary mentor, Harry comes to understand his heritage as James’ and Lily’s son, symbolized in part by his wand and his growing understanding of his own magical powers, but ultimately by his desire to choose good over evil and to dare to stand up against evil forces.

By contrast, in the more realistic world of *The Casual Vacancy*, Krystal is vulnerable in many ways and throughout her short life has no one to support or protect her adequately when she needs help or guidance, especially as she enters her teen years and faces difficult choices with little to no assistance from her family. While Krystal’s mother, Terri, fails to take proper care of her three-year-old son, his older sister Krystal willingly takes on responsibility for little Robbie. No one, however, is able to care enough to save Krystal and protect her. Finally, after being raped by Obbo, her mother’s drug dealer, Krystal realizes that she must escape from her mother’s home, taking Robbie with her. Victimized by family members and other adults, Krystal plans to become pregnant with classmate Fats Walls’ child, so that she will be able to “get her own place from the council” (328) and live there safely with Robbie and her baby. She dreams of a clean, “always clean” home (unlike the one she has grown up in) with “bolts and chains and locks on the door” (328) to keep out those—like Obbo—who might hurt her, her future child, or Robbie.

Her affair with Fats ends tragically, as they meet down at the river, where Krystal’s little brother, the child she has tried to protect from their mother for years, drowns. Little Robbie Weedon’s body “lay frozen and white in the morgue. Nobody had accompanied him to the hospital, and nobody had visited him in his metal drawer” (475). Grieving and guilt-filled, Krystal finds her mother’s bag of heroin and “shoots up” for the first and indeed last time, thus achieving “her only ambition: she had joined her brother where nobody could part them” (481).

When considered together, the seemingly different stories at the center of these two novels actually show an important shared theme: the ways in which adults must take responsibility for the moral and ethical education of their young charges—whether offspring, students, or other children in their lives. The *Harry Potter* series appeals to people of all ages, and the clearly evident child abuse and neglect

experienced by Harry at his aunt and uncle's home have no long-term effects on Harry. Thanks to magic and to his education at Hogwarts, Harry is able to transcend more than a decade of abuse and neglect, and the time he spends locked in the cupboard under the stairs leaves no permanent scars. In *The Casual Vacancy*, however, Rowling offers an audience of adult readers a much more realistic view of the damage such neglect and abuse can cause in real life, culminating in the tragic deaths of Krystal and Robbie Weedon.

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City Life through the Eyes of Louis Malle and Alfred Hitchcock

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Louis Malle and Alfred Hitchcock, two of the most celebrated directors of the late 1950s, are experts at taking a well known setting and redefining it in their own terms. This skill allows each director to incorporate his unique artistic perspective into his film and to comment on the nature of his society. Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows* (1958) and Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959), which are defining works in each director's filmography, patently illustrate these techniques. Through musical scores and visual experiments, both films depict city life as the manifestation of a nation's values. Malle's Paris is more than a fashionable hub of food and art while Hitchcock's New York and Chicago turn out to be more than bustling centers of business and commerce. Rather, the settings reflect the artistic mindsets of the national film cultures that they represent. While the films are the result of differing cultural values, the two directors share many of the same views about storytelling. In fact, by the time *Elevator to the Gallows* was released, Hitchcock had been redefining settings to enhance his stories and themes for many years, making his work a significant source of inspiration for Malle. Hence, *Elevator to the Gallows* and *North by Northwest* explore the same themes of moral degradation and loneliness. However, the aural and visual techniques used by both Malle and Hitchcock reveal a detached ambiguity in French culture and a search for understanding in American culture that elevate the stories from mere movies to commentaries about the cities in which they are set.

Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows* or, as it is titled in France, *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud*, has its roots in Malle's childhood and young adulthood. Born in Thumeries, France in 1932, Malle was first inspired to direct movies in 1944 when his Catholic boarding school was raided by Nazis. This institution housed several Jewish students, one of whom was Malle's close friend, as well as a Jewish instructor, all of whom were captured. According to Hugo Frey, this episode gave Malle serious trauma that led him to pursue a rebellious lifestyle full of cars, women, and money and led to his affinity for the American author F. Scott Fitzgerald. Frey writes, "like a character from Fitzgerald's writings, the young Malle was at times invincibly glamorous," but "[the director's] inclusion of the American novelist in his film-making is a subtle clue to his own ambiguous pessimism and anxiety" (24). In other words, Malle became disillusioned by this flamboyant lifestyle, which readers can see in his emphasis on the emotional emptiness that accompanies the materialistic values of bourgeoisie life. This politically driven theme is pivotal to *Elevator to the Gallows*, the story of two young couples who

each commit murder during the same evening, and the tragic tone of these events is heightened by the musical score.

Malle's use of and experimentation with jazz music is one of the most recognizable aspects of the work. Critic Jean-Louis Pautrot describes Malle's use of jazz in *Elevator to the Gallows* as an example of "counterpoint," in which the music is not meant to supplement the visuals, but instead acts as its own storytelling entity (132). To create this counterpoint, Malle showed various scenes to Miles Davis and his band, who then improvised music to accompany each one. Malle then paired the recorded improvisations with scenes for which they were not intended, so that the movie's music is discordant. According to Pautrot, this method allows Malle to create a detached, non-judgmental, documentary-like outlook at the world" that makes Paris seem like an empty place, devoid of any meaning (128). Moreover, although the movie is 92 minutes long, the soundtrack only lasts 18 minutes, creating a contrast between sound and silence that allows Malle to highlight scenes with symbolic value.

This technique is most evident during protagonist Florence's walk through Paris at night. The silence at the beginning of the scene is interrupted by calm, sultry jazz that, when paired with the fact that Florence is frantically trying to locate her lover, Julien, contradicts the mood of the scene. As Florence walks through the streets, Malle plays upon the French idea of a *flânerie*, or a stroll in which one "walks aimlessly in an urban setting . . . to revel in the urban spectacle and observe [one's] fellow man (or woman)" (Orpen 55). Actively observing the people and objects in the environment is an essential aspect of a *flânerie*. While Florence's *flânerie* shows the wonders of daily life in Paris, she does not connect with her surroundings, but rather sinks further and further into self-absorbed despondency. Florence's stroll, then, is not so much a *flânerie* to promote character growth as it is a method for Malle to explore Paris at night. His depiction of this setting is glamorous yet meaningless, serving as a reminder of the melancholy gloom that Malle saw reflected in bourgeois Parisian life.

Malle also uses several visual techniques to emphasize the detachment created by his music. The images of luxurious cars and blinding lights create a feeling of hopelessness as Florence repeatedly fails to find Julien, who has just executed their plan to murder her husband and has become trapped in an elevator. The dark sky contrasted with the bright streetlights creates a blurred *chiaroscuro* to highlight Malle's belief that the city's glamor leads to moral ambiguity. This *chiaroscuro* is used intentionally throughout the film to symbolically separate the known from the unknown. For example, when Julien lights a match to see down the elevator shaft, the darkness completely overtakes his dim source of light, signifying his lack of knowledge about the events taking place in the outside world. Malle's use of this *chiaroscuro* is an example of expressionism, or the practice of making the setting match a character's inner state (Belton 238). He further uses expressionism in tight, claustrophobic shots of the elevator's interior that show how Julien is trapped both physically and emotionally after murdering Florence's husband. Conversely, the other murderous lovers, Véronique and Louis, are free to drive a stolen car along the highway in the open air, although they ultimately get carried away with this freedom and kill two people, who suspect that the car is stolen property.

Therefore, these examples of expressionism show that no matter how the individual interacts with Paris, the city will eventually lead him or her to a place of moral degradation. This theme is one of the most dominant aspects of the New Wave cinema, which *Elevator to the Gallows* arguably initiated. Scholar Richard Neupert states that "so much of what one expects to find in a New Wave film is present in both the story and narrative style of *Elevator to the Gallows* that it

deserves careful study as . . . a prototypical New Wave text” (92). The movement has to do with rejecting the filmmaking conventions of the day and experimenting with narrative techniques. Malle tells his story by using innovative music and visuals and by alternating between plotlines to complicate the traditional framework of the crime story. New Wave cinema is characterized by these unconventional tactics, which allow Malle to manipulate his viewers’ perceptions of city life. New Wave is also closely related to American *film noir*, or “a type of crime film” with “an ominous atmosphere” and “shadowy photography” (“Film Noir”). However, Neupert describes Malle’s Paris as a “generic, modern glass-and-metal . . . cold and modernizing” city that highlights the action of an American *film noir* while “push[ing] character complexity and ambiguity closer to European art cinema traditions” (94-97). This tendency to embrace confusing characters classes *Elevator to the Gallows* as a distinctly European work that accepts and celebrates the characters’ vague intentions. The audience is not clearly aware of any motive for Julien’s crime other than blind love and has absolutely no idea why Louis and Véronique steal a car. This combination of action and ambiguity creates the daunting ambiance associated with New Wave cinema.

Yet *Elevator to the Gallows* is not classed as an official New Wave work, because Malle also combined his idea of a morally degraded city with the safer Paris from French films preceding the New Wave movement. Scholar Susan Hayward asserts that during the early and mid-1950s, the French did not depict Paris as “the hostile environment associated with the city of the American *film noir*. . . the site of paranoia that the city is in the American genre” (69). 1950s films usually portrayed Paris as a fashionable hub of food and art, not a center of crime and corruption. However, in the next decade’s New Wave movement, this safer Paris was transformed into a threatening city that actively oppressed its residents. While Malle’s Paris is certainly identified with detachment and emptiness, it has not yet become a menacing, active enemy. Rather, Malle uses his version of Paris to warn his audience about the temptations of a luxurious, materialistic lifestyle by showing how the two young couples’ selfish attitudes result in murder and moral ruin. The city becomes a hybrid of two distinct mindsets in French cinema, and this combination helps to create the political and moral ambiguity that has come to be a trademark of Malle’s work.

On the other hand, the acceptance of ambiguity is not a theme in Alfred Hitchcock’s *North by Northwest*, which depicts city life as a search for knowledge. Rather than forcing viewers to watch helplessly as the characters meet their demise, most of Hitchcock’s movies thrust the viewers into confusing situations in which they must figure out the truth for themselves. Born in Leytonstone, England in 1899, Hitchcock was first influenced by many of the same European themes as Malle. Yet when he moved to Hollywood, Hitchcock began to use American rather than European techniques. One such technique is the emphasis on emotional effect over message (Frayne 77-78). Many of Hitchcock’s movies are primarily concerned with presenting a powerful series of images to prompt an emotional response from the viewer, rather than communicating political ideas as Malle’s movies do. Hitchcock testifies to the importance of emotional response, especially regarding music, when he says, “the basis of cinema’s appeal is emotional. Music’s appeal is to a great extent emotional, too” (Watts 167). This mindset governs Hitchcock’s approach to cinema.

The music of *North by Northwest*, the story of a man who is thrown into a government plot when he is mistaken for a spy, is less experimental than Malle’s jazz. Rather than experimenting with musical improvisations to create discord, Hitchcock purposefully uses both sound and silence to supplement the events of the

story. The most notable example of this method is the famous crop duster scene in which Cary Grant's character, Roger O. Thornhill, leaves Chicago to go to a lonely roadside where he is repeatedly attacked by an unknown pilot. Although this scene does not take place in the city, it contributes to Hitchcock's portrayal of city life by counteracting the crowded, busy settings that characterize most of the film.

Hitchcock juxtaposes the city with the roadside to emphasize the gravity of the protagonist's plight and the loneliness that Thornhill's experiences in the city have created. As Thornhill runs for his life, the tension of the moment is augmented by the oppressive lack of music. The only sounds that viewers can hear are Thornhill's footsteps and the workings of the crop duster. Hitchcock's omission of non-diegetic sound in this scene emphasizes that his main character is alone, and the roadside becomes hostile as Thornhill struggles to escape the crop duster attacks. This scene is a clear example of using visual expressionism to convey Thornhill's loneliness, just as Malle uses a claustrophobic elevator to express Julien's detachment from society. Ultimately, the hostility of the remote setting forces Thornhill to reenter the city so that Hitchcock can manipulate the audience's perception of city life.

Another visual technique that Hitchcock employs in *North by Northwest* is the horizontal pan, or a shot in which the camera "rotate[s] so as to keep an object in the picture or secure a panoramic effect" ("Pan"). Hitchcock uses these pans to merge interior and exterior spaces. Throughout the movie, Thornhill is constantly breaking into or out of areas where he is not supposed to be. He tries to escape an elegant manor, sneaks his way into a forbidden apartment, desperately runs onto a train, and finally attempts to enter the antagonist's own home. During the scenes on the train, this merging of interior and exterior spaces is reinforced by horizontal pans that travel from outside to inside the train (or vice versa) in a single shot. Whereas Malle uses the boundaries between the inside and outside worlds to drive his plot, Hitchcock connects spaces in this film that are supposed to be separated, although he never allows his characters to break the fourth wall, choosing to make his film a piece of art rather than an ideological message. The two directors use physical space in contrasting ways to portray the same themes of loneliness, emptiness, and moral degradation.

Hitchcock redefines his settings most of all during scenes in which Thornhill is in the city. The film begins in New York, then moves through Chicago as the protagonist tries to unravel the intricate government plan. New York and Chicago are portrayed as corrupted cities, like Malle's Paris, but Hitchcock's version of city life makes the city a villain in its own right. This depiction begins in the very first scene in which Thornhill and his secretary are walking along busy New York streets. Thornhill is entirely immersed in, and in accord with, the city and its people. Then, over the course of the movie, he is slowly separated from society, a transition that begins in an elevator which, unlike Malle's, is overcrowded. Hitchcock uses tight, close camera shots to emphasize the protagonist's uncomfortable state, which is augmented by the fact that his pursuers are also in the elevator. At the end of the scene, the elevator passengers, one of whom is his own mother, collectively mock Thornhill, indicating that he is no longer at one with the world. As Thornhill is later speaking with an important member of the United Nations, the member is suddenly killed by a thrown knife, a twist emphasized by sudden loud music. As the threatening public surrounds him and assumes his guilt, Thornhill flees. Hitchcock portrays the protagonist's sudden loneliness through an extremely high overhead shot in which viewers can barely see Thornhill's body running out of the building, once again revealing the city and its people as enemies. This villainization of city life is repeated countless times throughout the film. Hitchcock's portrayal of

American city life is much more hostile than Malle's Paris, which suggests that *North by Northwest* is more concerned with violence and paranoia than *Elevator to the Gallows*.

Moreover, as a director who created both European and American films, Hitchcock noticed differences between these film cultures during the 1950s and 1960s, one of which, according to John P. Frayne, is "that American taste. . . was more feminine-dominated than [European] taste" (82). The inclusion of strong female characters is evident in *North by Northwest* in Eva Maria Saint's portrayal of the sly, quick-witted Eve Kendall. Conversely, Yori Bertin's Véronique and Jeanne Moreau's Florence in *Elevator to the Gallows* are dependent on male characters to secure their own happiness. The American theme of independent women permeates many of Hitchcock's Hollywood movies, while the ambiguous characters of European cinema make Malle's heroines far less bold. However, the emphasis on driven heroines in American culture may not be as much of a testament to advanced feminist ideals as it is to a cultural need for clarity and understanding. Clearly defined characters provide a certain stability to the story that, in American film culture, allows directors to communicate definitive themes. Even though Eve Kendall's identity is one of many that are never quite clear to the protagonist, viewers can plainly see that she is a confident and capable woman. This common character trope allows Hitchcock to ground his complicated plot in strong themes such as liberation and self-reliance. As Vivian C. Sobchack contends, "American films have rarely announced their own complexity," meaning that the "need to 'read' or 'decode' most American films often appears pretentious, if not unnecessary" because audiences can easily understand a movie's themes by the time it concludes (284). The presence of the strong heroine in *North by Northwest* is directly related to the audience's need for clear and powerful themes as opposed to the ambiguous characterizations of European cinema.

While Malle embraces vague characters and a sense of overall hopelessness throughout *Elevator to the Gallows*, in *North by Northwest*, Hitchcock gradually reveals information to make his film a journey towards understanding. Even though Hitchcock initially thrusts his viewers and his protagonist into a confusing situation in which no character's identity is known, the film ultimately reaches a satisfying conclusion in which Thornhill and viewers finally understand the government plot. Malle, on the other hand, introduces his characters and their objectives immediately. The ambiguity of the film is instead created by the characters' lack of satisfying motives. Such a contrast between the American need for understanding and closure and the French acceptance of uncertainty and vagueness is a testament to the differing values of these cultures during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Despite this clash of ideologies, both films depict criminal underworlds in a glamorous and sophisticated way, with bright scenes populated by refined characters wearing suits and speaking precisely and politely. The thrilling events of *Elevator to the Gallows* and *North by Northwest* are reminiscent of *film noir*, which classes crime as a plot device rather than a reality with societal and moral implications. Malle's version of the crime plot as a framework for experimentation makes an individual's actions seem inconsequential, while Hitchcock is more concerned with creating the stunning contrast between glossy visuals and dark subjects. The sophistication of the criminals shown in these movies lends an element of unreality to city life. The settings are not happy or idealistic, but neither are they ravaged by physical hardships and gritty criminals, redefining the cities' identities.

Although *Elevator to the Gallows* and *North by Northwest* address the same themes and use the same techniques, they often do so in opposite ways. Both movies use innovative music and cinematographic expressionism to create glorified

versions of crime, death, and the harshness of city life. Furthermore, the directors redefine the stereotypes of city life to create an empty and, in Hitchcock's case, antagonistic view of their respective societies. Yet the French film accepts the existence of vagueness, while the American film is enamored of the journey towards knowledge, which eventually leads to a satisfying conclusion. The technical expertise and artistic storytelling in these films reflect the values of the nations and film cultures in which the directors operate. Malle and Hitchcock utilize these values skillfully, each creating his own masterpiece that redefines city life in a revolutionary way.

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The Effect of Nonstandard Language on the Perception of Cuteness in Animal Memes

By Cailin Wile

Eastern Kentucky University

From the years 1995 to 2018, the amount of internet users increased from less than 1% to almost 51% of the world's population (The World Bank). This steady rise in internet use has resulted in higher rates of text-based communication. While this technology makes it easy to send a quick message to a friend or family member over a range of social media platforms, text alone cannot convey the depth of nuance that tone of voice or body language are able to. For this reason, new methods of producing these nuances are used on the internet. One solution to this problem is the "meme." Though the term is difficult to define or pin down to one type of post, for the purposes of this paper, "memes" will refer to "captioned images that typically consist of a picture and a witty message or a catchphrase" ("Image Macros"). The images in these memes provide the reader with visual cues similar to body language; however, the image is not the only aspect that affects a meme's interpretation. The use of intentionally ungrammatical language and misspelled words can clue the reader into the "proper" interpretation of the meme itself when body language or tone of voice are not at the rhetor's disposal. For a person with little experience on social media, this nonstandard language might be confusing, as much of the interpretation depends on prior exposure to these words. This confusion often leads to misunderstandings which, according to linguist Susan Herring, can lead to a fear of "the supposed widespread decline of young people's language skills" (5) as a perceived result of their time on the internet. I seek to showcase some of the patterns of nonstandard language and how they are used to enhance cuteness in animal memes to illustrate their legitimacy as a form of communication in digital spaces.

The term "meme" was first coined by British biologist Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, and was used to describe "the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation" (143). Long before they came to be associated with the internet phenomenon, memes took the form of small bits of culture that were transmitted from person to person. A specific type of meme that was popular before the internet—phrases that could be changed for a specific situation based on a recognizable formula—were actually given an official name *because* of the internet. These phrases included "X is the new Y," "X is my middle name," and "To X or not to X," and were dubbed "Snowclones" in 2004 by linguists Geoffrey K. Pullman and Glen Whitman ("Snowclones").

Mememes that were specific to the internet came into popularity in the late 90's and early 2000's (Cantrell), and with them came the use of many types of nonstandard language. "LOLcats" were some of the first popular animal memes, which consisted of "humorous photos of cats with superimposed text written in a

form of broken English known as lolspeak” (“LOLcats”). “Lolspeak” is a type of language typically associated with baby talk that is used to make the animals in the images appear more childlike. Though LOLcats refers only to the memes about cats in particular, many image macros from this time period followed the same format. Early patterns of spelling in lolspeak include adding “z” where “s” would go, as in “I can has cheezburger.” (“I Can Has”). These misspellings are paired with nonstandard grammar to mirror a toddler’s imperfect grasp of standard English. Early meme formats followed some general spelling patterns of their own, but the spellings varied slightly depending on who created the meme, such as “I needs” instead of “I needz,” or “I can haz” instead of “I can has.” The sound and spelling changes in earlier memes were newer and less standardized, therefore decreasing the exposure that a user would have to these language patterns. In the same way that the phrase “To be or not to be” evolved over time as the formula for a verbal meme, “I can has cheezburger” became a recognizable format after which internet users modeled their own phrases to convey the same rhetorical effect.

Later examples of nonstandard language focused on different methods of change altogether, and followed more recognizable patterns, as shown in Table 1:

Original Word	Replace Vowel with O	Replace Letter with M	Combination
Chunky	Chonky	X	Chomky
Chubby	X	Chumby	Chomby
Crunch	Cronch	Crunch	Cromch
Small	Smol	X	X
Large	Lorge	X	X

(Table 1)

One of the most common patterns of language change in contemporary memes is the replacement of any first vowel sound in a word with “o.” Some of the most prevalent examples of this are in the words “chonky,” “cronch,” and “smol.” This sound change helps draw the word out, making it look and sound cuter to the reader. While anything can be chunky, “chonky” is only used to describe things (usually animals) that are both *cute* and chunky. Similarly, “smol” describes something that is both cute and small.

Though rarer, the changing of consonants in the language of memes can also convey the aspect of cuteness. The most common change is the replacement of “n” with “m,” creating a softer and cuter sound. This change actually occurs less frequently on its own and is typically applied after a vowel change, like in the words “chonky,” “chomby,” and “cromch.” The version “cromch” actually appears so frequently that on the popular internet forum, Reddit, there is a subreddit called r/cromch that features user-submitted photos of animals biting things. With 87,300 subscribers to this particular subreddit as of December 27th, 2020, it is safe to say that “cromch” is an accepted variant of crunch on the internet (“r/cromch”).

In addition to the specific patterns in Table 1, there are other sound and spelling changes that words can undergo to enhance the effect of cuteness that do not follow patterns that are as obvious or specific as the ones above. Animal names often get changed to shorter versions of themselves, like “snake” to “snek.” Nick Douglas states in his article, “‘Snek’ is the Slithering, Scaly, Surprisingly Adorable Heir to Doge,” that this new word “turns snakes into ferocious little guys pathetically trying

to assert themselves. Sneks aren't scary. They talk a big game, but they're basically puppies." Googling "snake" will return images of slithering animals with their fangs out, poised to strike. "Snek," on the other hand, results in images of snakes wearing hats, curling up in flowers, or engaging in any number of non-threatening activities. In this case, the use of nonstandard spelling has actually helped to dispel a lot of the negative connotations that surround snakes as a whole.

In a similar way, the word "birb" is often used to make "bird" sound cuter. Though birds aren't typically as feared as snakes are, they do benefit from their name change as well. A Google image search for "bird" results in more clinical pictures of a wide variety of birds, including owls and eagles. The results for "birb" feature pet birds, like parrots, parakeets, and cockatiels, almost exclusively. "Borb" is variation that is used specifically for chubby birds, after it undergoes the aforementioned "o" vowel change. By changing the spelling of "bird," the rhetor can reflect the physical appearance of that bird through text alone. Though a person would normally see an image in a meme, the need for the image decreases once this spelling change has occurred: even writing "borb" in text-only format—like an SMS or Facebook message—conjures images of small, fat birds, with or without the image to guide the imagination.

In addition to common patterns of nonstandard spelling, the internet has also given rise to intentionally ungrammatical language as well. Jennifer Bivens, who studies the linguistic changes that comprise the popular internet speech trend called "doggo speak," states that the captions on these memes continuously follow the same patterns of "intentional misspellings, omissions, transformations, and other modifications of English" (2-3). Bivens tracked the changes that phrases had to undergo in order to become "doggo" phrases, and reported that doggo speak has "a basic sentence ordering of [do, INDIRECT OBJ, a, GERUND]... [and] without an indirect object in the sentence, the ordering would be [do, a, GERUND]" (7). This results in sentences like "he is doing me a frighten" (8) and "he is doing a happy" (9). This specific syntax helps the rhetor communicate that these are the dogs' own thoughts, and that the dogs are childlike and have a shaky grasp of English grammar.

So why is this nonstandard language so popular on the internet? Jessica Boddy from NPR quotes linguist Gretchen McCulloch, who says "[y]ou're taking on characteristics of how people would address their animals in the first place." McCulloch goes on to state that it's easy for these words to enter vocabulary because they're "new cutesy word[s] for a thing you're already used to using cutesy words for." Nonstandard grammar and spelling are also used to create a childlike dialect through changing syntax or eliminating parts of speech, which coincides with the human desire to anthropomorphize animals. The idea of animals as children is very common, especially on social media where many "pet parents" have separate Twitter or Instagram accounts for their "fur babies," and create captions and respond to comments using the first person as though the animals themselves are speaking. In the same way that "believing that a dog feels guilty after knocking over a vase may help someone bond with their pet" ("Anthropomorphism"), attributing human-like characteristics to an animal may help humans connect to the animal more closely, as a person might with their own human child. Similarly, because anyone with access to the internet can create a meme, people often make ones featuring their own pets. Taking part in a community that uses forms of grammar and spelling that are specific to it alone can lead to a sense of belonging that might also enhance the emotional effect of seeing an animal meme, and in turn increase the perceived effect of cuteness.

The use of nonstandard language in animal memes serves two main purposes: to create versions of words that depict a more accurate representation of an image or idea, e.g. “smol,” or to anthropomorphize animals in order to further endear them to humans. These changes are not made at random, but are part of a new method of creating nuance on the internet. At a time when some people believe that “language in the mouths (or on the keyboards) of youth is in a state of rapid decay” (Herring 5), and are using these nonstandard forms of spelling and grammar to justify their point, it is important to take a deeper look at these perceived errors and recognize their linguistic and rhetorical value. These patterns of language change were created to make text-based communication almost as nuanced as face-to-face communication, and have bent the limitations of standard language to do so.

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After Reading “Why Look at Animals?” by John Berger

By Don Boes

Bluegrass Community and Technical College

Meerkats and painted dogs cluster
like victims against the plexiglass. Okapi
acknowledge us with their formidable backs.
We crawl across the hot asphalt
in flip-flops while white lions
ignore us from the shade. We apply
our senior discounts to appreciate
these creatures before they disappear
but they do not give us the time of day.
We are feeling colonial and defeated
so we skip the gift shop.
At home I found a young sparrow
dead of a broken neck, the beak open
and blood on the bricks.
I buried a heart no less intense than mine.
A zoo cannot help but disappoint.

Safety First

By Don Boes

Bluegrass Community and Technical College

So many sensational videos of quotidian
scenarios! Dry shoes on a wet floor.

Feeling sad while shopping for toys.
Removing the hook from the mouth

of a fish. The hook. The fish.
What I thought was a copy room epiphany

was restructured as a fluorescent lawsuit.
Friction and the lack of it—but let us

not speak of my personal life.
According to stock photos, ladders

and clowns are reasons to be jumpy.
Prepare to fall from the lowest step.

Look both ways and read labels.
Keep stairwells clear of characters.

In case of elevators, avoid fire.
Check baggy suits and red wigs at the door.

Spring Training

By Don Boes

Bluegrass Community and Technical College

A massage therapist prepares my taxes
and my neighbor's fortune-telling brother
landscapes my yard, the gate unlatched
so he can come and go. I suffer
from low attendance and rain delays.
Criminal activity spikes
after the last hard frost
as do all manner of floods,
fires, tornadoes, wrong-way driving,
and fights, mostly between people
who love each other too much
or hate each other too much.
My workload is increasing but not my karma.
I can't decide whether to mark
my most dazzling student
absent or present. Video replay
is inconclusive. The patio furniture
is plastic, if you can call
a few crooked bricks a patio. I call
that stack of papers my career. My pitch count
is a topic of discussion
and my off-speed stuff
no longer fools the rookies.
My counsel encourages me to sign
the waiver. My employer
encourages me to embrace life-long learning.
Don't I ride an arthritic horse
up and down a mucky slope? Don't I stick
my hand in the cage?

Girl in the Mirror

By Edy Thomas

Eastern Kentucky University

You see her in the full-body mirror of your bedroom, her pensive face the reflection of your churning stomach. She is as real as you, tilting her head as you tilt yours, scrunching her nose as you scrunch yours. A silver ring is punched through her left nostril, though, while your ring hoops through the center of your bottom lip. This isn't the only difference, but it's the first you notice.

The water in the bucket by your kneeling feet spins, flakes of old paint at the bottom, while the new additions of yellow paint lie across the surface like an oil spill. The sunshine drips from your brush, resting between your forefinger and thumb, and it ripples your little toxic pool until it mimics the waves roaring in the pit of your stomach.

For a moment, you continue to kneel and stare at your not-reflection, and for that moment, she does the very same; she wields a paintbrush, too, but hers is worn down, the bristles frayed and stuck out like hurricane-swept hair. Green drips from her brush—the grass of a meadow—and you lean forward to catch a peek of her canvas, but she mimics this.

Abruptly, you both return upright—springboards—and turn your heads to gaze at your respective paintings.

And yet, you're turning to your not-reflection again, setting your paintbrush across the top of your bucket. You hear the small clicks of her brush's metal banding against the plastic of her bucket as she does the same, then the shuffling of her feet when she pulls her legs beneath her. Her bones crack, her toes, her ankles; and she lets out a gasp, you a shiver; and you study her face as if she were truly the face you see every time you brush your teeth.

You believe it to be a face you have seen once before, maybe in a dream, maybe on some sidewalk in a town you used to know the name of, glancing at you in passing—only ever in passing. This is a soft face, round edges, full lips, a nose with a bump in the bridge that aches for affection.

Her eyes are green. Her teeth are white.

The longer she inhabits your brain, the more you catch yourself edging closer to the full-body mirror propped against the wall by your bed. She does the same. She speaks to you in a voice you swear can heal any ailment you may suffer.

"What are you painting?" she asks, and you tell her, "I have no idea."

Her mouth twists as if she is laughing the absence of sound. "Yeah," she remarks. "Same here."

You say, "Where did you come from?"

She says, "Where did you go?"

You roll your eyes.

Now, she laughs—full of life, full of song, throwing her head back to the ceiling that looks like your own. “Come now,” she says, and she says, quieter this time, “Come now.”

Your fingertips are saltshakers in the hands of children; they tremble when you raise your hand and approach the glass of your mirror. She sits there, watching you. Her eyes say, *Hello*. Her lips say, *You are too far away*.

Your heart begins to hum a tune you know not well.

She waves, the very tips of her fingers curling, curling, curling.

Bending at your touch, the mirror gives beneath your weight.

Finding Life in the Graveyard

By Marianne Peel
Independent Scholar

Weaving our way through the scrub sanctuary
our feet take on the sand
and the ash
of a deliberate burn.

Our steps shrouded
in the most fragile of silences.
Whole trees lay prone on the ground
hollowed out from the proscribed flames.

The fires burned here
unevenly, indiscriminate
of wings or bud
of bloom or leaf.

And if we listen with places our ears
cannot hear,
green tendrils now sing
from the knotholes.

A wordless lyric
accompanied by scrub jays and a southerly wind.
Palm leaves lattice themselves
with pine needles, precarious on charred branches.

There is no limit
to this resurgence of living vines
in this graveyard place.

And if we listen with places our ears cannot hear,
we absorb this sanctuary cadenza
open-throated and leaning into the light, echoing
reborn,
 reborn,
 reborn.

Pelican Seeking Refuge

By Marianne Peel
Independent Scholar

This morning I wondered if you would fly into the window
confused, seeking safe shelter.

The wind was so close,
the water moving thunderstruck under your wings.

Heaviest of flying birds, air sacs breathing in your bones,
lightening your heft, your load.

But today there is no sea fowl
in the bellows of your beak.

You take refuge on the marble sill,
webs dangling over the edge.

Your breast is wounded,
opened to the salt breezes

You have been feeding your young
on your own blood offering during this scarcity of food.

Beak piercing your chest, again and again,
a self-inflicted opening of feather and flesh.

You are a banquet of ceremonial wine,
a feast of red river freshwater droplets

You gather them up,
urge them to suckle long and deep.

The lightning startles you,
shakes you from your landlocked perch.

I watch you take flight.
You are magical and exhausted
in your buoyancy.

No Prohibitions

By Marianne Peel
Independent Scholar

- I. A mourning dove landed on the bow
 coo-cooing her way into our river picnic.

 I want her to lick the mango juice off my chin.

 I brought the strawberries and mango,
 cut them in slices so thin, almost translucent.

 You brought the quince mead. Homemade
 from your private still out behind the barn.

 The rowboat had one small hole.
 All afternoon we bailed each other out

 scooping algae water
 from between our toes.
- II. You are shirtless for the first time.
 Shoulders rowing in a syncopated rhythm.

 You stop and point to the snapping turtle
 sunbathing on a log.

 We are wordless in this place,
 dove and turtle for company in the silence.

 You row,
 placing the oars silently in the water.

 I wonder how you connect with the water
 in such a solitary, tender way.

III. Between the soft paddling,
I see indentations in your back,

places where shards from the mortar rounds
imbedded in your spine.

Those months when you muscled your way through jungles
in Cambodia, the secret war, and letters home were all lies.

*On a good day, you told your sister,
it's like a Boy Scout camp without rain.*

*Just us and the fire
and the innocuous night, you told her.*

IV. I want to touch your back,
place my fingers in your scars.

Soothe them with mango juice and quince mead,
a healing balm.

Shrapnel from another time.

Lunch Break at Kara Tepe Refugee Camp, Lesvos, Greece

By Marianne Peel
Independent Scholar

I find the bin with spanakopita,
ferreting out the one with crusted edges.

I wish I craved olives, so many jars.
I settle for pomegranate juice and a brick of feta.

These I bury in my backpack
and then hike to the loading dock for a sit.

There are no olive trees for shade here,
just the blisters of the full afternoon sun.

I take off my sandals,
feeling the scorch of the pavement.

My hands drip with olive oil
and flakes of phyllo dough.

Peacock anemones carpet the spring field.
Winged sea lavender blooms onto the rocky shore.

As I climb back up the hill,
I long for someone to kiss my pomegranate lips.

Alone

By Megan Hutchinson
Western Kentucky University

I got away. I ran out of that house as quick as my legs could take me. That's what Mother would tell me to do. She doesn't like me talking to anyone I don't know, especially when I'm alone.

"I'll just be gone a minute," she had said. She had her pocketbook in her hand and her brown Oxford shoes on her feet. They looked dusty from walking on that dirt road to the general store so many times, but they still looked pretty on her. "Now mind your granny and do the dishes while I'm out." Then she disappeared out the door to Clifford's.

It got quiet. "Granny?" I called out. No answer. I kept calling her name all through the house. Cupped my hands to the windows to see if I could see Granny feeding the chickens or Pawpaw turning the dirt over in the field. I called their names again and again, until my voice felt like a stranger's in my ear. I was alone.

Sometimes I get scared when I'm alone. The shadows get darker and they grow until they're coming right at me, like the ones that chase after me in my nightmares. I'm not usually so scared of them anymore, because I'm a big girl, but today something awful happened: a man came inside. He busted the door right down, and Mother's nice glass broke everywhere. He tried to grab me, so I ran outside and into the woods even though Mother doesn't like me to.

Besides, Minnie ran away. She's an inside dog mostly. She chases the chickens when she's out, and Mother and Granny don't like that all too much, but the man scared her so bad she ran right out into the rain. Right out that door where Mother went.

My bare feet pound the wet mud. I can feel it squeezing between my toes as I run. I should have put some shoes on, because Mother doesn't like when I get the house dirty, but the man was right behind me. I can still feel him breathing on my back. I run harder and harder until I can only hear him screaming at me. He's far away now, and he sounds really angry.

I don't know where I'm running to. I just know I'm getting away from that house, and that man, and those shadows. I see Minnie up ahead through the trees. They look blurry in the rain like at the movies when the picture is about to go black. She's guiding me somewhere safe, I know it. She looks back at me as she runs, and she smiles at me with her shiny teeth. I try to smile, too. I keep on running until I forget I'm following her. Trees and trees and trees are all around me. Trees so big and dark they look like they might swallow me up, but no Minnie.

“Minnie!” I yell, but then I remember the man. I clasp my hands over my mouth and crouch down behind a tree. I make myself as tiny as possible, like a kitten, or something the man wouldn’t want to hurt. I sit very still for a long time, listening for sounds. All I hear are some birds twittering up in the branches and the rain plipping on the leaves. No footsteps or yelling.

Sitting there, I think about my daddy. I wish he was still alive to protect me and Mother from the bad men. My daddy was good. He was a soldier. I didn’t see him much, but when he came home he always had stories to tell. Then one day Mother got a letter and she cried for a long time. I knew what it meant even without asking. That’s what my Mother said an instinct is. She said she had an instinct even before she opened the letter. I guess we’re pretty good at instincts. I try to use mine to keep that man from getting me.

After a long, long while I get the nerve to peek around the tree. Even though I only hear forest sounds, and my instinct says I’m alone, I’m afraid the man’s face will be on the other side. I peek around real slow. Nothing but crunchy leaves, and trees, and a bumble bee flying to its house. I should get up then, before it’s too late, I think. “Ouch!” My feet hurt when I stand up. I guess I was so busy running away I didn’t realize my dress was torn. Thorns cut it up, and the bottom of my feet, too. Big teardrops make it hard for me to see anything around me, but I can’t stay here, though. I wipe my eyes with my fists and see Minnie just ahead of me. She’s being very patient. It’s not like her to run away. She just got scared like me, that’s all.

She looks at me with her warm eyes and starts wagging her bushy, brown tail. Then she turns and runs ahead. I keep on following Minnie’s swishing tail as she weaves through the trees like Lassie. If I had to be alone in the forest, I at least want her with me. After a minute, her tail starts swishing more slowly, and her brown fur turns gold in the sunlight peeking through the wet leaves. I know where she’s going now. It’s an instinct. She took me to where we can cross the street to the little general store where Mother is. The thoughts of that man float right out of me, because I can even see the bright spot where the trees get thin. The little dirt road is just past it.

Minnie starts running faster again, right through the thin trees and into the open air, shimmering with mist. Finally out of the dark forest! Finally almost to Mother! I stand at the edge of the road and wait to cross over. When my eyes adjust to the light, though, it isn’t a dirt road at all. It’s a grey one. It’s like the ones Mother showed me in the picture book. The ones in the big city. Even worse, the place where the general store should be is empty. It’s like no store has ever been there at all.

“This isn’t right, Minnie,” I say. She wouldn’t take me here. We must have gotten lost. When I look around for her, though, she’s gone, too. Instead, a strange-looking blue car waits at the side of the road.

It’s the man’s car. I see his face, but it’s too late to run again. My legs won’t let me, and he grabs me, just like he wanted to all along. I scream and scream, until the inside of my throat feels like it’s being ripped by the thorns just like my dress, and the man’s rough hands squeeze tighter around my arms. He pulls me towards his car, and I can’t even feel the ground on my sore feet anymore. Then he puts me in the back seat and locks the car and drives away fast.

A thin slit of light flutters between my eyelashes. My lids are heavy, like when I wake from a dream. When they finally open three people are in a room with me, but I can’t see their faces because of the yellow glow all around them. Everything’s so soft. Am I safe now? I’m floating, and it reminds me of when I was even smaller

and Mother would rock me in her arms, cradled with soft white blankets that smelled like the honeysuckles I pick outside.

“Mother?”

“It’s me,” a voice says. A man’s voice. He walks closer, and I see his face. It’s the man! He looks down on me from where I’m curled up in a bed. I pull the thick, white covers up until they’re covering my nose.

“It’s okay, Mom. You’re safe. We’re here to take care of you,” the man says.

Where is Mother? Where is Mother? I scream in my head, too afraid to open my mouth.

“We can’t do it anymore, George,” a different voice says to the man from the foot of the bed. She’s an old woman with grey hair, a round, pink face.

“I wish we had another option. I just can’t imagine Mom in one of those homes,” the third person says with a soft voice. She sounds like Mother, and from what I can see in the light she looks like her, too.

“Mother?” I say, squinting at her.

Her lips smile but her eyes look sad like Mother’s when she told me Daddy wasn’t coming back. Without saying anything, she walks to the side of the bed and puts an open hand beside me.

She’s not Mother. She’s not Mother.

A picture in my head plays like an old movie reel, and in it I’m the mother and she’s the baby. She’s *my* baby.

“Lisa?” I say, grabbing her hand. I feel that I haven’t seen her face in years, and now wrinkles crease the edges of her eyes. And her hair, warm and golden like the sun, is frosted with age.

I squeeze her hand and she squeezes back like she used to when she feared the monsters hiding in the dark corners of her warm, safe bedroom.

“I love you, Mom,” she says with lips glistening with tears.

I can’t find the words to express what’s happening inside me. My heart, my brain.

The edges blur and distort into something unrecognizable. That lovely old movie reel warps with hideous stains and splotches. I feel it moving inside of my head, taking me to another mind. Another me.

My head feels heavy, like when I’ve been playing outside in the rain too long.

“Mother?” I ask. Mother is sitting on the bed with me. I knew she wouldn’t be gone long! But her face looks sad, like when she told me Daddy was gone.

That’s when I see them: a strange man and woman at the foot of my bed.

I gasp and my heart tries to jump from my chest.

“Mom, it’s okay,” the woman who looks like Mother says, putting her hands on my shoulders.

I have to get away from here. I have to get away!

Minnie is standing in the doorway waiting for me. I know she’ll keep me safe. She always does.

American Samhain

By Gary Walton
Northern Kentucky University

The October rain has come cold
 And early on this Cabbage night,
 The penultimate ween before the

Hallow itself, an eve of All Souls
 Day of the Dead—the wind and
 Wet have forced the few orange and

Yellow leaves stubborn enough to
 Stay to love themselves in a
 Cascade of chaos and decrepitude—

The trees stand slick and black
 Like licorice sticks embarrassed
 And naked, bearing all with a

Creaking stoicism—here in the
 Gray twilight a ghostly fog rises
 Over mounds of mottled motley

Gathering at curbs mixing with
 Other memories like wandering
 Spirits who have come back

To lament the loss of the soft
 Sweet innocence of summer—
 We watch and know that we too

Are not young and shiver at the
 Thought of what is to come. Have
 We put enough aside to weather

The bitter months ahead? Can any
Saving suffice? Haven't we been
Fools to depend on delayed

Gratifications when time, like a
Childhood legacy, was meant to be
Spent, however winsomely, while

The blood was up and the sky
Bright with innocent expectation—
The freezing wisps of mist gather

On the porch and linger under the
Windows like hungry urchins
Searching for a way in to the fire

Or like spirits from the future
Here to admonish us for our
Recalcitrant complacency like

The ant clicking his tongue
At the still fiddling grasshopper—
Yet, what can we do but shiver

And wait, knowing that winter
At last comes to us all.

Solid Truths

By Gary Walton
Northern Kentucky University

First bliss, then laundry
Is an old Zen koan
And as true as any

Spiritual meme set to
Define expectation—but
What we need is to find

Bliss *in* laundry, like
Sisyphus rolling that
Damned rock up a

Mountain, forever shoulder
To wheel, but not cursed
In Camus' telling, free

Because he scorns the
Gods who condemned him—
Yet, that is the freedom,

If not the foundation, of
Irony and it *may* be
The most valuable commodity

In the universe—but
What if we could love the rock
Itself, dig it, for its *isness*

And for that friction of
Scapula to stone, the
Kinesis of human endeavor,

And the oneness of thing and
Mind—to embrace the boulder
And the mountain and the sky

And the sun with a heart
Beating, moment to moment
Conscious of its own labor—

Surely, this is the rising
The rhythmic road to nirvana.

Living in the Liminal

By Gary Walton
Northern Kentucky University

Managing the margins,
Writing in the cracks

Between the this and that—
The alarm clock, breakfast—

The gimcrack lure of the
Quotidian moment—the

Call of the necessary—
Like the waning Gibbous moon

We find we fall away from our
Fullest moment; becoming

Thus done, meaning has
Devolved into habit—

Why delay gratification
Like sinners waiting for the

Call? Something is about to
Give like a glacier calving

Into the sea or the cracking
Of a load bearing beam—

We can't quite see it, like a
Mote at the edge of our vision

But we feel the shiver, the *frisson*—
What we need now is simple:

Shelter from the inevitable
Storm.

