

*The  
Sigma Tau Delta  
Review*

**Journal of Critical Writing  
Sigma Tau Delta  
International English Honor Society  
Volume 9, 2012**

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*The Sigma Tau Delta Review* is published annually in April with the continuing generous assistance of Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, IL) and St. Norbert College (De Pere, WI). Publication is limited to members of Sigma Tau Delta. Members are entitled to a one-year subscription upon payment of the initial fee. The subsequent annual subscription rate is ten dollars (U.S.).

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“The Collective Unconscious, Zen Buddhism, and Zeami’s *Atsumori*:  
Aesthetics as a Means of Transcending the Self”

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Wil Norton

“The Collective Unconscious, Zen Buddhism, and Zeami’s *Atsumori*:  
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SUZANNE BERNE is the author of three novels and a book of nonfiction. Her first novel, *A Crime in the Neighborhood* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill) won Great Britain’s Orange Prize, awarded annually to the best book of fiction by a woman published in the UK. It was also a finalist for the Edgar Award and the *Los Angeles Times* First Fiction Award, and it was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year, as was her second novel, *A Perfect Arrangement*. Her third novel, *The Ghost at the Table*, was named one of the best books of the year by the *Boston Globe* and was featured on NPR’s *The Diane Rehm Show*. Her short stories, reviews, and essays have appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers, including *Vogue*, *The New York Times*, *Allure*, *The Washington Post*, *Mademoiselle*, *Ploughshares*, *The London Sunday Times*, and *Agni*. Berne has taught at Harvard University, the Radcliffe Institute, and Wellesley College. Currently she teaches creative writing at Boston College and is on the faculty of the Ranier Writing Workshop in Tacoma, Washington. Her most recent book is *Missing Lucile*, a biography of her paternal grandmother.

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# The Collective Unconscious, Zen Buddhism, and Zeami's *Atsumori*: Aesthetics as a Means of Transcending the Self

| Wil Norton

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The Noh plays of Zeami Motokiyo, in which the “aesthetics of Japanese theater reached its peak in history,” are allusive, stylized, mysterious, and grave forms of theater unlike any other dramatic form (Ueda 177). Repetitive chants and music and limited, controlled movements of the actors conjure an essence that Westerners perceive as otherworldly, unsettling, and bizarre. However, repeated imagery, singular obsessions, and the allusive nature of Noh have given the dramatic form “a new lease on life” in the Western “present century” (Lawall 2348). Specifically, Jungian psychologists take interest in the Noh dramas and examine topics ranging from an analysis of the actors’ obsessions, to definitions of the self, to numinous experience. Zeami’s famous Noh play *Atsumori* provides a fertile ground for Jungian understandings of religion and the collective unconscious. *Atsumori* demonstrates in the progression of actors and audience into *satori*, or enlightenment, a glimpse into the cultural unconscious of the Japanese culture, which reveals the Buddhist notion of a greater Self that transcends perceptions of reality.

Carl G. Jung uses the numinosum, or numinous experience, to provide a psychological explanation for how religious experience can lead to a greater connection with others. “The numinosum

is an involuntary condition of the subject, whatever its cause may be,” he writes in *Psychology and Religion* (4). Since the numinosum occurs “due to a cause external to the individual,” Jung explains, religious experience forms from experiencing universal archetypes, or objects shared across cultures that convey the same meaning; the numinosum “is either a quality of a *visible object* or the influence of an *invisible presence* causing a peculiar alteration of consciousness” (Jung 4, emphasis added). Within the numinous experience, human beings lose the impression that there is a separation between the “inside” and “outside,” leading to a sense of unity not only between the individual and the divine, but also between the individual and others simultaneously experiencing the numinous. Toshio Kawai claims the numinous has everything to do with “the collective unconscious,” and the numinosum leads participants to link into the greater existence of those around them, who sense religious symbols that trace basic unconscious similarities in all practitioners (187).

Scholars have found Jung’s psychological treatment of the numinous to be helpful when analyzing Buddhist understandings of the self and enlightenment. Polly Young-Eisendrath, a Jungian scholar and practicing Buddhist, defines the human self as “a limited continuous individual subject with a separation between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’” (242). She explains that in Buddhist thought, the illusory nature of existence begins early in human perception and serves to divide the self and world:

As humans, we have the distinct impression that we are “in here” in a body, while the world is “out there,” outside the body. These are sense impressions that are strongly enforced by society, culture, and language, after the age of about eighteen months. You may believe that the self is palpable and real, but as the Buddha discovered more than 2,500 years ago, if you look for evidence that it exists, you can’t find it. . . . I regard the human self as an action of a person that arises to something the person senses or experiences as

an “other.” (242-43, emphasis in original)

Young-Eisendrath writes that in the Jungian perspective, understanding the “archetype of the self” “functions over a lifetime to motivate us toward greater integration” by granting “increased recognition of unconscious complexes, increased acceptance as we become more responsible for what we actually do and say, and becoming more compassionate toward ourselves” (244). The archetype of the self, she writes, can lead to a positive tendency to “perceive ourselves as a unified subject,” as opposed to viewing ourselves as isolated individuals (244). Ochi Reiko also writes of the necessity in Buddhism to self-reflect in order to remove individualistic selfhood and integrate into the “macrocosm” (24). “Retrospection is equivalent to confession and has the effect of repentance in removing attachments caused by ignorance,” Ochi writes (24). When the “microcosm” of the individual is “*sunya* (devoid of selfhood) in the light of the macrocosm,” the “macrocosm is also *sunya* with respect to the fact that its existence depends on the reflection in the subject’s internal space” (24). Buddhism thus leads the self into a greater integration with the whole of existence and values the diminishment of the individual in favor of the deeper sense that all things transcend into the larger, collective Self.

Scholars and critics of Noh drama find that in nearly all aspects of the Japanese dramatic form, the plays work to move beyond the individualistic and world-grounded self toward a more profound expression of the world that transcends the trappings of perceived reality. Zeami Motokiyo, who dramatically shaped the style and philosophy of Noh drama through his plays and dramaturgy, created many of the defining aspects of Noh drama that have remained faithfully represented up to contemporary Noh performances. Zeami created vastly new aesthetics in the Noh in order to emphasize the transcendent power that aesthetics can provide, to briefly return to Jungian terminology, as archetypal signs of the numinous. He shifted away from mimetic drama “in favor of a performing art that is organized around . . . elements of the chanted line and dance,”

and employed an “economy of means” to achieve the “maximum effect” of aesthetic beauty (Keene 17). By doing so, Donald Keene explains, Noh “reaches out toward eternity through beauty and the elimination of the temporal and accidental” (17). Noh’s ultimate purpose is to reveal the aspects of existence and the self that are beyond the temporal, achieving a sense of *satori*, or enlightenment, by creating an aesthetic experience that pulls the audience away from the illusions of reality and brings awareness of the greater existence of the eternal and boundless nature beyond ego-limited perception. Specifically, Zeami’s Noh play *Atsumori* demonstrates this process of attaining enlightenment, and through his use of the actor, stage movement, archetypal imagery, and shared dialogue, Zeami reveals a deeper meaning of the greater Self and meditates on the notion of a common unconscious.

Zeami theorizes on the actor in Noh drama and expresses the actor’s requirement to perform his part so faithfully to the original that he loses himself in the performance:

The appearance of the actor, seen from the spectator in the seating area, produces a different image than the actor can have of himself. What the spectator sees is the outer image of the actor. What an actor sees, on the other hand, forms his own internal image of himself. . . . The actor therefore must make still another effort in order to grasp his own internalized outer image, a step possible only through assiduous training. Once he obtains this, the actor and the spectator can share the same image. (*On the Art of the No Drama* 81)

The Noh actor essentially performs his role with such skill that he is no longer merely an actor but truly becomes the person he represents. Aided by the use of an identity-concealing mask and the use of repeated chants and movements, the actor becomes a new person onstage, and the audience participates in this transformation. Zeami’s theory of the actor’s relinquishment of the self lends itself to the idea of *bushhō*, in which Buddha manifests

himself in all things, in both performance and spectatorship. Though many of these shared experiences are best found in the visual, staged performance of Noh, the script of *Atsumori* also reveals this transference of identity and ultimately points to the Buddhist greater Self. In the drama, the *waki* tells the audience: “I am Kumagai no Naozane, a man of the country of Musashi. I have left my home and call myself the priest Rensei; this I have done because of my grief at the death of Atsumori, who fell in battle by my hand” (3-6). The actor enfolds himself in two identities and becomes consumed by the roles, and then tells the audience, “And now I am going down to Ichi-no-Tani to pray for the salvation of Atsumori’s soul” (7-8). The *waki* Rensei walks slowly across the stage in a representational voyage, and by the time he traverses the stage, he explains “I have come so fast that I am already at Ichi-no-Tani, in the country of Tsu” (9-10). Not only does the actor immerse himself in other identities, he also manipulates the audience’s sense of location and temporality by taking a journey that surprises the audience’s typical perception of space and time. Drawn into a staged, stylized, space- and temporality-bending performance, the audience engages in the Zen realization that everything is merely perception and that reality is not how we perceive it.

The apparition of the *shite* ghost Atsumori also demonstrates this greater awareness of the Self and *bussô*. As Terasaki Etsuko mentions, the ghost figure in Noh plays enters in the position of an “‘other,’ displaced outside the strongly conventional system of social norms” (14). This “other” status changes during the progression of the performance, as “the social norm moves into the background while the ghost figure as ‘other’ moves into the foreground” (14). In the second act of *Atsumori*, the actor assumes the ghost figure so powerfully that the audience sees Atsumori as a ghost appearing before Rensei in order to “clear the karma of my waking life” (108-109). While Atsumori chants his memory of his death, the Chorus begins to speak on Atsumori’s behalf, recounting the battle when the Heike were defeated on the shore of Suma.

Here, as Atsumori enters a state of self-awareness, the Chorus is able to connect their discourse with the ghost's thoughts and chant together with Atsumori, creating a sense that a greater Self, and a common unconsciousness, is beginning to form as recollection brings all individuals closer to *satori*. The members of the Chorus, who establish the musical aesthetics of the drama, suddenly enter the consciousness of Atsumori and meld so that they share common thought and consciousness.

Toward the end of the play, Atsumori begins to dance while the Chorus assumes the responsibility of speaking on behalf of the *shite*. The Chorus chants the moments before Atsumori's death:

He looks behind him and sees  
that Kumagai pursues him;  
He cannot escape

.....

So Atsumori fell and was slain, but now the Wheel of Fate  
Has turned and brought him back. (199-201, 208-209).

Atsumori becomes entranced in his memory, and the Chorus vividly recalls the *shite*'s death, which draws the audience into the collective memory created by the Chorus and the *shite*. Atsumori no longer needs to speak, since the Chorus knows and embodies Atsumori's essence. At the final moment of the play, the Chorus speaks on behalf of the protagonist and narrates that Atsumori cries, "There is my enemy," turning to Rensei (210). However, Rensei "is grown gentle" and calls on Buddha to obtain "salvation for his foe" (211, 214). In that moment, Rensei prays that "they shall be re-born together / On one lotus-seat," and Atsumori realizes that "No, Rensei is not my enemy. / Pray for me again, oh pray for me again" (214-15, 216-17). At this final moment, the ghost, as he raises his sword to attack Rensei, moves into the foreground, as Terasaki notes is typical of Noh dramas. This movement inverts the audience's typical perception of the marginalized ghost, as we learn his story and he assumes the role of the main character. However, it is also important that Rensei prays for the ghost's salvation and that they

both will end up in paradise sitting “on one lotus-seat” (215). This willingness of the living to share with the dead opens up a wider understanding of the self that transcends the limited and temporary realm of the living, and the array of shared speech between the Chorus and Atsumori, as well as symbolic stage movement and the interaction between ghosts and humans, works aesthetically to establish *yûgen*. These stage elements work to remind the audience that the boundaries between the living and the dead, the temporal and the eternal, and the perceived and the real are less certain than one would assume, and that the Buddha nature transcends all existence.

As the ghost of Atsumori fixates on his desire to clear his karma, the recurring imagery of the flute in *Atsumori* becomes Rensei’s object of fixation. The flute takes on archetypal significance in the play, as it becomes the object that causes the Young Reaper and the Priest to enter into a conversation that delves into memory, guilt, and shared experience. As he enters the land of Ichi-no-Tani to pray for Atsumori, Rensei hears a flute, which alludes to the *Tale of the Heike*, in which the nobleman Rensei learns that the boy he kills had been the one that played the flute in the camp the night before (*Heike* 2316). Upon hearing the flute in *Atsumori*, Rensei vaguely exclaims, as if drawn solely by the sound of the flute, “But listen! I hear the sound of a flute coming from the knoll of rising ground. I will wait here till the flute-player passes, and ask him to tell me the story of this place” (12-14). When the Young Reaper arrives, the Priest expresses surprise that a young commoner can play the flute, a courtly instrument. The young boy offers surprisingly wise advice: “Have you not read:— / ‘Do not envy what is above you / Nor despise what is below you?’” (47-48). The boy and the Priest enter a state of social reversal in which the Priest learns a lesson from the peasant, and then the conversation blends to the point that the Priest and the Young Reaper finish each other’s statements, melding consciousnesses into a larger whole:

REAPER: Flute-playing of reapers . . .

PRIEST: Songs of wood-fellers . . .

REAPER: Guide us on our passage through this sad world.  
(56-58)

The Priest and the Young Reaper's shared dialogue indicates increasing comprehension of each other's selves as they partake in each other's unconscious. The *bushô* transcends the individual, and each begins to see the other in himself. The flute, as the Jungian object of fixation in the passage, becomes an archetypal image that leads the two characters into a numinous experience in which the individualistic self becomes part of the greater Self.

PRIEST: Once enemies . . .

ATSUMORI: But now . . .

PRIEST: In truth we may be named . . .

ATSUMORI: Friends in Buddha's Law. (119-22)

These dialogues, incoherent if viewed as individualistic speech but whole when understood as a shared Self, reflect the Zen Buddhist sense of a greater being that may be attained when self-reflection allows for a greater understanding of others. The Priest and the Young Reaper (later Atsumori) become unified, and in the last moment, the Priest prays that they may exist in Amida Buddha's paradise on the same lotus-seat. As the play ends, the audience sees Rensei requesting Buddha that they may be joined together, and Atsumori understands that he and the Priest are not enemies. The two characters acknowledge the illusory nature of perception and join in the greater Self, the Buddha nature of all things.

In its performance, Zeami's *Atsumori* conjures the *yûgen* of *bushô* to its audience, in which the actors evoke the mystery of the greater Self. Through the skill and movement of the actors, the enchanting and irrational power of music, and the conjuring effect of chanted words, the Noh drama evokes a state in which the audience can enter a transitory awareness of the Buddha Self. In this manner, an audience member becomes a participant, along with the actors, of a greater realization of the self in the encompassing Self. In this new state of awareness, individual differences may be reconciled when we

experience the unifying nature of the collective unconscious brought together by archetypes. *Atsumori* provides a powerful example of how understanding other individuals can bring us to a sense of the greater Self, freeing us from cyclical obsessions and guilt. By sensing the greater Self, we can in turn experience the divine as we transcend our individualism to join the greater conscious of those around us.

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# Daddy's Girls (and Boy): Negotiating Absenteeism, Proximate Cause, and Social Order in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*

| Sarah E. Morrow

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Aphra Behn's *The Rover* has provided Restoration and eighteenth-century humanities scholars with ample fodder for literary and cultural criticism. With its raucous plot, semi-exotic locale, and strong female characters, this comedy suggests readings that are at once empowering and unsettling. Of the extant discourses surrounding Behn's comedy, however, none thoroughly explores why the most powerful force in the play—Florinda, Hellena, and Don Pedro's father—never appears onstage. In fact, this character provides the proximate cause for all of the onstage action witnessed by the audience. I contend that the absence of Florinda, Hellena, and Don Pedro's father is the lynch pin that holds *The Rover*'s plot together, and that Behn uses this absence for both liberating and restrictive purposes. While the sisters' ability to pursue their own love interests and to eschew their predetermined futures hinges upon their father's absence, so does Don Pedro's opportunity to become the authority figure in the family. Whether or not Don Pedro maximizes this opportunity—and the accompanying socioeconomic commentary at work—may provide a subject of debate. His efforts to maintain some semblance of order ultimately fail, in part because of his own attempts to subvert his father's wishes. That this burgeoning patriarch ostensibly botches the duties delegated to him reveals the uncertainties of the old hereditary order and alludes to the inability of the newest

generation to be proper stewards of their families' resources.

In order to appreciate the importance of the absent character as proximate cause in drama studies, one must first understand the term as it is normally used in tort law. *Black's Law Dictionary* offers two definitions for proximate cause: "a cause that is legally sufficient to result in liability" or "a cause that directly produces an event and without which the event would not have occurred" (Garner 88). William R. Buckley and Cathy J. Okrent emphasize that proximate cause offers "a legal, not a physical concept," further explaining that "the proximate cause of an injury is not necessarily the closest thing in time or space to the injury and not necessarily the event that set things in motion" (513). Rather, the vital component to proximate cause lies in what some consider the "zone within which the plaintiff's injury was reasonably foreseeable as a consequence of the defendant's behavior" (Buckley and Okrent 37). Foreseeability, then, bears significance for proximate cause. H.L.A. Hart and Tony Honoré echo the importance of foreseeability when determining proximate cause:

It is true that courts appear to take seriously, as raising causal issues, such further questions as whether the defendant's conduct was the "proximate cause" of the harm or whether the harm was "too remote". . . . But the issues in question are . . . better answered by asking whether, all things considered, the defendant should be held liable for the harm which ensued, or, on another view, whether the harm was foreseeable. (xxxiv-v)

While the "appeal to foreseeability or risk" involved with negligence cases proves problematic for some critics of proximate cause, these basic concepts nonetheless prove valuable when discussing certain absent characters in Restoration and eighteenth-century drama (Hart and Honoré 254).<sup>1</sup>

One of the most immediate connections between proximate cause in tort law and absent characters in drama studies lies in proximate cause's status as a non-physical concept. Within

negligence cases, the proximate cause of the defendant's damages does *not* have to be the cause closest to a tortious act in space or time. Rather, a cause is "proximate" in the sense that it has the most potent connection to a given set of events or consequences. Following such logic, absent characters in drama can serve as proximate cause, too. These characters do not remain close to the onstage action of a play in any physical sense. In fact, these characters stay totally removed from the characters and actions perceived by the audience. Despite this physical removal, however, absent characters potentially affect the onstage action in a play.

In addition to the non-physical aspect, the role of foreseeability in proximate cause bears significance for drama. The concept of foreseeability in tort law asks the question, "Were the plaintiff's injuries a foreseeable consequence/effect of defendant's actions?" We can ask the same question of absent characters: is the onstage action of the play a foreseeable consequence of a given character's absence? The answer, frequently, is yes. Through close examination, one notices that the events witnessed by the audience can be traced to the characters who remain offstage. Entire chains of events remain causally connected to the absent characters. Occasionally, these characters' absences serve as the basis for the onstage action of a play. In many instances, the whole premise of the play would collapse if the absent characters were to appear. With the foreseeability question answered, absent characters' status as proximate cause in drama solidifies.

For Restoration drama studies, the use of absent characters as proximate cause serves as more than merely a plot device. Instead, these characters also serve as an absent signifier for larger sociopolitical issues at play in these works. Comedies such as Aphra Behn's *The Rover* make use of absent characters as proximate cause in striking and profound ways. In Behn's play, the absent character takes the form of father to Florinda, Hellena, and Don Pedro. Although he never appears physically as part of the onstage action, this patriarch nonetheless permeates *The Rover*. The opening

moments of the play, in fact, use the conversation between Florinda and Hellena both to introduce his character and to relegate him to the space offstage. Hellena teases Florinda about her lovelorn behavior from the start, insisting that she reveal “who ’tis you sigh for” (1.1.8). When Florinda refuses, Hellena begins a guessing game that includes “Don Antonio the viceroy’s son . . . or perhaps the rich old Don Vincentio whom *my father* designs you for a husband?” (1.1.21-23, emphasis added). Florinda’s retort echoes Hellena’s verbiage: “how near soever *my father* thinks I am to marrying that hated object, I shall let him see I understand better what’s due to my beauty, birth and fortune, and more to my soul, than to obey those unjust commands” (1.1.24-28, emphasis added). Shortly after their sisterly banter, Don Pedro makes his entrance. Even his opening lines refer to their absent father: he first greets Florinda with a genial “good morrow, sister” before informing her that “I have a command from *my father* here to tell you, you ought not to despise him, a man of so vast a fortune, and such a passion for you” (1.1.66, 70-72, emphasis added).

The language used in these and other references to Florinda, Hellena, and Don Pedro’s father reveals both his absence and the importance that he remain absent from the onstage action. Each of the siblings separately refers to “my father,” as opposed to “our father”; laying aside possible religious connotations of the latter title, the use of “my” is nonetheless loaded with multiple implications. In this first scene, the repeated phrase “my father” highlights the individualized patriarchal struggles that Florinda, Hellena, and Don Pedro face—Florinda’s arranged marriage, Hellena’s relegation to the convent, and Don Pedro’s responsibilities as a proxy of sorts for his father. In addition, the siblings’ insistence on their individual struggles points to the potentially antagonistic relationship between the sisters and brother. Don Pedro spends the first part of his initial appearance relaying messages from his father, “urg[ing] my father’s will” upon his two sisters (1.1.178). Meanwhile, Florinda and Hellena challenge his authority; Florinda complains that she

“would not have a man so dear to me as my brother follow the ill customs of our country and make a slave of his sister . . . and sir, my father’s will I’m sure you may divert,” while Hellena declares that she “had rather be a nun than be obliged to marry as you would have me” (1.1.76-79, 166-68). By the end of the scene, however, Don Pedro makes explicit the patriarch’s removal from the stage for the remainder of the play, and the sisters foreshadow the consequences of these actions:

PEDRO. This absence of my father will give us opportunity to free you from Vincentio by marrying here, which you must do tomorrow. . . .

LORINDA. Sir, I shall strive to do as shall become your sister. . . .

HELLENA. As becomes his sister! That is to be as resolved your way, as he is his— (1.1.181-92)

With this “opportunity” made clear and the sisters’ seeming acquiescence to Don Pedro established, the role of the absent father as proximate cause for the roistering that consumes the rest of the play emerges.

Understanding the necessity of Florinda, Hellena, and Don Pedro’s father’s absence requires an examination of the requirements for proximate cause. The two key components of proximate cause outlined earlier—proximity to the cause of action and foreseeability—certainly apply to this character. The audience does not know precisely when Florinda’s marriage was arranged or when Hellena’s vocation as a nun was decided upon, but the fact that these fates were chosen for these women prior to the onstage action is indisputable. Similarly, the audience cannot place the father’s absence immediately prior to the play’s opening; Don Pedro only mentions that he is not in Naples, and he presumably will be absent long enough to “free [Florinda] from Vincentio.” As such, the fact that a proximate cause need not be the “the closest thing in time or space” (Buckley and Okrent 513) to the event(s) in question holds true in this instance. Meanwhile, the question of the siblings’

actions as a reasonably foreseeable consequence of the father's absence presents itself. Don Pedro's comment at the end of the opening scene, coupled with his sisters' responses, clearly establishes the connection between absent father-figure and the onstage action of the play. Thus, while the father fails to appear onstage, and thereby remains physically and temporally removed from the actions witnessed by the audience, he nonetheless provides the force against which all of the siblings react and provides the proximate cause for much of the plot's trajectory.

Having outlined the manner in which Florinda, Hellena, and Don Pedro's father functions as proximate cause in *The Rover*, the question of this phenomenon's significance arises. Further examination of the play reveals not only a questioning of filial love and obedience, but a genuine concern for the fate of the younger generation as represented by the siblings. This socioeconomic concern certainly occupied the minds of Restoration playwrights and audiences, as several scholars have noted. Susan Staves comments on changing power relationships during the Restoration and its aftermath, noting that as "the relationship between sovereign and subject changed with the Glorious Revolution and the triumph of Whig ideology . . . other authority relationships between persons that had been perceived as analogous were also affected" (*Players' Scepters* xiv). One of these "analogous" relationships is that between parent and child, seen in "early Restoration plays [that] prefer to focus on what was felt to be the easier case of children rebelling against their parents or guardians" (Staves, *Players' Scepters* 119). Staves also points to the insistence that "daughters and sons had a religious obligation to honor and obey their parents. Because of the radical challenges during the Civil Wars . . . the Restoration Church of England often stressed that proper observances of hierarchy in the family and in the state were interdependent" ("Behn" 13). Other commentary concerning the treatment of intergenerational conflict in Restoration drama suggests the need for "these conflicts between sons and father, or heirs and guardians, [to] take place

for—and over—the bodies of socially and sexually desirable women. . . . On stage, at least, young wits can triumph . . . over a doddering, impotent generation of fools” (Markley 99). In this argument, the women take center stage in these power plays, although their agency and their complicity within the complex ideological apparatus remains problematic. Although extant scholarship spends much of its time exploring the vital roles that women/daughters occupy in these changing relationships, similar arguments can be made for the role of the son; both of these power struggles play out among the siblings in Behn’s play.<sup>2</sup>

The ability of Florinda and Hellena to subvert the roles scripted for them has received much critical attention, and multiple arguments have developed as a result. Those critics who choose to highlight the patriarchal structure at work in Behn’s “forced marriages” occasionally gloss over some of the more interesting familial repercussions when the “lovers typically outwit these attempts” by “parents, uncles, brothers or guardians” to create a suitable match for a daughter/sister (Staves, “Behn” 18). Others acknowledge that these women “recognize what they are doing [by flouting the patriarchal prerogative], but they are doing it anyway” (Markley 101-102). Regardless of the means by which women such as Florinda and Hellena “outwit” the patriarchal structures or their awareness of their actions’ significance, few scholars note that it is the absence of their father that allows these women to exercise their agency. These critics also fail to comment on the fact that their disobedience/liberation also defies their brother’s attempts to (re)gain patriarchal control. Richard Kroll does discuss the “entirely archaic and dysfunctional values” at work in the patriarchy of *The Rover*; in this failed system, “equally and markedly absent from the action are the other chief representatives of the Spanish patriarchy, namely the Viceroy and Don Pedro’s, Florinda’s, and Hellena’s father, who is, throughout the play, to be in Rome, though always pending, while his commands are supposedly to be executed by Don Pedro, acting as his representative” (244). While Kroll acknowledges

the father's absence and alludes to the fallibility of the patriarchy, he couches the bulk of his argument in terms of commerce and overlooks the consequences of Don Pedro's actions.

Perhaps the most profound result of the father's absence and its function as proximate cause in *The Rover* lies in Don Pedro's attempts to maintain the patriarchal prerogative. The opening scene of the play lays the groundwork for this transformation. When Hellena protests Florinda's match with Don Vincentio, proving too precocious for her brother's liking, Don Pedro orders Callis to "take her hence, and lock her up all this Carnival" (1.1.163-64). He quickly follows this instruction with a warning to Hellena not to "fear the blessing of that choice. You shall be a nun" (1.1.169-70). The legal, declarative connotation of the phrase "shall be" underscores the authority Don Pedro tries to exert throughout this exchange. Even by the end of the play's first scene, Don Pedro has told Florinda that "[his] will is that [she] would love Antonio," then proceeds to tell her to "resolve upon tomorrow" as the date for marrying him in violation of their father's wishes (1.1.178-79, 188). The mutual deception at work in this scene reveals multiple levels of rebellion. Despite his claim to "urge [his] father's will," Don Pedro has his own personal gain in mind by matching Florinda with his friend, Don Antonio (1.1.178). At the same time, the language he uses when telling his sister to "resolve," then that he will "both believe and trust" her, essentially replaces one authoritarian with another—the command implicit in the verb "resolve" and the vague admonishment in his parting phrase echo a parental discourse (1.1.190). In the disguise of trying to help his sister, Don Pedro strives to exert his own will over his circumstances.

After several acts of masquerading, mistaken identities, raucous humor, and near catastrophe, the final act of Behn's play reveals the faulty quality of the new patriarchy represented by Don Pedro. His initial anger at hearing of Florinda's match with Belvile and Hellena's match with Willmore is directed at the gentlemen: "Belvile, I did not expect this false play from you. Was't not enough

you'd gain Florinda (which I pardoned) but your lewd friends too must be enriched with the spoils of a noble family?" (5.1.553-56). Don Pedro's decision to "pardon" his sister's transgression and his concern for the fate of his family's "spoils" demonstrate his affected authoritarian stance and his familial concern. One cannot help but wonder, though, if these concerns prove impotent and belated. Florinda and Hellena have made their matches on their own terms, albeit with some mishaps along the way; Don Pedro's "pardon" feels hollow, and his concern for the family fortune reads almost as if borne out of a desire to save himself from the potential wrath of his father. Don Pedro's final acquiescence to Hellena's decision to wed Willmore bears the air of exasperation: "There's one motive induces me. Take her. I shall now be free from fears of her honor" (5.1.581-82). One wonders if "fears of [Hellena's] honor" provide the sole impetus for the granting of his permission, since considering the deed completed might also exculpate him from responsibility should his father object. This suspicion is confirmed with Don Pedro's final lines, when he "forgive[s] you all—and wish you may get my father's pardon as easily, which I fear" (5.1.593-95). The "fear" expressed by Don Pedro reflects both persistence of the older generation's influence and the uncertainties surrounding the Restoration's upending of patriarchal structures.

In addition to establishing their father's absence and its consequences, the encounter between siblings that opens *The Rover* initiates a complicated upending and examination of the socioeconomic order that carries through the remainder of the play. The absence outlined at the end of Act 1, Scene 1 also allows the transition of power from his father's hands to Don Pedro's. In the course of this transition and the subsequent actions of the sisters in defiance of their brother's wishes, the inadequacy of the new generation's leadership skills becomes clear, and a real concern for the new state emerges. The comedy might have its expected happy ending, but the cost of this resolution leaves the integrity of the patriarchy in question.

1. For further discussion of foreseeability's critics and their opinions, see Hart and Honoré.

2. A thorough examination of the historical basis for these tensions requires more space than is available here.

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## “Put Money in thy Purse”: The Economy of Evil in Shakespeare’s *Othello*

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In the opening scene of William Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice*, Iago makes the motive of his revenge known: he has been wronged by Othello’s appointment of Cassio to the position of lieutenant, Iago’s coveted—and he believes rightful—rank. However, Iago’s actions are motivated by more than a personal vendetta; his sense of alienation from his desired position causes him to strive for the lieutenant rank. Iago’s attention to money also exposes an economic motive in his actions, especially in his relationship with Roderigo. In his 1953 article “The Economics of Iago and Others,” Robert Heilman notes, “Iago is literally pursuing ‘purse’ and ‘profit’” (558). While Heilman attributes Iago’s language to a “theft-motif” (563), one might gain further insight into Iago’s motives by exploring his actions through the lens of Marxist theory. Even though Iago admits only a lust for revenge, his emphasis on economic gain reveals money as the underlying motive in his plot to overthrow the source of his alienation, Othello, ironically implicating the superstructure of Venice in its own tragedy due to its espousal of capitalist values.

Ever since Samuel Taylor Coleridge insisted on Iago’s “motiveless malignity” circa 1822 (190), Shakespearean critics have been fascinated by Iago’s motive, or lack thereof. Iago makes his reasons explicit—he desires the lieutenant rank and fears Othello has made him a cuckold—yet critics continue to debate the underlying cause for his revenge. In her 1997 article “Iago’s Alter Ego: Race as Projection in *Othello*,” Janet Adelman takes a psychoanalytical approach, viewing Iago as a fragmented individual. She notes, “Iago

successfully attempts to rid himself of interior pain by replicating it in Othello” (113). In his 1994 article “The Humiliation of Iago,” Karl Zender posits Desdemona as the cause of Iago’s scheming, claiming that she humiliates him by exposing his inability to play a “wit game” she considers “a courtly pastime” (329), causing Iago to influence Othello’s turn on her. In her 1989 article “Sexuality and Racial Difference,” Ania Loomba notes that Iago’s proclaimed “love” for Desdemona and desire to be “even’d with him [Othello], wife for wife” is less due to actual suspicions of Emilia’s infidelity and more due to his vision of himself as the “‘protector’ of all white women from black men” (804). In “Venetian Ideology or Transversal Power?: Iago’s Motives and the Means by Which Othello Falls,” published in 2002, Bryan Reynolds and Joseph Fitzpatrick suggest that Iago “condemns cuckoldry” and its “threat to patriarchal power” (210). Similarly, in her 2004 article, “Domestic Disturbance and the Disordered State in Shakespeare’s *Othello*,” Sandra Logan views “Iago’s manipulations” as “directed at the preservation of traditional patriarchal social privileges” (369). What Reynolds, Fitzpatrick, and Logan ignore is that Iago’s social status undermines the claim that he desires to uphold the older system. Though the former system benefitted him because military rank was determined by “old gradation” (1.1.36), he was considered inferior to Venice’s landowners and gentlemen due to his position as “a déclassé professional soldier” (Zender 329). The patriarchal system may have helped him gain rank, but the capitalist system allows citizens to gain status via wealth. That Iago focuses on money rather than simply rank is symptomatic of Venice’s shift from a patriarchal to a capitalist society, and it reveals both Iago’s false consciousness and the state’s role in Othello’s downfall.

Roderigo’s opening lines reveal Iago’s fixation on money, establishing a dialogue of exchange that guides Iago’s actions and exposes his underlying motive. Roderigo states, “thou, Iago, . . . hast had my purse / As if the strings were thine,” revealing the economic nature of his relationship with Iago (1.1.2-3). In return

for Roderigo's money, Iago provides him with false hope that he will obtain Desdemona, while beguiling him into assisting with his plan. At the conclusion of Act I, Iago's instruction to Roderigo, "Put money in thy purse" (1.3.333), suggests Iago's motive in luring Roderigo to Cyprus. Coleridge comments on Iago's command to "Go, make money!" by noting "a pride in it, of an anticipated dupe, stronger than the love of lucre" (189). Coleridge sees Iago's control of Roderigo as a game, more for sport than for profit. On the other hand, after Roderigo exits the stage, Iago confesses:

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse—  
 For my own gained knowledge should profane  
 If I would expend time with such a snipe  
 But for my sport and profit. (1.2.365-68)

In his speech, Iago claims his monetary motive is just as significant as his pleasure in beguiling others. Adelman dismisses Iago's desire for Roderigo's "purse" as a mere extension of Iago's other reasons for revenge rather than the basis of his plot. She views the money as a means of Iago's projection:

[D]etached from any ordinary human motivation, the money accrues almost purely psychic meaning, becoming the sign not of any palpable economic advantage but of Iago's pleasure in being able to empty Roderigo out, to fill himself at will. (119)

By giving it another meaning altogether, she essentially removes the economic value of the money in her interpretation. Then again, the money's value is essential in identifying Iago's desire for capital gains as a catalyst for his other motives.

Iago's alienation is a direct result of the emerging capitalist system, for Venice allows Othello's word to outweigh the suggestion of its leaders to make Iago his lieutenant. Explaining his contempt for Othello, Iago notes that Othello's "Preferment goes by letter and affection / And not by old gradation" (1.1.35-36). In suggesting Othello's "preferment" of Cassio, Iago identifies what Logan notes as a product of capitalism: "inscribing subjects within a myth of

merit-based success, and thus within a competitive model that encourages them to see themselves as threatened or displaced by ‘undeserving’ others” (356). While Iago sees himself as displaced by an emerging system that allows cronyism, he actually falls prey to capitalism’s “myth,” causing him to feel the sting of alienation since he believes he deserves Cassio’s position. Despite the plea of “Three great ones of the city” (1.1.8), Othello’s appointment of Cassio is upheld by Venice, foreshadowing the state’s later preferment of Othello over Brabantio on the Senate floor. Moreover, Iago equates himself to a commodity, claiming, “I know my price, I am worth no worse a place” (1.1.11). Iago suggests that he has been alienated not only by Othello’s actions but also by Venice’s inability to overturn Othello because the State needs Othello to maintain its stronghold in Cyprus. In “The Alienation of Labor” Karl Marx explains, “Labor does not only produce commodities, it produces itself and the laborer as a *commodity*” (401, emphasis in original). Even though Iago is not the wage earner Marx describes, he becomes a commodity in the same sense because he does not receive the product of his labor: the lieutenant rank. Iago explains that though Othello’s “eyes had seen the proof / At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds” of Iago’s ability as a soldier (1.1.27-28), he is valued less than one “That never set a squadron in the field” (1.1.21). Furthermore, because Cassio is a gentleman, Iago is doubly alienated: first, by not achieving the position he believes his actions merit; and second, by Othello’s favoring a gentleman over a soldier, reminding Iago of his place in Venetian society.

In his opening exchange with Brabantio, Iago objectifies Desdemona as both a sexual object and a commodity, betraying his constant attention to economic gain as well as the susceptibility of other characters to become displaced by Venice’s capitalist interests. He warns Brabantio: “Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags. / Thieves, thieves!” (1.1.80-81). By identifying Desdemona with worldly possessions, he establishes the power struggle that continues into the Duke’s chamber and allows the Duke to determine

Othello's claim to Desdemona. In addition, he qualifies Desdemona as something to be obtained, fueling Roderigo's quest for her and thereby his own power over Roderigo. Iago is able to influence Brabantio as well by commodifying Desdemona; as Heilman notes, "when he finds Desdemona gone, Brabantio unhesitatingly adopts the theory which has been dinned into him" (562) by addressing Othello as a "thief" (1.2.58). When Brabantio brings his claims against Othello to the Senate floor, his position as Desdemona's father echoes that of Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for both fathers view their daughters as extensions of their property. Like Brabantio, Egeus claims ownership over his daughter, Hermia, saying, "she is mine, and all my right of her / I do estate upon Demetrius" (1.1.97-98). In a sense, Brabantio's rights as a father are usurped by the state, for he should have the power to "estate" Desdemona upon whomever he chooses. Just as Iago uses others for personal gain, Brabantio views his daughter's marriage as a means to extend his own wealth. Indeed, in "Iago's Art of War: The 'Machiavellian Moment' in *Othello*," Ken Jacobsen notes that Othello's "marriage to the daughter of a Venetian magnifico . . . would be a strategic coup, and excellent means of obtaining power and political legitimacy" (504). While money is not his motive, Othello would, in theory, gain power and status from his marriage. Othello is not, as Brabantio says, one of the "wealthy curled darlings of our nation" (1.2.69) but what Roderigo calls "an extravagant and wheeling stranger" (1.1.137). Brabantio loses not only power over his daughter, highlighting the state's shift away from patriarchy, but also a financial opportunity. Unlike the state's favoring Othello for his military prowess or Iago's acquiring personal wealth from Roderigo, Brabantio's losses are unique to the patriarchal system, which allows him to control his daughter as one of his assets. Logan claims that Iago believes "the state's privileging of international interests over Brabantio's claims is parallel to his own imagined condition as cuckolded by Othello" (364). She believes both men—remnants of the old patriarchal structure—lose control of their women, revealing

a shift in the structure of the state. On the contrary, Iago was never a part of the patriarchal structure; otherwise, he—like Brabantio—would have been able to voice his claims against Othello, for both the lieutenant rank and his alleged cuckolding, to the state. Then again, admittance of his inability to control his wife would imply sexual impotency and reflect his political powerlessness.

In revealing his plot against Othello, Iago uses fiscal language, showing that he seeks not only revenge but also monetary retribution. In the opening scene, Iago tells Roderigo to observe:

Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave  
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage  
Wears out his time much like his master's ass  
For naught but provender (1.1.45-48)

Iago juxtaposes his motive in seeming loyal with a knave who is *actually* loyal. He aligns himself with the former, sympathizing with those who “when they have lines their coats, / Do themselves homage” (1.1.53-54). Thus Iago suggests his economic motive in appearing loyal. In a later soliloquy, Iago divulges his plan to “Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me / For making him egregiously an ass” (2.1.294-95). Iago’s plan to seize control of Othello’s faculties, with his emphasis on “reward,” echoes his earlier speech about servitude, implying that Othello will become like the first type of servant by giving Iago power over him. Iago’s comparison of a servant to an ass in both speeches reveals his conception of class, a product of his false consciousness: he believes servants are mere animals. Marx writes, “If [a man’s] own activity is for him an unfree activity, then he sees his activity as being done in the service, under the lordship of, under the coercion and under the yoke of another man” (404). Marx’s reference to the “yoke” explicitly ties his theory with Iago’s belief system. Under Othello’s command, or “yoke,” Iago would be an ass if it were not for his underlying financial intentions. Iago intends to alienate Othello by making him succumb to Iago’s will, turning him into an ass. Concurrently, Iago,

a soldier rather than a gentleman, covets money in order to elevate his social status, which he believes is possible because of Venice's shifting values.

In addition to seeking revenge on Othello, Iago pits himself against Cassio because Othello's favoring a gentleman over his ensign reinforces the latter's low social rank. In conversing with Cassio, Iago inadvertently exposes his preoccupation with money. When he delivers to Cassio the news of Othello's elopement, Iago says, "Faith, he tonight hath boarded a land-carrak. / If it prove lawful prize, he's made forever" (1.2.50-51). In Iago's metaphor of exchange, Desdemona is the merchant ship captured by Othello. Of course, the goods exchanged are only partially monetary, for the implications are also sexual. When Iago mentions Othello's being "made," he implies that he sees Desdemona as a means to financial ends. Othello's financial success, therefore, hangs in the Duke's consent. Furthermore, Cassio's response to Iago's metaphor, "I do not understand" (1.2.52), serves as a reminder that Cassio, a gentleman and therefore a vestige of the older patriarchal system, is unconcerned with monetary acquisitions. As foil to Cassio, Iago sees the state's move toward capitalism as beneficial to him, for he might gain status through monetary acquisitions rather than birth.

Even though Othello appoints Iago lieutenant by the end of Act III, Iago persists in his plan, proving that his economic motive outweighs his quest for title. At the end of the play, Lodovico admonishes Iago, "Look on the tragic loading of this bed / This is thy work" (5.2.373-74), referring to the dead bodies of Desdemona, Emilia, and Othello. While Iago is considered responsible for the play's tragic deaths—even those he did not personally commit—one body is curiously absent from the closing scene: Roderigo. Though Roderigo appears as his only ally in his plot against Othello, Iago's desire for capital gain drives him to murder. Iago reveals, "He calls me to a restitution large / Of gold and jewels that I bobbed from him / As gifts to Desdemona" (5.1.15-17). Iago murders Emilia because she betrays him by confessing her role in obtaining the

handkerchief, yet he disposes of Roderigo for financial reasons. Heilman argues, “He has not the shadow of a motive to rob Roderigo; contrariwise, he has at least monetary reasons for feeling gratitude to Roderigo” (560). What Heilman ignores, of course, is that Iago does have a motive for killing Roderigo: Roderigo is privy to Iago’s plan. Iago’s failure to admit this, even in his asides, might imply that his desire for money overwhelms his sense of reason. Even though Iago appears as a savvy chess player by disposing of his pawn once he has served his purpose, Iago seems to lose sight of his position on the board. Like Othello, Iago succumbs to something beyond reason: lust for money and power.

Despite his part in four characters’ deaths, Iago cannot be held solely responsible for the play’s tragic ending; his desires are symptomatic of Venetian ideology, making the state corollary in its own downfall. In “Relating Things to the State: ‘The State’ and the Subject of *Othello*,” Thomas Moisan “suggest[s] that ‘the state’ and Othello are tied to each other in a relationship both mutually exploitative and mutually revealing, one that leads Othello to define himself by readings of ‘the state,’ and that makes ‘the state’ an interested participant in Othello’s tragedy” (191). True, the state plays a role in its own tragedy, but that role goes beyond its identification with Othello. Iago’s economic exploitation of Roderigo, in fact, mirrors the state’s exploitation of Othello, revealing the Venetian ideology inherent in his economic motives. Furthermore, Iago’s desire for the lieutenant rank is a product of his alienation, also rendered by the state through its preferment of Othello’s word over its elder statesmen—first when Othello appoints Cassio lieutenant, and later when the Duke upholds Othello and Desdemona’s marriage. As Logan writes, “the state’s project of consolidation, dependent on a model of pragmatic rationalism, and predicated on self-sacrifice of citizens or subjects to state interests, implicates the state in the process of its own destabilization” (363). Logan notes the “self-sacrifice” of both Desdemona and Othello, yet she sees Iago as essentially ignored by Venice’s leaders, and thus

alienated by the state's failure to recognize him as a threat. Both Logan and Jacobsen note Iago's inability to place the state's interests above his own, rendering him incapable of adhering to the model Niccolo Machiavelli sets forth in *The Art of War*. Jacobsen writes, "Machiavelli justifies military training by arguing that it teaches civic virtues" and instructs citizens to "prefer the good of the public to any private interest" (523). What both critics ignore is that Iago is not given the opportunity to uphold state interests, for despite previous military service, he is not given the position of lieutenant. Iago values the military position both because he is alienated from it and because Venice favors those with military power, as revealed on the Senate floor. In both cases, Venice plays a role in Iago's alienation.

Additionally, the Senate's favoring the foreign Othello over Brabantio shows a shift towards capitalist values, which Iago swiftly adopts both because he might use them to his advantage and due to his false consciousness. Jacobsen notes that Iago appears as "a Venetian citizen devoid of patriotism, [who] understands the prevailing mercenary spirit and exploits it to the furthest" (527). However, if the state's own interests are "mercenary," then perhaps Iago's motives are in line with those of Venice. One must question the Senate's alleged "patriotism," for its interest clearly lies in Cyprus and not on the home front. Hence, Iago manipulates Roderigo, Othello, and Cassio in much the same way that Venice does, revealing yet another "body" curiously absent from the play's closing scene—the body politic—which makes Venice as guilty of murder as its citizens.

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## Colored Spots: Race Constructions at the Periphery of Don DeLillo's *White Noise*

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Jack Gladney, the narrator of Don DeLillo's 1985 novel *White Noise*, is a white American middle-class man who frequently notices "colored spots" flickering along the edges of his field of vision (39). Like the countless white American protagonists who have preceded him, Jack is positioned as an unracialized individual standing at the center of a seemingly insignificant "colored" presence. Literary critics have, for the most part, left this "colored" presence unaddressed in the margins of DeLillo's work. With this paper, I seek to reclaim the novel's construction of whiteness in relation to an "Africanist presence," the coded, nonwhite auras and personae theorized by Toni Morrison as foils that set off whiteness as the norm for American subjecthood (6). Critics Tim Engles and Thomas Peyser are among the very few to consider the whiteness of *White Noise*, each examining Jack's conception of his self in relation and relief to the nonwhite influence that impinges upon his rural setting. Neither Engles nor Peyser, however, connects the novel's racial constructions to its contextual roots in 1980s America. Considering Morrison's conviction that "National literatures . . . end up describing and inscribing what is on the national mind," the impact of the Africanist presence within *White Noise* must be framed against the backdrop of 1980s American race relations (14). Just as early national literatures organized "American coherence through a distancing Africanism" (Morrison 8), President Ronald Reagan used rhetorically coded racism to gain the support of white Americans who felt threatened by the newly integrated nonwhite

presence, as Michelle Alexander notes in *The New Jim Crow* (47). Jack's self-reflexive narrative recounts the 1980s individualistic attempt to refortify its normative supremacy by distancing itself from the "colored" presence. Unlike traditional American race constructions, however, the Africanist presence coded in *White Noise* extends beyond the literary and national imagination's periphery to challenge rather than confirm the unracialized, normative supremacy of the white self.

The opening chapter of *White Noise* reenacts a literary history of whiteness normalized into invisibility, a United States tradition manifested in what historian Gil Troy refers to as Reagan's rhetorically "colorblind" vision of America as a small-town utopia (92). The rural setting of the College-on-the-Hill where Jack teaches evokes Reagan's recurring description of America as "a shining city upon a hill" (qtd. in Troy 5) whose city walls had "doors open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here" (Reagan). The "anyone" Reagan addressed, however, excluded African Americans, especially the black urban poor targeted in his 1982 War on Drugs. Bringing the "conservative revolution" begun in the 1960s to its full development in the 1980s, Reagan's War on Drugs "echoed white frustration" with Civil Rights gains "in race-neutral terms through implicit racial appeals" (Alexander 47). The War on Drugs glorified white, rural life while vilifying racially coded urban "predators" and offering the two-thirds of white Americans who approved of Reagan's actions an unracialized outlet for backlash against black progress (Alexander 51). Accordingly, the residents of Jack's rural town need not "feel threatened and aggrieved in quite the same way other towns do," as there is a "corrupt" city nearby to "distrust" (DeLillo 85). The residents of Reagan's "city upon a hill" appear in the first chapter as an encoded white middle to upper class. From his office, Jack observes "the day of the station wagons" (5), the annual "spectacle" of parents unloading their children into dormitories at the College-on-the-Hill (3). The privileged whiteness of these students and their parents goes unspoken. We can assume

that the participants of “the day of the station wagons” are white because there is a “communal bond” among the families; that Jack, who is later marked as white by one of the novel’s “others,” recognizes the families as a “collection of the like-minded and the spiritually akin” suggests whiteness as the common base for such psychic connections (4). As Jack goes on to call the families “a people, a nation,” their shared, invisible whiteness bounds them as an ingroup, a metonymic representation of the unracialized, ordinary American subjecthood at the heart of Reagan’s “city upon a hill.”

Since the white characters that constitute the numerical majority in Jack’s rural setting are not raced and Jack himself is only seen as racialized from a nonwhite perspective, the novel’s main characters identify as individuals rather than as representative members of a race. While “the day of the station wagons” suggests a certain degree of homogeneity and consensus, narcissism and individualism flow beneath the surface (DeLillo 5). The parents, looking around campus, “feel a sense of renewal” because they see “images of themselves in every direction” (3-4). Here, Engles notes that the novel establishes an “interest in the relational, dialogic nature of identity formation” (762). The parents feel “renewal” because they can categorize those around them as similar to themselves in relation to their own categorical placement; their position as individuals living within the norm is confirmed. With this individualism comes a sense of entitlement. The parents are “accomplished,” and Jack attributes their wealth not to their race but to some inherent quality present in their very posture, “something about them suggesting massive insurance coverage” (DeLillo 4). In the 1980s, white Americans who felt threatened by the socioeconomic advancements made by minority groups through Civil Rights developments held steadfast to this notion of entitlement and President Reagan appealed to their anxieties. Reagan’s stance against crime, affirmative action, and welfare, while publicly issued in “colorblind” rhetoric, earned him the support of white voters who could clearly

see a racial dimension in his coded words. An Africanist presence within Reagan's speeches supplemented whites' normalized superiority through Engles' and Peyser's dialogic identity formations, with black men and women coded as "predators" and "welfare queens," respectively (Alexander 51). Throughout the novel, Jack, like Reagan, vainly attempts to use dialogic comparisons to distance himself from nonwhite people who encroach upon the entitlement associated with the unracialized white norm.

Within his 1980s American context, Jack sees his unracialized space pervaded by a "colored" presence. More African Americans entered areas once exclusively white as the percentage of blacks defining themselves as middle class doubled from the 1960s (Troy 91). In his encounters with nonwhite people, Jack embodies the 1980s white American longing to distance the Africanist presence expanding beyond the margins of society to the once unracialized mainstream. Upon meeting Heinrich's nonwhite friend Orest, Jack performs Engles' and Peyser's dialogic identity formation, attempting to categorize the boy's race in order to implicitly distance and define himself as the norm: "What kind of name is Orest? I studied his features. He might have been Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, a dark-skinned Eastern European, a light-skinned black. Did he have an accent? I wasn't sure" (DeLillo 198). Jack's inability to precisely categorize Orest demonstrates the shifting nature of racial constructions. Superficially, Jack's failed attempt to identify Orest based on visual differences reveals how physical racial signifiers, often used in the othering process, change over time, pointing to the arbitrariness of oppressive racial categorizations. More significantly, Jack's failure in racializing the other to establish the boundaries on his own unracialized individuality suggests that the racialized experience is becoming indistinguishable from the American norm. Rather than serving only as the marginalized foil to whiteness, the Africanist presence is gaining the same status once attributed exclusively to whites. Unable to rely upon the language of racial categorizations to dialogically stabilize his unracialized

identity, Jack can no longer define himself based on what he is not and must instead reconsider what he is.

As normative American subjecthood begins to include racialized experiences, Jack becomes more cognizant of his undefined whiteness. Historically classified only in opposition to the other outside itself, whiteness as a racial group lacks real definition. This is especially true as the outgroup white normativity depended upon for dialogic formation integrates into the ingroup due to shifting 1980s American demographics. Jack's encounter with Orest unfolds in the novel's third part, "Dylarama," just as Jack's fear of death seems to be coming to fruition. In what DeLillo describes as a novel "about death on a personal level" (qtd. in Engles 768), white imagery initially associated with generic supermarket "items in plain white packages" with clear, explicit, "simple labeling" (DeLillo 18) is linked in this third section to the endless emptiness of "Uniform, white" death (DeLillo 189). Accepting his racialized status as part of his self-awareness would require sacrificing the individuality granted by his membership in the norm to vague, indistinct, undefined whiteness. Lost in the meaninglessness of his newly racialized identity, Jack's isolation is encapsulated by the moments he spends in "The Old Burying Ground" (97). Engles argues that the "barely legible" headstones mark a lost history of racial configurations, an ancestry that might supply Jack's empty whiteness with a "historical narrative" to ground his identity (768). In the silence that fills the graveyard, an erased timeline of race constructions leaves Jack's once individual, "unmarkedly white self" as vastly blank as the snow that falls around him (Engles 769).

Jack's preoccupation with the death of his individuality keeps him from noticing the potential for growth personified by the novel's Africanist characters. Like the "black billowing cloud" responsible for Jack's anxieties, the transformation of racial demographics leaving whites behind as the numerical minority cannot be stopped (DeLillo 111). As previously marginalized groups enter mainstream American society, racial constructions will become

as “nebulous” as the mass growing in Jack’s body, too indefinite for “simple labeling” (DeLillo 270, 18). The historical narratives that allow Jewish New York *émigré* Murray Jay Siskind to prosper in Jack’s unracialized rural setting is a testament to the arbitrary, malleable nature of race. Murray, as a member of a racial category that was once considered nonwhite and therefore positioned as other, offers an outsider’s perspective on normative American life. When Jack takes Murray to “The Most Photographed Barn in America,” Murray comments, “Once you’ve seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn” (12). Metaphorical ties can be drawn between the barn and the historically unracialized white individual (Engles 768). Murray theorizes, “We’re not here to capture an image, we’re here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura. We’ve agreed to be part of a collective perception” (DeLillo 13). Unracialized whiteness, like the barn, is simulacrum, an empty imitation without authentic roots. The normativity of invisible whiteness is an aura collectively maintained and reinforced over the course of political and literary history through dialogic comparisons to a peripheral Africanist presence linguistically coded as inferior. Murray’s outlook on American life and his mere presence within the middle class mainstream as a former other should reveal to Jack the illegitimacy and arbitrariness of constructed racial superiority.

Like 1980s white Americans who felt “unmoored” by the expansion and success of nonwhite populations, Jack cannot see the arbitrariness that Murray sees in racial superiority (Troy 27). Jack is unwilling to relinquish the autonomy granted by his illusory unracialized individuality and accept the deathly “permanent oblivion” of whiteness (DeLillo 277). Instead, Jack seeks out Dylar, the white tablets Babette has been secretly using to repress her fear of death. For Jack, repressing his fear of dying into whiteness would mean repressing his racialized status and buttressing his unracialized normativity against the inferior, “colored” other. Dylar’s side effect of forgetfulness suggests that repressing his racialized status requires forgetting the painful history of racism that has normalized whiteness

into invisibility. This symptom of illusory white superiority can already be found in Jack's love for Hitler and disregard for the Holocaust. When he cannot get a hold of Babette's stash, Jack seeks out her dealer, Willie Mink, a nonwhite man she has repeatedly had sex with as payment for the drug.

Jack is inspired by a conversation with Murray to murder Mink, who Jack cannot picture as white but rather thinks of "literally gray" (204). Murray divides the world into "two kinds of people . . . Killers and diers" (277). His "theory" is eerily reminiscent of violent colonialism and, given the unspoken but strange dynamic between his Jewish identity and Jack's Hitler studies, the Holocaust: "The more people you kill, the more power you gain over your own death." As Murray ties this method to "massacres, wars, and executions," Jack draws the conclusion "that men have tried throughout history to cure themselves of death by killing others" (277). Violence against "others" asserts the "killer's" authority over the "dier," a strategy employed throughout imperial history to establish the white man's power and repeated in the surge of 1980s "vigilante" hate crimes inspired by rhetoric depicting blacks as criminals (Troy 181). The text reenacts colonial history in Jack's confrontation with Mink. Once again, Jack resorts to dialogic identity formations, his narrative echoing his attempt to other Orest: "What kind of a name is Willie Mink? . . . Did he speak with an accent? . . . Was he Melanesian, Polynesian, Indonesian, Nepalese, Surinamese, Dutch-Chinese?" (DeLillo 291-93). Once again, Jack's inability to categorize the other so that he may establish his own unracialized position within the norm fails due to his reliance on physical differences and his refusal to recognize that race is not a stable visual or categorical entity but a constantly fluctuating state. Unable to distance the racialized other from the unracialized norm, Jack's whiteness is verbally marked for the first time by Mink, his choice of words evoking the colonial past: "Why are you here, white man?" (296). Mink seems aware of Jack's tyrannical drive to mark the other so that he may define

his self and substantiate his superiority. “You are very white,” Mink continues, “you know that?” (296). Jack’s awareness of his whiteness peaks in this moment and he replies, “It’s because I’m dying” (296), dying into the emptiness of a race that lacks definition, a race that can only point to what it is not, and a race that cannot answer Mink’s question “Who are you, literally?” (300). Dialogical categorizations have failed Jack in his mission to reclaim his nonracialized, normative superiority; therefore, he does what white “men have tried through history” to do—subject the other to violence to assert the power of whiteness not as a race but as the ideal norm. Jack shoots Mink, but just as Jack steps back to take in “the scene of squalid violence and lonely death at the shadowy fringes of society,” Mink takes the gun, shoots Jack, and nearly ends Jack’s tyrannical fantasy (298). The blood that pours from Jack’s wound matches Mink’s, and he conceives of Mink as more alike than different from himself, “seeing him for the first time as a person” (299). Engles’ essay culminates with this one fleeting moment when Jack suddenly knows who he “literally” is—“just another human body” (779). But ultimately, the white individual is too focused on defining himself through distance from the other to engage in such compassionate outreach. Jack quickly turns inward, away from Mink, to tend to his own wounds.

The final chapter of *White Noise* serves as a warning to President Reagan’s “city upon a hill.” The white Americans stabilized through a once reliably distanced Africanist presence sit atop an incline watching, as they did earlier in the novel, “another postmodern sunset” (DeLillo 216). Only, they “find little to say to each other,” the white individual’s “introverted . . . almost backward and shy” retreat away from his increasingly “colored” reality leaving Jack and his neighbors isolated from one another (308). “The bands of color” strike a feeling of inexplicable “anticipation,” a feeling without “coherent precedents” (308). If contextualized, the image of the white rural residents looking towards a colored Western sky becomes a symbolic representation of the 1980s white American

apprehension towards an increasingly widespread “colored” presence. During this time, Americans experienced unprecedented shifts in demographics, social transformations that would not end with the decade. Jack and his white neighbors “don’t know whether it is permanent . . . or just some atmospheric weirdness, soon to pass” (308). But as the looming sunsets suggest, the nonwhite presence is spreading over spaces formerly exclusive to whites, an immense entity that transcends marginalizing racial categorizations. The nonwhite presence, like the chemically altered sky, is here to stay, and the white individual must alter his construction of self or else die into whiteness. The fact that a novel preoccupied with death spares the lives of all its characters seems to imply a certain impending doom that has yet to happen but very well may in the future. The white individual may be spared from disaster if he takes up Toni Morrison’s mission and appreciates the worth of the Africanist presence that is pushed to the periphery of political and literary narratives. If he can see that race relations are dialogically fabricated, his identity might rely less on distancing categories and benefit more from communal human experiences, the colorblind actualization of Reagan’s “shining city upon a hill.”

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## Cabbages and Kings: Natural Selection and Colonialism in Carroll's "The Walrus and the Carpenter"

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In the midst of Victorian colonization, social critics examined the role of natural selection in the progression of society. While scientists analyzed nature through an evolutionary lens, social critics used the same ideas to explain the technological disparity between Victorian England and those civilizations that became the English colonies. Thomas Henry Huxley, a critic of social applications of evolution, argues in "Evolution and Ethics" that the "evolution of society" is "a process of an essentially different character" from that of nature (37); however, Huxley's critique conflicts with attitudes toward colonization recorded in Victorian fiction and political documents. Huxley writes that modern society has evolved beyond the struggle for competition, but he ignores the conflict between England and its colonies. In his essay "Minute on Indian Education," Thomas Babington Mccaulay argues that colonial powers have a duty to educate the colonized in a British tradition in order to infuse knowledge outside of "false history, false astronomy, [and] false medicine" found "in company with [the] false religion" of a native people (1747). As Mccaulay argues that the British cultural knowledge is superior to that of colonized people, he shows that the potential for conflict still exists between the colonizer and its colonies.

Although written in childish language, Lewis Carroll's poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter" illustrates social evolution in

conjunction with Victorian attitudes of colonial dominance. Carroll portrays the Walrus and the Carpenter as superior to the Oyster masses, and he shows how that supremacy allows the protagonists to take advantage of the Oyster masses. Essentially, Carroll shows that England's cultural history—its “cabbages and kings”—operates on a higher plane than anything the simple Oysters have imagined within their society. Carroll's fictional narrative echoes McCaulay's position on England's superior place within the colonial world. Rather than agree that society is no longer in competition and thus no longer evolving, Carroll shows that colonial powers compete with the natives of their colonies: if competition facilitates evolution, then colonial interaction forces each society to evolve. Carroll uses a combination of satire and absurdity to show the place of natural selection within Victorian colonialism. “The Walrus and the Carpenter” contradicts Huxley's rejection of social evolution by showing the conflict and subsequent evolution found within the interaction of native and colonial powers.

Huxley bases his description of evolution on a garden: the plants that survive natural threats will succumb to human influence and become a cultivated patch of land. However, he argues that once humans remove their influence, natural selection will resume and those plants most able to survive will again flourish. Man, according to Huxley, is capable of altering the natural process of evolution for so long as he attends to nature (13-15). Critic John Dewey writes, “The problem, however, is to locate this opposition and interference,—to interpret it, to say what it means in the light of our idea of the evolutionary process as a whole” (59). The setback, as Dewey notes, is that man's place in evolution is one of constant struggle against the weeds of nature that do not fit his purpose and still thrive. Huxley concentrates on man's role in the progression of nature, but he ignores man's role in the progression of society. If man must constantly struggle to improve his civilization and control his colonies, then society as a whole has continued to evolve rather than remain stagnant, as Huxley suggests.

Carroll uses a stretch of unmarked sand to represent Huxley's proverbial garden. When Carroll introduces the Walrus and the Carpenter, his protagonists walk along the beach "[weeping] like anything to see / such quantities of sand" (21-22). They weep for land not cleared for civilized society, and they wonder how long it would take to "[clear] away" the sand in exchange for a "grand" civilization (23-24). From a colonial lens, the Oysters represent a native people who have never thought to clear away the sand of their homeland. The Walrus and the Carpenter invite the native Oysters on "a pleasant walk, a pleasant talk, / Along the briny beach" (33-34). When speaking to the Oysters, they do not mention clearing away the sand of their homeland. Instead, they try to lure young, naïve Oysters away from the security of the Oyster bed to a place where the protagonists can pursue their own gains through their advanced and educated skills.

Just as the Walrus and the Carpenter dream of clearing away the quantities of sand, Huxley shows that colonial man must clear away the remnants of native vegetation and civilization in favor of the English colonial ideal. While he fails to account for technological changes in England, Huxley compares the uncivilized colonies to the untamed nature found in an evolving world. Colonization, according to Huxley, also follows the same analogy of an instructive garden. He writes, "On landing, [English colonists] find themselves in the midst of a state of nature, widely different from that left behind them in everything but the most general physical conditions" (16). Essentially, Huxley compares native society to the untamed wilderness of nature that flourishes without a human influence. The colonizers must "clear away the native vegetation, extirpate or drive out the animal population, so far as may be necessary, and take measures to defend themselves from the re-immigration of either" (16). In place of native vegetation, Huxley writes, "they introduce English grain and fruit trees; English dogs, sheep, cattle, horses; and English men; in fact, they set up . . . a new variety of mankind, within the old state of nature" (16).

Huxley concludes that the colony is the vanquished state of nature upon which English colonists must struggle to overcome the native growth of the original society. Huxley shows that colonialism requires struggle; the Englishman must “defend” himself against the native culture, implying a conflict that Huxley fails to address in his critique of societal evolution.

Beyond the single stretch of untamed sand, “The Walrus and the Carpenter” begins with an allusion to the size of the British Empire and the amount of land the English had struggled to conquer:

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might:

.....

And this was odd, because it was

The middle of the night. (1-2, 5-6)

In the middle of the night, Carroll shows his reader that the sun remains high, shining down upon his characters; beyond the absurd nature of the poem, Carroll references the classical words describing the size of the British Empire. In 1827, Rev. R. P. Buddicom said, “It had been said that the sun never set on the British flag; it was certainly an old saying, about the time of Richard the Second, and was not so applicable then as in the present time” (589).

And yet, even as Carroll alludes to the grandeur of the Empire, he also shows a conflicting perspective on the nature of the Empire. If the sun represents shining glory, Carroll’s moon represents those who wondered if the British had the right to spread so widely over the globe. The moon sulks and says, “It’s very rude of him”—the sun—“to come and spoil the fun!” (11-12). Carroll uses the sun and the moon to represent the grand and oppressive applications of colonial rule: the sun shines “smooth and bright” doing “his very best” to shine across the ocean, whereas the moon believes the sun has “no business” going beyond the extent of its usual reign to overshadow the night. Supporters of colonialism did their very best to expand the British empire as far as possible, whereas the opposition believed that they had no business overpowering existing

cultures.

Beyond simply discussing colonialism, Carroll also uses the theory of natural selection to show the difference between naïve and more experienced colonized individuals and to comment on the philanthropic duties of colonial powers. He writes:

The eldest Oyster winked his eye,  
 And shook his heavy head—  
 Meaning to say he did not choose  
 To leave the Oyster-bed. (39-42)

The eldest Oyster, who has survived long enough within his environment to reach old age, has the sense and cultural awareness to resist the deadly, if “pleasant,” offer. However, Carroll contrasts the eldest Oyster with “four young Oysters” who “[hurry] up, / All eager for a treat” (43-44). The theory of natural selection contends that those most suited for an environment will survive to reproduce and pass on those traits to the next generation. The eldest Oyster obviously has the cunning to survive in the midst of hungry predators, while the young Oysters who follow the Walrus and the Carpenter will not survive to spawn a new generation. Essentially, the eldest Oyster represents the individual who is most suited to survive within the English society that the colonized people are obliged to embrace. The eldest Oyster has adapted, and the Walrus and the Carpenter allow him to live peacefully.

Regardless of the Oysters’ plight, the Walrus still feels compelled to educate the young, naïve Oysters before their death. Carroll writes:

“The time has come,” the Walrus said,  
 “To talk of many things:  
 Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—  
 Of cabbages—and kings—  
 And why the sea is boiling hot—  
 And whether pigs have wings.” (61-66)

Once again, Carroll interplays absurdity with details that are culturally relevant to the colonial process. The Walrus feels it is

his duty to discuss shoes and ships and sealing wax, to represent civilized dress, ocean-based expansion, and the role of letters in communicating between governing bodies within an empire; the Walrus discusses cabbages and—more importantly, kings—to show the inherent superiority of English society. As noted by critic William Empson, the Walrus becomes discouraged by the Oysters’ inability to absorb the lesson, but later drowns his disappointment in a tasty oyster snack (18). Carroll includes ridiculous elements within his “education” to show that even though the Walrus feels he must educate the Oysters, he is never convinced they will actually absorb the lesson.

Indeed, the Oysters prove to be unable to comprehend the lesson the Walrus has offered to give, and as such, they are not naturally selected to survive in the climate of a British colony. They respond with a cry of

But wait a bit . . .  
 before we have our chat;  
 For some of us are out of breath,  
 And all of us are fat! (67-70)

The Oysters do not have the physical—or, we must assume, mental—capability to listen to the lessons that the Walrus has offered to teach, and after they request a break, the Walrus never returns to education. The Oysters have already adapted the codes of English dress: Carroll describes their brushed coats, washed faces, and clean and neat shoes, which are “odd, because, you know, / They hadn’t any feet” (44-46, 47-48). Carroll uses the ridiculous image of feet-less Oysters wearing shoes to what English colonial leaders attempting to educate natives in English ways. The Oysters can dress in shoes and coats, but they cannot catch their breaths for long enough to learn about the civilized tropes of ships, sealing wax, and kings. The Walrus and the Carpenter feel justified in their consumption because they tried, and failed, to educate the Oysters, and since the Oysters are not capable of learning, they are inferior to those well-versed in an English education.

Carroll's poem uses the Walrus, the Carpenter, and the Oysters to satirize individual thoughts on colonization and subsequent education. The Walrus, sympathetic to the plight of the Oysters, represents those hypocrites who supposedly "weep" for the natives and deeply sympathize with their plight and yet still take advantage of their place within an advanced society. The Walrus sobs as he separates the Oysters "of the largest size" to consume through his tears (100). Furthermore, as noted by critic James R. Kincaid, his handkerchief doubles as a means to hide his consumption from the Carpenter and thus eat more than his share, marking his greed rather than his compassion (95). Conversely, the Carpenter simply accepts his role as superior and only speaks to the Oysters about food, rather than the finer points of British society. The Carpenter allows the Oysters to rest before their "chat," for which he is thanked (71-72). Carroll's reader has no question about the Carpenter's motives. Instead, the Carpenter represents those colonialists who took what they could from the native lands with no obligation to educate the natives in the ways of British society.

Like Carroll, Huxley also shows the place of education within the struggle for natural selection. He writes, "that man, as a 'political animal,' is susceptible of a vast amount of improvement, by education, by instruction, and by the application of his intelligence to the adaptation of the conditions of life to his higher needs, I entertain not the slightest doubt" (44). If the English "political animal" requires educational improvement, the native also requires similar attention. In "Minute on Indian Education," Macaulay illustrates the duty a colonial empire has toward the citizens in its colonies. As the Walrus tries to educate the Oysters despite his ulterior motives, Macaulay too discusses the "political animal" to which Huxley refers. After Parliament set a sum "for the revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of Indian," Macaulay argues that the education to which Parliament refers is the classic literature of the English tradition, notably that of Milton and Newton, rather than "the sacred books

of the Hindoos" (1754). Macaulay furthers Huxley's point of the education of natives within British colonies; essentially, both agree that the natives must be educated in the British tradition in order to eliminate the wild nature threatening to overthrow civilization. Macaulay's advice is twofold: he hopes to philanthropically educate the natives, but more so, he wishes to preserve the English power in the colonial struggle.

While Huxley appears to discount social evolution, his position waffles as "Evolution and Ethics" continues. As noted by Dewey, Huxley maintains that social struggle has ceased and so social evolution has also ceased; however, he also notes that in terms of colonization, the struggle must continue, or else the native world will revert to its wild, uncivilized ways. Education, according to Huxley, allows for the progression of society that has advanced beyond the need for competition. Nevertheless, he fails to explain the ways by which education facilitates social change within divergent societies. In response to Huxley's ambiguity, Dewey writes:

We know that through what we call public opinion and education certain forms of action are constantly stimulated and encouraged, while other types are as constantly objected to, repressed, and punished. What difference in principle exists between this mediation of the acts of the individual by society and what is ordinarily called natural selection, I am unable to see. (64)

England, as a whole, may have opened the gateways of education to its citizens, but Huxley fails to comment on the education of native people within the British Colonies. Education, as its route, represents the means through which society may naturally select those who advance and those who fall behind. Those who adapt are advantageous in the new society, and the English believe they have no duty to those natives who cannot absorb their lessons.

Essentially, Carroll's satire "The Walrus and the Carpenter" shows the unavoidable conflict found within colonialism that counters Huxley's rejection of social evolution. While Huxley

believes that England and the English people have not evolved since the Tudor reign, he contradicts himself by writing that colonialism acts in constant struggle with the native land and population. If colonial powers, represented by the Walrus and the Carpenter, struggle to educate and profit from their colonies—the Oysters and their stretch of sand—then the process of social evolution is rampant within Victorian England. The Walrus tries, and fails, to educate the Oysters, just as Macaulay indicates is necessary for a colonial government. Nevertheless, Carroll shows the Walrus and the Carpenter to be after nothing more than personal advancement. The Walrus abandons his attempts at education, for while it was a noble goal, he ultimately fancies that the Oysters would make a tasty snack. The Walrus and the Carpenter are in competition with the Oysters, and they, as colonial forces, overcome the wild, natural order found within the untamed native society.

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# Faulkner's "Pantaloon in Black": The Necessity of the Fringe Story

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As human beings, we have a craving or a compulsion to find order amidst chaos, particularly when the world seems the most difficult to understand. To make sense of our lives and find a shred of hope to help us carry onward, we establish—or attempt to establish—order and reasoning to cope. This tendency was especially prevalent during the Modernist period, with daily existence characterized by disintegrating societal relations due to brutal warfare and man's own inhumanity. When the entire human race is struggling to find meaning amidst shifting social, moral, and political values, what happens when literature abandons the "normal," well-organized traditions of the classic novel in favor of writing styles that mimic the upheaval of daily life? Should readers follow their natural instincts and still search for unity in purposefully fragmented genres such as the short story sequence? Rather than merely seeking qualities of surface-level organicism in the short story sequence genre, both readers and critics alike need to embrace the tension and recognize that, as Rolf Lunden argues:

the greatness of . . . short story composites is not diminished if we acknowledge that they are not well polished, perfectly balanced, monolithic objects of art. The disruptive elements—the gaps, the vignettes, the contradictory chronology, the absence of recurring protagonists—are not flaws; they work either to subvert or reinforce the author's

message. A larger pattern is often thereby established, one that makes room for both order and disorder. (28)

Although short story sequences have often been criticized in the past for so-called flaws or elements that do not fit the overall whole, these are not mistakes to be disregarded by readers. In fact, fringe stories, which seemingly disrupt the overall picture, should not be pushed aside in favor of unifying elements, but rather should be focused on due to what they can reveal about an author's underlying themes. Accordingly, although it is only loosely connected to the remainder of the sequence *Go Down, Moses*, William Faulkner's fringe story "Pantaloon in Black" particularly highlights his themes of the importance of perceived masculinity, the myth of black infidelity, the unfruitful relationships between men and women, and the racial conflict and misunderstanding between Southern whites and blacks. Thus, while removing this story may lead to more unity, connectedness, and coherence between the remaining parts, Faulkner's overall message would be severely weakened and his entire short story sequence would be rendered less effective.

The short story sequence *Go Down, Moses* continually emphasizes the patriarchal ideal of Southern culture as the McCaslins attempt to pass the family plantation into the hands of each true heir (male son). This manner of bequeathing property is considered the only legitimate method for continuing one's heritage, and the tradition of patrimony is central to almost every story in the sequence. Yet, since Rider, the main character in "Pantaloon in Black," is not a member of the McCaslin family tree or part of the larger history of the book, at first this fringe story seems like unimportant filler material meant only to provide an additional black perspective of Southern life. As Lunden observes:

it can only with difficulty be placed in the book's chronology. Rider . . . is [not] related or connected with any other character in the book. . . . There are no references in the story to events or story lines of preceding stories. . . . The other stories in the composite contain references and

establish connectives to more than one other story. . . . No such intratextual links occur in “Pantaloone in Black.” No succeeding story refers back to “Pantaloone.” (139)

Upon closer examination, however, removing “Pantaloone in Black” from the entire sequence would damage the importance of perceived masculinity for both whites and blacks in the book. Though old Carothers McCaslin spearheads this viewpoint through traditional inheritance practices, Rider also adheres to images of stereotypical masculinity by refusing to accept weakness of any kind despite the recent death of his beloved wife Mannie. As the story opens with her burial, Rider tries to mask his “unmanly” feelings of grief by frantically shoveling dirt onto Mannie’s coffin:

“Lemme have hit, Rider.” [Rider] didn’t even falter. He released one hand in midstroke and flung it backward, striking the other [member of the sawmill gang] across the chest, jolting him back a step, and restored the hand to the moving shovel, flinging dirt with that effortless fury so that the mound seemed to be rising of its own volition. . . . Then he straightened up and with one hand flung the shovel quivering upright in the mound like a javelin and turned and began to walk away. (Faulkner 131)

This seemingly callous behavior during his wife’s funeral ceremony outwardly epitomizes the hard, ruthless, and strong disposition necessary for patriarchal lineage to survive. Thus, by ignoring and angrily acting out against any friend or family member who attempts to comfort him or stop his actions, Rider believes he is coping like a Southern man traditionally should, using physical strength and endurance to hide his emotions. As the story progresses and Rider finds it more and more difficult to hide his sorrow—his breathing becomes more audible and labored, the whites of his eyes appear strained and rimmed with red, and even eating becomes a mechanical, tasteless process—he finds even more extreme methods for proving that his wife’s death has not weakened his “masculinity”: the morning after his wife’s funeral, he returns to work at the

sawmill and singlehandedly hoists a massive log (a feat which should have killed him) and launches it down a hill; that same night, Rider consumes an entire gallon jug of homemade whiskey and stumbles around drunkenly to avoid confronting his feelings in an empty home; and, when his aunt offers compassion, aid, and a safe place to express his grief freely, Rider angrily blasphemes God—refusing to confess his intense sorrow and insisting that the Lord come down from Heaven to serve his needs instead—before walking out on the only family he has ever known. Since this black protagonist, who possesses no familial ties to the McCaslin tree, clings to similar perceptions of masculine duty as the white Southerners do, Faulkner reveals the universal similarities between both races in a more meaningful, convincing manner than could be achieved without the presence of this fringe story.

Besides emphasizing racial connections through shared perceptions of masculinity, Faulkner uses “Pantaloon in Black” to disprove the common myth of black infidelity. Even after slavery ended in the South, many whites still pictured relationships between African-Americans as primitive, sexually animalistic, and lacking in loving feelings—or as Jean Toomer strikingly expresses in his short story sequence *Cane*: “That the sexes were made to mate is the practice of the South. Particularly, black folks were made to mate” (15). In this case, Rider’s character is used, once again, to further Faulkner’s underlying messages to the reading audience. Walking home alone after his wife’s burial, Rider’s reddening eyes and interior musings display the true nature of his feelings:

with somewhere beneath them, vanished but not gone,  
 . . . the narrow, splay-toed prints of his wife’s bare feet where  
 on Saturday afternoons she would walk to the commissary to  
 buy their next week’s supplies while he took his bath;  
 . . . his body breasting the air her body had vacated, his eyes  
 touching the objects—post and tree and field and house and  
 hill—her eyes had lost. (Faulkner 133)

Before his commitment, Rider had caroused with nameless women,

gambled away his wages, and drunk his fill of whiskey. After setting his sights on Mannie, however, he decides he is done with this stereotypical African-American lifestyle and completely changes his behavior, even building and tending the symbolic fire on the hearth (representing their enduring love and fidelity for each other through everlasting flame). Now, though they had been married less than six months before her sudden death, Rider cannot escape Mannie's presence. Every typical sensation, landmark, and routine is colored by her memory to the extent that Rider believes he encounters her spirit—a fading entity he sweetly begs to stay or allow him to pass on as well. Then, when expressions of physical strength and masculinity fail to minimize his grief, Rider resorts to killing a white night-watchman and breaking free from a prison cell to purposefully cause his own lynching. Since he cannot bear to live without Mannie, these extreme actions allow him to join her in the afterlife instead. While Rider's behavior in the story may appear strange and unfeeling to outsiders, the nature of his thoughts and the ultimate sacrifice of himself leave no doubts about his commitment to and love for Mannie. By juxtaposing Rider's response to his wife's death against old Carothers McCaslin's numerous infidelities—resulting in incest, miscegenation, and a black branch to the McCaslin family tree—this fringe story convincingly offers an alternative perspective to the myth of black animalistic desire and infidelity.

Since Rider's commitment and devotion to his dead wife Mannie made further existence unbearable, by suddenly shifting the story's point of view to a white couple, Faulkner poignantly draws attention to typically unfruitful relationships between men and women in the Modern time period. Due to the disruption and alienation of society, men and women largely lacked the important elements necessary to maintain healthy, successful marriages. The deputy sheriff and his wife clearly lack communication skills, and their relationship is doomed to dissolve in futility primarily because routine has replaced emotion. While attempting to tell his wife about Rider's strange behavior, the deputy must deal with verbal

interruption, the separation of physical space, and her general indifference:

“I wish you would,” his wife said harshly. . . . “Take him out of my kitchen, anyway. You sheriffs! Sitting around that courthouse all day long, talking.” . . . The wife turned from the stove, carrying a dish. The deputy snatched his feet rapidly out of the way as she passed him, passed almost over him, and went into the dining room. The deputy raised his voice a little to carry the increased distance. (Faulkner 150)

During his account, the deputy tries to rationalize and explain Rider’s peculiar behavior both before and after the arrest, looking to his wife for commentary, input, and insight. As she rushes in and out of the kitchen and her husband’s presence—nearly trampling him to quickly get dinner on the table while providing only a few critical words and no other signs of interest in his conversation—her emotional and physical withdrawal highlights the gulf in their marriage. Despite his exhaustion and slight hysteria, as the deputy reaches out for response, his wife only contributes a passive-aggressive warning to cease conversation and eat so she can attend the nightly picture show on time. With no invitation extended to her husband, the deputy’s wife merely longs to escape his incessant talking in favor of the theater’s solitary darkness. By contrasting this emotionally sterile relationship with that of Rider and his wife Mannie and by drawing parallels to McCaslin family marriages, Faulkner emphasizes the unfeeling nature of Modern life. Although the McCaslin family tree continually produces unfruitful relationships (old Carothers McCaslin cannot remain faithful to his wife, committing both adultery and incest; Lucas Beauchamp practically exchanges his wife Molly for his perceived monetary entitlement; Isaac’s wife manipulates him sexually to convince him to reclaim his patrimony), the inclusion of the deputy sheriff and his wife demonstrates that most Southern couples had fallen victim to Modern romantic disillusionment.

In addition to his commentary on Southern masculinity, the

misguided notion of black unfaithfulness and promiscuity, and the unfruitful relationships between Modern men and women, Faulkner exposes the racial conflict between whites and blacks through his fringe story “Pantaloons in Black.” While the first section of the story is relayed through Rider’s personal thoughts, masked feelings, and display of masculine actions, part two switches to the viewpoint of a Southern white deputy sent to arrest Rider for murder. The deputy’s straightforward, unfeeling account—encompassing Rider’s lynching at the hands of a white mob, his apparent lack of grief after Mannie’s death, and his curious “jailbreak”—reveals the divide between the races:

Them damn niggers . . . it’s a wonder we have as little trouble with them as we do. Because why? Because they aint human. They look like a man and they walk on their hind legs like a man, and they can talk and you can understand them and you think they are understanding you, at least now and then. But when it comes to the normal human feelings and sentiments of human beings, they might just as well be a damn herd of wild buffaloes. (Faulkner 149-50)

Contrasted with Rider’s internal thoughts from section one, the deputy’s comments about the animalistic impulses and lack of emotional response in African-Americans demonstrate the marked misunderstanding of Southern blacks by Southern whites. Rather than interpreting Rider’s sudden immersion in work, whiskey, and gambling as a coping and grieving mechanism, the deputy sees signs of apathy, lack of respect for the dead, and the absence of natural human love. Such oversimplification of Rider’s prior behavior and motives for murder ultimately reduces his emotional struggle to insignificance, almost as if it had never existed in the first place. Rider’s initial classification as tragic hero is overshadowed by the deputy’s surface-level report, leaving the white community with the mere image of a “pantaloons” or foolish clown. By including this fringe story in the sequence, Faulkner strikingly underscores the racial tension lurking in all Southern culture (not just isolating the

theme to the McCaslin family); thus, in a manner unparalleled by the sequence's other stories, this particular case of misunderstanding alters readers' entire perception of racial relationships and interactions throughout the book.

Although readers, critics, and editors alike may feel the desire to overlook and remove fringe stories from short story sequences, William Faulkner's "Pantaloons in Black" demonstrates that such disruption in cohesion actually serves an important purpose. By stressing tension and disunity, fringe stories not only mimic the fragmentation and isolation of modern life—making the content more meaningful to audiences—but also highlight the author's underlying messages because surface-level connections become less of a focus. Since "Pantaloons in Black" lacks the overarching presence of the McCaslin family tree, Faulkner is able to extend his commentary and themes to encompass Southern culture as a whole: the display of traditional masculinity actually guides the behavior of both blacks and whites; the notion of black infidelity is rooted in myth rather than reality; the nature of modern existence causes couples to battle emotional sterility; and, even after slavery was abolished, racial conflict and misunderstanding still permeated life in the South. So, despite the fact that we as human beings are naturally drawn to order and continuity—especially as our world seems more chaotic and difficult to comprehend—we cannot ignore how deviation in a fringe story impacts the short story sequence as a whole. As Dallas M. Lemmon explains:

each story, if plucked from the whole, would be able to stand alone and complete, yet the whole would be weakened by the loss of one of its parts—each story, when in its place in the overall sequence, [does] enrich and [is] enriched by the stories around it. (qtd. in Kelley 296)

Hence, by forcing the audience to navigate a variety of voices and perspectives in ways not as easily or immediately tied to the other parts, fringe stories provide a new experience for readers. As an invitation to construct their own network of associations

and personal meaning—hopefully culminating in shared social significance as well—these fringe stories, as Lunden notes, “make us realize . . . the ‘new looseness’ of this form of writing, reflecting the basically disruptive, ‘flowing’ nature of life and the fact that most of us do not ‘know the answers’” (145).

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## Emelye's Objectified Characterization: A Study of Gender Characterization in Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale"

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In Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, "The Knight's Tale" perfectly voices the ideologies of patriarchy and chivalry. Arcite and Palamoun, under the guidance of the rational Duke Theseus, attempt to prove their worth and win the fair Emelye. Yet, for a tale that centers on Emelye, she has surprisingly little to say. Through Emelye's minimally voiced opinions and the emphasis on her idealized physical traits, the Knight makes her more of an object than a real person. Although Emelye does articulate her own words in her prayer to the goddess Diana, the Knight deems her wishes irrelevant as she remains the prize to be won at the end of the tournament. Remaining rooted in the strict ideologies of patriarchy and chivalry, the Knight objectifies Emelye by giving her a voice that projects his own values.

The Knight's objectification of Emelye begins when Palamoun sees her in the garden. There "fairer was [none] to sene" and the Knight cannot decide whether the flowers or Emelye "was the fynere of hem two" (Chaucer 1035, 1039). The Knight's long description of her beauty and her talents, since "as an aungel hevenysshly she soong," idealizes her as a worthy woman for a knight (Chaucer 1055). The Knight also states that Emelye is dressed "freshe" (Chaucer 1048). *The Oxford English Dictionary* reveals that during Chaucer's time, "fresh" denoted a blooming, youthful look that

reveals one's pure and untainted nature; thus, Emelye, "yclodeth" as she is in these "freesh" garments, has a virginal purity (*OED* II. 6.a.; Chaucer 1048). Continually ascribing the word "fresh" to Emelye illustrates that the Knight's energy is spent promoting a woman's virginity, with the assumption that she must want a husband. The Knight's focus on Emelye's physical characteristics, such as her hair, voice, and clothing, makes her an object rather than a subject in the tale. Lilian Bisson states that this tradition of idealizing women "thinly disguises medieval culture's ongoing marginalization of women: it too sets before women a dehumanizing ideal" (204). When the Knight attributes what he sees as a woman's duty to Emelye, he dehumanizes her by characterizing her as a maiden who needs a man rather than as an independent person with her own will.

The entire drive of the tale is predicated on this belief that Emelye wants and needs a husband. One of Palamoun's purposes and goals in life is to marry a worthy woman. Since Emelye is the "perfect" woman, she is clearly the prize to "wynnen" (Chaucer 1486). The whole notion of "winning" Emelye is significant because, here again, she is valued as an object. Winning typically implies force, and, based on the competition between the two brothers and the established tournament, Emelye is more a piece of property "to seize, capture, [or] take as spoil" than a woman with her own will (*OED* 5.b.). Peggy Knapp expands this notion by describing how the Knight's patriarchal discourse presupposes a world in which men compete and women are awarded as prizes. "Neither" Palamoun nor Arcite, Knapp states, "prays that he will win her love, merely the possession of her" (23). The Knight recounts no evidence within the tale of Palamoun or Arcite wooing her; it is taken for granted that Emelye will simply obey. Through this rigid discourse, the Knight objectifies Emelye by making her solely the reward of a challenge.

The Knight's chivalric assumptions are made explicit in part three when the audience presumably hears Emelye's voice. In her

prayer to the goddess Diana, Emelye says,  
 I desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,  
 ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.  
 I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye,  
 A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,  
 And for to walken in the wodes wilde,  
 And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe. (Chaucer 2305-10)

By desiring to remain a virgin and hunt in the woods, Emelye goes against what the Knight envisions for her. The Knight believes that women want marriage and cannot logically expect anything else. While Emelye recognizes this cultural expectation, she stills prays for freedom from this obligation.

The clash between Emelye's wishes and the Knight's cultural values poses a problem for the Knight. Since the Knight cannot possibly grant her wishes without rejecting the values he upholds, he clearly disregards her prayer. Yet the way the Knight does this is clever. Not wanting to appear insensitive and unfeeling towards women's desires, he lets the goddess Diana appear in the scene to articulate the refusal instead. Diana tells Emelye "thou shalt ben wedded unto oon of tho" (Chaucer 2351). This decision is justified by the "aventure of love" (Chaucer 2357). "Adventure," *The Oxford English Dictionary* explains, happens by chance or fortune; Diana thus reflects and solidifies medieval patriarchal values through her words (*OED* I. 1.). The fact that Diana justifies the same value the Knight does later in the tale, when Arcite wins the tournament by "his fortune," shows how her female voice is presented through the ideological views of the Knight (Chaucer 2559). In this case, the speaker Diana's words actually come from the voice of the Knight, a strategy called "ventriloquism." By using Diana to express his refusal, he objectifies Diana as well.

Diana is not the only female the Knight speaks for, however, because even Emelye's words in this scene are tinged with the Knight's biases. Emelye's prayer for maidenhood is made with

a significant qualification. She tells Diana that if she absolutely must marry to “sende me hym that moost desireth me” (Chaucer 2325). Yet, after Diana speaks and vanishes, “Emelye astoned was” (Chaucer 2360). Her distress at receiving an unsatisfactory answer is further expressed by what she says: “What amounteth this, allas? / I putte me in thy proteccioun” (Chaucer 2361-62). Emelye’s dashed hope contradicts the qualification she makes earlier, in which she shows her reluctant acceptance of the role of wife. This incongruity causes tension that the Knight again resolves through his ideological view. Just as he speaks for Diana he speaks for Emelye, blending what he imagines a woman might say with what he wants a woman to say. The Knight, always trying to escape blame for rejecting a woman’s wishes, adds the clause about Emelye wanting to marry the one that loves her the most in order to make it appear as though Emelye accepts this role herself. The tension between her qualification, which arguably displays her cultural awareness, and her reaction upon leaving the temple calls into question the truth of her words. Based on Emelye’s characterization throughout the tale, the Knight is the one who projects societal burdens on her. Although some, like Knapp, may argue that the Knight gives her a voice, and thus a sense of power (106), in actuality Emelye’s words reflect the ideals and the agenda of the Knight.

The Knight’s use of predication is clearly seen in Emelye’s expression of grief over Arcite. Her response to Arcite’s death—a “shrigthe” (shriek)—reflects that of a widow even though Arcite dies before there is any time for a wedding (Chaucer 2817). Her thoughts and feelings are never articulated because the Knight narrates the rest of the tale, allowing him to dehumanize Emelye by making her into the ideal grieving widow. At the funeral, Emelye is described as “the rewefulleste of al the compaignye” (Chaucer 2886). “Rewefulleste” means the most pitiful. Emelye, then, displays compassion, tenderness, and devout loyalty to Arcite at the funeral (*OED* A. 1-2.). Thus, the Knight presents a character whose immense grief is incongruous with reality. Even though it is

customary for a wife to grieve for her husband, Emelye hardly knew Arcite. He never makes any attempts to woo her or speak to her, nor is she officially married to him. By exaggerating the length and degree of her grief—she is described as having mourned “by processe and by lengthe of ceretyn yeres”—Chaucer points to a grief that is inconsistent with a character who expresses no desire to get married only 500 lines earlier (Chaucer 2967). This exaggeration and ironic twist in Emelye’s behavior supports the notion that the Knight continues to idealize her. Emelye is given no voice in this scene; instead, the Knight predicates a widow’s excessive feelings of grief on Emelye in describing her reaction after Arcite’s death.

After all the broken loyalties, fighting, and death, the Knight finally creates a “happy” ending. Theseus ultimately decides that Palamoun and Emelye should marry. Despite the plausible notion that Emelye is no keener on marriage now than she was before, the Knight asserts happiness on the couple by saying “Nevere was ther no word hem bitwene / of jalousie or any oother teene” (Chaucer 3105-106). What is particularly significant about this ending is the Knight’s focus on Palamoun’s feelings and actions versus Emelye’s. Palamoun is described as “lvyng in blisse, in richnesse, and in heele,” while the Knight only notes that “Emelye hym loveth so tenderly” (Chaucer 3102-103). This brief line about Emelye’s “happiness” continues the Knight’s pattern of, to use Priscilla Martin’s words, “tack[ing Emelye] on as an afterthought” (42). True to the nature of a patriarchal system, the Knight focuses on the male’s feelings of prosperity and happiness, just as he focuses on values of character and worth in his male characterizations. The Knight simply presupposes, because it is a knight’s duty to “honor and protect women,” that Emelye wants and is happy with Palamoun’s protection (Bisson 131). The text lends itself to questions about whether Emelye actually is as happy as the Knight claims she is, especially since she had expressed a desire to remain unmarried. To achieve his own goal of ultimate balance and harmony, the Knight, through objectification, creates a “happy”

ending that is ultimately unsatisfying and forced.

The events and characters within “The Knight’s Tale” are influenced by the Knight’s reliance on the ideologies of patriarchy and chivalry. Even when he grants Emelye the power of speech, her wishes are overruled, as the technique of ventriloquism is employed for both Diana and Emelye. Through his idealization he, as Bisson says, “validate[s] the male power structure” (222). When Emelye’s wishes pose a threat to this system, the Knight refuses her request and takes away her voice. Hope Weismman states, “Of course Emelye’s prayer is not answered, the courting life requires her complete subjugation and requires not only the relinquishing of her body but the elimination of her independent will” (117). In order to reach the ending he ultimately wants, the Knight assumes Emelye’s thoughts and emotions through his narration. Although gender issues are never definitively solved throughout Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*, “The Knight’s Tale” serves as a springboard that allows various other characters to also wrestle with these questions of gender, power, and ideological values.

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## The Juxtaposition of the “Crone and the Coquette”: Exposing the Dangers of Fleshly Attractiveness in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

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*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, like most Arthurian romances, tells the story of a knight who ventures forth on a quest; whether Gawain understands the true nature of his quest seems unlikely, as is evidenced in his dealings with the women of the poem. Lines 942-69 describe the old lady-in-waiting of Sir Bertilak’s castle and the young, beautiful Lady Bertilak, the central women of the poem who Marie Borroff calls “the crone and the coquette” (1317). On a superficial level, the crone seems to function merely as a foil to the beauty of Lady Bertilak. The language and structure of the poem, as well as Gawain’s reaction to the women, leads us to dismiss the ugly old woman as an unimportant player in the narrative. However, at the poem’s end, she is revealed to be Morgan le Fay, a sorceress who enchanted Sir Bertilak to look like the Green Knight “For to assay the surquidre, yif hit soth were / that rennes of the great renoun of the Rounde Table,” or to “put pride on trial, and to test with this trick / what distinction and trust the Round Table deserves” (Armitage 2457-58). She is not an altogether malicious figure; in fact, many critics argue that by testing Gawain’s honor, she helps him to come to a greater realization of himself and that, as Paul Battles claims, “Gawain’s realization of his imperfections makes him wiser and humbler” (10). Morgan, or the ugly old woman, serves an important role in Gawain’s moral progression in the poem, though he does not recognize her role in his quest until the end. I suggest that the lengthy description of the old woman, or Morgan, positions

her as a symbolic manifestation of hidden truth, which counters the beautiful Lady Bertilak as a symbol of false attractiveness. In this way, these female characters expose the difficult, perhaps impossible, task that Gawain undertakes in striving toward moral uprightness in the face of physical temptation.

Gawain leaves King Arthur's court, which is draped in extravagant tapestries "that were enbrawdred and beten with the best gemmes / that might be preved of prys with penyys to bye / in daye" (Armitage 78-80) to meet the Green Knight's challenge. On the way, he encounters Sir Bertilak and becomes a guest in his castle, which is decorated lavishly with "cortynes of clene sylk with cler golde hemmes, / and covertores ful curious with comylch panes / of bright blounmer above enbrawdred bisydes" (Armitage 854-56). Within the castle, Gawain undergoes a test of his honor that is inextricably linked to the Green Knight's challenge. Lady Bertilak tempts him into accepting a green girdle that protects the wearer from harm; as it turns out, accepting and wearing this gift to his encounter with the Green Knight demonstrates an unchivalric, "all too human attachment to his own neck," as Karen Cherawatak observes (3). His drive toward the physical exposes a shameful internal weakness of fear for his own life. However, the poem itself focuses heavily on physical elements: extravagant settings, lavish clothing, and remarkable characters are described in detail. These physical details emphasize the remarkable nature of a person or place. Paradoxically, the poem warns against the dangers of adhering to physical desires while praising the earthly riches and physical beauty.

The poem's language and structure emphasize the beauty of Lady Bertilak and, in doing so, encourage the audience to dismiss the old woman. One way in which the poem does this is by suggesting that the two women are physical opposites and that the reader should perceive them as such from their first introduction into the poem. Soon after the women's introduction, we are told that "unlike on to loke tho ladyes were" (Armitage 950) and that the young woman is

“More lykkerwys on to lyk” or “more toothsome to [Gawain’s] taste” (Armitage 968; Borroff 968). The poem does not need to emphasize that the young lady is more beautiful than the old woman. It is rather obvious to the reader that a young woman would be more attractive to a knight than a wrinkled old woman. Yet the poem compels the reader to compare the two women and leads the reader to believe that Lady Bertilak is more deserving of our attention than the old woman.

Structural elements of the poem—including word order, alliterative syllables, and line order—counterpose the two women against each other. Line 951 reads, “For if the yonge was yep, yolwe was that other” (Armitage). This specific instance of comparison is particularly meaningful, as the key descriptive words, “yep” and “yolwe,” are positioned next to one another. The close proximity of these words serves to emphasize the dramatic difference in their meanings, just as the close proximity of the two women emphasizes the difference in their appearances. The juxtaposition of these two words is further emphasized by the fact that they form the alliteration of that line, a key element of the alliterative poem’s structure. Even the structure of the poem’s alliteration invites the reader to focus on Lady Bertilak. The part of line 951 which describes her is more important structurally than the part which describes the old woman. “For if the yonge was yep” features two alliterative sounds, while “yolwe was that other” features only one. The structure of line 951 positions the two women against each other and de-emphasizes the old woman by lending more alliterative importance to the words describing the young woman.

This deliberate pitting of opposites against each other exists in a wider view of the poem’s structure, as the narrator alternates back and forth between descriptions of each woman. Lines 943-45, 952, 954-56, and 968-69 describe the young woman, while lines 947-49, 953 and 957-67 focus on the “beldame” (Borroff 964). This oscillation of focus between the women emphasizes the differences in their physical appearances. This series of descriptive

moments invites us, like Gawain, to admire the young lady's physical attractiveness and dismiss the old woman by ending with the comment. These poetic techniques invite the reader to participate in Gawain's confusion on his quest. Like Gawain, we are drawn to focus heavily on the beautiful young lady. Also like Gawain, we are led to foolishly dismiss the old woman as unimportant.

While physical differences of the woman appear to be the central theme of the descriptive passage, the social statuses of the women are also articulated. However, the terms referring to the non-physical natures of each lady do not seem very consequential until the poem's end, when Morgan le Fay and Sir Bertilak's deception is revealed. Only then can we understand that, like Gawain, we have been beguiled by the young woman's beauty. The seemingly dismissible old woman turns out to be the figure which we, and Gawain, should have been watching all along.

The poem leads us to focus on the young lady's beauty while we should be focusing on the role of the old woman in the story. This deception is often heightened by certain translations, which can convolute the poem's message even further. Borroff's translation of the characterization of the old woman seems less complimentary than it should be: though she is "held high in honor by all men about" (949), Borroff also calls her "beldame . . . of pride" (964-65). Modern connotations of the word "beldame" do not seem to fit the revered stature of the old woman, whether she has pride or not. She is "a mensk lady," according to the *Gawain* poet, which Armitage translates as "a grand old mother, a matriarch she might be hailed" (Armitage 964, 964-65). Armitage's translation seems more appropriate than Borroff's at this point. The old woman appears to be a highly honored woman. The young Lady Bertilak, though she is the lady of the castle, does not seem to be as honored or respected. Gawain seems to notice only her beauty and her engaging disposition. She is described as "that gay that graciously looked" (970), which Armitage translates as "the gracious-looking woman" (970) and which Borroff translates as "that gay lady" (970). These

translations do seem to encapsulate the manner in which Gawain perceives the young woman. She is beautiful and engaging, whereas the old woman is dignified and worthy of honor. This foreshadows the importance of the old woman in the story—she is Morgan le Fay, a highly powerful and important character who helps to teach Gawain an important lesson.

If the poem's structure serves to counterpose the women against each other, the language of the poem places Gawain in a figurative, as well as physical, place between them. This positioning suggests that he will ultimately have to make a choice between the values that they symbolize: physical attractiveness (which is represented by Lady Bertilak) or moral truth (represented by Morgan le Fay). The first instance of Gawain being placed between the women occurs after the two women enter the feast and Gawain has made his appraisal of their appearances. He greets the two women courteously and “*thay tan hym bytwene hem*” (Armitage 977, emphasis added). He is again referred to as being between them after he rejects the young lady's overtures for the first time, emerges from the bedchamber, attends mass, and meets the ladies in the feasting hall. He spends such an enjoyable time with the two women that “*was never freke fayrer fonge / bitwene two so dyngne dame*” (Armitage 1316, emphasis added). Both literally and figuratively, Gawain is being positioned between two options. He will ultimately have to decide which is more valuable to him: what is gay and attractive to the flesh or what is honorable but unattractive to the flesh.

He eventually chooses flesh over honor by accepting the magical green girdle from the beautiful lady and not returning it to her husband. He goes to challenge Morgan's Green Knight with the girdle when he should have given it to Sir Bertilak as the rules of the Exchange Game dictate. There are several elements of the poem which foreshadow Gawain's choice. During his first feast at Sir Bertilak's castle, Gawain appears to enjoy the company of both women equally, bowing low for the old woman and embracing the young (972-76). He appears, at this moment, to appreciate both

women appropriately by treating them as a man of chivalry would be expected. However, at the next day's Christmas feast, "the olde auncian wyf highest ho syttes," or "the ancient elder sat highest at the table" while Gawain sits away from her and attends specially on the young woman (Armitage 1001). Gawain has drifted from the company of the respected old woman in favor of the gay young lady. The old woman's status as an elder in an honored position at the table marks her as being worthy of attention, which foreshadows her disclosure as Morgan le Fay. As she is a figure of wisdom, Gawain would have done well to partake in her company.

Instead, he talks intimately with the young woman, "the wale burde" (1010), which Borroff translates as "noble lady" (1010) and Armitage translates as "beautiful woman" (1010). According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, these translations are not wholly representative of *wale's* original meaning. I suggest that *wale*, as used in line 1010, would be better translated as "choice" or "select," because these words provide for two connotations, one of which both Borroff and Armitage have excluded (seemingly for the purpose of alliteration). The young lady is choice, being lovely and desirable, but is also *Gawain's* choice or selection of company. The placement of the term *wale* at this point seems to suggest that Gawain has made a choice to engage specifically in the young lady's company. Long before he is confronted with the dilemma of whether to retain the Lady's secret gift of the green girdle, Gawain's tendency toward the physical is exposed. Granted, this weakness does not appear to have any dire consequences. Only after his confrontation with the Green Knight and his public humiliation is Gawain's preference for the young lady exposed as a sign of inner weakness.

Derek Pearsall points out that Gawain is prone to physical comforts throughout the entire poem. Pearsall writes:

It was winter that troubled him most on his journey north, we are told, in a sympathetically reductive aside (726), not the routines of battle . . . and there is a similar generosity to

young blood in the picture of Gawain luxuriating in the new comfort of his unexpected Christmas quarters, or, flushed with wine after the privations of his journey, pursuing the young chatelaine a little too eagerly into the chapel (935-6). (554)

Gawain does indeed appear to appreciate physical comforts; however, just as his preference for Lady Bertilak's company does not initially seem to hide any sinister consequences, this appreciation does not seem harmful at first. After all, Gawain comes from the lavish court of King Arthur to the luxurious castle of Sir Bertilak, settings which are dominated by physical extravagance. Gawain may have some weakness for such extravagance, but it is not until he encounters the lovely Lady Bertilak that this weakness poses a potential threat to his honor. The bedroom temptations themselves are not too worrisome; I agree with Pearsall when he states, "I take it that no-one, inside the poem or out, ever thought for more than a moment that Gawain would succumb" (554). Gawain's weakness for the physical does not appear to be harmful until he secretly keeps the green girdle, thereby breaking the rules of the Exchange Game and falling short of honorable, chivalric values.

Gawain's weakness for the physical has further ramifications on the entire poem. The visual aspects of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are an integral part of the story; however, it seems that the emphasis on the beauty of Lady Bertilak contrasted with the ugliness of Morgan le Fay in disguise adds a caveat to this poem's overall focus on physical appearance. The poem contradicts its own emphasis on beauty. For example, the sartorial elements of the poem lend vivid imagery to the reader's mind, as in the passage when Gawain arms himself to face the Green Knight. He winds the green silk girdle around his waist and dons his coat with a badge which is "Ennurned upon velvet, vertuus stones / Aboute beten and bounden, enbrauded semes / And fayre furred withinne with fayre pelures" (Armitage 2027-29). The poem itself sparkles with bright, colorful descriptions of clothing, fabulous feasts, beautiful women,

and dramatic natural settings which contribute to the poem's readability and are certainly a reason for the poem's long-lasting popularity. Luxurious settings and detail enhance the reader's sensory experience of the poem. However, the way in which the poem presents Lady Bertilak and the disguised Morgan le Fay communicates a warning about the value of temporal beauty, a message that pervades the entire poem.

The poem markedly opens and closes with images of the great, fallen city of Troy, which further complicates the relationship between material riches and moral uprightness. Even though the poem goes on to hail the greatness and glory of Rome, Britain, and Arthur's court, these descriptions are seated in the memory of Troy's destruction. The fall of Troy provides context for the founding of Rome, Britain, and Camelot. The poem also closes with a reminder of Troy's downfall (2525-26), bringing the poem's message full circle. The poem is framed within these images of destruction of a great, rich city, suggesting that physical, earthly prestige is temporary. However, the poem clearly praises the greatness of cities like Troy and Rome. There is not one clear message that claims physical power or beauty is immoral; the poem both praises physical attractiveness and suggests that it can be ultimately unsatisfactory.

This subtle warning against the over-valuing of physical, earthly desirability pervades the entire poem. The old woman, ugly but secretly one of the poem's most important figures, is set opposite the beautiful Lady Bertilak. Their contrasting appearances expose Gawain's preference for the physical, foreshadowing his choice to retain the green girdle through dishonest means. Physical attractiveness seems to be a reprehensible force within the poem, as it leads to Gawain's dishonesty. However, details of riches and beauty are heavily emphasized throughout the work. Lavish clothing, rich food, and luxurious settings pervade the poem. The poem seems to contradict its own warning in savoring the very physical attractions that it warns against. The search for a cohesive message about the value of physical attractiveness in *Sir Gawain and the Green*

*Knight* proves to be in vain; however, in our inability to discover a universal truth, we experience the plight of Gawain as he, too, searches for true moral uprightness.

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# “Touching a Secret Spring”: Catherine’s Sexual Awakening in Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*

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Among the criticism on Jane Austen’s novels, *Northanger Abbey* is one that is less-critiqued. Still, it has received reasonable attention. The novel as a Gothic satire has sparked discussion about genre, style, and the use of language within the text among such scholars as Natasha Duquette, Richard Lansdown, Mark Loveridge, and Narelle Shaw, whereas Barbara Benedict, Maria Jerinic, and Susan Zlotnick have found the novel’s emphasis on reading—whether it be books, people, or oneself—to be a significant source of criticism. However, scholars have made little effort to examine *Northanger Abbey* from a psychoanalytic perspective, and it is curious as to why.

In her essay “Jane Austen and Psychological Realism: ‘What Does a Woman Want?’” Gloria Sybil Gross asserts that in Austen’s major novels we the readers “are led to discover the pattern of an inward life, that is, the heroine’s deeply suppressed unconscious wishes projected upon external reality” (29). Yet, despite its “psychological features,” which she acknowledges in an endnote, Gross excludes *Northanger Abbey* from the list “in view of its chiefly parodical intent” (33). In spite of its parodic elements, however, the novel should not be excluded from psychoanalytic criticism. Instead, applying a psychoanalytic perspective to the novel illustrates how the text’s Gothic features and Austen’s parody of them reveal Catherine Morland as a young woman with unconscious sexual desires and allow her to explore and become comfortable with her

own sexuality.

According to Stephen Derry in his brief psychoanalytic account of the text, “*Northanger Abbey* is concerned with Catherine Morland’s process of maturation, which includes the awakening of her sexuality” (49). There is no doubt of the novel’s concern with Catherine’s developing maturity, as it is a coming of age story, and that it includes a sexual awakening is no great stretch of the imagination in light of the text’s Gothic elements. Scholar Cynthia Griffin Wolff describes “the Gothic tale” as that which “reinforces a woman’s sense of herself as an essentially sexual creature, something that society has often been at pains to deny” (99). Furthermore, Eleanor Ty, in her essay on *Northanger Abbey*, is convinced “that Gothic heroines are bodies who desire” and “want the world of the abbey to contain more than what meets the eye” (258). With these thoughts in mind, Catherine’s relationship to the Gothic can be explored in greater detail.

Catherine’s obsessive desire to explore castles and create mysteries, as well as her avid reading of Gothic novels—particularly Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*—seems to be her attempt at placing herself within a Gothic context. Catherine does, in fact, have experiences that align with the Gothic, although they are not quite so romantic. The scene in which Catherine is riding to Clifton in the carriage with John Thorpe is a prime example. When Catherine sees Henry Tilney and his sister Eleanor walking down the street as the carriage drives by, she becomes aware that John Thorpe has lied to her about the Tilney’s disregarding their plans with her. She demands that Thorpe stop the carriage, but he “only lashed his horse into a brisker trot” (Austen 80). Upon her continual pleadings, “Mr. Thorpe only laughed, smacked his whip, encouraged his horse, made odd noises, and drove on; and Catherine . . . having no power of getting away, was obliged to give up the point and submit” (80). This scene parallels the typical kidnapping scene of the Gothic novel; yet, the reality of it is not as dangerous as it would be in one of Catherine’s novels. Additionally,

she is not scared by the incident, but rather extraordinarily vexed.

Despite the lack of romance between Catherine's fiction and reality, she continues to seek and succumb to Gothic ideas which act as an outlet for her unconscious sexuality. The interplay between the Gothic and Catherine's sexuality is encouraged by Henry. Austen scholar Juliet McMaster discusses Henry's role as Catherine's mentor: "He puts her on the track of finding things out for herself, *about* herself, and so learning to articulate her self to the world" (220, emphasis in original). In the same way, Henry helps Catherine explore her own sexuality by using the Gothic as a figurative tool for representing sexuality. Such is the case as Henry playfully creates Gothic expectations about Northanger Abbey for Catherine as they travel there.

This scene parallels, though more positively, the previous carriage scene as Catherine—upon General Tilney's suggestion—rides with Henry in his curricle to Northanger Abbey. Catherine is aware of the sexual implications involved here as she remembers her guardian's "opinion, respecting young men's open carriages" and how it "made her blush" (Austen 146). However, Catherine justifies the situation out of "greater deference for General Tilney's judgment" and "found herself with Henry in the curricle, as happy a being as ever existed" (146). Catherine's happiness at riding alone with Henry, despite her awareness of its potential inappropriateness, conveys a sexual interest within Catherine. This sexual tension sets the groundwork for a Freudian interpretation of the Gothic fiction Henry relates in this scene.

Henry begins his tale upon hearing Catherine's excitement about visiting the abbey, which she imagines to be "just like what one reads about" (147). He asks her: "Are you prepared to encounter all the horrors that a building such as 'what one reads about' may produce?" (148). Catherine's affirmation is rationalized by the fact that the abbey "has never been uninhabited," which can be read symbolically (148). Psychoanalytic scholars Norman N. Holland and Leona F. Sherman explain that within Gothic literature, "The

castle delineates a physical space which will accept many different projections of unconscious material” (282). Therefore, the sexual representation of this scene is reinforced by viewing the abbey as a yonic symbol. From this perspective, Catherine is exhibiting an interest in sexual fulfillment and expressing a fear of an empty or “uninhabited” vagina. Henry encourages her interest by telling her, “We shall not have to explore our way into a hall dimly lighted by the expiring embers of a wood fire—nor be obliged to spread our beds on the floor of a room without windows, doors, or furniture” (Austen 148). The dimly lit hall is representative of limited sexual knowledge, and the empty room parallels the “uninhabited” abbey in meaning. These symbols of virginity are portrayed as something undesirable rather than something to aspire to and as such positively promote the idea of female sexuality, particularly Catherine’s sexuality.

Catherine, with apparent interest, encourages Henry to continue the conversation and he obliges, giving a Gothic account of what Catherine will encounter at the abbey. In this scene, Henry’s description is fraught with sexual innuendo:

After surmounting your *unconquerable* horror of the bed, you will retire to rest, and get a few hours’ unquiet slumber. But on the second, or at farthest the *third* night after your arrival, you will probably have a violent storm. Peals of thunder so loud as to seem to shake the edifice to its foundation will roll round the neighbouring mountains. (149, emphasis in original)

The “*unconquerable* horror of the bed” undeniably parallels a fear sexual intercourse, and Catherine’s “surmounting” of such a horror is indicative of her conquering her sexual inhibitions—which has already been indicated (149). Furthermore, on subsequent nights after her initial “arrival,” she is likely to have a “violent storm” (149). In other words, after having her first orgasm Catherine will become more comfortable with her sexuality, to the point of having multiple orgasms. The storm is further described as producing “peals of

thunder,” which might also be interpreted as screams of pleasure (149). It should be noted that Henry employs the word “you” here instead of “we,” thus placing emphasis on Catherine’s (sexual) experience.

The message is clear; however, Henry does not stop there. He tells how during these events Catherine will be unable to “repress [her] curiosity in so favourable a moment for indulging it” and “proceed to examine this mystery” (149). He describes how, acting on such curiosity, Catherine “will discover a division in the tapestry so artfully constructed as to defy the minutest inspection, and on opening it, a door will immediately appear” (149). The imagery in this description is unmistakably comparable to a vagina. By successfully opening the door and walking through it, which she will do according to Henry’s story, Catherine becomes fully aware of her body and its inherent sexuality (149). Taking it to the next level, Henry describes Catherine’s exit as she “repasses” through the room: “Your eyes will be attracted towards a large, old-fashioned cabinet of ebony and gold. . . . Impelled by an irresistible presentiment, you will eagerly advance to it, unlock its folding doors, and search into every drawer” after which, “by touching a secret spring, an inner compartment will open” (150). Here the cabinet functions as yet another yonic symbol, the “secret spring” represents the clitoris, and Catherine’s unlocking of its doors and searching through the drawers serves as a metaphor for female masturbation. In relating this instance to Catherine, Henry encourages her to explore herself while also conveying the idea that she does not need to rely on a man in order to exercise her sexual desires.

Although the sexual aspects of this passage rely heavily on interpretation, it is not difficult to see the parallels that produce such a reading. This is especially the case when taking the Freudian concept of the unconscious into consideration. In his book *Literary Criticism*, Charles E. Bressler discusses Freud’s concept: “Freud believed that the unconscious houses humanity’s two basic instincts: eros, or the sexual instinct . . . and the destructive

or aggressive instinct” (144). Freud viewed the unconscious as holding “the repressed hungers, images, thoughts, and desires of human nature” (Bressler 145). If the conversation between Henry and Catherine is derivative of the unconscious, which a lack of explicit sexual dialogue demands it must be, then the Gothic features of the conversation can be interpreted as sexual in nature. Furthermore, Catherine’s obsession with the Gothic can be seen as an unconscious preoccupation with sexual desires.

However, in contrast to Henry’s romantic fiction, once Catherine arrives at the abbey no such Gothic fantasies are fulfilled. Henry’s fiction has seemingly raised her already fervent yearning for Gothic adventure, as she begins looking for a mystery within the first twenty minutes of being at the abbey (Austen 154). Ty notes that “Once inside the boundaries of the castle, [Gothic heroines] reveal their desire for adventure, and their wish to experience what lies beyond their reach” (256). Catherine’s novels have certainly provided her with this knowledge, and she acts accordingly. Catherine’s heightened sexuality, though unconscious, motivates her to seek the Gothic romance that will fulfill her desires, but she will not find it.

*Northanger Abbey* is not a Gothic novel; it is a parody of a Gothic novel, and Catherine’s fruitless anticipations of mystery illustrate that point. Although she is continually disappointed in her hopes to become a type of Gothic heroine, Catherine is better off than the protagonists she reads about. The novels Catherine reads are laden with dangers and warnings towards women, as is typical of the genre. For example, Wolff writes of Gothic literature: “Danger is palpably equated in these fictions with a specialized form of ‘inner space’; and if the heroine can manage to stay away from the treacherous cave—tunnel, basement, secret room—she will usually be safe”; furthermore, “the overtly sexual implications of this recurrent situation are inescapable, even in eighteenth-century Gothic fiction” (100). Moreover, Holland and Sherman show that “A gothic novel combines the heroine’s fantasies about the castle with her fears that

her body will be violated” since “the castle threatens shame, agony, annihilation—and desire” (281-82). If Catherine were in a Gothic novel she would have been in serious danger when John Thorpe rode off in the carriage with her, and would have been kidnapped or even raped. There is no doubt sexuality is present in Gothic novels, but it functions as a warning to women more than anything else.

By parodying the Gothic genre, Austen is able to use the sexual implications it possesses and reverse their negative connotations to positive ones. Austen exposes the supernatural, the melodrama, and the romance of Gothic novels as fiction, and despite Catherine’s pursuit of Gothic adventure, even in a Gothic abbey, she is repeatedly forced to learn that it is fantasy and not reality. Despite this satirical representation of the Gothic, borrowing its elements allows Austen to create Catherine’s sexual unconscious and provide the means by which Henry can encourage Catherine’s sexual development. Furthermore, Catherine’s marriage to Henry at the novel’s close, which is appropriately condensed to avoid romanticism, puts her in a real relationship with a partner who has already proved to respect and support her womanhood.

Without parody, Catherine would be subject to the dangers and reprimands of sexuality typical of her contemporary society. With parody, however, she is able to experience a sexual awakening that correlates with her coming of age in a supportive and positive environment. Ultimately, parody exposes fantasy as something less desirable than reality. Sexuality within the Gothic is dangerous, but in Catherine’s reality it is natural, positive, and encouraged. Perhaps Austen was aware of the sexual implications at work in this novel, or perhaps they derived from her own unconscious; in either regard, Austen has made a major contribution to the canon by creating a nineteenth-century female character that is undeniably a sexual being.

The variation of this interpretation of *Northanger Abbey* from existing criticism illustrates Austen’s applicability across literary theories. While the existing criticism offers interesting and insightful

views of the text, it should be remembered that Austen's work is not confined to specific theories. Rather, her work exhibits enough depth to span theories, and criticism on Austen's novels should reflect that complexity. For if the possibilities of interpretation are limited, Austen's brilliance is not being fully appreciated.

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## “With a Heart as Willing”: Service, Reciprocity, and Volitional Primacy in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*

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It has become common practice to read a Shakespearean play depicting master-servant relationships, such as *The Tempest*, through a post-colonial lens as being an expression of patriarchal hegemony, a text that glorifies or at the very least supports the British colonization of territories abroad. However, in embracing this view alone one tends to overlook the many positive expressions of service that occur throughout the text. Furthermore, the post-colonial reading does not take into account the way in which Shakespeare’s own audience perceived master-servant relationships, for our modern interpretation of servitude differs vastly from views on the same subject in Shakespeare’s England. Thus, to gain a real understanding of characters in *The Tempest*, one must bear in mind the ethical and religious dimensions of service in Shakespeare’s time, especially the Protestant ideal of “perfect freedom in service.” By considering the moral/theological views of Shakespeare’s intended audience, the relationships between Ferdinand, Miranda, Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban become more dynamic and meaningful, since those who had previously been perceived as victims then become active agents with the ability to make their bondage into perfect freedom by willingly embracing it.

To begin, we must establish an understanding of the Protestant ideal of “perfect freedom in service” that was so popular in Elizabethan England, and determine whether Shakespeare would have found it important enough to imbed within his plays. In

Shakespeare's England, Christians at every level of society subscribed to the paradoxical model of service in which the only true freedom that anyone could ever hope to attain was offered through service to others (Evelt 1). This applied to everyone, from the lowliest slave to the greatest king, since all people were servants of one kind or another regardless of class. Noble people served in the household of lords and kings, and even kings were servants to God (Schalkwyk, Review 97). The social concept of servitude was indelibly linked to the Christian one, because just as all people were socially in a position of servitude to someone else, all Christians were considered to be servants to God and, through the commandment to "love thy neighbor," were also servants to one another (Schalkwyk, "Between Historicism and Presentism" 13). For this reason, in writing his 1549 version of the Anglican Prayer Book, Thomas Cranmer moved the paradox of service from its original place in the occasionally invoked *missa pro pace* in the Sacramentary of Gregory the Great to where it would be said every day in the Collect for Peace of the Morning Prayer. Cranmer's version of the Collect for Peace is as follows:

O God, which art author of peace, and lover of concorde, in knowledge of whome standeth oure eternall life, whose *service is perfect freedom*: defende us, thy humble seruantes, in al assaultes of our enemies, that wee surely trusting in thy defence, maye not feare the power of any adversaries: through the might of Jesu Christ our lorde. Amen. (qtd. in Evelt 2, emphasis added)

The Collect emphasizes the importance of servants and obedience in a Christian sense, and furthermore "invoked and enacted the motives of love and sacrifice that [made] social life not only possible but also desirable" (Evelt 2). Thus it becomes clear that Shakespeare wrote for a society in which "legal subordination and marginality must have made [the idea of perfect freedom in service] very appealing" (Evelt 15). There is no doubting the significance of the concept of service in Shakespeare's mind, since it is a theme

that constantly appears throughout his plays, from *The Taming of the Shrew*, to *Othello*, to *Antony and Cleopatra*, to *The Tempest*. In fact, Shakespearean critic David Schalkwyk declares that *The Tempest* could “without exaggeration” be called “an allegory of service” (“Between Historicism and Presentism” 10).

So, Cranmer’s Collect for Peace ingrained English society with the idea that by embracing the position into which God has placed one, and by serving with a willing heart, one will find perfect peace and freedom. The capacity to choose to serve and transmute bondage into bliss therefore makes any servant an active agent, and it is this ability that Shakespearean critic David Evett refers to as “volitional primacy.” In his review of Evett’s *Discourses of Service in Shakespeare’s England*, Schalkwyk notes that the beauty of volitional primacy lies in the way that it allows audiences “to focus on satisfaction and to recognize the servants in Shakespeare as ethical agents rather than ideological victims” (97). In light of volitional primacy, the characters of *The Tempest* who play the roles of servants cease to be victims of tyranny and instead become active agents with the capacity to live in perfect freedom if they so choose. This is a theme that would have been appealing to the audiences of Shakespeare’s theatre, considering the fact that, as we have established, everyone in Renaissance England was a servant in one sense or another.

Shakespeare manifests the volitional primacy necessary for “perfect freedom in service” through the relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda, making the couple an example of “willing and generous service, right service” (Evett 210). Ferdinand, who believes that he has inherited the crown of Naples due to his father’s alleged death, chooses to forsake his royal title and perform menial service to Prospero’s house. He freely lays aside his sword and crown to gather wood, because to do so allows him to be in Miranda’s blessed presence, which makes his slavery no bondage at all, but rather perfect freedom. He professes:

Might I but through my prison once a day

Behold this maid: all corners else o' the earth  
 Let liberty make use of; space enough  
 Have I in such a prison. (1.2.494-97)

In voluntarily performing his labors and embracing his service to Miranda, Ferdinand's degradation from king to slave transforms something humiliating into something noble; the service becomes that which the chivalric lover owes to his lady, which is but another form of the "perfect freedom in service" mentioned in *The Book of Common Prayer* (Neill 41). However, Ferdinand goes beyond claiming that service to Miranda gives him perfect freedom—he goes so far as to declare that there is no life *without* service to her, for "The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead, / And makes my labours pleasures" (3.1.6-7). In other words, Ferdinand suggests that the Protestant ideal of service is not only what makes life bearable, but that it is what makes life worth living.

Miranda likewise freely chooses service on behalf of her lover, and lowers herself from a position of mastery over Ferdinand to sharing his burden. Shalkwyk points out that she "reciprocates [his] feeling totally . . . and each pledges their freely given love to each other precisely in terms of a willing slavery or service which, given the circumstances, renders materially concrete the literary vows of servile devotion in [courtly love]" ("Between Historicism and Presentism" 14). What could have been a tyrannical command over a slave instead becomes mutual service to one another, a reciprocity between the two that blurs who is truly the master and who is the servant. This is made clear in the lovers' shared declaration of service:

*Ferdinand.* Hear my soul speak.  
 The very instant that I saw you did  
 My heart fly to your service; there resides  
 To make me slave to it. And for your sake  
 Am I this patient log-man.

.....

*Miranda.* . . . I am your wife, if you will marry me;

You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,  
Whether you will or no.

*Ferdinand.* My mistress, dearest;  
And I thus humble ever.

*Miranda.* My husband, then?

*Ferdinand.* Ay, with a heart as willing  
As bondage e'er of freedom: here's my hand.  
(3.1.63-67, 83-89)

This emphasis on mutual bondage is carried into the masque that Prospero hosts to celebrate the couple's betrothal, which is fraught with words evocative of labor. For instance, when Ceres' song blesses the betrothed couple with fertility, it includes the benison of "Plants with goodly *burden* bowing" (4.1.113, emphasis added), connecting "burden" (linked to the idea of service) with the "bowing" (literally the obeisance) of the branches (Neill 44). Evett notes that the masque's images of harvest and gardening insinuate that "the good things of this world sometimes come unsought, but must usually be gained and must always be sustained by labor—by service" (204). Thus the couple's relationship is commenced by and flourishes under mutual service as an illustration of the Protestant ideal.

While Miranda and Ferdinand are an example of "perfect freedom in service," we have another kind of servant in the sprite Ariel. Ariel does not welcome his bondage to Prospero, but he and the mage have a mutual agreement that both sides respect. Thus, Prospero needs only to remind Ariel of the letter of their bond to control Ariel's antipathy:

*Prospero.* How now? Moody?  
What is't thou canst demand?  
*Ariel.* My liberty.  
*Prospero.* Before the time be out? No more!

.....  
*Ariel.* Pardon, master.  
I will be correspondent to command,

And do my spriting gently.

*Prospero.* Do so, and after two days

I will discharge thee. (1.2.245-48, 99-302)

Ariel must serve a full twelve years plus a thirteenth to earn his freedom, or else return to the confinement in which Prospero first found him. Even if Ariel has been relieved of the extra year because of good behavior, Prospero requires that Ariel work to fullest extent of his twelfth year as per their bargain, and the agreement is enough to keep Ariel obedient, no matter how the sprite might grumble. So the relationship may appear shaky, but is in fact stabilized by its mutuality (Shalkwyk, “Between Historicism and Presentism” 12).

Caliban, on the other hand, is a servant whose resentment of his unreciprocated service inevitably leads to resistance and dissention. Unlike Ariel, Caliban does not have a mutual agreement with his master, and so, with no real reason to comply with Prospero’s demands, Caliban is kept under control only through Prospero’s threat of physical violence: “If thou neglect’st, or dost unwillingly / What I command, I’ll rack thee with old cramps, / Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar” (1.2.371-74). Prospero also employs the equally crude method of captivity: “therefore wast thou / Deservedly confined into this rock, / Who hadst deserved more than a prison” (1.2.363-65). As Schalkwyk observes, the bonds “which have a reciprocal ethical dimension” in Prospero’s relationship with Ariel are for Caliban “replaced by bondage (which has none)” (“Between Historicism and Presentism” 12). The lack of mutuality and reciprocity within the master-servant relationship causes it to be not only unenjoyable, but also fundamentally flawed and subject to breakdown, whereas Ariel’s similar relationship with Prospero is not.

Because the only way to control this unwilling servant is through physical means, it also changes the nature of the services that Caliban can do for Prospero. While Ariel is “a kind of all-purpose upper servant, analogous to, though more powerful than, Gonzalo,” with “substantial freedom of movement and action,” Caliban cannot be trusted with unrestricted agency, and thus is a slave in

the basest sense (Evetts 191). He does only the most degrading and menial labors. Prospero describes: “He does make our fire, / Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices / That profit us” (1.2.314-16).

In other words, Caliban is treated not as an English servant, but as something like the New World slaves. However, Shakespeare’s audience would have believed that it was Caliban’s own choice to be treated in this manner. Evetts notes that Caliban embodies virtually every undesirable trait that could exist in an English servant, and that “few English masters would have tolerated for long . . . a servant who, like Caliban, resisted every order, did his work only under compulsion, and returned curse for curse” (192). In the ideology of Shakespeare’s England, Caliban is the kind of servant who *deserves* the maltreatment that he gets, because it is the responsibility of the servant to willingly obey the master and thereby make his bondage into perfect freedom. Therefore, through his resistance, Caliban creates his own Hell.

Yet the lack of reciprocity in Prospero and Caliban’s master-servant relationship cannot be blamed solely on Caliban. One cannot help but argue that Caliban resists Prospero’s commands because he is forced into a relationship in which there is no mutual regard and in which he receives nothing at all in return for his service. The fault then seems to lie not with the unruly servant, but with the unsatisfactory master. Schalkwyk points out that “in both the Protestant conduct books and in Shakespeare’s work the discovery of perfect freedom through service occurs only when the service shades into love” (Review 98). Thus a kind of mutuality or reciprocity is as important as one’s willingness to service, as we see in the relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda. One must accordingly examine Caliban’s relationship with Prospero to see when, if ever, Caliban’s service “shaded into love”—and it may come as a surprise that in the beginning, it had. Caliban showed Prospero the secrets of the isle, and Prospero taught Caliban language:

When thou cam’st first,

Thou wouldst strok’st me and made much of me; wouldst give

me

Water with berries in't, and teach me how  
 To name the bigger light and how the less,  
 That burn by day and night; and then I loved thee,  
 And showed thee all the qualities o'th'isle,  
 The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile. . . .  
 (1.2.332-38)

This reciprocity fails somewhere along the way, and it becomes only Caliban exerting any effort on behalf of his partner in the relationship. Critic Melissa E. Sanchez notices that “the two men agree on the general outline of the story—mutual service turned to tyranny and slavery—but each blames the other for betraying the initial bond” (61). Now, Caliban uses Prospero’s gift to curse him, and Prospero tortures and imprisons Caliban. The native is reduced to a slave and receives nothing for his pains except for momentary cessation of that pain.

By the end of the play, however, Caliban seems to be reformed, and he takes his place as a proper English servant rather than a slave. Having left Prospero for an even more degrading relationship with Trinculo and Stefano, Caliban ultimately returns to his former master a humbled man and now gladly obeys Prospero’s commands: “Ay, that I will; and I’ll be wise hereafter, / And seek for grace” (5.1.298-99). Caliban has realized his own foolishness and resolved “to change his ways . . . in terms that invoke the theological context of good service” (Evelt 200). By recognizing that he cannot change his role, but *can* change how he chooses to play it, Caliban is finally able to embrace his servitude and gain the perfect freedom that we have already witnessed in Ferdinand and Miranda’s relationship (Evelt 185). After all, the question was never whether Caliban could escape his subjugation, for he was a serf even in the company of Stefano and Trinculo; the matter of contention had always been whether or not he would achieve an ethical and spiritual perfect freedom through the servitude, or treat the service as crude bondage.

Likewise, Prospero appears to have been reformed. In having “pardoned the deceiver” (Epilogue, line 7) and accepting Caliban back into his service, he engages in “that mode of service we call forgiveness” (Evelt 210). We know that Prospero will no longer use his magic to physically hurt or confine Caliban because all of his “charms are o’erthrown, / And what strength I have’s mine own” (Epilogue, lines 1-2)—he will have to reconsider his treatment of Caliban if he is to retain his service. This demonstrates that Prospero has regained some sense of the empathy and ability to reciprocate which he previously lacked in his relationship with Caliban. And as Evelt explains, “It is Prospero . . . who gets the last word, with its emphasis on freedom and service, freedom *in service*” (211, emphasis in original).

Thus, each of the three master-servant relationships comes to a fruitful resolution at the end of the play. Ferdinand and Miranda are wed to one another and, through their mutual love and willingness to serve, have every reason to enjoy the rest of their lives together in perfect freedom. In having honored their verbal agreement, Ariel does achieve true freedom through his faithful service to Prospero—he is set free as promised. And while it is unclear whether Prospero will return to Naples with or without Caliban, for the time between Caliban’s return to Prospero and the dropping of the curtain we do see a new respect between master and servant. From all of this, it is clear that service is used within the play as a positive and liberating force and not as a tool of tyranny; there are no victims, only active agents who must make their own choices as to whether to live in perfect freedom or base bondage.

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## “What Dread Hand?”: The Question of the Creator’s Identity in William Blake’s “The Tyger”

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Inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, the Romantic period of British literature is typified by a rejection of traditional values and philosophies. Eighteenth-century English poet William Blake, even more so than many of his contemporaries, personified this trend. An ardent supporter of the Revolution in spite of his English heritage, Blake was an unrepentant maverick whose work was “[e]nergized . . . by [his] resistance to psychological, ideological, institutional, and political tyrannies” (Damrosch and Dettmar 163). In a time when Deistic beliefs were prominent among intellectuals and dissent was rising in the Anglican Church, Blake forged his own abstract theology. Blake was not bound by tradition, and neither was his poetry. “The Tyger,” from the 1793 collection *Songs of Experience*, reflects this unorthodoxy. In the poem, an unnamed speaker remarks on the disturbing ferocity of the tiger, which is contrasted with the tender lamb, an animal that serves as the focus of “The Tyger’s” companion piece in *Songs of Innocence*, “The Lamb.” Though “The Tyger” is usually read as an indignant questioning of the true nature of God, a logical conclusion based upon Blake’s religious beliefs, the piece can be interpreted as possessing an underlying subtext in which Blake is narrating an intertextual conversation with his own poem, casting himself as the Creator.

Traditionally, critics have interpreted the poem in one of two ways. Some critics see the work as the poet’s meditation on the enigmatic powers of God and argue that the poem conveys “a

general tone . . . of religious awe” (Hirsch 248). This interpretation is problematic, however, for it ignores Blake’s personal religious convictions. He possessed an intense, if idiosyncratic, sense of spirituality but abhorred traditional religious doctrine. Blake harbored nothing but “contempt for the authoritarian God,” whom he dismissed as “the Prince of Darkness” (Bronowski 12; Schorer 119). Arguing that Blake wrote the poem with the intention of praising God contradicts the very essence of Blake’s dogma. This positive interpretation also ignores the satirical context of the work in regards to *Songs of Experience* as a whole. The poem, and the entire collection, is clearly intended to be contrasted with the naïveté of the speaker in the “The Lamb” and the other works in *Songs of Innocence*. Other critics see the poem in more cynical terms as a questioning of God’s purposes or powers. Wolf Makowitz argues that the poem expresses “Blake’s incredulity at the whole notion of an all-creating god” and insists that the poet is championing mankind’s “develop[ing] to his fullest within that structural limitation [of this doubt]” (135). Though this interpretation allows for some of Blake’s theology, it still ignores aspects of his religious beliefs. Blake was not an atheist who doubted God’s existence; he was, however, a religious rebel who questioned and rejected God’s authority.

Furthermore, both the positive and cynical interpretations of the poem ignore the inherent complexity of Blake’s work. As Jerome J. McGann explains, “part of the poem’s strategy is to resist attempts to imprint meaning upon it” (12). It seems natural, then, to consider if Blake intentionally crafted the poem to baffle critics by specifically weaving an underlying subtext within the piece. “The Tyger’s” impassioned line “Did he who made the Lamb make thee?” (Blake 20) is, in addition to an overt reference to Christ and the lamb in “The Tyger’s” companion poem “The Lamb,” a subtle allusion to the poem “The Lamb” itself (Damrosch and Dettmar 182, footnote 7). If this line is indeed an intentional reference by Blake to his own poem, the potential for an intertextual conversation between

the poem and the poet exists. “The Tyger” can conceivably be read as Blake addressing his own poem and discussing himself as the Creator. Pursuing the notion of “The Tyger” possessing this subtext, the poem’s opening apostrophe of “Tyger, Tyger” (Blake 1) is also a reference to the very poem itself, not just the figure of the tiger in the poem.

Blake’s choice of a blacksmith motif for the act of crafting the tiger also indicates he could be referencing himself as the Creator of the poem. Blake describes the tiger as “burning bright” and speaks of the Creator’s “hand . . . [seizing] the fire” (1, 8). E. D. Hirsch, Jr., notes that “the creation of the tiger is seen . . . as an act of fiery craftsmanship in a fantastic smithy” (249). The image of a blacksmith forging his craft is “Blake’s favorite image for artistic creation, whether it be the creation of a tiger, a world, a religion, or a poem” (Hirsch 249). When Blake describes the Creator fashioning the tiger, he could just as conceivably be using the motif as a metaphor for his own work in writing the poem. Blake’s intentional use of this imagery further suggests that the poem possesses an underlying subtext in which the poet is the Creator the poem discusses.

This subtext allows Blake to emphasize his own audacity—and potential blasphemy—in inserting his scathing critique of traditional theological views into the poem. Blake prided himself on his “radical and anti-authoritarian” views (Bronowski 13). In spite of his hostility toward a God he perceived as tyrannical, Blake, ever the rebel nonconformist, admired Christ, whom he perceived as a fellow opponent of traditional religious law. He saw Christ as an “antinomian” whose “function was to break laws, including every item of the decalogue” (Schorer 122). Thus, Blake’s personal form of religion did not reject Christ, despite his dismissal of God as a tyrant. When the poem’s speaker asks “On what wings dare he aspire” and “What shoulder & what art, / Could twist the sinews of thy heart?” (Blake 7, 9-10), Blake is likely referring to his own audacity in possessing such heretical beliefs and in crafting the

strongly-worded poem “The Tyger,” which, even on its surface level, dares to question God in such an explicit and confrontational manner. The lines ask who dares to issue such a challenge to God, with Blake intending himself as the answer. Although Blake perceived Christ as a righteous rebel, the poet saw his own defiance of traditional religion as a form of righteous indignation, a fact he is acknowledging in the poem’s subtext if he is the Creator named in the poem.

Blake’s view of himself as a divinely-inspired bard, a notion held by many Romantic poets, is the justification for his questioning of God. The speaker of the poem, in referencing the tiger’s Creator, asks “What immortal hand or eye, / Could frame thy fearful symmetry?” (Blake 3-4). Because immortality is commonly associated with deities and the long-deceased Blake certainly proved to be mortal, these lines seem to rule out Blake as the Creator in the poem. However, just as Blake’s theology was unique, so was his self-perception. Blake regarded himself as “an unlettered poet in whom Divinity found utterance” (Schorer 4). Therefore, even if he did not literally consider himself immortal, and no evidence suggests that he did, Blake saw himself as possessing some form of sublime inspiration and, thus, believed he was capable of acting on a similar plane as immortal beings. In addition, as with many Romantic poets, Blake considered himself “an enraptured, entranced bard” who functioned as “an electrically visionary poet and prophet for the age” (Wolfson and Manning 11). Blake may not have literally considered himself immortal, but because of his perception of himself as a prophet, he felt that he possessed insight and abilities similar to a Creator who is immortal. In a sense, when the poem’s speaker asks “What immortal hand or eye, / Could frame thy fearful symmetry?” (Blake 3-4) at the beginning of his poem, Blake is suggesting that his hand is capable of crafting the poem, for his spiritually-inspired knowledge entitles him to do so. His concluding lines “What immortal hand or eye, / Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?” (Blake 23-24) can be seen as a further affirmation of his

right to issue such an edict against God because he is not only able to do so, but also the only one willing to do so. Blake's perception of himself as an inspired bard further suggests the possibility that the poem has an underlying subtext, for several of the poem's pivotal lines could just as well refer to Blake, the creator of "The Tyger," as they could to God.

By casting himself as the Creator in the poem, the poet also allows himself to make subtle jabs at his contemporaries, who held more traditional religious views and largely ridiculed and ignored Blake due to his eccentricities. In "The Tyger," the speaker asks "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (Blake 20), a potential reference to "The Tyger's" accompanying work "The Lamb," in which a naïve speaker innocently praises God's work without any trace of doubt. Blake conceivably is expecting his readers to question how the same poet who wrote the gentle, seemingly devout poem "The Lamb" could also craft the fierce, defiant work "The Tyger." Considering Blake's religious beliefs, the question is a sarcastic echo of those who fail to grasp the poem's biting condemnation of the beliefs the narrator of "The Lamb" espouses. Blake had little patience for those who could not comprehend the complexity of his work. He once ranted that "[w]hat is Grand is necessarily obscure to weak men. That which can be made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care" (qtd. in Frye 162). Blake was acutely aware of the complex, controversial nature of his work and prided himself on it. The speaker's question "Did he smile his work to see?" (Blake 19) may reflect the satisfaction Blake derived from confounding his critics with his abstract texts. Blake's enthusiasm for confounding critics and readers lends credence to the interpretation that he included an underlying subtext in his poem with the express purpose of confounding readers. Blake's caustic reaction against those he dismissed as naïve for not being able to understand his work may also have extended to those who questioned Blake's sanity. Morris Eaves writes that "perfectly mad' . . . was a label applied so often and so painfully that Blake read a book on insanity, presumably to

locate his own mind somewhere in it" (6). The lines "In what distant deeps or skies, / Burnt the fire of thine eyes" (Blake 5-6) originally were worded to ask where the fire of the tiger's eyes originated without considering possible answers; Blake revised the poem to explicitly ponder if the tiger was crafted from up above or down below (Nurmi 204-205). The reference to the "skies" suggests Blake's view of himself as a divinely-inspired bard while his reference to the "distant deeps" parallels the view that most of Blake's critics held about him. As such, the lines reflect an acknowledgement from the poet of the criticism he received and his own defense against these charges. This underlying subtext, which provides the poet with a means of acknowledging the conflict between his own defiant theology and his contemporaries' more orthodox religious views, enables Blake to launch further attacks on those he deems ignorant and naïve.

The development of the poem, as recorded in Blake's personal notebooks, provides a tantalizing insight into the poet's mindset. Martin Nurmi notes that the original drafts of the poem show a definite pattern in Blake's construction of the piece. The initial draft "emphasizes the tiger's dreadfulness," with Blake only exploring and enhancing the Creator's role in his second draft (199). Blake's focus on the Creator's role in the revision served to soften the piece's overall effect and led him to remove "most of the tiger's dreadful attributes," which he remedied in subsequent drafts that "restore[d] some of the dreadfulness of the first stage" (Nurmi 199). The revisions of the piece certainly are not conclusive one way or another in regard to Blake's intent. However, given Blake's intense dislike for God, it seems unlikely that the poet would see the Creator in a positive light and need to revert the poem back to its original tone if the Creator of the tiger is, in fact, God. The more flattering version of the Creator in the poem's initial drafts seems to more accurately reflect Blake's view of himself as a divinely-appointed bard and not his harsh views of God. This pattern of revisions suggests that Blake was indeed trying to subvert attempts to

interpret the poem by adding an underlying subtext.

Discussions of Blake's intentions in writing "The Tyger" are, by necessity, speculation precisely because of the abstract nature of his work. The traditional interpretation of "The Tyger" as a sharp critique of God does somewhat match Blake's philosophies; however, the piece can also be read as Blake naming himself as the Creator in an acknowledgement of his brazen embrace of unconventional theology. This possible intertextual subtext also corresponds with Blake's beliefs, many of the images used in the poem, and the development of the poem, as documented in Blake's journals. Regardless of the identity of the tiger's maker, the poem stands as a superb example of Blake's biting sarcasm and avant-garde theology. Blake's ardent nonconformity served as an inspiration to other Romantic writers, paving the way for other rebellious poets who rejected traditional theology, such as Percy Shelley.

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# The Quips of a Desperate Knight: Sir John Falstaff's Financial Woes in Shakespeare's *1 and 2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*

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Sir John Falstaff, Prince Hal's mischievous comrade and mock father figure, is often hailed for his formidable speaking ability and cunning schemes, but his banishment at the end of *2 Henry IV* is one of "[t]he most frequently debated issues in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays" (Howe 217). According to Edward I. Berry in "The Rejection Scene in *2 Henry IV*," literary critics are generally divided into two categories on this issue: "moralists," who favor Falstaff's banishment because of his unethical behavior, and "sentimentalists," who reject Falstaff's banishment on the grounds of his loyal friendship to Prince Hal (201). What these distinctions fail to clarify is whether Falstaff has much of a choice in the role he plays. He is clearly dependent on Prince Hal for much of his livelihood up until the banishment scene, and it is unlikely that he possesses many skills capable of earning money aside from thievery and trickery. Given his obesity and poor military ingenuity, it is doubtful that Falstaff can earn distinction and wealth on the battlefield as most noblemen of Falstaff's rank do. It is this fear of financial ruin that drives Falstaff to perpetrate the events and behavior that eventually lead to his banishment; in this regard, fear, not loyalty or love of immorality, is the issue that should be examined in Falstaff's defense.

From Falstaff's first appearance in *1 Henry IV*, it is clear that Falstaff possesses a unique rhetorical cunning that Hal wishes to emulate: an ability to banter in the common tongue of the English

lower classes. It is this ability that gives Falstaff both his charm and livelihood. As Russ McDonald observes:

The most gifted speaker of prose in this play [*1 Henry IV*] is Sir John Falstaff, whose influence over the young prince—a dubious influence in the opinion of the court—is signaled most obviously in the way Prince Hal mimics the old rascal’s linguistic forms. (49)

Hal sees in Falstaff the unique ability to manipulate commoners and nobles alike through wordplay, and so he acts as Falstaff’s benefactor until he can hone this skill himself. However, Falstaff suspects Hal’s motives and hopes to solidify the relationship by pressuring Hal to remain his benefactor after taking the throne. “But I prithee, / sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England / when thou art king?” asks Falstaff of the Prince, “Do not thou, when you art king, hang a thief” (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.58-60, 62). In these lines, Falstaff subtly hints for Hal to pledge his loyalty and protection, but the Prince does not fall for his ploy; instead he leaves Falstaff without an answer to his pleas.

What appears to be harmless banter between two friends is actually a display of Falstaff’s deep seated anxiety about his future in the court. He worries that the Prince will abandon him when he becomes king. Sensing Hal’s resistance to answer his subtle plea, Falstaff eventually resorts to appealing to Prince Hal directly:

*Fal.*

No, my good lord, banish Peto, banish Bardolph,  
banish Poins, but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind  
Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff,  
and therefore more valiant, being as he is old Jack  
Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry’s company,  
banish not him thy Harry’s company—banish plump Jack,  
and banish all the world. (*1 Henry IV*, 2.4.474-80)

Falstaff—revealing a more pitiable and desperate side of his character—essentially begs Prince Hal to promise never to abandon him. He even reminds the Prince that he is old and in poor health

(obesity), but the Prince does not surrender to Falstaff's plea. He answers simply: "I do, I will" (2.4.481). Despite Falstaff's best efforts, Hal has proclaimed he will eventually banish the poor man, regardless of their past friendship. While Falstaff does not cease to subtly plead with Hal throughout *1* and *2 Henry IV*, it is painfully clear to the audience that Falstaff will eventually be rejected from Hal's court. As Nina Levine accurately observes, "[t]he prince makes good on his promise" (414).

Despite these not so subtle hints, Falstaff continues to find solace and some measure of confidence in his wit, which he hopes will prevail over Hal's objections in the end. In *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff asserts that his wit is inexplicably tied to his nature: "I am not only witty in myself," he concludes, "but the cause that wit is in other men" (1.2.9-10). In other words, he believes he has the unique talent of inspiring wit in other people, particularly in people above his station, and he believes this talent is widely accepted by other characters. Falstaff incorrectly assumes that Prince Hal needs him in order to maintain a high level of wit, particularly with the lower classes, and he ties this belief to his consumption of alcohol:

A good sherries-sack hath a twofold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish and dull and crudy vapors which environ it, makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which deliver'd o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherries is the warming of the blood, which before (cold and settled) left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice; but the sherries warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts' extremes. (*2 Henry IV*, 4.3.96-107)

Alcohol is the fuel that feeds the fire of Falstaff's wit, the furnace of his great rhetorical engine, and he perceives the Prince recognizes this talent as well. "Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant," he

concludes in the same soliloquy,

for the  
cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he  
hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manur'd, hus-  
banded, and till'd with excellent endeavor of  
drinking good and good store of fertile sherries, that he  
is become very hot and valiant. (4.3.117-22).

In this way, Falstaff believes he has produced in Prince Hal—through witticisms and the sack—the makings of a great prince, a service he hopes will be rewarded once Hal assumes the throne. However, this conclusion seems to be drawn more from desperation and skepticism than from genuine hope.

In the early acts of *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff appears confident and dismissive of the Prince's authority, regardless of the Prince's previous declaration to abandon him in *1 Henry IV*. In his conversation with the Chief Justice, Falstaff claims to have “check'd” the prince and caused the “young lion” to repent (1.2.196-98). Despite the cleverness and boldness of these lines, no evidence of such an affront is offered by Falstaff, nor is such a refusal to obey the Prince's direct commands confirmed anywhere else in the play. In fact, the absurdity of provoking a lion, even a young lion, is not lost on Falstaff. When the Chief Justice rebukes him for being a bad companion (negative influence) on the Prince, he replies, “God send the companion [Falstaff] a better prince!” (1.2.201-202), a subtle hint that Falstaff suspects the Prince will not demonstrate as much loyalty as Falstaff feels he deserves. Such anxieties are visible in other boastful lines in *2 Henry IV*, especially in relation to debt and wealth. When Falstaff requests that Bardolph obtain satin for a short cloak and slops in his name, Master Dommelton refuses to honor the exchange because of the weak value of his name and means, claiming it would be a risk to his financial security to do business with one such as Falstaff (1.2.31-33).

In an ironic and somewhat skeptical response, Falstaff attempts to dismiss Master Dommelton's insult. “Well, he may sleep in

security,” boasts Falstaff, “for he hath the horn of abundance, and the lightness of / his wife shines through it” (1.2.45-47). While Falstaff jokes of Master Dommelton’s over reliance on security (cleverly paralleling it with cuckoldry), he recognizes, however subtly, the luxury of abundance, and questions why his station is worth so little: “I look’d ’a [Master Dommelton] should have sent me two and / twenty yards of satin (as I am a true knight), and he / sends me security” (1.2.43-45). The irony, of course, is that Master Dommelton does not send him security at all, but instead reminds Falstaff of his uncertain future and growing financial woes, which will continue to haunt him throughout the play.

Falstaff’s financial woes are first indicated in the tavern scene after the botched robbery in *1 Henry IV*. When Hal and Peto riffle through Falstaff’s pockets as he sleeps, they discover a list of items:

Item, a capon . . . . .	2s. 2d.
Item, sauce . . . . .	4d.
Item, sack, two gallons . . . . .	5s. 8d.
Item, anchoves and sack after supper . . . . .	2s. 6d.
Item, bread . . . . .	ob.

(*1 Henry IV*, 2.4.536-40)

Whether the list represents money owed or items desired is irrelevant to the financial picture the list portrays. The fact that Falstaff bothers to record the cost of these items displays his anxiety over finances. If Falstaff were financially secure or only interested in conning for these items, he would not have bothered to record the cost of each one. He would have merely listed them without tallying the cost. This tallying of items, coupled with the absence of cash from his pocket, is a telling metaphor of Falstaff’s financial situation, validating his desire to swindle and mooch off the Prince.

In *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff comments again on the unfairness of his circumstance. When the Chief Justice approaches Falstaff about his debt and behavior, Falstaff compares himself to Job. “I am as poor as Job,” retorts Falstaff,

my lord, but not so

patient. Your lordship may minister the potion of imprisonment to me in respect of poverty, but how I should be your patient to follow your prescriptions, the wise may make some dram of a scruple, or indeed a scruple itself. (1.2.126-31)

The brilliance of this retort is twofold: first, Falstaff manages to challenge the effectiveness of punishing someone for their poverty, and second, he suggests—or hopes, rather—that his relationship with the Prince is similar to that of Job and God. Job, of course, begins as a protected favorite of God, but his loyalty is tested when this protection is lifted and misfortune befalls his family and financial wellbeing (*The Holy Bible*, Job. 1.1-42.18). In other words, Falstaff hopes Hal, like God in Job’s parable, will forgive his transgressions and settle his debts, but his wistful response to the Chief Justice a few lines down suggests he worries about this outcome:

*Ch. Justice.*

Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.

*Fal.*

I would it were otherwise, I would my means were greater and my waist [slenderer]. (1.2.140-43)

Falstaff clearly wishes he possessed a lean, formidable physique and financial wellbeing, but his comment also hints at his insecurity over his financial future; he appears as an uneasy jester, performing at one moment and revealing his anxieties in the next.

Falstaff is even less confident in battle. His weight and health place him at a severe disadvantage, especially in direct combat. When he is pitted against Hal in *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff flees after only a brief skirmish, completely exhausted by the fighting, provoking the pity and laughter of the Prince (2.2.103-10). “Were’t not for laughing,” says Hal, “I should pity him” (2.2.10). As Hal notes, Falstaff’s incapability to sustain combat is an uncomfortable mix of humor and pity. The poor knight seems only capable of fighting for a few blows before retreating. Even while fighting alongside

Prince Hal at the play's end, Falstaff goes as far as to fake his own death to avoid the risks of direct combat—a further indication of his inability to perform well on the battlefield (5.4.76-110). Falstaff had previously offered a catechism that challenges the practicality of honor. “Who hath it [honor]?” concludes Falstaff. “He that died a’ Wednesday. . . . Therefore I’ll none of it, honor is a mere scutcheon” (5.1.136, 140). While Falstaff makes a strong case for the emptiness of honor, it is also important to note that this statement may serve as a ploy, as a means to disguise the fact that Falstaff, unlike Hal or Hotspur, is fearful of battle and unable to perform or operate in that arena.

Despite his phobia of combat, Falstaff still manages to remain conscious of his financial situation. After Prince Hal has slain Hotspur, Falstaff is quick to leap at the chance to steal his corpse for the reward, which he does in his typical flamboyant fashion (5.4.122-29). Given Falstaff's financial woes, it is plausible to assume that he does this more out of desperation than jest, but he plays it off as a mere spectacle of his cunning. The prince, possibly recognizing his need, allows the ruse to continue: “For my part, if a lie may do thee grace, I’ll gild it with the happiest terms I have” (5.4.157-58). The irony of this statement, of course, is made all the more potent given Hal's rejection of Falstaff at the end of *2 Henry IV*.

If Falstaff is indeed a victim of the so called “poor noble” condition, then his behavior on many fronts becomes more justifiable and pitiable. Because mediaeval and Renaissance customs forbade the upper classes from working (for the gentleman was raised to a position of “eminency above the multitude”), Falstaff would only have a limited amount of options available to him to escape debt (Manson 319). He could earn distinction and land in service to his ruling lord or he could survive off the good graces of a lord above his station. Since Falstaff seems to have little to offer on the battlefield, he must rely on his ability as a rhetorician to earn favor. And like many other characters in Shakespeare's *Henry* plays, he notices that Hal will always pay his debts. “That Hal can be

trusted always to pay his debts” argues E. Rubinstein, “is admitted even by Falstaff” (288). Prince Hal, however, has no intention of supporting Falstaff after ascending the throne. The debt he owes Falstaff for teaching him the common banter and trickery remains unpaid. In fact, Hal’s soliloquy at the beginning of *1 Henry IV* demonstrates he has no desire to return Falstaff’s favor:

*Prince.*

I know you all, and will a while uphold  
 The unyok’d humor of your idleness,  
 Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
 Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
 To smother up his beauty from the world,  
 That when he please again to be himself,  
 Being wanted, he may be more wond’red at  
 By breaking through the foul and ugly mists  
 Of vapors that did seem to strangle him. (1.2.195-203)

In these lines, Hal clearly demonstrates his intentions to shed “the base contagious clouds” from his glory. He had no desire to keep Falstaff’s company from the start. For Falstaff, this will mean both a literal and figurative death. However, until the end of *2 Henry IV*, Falstaff will remain reluctant to truly accept his fate, and he will continue to rely on Hal to deter the inevitable weight of his debt.

Whether Falstaff is in denial of Hal’s declaration to abandon him is a point widely discussed amongst scholars. Herbert Weil suggests that Falstaff’s willful denial to face the “truth of how limited is Hal’s commitment to him” is a further sign of his integrity as a friend under Montaigne’s principles (70), but it is also a necessary denial in order to motivate his character. If Falstaff’s fear consumed him within the first few acts of *1 Henry IV*, then his character would be useless to the plot of the remaining plays; however, it is rash to assume Falstaff is completely unaware of his circumstance. He is, if anything, certainly aware of his financial troubles and legal transgressions.

Without the Prince to support him, Falstaff is truly at a loss

to cover his debts. It is clear from his arguments with the Hostess that he has incurred a great deal of debt at the tavern and has little means of paying it back (*1 Henry IV*, 3.3.70-72; *2 Henry IV*, 2.1.32). “The sum of his appetites,” Nina Levine notes, “Falstaff’s debts increase exponentially over the course of *1* and *2 Henry IV* until at the end, with Henry V’s coronation, the old knight is hauled off to Fleet prison, presumably for bad debts” (414). Given Falstaff’s predicament, it is doubtful he will ever be able to fully free himself from debt and earn honor enough to return to the court. In *Henry V*, the audience is told that Falstaff has gone through a transformation, exchanging his jovial, old self for a more melancholy persona, and it is never suggested that he was able to gain wealth and honor enough to return to the court. The audience is told that Falstaff has endured a sort of spiritual or figurative death after his banishment, which eventually coincides with his literal death (*Henry V*, 2.1.88-128, 3.4-6).

The final picture that emerges of Falstaff is a man of desperation: a knight by title and right, not of land and wealth. Where age and obesity have limited his abilities on the battlefield, wit and rhetoric have strengthened his ability to survive off the dullness of others. Hal, perhaps the only character equal to Falstaff’s rhetorical prowess, is indebted to him for honing this skill, but it is a debt he never intends to pay. Trickery and wordplay are Falstaff’s only means of survival. He jokes of thievery and gambling for sport but depends on it for his livelihood. When viewed in this regard, Falstaff becomes a man more deserving of sympathy than banishment. And while the epilogue to *2 Henry IV* suggests the audience may kill him with their “hard opinions,” it seems unlikely that many audience members would see Falstaff’s fate as a fitting end for such a boisterous character (30-31).

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## Jurors

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