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Contents

The Sigma Tau Delta Review

Volume 14, 2017

- Migrants as Criminals & Criminals as Migrants: Reimagining Jimmy Santiago Baca's US Prison Writing as Transnational Literature
Victoria Pyron Tankersley
Frederic Fadner Critical Essay Award 6
- Witches and Bitches: The Portrayal of Unruly Women via Cross-dressing in *Henry VI, Part 1* and *The Merchant of Venice*
Victoria Parker 14
- Verbal/Nonverbal Communication in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*
Mackenzie Adix 24
- Queer Mongrels and Tricky Phalluses: Dispelling the Myth of Heteronormativity and Settler Homonationalism in Vizenor's *Bearheart*
Zachary Clifton 33
- Male Homosocial Love in *Othello*: Iago and the Culture of Masculinity
Elizabeth Hallgren 41
- Dracula* and Degeneracy: Fear of Infection or Invasion?
Krystal Iseminger 48
- "A Paradise Happier Far": The Literary *Felix Culpa* in *Paradise Lost's* Invocations
Madeleine Gallo 55

Not of this World: Divine Radical Inclusivity as a Foil to Worldly Wisdom in Flannery O'Connor's <i>The Violent Bear It Away</i> Marcy Pedzwater	64
Jane Austen and the Last Laugh: Parody in <i>Northanger Abbey</i> Kyriana Lynch	73
What Makes a Monster: The Definition of Monstrosity According to the <i>Beowulf</i> Manuscript Mikayla Kim	81
Signposts to Prophecy: Marginalized Voices in Flannery O'Connor's <i>The Violent Bear It Away</i> Evan Pell	90
"Enforced, stained, and deflowered": Considering the Reactions of Tamora and Lavinia to the Patriarchal System in <i>Titus Andronicus</i> Danielle Routh	99
Influence and Identity: Coming of Age in Black British London Julia Woolever	107

Migrants as Criminals & Criminals as Migrants: Reimagining Jimmy Santiago Baca's US Prison Writing as Transnational Literature

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When Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty cite Julia Sudbury to suggest “race, citizenship and national status” are “at the center of the prison boom,” they gesture toward how migrants are criminalized for their migrant status (38). Similarly, Linda Evans notes that “thousands of people of color are in prison for violations of immigrant law” (216). While I agree that race, citizenship, and national status are the core issues of the prison boom, it seems these issues have a type of cyclical relationship—rather than a seemingly one-way relationship—with incarceration. Migrants are not just sent to prison, but they are created in prison. In other words, a lack of citizenship may be both the cause and effect of criminality—constituting migrants as criminals and criminals as migrants. To investigate this relationship, I turn to Jimmy Santiago Baca's prison writing in light of Alicia Schmidt Camacho's delineation of migrant melancholia. Baca's literature demonstrates that not only do the incarcerated experience a type of migration, but they experience

a migration that effectively constitutes them as stateless subjects—citizens of another America, of a country within a country, in which they are barred *even upon release* from natural citizen rights. Re-imagining the incarcerated as a type of stateless subject, then, enlarges the conception of the transnational and allows literary scholars to re-envision US prison writing as transnational literature.

In order to understand prison writing as transnational literature, it is first necessary to reexamine borders. Baca's prison writing reveals borders as not *solely* a method of delineating nation-states, but as a method of delineating citizenship more generally, which according to the Association of American Geographers, has "outgrown its national dress" (Davies & M'Bow 37). In his poem "Immigrants in Our Own Land," Baca illuminates the many ways in which prisoners' supposed citizenship is questioned, threatened, and ultimately revoked, saying, "At the gates we are given new papers, / our old clothes are taken . . . then we gather in another room where counselors orient us to the new land / we will now live in" (*Immigrants* 12). This new land and new culture in which he will live, based on his "new papers," allude to the passports and citizenship documents migrants carry on them and reflect a new national citizenship. Nation-states, then, are no longer the "sole and supreme source for determining citizenship" (37). Thus, I suggest that the physical, impenetrable borders of prison mirror national borders in that they have an altering effect on one's citizenship, and that Baca's use of the phrase "our land" and the borders around that land are problematized as he suggests that borders within a border function as *international*, rather than *intranational*.

The altering effect that crossing prison borders has on one's sense of citizenship is seen even more clearly when aligning Baca's prison writing—namely, his *What's Happening*, *Immigrants in Our Own Land*, and *Working in the Dark*—with Alicia Schmidt Camacho's concept of "migrant melancholia." Camacho explains this migrant melancholia, claiming it stems from a pervading sense of "loss and wounding" experienced by the migrant, which in turn stems from the dislocation of being "stranded in the border space," and from

being pushed into isolation with absolutely no hope for “communal belonging” (286-87). Migrant melancholia is then characterized by three major threads: dislocation, disappearance, and isolation—all three of which stem from, or are perhaps deliberate functions of, physical, forced incarceration.

Baca creates an image of incarceration which reveals that, rather than being permeable, once passed, this border is impenetrable, and thus imbues prisoners with a sense of dislocation, disappearance, and isolation. For example, in “Steel Doors of Prison”: “The big compound gates close the world off, / Lock with a thunderous thud and clunk,” and he is left “breathing in the first stark glance / Of prison cellblocks behind the *great wall*” (*What’s* 18, emphasis added). This great wall of the prison seems a mirror image of the heavily militarized US–Mexican border—one that not only signifies a border between nation states but also signifies isolation, since it keeps migrants both detained from entering the United States and isolated from their family, culture, and language once they have entered.

Along these lines, Baca’s prison writing reveals three distinct types of isolation: isolation from family; isolation from community; and isolation from self. First, he illuminates isolation from family: “The ones you love cannot be touched, / Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day, / All seen from these bars” (*What’s* 18). Aside from the separation and isolation experienced by the incarcerated, then, depicting isolation on national holidays that are considered to be inherently communal, perhaps hints at Baca’s sense, or lack thereof, of national citizenship. Similarly, in “Past and Present” Baca writes, “In the world outside, convicts have mothers and wives and children, but in here, in this world, they have nothing” (*Working* 17). Again, the poem gives the sense that Baca literally inhabits a different world, one differentiated from the other precisely by a lack of communal belonging. Again, in “Who Understands Me But Me,” Baca writes, “they separate me from my brothers, so I live without brothers” (*What’s* 19). Here there is no sense of being able to cross the chasm created by incarceration; he cannot live with distant brothers or create a new sense of brotherhood within the prison, so he must live in total isolation. In

each poem, Baca foregrounds the intense sense of forced isolation from behind an impermeable border, echoing Camacho's migrant melancholia.

Baca then focuses on the prisoners' isolation and separation from each other. In "Immigrants in Our Own Land," Baca describes the segregation of confinement: "the Black gangs are locked down, / the Chicanos and Whites are locked down" (*Immigrants* 13).

Thus, each racial group is isolated both from the outside world and from each other. He explains this segregation, writing, "we go about our business, blacks with blacks, / poor whites with poor whites, / Chicanos and Indians by themselves" (12). Prison, then, subjects inmates to an even more nuanced sense of communal loss and isolation, as they are incapable of forming solidarity among themselves. Interestingly, it seems as though this isolation is not simply an unhappy byproduct of imprisonment; it is the purpose. Evans suggests that the criminal justice system has "severely compromised the ability of people in these communities to organize and take action against economic and social injustice" (216). Isolation, then, from other inmates is a tool deliberately used to nullify prisoners' ability to join in solidarity and stand up for their own citizen and human rights—keeping their bodies both docile and perhaps productive. Baca reveals the administration's support for this fragmentation: "The administration says this is right, no mixing of cultures, let them stay apart, / like in the old neighborhoods [they] came from" (12), which further confirms isolation as a deliberate tool to prevent solidarity. The intentional promotion of complete communal loss, coupled with forced dislocation and disappearance, allows us to see Baca's literature as infected with Camacho's definition of migrant melancholia, which subtly and continually establishes the direct relationship between prisoners and migrants.

Lastly, Baca reveals a type of isolation from self when he recounts a prisoner yelling, "play the song I like, I love! / Play the one about the man that lost his woman! . . . Let my soul feel once more the shudder of those days! / When I was free and human!" (14). The connection, here, between losing a sense of belonging with family and community and losing not only one's freedom, but one's

humanity, suggests that isolation separates prisoners from their own sense of identity. Thus, it seems as though prisoners' sense of total isolation and communal loss does not only constitute them as migrants, but constitutes them as dehumanized subjects.

While in prison, Baca elucidates his migrant status by exploring his prison experiences which are imbued with migrant melancholia, but he also uses clear transnational imagery. For instance, in "Past Present," he calls the land in which he lives a "dead land, filled with threat," and he asks us to "imagine being hunted through the jungles of Nam day after day for twenty years," and "that will tell you a little of what prison is about" (*Working* 16). Here, Baca creates a direct correlation between prisoners and the Vietnamese during the Vietnam war, which gestures toward prisoners' migrant status, transnational citizenship, or lack of American citizenship, but also to the relationship of war between the two countries he references.

After his release from prison, Baca continues to describe his existence as one of inhabiting two differing and opposing worlds. Most clearly, he writes,

I realized that America is *two countries*: a country of the poor and deprived, and a country of those who had a chance to make something of their lives. Two societies, two ways of living, going on side by side every hour of every day. And in every aspect of life, from opportunities to manners and morals, the two societies stand in absolute opposition. Most Americans remain ignorant of this, of the fact that they live in a country that holds hostage behind bars *another populous country*. (*Working* 18)

In revealing here that there is another country, another society, another nation, one to which all its citizens are involuntarily forced, Baca mirrors closely Davies and M'Bow's claim that the US functions "as a 'multination state'" (20). He *further* envisions himself as a member of two diametrically opposed nations: "The two worlds I inhabited then were so far apart I could find no bridge between them" (*Working* 17). However, although Baca suggests here that he inhabits two worlds, the necessity for finding a bridge between

the worlds implies that he, instead, inhabits the space between the two—where the bridge should be. Thus, he seems to more accurately inhabit neither; and instead, he is relegated to an existence of present-absence—or what Camacho calls being “stranded in the border space.”

This border space, then, seems to be more accurately described not as inhabiting a “multination state,” but as inhabiting a sense of statelessness. This statelessness is most clearly seen when Baca writes he “had been born into a raging ocean. . . . Never solid ground beneath [him], never a resting place” (*Working* 6). The ocean imagery indicates Baca’s sense of landlessness; without having been born on any particular land, he has none of which he can claim rights as a citizen.

Even after being released from prison, ex-prisoners carry what Michel Foucault deems a type of “branding” (*Discipline and Punish* 272). He argues that the “penal institution . . . after purging the convicts by means of their sentence, continues to follow them by a whole series of ‘brandings’” (272). These brandings constitute the marks that classify ex-prisoners as those unable to claim citizen rights, and this denial of citizen rights is what Davies and M’Bow suggest “speaks most strongly to what the concept of ‘citizenship’ in the United States has meant,” namely, a “sense of statelessness” (19). Rather than being protected by the state, then, and having citizen rights, these stateless subjects are “hunted” and have their citizen rights revoked. For example, Michelle Alexander explains that “once a person is labeled a felon, he or she is ushered into a parallel universe in which discrimination, stigma, and exclusion are perfectly legal, and privileges of citizenship such as voting and jury service are off-limits” (94). Evans lists further rights which are stripped from former prisoners, which include welfare benefits, food stamps, student loans (and thus, education), employment in certifying occupations (such as “nursing, other medical professions, teaching, real estate, and the law”), public housing, the right to vote, and sometimes even custody of their children (219). Even more disturbingly, once incarcerated, people also lose their right to freedom—not only in the sense that their bodies are behind bars, but in the sense that their bodies are open to appropriation and

enslavement. Amendment XIII, Section I of the US Constitution lays the foundation for the revocation of this most basic of citizen rights: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted*, shall exist within the United States” (Alexander 20, emphasis added).

Thus, incarceration seems to have a dual function: on the one hand, it can, for a specified amount of time, force the prisoner into a migrant status by keeping the prisoner behind certain borders where he or she is physically dislocated and isolated, and, on the other hand, it has a transformative effect upon the prisoners, constituting the ex-prisoner as what Foucault would call the “delinquent,” who has a precarious citizenship. Thus prisoners are not merely relegated to a country within a country for the duration of their sentence, but upon release they are “marked” or “classified” in such a way as to have their citizen rights revoked. Imprisonment, then, makes a lasting impact on those imprisoned; it transforms them as subjects and relegates them to being stranded in a type of border space for the duration of their lives.

Finally, while some describe prisoners as “second-class citizens,” it seems as though the incarcerated person’s separation from society (through dislocation, disappearance, loss, and isolation) and subjection to slavery (under the revocation of the most basic of citizen rights) constitutes criminals as, perhaps more accurately, “citizenship-less” subjects—stateless subjects with no land, no belonging, no civic rights. Migrants, then, are not merely sent to prison, but they are *created* in prison. Thus, although United States prison writing is generally thought of as a minor sub-genre of American literature, we can view it as much more. Rebecca Walkowitz notes that because “changes in thinking about migrants [now] require changes in thinking about belonging, community, and civic recognition”—rather than merely national citizenship—literature will have to be considered on many different levels “in several literary systems” at once (528, 534). Ultimately, if criminality can be used as a tool that revokes a sense of belonging, community, and civic recognition in America, prison writing should be read as both US and transnational literature.

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Witches and Bitches: The Portrayal of Unruly Women via Cross-dressing in *Henry VI, Part 1* and *The Merchant of Venice*

Victoria Parker

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Joan la Pucelle, Shakespeare's version of the famous French warrior saint in *Henry VI, Part 1*, is surprisingly similar to Portia, a rich heiress whose availability as a potential wife initiates the financial scheme in *The Merchant of Venice*. Both women employ the queer device of cross-dressing to empower themselves and enter a male-only world: for Joan, the military world of battle and political strategy; for Portia, the male educational world of the courtroom and law. The women's use of cross-dressing is queer because it transgresses boundaries of gender identity and sexuality, defying the socially prescribed standard for how a woman should dress and behave. According to Karen Newman, the definition of an unruly woman is "a woman who steps outside her role and function as subservient, a woman who dresses like a man, who embarks upon behavior ill-suited to her weaker intellect [and strength]" (28). Hence, both Joan and Portia fit the requirements for what is means to be an "unruly woman."

However, despite their equal categorization as "unruly women," the two are portrayed quite differently in their respective plays. Portia's cross-dressing functions as a comic element in the play despite its use as a device to reverse traditional gender power relations in her marriage. In contrast, Joan's cross-dressing leads to her capture and trial as a witch, thereby condemning her unruly behavior and negating her previous claims to virginity and divinity.

Joan's portrayal as a genuine witch is interesting because, in the Early Modern period, the idea of being an "unruly woman" and a "witch" were often one and the same.

Considering Robert Schuler's claims that "witchcraft is intertwined with both gender transgression and treason" and that "the ultimate embodiment of female unruliness was the witch" (388), what causes these two representations of "female unruliness" to be treated so differently—one portrayed as a comic and ultimately good character, and the other vilified as an actual consorter with the devil? The answer to this question lies not in the act of cross-dressing, which make both Joan and Portia "queer" or "unruly women," but rather in the consequences of their cross-dressing, the degree to which they disrupt social order through their transgression. Thus, my purpose in this essay is twofold: first, to establish Joan's and Portia's similar nature as queer, unruly characters through their use of cross-dressing; and second, to propose that the divide in their portrayal as "bad" and "good" women is attributable to the fact that Joan's cross-dressing destroys all established social order by disrupting the male conventions of war, whereas Portia's cross-dressing ultimately serves to restore order through the marginalization of other "queer" characters.

Unruly Women and Cross-dressing

Although both *Henry VI, Part 1* and *The Merchant of Venice* feature women who cross-dress in order to sidestep the patriarchal restrictions imposed upon their sex, they do so under different circumstances and with different outcomes. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia's cross-dressing is part of a larger plan to take control of her marriage. As the play begins, Portia, whose husband will be determined by a casket lottery game, laments that she has no choice in the matter, saying: "O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father" (1.2.19-22). However, Portia's actions toward her suitors suggest that, while she accepts that she must abide by her father's will and "accepts marriage as her mandated social goal," Portia also seems to give herself "autonomy in her choice of husband" through various means of manipulation

and persuasion directed at her suitors (Jankowski 126). For example, when Nerissa reminds Portia that she cannot refuse to accept the German suitor as her husband, Portia asks that Nerissa place a glass of wine on the wrong casket in order to persuade the alcohol-loving suitor to choose incorrectly. Thus, Portia demonstrates her “unruliness” by cleverly tricking suitors into choosing the wrong casket, thereby conforming to her father’s lottery game while maintaining her own personal choice at the same time.

Interestingly, Portia’s actions often contradict her words throughout the play. Directly after Bassanio (the man she wishes to marry) selects the correct casket, but before she cross-dresses as a man, Portia makes a self-degrading speech to Bassanio that does not reflect the confident and rebellious character portrayed so far. In this speech, Portia claims that she is but “an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpracticed” (3.2.159), and therefore hopes to learn by committing herself to Bassanio to be “directed / as from her lord, her governor, her king” (3.2.164-65). This self-degrading rhetoric is juxtaposed with the very self-aware explanation of how she is “the lord / of this fair mansion, master of my servants, / queen o’er myself” (3.2.167-69). Portia’s portrayal of herself as an independent woman who maintains her household with masculine-like authority (noted through the use of the masculine nouns she later confers on Bassanio, such as “lord” and “master”) contrasts with the naïve girl depicted previously. This contrast suggests that she is using self-fashioning language in order to evoke “the ideal of a proper Renaissance lady,” i.e. a woman who is “chaste, silent and obedient” and who would therefore make a good, proper wife (Newman 29). Of course, Portia immediately transgresses this ideal image of herself through the improper act of cross-dressing.

Portia’s decision to cross-dress as the judge Balthasar further demonstrates her unruliness in that she does the exact opposite of what is expected for her sex—instead of waiting at home for Bassanio, silently and obediently, she takes matters into her own hands, determining the outcome of the courtroom case in order to save Bassanio’s friend. In addition, her speech to Nerissa explaining how to become a man via cross-dressing is especially transgressive, in that it reveals the socially constructed nature of gender itself.

According to Portia, she can transform into a man if she adopts such masculine behavior as “wear[ing] [a] dagger with the braver grace,” “turn[ing] two mincing steps / into a manly stride” and practicing telling the “quaint lies” of “bragging Jacks” (3.5.65-77). That Portia’s disguise is convincing enough to fool an entire courtroom of men, including her own future husband, proves that gender is merely a role that can be played with the right clothes and proper behavior. Moreover, her success as a judge—for which she is lauded as an “upright judge, a learned judge!” by men like Graziano (4.1.313)—demonstrates that a woman can successfully complete “productive labor reserved for men,” further demonstrating that women and men are equally capable and intelligent (Newman 30).

In comparison to Portia, Joan la Pucelle in *Henry VI* uses cross-dressing as a necessary means to partake in the war and lead the French army, as her divine vision from Mother Mary instructs. Instead of using cross-dressing as a device to hide her female sex in order to participate in a male-only institution like Portia does, Joan takes on the masculine garb of a suit of armor while boldly maintaining her reputation as a “holy maid” (1.3.30). This combination of male and female appearance, through her feminine beauty and her masculine armor, as well as her adoption of a masculine ethos, is evident in Joan’s first interaction with the French Dauphin Charles. To prove her abilities, Joan agrees that Charles can try her “courage by combat, if thou dar’st, / and thou shalt find that I exceed my sex,” adding that he and the French will be fortunate “if thou receive me for thy warlike mate” (1.3.68-71). Joan’s language combines traditionally masculine ideals of courage and being “warlike” with references to her female sex, in that she recognizes that her strength exceeds that of “normal” females. In addition, the double entendre of “mate” implies that Joan is a “peer” of Charles, an equal status reserved for men, while calling attention to her feminine sexuality as a potential “lover.”

References to Joan’s (questionable) sexual status as a virgin and warrior are frequently made throughout the play by the French and English, and by Joan herself. For instance, Joan’s remark to Charles about how she is prepared to fight with the “keen-edged sword” she chose from “Saint Katherine’s churchyard” emphasizes

her virgin/virago status (1.3.77-79). Considering that Saint Katherine is a virgin patroness of young women, Joan's statement that her sword comes from Saint Katherine's yard combines the element of masculine war (notably, through the phallic symbol of the sword) with the concept of female sexuality and maidenhood. This is only one example of the language Joan uses to refer to herself and her abilities. Just as Portia crafts her speech to Bassanio so that she can portray herself as a "proper" woman, so too does Joan employ language for similar purposes. Joan's self-fashioning speeches persuade others of her "holy maid" and "warrior" status. Moreover, they also serve to mimic the boastful, self-glorifying speech of male soldiers like Talbot, such as when she asserts to the French that she is "like that proud insulting ship / which Caesar and his fortune bore at once" (1.4.117-18). Joan's claim that she will calm the French and bring them good fortune is one of many bold statements that M.L. Stapleton argues she uses to "make herself heroic in the same masculine aristocratic way that her enemies do" (245). By adopting heroic male conventions of speech, Joan puts herself on an equal level with the other male "gentlemen" soldiers, further transgressing boundaries of gender and class by demanding to be treated as an equal of aristocrats despite only being "a shepherd's daughter" (1.3.51).

Overall, both Joan and Portia prove themselves to be queer or "unruly women." While Portia transgresses gender boundaries by manipulating potential suitors and cross-dressing as a judge to control her marriage, Joan transgresses gender and class boundaries by insisting on her virginal warrior status.

Unruly Women and Witchcraft

If both Portia's and Joan's acts of cross-dressing (which allow them to resist gender roles and to empower themselves) categorize them as "unruly women," then why is one portrayed positively and the other negatively? In light of Early Modern ideas about women, it seems any "inversion of the social order" qualified a woman as being "demonic" in nature; yet, while both women invert the gender hierarchy, only Joan is demonized for the act (Schuler 388).

Perhaps one way to interpret Joan's negative portrayal is to

read it as a process of normalization. As Theodora Jankowski notes:

As a virgin, Jeanne could be read as both the good daughter of the patriarchy who preserved her bodily integrity until she married and the threatening creature who acted as a man to conquer men in their own arena of war. But to read Jeanne as both these things meant granting women, especially virgin women, an extraordinary amount of personal power and autonomy. Not surprisingly, Shakespeare's Joan . . . is a threat perhaps, but simply a whorish, monstrous threat—not a virginal one. (6)

Up until the play's fifth act, Joan is true to her word, gaining French victories through cunning tactics like disguising herself as a peasant and gaining the trust of the French to the extent that they declare her "France's saint" (1.8.29). However, the transgressive actions that are so beneficial to the French are devastating to the English army, led by English hero Lord Talbot. In other words, Joan's actions devastate the characters with whom Shakespeare presumably intends for his audience to identify. Thus the effects that Joan has on the traditional order of battle must be perceived in a negative light. For instance, Joan's mere presence on the battlefield as a "woman clad in armour [who] chaseth men" (1.6.92) wreaks havoc as she "drives back [English] troops and conquers as she lists" (1.6.22). Joan's presence as a woman on the battlefield disrupts military order, in that male soldiers are confused as to how to react to a woman who defies expectations as someone weak, vulnerable, and obedient—someone whom they traditionally protect. Additionally, Joan's unusual battle tactics cause confusion. For example, after the French claim Rouen and taunt the English from the top of the city walls, Talbot demands that the French meet them in the battlefield for another fight "like soldiers," and at Joan's refusal, cries that they "dare not take up arms like gentlemen" (3.5.26-31). Joan's refusal to risk losing the city for the sake of a "soldier's" or "gentleman's" code of honor demonstrates her different perspective on war strategy—one that dismisses the traditional view of war founded on ideas of honor and etiquette, as represented by the English and Talbot. Thus, Joan resists gender roles through a combination of cross-dressing, challenging traditional ideals of war, and leading successful battles

against the English. The “queerness” of this resistance results in doubts about her sexuality, divine visions, and military abilities, and leads to taunts accusing her of being a witch. For example, Talbot’s violent comment, “Devil or devil’s dam, I’ll conjure thee. / Blood will I draw on thee—thou art a witch” is one of many remarks about her evil and “whorish” nature (1.8.5-6).

Hence, it appears that Joan’s witch scene in Act Five, as Jankowski hints at, is a necessary normalizing procedure that puts Joan in her place, so to speak. Not only does this scene diminish her power by making her previous transgressive actions dependent on the help of demons, but it also negates her claims to virginity and sainthood. Consequently, it allows the English army (and the play’s audience) to properly condemn her for being an unruly woman—a “witch.” In fact, it seems that Joan’s metaphorical categorization as a “witch” by the English army leads to her literal transformation into a witch by Act Five, permitting the English to “justifiably” kill her for her transgressive behavior.

In contrast to Joan, Portia does not face any dire consequences for her unruliness. Instead, Portia’s transgressive behavior benefits her. For instance, her cross-dressing as a judge allows her to trick Bassanio into giving back her ring, a fact she uses against him in order to “renegotiate the power relationship within her marriage” (Jankowski 157). Portia manages this by first making the condition of keeping the ring such that, if Bassanio were to “part from, lose or give [it] away, / let it presage the ruin of your love, / and be my vantage to exclaim on you” (3.2.171-73). Thus, Portia only gives herself to Bassanio on the condition that he keep the ring; by later forcing him to give it away (back to her in disguise) she is not only able to reproach him, but is also able to symbolically cuckold him when she suggests that the doctor gave the ring to her when he lay with her. The ring test thus indebts Bassanio to her, shifting the power from him to her in their relationship. This shift is highlighted in Portia’s final command in the play when she tells everyone to go in because “I have not yet entered my house” (5.1.271-72). Portia becomes once again the lord of *her* house, despite having originally conceded to give everything, her house and herself, to Bassanio as her new master (Newman 32).

Despite Portia’s effective “inversion of the social order,”

positioning herself as master and Bassanio as servant, Portia is never denounced for her unruly behavior. The reason behind this positive portrayal rests in the play's climactic courtroom scene. At this moment, Christian authority in the form of Venetian law is threatened as Shylock demands his pound of flesh from Antonio. Just as it appears that Shylock will be granted his wish, Portia (as Balthasar) finds a loophole: Shylock can take a pound of flesh, but not a drop of blood. The result of this loophole is that Shylock not only loses his money, but is also threatened with the death penalty. According to Portia/Balthasar, because Shylock's desire for Antonio's pound of flesh is a "direct or indirect attempt / [to] seek the life of [a] citizen," Shylock must therefore be subject to the appropriate punishment: the death sentence, which is later reduced to the confiscation of his lands and money and a forced Christian conversion (4.1.344-46). The disproportion of this punishment with the offense (a "crime" that was in fact legalized through a bond) demonstrates the prejudice enacted against outsiders like Shylock. The saving of Antonio's life, meanwhile, signals the restoration of law and order, a social order in which Christians remain in control of the law.

However, Shylock's punishment and Antonio's rescue are not the only ways the cross-dressed Portia restores appropriate social order. As Jankowski remarks, "Portia [also] manages . . . to restructure—if not destroy on some level—the male bond between Bassanio and Antonio" (157). This bond is exemplified in Antonio's plea to Bassanio to "tell [your wife] the process of Antonio's end . . . Bid her be the judge / whether Bassanio had not once a love" (4.1.269-72). Antonio's attempt at self-sacrifice for Bassanio, coupled with the homoerotic undertones in their relationship throughout the play, imply that Antonio's sacrifice is partly an attempt to claim Bassanio's love for himself, and that he views Portia as competition and threat. Thus by averting Antonio's death through the bond loophole, Portia maintains her claim on Bassanio. Furthermore, the ring test also functions to cast Antonio aside: in Act Five, Scene One, all characters on stage are paired (Lorenzo and Jessica, Graziano and Nerissa, Bassanio and Portia) except Antonio. This visual dislocation separates Antonio from the others, highlights

the scene's heteronormativity, and emphasizes Antonio's queer character as the "outsider" of the group.

In conclusion, Portia is portrayed as a "good" unruly woman because her cross-dressing serves to restore order, in the sense that it restores both heteronormative love and Christian law by marginalizing Antonio and punishing Shylock. In contrast, Joan's cross-dressing disrupts the social order of male war, placing the English at a disadvantage and challenging traditional ideas of proper battle, and thus results in her negative portrayal as the "bad" unruly woman. Although both *Henry VI, Part 1* and *The Merchant of Venice* depict queer female characters who use cross-dressing to empower themselves, the social consequences of their cross-dressing—the extent to which they normalize others or are normalized themselves—determines whether they are good or bad, insider or outsider, "witch" or not.

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Verbal/Nonverbal Communication in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*

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When writing about Sherwood Anderson's short story collection *Winesburg, Ohio*, critics often discuss the characters' inability to communicate effectively as a primary source of conflict in the book (Love 39). This discussion often concludes that a failure in communication between character and community is a key factor in a character's becoming a "grotesque" as defined in the collection's prologue-like first story: that is, a person who obsesses over a certain "truth"—a certain attitude or condition of daily life—and "trie[s] to live his life by it" (Anderson 6). This conclusion has merit. However, the discussion can be taken further by deconstructing the central binary opposition that affects character communication in *Winesburg*: verbal/nonverbal communication. Even though the community sees characters like Wing Biddlebaum and Elizabeth Willard as grotesques because of their preference for nonverbal communication, their blending of speech and action in order to express themselves, plus the actions of secondary characters in their stories, serves to deconstruct the hierarchical binary of verbal/nonverbal communication in *Winesburg*, revealing that speech alone is not sufficient to adequately express oneself and must be supplemented by and balanced with nonverbal forms of communication.

Jonathan Culler explains that in traditional Western thought, speech—or verbal communication—is privileged over writing

(100). Traditionally, spoken words are considered to be “in direct contact with meaning”—with the speaker’s thoughts and feelings—while the “physical marks” of writing are separated from the writer’s original intentions and can more easily lead to misunderstanding (100). Thus, a communicative norm is established: verbal communication is privileged over “physical” or nonverbal forms of communication as the best way to convey meaning accurately. In this system, nonverbal forms may “supplement” speech in the sense that they are “an inessential extra, added to something complete in itself”—but ultimately, speech is the preferred expressive method (103).

As in real life, this norm pervades the town of Winesburg, shaping the community’s response to any “deviant” forms of communication (Sanchez 26-27). When characters opt to communicate their needs and desires nonverbally, their actions fall prey to the community’s scrutiny, judgment, and misinterpretation. Characters inclined toward nonverbal expression are then considered “grotesque” because their touches, actions, or silences fall outside the town’s communication norms. This pattern shows up repeatedly in *Winesburg*. For example, Wash Williams is likened to a “grotesque kind of monkey” because of his strange hygiene habits and standoffish, nonverbal behavior (Anderson 113-14) and Elmer Cowley is deemed “queer”—or odd—because of his awkward silences and unpredictable, violent actions (193-202). However, the tension stemming from the verbal/nonverbal hierarchy is especially evident in the stories of Wing Biddlebaum and Elizabeth Willard. Since the standard construction of this hierarchy must be understood before it can be deconstructed, I will first explore the effect that the strict privileging of speech over nonverbal expression has in these characters’ lives.

Wing Biddlebaum’s story, “Hands,” immediately follows the prologue piece and introduces the binary of verbal/nonverbal communication; the story’s title “alerts the reader to the significance of physicality” in the collection (Allen 7), while the narrative itself provides some of the most extreme and obvious examples of social consequences that result from clashing communication modes. Wing’s preferred forms of

expression are touch and gesture; indeed, “[t]he story of Wing Biddlebaum is a story of hands” (Anderson 11). This focus on nonverbal communication does not exactly enable Wing to succeed within the phonocentric norms of Winesburg and the unnamed Pennsylvania town where he once taught.

First, in Winesburg—where he currently lives as an outcast beyond the edge of town—Wing is labeled a “grotesque” because, unlike the other berry-pickers, he can use his abnormally active hands to “pick . . . a hundred and forty quarts of strawberries” per day (11). Also, his hands often “beat” compulsively like “the wings of an imprisoned bird”—a motion that yields the nickname “Wing” (11). This label, like “grotesque,” emphasizes his communicative nonconformity at worst, and turns him into a local oddity for Winesburg’s amusement at best (11). Thus, as a result of his unorthodox nonverbal activity, Wing is relegated to the fringe of Winesburg, physically, socially, and linguistically.

Second, in his past life in the Pennsylvania town, Wing encounters an even more intense reaction to his nonverbal communication style. In that town, Wing uses “the caress of his hands” to help him inspire his young male students “to dream” (Anderson 14). Unfortunately, “the Pennsylvania town is suspicious of such communication because it cannot be neatly gauged” like verbal communication, “and accordingly, people like [Wing] who resort to such expression . . . raise suspicions” (Dunne 47). In this case, Wing is suspected of homosexuality and gets kicked out of town (Anderson 15). Rebecca Sanchez points out that even though Wing’s “non-normative linguistic practices . . . are the only definitive evidence of his difference” from the townsfolk, they mistake his unusual mode of expression for sexual deviance because “[i]deas about what bodies should and should not be doing . . . govern both sexual and communicative norms” (33-34). In both these areas, overt physical expression is discouraged and verbal expression is preferred. Wing’s divergence from the community’s norms therefore incites the townsfolk to purge his influence from their midst, as “deviation from the norm impacts not only the individual, but all those around him” (Sanchez 30)—in this case, Wing’s young, impressionable pupils. In these ways, both the Winesburg community members and the Pennsylvania townsfolk serve “as critical eyes that evaluate and

pass judgement” on Wing, pressuring him to either comply with the community’s “normalized standards” or be driven out of town like an animal (Dunne 46).

The community’s privileging of verbal forms of expression also has a significant impact on Elizabeth Willard, the only female character in *Winesburg* to feature prominently in more than one tale. Because Elizabeth’s stories, “Mother” and “Death,” interweave chronologically, I will discuss them as a single narrative. First, in her youth, Elizabeth falls subject to the community’s judgement when she expresses her “great restlessness” and “desire for change” using two potent forms of nonverbal communication (30): public actions and sexual encounters. Many of Elizabeth’s actions, like “putting on men’s clothes and riding a bicycle down Main Street,” earn her a “shaky reputation in Winesburg” (30). Also, rumors of her ongoing pursuit of sex—a highly intimate form of physical communication—leads the community to conclude Elizabeth is a “bad woman” (230). Thus, in Winesburg, “overt matters pertaining to sexuality are deemed aberrant” or seen “as topics that one assumes but does not openly discuss”—let alone act upon nonverbally (Dunne 78). Elizabeth’s preference for physical expression, then, turns her into a wild, grotesque figure according to the community’s “codified constructs of sexual behavior” and “language” (Dunne 80).

This grotesque status follows Elizabeth into adulthood—although, after many years of enduring an unhappy marriage and constant, debilitating housework, silence is now Elizabeth’s main communication method. Elizabeth believes the silence between her and her son George holds “a deep unexpressed bond of sympathy” (24), while her silence toward her husband Tom is much colder, “a reproach to [Tom] himself” (23). However, Elizabeth’s “muteness [is] stretched taut over a tremendous [social] pressure to communicate” verbally (Love 44)—a pressure she is never able to overcome (Anderson 233). Thus, as Ralph Ciancio puts it, through her intense focus on nonverbal communication, “Elizabeth, like all the grotesques, is both self-crucified and victimized by others” (1005)—that is, by the town’s communicative norms.

In typical readings of *Winesburg*, then, the devotion of Wing and Elizabeth to the “truth” of nonverbal communication

is cited as the main reason for their grotesqueness. However, Ciancio asserts that the prologue, by equating grotesqueness with a character's personal choice to embrace some truth, "oversimplifies": it places too much emphasis on the characters' choices and not enough on "the external forces that contribute to [the] characters' grotesqueness" (994). In other words, the town's communicative norms play a vital role in how characters like Wing and Elizabeth relate to others, beyond simply turning them into social outcasts. The community expects these characters to express themselves with words, not touches or actions. Wing's and Elizabeth's attempts to satisfy this expectation, however, often result in misunderstanding and frustration. This is where most typical readings end. And this is where the text first begins to misspeak.

In his deconstruction of the speech/writing binary, Culler presents another view of supplementation: instead of an "inessential extra," the supplement can be an element "added in order to complete, to compensate for a lack in what was supposed to be complete in itself" (103). In reality, speech often suffers from the same lack of clarity that sometimes plagues writing, resulting in plenty of room for "misunderstanding" within verbal communication (103). Writing, then, must supplement speech because speech is not "self-sufficient," but a system filled with gaps for which only writing—and other forms of nonverbal communication—can compensate (103). Thus, speech is displaced from its privileged position in the hierarchy, leading to a more equalized view of the relationship between elements. These principles can be seen unfolding in Wing and Elizabeth's lives. When verbal communication proves to be inadequate by itself, these characters turn to nonverbal forms to balance out the shortcomings of speech.

In Winesburg, Wing Biddlebaum at first tries to align with the town's preference for verbal over nonverbal communication. Wing attempts to keep his gestures and touches under control by hiding his hands "in his pockets or behind his back" and uses speech to communicate his dreams to George Willard (11-12). Significantly, however, during these conversations with George, Wing cannot help pounding his fists against tables, walls, or fence

boards, as the physical action helps him feel “more comfortable” with verbal expression (11). Additionally, just when it seems Wing is finally communicating effectively with George using speech during the story’s climax, Wing’s inclination to express himself through touch breaks in, prompting him to “caress” George’s shoulders (12-13). These are the first distinct misspeaks in the story. After all, if speech really were the clearest way to communicate, Wing’s supplemental gestures and touches would be unnecessary. However, as Sanchez points out, it is only when Wing “express[es] himself in the [nonverbal] way he finds most natural” that he turns into a “powerful speaker” (34) rather than a “grotesque” figure “beset by . . . doubt” in his own ability to communicate appropriately (Anderson 9). In other words, in order for Wing to fulfill his potential as a teacher and a person, he must use additional forms of expression to supplement speech, which—at least for him—is clearly not a “self-sufficient” communication method (Culler 103). Thus, Wing’s pairing of actions with words begins to deconstruct the town’s communication hierarchy, “to undo and displace it, to situate it differently” (150): instead of privileging verbal over nonverbal communication, Wing uses both modes in unison, letting actions fill the gaps between words and vice versa.

Similarly, Elizabeth Willard relies on physical expression to supplement—or even take over for—speech in two key scenes, indicating a fundamental lack in a supposedly ideal system of communication. First, after overhearing a conversation between her husband and son that she perceives as a threat to her silent bond with George, Elizabeth is “infuriated,” and she develops “definite determination” to kill her husband (28-29). In this case, the hierarchy of verbal/nonverbal communication is completely reversed. Elizabeth first prepares to carry out her plan by brandishing a pair of scissors “in her hand like a dagger,” then says aloud to herself, “I will stab him” (30), merely putting into words the sentiment she has already expressed through her actions. Though Elizabeth ultimately does not carry out the deed, her actions and words are still important from a deconstructive standpoint. Whereas the meaning of her declaration, “I will stab him,” might have been misconstrued, depending on whether

she was speaking hyperbolically or seriously, the meaning of her aggressive posture, scissors in hand, is clear.

Second, shortly before her death, Elizabeth interweaves speech and nonverbal expression in her relationship with Doctor Reefy, verbally sharing her personal frustrations with him, as well as finally finding in his embrace the physical “release” she had searched for via sexual encounters during her youth (236). In this moment of “true communication,” verbal and nonverbal modes of expression are balanced in mutual supplementation (Allen 9). Notably, this is the only scene in which Elizabeth seems at peace with both herself and the other person present. Thus, in these ways, the actions and words of Wing and Elizabeth begin to deconstruct the verbal/nonverbal hierarchy—the idea that speech is a clearer form of communication than nonverbal expression. As seen in both characters, they are at their strongest when they ignore the community’s norms, instead allowing speech and action to enhance each other in a supplementary chain, each element compensating for the gaps—the potential misunderstandings in the other—rather than trying to dominate the binary.

Not only do Wing’s and Elizabeth’s words and behavior serve to deconstruct the verbal/nonverbal binary, but so do the actions of the community members surrounding them. In these stories, the background characters—who are seen as representatives of the phonocentric norms of their communities in more typical readings of *Winesburg*—repeatedly supplement their speech with nonverbal communication. This is the second place where the text misspeaks. For example, in “Hands,” the young berry-pickers flirt verbally with each other, “laugh[ing] and shout[ing] boisterously” until one boy decides flirting is not enough and “drag[s] . . . one of the maidens” away from the main group (Anderson 9). Similarly, in Elizabeth’s narrative, the Winesburg baker is not satisfied with simply swearing at a cat that enters his shop but also feels the need to chase it away by “hurl[ing] sticks, bits of broken glass, and even some of the tools of his trade about” in an excessive physical display of irritation (25). Despite the phonocentric norms of the town, then, these characters implicitly acknowledge their need for nonverbal communication to supplement and balance out their speech.

Finally, the actions of the Pennsylvania townsfolk constitute perhaps the most significant misspeaking of all within these stories: the very community members who condemn and banish Wing for supplementing his speech with touch resort to physical violence to express their “wrath” toward the teacher (15). Apparently, verbal insults are not enough for characters like the saloonkeeper; he heaps both verbal and physical abuse on Wing, calling him a “beast” and “beat[ing] him with his fists” (15). In addition, a mob gathers to help drive Wing out of town, supplementing their angry shouts with antagonistic nonverbal expression: one man “had a rope in his hands” and they all “ran after [Wing], swearing and throwing sticks and . . . mud” at him (15). Thus, through the characters’ uses of their hands—that is, nonverbal communication—“Wing’s essential warmth and humanness are contrasted with the brutality and narrow-mindedness of others” (Morgan 47). On one level, the townsfolk can be viewed as intolerant hypocrites. After all, they privilege speech above all other forms of communication, yet seem to have no problem using—when the mood takes them—physical methods of expression even more abusive than those Wing supposedly practiced in his school. However, reading the townsfolk in a more positive light, we can draw the same conclusion about their actions as we did about Wing and Elizabeth’s: that verbal expression alone is simply not enough to adequately express oneself without the supplement of actions, touches, and silences.

As Sanchez suggests, it is important to investigate other methods of expression in order to better understand “the political and social realities of individuals who, like Biddlebaum, communicate in ways deemed unacceptable” by their communities (34). *Winesburg* in key ways interrogates these normative forms of communication and, ultimately, a deconstructive analysis of Anderson’s work gestures toward new ways of thinking about communication. Perhaps this is the kind of “change” Elizabeth Willard longed for when she was young.

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Queer Mongrels and Tricky Phalluses: Dispelling the Myth of Heteronormativity and Settler Homonationalism in Vizenor's *Bearheart*

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Gerald Vizenor's *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles* sets up its first sex scene between male and female corporate workers from the federal government, who have come to remove the protagonist, Proude Cedarfaire, from his ancestral land in the cedar forest. In Vizenor's post-apocalyptic world, the highway has been shut down and there are no sources of fuel left, except Cedarfaire's forest. Unsuccessful in convincing Cedarfaire to leave, the man, out of awe for the forest, convinces the female worker to have sex with him. While this initial act may suggest heterosexual sex is natural, Vizenor describes the moment as "falling through a cloudless space, out of time and green paper, plastic flowers, part thunder and poison" (30), the combination of naturalness and artificiality shows that their bodies are no longer divorced from the natural world—they allow nature to permeate them. As the female worker thinks about "bears and crows" during sex, her constructed and artificial sexuality gives way to something more transgressive (30). Instead of reporting back to the government, she closes the report and never mentions the cedar trees, as they have now come to reside within her. Vizenor describes her as "still [smelling] of semen and cedar" and defies the structured orders of the "constructed" world around her for a more natural, flexible one, where her body becomes part of a natural process outside society (30). Thus, Vizenor constantly challenges the pervasive myth of white heteronormativity and homonationalism, where LGBTQIA+ movements tend only to privilege white non-Natives. Through characters like Lilith Mae, Pio Wissakodewinini,

Bigfoot, and even Proude Cedarfaire, he forces the reader to see Native sexuality as something that defies the invented term “Indian” and by extension the white, heteronormative constructions of sexuality. Using queer theory and Native studies, I will explore how Vizenor’s characters challenge normative sexuality through Native conceptions of two-ness, or a fluidity between identities and sexualities that refuse to be interpellated back into normative constructions. Whether it be animal/human hybridity, Two-Spirit identities, or the figure of the trickster, Vizenor uses two-ness in order to show that the natural world constructed by white settlers as always heterosexual and only including one form of gender expression is not natural. Few voices are more marginalized and criminalized than the Native queer, whose voice has been silenced in queer liberty movements to serve only white queer voices, and, by extension, heteronormative logic and power structures.

Bestiality is one of the first ways Vizenor deconstructs heteronormative fantasies of sexuality because it not only challenges taboos, but represents a collapse of the natural and unnatural. The figure of the hybrid between man and animal constitutes a literal collapse between seeing the natural as separate from the body. Lilith Mae, a former teacher in a tribal roundhouse, is the first to bridge the gap between animal and human. As one of the pilgrims, she previously was forced out of the reservation for her overt sexuality, sleeping with most of the men she worked for on the school board. Out of revenge, the women on the reservation give her the title *abita animosh* (91), or half dog, for feeding all the mongrels on the reservation. Lilith Mae resents the title, but ultimately comes to embrace it as part of her identity. She carries with her a quilt that depicts figures with faces that change “from a child smiling on one side to part animal child becoming a savage beast on the other side. The beast resembled the visual crossing of bear and dog and child” (89). She uses the quilt to protect herself from the “erotic hostilities of men” and their “foul smelling penises” (89). Even though she hates the identification with *abita animosh*, it is clear that Lilith Mae uses the identity to ward off heteronormative sexual encounters. She chooses to have sex with both of her dogs in direct defiance of heteronormative power structures and in the face of the women who

would shame her for her sexuality. Lilith Mae's choice to have sex with her dogs and embrace this idea of hybridity between animal and man calls into question what is natural and unnatural—nature and men—as she uses taboo and Native identification to move outside of shame.

Therefore, Lilith Mae becomes a queer Native figure in that she embraces a different form of erotic sexuality between herself and her previous heterosexual encounters. She uses the mongrel as a way to assert her differences, while also learning to accept her sexuality as inherently rooted in Native tradition and legends. As Nora Barry notes, “Bears and mongrels may often represent the spiritual and the ritual, but they also represent their own uninhibited animal physicality when their sexualities are often transferred by Vizenor to human characters” (99). Lilith Mae embodies the tale told by Inawa Biwide about a girl whose favorite dog becomes a man in her dreams. She becomes impregnated and gives birth to five puppies, but her parents are so ashamed they kill her lover, burn their possessions, and leave their daughter alone to die. Lilith Mae's identity, once a source of shame, becomes rooted in Native traditions that transcend normative boundaries and allows for safe expression of her overt sexuality outside of judgments. Vizenor notes that he played on native stories of:

Human and animal relations, the wild allegories, ironies, and myths of families. The stories tease a native creation, a time of stones and tricksters, a time when humans and animals and birds got on pretty well, including language, and sex, and in some of the best native stories humans were related to bears, the creation of crossbloods. So the stories of humans and animal unions created the first crossblood bears, wolves, eagles, and other creatures. Later, in *Bearheart*, that tricky union is between a reservation teacher and boxer dogs. (Vizenor and Lee 100)

Later, she goes against the very representative of these hegemonic power structures in the form of Sir Cecil Staples, who owns the last source of gasoline and threatens anyone with death who tries to win it from him. Lilith Mae loses and “the fear of death aroused

the pilgrims to the sexual energies of living” (119). Scott Morgensen asserts that “images of death frame Native people’s memories of the erasure of gendered and sexual possibilities: as exile from the community’s spiritual continuity” (116). Vizenor’s text echoes Morgenson as the pilgrims become aware of the foreclosure in sexual possibility represented by Lilith Mae when Cecil plans to rape her corpse after he has killed her. The rape would come to signify a reassertion of an aggressive heterosexuality forcing Lilith Mae back into normativity. Her death, particularly one motivated by sexual violence, would remove her from the text, and therefore, foreclose the possibility of a specific Native sexuality. She would become erased, which suggests the pilgrims also face that possibility. Despite Proude Cedarfaire’s attempt to save her, Lilith Mae chooses to self-immolate rather than suffer interpellation back into white, heteronormative culture. She chooses to become more than herself as she now represents queer Native identity and what is at stake should fear tactics be used to bring them back within normative structures. Even though she fails, Lilith Mae is able to “travel among the real stars” (141) as she transcends heteronormative sexuality. Her body continues on in the natural world, moving outside a constructed environment of “terminal creeds,” or deadly absolutes of identity that the novel challenges. Lilith Mae moves outside normative logic and into legend, suggesting that her identity will carry on even if she cannot finish the pilgrimage.

Vizenor not only uses characters that are specifically queer in their alternative sexual and gender expressions, but also those that deconstruct white and Native heteronormative masculinity. Benito Saint Plumero, or Bigfoot, represents a problematic trickster figure. He slips between heteronormative logic and queer sexualities; however, when he does take on a solid identity—particularly a violent, heterosexual identity—he is killed. Vizenor forecloses on submission to normative structures of sexuality and thus continues to resist stable sexual identification based on the absolutes of settler colonialism. Bigfoot troubles these connections as he fluctuates between a hypermasculine, heteronormative sexuality and a queer one. His large penis, a sign of virility and masculine power, is described throughout the text as “president jackson” (38). Bigfoot’s

sexual prowess aligns specifically with the president that forced Natives off their homeland. At first Bigfoot's willingness to serve as a communal sex object for a group of women poets and priestesses places his trickster penis more in line with Native sexuality, one built on community rather than individual identity. However, when he moves away from the Scapehouse women, his sexuality becomes questionable and reinforces the violent sexuality related to white heteronormativity. On their journey, Bigfoot recounts a tale where he falls in love with a bronze statue of a woman with big feet. A white man also falls in love with her: he defiles the altar Bigfoot sets up, then steals her. When Bigfoot catches the man, he proceeds to "slit a hole in the crotch of his pants and cut his cock and balls out and [stuffs] them in his mouth" (87). These actions, along with his repeated assertion that the man is a "whitefaggot," recall an almost homophobic ideology of the white settler. Bigfoot, whether trickster or saint, queer or heteronormative, is an ever-shifting figure that complicates problems of Natives using heterosexuality as a viable identity. Unlike Pio and Lilith Mae, who embrace a more fluid sexuality or identity, Bigfoot begins to take on a solidified identity, one that is rooted in settler constructions of sexuality. As a trickster, he should embody a two-ness, a fluidity, that goes against a "terminal creed"; yet, Bigfoot problematically appropriates heteronormative violence and sexuality into an identity that goes against Native ideologies of two-ness.

For example, Bigfoot's handling of the white man's genitals and the forced oral ingestion suggest that the trickster is queer himself. The pleasure in watching a man swallow his own manhood through force aligns Bigfoot with Native queer sexuality. Yet, he treats any challenges to his masculinity with violence, similar to how Native queers were punished by the white settlers. Anne Smith asserts, "It is through sexual violence that a colonizing group attempts to render a colonized peoples inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable" (61). Bigfoot uses this same logic, making the white man vulnerable and places his own Native trickster identity disturbingly close to the logic of the settler. Bigfoot's status as a trickster figure serves a twofold purpose, signifying realities and making those

realities an illusion. Rebecca Lush concludes that the representation of the trickster “can construct realities but can also be exposed as illusions and artifice” (14). Bigfoot, in that sense, creates a reality of sexual violence through a sexuality that mimics white masculinity, but reveals it to be inherently queer and ultimately an illusion.

His later arousal by the sacred clown spirits serves to make heteronormative masculinity seem comical. As the sacred clowns wave their wooden cocks, “Double Saint [becomes] aroused with lust” and unharnesses “his massive penis” (237). In this scene, Bigfoot’s trickster penis is linked with the wooden ones of the clown—as false and comical. His sexuality is revealed to be a hollow construct to be made fun of rather than something to aspire to. It makes sense, then, why it is Pio—the best representation of Native gender and sexuality—who kills him. As Bigfoot is unable to move beyond a heteronormative construction of masculinity and sexuality, he is rendered meaningless within the text. While raping Rosina, Pio snaps Bigfoot’s neck and Rosina feels his penis “rise once more and then the president weakened and flopped out of her mouth” (240). Bigfoot’s aggressive and heteronormative sexuality is not allowed to transcend and continue in the text, suggesting that Natives must liberate themselves from the dangerous absolutes of settler constructions of Native gender and sexuality. Because his trickster penis reinforces an absolute (in this case sexuality), he is denied transcendence into the Otherworld. It is Pio, one of the few pilgrims who has not given in to a terminal creed, that removes Bigfoot and his problematic sexuality from the text and from meaning. His trickster penis, which once signified Bigfoot’s fluidity between categories, is not able to rise anymore, rendering it meaningless at the end of the novel.

Having come full circle, Vizenor’s final critique of sexuality occurs through the contrast between Proude Cedarfaire and Inawa Biwide, the only two pilgrims who do not give in to terminal creeds. Both of these men transcend into the fourth world together, placing Native queer sexuality as pervasive and a direct challenge to the “natural” world of only one sexuality and gender expression. Vizenor writes, “the two dreamed and traveled in magical flight over

and over with the vision of the bears from the mission ruins” (242). Native queer sexuality invokes the image of the Two-Spirit as these men—through their ritual and spiritual connection—leave behind the heteronormative world and continue on a different plane of existence. Driskill asserts that “our genders and sexualities are something that are ‘normal’ within traditional worldviews, marks Native Two Spirit/queer politics as very separate from non-Native moments” (83). The novel concludes with a mingling of the two men and their spirits, a move that echoes the novel’s theme that Native queer sexualities and gender expression are not part of non-Native queer identities and should resist any form of assimilation into dominant culture.

Vizenor’s novel then suggests that for Natives’ liberation to occur, they must first sexually liberate themselves from settler constructions of identities and sexualities. Vizenor challenges not only what it means to be an “Indian,” an identity constructed by white settlers, but what it means to be queer within a Native community. As Vizenor and most scholars argue, while Native queer identities share common ground with queer identity as a whole, it is something separate that can further challenge essentialist assertions of gender and sexuality. Therefore, the characters who are able to transcend the heteronormative confines of the world recognize that their own queer sexuality is part of their Native identity. As a result, Native identity needs to move past seeing heteronormative sexuality as their own and embrace the possibilities of a transformative identity outside of settler logic and embrace the logic of the trickster and the mongrel.

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Male Homosocial Love in *Othello*: Iago and the Culture of Masculinity

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Manifold portraits of love underpin and guide the tragic plot of Shakespeare's *Othello*, serving as the play's central theme. One popular reading of *Othello* claims that the unraveling of marital love is the play's true subject, visible in the breakdown of the bond between the title character, Othello, and his previously cherished wife, Desdemona. In his introduction to *Othello*, Russ McDonald echoes this common sentiment by writing, "the real subject of *Othello* is the fragility of love, its inability to survive the corrosive conditions of a tragic world" (lvi), alluding to the marital relationship's unraveling due to the villainous Iago's plot. However, by focusing on marital love, readers overlook the constructions of male homosocial love within the play and the social factors this portrait of love reveals. Analyzing male homosocial love allows for a nuanced glimpse into the inner workings of the characters in *Othello*, revealing the ways in which male love acts as a "microphysics of power" or social coercion that shifts power dynamics between male characters (Foucault 26). Male homosocial love plays a central role in *Othello* through the character of Iago, who uses this form of love as an intentionally coercive mechanism, exposing the destructive culture of masculinity and using it to gain power.

This paper begins with a brief introduction to Foucault's "microphysics of power" as context for analysis of Iago's coercive use of male homosocial love. Following this background, I shift

to Iago, highlighting his disclosure of his use of love as a means for manipulating his fellow male figures in order to establish the intentionality of his actions. I then discuss Iago's use of fraternal love in his relationship with Othello in order to reveal his appeal to male jealousy and dominance as a means of undermining authority. I then analyze Iago's manipulation of Cassio, concentrating on his exploitation of the "corpus [body] of knowledge"—through the use of fraternal love—of masculine culture within which the characters operate (Foucault 29). I complicate Iago's intentionality by suggesting that Iago not only acts *within*, but also is acted *upon* by the culture of masculinity. I conclude by discussing Iago's complicated relationship with male love in relation to the play's ending, remarking on Shakespeare's commentary on the nature of love.

In *Discipline and Punish* Michel Foucault argues that the microphysics of power are a result of apparatuses and institutions that give rise to power relations among people. Foucault clarifies that this microphysical power is "exercised rather than possessed" as forces or "machinery" that govern the body (26). Thus, Iago's expression of male love can be viewed as a microphysics of power, a social force that gives rise to the shifting power dynamics between characters by way of exacerbating the culture of masculinity in which the male characters operate. While Foucault suggests the microphysical power is not enacted with intentionality (26), Iago complicates this idea by using this force with purpose, seemingly aware of its power. It remains to be seen whether Iago has, in fact, mastered control of this force.

The play emphasizes the power of love as a social force in inter-male relationships from its outset, highlighting Iago's plan to use love as means of tricking Othello into his favor in the first scene. Iago divulges his intentional use of male fraternal love as a guise when he begrudgingly fetches Othello upon Brabantio's demand. Iago laments:

Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
Yet, for the necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. (1.1.152-55)

Iago expresses his dislike for Othello through a simile, "though I

do hate him as I do hell pains,” comparing his feelings for Othello to the pain one might experience while in Hell. Iago expresses his disdain further by revealing that his love for Othello is merely a “sign,” letting the audience in on his ruse. Using the word “sign,” Iago not only emphasizes that his love for Othello is disingenuous, but also foreshadows its use as a mechanism of power. “Sign” suggests gaining proximity or access, and thus, through this diction, Iago nods to his future use of love as a means of accessing Othello’s insecurities. Iago admits early in the play that his use of love is an intentional form of coercion, not a genuine expression, framing the rest of his actions as purposeful exploitations of masculine culture as a means of gaining power.

Iago’s use of male homosocial love as a microphysics of power within the culture of masculinity takes shape most visibly in his exacerbation of Othello’s jealousy in Act Three, Scene Three, appropriately termed the “temptation scene.” Iago leads Othello to the conclusion that Desdemona is an adulteress by encouraging Othello to inquire into his vague accusatory statements, and in turn, question Desdemona’s behavior. Frustrated with Iago’s lack of clarity, Othello exasperatedly demands, “If thou dost love me, / Show me thy thought” (3.3.115-16). Othello’s invocation of love as the object at stake within this demand reinforces the value placed on inter-male love, and further, expresses his earnest desire to understand the implications of Iago’s claims. Othello’s frustrated inquisitiveness turns to frenzied envy of Desdemona’s alleged affair by end of the scene, as he cries, “Damn her [Desdemona], lewd minx!” (3.3.476), Iago’s expression of love in response to Othello’s jealousy—the reassuring, “My lord, you know I love you” (3.3.117)—exposes his use of love as an encouragement of Othello’s jealousy. Using the construction “you know” to reinforce his consistent love for Othello, Iago supports Othello’s jealousy by assuring him that while Desdemona may no longer love him, he always has and always will. Using male love as a microphysics of power, Iago aggravates Othello’s jealousy, revealing his stealthy exploitation of the culture of masculinity.

Iago uses expressions of fraternal love to weaken Othello by preying on his jealousy; however, Iago also uses expressions

of fraternal love to fraudulently bolster Othello's confidence, blinding Othello to his deceitful intentions. Using male love as a microphysics of power to develop a false sense of subservience, Iago takes advantage of Othello's place within a culture of masculinity that encourages the maintenance of hierarchy and dominance. Iago ends Act Three's third scene having successfully convinced Othello of Desdemona's infidelity, with the line "I am your own forever" (3.3.480). By using the possessive in this phrase—"your own"—Iago emphasizes his inferior position and affirms Othello's status as his master. Similarly, his use of the diction "forever," maintains the sense that his commitment to Othello is unwavering. By buttressing his sense of superiority, Iago quells Othello's speculation about his intentions, usurping his power without Othello realizing he has been deceived.

Othello's responses to Iago's claims of love evidence Iago's successful deceit through the use of male love: Othello takes Iago's expression of love as evidence of his loyalty. Othello reasons, Iago's claims are "close dilations, working from the heart / that passions cannot rule" (3.3.123-24), acknowledging that Iago's claims must be true because they are the result of Iago's love. The use of "dilations" to describe Iago's claims shows that Othello is convinced of Iago's virtue; "dilations" here coming from "dilate"—an expansion or amplification—suggesting a swelling of emotional expression—emotional outpourings of the heart that cannot be controlled (OED). The word evokes a sense that Othello sees Iago's words as an uncontrollable expression of his loyalty and love. As Othello's affirmative responses make visible, Iago's expression of male love allows him to take advantage of Othello's place within a culture of masculinity that emphasizes loyalty and male hierarchies, blinding Othello to his deceit.

Iago's manipulation of Cassio takes a similar form, as he uses male homosocial love to intensify the male social culture that catalyzes Cassio's downfall. Iago tricks Cassio into disgrace by calling upon the body of knowledge—the structures of power determining the ability to act—which governs male social culture. Specifically, Iago appeals to the culture of male fraternization and social use of alcohol in order to force Cassio into participating in a night of

drinking, aware that Cassio is unable to avoid this temptation. Iago again turns to his audience to reveal his evil plot, scheming:

Have I tonight flustered with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of
drunkards

Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle. (2.3.53-57)

Iago's announcement of his plan demonstrates the intentionality behind his use of male love as a means of social coercion, reinforcing his purposeful exploitation of the culture of masculinity. In his announcement, Iago reveals his plan to call upon a culture of drinking and fraternization in order to disgrace Cassio by citing the "flock of drunkards" as the catalyst for Cassio's disgraceful "action." Aware that Cassio cannot operate outside of the body of knowledge of male social interactions stipulated by the mechanisms of his society, Iago takes advantage of the culture of masculinity in order to force Cassio's undoing.

Though Iago does not explicitly use the word "love" when manipulating Cassio into participation in the culture of fraternization, Iago uses language of male fraternity in order to coerce Cassio into participation in the socializing that leads to his disgrace. Iago encourages Cassio's drinking, demanding, "But one cup! / I'll drink for you" (2.3.33-34). In this line, Iago not only reinforces drinking among men as a social rule and norm, a body of knowledge under which Cassio is compelled to operate, but also extends an expression of fraternity—"I'll drink for you"—in order to encourage him to participate. Thus, though Cassio does not feel comfortable drinking, as he says, "Not tonight, good Iago," he also cannot find a successful alternative or excuse, able to operate only within the body of knowledge constructed by his society and exacerbated by Iago (2.3.30). Confined to a body of knowledge that stipulates male fraternization as a way of "fitting in," Cassio falls victim to Iago's use of male fraternity as an aggravator to the masculine culture of which he is a part. Thus, while not explicitly stating his love for Cassio, Iago uses expressions of male fraternity to undermine Cassio's moral convictions, invoking the body of knowledge within which Cassio is governed to gain power.

While Iago's manipulation of Cassio reveals his adept navigation of hidden structures of power to manipulate his fellow characters, Iago's interactions with Cassio also serve as an important reminder that Iago is not in fact free from the forces he seems to have mastered. The play depicts Iago as motivated by a culture of masculinity promoting fear of displacement, and encouraging a paradigm of "eye for an eye" justice motivates Iago's actions; his contempt for Cassio is the catalyst for his subsequent actions. Iago's commentary on Cassio's promotion, seen as a personal offense, reveals the influence of these social forces when he says:

One Michael Cassio, a Florentine
(A fellow almost damned in a fair wife)
The never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of battle knows. . . . (1.1.21-22)

Iago's contempt for Cassio, visible in his denunciation of his experiences, stems from his jealousy at Cassio's promotion, revealing that Iago too is driven by a culture of masculinity that incites fear of hierarchical displacement and a paradigm of justice that encourages revenge. It is Iago's inability to break free from these mechanisms governing his actions that drives Iago's use of male love throughout the play, exposing that male love is a microphysical power working within social mechanism of masculine culture that cannot be conquered.

Iago's use of male love—taking advantage of fellow male characters within a culture of masculinity—reveals his adroit navigation of hidden social forces. However, the construction of Iago as a jealous character motivated by fear of inferiority reflects that Iago has not in fact mastered the social forces that construct his society. The play reflects Iago's complicated use of male love in his construction of Othello and Iago's final lines, as Iago is rendered incapable of explaining his actions. Othello grapples with the, demanding, "why [Iago] hath thus ensnared my soul and body?" (5.2.301). Iago's silence in reply—"From this time forth I will never speak a word," (5.2.304)—reveals most profoundly his complex position within male homosocial love, his speechlessness reflecting that his use of male love results in his own downfall. A counterpart to Iago's silence, Othello's famous ending lamentation in which

he sees himself as “One that loved not wisely, but too well” marks his understanding of his naiveté in the face of male homosocial love and his misplaced trust in the expressions of the love that Iago offers (5.2.346). The relationship between these ending lines, each in part a reflection of the tragedy of male love, reveals Shakespeare’s suggestion that love in *Othello* is in fact a “zero sum game” in which no one wins. Ultimately, *Othello* exposes the consuming culture of masculinity within *Othello*, but also includes a commentary on the inherently fickle nature of love.

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Dracula and Degeneracy: Fear of Infection or Invasion?

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Academic discourse on the subject of infection and disease in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* has blossomed in the last few decades, opening up a compelling new lens through which to view themes of fear in this time-tested tale of terror. The nature of disease and the fears related to infection can, through Stoker's novel, be tied to the social and political concerns of the period, illustrating that the fear of infection in *Dracula* mirrors not only the fear of national degeneracy in late Victorian England, but the dread of invasion as well.

Understanding the historical context of Stoker's novel illuminates the depth of terror instilled by disease. One article, published in the contemporaneous periodical *Chums*, details the case of a doctor murdered by the family of a deceased cholera patient. The brief article highlights the superstition and ignorance surrounding the outbreak of cholera in Spain in 1885, hinting that the violence spawned from these situations often caused as much terror as the epidemic itself. Charlotte Stoker's account of the cholera epidemic in Ireland details villages willing to burn families fleeing the disease in order to stop its spread (417). These instances, near both the time and place in which Stoker wrote, illustrate the frantic emotional climate of the time.

An article from *The London Times* in 1890—"The Spread of Influenza—A Novel Suggestion"—claimed cholera originated from

Chinese and Siberian spores, attributing “the rapid spread of the disease” to winds from the east and “the increased facilities of swift travelling and the great increase of trade, by which infected goods are transported from eastern to western Europe” (2).

This explanation illustrates both major approaches to infection: miasmatic and contagionism. Wind-driven spores and dusty trade goods support a miasmatic approach, while the entry of people from infected regions into the urban populace reflects a contagionist view.

To clarify: in Stoker’s time, miasmaticists believed that disease originated from a polluted environment, like foul air or stagnant water, and only people near that pollution became infected (Willis 306). Conversely, contagion theorists believed that only close contact or touch between people could spread disease (305). Martin Willis notes “Stoker’s knowledge of disease theories allows him to employ their rhetoric and explore some of their public positions” (310). By using both disease theories in *Dracula*, Stoker creates a seemingly unstoppable infection horrifying to believers of both doctrines.

Directly and indirectly, miasmaticism plays a large role in *Dracula*. In addition to direct references to the vampire women appearing from swirling mists and snow (390) and the “dank and cold” fog that overtook the harbor at Whitby (87), Stoker consistently references dust and foul air in relation to the Count and his castle. When Harker strays into the forbidden parts of the castle, he writes that he “lay . . . unthinking of and uncaring for the dust,” and when he wakes, he notices where his footsteps “disturbed the long accumulation of dust” (44). At Carfax Abbey, Harker describes the stench of the Count’s lair as “stagnant and foul,” a smell “composed of all the ills of mortality and with the pungent, acrid smell of blood” (267). Beyond the foulness of dust and mist and fog rests another, even more telling, miasmatic reference. The Count himself, when speaking of Transylvania to Harker, exclaims that “there is hardly a foot of soil in all this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots, or invaders” (28). In this very soil must the Count sleep; it is his origin, the origin of

the infection he brings, like a flooded plain in China might, in Victorian theory, be the origin of influenza. Despite such a tie to miasmatism, Dracula himself ushers in contagion theory in the novel.

True, Count Dracula appears as mist and sleeps in foul dirt, but his actual method of infection more closely reflects contagion theory. Shared space and physical contact are requirements for spreading vampirism. In the Whitby churchyard, it is the figure bending over Lucy, feeding on her, that left her tainted—not the miasmatic cloud Mina witnessed (101). An infection spread explicitly by the sharing of bodily fluids mirrors contagionist beliefs that diseases “produced similar effects on the human body as the processes of fermentation did on liquids—where there began an agitation of fluid that could escape its immediate surroundings and ultimately come into contact with another body” (Willis 305). Blood of the vampire must escape the body and be consumed by the victim to create infection. Transmission requires close contact, which raises the frightening question for a Victorian reader: how would such contact be formed? Who would allow a foreigner ingress into the upper echelons of society?

Society itself is Stoker’s implied answer to that question. A fear of infection is less terrible if there is a means of preventing or stopping it. Prevention, in the case of Count Dracula, means two things: no access to England and no access to people who can transmit and infect at the highest level. The first point of access comes in the form of Jonathan Harker and the firm he represents. “It is relatively straightforward,” notes Willis, “to make connections between Dracula’s foreignness and his role as carrier of disease, but his arrival in Britain, what we can call the transmission of disease to Britain from abroad, is only achieved with the help of Jonathan Harker” (317).

Harker’s “imperialist attitude” and “extraordinary disregard for Transylvanian custom” prevent him from seeing the mistake he and his firm are making in brokering the Count’s transition to England. Harker’s first journal entries provide evidence of his imperialist attitude and the blindness it causes (Willis 318). Though Harker writes, “I wanted to see all I could of the ways of

the country,” he blatantly refuses to accept the warnings of the innkeeper and his wife (9-10). Though he takes the crucifix offered to him, he does so with hesitation and censure, writing later that he “did not know what to do, for, as an English Churchman, [he had] been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous” (11).

From a business and trade standpoint, Harker was sent out by his firm and, therefore, is not, as Willis points out, “solely culpable for the economic alliance with Dracula that brings back to British shores the disease of vampirism” (317). Harker’s firm of middle- to upper-class men looking to expand their wealth is equally to blame, but Harker, to secure his newly-granted position as an equal in the firm, must perform his duty admirably (317). These actions exemplify the rise of the middle class through trade brought on by imperialist activities and their desire for personal gain in a consumer culture that increasingly allows ownership to determine class.

Only too late does Harker realize his ignorance, acknowledging his mistake upon seeing the sleeping Count: “This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood” (60). The imperialist idea that England’s way must be the only true way, combined with Harker’s need to fulfill his “imperative” duty to conduct “important business” (11) and thus rise in social standing, lead to Harker’s harrowing experience and the Count’s invasion, which leaves both Harker and England in great peril.

However, the ambitious, traveling real-estate agent only removes one of the Count’s barriers to invasion. For the novel’s fear of infection to mirror England’s fear of degeneration, the infection would need to strike not in the lower classes, but in the gentry: where the true blood of the nation remains pure. Lucy Westenra, fiancée of Lord Godalming (Sir Arthur Holmwood), is the ideal starting place. Kathleen Spencer’s explanation of Lucy’s eventual duality also explains why she is the ideal victim: “She is both the image of purity, sweetness, and beauty—the traditional blond angel in the house—and the creature of sexual appetites, the sleep-walker

who accedes to violent penetration by the vampire” (211). We know Lucy is seen as virtuous and innocent by those around her; Mina describes her as “sweeter and lovelier than ever” when they meet at Whitby (71). She is beloved by three upstanding men, and she inspires loyalty to the point of death, as when Arthur vows he would “gladly die for her” (132). To infect a girl with such virtue, breeding, and connections would lead to the infection of others like her, eventually destroying the upper class through the same means by which it usually grows stronger—breeding.

The second side of Lucy, the undercurrent of voluptuous and wanton behavior that is eventually magnified when she becomes a vampire, is implied rather than overt. Lucy’s comments in her letter to Mina, first wishing she could marry three men, “or as many as want her,” then apologizing for speaking heresy, reveals a flippant view of marriage unbecoming a virtuous girl (67). Lucy kissing one of her three suitors after refusing his proposal also prompts one to wonder about the physical merits possessed by a girl so much in demand. Lucy’s nature and desirability benefit the Count, making her irresistible to men and more able to infect them. Disturbingly, the idea that an upper-class man could be led into intimate close contact by a voluptuous, red-lipped woman implies that the men—giving in to lust—are also culpable. If hyper-sexual women seduce faulty men, the result, in a reproductive sense, would be the antithesis of Victorian British values.

Willis addresses Lucy’s growing level of impropriety by examining Mina’s reactions to Lucy’s sleepwalking incident. He points out that Mina shows great concern for how appearances affect Lucy’s reputation, suggesting that “Mina’s complex response to Lucy’s attack offers a clear indication of Stoker’s acknowledgement of the effects of infection on public image as well as the easily reversible route from disease back to individual sexual impropriety” (316). Lucy’s possible discovery is yet another layer of threat to her and those around her, as her good name would be as infected by scandal as her body eventually is by vampirism.

With access to England and Lucy, the Count can infect whomever he chooses. Lucy grants him the ability to regenerate and begin searching the streets of London, but Harker grants him

initial ingress. Harker's reaction to seeing the Count in the middle of urban London is understandably one of abject terror (183-84). Kathleen Spencer probes deeper into this terror, noting that the two main "bulwarks of identity" left in the new capitalist world are the intimacy of family and personal relationships and mass relationships, like nationalism (203). Harker knows that the Count has already attacked his own personal relationships and, upon seeing him at Piccadilly, knows the Count can begin infecting the entire nation, thereby destroying British nationality.

Stephen Arata concurs, suggesting "the Count endangers Britain's integrity as a nation at the same time that he imperils the personal integrity of individual citizens" (630). Arata goes further, tying the British fear of imperial decline to the fear of reverse colonization, pointing out that the Count "appropriates" rather than destroys bodies, wiping out their inherent nature and filling them with his own cultures—both vampire and Eastern European warrior—much as the British did to the cultures they conquered. This connection establishes the Count as both the infection and the conqueror who will take over after the infection has spread.

Dracula's "essential nature" is both vampire and invader, thus he embodies the fears of both infection and of degeneracy via reverse colonization (628). The Count's ability to infiltrate both England as a nation—and England's enervated and waning upper class—stems from the consumerism of the middle class and the influx of trade opened up by imperialism. Essentially, waning imperial power left England open to infection from the lands she invaded and the diseases she stirred up through avenues of infectious ingress of her own making: consumerism and greed in the form of businessmen willing to import a deadly monster/warlord to their own shores for a profit. Additionally, the ignorant imperialist attitude blinds England to the portents of doom preceding the infection. Whether from a fog, or dust, or intimate contact with the infected, the fear that England brought the disease upon herself is greater than the actual fear of the disease.

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“A Paradise Happier Far”: The Literary *Felix Culpa* in *Paradise Lost*'s Invocations

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An invocation is a conventional literary tradition in which the speaker calls upon a heavenly muse or divine spirit as a source of inspiration before embarking on an epic poem. John Milton was no stranger to invocation as he searched for both heavenly and creative inspiration for his poetry, including his large task of “justify[ing] God’s way to man” in *Paradise Lost* (1.26). In fact, when read alone, the four invocations of Milton’s greatest epic not only directly parallel the events and actions of *Paradise Lost*, but also create their own story—one of Milton’s own personal literary rise and fall: “All these prologues, taken together, constitute an eloquent defense of poetry as divine inspiration, a defense not of all poetry, but a defense of the kind of epic poetry Milton is now daring to write in *Paradise Lost*” (Schindler 31). What this invoking voice guarantees is both a “defense of Milton’s type of epic poetry” and a presence within the epic, a reminder that Milton speaks to his audience not only as a poet, but also as one of Original Sin’s victims—one of the fallen. Although one of the fallen cannot feasibly justify the ways of God to man, this impossible task allows Milton to undergo an ironic turn from the theological justification of Adam and Eve’s banishment to a positive literary appraisal of the Fall. As *Paradise Lost* evolves, the invocations begin to reveal a literary *felix culpa*, or happy fault, as Milton recognizes that the Fall is a necessary element for bringing literature into the world.

The first two invocations illustrate a Milton who sets out only with his original purpose of justifying man's fallen state through religion. In the first invocation, Milton outlines his plan for his epic from a purely theological standpoint. This plan concerns "man's first disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste / Brought death into the World, and all our woe" (1.1-3). Milton relies on a "heavenly muse," typically interpreted as the pagan goddess Urania named later in the poem. Urania is the muse of astronomy, and the use of the word "heavenly" also associates her with the Christian Holy Spirit—another religious icon (853). William Hunter addresses the poignancy of Milton's choice of muse, noting, "the quality of the emotion surrounding Urania is intense and personal: her communication of light and insight takes the form of a haunting and human love relationship, as of mother to son" (31). Both of these elements make sense for Milton's own purpose as he sought inspiration as one of God's sons rather than only as a writer. He claims that his epic "with no middle flight intends to soar / Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues / Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (1.14-16). Milton thus addresses the boldness and greatness of the task before him mostly as a religious feat.

In this first invocation, Milton displays the confidence and capability necessary to create his theodicy. He suggests his epic is shrouded in darkness that only divine light can brighten, just as Adam and Eve's lives become filled with darkness that only the Son can brighten. This idea directly parallels the necessity of the Fall in relation to both Christ and literature that appears in later invocations. In one of Milton's more modest moments, he pleads, "what in me is dark / Illumine, what is low and support; / That to the height of this great argument" (1.22-23). As Walter Schindler points out, this modesty is problematic, however, in that "the distinguishing feature of Milton's boldness is . . . its paradoxical humility: he 'attempts' and 'adventures' to stand or fall by a power that is not his own. . . . The first invocation is the most confident" (50). The cry to Urania provides Milton a force on which he can blame both failure if he must, suggesting that failure is possible. The epic also focuses on the "human relationship," not only between

Adam and Eve, but also between Milton and his fellow men—not yet Milton and his fellow writers. He asks Urania to “invoke thy aid to my adventurous song” so that he might find the same inspiration Moses experienced upon hearing the Ten Commandments (1.10-13). By comparing himself to spiritual figures rather than other writers and by relying on Urania rather than his own voice, Milton implies that his focus at this point remains a religious one. He wrestles with his own confidence here as he turns himself over to Urania completely, while also establishing *Paradise Lost* as his own journey alongside the story of mankind. He is but a mortal man searching for godly inspiration: “Before all temples the upright heart and pure, / Instruct me” (1.18-19). While the first invocation creates an image of a speaker who has yet to undergo the hardship of his own trial, it also paves the way for the literary insight Milton will discover in attempting to break free of the mortal realm—insight that will eventually allow him to look beyond the “woe” of the Fall into the opportunities, particularly literary, that it has opened for mankind.

Milton’s invocation to light at the opening of Book III is the first indication that Milton’s mind has turned from its initial religious purpose to a literary defense of the Fall. Nowhere in *Paradise Lost* is Milton’s personal voice more present than in this invocation. According to Schindler, “[T]he essential feature of the poet’s *calling upon* a presence is his *vox*, his voice. This voice is at the very center of the phenomenon we know as invocation. Milton is only the most fully developed and self-conscious example of a voice-awareness that goes back to Homer” (5). Here this voice shifts from one of courage to one of lamentation—still, at this point, mainly supporting religious purposes. In a literary sense, however, Milton *does* begin to drift from conventional epic traditions. He reflects on his own blindness rather than simply invoking a muse, asking if he may call upon the “eternal co-eternal beam” since light is one with God (3.2-3). Book III also undergoes a dramatic setting change from the previous books, as Milton turns his focus from Satan and Hell to God and the Son in Heaven—his true attempt at justifying his theodicy. The speaker, under Urania’s instruction, has now abandoned the “Stygian pool” of Hell after a “sojourn” through darkness and Chaos (3.13-18). All traces of his humility disappear as

“the speaker betrays hints of undue self-interest and presumption. It is he who revisits Light” (Sundell 76). This arrogance reinforces Milton’s own postlapsarian humanity. Comparing himself to Orpheus, Milton suggests that he, too, has sung of darkness and death, but now wishes to reascend—a fallen man’s desire (3.16-19). These moments of self-insertion and vanity illustrate Milton’s continuing battle with his own capabilities.

This invocation of light progresses in a new direction, however, as Milton’s lamentation on blindness becomes praise toward his handicap that begins to show fortune within flaws. He becomes overtly aware of his own being as he brings his suffering into the epic, claiming that he is “cut off” from the “cheerful ways of men” through his blindness (3.46-47). He continues with the claim, however, that his disability may make him equal to the blind prophets Thamyris, Maeonides, Phineus, and Tiresias (3.35-36). In fact, he may even prefer heavenly internal light as opposed to eyesight: “So much the rather thou celestial light / Shine inward” (3.51-52). This inward illumination allows him to “see and tell / of things invisible to mortal sight” (3.54-55). Still, this reflection on blindness has not yet moved full support for a literary *felix culpa*, and certainly not a theological one, because it openly addresses Milton’s personal suffering brought on by the Fall:

Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer’s rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human faces divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me. . . . (3.42-47)

In this invocation, Milton is just beginning to address the kind of inspiration and knowledge that suffering can bring. Without his blindness, he might not have been able to peer into the hidden epic within him—much like Adam and Eve, who cannot experience the true glory of God’s paradise until they lose Eden.

The final two invocations signal a dramatic shift from Milton’s theological argument to his literary defense of *Paradise Lost* and subsequent discovery of the Fall’s significance to literature. The tonal shift between the first two invocations and the last two

represents in Milton “an objectified and developing character whose experience of creating a sacred epic effects significant changes in himself” (Sundell 69). These “significant changes” become evident in Book VII’s invocation when Milton invokes Urania again, this time by “the meaning, not the name” (7.5). Older, completely blind, and halfway through his epic, Milton begins to realize that his religious task may be too great for one mortal man. He instead suggests internal paradise may prevail over an external one, indicating that Urania’s heavenly meaning, or Holy Spirit, can exist solely within a person’s mind. Milton continues with his defense of epic poetry: “Finally, in the last true invocation . . . Milton names and reflects upon the nature and heritage of his most immediate source of poetic inspiration” (Sundell 35). Milton further separates himself from his predecessors, disconnecting himself from the classical muse and asking instead to “descend” back to Earth (7.1). This movement out of Heaven also represents a turn from a religious focus to a literary one. Milton almost returns to his former humility, referring to himself as but a heavenly guest: “Up led by thee / Into the heaven of heavens I have presumed, / An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air, / Thy tempering; with like safety guided down” (7.12-15). He compares himself to Bellerophon, a mythological Greek figure who perished after attempting to ride Pegasus onto Mt. Olympus. This dark allusion serves as reminder that Milton, too, is a mortal man who must face death as a result of Adam and Eve’s sin, and may experience his own punishment for seeking divine knowledge. Perhaps he also recognizes that, like Bellerophon, he cannot possibly explain God’s actions.

Now more settled in his beliefs, Milton continues his third invocation by further reflecting on his literary triumph rather than the sorrow of Original Sin. He confidently sings the rest of *Paradise Lost* within the safety of his own domain: “More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged / To hoarse or mute, though fall’n on evil days” (7.24-25). He now claims he no longer needs to rely on forces outside his own element—perhaps another reason why he feels secure in losing his muse’s name. He is back in the realm of what he knows and thus can complete his epic through something he understands completely—literature. As Hunter claims,

“the invocation to Book VII, the beginning of the end, returns to a source in the maternal-paternal dove-spirit of Book I, which becomes in terms of this radiant symmetry the focus of meditation between Heaven and earth in the fallen world” (40). Milton, who has already shown his own flaws, here *does* recognize and admit his own confined connection to mankind. He, much like Adam, is limited to Earth and cannot reach heavenly knowledge. He asks his muse to drive off the “barbarous dissonance” of Bacchus’ revelers, Orpheus’ killers. Milton thus addresses his own failure at justifying God’s way to man, just as Orpheus lost Eurydice to the immortal Hades and faced dismemberment and death at the revelers’ hands (7.30-40). Milton instead seems to ask for protection simply so he can complete his song.

The final appearance of Milton’s personal voice in Book IX exposes a poet who whose goal has moved from defending God to defending his own epic instead. Milton addresses the *felix culpa* most directly through his self-praise when he suggests that *writing*, not reaching the gods, is a true act of heroism. Many scholars do not consider this prologue an invocation at all because of its turn from the conventional religious format: “To describe all four prologues as invocations oversimplifies passages that appear significantly different both in design and intent” (Sundell 69). Here Milton seems to intend to establish his own merit as a writer—his final attempt at demonstrating his own value. If he opens his epic as a modest man, he certainly closes it otherwise: “His mood seems almost impatient now, certainly more austere, as he snaps ‘No more talk where God or angel guest / With man, as with his friend, familiar used’” (Schindler). This tone is very different from the confidence of the first invocation. Here Milton seems to accept fully his own humanity and distance from the gods as he moves further and further from a standard invocation.

Now confident and fully aware of the literary need for the Fall, Milton speaks of more “tragic notes,” and “breach disloyal on the part of man” (9.6-7). Although his argument is “sad,” it feels more heroic than those of mythological Greek heroes because his quest has spanned Heaven, Earth, and Hell in order to explain humanity’s current state (9.10-20). He claims that *Paradise Lost* is

braver than the three classical epics, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid* that remained trapped in their constrained genres. Milton, on the other hand, believes that he has attempted to rise above his genre by writing on man's greatest mistake rather than pure heroism: "The clear implication is that the answer [to heroism] is writ large in the poem [Milton] is now composing: in the Son's offer of himself as Example; in Satan's adventure as a counterexample; or in Abdiel's defiance, or Adam and Eve's rededication to mankind, or even in Milton's own heroism as a poet, vividly portrayed in the invocations themselves" (Schindler 55). Milton thus ironically converts the Fall into an event that allows for great acts of valor, such as turning a great tragedy into one of the world's greatest literary achievements. He justifies the Fall's impact on literature by addressing, and even cherishing, the great works it has allowed.

What the ending of Milton's final invocation ultimately does is allow readers to accept the idea of the happy fault in literary terms, even if they cannot embrace it through religious ones. Of this final invocation, Sundell writes, "The single thematic description of [the] argument, presented with marvelous understatement, occurs parenthetically in the midst of sarcastic comments on the substance of romantic epics . . . both confidently and condescendingly, he derogates the substance of earlier epics" (79). Milton's confidence, or "playfulness" as Sundell writes later, in comparing himself to former writers suggests that the meaning of his epic is but a literary feat and not an attempt to justify God's theological reasoning. Milton ends his final "invocation" on a bleak note, claiming that he must complete his work before "climate," "years," or "depression" destroys the story, or even greater stories to come, inside him—a last reminder that Milton remains one of the fallen (9.44-46). Without darkness, however, Milton would search for no light and invoke no muse in the first place. In the final book of *Paradise Lost*, archangel Michael shows Adam all the historical and Biblical events that will take place as a result of the Fall. He explains that this postlapsarian condition is still worth the Savior it will ultimately bring—Jesus Christ. Only then will mankind experience complete salvation and freedom: "For then the earth / Shall all be paradise, far happier place / Than this of Eden, and far happier days" (12.463-65).

This paradoxical moment strengthens the notion that Eden is but the starting point for greater and immeasurable knowledge. Only through eating the fruit can Adam and Eve bring the Son to the mortal world—the figure who will ultimately grant humanity with infinite divine intellect. And since no literature or need for it exists in Eden, only through the same eating of the fruit can *Paradise Lost* exist.

Clearly, one of the most powerful elements of *Paradise Lost* is the untold story within its invocations—the man who, after recognizing the difficulty of his initial theological purposes, must turn to a defense of epic poetry instead: “Milton’s appeal to [the] spirit is . . . more than a conventional invoking of the Muse. . . . It expresses, on its own terms, a theory of poetry that has grown out of his total poetic and religious experience from youth to manhood” (Schindler 46). This theory of poetry embraces the importance of knowledge and sense that the banishment from Eden allows, even if mankind suffers in terms of religion. In the final book, Michael asserts directly that true paradise is what exists in the mind and that Adam and Eve will discover greater joys once they are cast out of Eden. Real glory exists in the paradise the Son will ultimately offer, and this opportunity can never come if Adam and Eve remain in the Garden: “thou not be loath / To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A paradise within thee, happier far” (12.583-86). The poem shows the Fall’s necessity by raising a key question: Could *Paradise Lost* exist without the Fall? What great literature could ensue? Although Milton condemns desire as the great sin that tempts Eve into eating the fruit, he also ironically cherishes desire as the great motivating factor in life. Just as desire for knowledge convinces Eve to taste the fruit, desire for knowledge and fame inspired Milton to write, and, as *Paradise Lost* demonstrates, both Eve and Milton ultimately benefit from their decisions.

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Not of this World: Divine Radical Inclusivity as a Foil to Worldly Wisdom in Flannery O'Connor's *The Violent Bear It Away*

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In 1962, John Hawkes asserted that Flannery O'Connor's fiction provides an "improbable combination of religious faith and eccentricity," and that *The Violent Bear It Away* "transforms the writer's objective knowledge of the devil into an authorial attitude in itself in some measure diabolical" (399, 401). Thirty-four years later, Suzanne Morrow Paulson lamented Francis Tarwater's "progress towards madness," and assert that the novel "ends by depicting a shattered form of Francis's psyche . . . and thus is lost" (129, 133). These two critics are part of a larger trend for scholars patronizing O'Connor by characterizing her as a writer whose artistic intent was overshadowed by her final written products, which revealed hidden allegiances to her secular characters and repressed religious ambivalence. Albeit provocative, such readings of O'Connor overlook her work's rhetorical complexity and craft. A better tactic for understanding O'Connor, a devout Catholic well-versed in theology, is to approach her work as a dramatization of the Apostle Paul's claim that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and that "those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them" (1 Cor. 2.14, 1 Cor. 3.18). If O'Connor's Christian characters seem mad and her unbelieving characters reasonable, it is because to a secular reader, they are. However, by reading an O'Connor work like *The Violent Bear It Away*

through a Christian lens, readers can once again access her nuanced Christian vision.

In *The Violent Bear It Away*, Rayber and Meeks, a school teacher and a salesman, respectively, represent Paul's description of worldly wisdom. Despite the relatively respectable social status of these characters, O'Connor ultimately reveals them to be spiritually bankrupt. It is instead the characters who are marginalized by society who have access to and accept religious visions. Through these characters, O'Connor presents a religious vision that at its heart opposes existing social hierarchies. Moreover, through the character Tarwater, who straddles these two worlds, O'Connor suggests the impermanence of these systems and hints at the ultimate triumph of a radically inclusive Christianity, one that paradoxically supports the secular values of equality and justice.

One of the first examples of worldly wisdom O'Connor presents is Meeks, a salesman who offers Tarwater a ride as he leaves the city. O'Connor describes Meeks as "a manufacturer's representative, selling copper flues throughout the Southeast" (361). Meeks is the embodiment of capitalism and faith in material goods. Moreover, people trust Meeks; as they are driving towards the city, Meeks tells Tarwater, "love was the only policy that worked 95% of the time. He said when he went to sell a man a flue, he asked first about that man's wife's health" (362). Meeks is the emblem of a trustworthy salesperson who is concerned with the lives of his clients and is well respected by his customers.

Despite his respectable social standing, O'Connor quickly reveals that Meeks is morally corrupt. Meeks confesses to Tarwater that he only pretends to care about his clients in order to make sales, boasting "I say thank God when they're dead . . . that's one less to remember" (362). Rather than form genuine connections with others, Meeks fakes connections to serve his own egocentric motives. O'Connor highlights Meeks's spiritual bankruptcy when he misquotes scripture. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus tells his disciples there are two great commandments, to love God and to love your neighbor. However, according to Meeks's paradigm, hard work "was the law of life and it was no way to get around it because it was inscribed on the human heart like love thy neighbor. He said these

two laws were the team that worked together to make the world go round” (365). Meeks removes God from scripture and replaces God with the idols of work and material accumulation, thereby secularizing the gospel and emptying it of any spiritual resonance.

In addition to Meeks—a representation of material wisdom—O’Connor constructs Rayber as a figure of intellectual wisdom. The novel describes Rayber as “a schoolteacher who had no child of his own at the time” (331). As a schoolteacher, Rayber models worldly respectability and intellectual wisdom. Tarwater himself acknowledges his Uncle Rayber’s intellectual capabilities, telling a stranger, “my uncle knows everything” (460). Critics like Gary Ciuba have noted Rayber’s function as an intellectual: “The modernist Rayber espouses the scientism, materialism and rationalism that southern Christianity spent the first half of the twentieth century in rejecting” (Ciuba 128). Rayber attempts to approach everything rationally, suppressing emotion for the sake of a scientific level of disinterest. He sees his own son Bishop, a young boy with a mental disability, as “part of a simple equation that required no further solution” (393). Rayber attempts to control even love—the height of emotional entanglement and fervor—warping it to his sense of intellectual respectability. As the novel indicates, Rayber “was not afraid of love in general. He knew the value of it and how it could be used” (401).

Rayber embodies intellectual and rational thought taken to its extreme conclusion, but as a consequence, Rayber suppresses any emotional fervor or religious understanding. Rayber uses love as a tool in order to prevent himself from feeling “overwhelmed by the horrifying love” (401). Rayber fears this “overwhelming love” that is beyond intellectual rationalism and “of a different order entirely” (401). This love takes the form of *agape*, God’s unconditional love that extends beyond boundaries, which is radical and transformative in nature. This love confounds Rayber because “It was love without reason, love for something futureless, love that appeared to exist only to be itself imperious and all demanding, the kind that would cause him to make a fool of himself in an instant” (401). Because it exists outside the realm of rational thought, Rayber suppresses this godly love and instead puts his faith in himself and intellectual reason.

There is a cost to rejecting this godly love, which O'Connor reveals to be the meaningless and empty world Rayber has created. After Tarwater drowns Rayber's son Bishop, Rayber is so anesthetized by his ordered world of intellectual reason that he cannot even mourn the death of his son. Instead, Rayber "stood waiting for the raging pain, the intolerable hurt that was his due to begin, so that he could ignore it, but he continued to feel nothing" (456). Rayber's militant intellectualism, when carried to its extremes, leaves him with nothing but "the dull mechanical beat of his heart" (456). Rayber is trapped in a godless life of his own construction, where he is unable to experience any type of emotion. Susan Srigley notes the depravity of his situation, claiming, "there is no abundance for Rayber, only the poverty of his narrow definition of life, constituted entirely through the lens of the intellect" (187). Despite the seductiveness of a rationalized world, Rayber's intellectualized world proves little more than a grotesque vision of human apathy.

Both Rayber and Meeks, who extol the values of an apathetic and rational world, inhabit the city, which causes the city itself to become a symbol of secular indifference. Meeks brings Tarwater to the city and introduces him to it, telling him, "That's the city we're coming to. That's the glow from the city lights" (362). Meeks is the first person Tarwater meets on the way to the city, and thus Meeks's corrupt materialism becomes inextricably connected to the city that the two characters enter. Rayber also lives in the city, and Tarwater notes, "the schoolteacher was no more than a decoy the old man had set up to lure him to the city" (387). The city is a normalizing force, which houses men like Meeks and Rayber, emblems of respectability and secularization.

It is only when Tarwater encounters those who are outside of the dominant narrative of the city that he witnesses genuine religious truth. When Tarwater is on his Uncle's farm, he encounters Buford Munson and Munson's wife: "A colored man and woman, each dangling an empty vinegar jug by a finger" (356). These characters lie outside of society's definition of respectability, by both race and location, and yet they are the ones who can speak religious truth, which manifests itself in the religious visions each

of them relate. Buford Munson warns Tarwater, “Nobody’s going to bother you . . . that going to be your trouble” (360). Munson’s spoken moment of prophecy comes true as the novel unfolds—Tarwater’s central conflict is not with other characters, but within himself. Munson’s wife reveals that she has had visions of Old Tarwater, announcing, “I seen his spirit for two nights . . . seen him two nights and he was unrested” (357). She dreams of the dead and of the future, which aligns her with the prophet Ezekiel and his vision of the valley of dry bones.

It is through religiously attuned characters such as Munson and his wife that O’Connor demonstrates a faithful community that exists outside of the city. These characters exhibit revolutionary love and inclusivity, which highlights Ciuba’s suggestion that “the message of the prophet is counter cultural” (121). This vision of radical relationship emerges when Buford Munson buries the elder Tarwater: Munson had to “drag the body from the breakfast table where it was still sitting and bury it in a decent and Christian way, with the sign of its Saviour at the head of the grave” (331). Buford Munson has no obligation to bury the older Tarwater, but he does so nonetheless. His wife also expresses love that transcends racial boundaries. When Munson’s wife discovers Old Tarwater is dead, she “lifted her head and let out a slow sustained wail, piercing and formal” (357). Giannone notes the radical inclusivity of this vision, pointing out that “a black woman wails over the corpse of a white prophet, whose grave is dug by a black man” (75). Despite their outsider status, from their marginalized position these characters express a love that has been erased within the confines of the city.

Tarwater exists in the middle of these two categories—Meeks and Rayber who represent mainstream society and the marginalized characters who embody religious truth—and he has to choose between worldly wisdom and Godly wisdom. Tarwater is caught in an inner struggle between prophetic and rational worlds. There is a part of Tarwater that shares Rayber’s notion of rationality, as evidenced by the inner voice that tells Tarwater to reject the call he feels to prophesy. This voice embodies the epistemology of the rational world and is “adamant that he refuse to entertain hunger as a sign” (430). The inner voice encourages him to dismiss signs

as foolish abstractions, in favor of acknowledging only that which can be defined logically. Ciuba describes the voice's subversive role arguing that, "like Satan in the gospels, the youth's unfamiliar companion sets up appealing models to follow that are actually obstacles" (141-42). The voice sets Tarwater upon a path on which he must forcefully reject the call of religion. For example, after Tarwater has a dream similar to that of a prophetic vision, the novel describes his actions: "deliberately, forcefully, he closed the inner eye that had witnessed his dream" (463). Despite the luring call of religious vision, Tarwater has the ability to reject it, and he does so. However, amidst these rejections, Tarwater also experiences the call towards God's world, the world of the outsider. The novel indicates that since his uncle's death, Tarwater "had not been satisfied by food, and his hunger had become like an insistent silent force inside him, a silence inside akin to the silence outside" (430). Inexplicably, Tarwater feels a call to comply with God's will and he has to choose whether to fulfill his religious duty.

Despite the voice of his friend as his forceful rejections of the divine call, Tarwater ultimately chooses the world of the outsider and the role of the prophet. Tarwater "knew that his destiny forced him on to a final revelation" (473). Tarwater gives into God's call and marches forward to his final revelation. As he moves toward that vision, he traverses the margins and abandons the city for "the road home, ground that had been familiar to him since his infancy but now it looked like strange and alien country" (473). The path home leads Tarwater to a place where "God does not need to compete for place but makes a dwelling place amid the humble and the homely . . . and in the loving kindness of Buford Munson" (Ciuba 161). Tarwater's path toward religious realization leads him to the margins of society both physically and spiritually, as he approaches his geographically isolated home and Buford Munson.

It is there, on the margins of society, that Tarwater experiences a truly transformative vision of the kingdom of God. It is at Powderhead that Tarwater sees a field that "seemed to him no longer empty but peopled with a multitude. Everywhere, he saw dim figures seated on the slope and as he gazed he saw that from a single basket the throng was being fed" (477). Once Tarwater

stops rejecting his religious call, he sees a radically inclusive world that is based in community, in which all are welcomed to God's feast. Srigley asserts that "Tarwater's desire propels him toward the feast that will truly satisfy his hunger, but he arrives to a shared communion: a multitude is gathered with enough food to satisfy all" (186). Thus, Tarwater experiences religious truth not only in his own personal relationship with God, but in the relational experience that is central to the Christian vision.

Tarwater's journey does not end with his personal revelation, however; after seeing the life-fulfilling feast, he receives his call, which pushes him back to the city. Tarwater hears the command to "GO WARN THE CHILDREN OF GOD OF THE TERRIBLE SPEED OF MERCY" (478). Tarwater cannot keep his religious vision to himself; instead, he must return to the city armed with the word of God. Srigley reinforces this notion when she claims, "While this final vision suggests abundance and community, a palpable and often violent force persists throughout the novel animating and impinging on each of the characters" (187). In this case, the violent force that pushes Tarwater forward is the jarring violence of God's world, whose radical love stands in opposition to the values of the city.

Through Tarwater's call to return to the city, O'Connor suggests that the world of Rayber and Meeks is not fixed permanently. The novel ends with a description of Tarwater in which "he moved steadily on, his face set toward the dark city, where the children of God lay sleeping" (479). The imagery of sleeping children suggests that those in the city can be awoken, thereby implying that it is not too late for salvation. Characters like Rayber and Meeks are not irrevocably lost, but still have the chance to be saved and witness the religious revolution that is already taking place on the margins of society. Ciuba notes the promise of this final line, maintaining, "it raises the hope that those who awaken to be merciful will be blessed with mercy in a kingdom beyond scandal" (164). What happens on the margins does not stay on the margins; instead, the novel ends with the forceful marching on of God's kingdom, until even the most stubborn individual might experience the jarring power of transformative love and acceptance.

The novel's complex characters, its critique of the city, and its accompanying dominant narrative, point to the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God, a radically inclusive space open to people of every race, gender, and class. O'Connor is famous for her assertion that "the topical is poison" ("Letter to 'A'" 357). However, to assume that O'Connor was untroubled by the social concerns of her era would be reductive. Rather than seeing issues of racial, gender, and economic inequality as problems to be directly addressed and fixed, O'Connor saw them as the symptoms of a larger problem—an imperfect and godless society. Thus, O'Connor's fiction points to a teleological view of history, in which patterns of oppression will only be overcome by the eventual triumph of God's kingdom. This teleological vision does not need to conflict with secular critics' social justice oriented interpretations, but rather it functions as the source from which these social justice themes emerge.

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Jane Austen and the Last Laugh: Parody in *Northanger Abbey*

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Jane Austen situates her earliest drafted novel, *Northanger Abbey*, at the crossroads of two eighteenth-century genres: courtship novels such as those of Frances Burney and gothic novels in the tradition of Ann Radcliffe. Austen's narrator connects these two genres in the heroine's thoughts: "[Catherine] meditated, by turns, on broken promises and broken arches, phaetons and false hangings, Tilneys and trap-doors. . . . Her passion for ancient artifices was next in degree to her passion for Henry Tilney" (103, 147). The narrator's tongue-in-cheek commentary parodies both the courtship novel and the gothic novel. Austen says of her own work, "I could not sit seriously down to write a serious Romance under any other motive than to save my Life, & if it were indispensable for me to keep it up & never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first Chapter. - No - I must keep to my own style & go in my own Way" (qtd. in Todd, *Cambridge* 25). Austen crafts her "own way" out of laughter. Rather than simply mocking Burney's sensibility or Radcliffe's sublime, however, Austen channels the strengths of both in creating a story effective on its own merits. While Austen utilizes *Northanger Abbey* to parody both the novel of sensibility and the gothic novel, she constructs a new vision of literature that is uniquely her own—by validating the heroine's ordinary moments of mortification rather than flights of sentiment or gothic terror.

One major trait of the courtship novel is sensibility, or the heroine's capacity for refined emotion. The genre began with

Samuel Richardson's 1740 novel *Pamela* and continued to general acclaim in Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782). Two of the distinguishing features of sensibility are physical: tears and blushing. In the 1774 work *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, John Gregory praises a woman's blush: "When a girl ceases to blush, she has lost the most powerful charm of beauty" (qtd. in Jones 45-46). Janet Todd characterizes novels of sensibility as "devoted to tear-demanding exhibitions of pathos and unqualified virtue" (*Sensibility* 8). However, Austen's heroine does not, at first, seem to possess these blushing and tearful qualities of a heroine in a courtship novel. *Northanger Abbey* opens with the line, "No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland would have supposed her born to be an heroine" (37). In fact, Austen characterizes her heroine not as a "heroine"—a paragon of sensibility, beauty, and skill—but rather as an ordinary seventeen-year-old: "Her heart was affectionate, her disposition cheerful and open . . . and her mind about as ignorant and uninformed as the female mind at seventeen usually is" (42). By highlighting Catherine's imperfections, Austen critiques the portrayal of such characters as Burney's *Evelina*. As Todd notes, "Austen can mock her predecessor, contrasting her own plain and ignorant heroine with Burney's angelically beautiful and accomplished *Evelina*" (*Cambridge* 21). However, Austen does not abandon sensibility entirely; Catherine still blushes and sheds tears. Her blushes, like *Evelina*'s, are often a result of Catherine's knowledge of her own ignorance: "Confused by [Henry Tilney's] notice, and blushing from the fear of its being excited by something wrong in her appearance, she turned away her head" (98). As she blushes, sensitive to the perils of polite society, so, too, is Catherine prone to tears of sensibility. After Catherine's unintentional rudeness towards the Tilneys, the narrator comments, "And now I may dismiss my heroine to the sleepless couch, which is the true heroine's portion; to a pillow strewed with thorns and wet with tears" (107). Together, both her blush and her tears reveal Catherine's heart: despite her anti-sentimental traits, she is a heroine of deep emotional sensitivity.

Interspersed with this account of the heroine we find narrative commentary, which, with its subtle humor, parodies

the narrative voice of courtship novels in much the same way that Catherine parodies a heroine of sensibility. This narrative voice mocks Catherine's lack of sensibility—while Catherine may not write sonnets as Adeline does, the narrator dryly comments that she “brought herself to read them” (41). The narrator later criticizes Catherine's excessive sentiment: After crying herself to sleep, “lucky may [the heroine] think herself, if she get another good night's rest in the course of the next three months” (107). Such satirical narrative commentary is significant for its departure from the narration common to courtship novels since Richardson's time; that is, the voice of the sentimental heroine herself writing in epistolary form. Such a voice allows Pamela, for example, to exclaim with perfect seriousness, “O how amiable a thing is doing good!” (Richardson 50). Through her narrative voice, Austen satirizes the perfections of sentimental heroines.

As Judith Wilt comments, “The impulse of parody is too mechanical to be sustained” (124); recognizing this, Austen's narrator is not merely an instrument of satire but also of sympathy. Such sympathy emerges from the embarrassment Catherine feels in situations typical in courtship novels. Indeed, one of the strongest features of *Northanger Abbey*, as in all of Austen's novels, is Austen's uncanny ability to convey the awkwardness of uncomfortable situations. One feels the characters' mortifications—and this, in turn, becomes the means by which the characters learn their lessons. For example, at her first ball, Catherine whispers, “How uncomfortable it is . . . not to have a single acquaintance here!” (46). In this and similar situations, the narrator does not mock Catherine's embarrassment, but rather encourages her readers to be sympathetic: “Every young lady must feel for my heroine in this critical moment, for every young lady has at some time or other known the same agitation” (93). What Austen does here is striking: rather than parodying Catherine's embarrassment, Austen encourages her readers' sympathy. Thus, Austen both mocks and utilizes the sympathetic feelings characteristic to the courtship novel. Rather than appealing to sensational emotions and pathos, however, Austen relies on the humbler feeling of mortification. Todd remarks on Austen's subtlety in comparison to the “didactic

and sensational Burney. [Austen] allows her heroines' moments of discovery to emerge from ordinary events within a normal everyday world, where Burney's young women are routinely subjected to extreme experiences of social and sexual disgrace" (*Cambridge* 21). Avoiding the extremes of sentiment and satire, Austen "combined [Richardson and Fielding's] qualities of interiority and irony, realism and satire to form an author superior to both" (Todd, *Cambridge* 20). With her exquisite twists of satire and sincerity, Austen constructs a narrative that ultimately validates Catherine's emotions.

Austen's treatment of gothic novels in *Northanger Abbey* parallels her depiction of courtship novels. One central feature of the gothic is the sublime. Edmund Burke's 1757 treatise defines the sublime: "Whatever is in any sort terrible . . . is a source of the *sublime*" (58-59). Writing at the end of the century, Sir Walter Scott defines the gothic novel as "an appeal, in one word, to the passion of fear" (235). Gasps of terror are the physical medium through which the gothic sentiment is expressed. Austen draws on Ann Radcliffe, whose works combine the Romantic impulse of courtship novels with the terrors of the sublime. *Northanger Abbey* parodies such terror in some of the most humorous passages in Austen's canon. Upon her arrival at the abbey, Catherine discovers an ancient scroll, at which "her heart fluttered, her knees trembled, and her cheeks grew pale" (171). Just as she is about to read its secrets, her lamp goes out: "a lamp could not have expired with more awful effect. Catherine, for a few moments, was motionless with horror" (172). However, in the morning, the mysterious manuscript turns out to be nothing more than a laundry bill; Catherine's fears are for nothing. Such scenes parody both Radcliffe and the entire gothic canon, beginning with Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*.

Just as Austen's depiction of sensibility is not wholly satirical, the novel in some ways validates gothic fears. Wilt connects Austen's scenes of Bath with gothic elements: "The middle ground of Bath and environ, where unfamiliar anxieties begin, is that same significant isolating Gothic labyrinth, subtly more frightening because it is filled with that ghostly intimidating crowd of 'no acquaintance'" (138). As Wilt suggests, Austen may utilize the gothic sense of fear to emphasize Catherine's terror of a more ordinary setting—Bath society. Susan Payne concurs, claiming:

[Austen's] parody of Gothic, in the second part, while mocking much of the "machinery"—hair-raising journeys, ruined abbeys, murderous villains, etc., retains and re-elaborates . . . the indeed "terrible" *anxiety, fear, dread, shame, and awe* that a young girl . . . could feel or be induced into feeling by the social mores of what Austen terms "common life." (52)

As these critics indicate, Austen laughs at the gothic while she casts the shadow of real fears across the hedgerows of England. Austen demonstrates that human nature is as terrible in England as it is in the remotest corners of the globe.

Marvin Mudrick contrasts novels of sensibility with gothic novels, suggesting, "the only difference is that the gasp replaces the tear as the measurable unit of response" (75). As noted above, in *Northanger Abbey*, rather than appealing to tears of sensibility or gasps of terror, Austen reaches for another emotion: mortification. Mortification serves as the vehicle for Catherine's transformation. When Catherine, carried away by her gothic fears, is discovered in the late Mrs. Tilney's room, she is at first terrified. However, when she spies Henry and not a gothic nightmare, she "blushed deeply" (193). He then rebukes her thus: "Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. . . . Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. . . . Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting?" (195-96). At the end of this diatribe, "with tears of shame [Catherine] ran off to her own room" (196). Catherine abandons gothic terror for the blushes and tears of mortification. Here, at last, "Catherine was completely awakened" (196). At this point in the novel, a shift occurs: "The anxieties of a common life began soon to succeed to the alarms of romance" (198). Rather than being alarmed by her gothic fears, Catherine is now concerned with her ordinary life—a life still imbued with anxieties and fears of its own. Wilt notes, "[W]hat distinguishes Austen's Catherine is that rage and humiliation are allowed to turn into self-reproach, which generates self-examination, which finally generates self-forgiveness and growth" (136). Only by recognizing and accepting the gothic in another form—the form of mortification—can Catherine learn her lesson and progress.

While Henry's rebuke causes Catherine's awakening, her transformation is truly evident when General Tilney casts Catherine out of Northanger Abbey. Wilt calls this episode "the greatest hurt of all" (127); Payne regards it as the "real" gothic adventure of the novel (55). This time, as Catherine lies sleepless in bed, "Her anxiety had foundation in fact, her fears in probability; and with a mind so occupied in the contemplation of actual and natural evil, the solitude of her situation, the darkness of her chamber . . . were felt and considered without the smallest emotion . . . she lay awake, hour after hour, without curiosity or terror" (220). Rather than being paralyzed by gothic terror, Catherine's strongest emotion is that of mortification. The next morning, "Catherine's colour rose at the sight of [the carriage]; and the indignity with which she was treated [struck] at that instant on her mind with peculiar force" (220-21). Fear is usurped by that more ordinary but still no less powerful emotion: shame. Critics such as Payne and Todd read Catherine's journey home as a reinvasion of the gothic, a journey of solitude and dread in the real world. Payne claims, "when the worst comes, and Catherine is 'turned out of doors', the 'anxieties of common life' no longer need the trappings of sentimentalism or Gothic machinery. She *dreads* the sight of the 'real' spire of Salisbury Cathedral (her first 'home' landmark) much more than that of any 'fictional' ruined abbey" (58). What these critics overlook, however, is Austen's broader vision. The narrator concludes, "A heroine in a hack post-chaise is such a blow upon sentiment, as no attempt at grandeur or pathos can withstand. Swiftly therefore shall her post-boy drive through the village, amid the gaze of Sunday groups, and speedy shall be her descent from it" (224). Here, Austen rejects both the "grandeur" of the gothic impulse and the "pathos" of the courtship novel; instead, she concludes with Catherine's ordinary mortification—born of the blush of sensibility, inspired by the dread of a cathedral, yet ultimately composed not of gothic or sentimental elements but the anxieties of ordinary life.

The conclusion of *Northanger Abbey*, then, is powerful for the way in which it makes common anxieties a matter of serious literature. Mudrick suggests, "Catherine finds her villains, not simply because she is looking for them, but because the author finds

villains in actual life and allows her a few” (81). The novel observes life and grants its characters emotions outside of the constraints of genre. Wilt summarizes *Northanger Abbey*’s significance thus: “Jane Austen, whose sense and sensibility were the finest of all, sat down to deal with the Gothic by way of the loving subversions of parody and achieved . . . not a subversion or conversion but a real transformation of the machinery, a true and original grasping of her inheritance” (124). Rather than a simple parody of sensibility or gothic terror, *Northanger Abbey* is far more: it recognizes the anxieties of ordinary young women, and by doing so elevates her readers to the status of heroines in their own small corners of drawing rooms across England.

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What Makes a Monster: The Definition of Monstrosity According to the *Beowulf* Manuscript

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Set in the context of its manuscript, Cotton Vitellius A.xv, the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf* presents a subtle critique of the ideal Anglo-Saxon king in its titular character, whose lust for glory and gold as a hero subverts his kingly responsibilities and ultimately dooms him and his people. By beginning with the unequivocally evil Holofernes of *Judith* and the dog-headed saint of *The Passion of St. Christopher*, the manuscript confines its particular definition of monstrosity to individuals of lustful and godless character regardless of social class or noble birth. Instead, the manuscript judges its characters by their moral integrity. Through *Wonders of the East* and the *Letter of Alexander the Great to Aristotle*, it further pares down its consideration of monstrosity on the quest for personal glory. This quest is symbolized by the lustful acquisition of gold, a bottomless ambition that parallels the hero's quest for personal glory. In the case of Alexander and Beowulf, the refractory pursuit of glory proves ephemeral in light of their kingly responsibilities. In *Beowulf*, Hrothgar personifies the ideal conduct of a king who has successfully navigated the responsibilities of his identities as both king and hero. He provides a foil by which we may judge Beowulf, who advances on the dragon in a quest for glory and gold, an action that triggers his own demise and the impending destruction of his entire people. We see the interplay and, at times, the conflict of

these two identities of hero and king in an examination of the last word of the poem, *lof-geornost*. Collectively, these characters and the precepts by which the manuscript judges them set the rules by which the Anglo-Saxon reader must judge Beowulf's character and suggests a critique of contemporaneous cultural structures.

Clarifying assumptions about the sequence of the five texts—which are typically interpreted in the order in which the current codex presents them: *The Passion of St. Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, *Beowulf*, *Judith*—is essential to discussing the codex's thematic unity. I ground my analysis on the pivotal assumption that Scribes A and B intended *Judith* not as the last text, but as the first. The binding of the manuscript that places the last quire of *Beowulf* after the fragment of *Judith* suggests that the manuscript was at the least added at a later date, yet the paleographical evidence of *Judith* and *Beowulf* that indicates they were written by the same scribe strongly suggests that the two texts were intended for the same manuscript (Lucas 468). Ker further notes the presence of wormholes in *Judith* that are not present in *Beowulf*, an indication that though the texts were intended for the same manuscript, they were not intended to be read sequentially (qtd. in Lucas 469). Lucas builds on Ker's conclusions in his study of the length of the lost quires of *Judith* and *Christopher*. According to his estimates, the missing quires of the two saints' lives would have fit exactly the portion missing from the beginning of the manuscript (Lucas 446-47). This order also provides a convenient thematic progression; we may study the two sacred texts and the three secular texts in convenient parts. This progression suggests an interpretation of the secular world informed by and adhering to a Christian moral code transcending of the cultural or social structures of Anglo-Saxon England. This interpretive lens can be applied across the manuscript through the remarkable heroes, kings, and monsters who often are one and the same.

The first pair of these similiar characters, King Holofernes from *Judith* and Christopher from the fragment of *Christopher*, define monstrosity as an inward characteristic, not an outward aberrance. This consideration of Holofernes's character is especially interesting given that, as Andy Orchard points out, the original Vulgate text of

Judith does not list him as a king but as a prince (7). The purposeful elevation of his rank leads Orchard to suggest that the scribes of the codex were not only interested in monstrosity but also in exploring “prodigy and kings,” particularly the differentiations—and surprising correlations—between the two (13). As the first king and the first villain presented in the manuscript, Holofernes separates the concepts of high social status and moral integrity; he personifies the possibility of fulfilling the expectations of class and culture and yet still perpetuating destruction of his people through his moral failures. As the “prince of the mail-coated warriors” (line 36), he rewards his warriors with gold as his men’s “gold-friend” (12), thus satisfying the cultural demands of an Anglo-Saxon king to his warriors. Nevertheless, he is characterized as a hyperbolic enemy to Judith and God’s people as “the most despicable heathen war-maker” (178, 311). Furthermore, the description of the “golden tent” that surrounds his bed has led many scholars to read him as an idol (qtd. in Orchard 9)—not, then, merely an enemy of the assumed Christian audience’s creator God, but a direct competitor to him. By acknowledging Holofernes’s dutifulness as a king, yet characterizing him in superlatively evil terms, we see a separation between the conformity to cultural standards and pleasing the Christian God by an upright character.

In addition to removing rank as obstacles to monstrousness even for royalty, contrasting Christopher’s dog-headedness with King Dagnus’s unbelief removes the consideration of physical appearance. Christopher, “twelve fathoms tall” (Fulk 3), is traditionally depicted as one of the dog-headed *cynocephali*; nonetheless he is called “saint” or “saintly” sixteen times throughout the fragment. By contrast, King Dagnus is a “vilest brute” because of his presumption “to entice this populace” away from Christopher’s teaching (5). By identifying monstrosity in King Dagnus’s spiritual blindness rather than in Christopher’s aberrant physicality, the poet builds on the previous definition of monstrosity as firmly grounded in an individual’s morality.

Informed by this distinction, we find a correlation between glory and gold in *Wonders of the East* and *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*. This correlation indicates the imminent destruction that

results from an insatiable, unyielding quest for them. Both texts feature monsters in close proximity to hoarded riches and nuance the manuscript's singular definition of monstrosity to include specifically the quest for the praise of men. Over forty percent of the creatures in *Wonders* guard or dwell near a rare valuable. This proportion marks a positive relationship between monsters and valuables, a significant correlation when considering Alexander's *Letter*, wherein Alexander writes that the amount of gold that his army carried was so great that it "shone and gleamed in front of [him] and around [him] with majesty" as they travelled. He then directly links this spectacle as a physical representation of "my glory" (Fulk 45). However, despite the fact that his fantastic wealth actually impedes his journey, he accepts yet more gold from King Porus (63). His refractory lust for riches, despite the severe inconveniences it causes him, correlates with his accumulation of glory. Early on in the narrative, he writes that his men named him "king of kings," a blasphemous title for the implied Christian audience of the manuscript who would acknowledge Christ as the only King of Kings (37). Yet despite his awful weight of gold and his titles, Alexander laments: "And the approaching end of my life was not so very distressing to me as was the thought that I had achieved less glory than I had intended" (83). This sentence illustrates the insufficiency of gold and glory to sate him. Though presented with more nuance than earlier kings, his hunger for more gold—especially contextualized by the treasure-hoarding monsters of *Wonders*—and his blasphemous self-deification advances him into the realm of the monstrous.

Just as *Alexander* eventually discommends the titular character's appetite for gold and personal exaltation, *Beowulf* critiques its titular character's quest for personal glory and gold by showing their ephemerality. As in *Judith*, *Beowulf* uses the Anglo-Saxon practice of bestowing treasured gifts to heroes in order to connect acquiring gold with acquiring glory. When Beowulf first arrives at Heorot, Hrothgar's men marvel at him because of his "intimidating gear" (Fulk 107.321), connecting its worth to his assumed prowess in battle. Hrothgar follows this practice by giving Beowulf "four treasures made of gold" after Beowulf

wrestles Grendel (152.1024). These treasures physically evidence his praiseworthy deeds, intertwining the quest for glory and for gold. The poem then criticizes this search by showing the fallibility of these treasures. Beowulf's sword, a treasure itself, breaks at pivotal points during his fights with Grendel's mother and with the dragon, echoing the inadequacy of gold and glory to sate Alexander's lust and reinforcing the implication that the addictive quest for riches and fame is ultimately futile.

After paralleling Alexander and Beowulf, the poet extends his argument by augmenting the consequences of Beowulf's pride. To this end, it is helpful to compare Beowulf's and Hrothgar's reactions to a threat to their respective kingdoms. In contrast to every other kingly character in the manuscript, Hrothgar is presented in unilaterally positive terms, such as "sage and good" (105.278) and "famous lord of the Danes" (105.271). As one of the few "good" kings in the entire manuscript, Hrothgar presents an archetype at the opposite end of the spectrum from Holofernes. Therefore, his actions when confronted with a threat to his kingdom from Grendel may be considered the model for a king in his situation. The threat of Grendel, "the enemy of humankind" (97.164), is classed in superlative terms as a "war on justice" (95.144); yet, though the monster's destruction and murder threatens the stability of his kingdom, Hrothgar responds merely with passive sorrow for his dead men: "The mighty one suffered, endured misery over his men" (95.130-31). Perhaps more astonishingly, the poem never condemns Hrothgar's passivity, but rather continues to refer to him as "wise" (99.190) and as a "famous lord" (line 201). These epithets indicate that Hrothgar's decision to wait for a champion instead of fight is not a sign of cowardice but rather a wise choice, considering his kingly responsibilities. As Kathryn Powell notes, "The difference between a heroic warrior and a king or ruler is a notable one, in that rulers form an exclusive subset of heroic warriors whose actions have special political, religious, and moral significance" (4). Hrothgar's passivity, then, may be regarded as wisdom when considering his broader responsibilities as a king whose life, if endangered, could have even direr repercussions for his kingdom than Grendel's rampages.

By contrast, Beowulf fails to fulfill this regal role because he seeks to fulfill his personal goals of glory and thereby dooms his people. Unlike the young hero who vanquishes swamp monsters, the Beowulf who fights with the dragon should no longer function as an independent agent but as a representative whose actions—and death—affect his country. Therefore, when old Beowulf states to his retainers, “By valor I shall gain the gold, or warfare, violent, mortal peril, will carry off your lord” (Fulk 253.2535-38), he forsakes his duties to his people in favor of a personal bid for more glory. The poem criticizes this abandonment by changing the epithets referring to Beowulf. His descriptors at the beginning of the poem include “the good one” (99.203), “the champion” (line 209), and “the safeguard of men” (139.791). His undisputed goodness shifts during his bout with the dragon by the collective label *aglæcean*, translated “the troublemakers” (257.2591). Previously, this word solely describes monsters such as Grendel and Grendel’s mother. This epithet indicates that Beowulf’s search for fame has pushed him further into the realm of the monstrous and equates his character with the very monsters that he has spent his career vanquishing.

Rather than demonstrating the wisdom of Hrothgar, Beowulf’s destructive lust for glory—reminiscent of the vile Holofernes of *Judith*—utterly dooms him and his people. The first indication of Beowulf’s failure is his absence when the dragon burns down his home (239.2324-27), an absence that suggests he has ceased to fulfill his role as king even before he decides to fight at his kingdom’s downfall. Furthermore, as Beowulf himself states, because of his presence “there was not any king of the neighboring peoples who dared confront [him] with war-friends, threaten alarm” (267.2733-36). Upon Beowulf’s death, Wiglaf, his last trustworthy thane, laments, “Many a man shall often suffer wrack for the will of one alone, as has happened to us” (289.3076). By expanding the consequences of Beowulf’s actions to his people, the poet builds upon the previous critique of the insufficiency of gold and glory to satisfy by augmenting the consequences. Therefore, when Beowulf risks and then loses his life for gold and glory, he risks and loses the collective survival of the Danes. He does not merely abandon his people; he dooms them.

We find Beowulf’s final complexity, the manuscript’s

definition of monstrosity, and the critique of the search for personal glory in the poem's final word: *lof-geornost*. A compound adjective, *lof-geornost* indicates Beowulf's fatal, refractory commitment to achieving glory through the acquisition of gold. The first part, *lof*, can be translated "fame" or "honor" and appears twice elsewhere in the poem. The first instance comes within the first 25 lines of the poem in a description of Scyld, a "good king" who lived prior to the events of the poem (87.11). In this section, the poet lays out the timeline of a good king such as Scyld, stating, "so ought a young man to ensure by his liberality . . . that his close companions will in turn stand by him in his later years, his men be true when war comes; from praiseworthy deeds [*lof-dædum*] comes success in every nation" (87.20-24). Here, the poet attributes the responsibility for performing "praiseworthy deeds" to young men who serve a king, not the king himself. Beowulf fulfills this role when he puts "his trust in his strength, the hand-grip of a mighty man" while fighting Grendel and thus earns "long-lived praise [*lof*] in warfare" (187.1533-34, 1536). However, while attempting to achieve such praiseworthy deeds as an old king, Beowulf fails because he tries to fill an identity he should no longer claim as an old king. As a young man, his "grip," or youthful strength, provides him with a suitable substitute when his sword breaks. However, when his sword "fail[s] in combat" during his fight with the dragon (263.2680), the older Beowulf has no reserves to deploy in its place; he must rely solely on another equally fallible sword to win (265.2703). This weakness indicates that he can no longer achieve *lof* and should have left the achievement of praiseworthy deeds to his younger retainers.

Just as a linguistic understanding of *lof* helps us understand Beowulf's identity confusion, combining *lof* with the second part of the compound, *geornost*, reinforces the poet's subtle critique of Beowulf and, by extension, Anglo-Saxon culture as well. *Georne*, an adverb of intensity, translates as "willingly" (237.2294) or "resolutely" (149.968) in other places in the poem. By placing it before the noun *lof* and using its superlative form, *geornost*, the poet indicates the consummate intensity with which Beowulf pursues *lof*, an intensity that Fulk translates as "most honor-bound" (295.3182).

This word evokes the extent to which Beowulf pursues personal glory and, as the final word of the manuscript, implies a warning against the pursuit of personal glory because of its potentially disastrous consequences.

Informed by the manuscript's definitions of monsters and the symbolic significance of gold from the previous texts of the manuscript, we may judge the monstrous valence of Beowulf's character in light of a moral standard, which he fails because of his refractory pursuit of glory and gold. The poet then uses his subtle characterization to challenge traditional Anglo-Saxon cultures that privilege the pursuit of personal glory above all else by pushing that principle to the extreme. In Beowulf's case, his death in pursuit of the dragon's hoard enables the eventual annihilation of his people. His specific pursuit of gold signals the symbolic weight of treasure from Alexander's *Letter*, where Alexander's insatiable thirst for gold mirrors his more intense, though no more successful, quest for personal glory. Because of this glory-lust, Beowulf's heroic construction breaks down in the latter half of the poem as he bears more resemblance to the lustful Holofernes from *Judith* and the godless King Dagnus from *St. Christopher*. In the end, we, much like the assumed Anglo-Saxon audience, are left with a series of poignant correlations transcendent of culture: parallels between vanity and valor, gold and glory, and most importantly, men and the monsters they both vanquish and embody.

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Signposts to Prophecy: Marginalized Voices in Flannery O'Connor's *The Violent Bear It Away*

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The world of literary theory seems often to leave little room for dogma too heavily influenced by religious thought. Therefore, the consensus that the body of fiction by Southern writer Flannery O'Connor—an unequivocal “cradle-to-the-grave Catholic”—has unfailing literary merit is anomalous (Peede 1). O'Connor's insistence that she wrote fiction solely as a means of furthering the Kingdom of her Catholic faith has colored the interpretation of her work to the point that she is studied “through a proscribed master text: as a religious writer who used a rural Southern, Protestant fictional backdrop as a setting to express the core tenets of . . . Christianity” (2). Despite the trend to interpret her work only through this specific, Christianized lens, criticism of O'Connor's work has not been completely shut off to non-Christian scholars; her thirty-two short stories and two novels have been studied by critics both sympathetic to and critical of her religious values.

In the eyes of Christian literary scholars, O'Connor is hailed as a hero of sorts—a good writer who was a Christian rather than a good Christian writer—serving as an early testament to C.S. Lewis's call for more “books by Christians . . . with their Christianity latent.” O'Connor's prominence, however, has led many of her Christian critics to overlook the more problematic elements of her work. O'Connor was, undeniably, a product of the 1950s American South, and many critics go to great lengths to sidestep her tendency to succumb to the attitudes that permeated that region. The most ungainly facet of O'Connor's work, for Christian critics, seems

to be the largely un-nuanced treatment of minorities. Specifically, O'Connor tends to use characters who are disabled, homosexual, or black as mere metaphors or place-markers in the lives of her white Protestant protagonists, foregoing any attempt to humanize them in the name of meeting her objective: the glorification of Christ. Though this trend manifests itself in various forms and to various degrees across her short stories, O'Connor's second novel, *The Violent Bear It Away*, demonstrates her dereliction on all three fronts; the mentally disabled Bishop Rayber, the homosexual stranger dressed in purple, and a slew of racial minorities including Buford Munson are all examples of characters O'Connor uses to advance her plot and characterize the novel's white protagonist, Francis Tarwater.

To begin an analysis of the egregious treatment of minorities in O'Connor's fiction, it is important to understand the conventions of O'Connor criticism; this endeavor merits an unpacking of how many critics choose to interpret her work. Timothy P. Caron distinguishes between two fields of O'Connor criticism: the "True Believers," who "see the world in much the same way O'Connor herself saw it" and the "Apostates," who do not (138). Caron's True Believers typically interpret O'Connor's works as metaphorical endorsements of Roman Catholicism, where every story culminates in a grace-bestowing moment of violence directed toward a protagonist who is too heavily dependent upon the modern philosophies of self-reliance and intellectualism. Caron, however—a self-professed "Apostate"—claims the problem inherent in the True Believers' interpretations of O'Connor's work is that they derive those interpretations from O'Connor's intentions in writing her fiction: "Common to most True Believers' approach is a reliance upon O'Connor's nonfiction, both her occasional addresses and her letters, to provide the key to a proper reading of her work. Often these critics are following O'Connor's explicit instructions on how her fiction is to be read" (140). Certain trends within O'Connor criticism have become conventional precisely because O'Connor told her readers how to read her fiction. O'Connor addressed nineteen letters to fourteen different people concerning *The Violent Bear It Away* alone, instructing them, with varying degrees of

didacticism, how to interpret aspects of her novel (*Habit of Being*). Indeed, O'Connor has "had [her] way with critics," as James M. Mellard asserts (qtd. in Caron 141), and Caron's observation that "as a group, the True Believers follow her directions quite closely" is aptly made (141).

In addition to raising questions concerning the intentional fallacy, the True Believers' dependence on O'Connor's extra-textual commentary for the interpretation of her work also leads such critics to dangerous conclusions. Specifically, the trend leads critics to overlook certain transgressions of O'Connor's in favor of campaigning for her suggested interpretations. For example, True Believer Timothy J. Basselin justifies O'Connor's unfair treatment of disabled characters by arguing that "her primary concern was spiritual [so] her style therefore allows and even perpetuates negative stereotypes of disability" (113). Though Basselin addresses O'Connor's use of disabled persons, his defense shields O'Connor from accusations of perpetuating any kind of negative stereotype. This disturbing "end justifies the means" mentality is all too common among O'Connor's True Believers. Ralph C. Wood even extends the sentiment to encompass O'Connor's personal life, positing, in response to accusations of racism in O'Connor's letters, that O'Connor's "Christian faith trumped her deficiency in fellow-feeling" no matter what "her likes or dislikes about black people as a race" may include (100).

It is worth noting that not all True Believers are so willing to excuse O'Connor of her offenses. More self-aware critics at least recognize the dissonance that the "ends justify the means" argument can invoke in a reader. In particular, Christina Beiber Lake notes that her classes, upon encountering O'Connor for the first time, "agree with [O'Connor's] goals," but "respond negatively to the ways she bends the characters . . . to her ideological needs" (28). "The resulting question," Lake says, "is a good one: If O'Connor views her characters as tools in service of her vision of the truth, how can she hope that her readers will not view people that way, too?" (28). Lake's question implies that O'Connor uses certain characters to make certain points, a fact rarely contested by scholars. Additionally, Lake's question gives rise to several more questions:

Is it ethical to perpetuate negative stereotypes to make a theological argument? How are readers to discern between O'Connor's bending a character for her own purposes and her writing negative stereotypes because she actually believes them? The True Believers' approach to O'Connor's text does not answer sufficiently such questions, simply because, to them, the ethical implications of the answers do not matter. O'Connor's personal vision of truth matters, and any resulting casualties are unimportant. Effectively, die-hard O'Connor critics turn a blind eye to any elements deemed irrelevant to O'Connor's Catholic dogma.

George A. Kilcourse, Jr., notes that O'Connor "honestly admitted" in a letter to a friend that Hazel Motes, protagonist of her first novel *Wise Blood*, "did not seem 'very human'" (208). Consequently, says Kilcourse, O'Connor "consciously strove to remedy this dimension of her writing in her second novel, *The Violent Bear It Away*" (208). While Kilcourse's immediately following assertion that "Francis Marion Tarwater . . . emerge[s] as [a] fully human and complex character" is overstated, it is important to note what facets of the text contribute to Tarwater's characterization (208). Ironically, *The Violent Bear It Away* develops Tarwater primarily through his interactions with secondary, undeveloped characters. Perhaps this method of characterization would be unremarkable were it not for the fact that nearly all of these secondary characters represent some sort of marginalized voice: Tarwater's cousin Bishop Rayber is mentally disabled, the stranger who assaults Tarwater is homosexual, and Buford Mason, who buries Old Mason Tarwater, is black.

O'Connor's use of mentally handicapped characters as grotesque stand-ins for innocence and as mere plot devices is perhaps the most glaring instance of her failure to humanize the marginalized. In *The Violent Bear It Away*, George Rayber's son Bishop occupies this space. In addition to functioning as "Rayber's call . . . to define being human by relationship rather than reason," the disabled Bishop also serves as a catalyst for Tarwater's prophetic calling (Basselin 78). Frequently, critics reference the iconic scene in which Tarwater drowns Bishop in the lake as he "crie[s] out the words of baptism" as being a pivotal moment in Tarwater's

journey toward accepting his call as a prophet (*Violent Bear It* 216). Marshall Bruce Gentry, for example, identifies the drowning of Bishop as “the first” in a “series of crucial . . . turning points” in Tarwater’s life, as it is only after baptizing Bishop that the “sibilant oath of his friend”—commonly held to be the voice of the Devil, per O’Connor’s instructions—“fad[es] away on the darkness” (Gentry 149). Tarwater only frees himself from the evil voice in his head by baptizing Bishop. In this respect, the mentally disabled Bishop becomes nothing more than a plot device. Any opportunity O’Connor has to portray Bishop as a nuanced character is lost.

This exploitation of Bishop’s character is not lost on critics. Lake, for example, identifies “Tarwater’s baptism/drowning of Bishop” as one of the many facets of O’Connor’s fiction which elicit negative reactions from her students (28). While the death of a mentally disabled child at the hands of a maniac of ambiguous religious standing is a disturbing prospect enough, Bishop’s death scene is true to O’Connor’s form and is, paradoxically, predictably shocking. However, Bishop’s role as nothing more than a pawn O’Connor employs to further characterize her more prominent characters, while not exactly shocking, is considerably more damning.

At least it can be said that Bishop is endearing, which is more than can be said of the man with the “lavender shirt and . . . a panama hat,” whom O’Connor portrays as unsettlingly creepy from the moment he first rolls up in his “lavender and cream-color car” (227). The narrator’s description of the stranger—dressed in “lavender,” with “heavy black lashes around his eyes” and a “lock of yellow hair”—combined with the text’s emphasis on his “watching [Tarwater]” and encouraging him to drink whisky, treats the man as something that is at once sensual and disturbing (227, 229). The result is nothing less than repulsive. Readers’ suspicion based on O’Connor’s physical description that the man is a homosexual are validated four pages later, when he appears to implicitly sodomize Tarwater.

Though the temptation may be to accuse O’Connor of conflating the stranger’s morality with his sexuality—suggesting the

stranger is inherently evil because he is homosexual—this doesn't appear to be the case. If one succumbs to the True Believers' proclivities and appeals to the published collection of O'Connor's personal letters, it is undeniable that the stranger with whom Tarwater hitchhikes is indeed "the Devil . . . actualized" (375). The letter, however, makes no mention of the man's homosexuality and implies that it is his appealing "idiom" that likens him to Satan, not his sexual leanings (375). Ralph C. Wood further exonerates O'Connor of writing anti-homosexual sentiment: "As a single woman who had several lesbian friends, O'Connor had no desire to demonize homosexuality" (244). Wood also notes that the "demonic and vampiric act" of the stranger's raping Tarwater is not thusly classified because it is a homosexual rape, but rather because it is a "pedophilic" one (243). Nevertheless, Tarwater's interactions with the lavender-clad man constitute a significant plot point. Gentry labels "[Tarwater's] rape in the woods" as "the next . . . turning point" on the road to prophethood (150). In raping the young wayward prophet, therefore, the lavender-clad stranger takes his place next to Bishop as another dispensable minority—in this case, a sexual minority—whose sole textual purpose is to drive Tarwater toward his ultimate end: prophecy.

Like the first two turning points in Tarwater's path to accepting his calling, the final turning point that opens Tarwater's eyes and makes him "aware at last of the object of his hunger"—his call to prophecy—is initiated by yet another marginalized character (*Violent Bear It* 241-42). Buford Munson, the "Negro mounted on a mule," whose declaration that he "buried [Old Tarwater] while [Young Tarwater] was laid out drunk" is responsible for this final revelation (240). Undoubtedly, Buford Munson's burying Old Tarwater when Young Tarwater neglects to do so makes him a pivotal part in the latter's path to redemption. In spite of all Young Tarwater's efforts to prevent it, Old Tarwater has received his long-demanded Christian burial, and Young Tarwater can no longer ignore the inevitability of his calling. Gentry explains that Tarwater's final revelation at Powderhead—sparked by Buford's declaration that he has buried Old Tarwater—is the last turning point young prophet's life:

Tarwater's conscious acceptance of the role of prophet occurs only when he returns to Powderhead, at which point I believe that Tarwater's freedom is clear. . . . It is only at this point that Tarwater realizes that his original obligation to Old Tarwater has been fulfilled and that if he wishes to go off on a path different from the one Old Tarwater wants him to follow, now is the time to start. (151)

Notice that Tarwater chooses to submit to this call and, therefore, accepts redemption. Buford, by sparking this revelation, operates as the agent of Tarwater's redemption. Effectively, Buford Mason becomes the third minority character in the novel whose function is to inform the young would-be prophet's development. Buford's appearances at both the beginning and the end of the novel—each time characterized as the “Negro” who “burie[s]” Old Tarwater's body “in a decent way” solidify the claim that his burying Old Tarwater and forever ushering Young Tarwater into prophethood is his only function in the novel (3, 240).

Wood emphasizes O'Connor's tendency to “create black characters who become vehicles of salvation for whites,” citing “Buford Munson” as “the instrument of young Tarwater's religious rescue” (143). J. Ramsey Michaels takes the analysis one step further and identifies Buford as something of a prophet himself, noting that “the unremarkable ways of prophecy will be the ways of old Mason for sure, but also . . . the ways of Buford Munson” (65). Michaels goes on to provide an entire list of characters who act as prophetic voices throughout the novel, including Buford's “Indianlike” companion, another racial minority (*Violent Bear It* 42). Although Michaels celebrates O'Connor's use of racial minorities as God's mouthpieces, the actual purpose of these character's voices belies any argument that O'Connor uses them as positive forces. For Michaels, Buford Munson's importance lies not in his being elevated to the status of a prophet, but in his contribution to the life of a more central, white prophet. Michaels here merely identifies a recurring thread in *The Violent Bear It Away*: a minority character's contribution to the lives of one of O'Connor's two leading men determines his significance.

O'Connor's constant exploitation of her minority characters in *The Violent Bear It Away* is especially ironic when one notes that she devotes a large part of her second novel to condemning Rayber's modernistic, utility-based assessment of people via his son Bishop. Even more ironic—or, perhaps, frustrating—is the True Believers' eager acquiescence to O'Connor's criticism of modernity and simultaneous denial that she is guilty of unconsciously lacing her novel with that very same mindset. Fear of discrediting O'Connor's work and her contributions to both Southern and Christian fiction stop many critics from judging her too harshly. In the end, however, recognizing O'Connor's breach of her own moral code is important for a number of reasons.

For True Believers, the end justifies the means, which effectively curtails criticism. The Apostates, however, have a much harder time dismissing such statements. Caron applies the sentiment to O'Connor's use of racial slurs, positing that “if one grants . . . that O'Connor's salvational concern should be at the center of our readings, . . . then the occasional impolite term or the unenlightened joke can be gotten past because the concern for her readers' immortal souls far outweighs the . . . racial faux pas” (150). It is here that we see the full significance of True Believers' dismissal of O'Connor's treatment of marginalized characters; discussions of widely-studied writers like O'Connor call attention to her hasty willingness to deploy these characters in order to develop a theme. Unfortunately, marginalized groups receive the brunt of O'Connor's negligence. Recognizing these elements in a canonical writer's work remains important both as a means to more fully understand their work and as a reminder that these marginalized voices—characters and real-life alike—should not be ignored.

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“Enforced, stained, and deflowered”: Considering the Reactions of Tamora and Lavinia to the Patriarchal System in *Titus Andronicus*

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Shakespeare's early play *Titus Andronicus* features two prominent female characters: the Goth queen Tamora, made empress of Rome by Saturninus, who is cruel and conniving; and Lavinia, honored daughter of the titular Titus, who is first esteemed and then is cast aside. These two women are extremely dissimilar, yet scholarly criticism has produced very little research that considers both Tamora and Lavinia as they relate (or do not relate) to each other; instead, most criticism interested in the play's women is concerned primarily with the literary implications of Lavinia's rape and scarcely discusses Tamora at all. While the view of Lavinia as an object subjected to male power is perfectly valid, it is not her only function in the play, and the absence of scholarship on such a unique, powerful character as Tamora is puzzling. Many scholars have insightfully addressed Lavinia's plight, but because Shakespeare's female characters are few and therefore must represent much, we should recognize the value of examining both Lavinia and Tamora to better understand their importance.

Titus Andronicus historically has been regarded as one of Shakespeare's worst plays. Indeed, T.S. Eliot commented that it was “one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written” (qtd. in Bevington 966). More generous criticism, however, has spiked in the past twenty years and has lauded the play for its social

commentary concerning violence, revenge, and the pitfalls of a patriarchal system as found in ancient Rome (Willis 21). Deborah Willis notes that “the dramatic rise in favor of *Titus Andronicus* . . . has—perhaps not coincidentally—closely paralleled the growth of feminist Shakespeare criticism,” for much recent criticism is interested in *Titus*’s gender politics, suggesting it is a critique of a male-dominated power structure: “The Rome of *Titus Andronicus* is an almost exclusive male world; its two female characters, their roles sharply circumscribed by patriarchal norms, are both dead by its end, and few other women are even referred to in passing” (Willis 21-22). These “patriarchal norms,” of course, fail Rome; Titus needlessly kills Tamora’s son Alarbus to honor the fallen men of Rome, the inept Saturninus (by right of primogeniture) is elected as emperor and takes the wicked Tamora as his empress, and innocent Lavinia is killed by her father to preserve family honor. The patriarchy is regarded as the reason for Rome’s downfall; thus, the play’s women and the roles they serve (or are assigned) within the play are of the utmost importance. Criticism of *Titus* reflects the importance of these roles on an individual level but does not consider the importance of *both* Tamora and Lavinia as one multifaceted representation of women in a patriarchal society. Understanding the different ways they react to their assigned roles is crucial for understanding the play’s gender. Relying on feminist criticism, this essay examines Tamora and Lavinia, their different reactions to ancient Rome’s patriarchal ideologies, their interactions with each other, and their impact on the play’s gender critique.

Queen of the enslaved Goths and empress of Rome due primarily to Saturninus’s lust, Tamora is a cunning, complex character who demonstrates only a glimpse of humanity at the beginning of the play when Titus decides to kill Alarbus as recompense for the “five-and-twenty valiant sons” (1.1.79) of Rome killed in battle. Tamora kneels before Titus in contrition and pleads for her son’s life, appealing to Titus’s sense of virtue: “Sweet mercy is nobility’s true badge / Thrice noble Titus, spare my firstborn son” (1.1.119-20). Her pleas fail, of course, and Titus sacrifices Alarbus, thus inciting the play’s savage cycle of revenge, for once Tamora recognizes that men hold the power, she appropriates

the ruthlessness of Rome's men to use for her own gain. For the majority of the play, she exhibits behaviors generally regarded (at least in the sixteenth century) as intrinsically male: deception, manipulation, cruelty, and strong sexuality. She is the mastermind behind the plot to ruin Titus and his family; she cuckolds Saturninus via her relationship with Aaron; and she encourages her sons Demetrius and Chiron to have their way with Lavinia. She is completely depraved and cares only for herself—others, in her eyes, are merely tools to be used for personal gain. Even her lover Aaron is not immune to her coldhearted nature, for when she bears their dark-skinned, illegitimate son, she “bids [Aaron] christen it with thy dagger's point” so that Saturninus will not discover her affair with Aaron (4.2.71). Tamora's wanton sexuality is a recurring theme within the play; indeed, everyone except Saturninus seems to be aware that Tamora is unfaithful, and Tamora herself appears to make little effort to conceal her adultery. The “most insatiate and luxurious [lecherous] woman” (5.1.88) was regarded with fearful suspicion in the sixteenth century; society presented “an absolute distinction between male and female wantonness in which the latter is always a ‘default’ condition that a woman must be trained to avoid,” or else men might be infected by such behavior (Rice 302). In other words, women with strong sexuality would undermine the social order by achieving power over men and using this power for personal gain. Tamora is a perfect example: she uses her sexuality to achieve her own goals. Superficially, she acknowledges the social order of Rome; in reality, however, she knows she can invert this order by deviating from what patriarchal society expects of women.

Lavinia, then, is the complete opposite of Tamora. She fulfills patriarchal expectations of women perfectly and suffers enormously for her efforts. The text refers to Lavinia as “Rome's rich ornament” (1.1.50), making clear that she is valued for her beauty and virginity and nothing else, even by her husband Bassianus, who appears to be of a gentler persuasion than many of the other men in the play. Lavinia's father Titus views her “as a device to effect a transfer of power,” and whoever “owns” Lavinia gains the power she represents, whether it is political or sexual (Harris 385). The squabbling between Saturninus and Bassianus

over who has the right to Lavinia, then, is effectively an argument about which man will gain the useful support of Titus. Similarly, Titus favors Saturninus as husband to Lavinia, for Saturninus holds more power than his brother Bassianus, who argues that Lavinia is rightfully his via a prior claim. Bassianus eventually succeeds, but not without a price, for Titus kills his own son Mutius when he blocks Titus from following Bassianus and Lavinia. Titus appears to feel no guilt for his actions, justifying his son's death as an appropriate response to the emperor's wishes and thus Rome itself. Superficially, Titus defers to the honor of Rome by asking permission from Saturninus before killing the ravished Lavinia, thus giving the appearance that Lavinia's sacrifice is necessary to uphold Rome's honor (5.3.35-42). Emily Detmer-Goebel, however, points out that "the killing of Lavinia isn't for Rome at all" (117), but instead occurs to preserve Titus' familial honor: "Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee / And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die!" (5.3.46-47). When Demetrius and Chiron kill Bassianus and forcibly take Lavinia for themselves, another transaction of power occurs, but Lavinia, raped and mutilated, is no longer of any worth to Titus and is, therefore, nothing but a source of shame. Modern readers, naturally, are outraged by such a worldview, and many authors suggest that this is Shakespeare's intended reaction: "In this way, the play offers not just a critique of an ancient Roman law, it confirms the distinctly modern judicial system that limits the father's power over his children" (Detmer-Goebel 110). The play confirms Lavinia is valuable only when she is chaste, a move that serves not as a recommendation of the patriarchal system, a criticism of it. Ironically, the innocent Lavinia dies to preserve the honor of a family that has, for the entirety of the play, been behaving dishonorably in its quest for revenge.

Tamora and Lavinia interact in only one scene, but this scene is crucial for understanding the play's presentation of a spectrum of womanhood in a patriarchal system. In the third scene of Act III, Lavinia pleads with Tamora to rescue her from the lascivious intentions of Demetrius and Chiron. Here, Tamora's assimilation into Roman culture is evident, for instead of chastising her sons, she instead chides Lavinia for trying to prevent them: "So

should I rob my sweet sons of their fee / No, let them satisfy their lust on thee” (2.3.179-80). Earlier in the scene, Lavinia has erred in mocking Tamora for her dark-skinned lover, but “neither logical nor eloquent arguments against rape necessarily save victims; they did not save Lucrece, after all” (Detmer-Goebel 80). Despite Lavinia’s foolish words, Tamora is interested primarily in reparations for Alarbus’s death and thus approves of her sons’ intentions that will, effectively, mar Lavinia to a state of value that equals a dead son, even if Lavinia herself does not actually die. The juxtaposition of the monstrous Tamora with the terrified Lavinia peaks when Lavinia appeals to their shared womanhood: “O Tamora! Thou bearest a woman’s face—” (2.3.136). When this tactic fails, she pleads for Tamora to kill her and so keep her “from [Demetrius and Chiron’s] worse-than-killing lust” (2.3.175). Her pleas are unheeded by Tamora, and Lavinia, before she is dragged away, cries that Tamora is “a beastly creature / The blot and enemy to our general name!” (2.3.182-83). This “general name,” of course, refers to womanhood—Tamora seems determined to scorn such a name in favor of revenge, ending the exchange with orders to her sons to ensure Lavinia will be unable to report who has attacked her. All traces of the Tamora who begged for her son’s life are gone; in her place is a creature shaped by cruelty that can no longer empathize with her own sex when it is in danger.

Bernice Harris argues that both Lavinia and Tamora experience rape within the play, Lavinia in the modern sense of the word and Tamora in the archaic sense: the Latin root of “rape” is *rapere*, which means “to seize.” In early English laws, little distinction was made between abduction and sexual rape, so when Tamora is taken prisoner by the Romans, she has been “raped.” Since Tamora too has been “raped,” says Harris, she coldly leaves Lavinia to the same fate, albeit one of a more horrific nature. Saturninus and the Romans have, after all, treated Tamora fairly well since her capture, excluding the death of Alarbus, which is what spurs her to adopt Rome’s patriarchal ideology of treating subordinate persons as expendable. Lavinia is one of the few over whom Tamora can exert total control, and she desires Lavinia’s ruin: “Tamora would have Lavinia’s virtue undone; as a chaste wife, Lavinia is Tamora’s

antithesis” (Harris 392). Tamora, then, wants to rid Lavinia of what sets her apart from herself not only to avenge the death of Alarbus, but also to drag Lavinia down from her position in ancient Rome as a woman held in the highest regard possible (due to her purity). Tamora has seen all too well what the patriarchy is capable of in Rome; “since she cannot strike directly at the men who oppress her, Tamora chooses to revenge herself on Lavinia” (Harris 392).

While Harris’s claims have merit, they address only part of the significance of the dichotomy between Tamora and Lavinia, because they focus primarily on Tamora. By constructing such drastically different characters as Tamora and Lavinia, *Titus Andronicus* suggests that within a patriarchal society, women will ultimately bow to male power regardless of how they react. Tamora uses her sexuality to gain power as empress and employs revenge tactics against Titus and his family, but she and her sons all die by the play’s end. Lavinia performs her duties as a daughter and a wife flawlessly, but she is still subjected to the male honor code of a patriarchal system and suffers capital punishment due to factors beyond her control. What much criticism of the play misses, when it focuses exclusively on either Tamora or Lavinia, is that *both* women ultimately lose when they play patriarchy’s game. A woman can imitate the male power structure and use it for her own gain or she can become what patriarchal society expects her to be; either way, should men decide that the women are insufficient or unworthy, they are the ones who ultimately hold power over women’s life, death, and reputation. A woman may fall on Tamora’s end of the spectrum, Lavinia’s end, or somewhere in the middle, but when patriarchy reigns, she will not have control over herself. The claim, then, that Shakespeare uses such different women to show the numerous faults of patriarchy is not unfounded. Ralph Berry remarks that “if one had to go on *Titus Andronicus* alone, one would say that Shakespeare regards [it] as an absurd system” (13). If only Tamora were included, her demise might be dismissed as the inevitable end of depravity; if only Lavinia were included, we might be tempted to consider her as an Ophelia who is simply swept up in the madness that surrounds her. Instead, the presence of both types of women allows the play to show the ludicrousness that ensues when men hold total control.

Despite the reign of Elizabeth I, the England of Shakespeare's day was still highly patriarchal. Women retained few rights and were primarily dependent on fathers or husbands for protection and welfare (Detmer-Goebel 78). The fact that *Titus Andronicus*—a play that enumerates the flaws of dominant male power and exhibits its gruesome aftereffects—was panned by critics and audiences of its era is hardly surprising; indeed, the recent increase in scholarship on the play suggests that Shakespeare was, once again, ahead of his time. Elizabethan England was certainly no ancient Rome, but it unfortunately retained much of Rome's negative ideology concerning women and other marginalized groups. In *Titus Andronicus*, Tamora and Lavinia are an inextricable pair that subversively suggest the total domination of women is detrimental, not beneficial.

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Influence and Identity: Coming of Age in Black British London

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The *Bildungsroman*—the popular Western coming-of-age genre—has long been considered universal in its representation of the human experience of self-actualization. But recent iterations of the genre have shown that such a universal sentiment does not exist. This is particularly true in the case of black British literature, an umbrella term encompassing works from authors with cultural ties to both England and one or more of its many colonial territories in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, or South America. This paper will focus specifically on the process of forging an identity that challenges the strict confines of English nationalism and encompasses the black British experience, particularly within the context of London. It will utilize two postcolonial, semi-autobiographical texts by black British authors with differing representations of the journey towards self-actualization: *Lara* by Bernardine Evaristo and *The Intended* by David Dabydeen. As a result of the clash between traditional English national identity and the varied cultural identities of immigrants, young black Britons coming of age in England dwell in a fluid third space that is reflective of both their pasts and the communities in which they currently live.

It is important to first examine the traditional *Bildungsroman* in order to understand how the black British experience both supports and subverts its primary objectives. Some of the genre's key features are loss of innocence, journeys, and self-actualization.

As Ericka Hoagland points out, the *Bildungsroman* perfectly aligns with the traditional sense of English nationalism (24). The idea that a man can advance his own position in life through hard work, moral behavior, and religious devotion supports the ideal English gentleman: well-rounded, righteous, and just. Thus, novels that constructed masculinity also reinforced Englishness. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that this white male-dominated genre expanded to include women, while ethnic minorities were not represented in *Bildungsroman* until early in the twentieth century.

The black British *Bildungsroman* is structured similarly to its traditional form, but diverges in the scope of the protagonist's struggles. Black *Bildungsroman* make no pretenses about the opportunity to advance when the subject is not white. Mark Stein defines the genre as being about the problems of "subjecthood attained through dialectical interaction between self and society" (92-93). In fact, many black British *Bildungsroman* can be characterized as anti-*Bildungsroman*. As defined by Hoagland, this subgenre follows the traditional structure of a journey of growth, but culminates in an ultimate failure to reach self-acceptance. The blame for this failure is not placed on the protagonist, but on society's unrealistic expectations, blocked resources, or structural flaws (28). These flaws are manifested through racism, sexism, and classism. By recognizing the mechanisms that forced a failed attempt to assimilate into society, the black protagonist grows in a way that subverts the traditional *Bildungsroman* and thus redefines the genre.

All of these influences on black British identity culminate in a sense of self that cannot be categorized as firmly English or as "other," but as a hybrid, third space that varies based on individuals' responses to said influences. In *Lara*, the titular character turns to her past to understand the competing forces that push her against traditional Englishness. Born in London to a white Irish-English mother and a black Nigerian-Brazilian father, Lara begins her coming-of-age journey steeped in the racial binary set forth by society. In the tradition of black British *Bildungsroman*, physical appearance factors heavily into Lara's adolescent experience and social interactions with her peers. In the schoolyard, she witnesses an exchange between her white friends: "Your lips are so luscious, Soos. Mine are too thin, see?" / . . . Lara wondered what was so

special about Susie's lips, / same size as hers and shape, just a different colour" (116). Here, Lara is defined in relation to physical standards set forth by others. Beauty becomes a mechanism of exclusion used to keep Lara firmly outside the English identity. As defined by Paul Gilroy, these "mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion" create narrow criteria for inclusion and a multitude of grounds for exclusion from British society (45). They effectively dictate that Lara can never be characterized as English because she exists only by comparison to Englishness.

Nevertheless, an adolescent Lara continues to strive toward a fully realized English identity. At one point, she tells her cousin Beatrice that she, Lara, is not black, but half-black, thus implying that she is exempt from institutional racism. Beatrice's retort shows that such details are not considered legitimate in society:

The only half you are is half-asleep. . . . You're a nigger to them, lovey, or a nigra as I like to say. . . . I know blacks who were beaten by marauding whites in the race riots of the Twenties. . . . Do you think they stopped to ask if they were half-caste? Oh, excuse me, 'Sir, just before I kick your head in, is your mother white by any chance?' (128-29)

Beatrice's lecture brings Lara to understand that she cannot use her white mother, her English friends, or even her British citizenship as signifiers of English identity. The exchange is the foundation for Lara's change in reference group from mainstream English to African.

But during this portion of her journey, Lara encounters a second social construct that problematizes her self-actualization: gender. At one point, her Nigerian boyfriend Josh berates her for not being Nigerian enough: "you don't even know what / Jollof rice is, let alone how to cook it. You're strictly / a fish fingers and mash girl. You'll make a sorry wife" (143). Thus, gender is used in conjunction with race to reject Lara from another cultural community that she technically belongs to by birthright. As E. M. Ester Gendusa writes, "while [English society] ostracizes her as not being fully white, [the Nigerian community] does not hesitate to exercise forms of internal gender discrimination, implying physical violence and the presupposition of Lara's having to conform to a

pre-conceived role of loyal keeper of the ethnic culture” (101). This is not a role that Lara will accept, most simply because it does not capture what she believes to be the true essence of her identity. It is only when she makes this conscious decision that Lara recognizes the impossibility of living within a binary and sets out to synthesize the pieces of her past into a coherent whole.

Lara must experience her cultural past firsthand in order to truly understand its effect on her life. Her journey leads her to Brazil, where four generations of her paternal family lived in slavery. It is only there, in a country with no link to British colonialism, that Lara can view herself apart from the influence of English identity. Deep within the Amazon, she is free from the competing social mechanisms that dictate her identity in England. As she leaves Brazil, Lara sheds her short-sighted views of identity and debuts a new worldview:

I savour living in the world, planet of growth, of decay, think of my island, the “Great” Tipped out of it, tiny amid massive floating continents, the African one an embryo within me . . .
Back to London, across international time zones.
I step out of Heathrow and into my future. (188)

Here, in the novel’s concluding lines, nature and birth imagery show that Lara’s current state is natural and unaffected by artificial impositions of society. None of Lara’s three major cultural influences are valued above the others; the dominance of Great Britain is notably discredited, though she will not, and cannot, go as far as erasing her Britishness altogether. By distinguishing between honoring a cultural legacy and letting its negative connotations affect sense of self, Lara translates her past into a present that is entirely her own. Her journey culminates in a self-created third space that breaks binary’s boundaries.

In *The Intended*, the unnamed narrator struggles against similar social forces, but instead attempts to align with traditional British society by turning away from his West Indian Guyanese heritage and community. He fetishizes Englishness from a young age in his rural village in mid-twentieth-century Guyana. In one scene, he becomes obsessed with a British porcelain doll. Transfixed by the

doll's white skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes, the narrator "wished Ma could send her back to England where she belonged, instead of trapping her here with all the coolie and nigger people who would manhandle her and drop her on the floor so she'd hurt her head, so crude and ignorant were they" (160). In a telling use of the word "they," the narrator exempts himself from the Guyanese, degrading and blaming them for corrupting the doll. Already, he distances himself from his culture. His fear that touching the doll will soil her purity is representative of his shame and embarrassment. The narrator's subsequent sexualization of the doll is also framed in this context: "I stood there gazing upon her body, and I felt my fingers trembling to pull down her white slip to discover what lay underneath. It was beautifully white and smooth, hairless, not like Ma's" (161). Here, his sexual awakening is tied directly to a fetishization of the English and disgust for the Guyanese. This incident parallels the narrator's later failed attempt to have sex with Janet, a white English girl. As Charles Sarvan writes, "sexual possession of her would signify to him penetration into a culture from which he was then excluded" (60). Although such penetration is the narrator's ultimate goal, internalized self-hatred prevents him from achieving it. In both cases, he fears the women will no longer be the epitome of Englishness if he touches them. He will not let himself degrade them, and preserves them as his "intended," his eventual prize for assimilation.

Once in London, the narrator's story takes on qualities of the anti-*Bildungsroman*, as he begins to recognize the social mechanisms that prevent him from being viewed as a success in English society. In awe of the city, the culture, and what he believes to be the superior breed of people, he wishes more than ever to be identified as English in the traditional sense he has cultivated since childhood. The narrator tells his Rastafarian friend and fellow Boys' Home resident Joseph, "I have to make something of my life and move out of this place . . . that is why I work at my essays" (62). Here, the mechanism is education, and, more specifically, a traditional English education based on the myth-building, nationalistic literature that plays a major role in creating the imagined identity of Englishness. The narrator refuses to associate

himself with the others in the boys' home because their lack of education makes them the antithesis of Englishness. Instead, he uses education to bring himself out of the squalor of the home and create a persona that distinctly separates himself from his own past. It is here that the story deviates from the anti-*Bildungsroman*, as the narrator does not end his love affair with English society. Rather, he continues to obsess over shaping himself in the image of the classic Englishman.

The narrator also defines himself in relation to those around him, especially his friends Janet and Joseph. Janet represents traditional Englishness: education, whiteness, and middle-class stability. On the opposite end of the spectrum is Joseph, a black Jamaican immigrant, whose Rastafarian beliefs and lifestyle represent the narrator's foreign roots. According to Margaret Fee, these two relationships "[map] out the bleak opposition that the dominant stereotypes force on those categorized as Other: assimilate (and, implicitly, disappear into the majority) or just vanish into the shadows of the margins" (116). This highlights the most damning aspect of the binary: that the subject will be made invisible regardless of what identity he chooses. By defining himself not as an independent being, but in comparison to the whiteness or blackness of these relationships, the narrator falls into the racist discourse put forth by British society. He does not entertain the possibility that an identity beyond the binary even exists, and therefore is confined to a third space that only ideologically resembles an English identity.

At the end of *The Intended*, the narrator has successfully emulated the trappings of Englishness. He has been accepted to study literature at Oxford, and he is secretly engaged to Janet. Yet he has not successfully achieved any true sense of self:

The future is a space only in daydreams, as soon as I blink it shrinks to a dot the size of my pupils. I only know *now*, and what used to be. I watch the clouds being rinsed to their original colour and the darkness slowly unpeeling from the sky. I wait under the street lamp, wanting to be visible, but the light flames upon my head, flames upon my skin and I have to step back into the shade. (173)

The interplay between the imagery of white and black, light and dark, visibility and invisibility, shows the narrator has not escaped binary thinking. He cannot stand in the light because his claim to English identity is fragile at best. There has been no permanent change within his character over the course of his journey. Societal constructs make it impossible to live up to the standards of Englishness he has cherished since childhood and, as a result, he can see himself only as a failure. The narrator has no concept of his future and thus ends the novel on an ambiguous note.

With such disparities between *Lara* and *The Intended*, it is important to consider the effect of London on the course of events depicted. With its seats of government and cultural institutions, London is the metropolitan center of England and the physical manifestation of British nationalism. As Gendusa writes, “London is not only the product of real life experiences, but also a fictional reality, that is the result of literary practices which actively intervene in the delineation of the national image” (108). This means that, like the English identity itself, the essence of London is imagined. There can be no claim to a singular London experience due to this subjectivity. It serves as the context in which self-identity is formed and understood.

In both *Lara* and *The Intended*, the protagonists view London with respect to their cultural pasts, which define the way they view themselves within it. For Lara, London “is both beginning and end, a point of departure because it witnesses Lara’s birth and thus her story, but also of multiple, unending arrivals, both for immigrants and locals” (Cuder-Domínguez 178). While the statement may at first glance suggest instability, it really means that London is what Lara makes it at any given time. Lara’s identity has altered the make-up of London, due to the symbiotic relationship that exists between the city and its subjects. The narrator of *The Intended* has a far more reluctant relationship with London. As he prepares to leave for Oxford, he is struck by the fluidity of his identity and is filled with dread at the idea: “I didn’t want to be born time and again. I didn’t want to be an eternal indefinite immigrant” (171). In direct contrast to Lara, the narrator views rebirth negatively; the impossibility of clear categorization obstructs him from freedom of English

identity, while for her it is a gateway to the freedom of hybridity. The narrator's London exists as a binary, not a constantly evolving landscape. Because he has not attempted to forge an identity of his own outside the binary, his stagnant third space supports the social mechanisms present in London. By comparing the functions of London in these two black British *Bildungsroman*, it becomes apparent that the city is not only a battleground for identity, but also a freeing space for hybridity.

Ultimately, the study of black British *Bildungsroman* illuminates the struggle of young black Britons to assert their individuality in a nationalistic society that pushes them into a racial binary. Through works such as *Lara* and *The Intended*, that very nationalistic society is called into question as the actuality of a national English identity is called into question. As the genre of *Bildungsroman* continues to develop in diversity, so will the definition of what it means to be English. For the imagined community of the British nation, such diversity will serve to create a more comprehensive image of the black British experience.

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