WR

JOURNAL OF THE CAS WRITING PROGRAM

ISSUE 9

2016/2017

http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal (ISSN 1948-4763)

Contents

EDITOR'S NOTE

This year, the editors of *WR: Journal of the CAS Writing Program* received more than 450 submissions. This number illustrates the level of students' interest in having their work published and read not only by peers and instructors, but also the university community and indeed the global academic community at large.

Of these 450 submissions, the editorial board selected twelve essays for publication. The topics range from "Korean culture-bound mental illness" to "Brechtian epic theater"; from the benefits of prison nursery programs to the Freshkills Landfill on Staten Island. The CAS Writing Program offers about 400 seminars in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences every year, and Issue 9 of *WR* showcases exceptional examples of academic writing and research from across these disciplines. Most remarkable about all of these writers is the passion and intellectual rigor with which they pursue their rhetorical exigencies.

Jason Tandon
Editor, *WR: Journal of the CAS Writing Program*

FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

The final paper of WR 098 asks students to think critically about a theme in at least three different texts, two essays from their *Globalization* anthology and the novel *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. Their critical enquiry then leads them to formulate a conceptual problem and a well-reasoned response, allowing them to practice the kinds of rhetorical moves that they will employ in WR 100 and WR 150. WR 098 students tend to become attached to one or two themes that reappear in unique ways throughout our many readings, often establishing personal connections between the texts and their own experiences as international students and foreign language learners.

Sofia latched on to the themes of home and identity early on, but it wasn't until she read Humera Afridi's essay that the personal connection and the debate became clear. Sofia spoke with both me and her classmates about her definition of home and her views on identity, which became more problematic once she began considering the varied configurations of identity (and, specifically, cultural identity) within the many other course readings. Ultimately, Sofia's undeniable passion for the topic, her thorough engagement in each stage of the writing process, and her consistent questioning of alternate points of view led to a thought-provoking argument within the nature versus nurture debate.

Lesley Yoder
WR 098: Academic Writing for ESL Students 2

FROM THE WRITER

Writing this essay was a very challenging experience for me. I struggled a lot with thinking of an interesting topic to connect the novel and the two short narrative essays and with trying to keep my readers focused throughout the essay without forgetting the main message. Then I remembered how strongly I connected to Afridi's experience and her understanding of home and, conversely, how strongly I opposed Gogol's change of identity in *The Namesake*. I therefore decided to explore the debate of nature versus nurture, further inspired by my own experiences creating my identity based on where I am from, what I understand and feel close to my heart as home, and where and with whom I feel safe to be my true self. I had never thought about all of these issues before coming to study in the U.S., but since the first day I started my new life here, I have felt as though I am living in a fake reality away from my true home. Going through the process of creating this paper, I realized that even though I had strongly believed that nurture is what truly shapes our identities I had to acknowledge that nature does determine a part of our personalities.

SOFIA KONSTANTINIDOU is a rising sophomore and was born and raised in Athens, Greece. She has not yet chosen a major as she loves Biology but has not figured out what to specialize in. Even though she has no idea what path she is going to follow in life, she has always had two dreams: to help anyone in need and to travel the world. She just moved to the United States one year ago, so she misses her home greatly and is still adjusting to her new life in the United States. Sofia would like to dedicate her work to her WR 098 professor, Lesley Yoder, as she helped her improve her writing and created a safe and welcoming environment in class to express and talk about her fears and questions.

SOFIA KONSTANTINIDOU

IDENTITY CRISIS

Identity is the mark of one's personality and it is important to explore how each one of us understands and chooses to form it through two basic factors: nature and nurture. In Julian Hill's essay "In Search of Black Identity in Uganda," the author narrates his experience when he visited Africa for the first time, wishing to find a sense of belonging. As an African-American with a long-lost connection to his African roots, he travels to Uganda to reconnect with his heritage, but once he is there he realizes that identity is not only based on race and culture. Even though Hill's realization is important in order to understand that race and nationality are not the only factors that define him, Humera Afridi in her essay "A Gentle Madness" shows how her own identity was formed by identifying as Pakistani and by being emotionally connected to Pakistan. In her essay, Afridi describes her last memory of Pakistan during the war, a memory that has haunted her whole life and defined who she is. Her narrative has been created from fragments of that old memory that have been glued together through multiple descriptions of that day. Both authors enter the debate of whether identity is based either on nature or nurture as Hill comes to understand that not only nature determines one's identity and Afridi strongly believes that nature and nurture can work together to help someone identify with an ethnic group and find a sense of belonging within it. So, based on these two views, what are the factors shaping identity and how important are ethnic and cultural roots in defining who we are? Although I agree with Afridi's view on identity being related to a nation and to her meaning of "home," I disagree with Hill's perspective of identity being primarily and entirely based on one's biological traits and race. Nature, which involves race, nationality and biological traits, is an important aspect of identity, but nurture and how identity is socially constructed by one's personal experiences and what one attaches to the meaning of "home" play a bigger part in defining one's essence. A person can choose who and what they want to identify with, whether that be the same culture they were raised in or a different one.

Identity is more defined by nurture than nature as it is connected with the shared experiences, memories, and aspirations one has with a certain group of people and the sense of belonging one feels within that group. In the essay "In Search of Black Identity in Uganda," Hill visits Africa because he believes that it is a big part of his identity and that he is entirely connected to Uganda based on his African race and heritage. Hill travels to Uganda with the mindset that he is going to be accepted by the local people and that he is going to find the sense of belonging he was looking for. His naiveté is obvious from the very beginning of his narration as he mentions that "Africa was my second home. I had never been there, though" (53). Hill is unable to understand that Uganda cannot be his home as he has never been there before and does not share experiences with that place. However, after staying some days in Africa, he realizes that the natives see him as an outsider and his perception on what "home" means changes. By staying within the local community, Hill understands that he is not a part of the community as he has not been through the economic and political struggles that the Ugandans have been through. It is only when someone shares

experiences and feelings with other people of the community that he is a member of that place and it is only through these experiences that one can find a sense of belonging.

At the end of his essay, Hill wonders whether "these Ugandans in town would think of me differently, or would see me only in passing. I knew both of these responses were possible. And truthfully, the same probably went for how I might think about them" (61). Hill comes to understand that trying to define an unfamiliar place as "home" is unrealistic and unattainable. Hill realizes that Ugandans have come together only when they have a common goal to change their lives by sharing similar life experiences and that race and culture do not necessarily make someone a part of that group. Through Hill's observations we can assert that being a part of a group based on race and ethnicity and feeling that you are a part of a common goal by having similar experiences with the other members are two totally different things. Even though Hill makes a valid point on creating a sense of belonging within one's racial group by having similar personal experiences and common aspirations with these people, he overlooks the fact that identity is also directly linked with what one chooses to understand as "home" and one's emotional connection to that place. "Home" is where one feels emotionally and mentally connected to and where one is able to find a sense of belonging with the people attached to that place.

Many would probably challenge my view by insisting that "home" is always the place of one's origins, including one's heritage, race, and culture. Yet, is it always the case that "home" is where a person and his or her ancestors comes from, or is it more complex than that? For every person, the word "home" elicits different memories and feelings particular to a certain place. Due to these memories and feelings, an emotional connection is formed between a person and what becomes "home." Afridi expresses the importance of nationality in creating an emotional attachment to the place one calls "home." In her personal narrative "A Gentle Madness," she reveals her inner feelings of pain and despair about leaving Pakistan and the way that her cultural roots have defined her, but also how being Pakistani follows her wherever she goes. Afridi reveals that her last memory of Pakistan has become the center around which her identity revolves. She emphasizes the importance of this memory through the use of metaphor, saying that the memory "thrusts into [her] days, dappling and splicing them, in a macabre ceremony of remembrance, of a place that is always elsewhere, whose heart is that excruciating space below ground where the most exquisite music trickles in, informing virtually every moment of [her] present" (52). Her bittersweet and greatly emotional words uncover her pain and show how this memory about the loss of her nation's place of origin still haunts her. Moreover, her sudden separation from that place highlights her own feelings about the struggle to identify as a Pakistani. For Afridi, identity means embracing the place where she comes from, even if that means to constantly feel that something is missing, to not have a place to be connected to. She has formed her identity by gaining a sense of belonging in terms of upholding her nation through the shared feeling among all Pakistanis of missing "home." Afridi emphasizes the fact that only because she feels attached to Pakistan and calls it "home" she defines herself as Pakistani, thus proving that nature but mostly nurture define someone, as emotional connections and a sense of belonging within a specific ethnic group and place are the factors that create one's character.

While Afridi emphasizes how crucial it is to have a deep emotional connection and shared experiences to feel at "home," Jhumpa Lahiri demonstrates in her novel *The Namesake* that one's birthplace and shared memories do not guarantee a sense of belonging. Through the main character, Gogol Ganguli, a first-generation American with Indian immigrant parents, Lahiri presents a unique

situation in which the protagonist travels back and forth between the country of his birth, America, and the country of his parents and ancestors, India. His experiences and sense of belonging in America have mostly shaped his personality, yet he still seems lost in America. At the same time, particularly early in the novel as Gogol is growing up, he knows and understands his Indian heritage and traditions, but generally rejects them. Along with his parents, Ashoke and Ashima, Gogol visits India for long periods of time, but Gogol and his sister, Sonia, feel that "though they are home they are disconnected by the space, by the uncompromising silence that surrounds them. They still feel in transit, still disconnected from their lives" (Lahiri 87). Unlike Afridi and her Pakistani heritage, Gogol chooses to distance himself from his Bengali heritage, even though he has shared experiences with other Bengali people by knowing the language and undergoing several cultural traditions based on his parents' persuasion. His whole life Gogol has been split between two different cultures, Bengali and American, and as a result, he never finds a place to call "home." Although he has Bengali experiences, he does not share the same feelings with his family and doesn't identify as Bengali. Once he is eighteen years old, Gogol, who has always despised his name, chooses to change his name to Nikhil (Nick for short), which enables him to create a new personality based on his personal experiences and the way he feels about himself. "Home" and his identity become his own invention rather than decided by birthplace or heritage. As mentioned above, both Lahiri and Afridi illustrate that nurture, defined as one's personal experiences and feelings, is what determines one's identity. However, Afridi shows that someone can be attached to a place based on shared experiences with other people from the same ethnic group and find a sense of belonging within that community, whereas Lahiri through Gogol opposes Afridi by presenting Gogol not sharing the same feelings with his Bengali family of calling India "home" and not being able to belong somewhere as he is constantly split between two identities. Despite the fact that the two authors may have different point of views on this issue, they both show that a person can choose either who or what they identify with, whether that may be the culture they were raised in or not.

"In Search of Black Identity in Uganda," "A Gentle Madness," and *The Namesake* illustrate the complex debate of whether nature or nurture determines one's identity. In a multicultural environment, one can feel like losing one's identity or not being able to find a sense of belonging in a group or a place. Nature is considered to be an important factor in one's identity, but according to all authors, nurture is what mostly defines one's whole essence. This idea is presented in Hill's essay, but the author fails to emphasize the importance of attaching personal feelings and memories to what one calls "home". According to Afridi, identity is directly linked to one's feelings and what one understands and brings to mind at the sound of the word "home." However, even in today's world, a world filled with racism and outright rejection, those who are oppressed never give up on their identity. As Afridi presents in her narrative, she feels that her Pakistani identity follows her anywhere she goes (51). This feeling of belonging and having a place to call "home" is essential for the majority of people, but Lahiri shows us through Gogol that not everyone feels that deeply connected to a place, but rather creates an identity based on what one has experienced growing up and understands. To sum up, all authors could agree upon the fact that identity is the core of our entity, and that entity has to be attached to a sense of belonging; otherwise, we would lose ourselves and everything that represents our identity.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

One of the tricky things about having a class centered on the work of a single author is getting around that author's blind spots. With Kurt Vonnegut, that means wrangling with the peculiar way women show up in his novels and his short stories. What impresses me so much about this paper is the way Lauren zeroes in on the particular problem of gender in Vonnegut's fiction and elegantly applies a complicated theoretical lens to that problem. Lauren identifies moments in Vonnegut's fiction that lend themselves to a reading according to Judith Butler's work on performativity and gender expression. In so doing, she avoids some of the pitfalls that crop up with this sort of assignment—where either the exhibit source is an excuse to talk about method or argument, or the argument source becomes a pretext to recount juicy bits of story. Instead, this paper addresses the prompt—"discuss how the model of personal identity put forth in Vonnegut's fiction fits in with a philosophical conception of selfhood we've discussed"—by actually reading Vonnegut and Butler together.

Lauren worked extraordinarily hard on this paper; she read the entirety of Butler's *Gender Trouble* despite only being assigned an excerpt, and wholeheartedly participated in the peer-editing sessions. Further, her enthusiasm about the topic and the paper as a whole led her to meet with me several times and go through several rounds of editing, honing her paper into its best version of itself. That enthusiasm and hard work shines through in her clear, forthright prose and the paper's overall excellent quality. Her paper offers her readers, including me, a new way to read the works she's writing on, and that's no small feat.

Kenneth Alba
WR 100: Kurt Vonnegut

FROM THE WRITER

When given the task of discussing identity in Vonnegut's work, I knew almost immediately that I wanted to center my essay around Judith Butler. I was immediately captured by Butler's idea that gender identity, unlike biological sex, is slowly constructed through factors like individual desires, historical patterns, and the expectations of others. As I read through more of her work, I started to think about how her ideas aligned with certain aspects of Vonnegut's female characters. Although Vonnegut is my favorite author, I've always been bothered by the way he portrays women. Unlike his dynamic male characters, his female characters are alarmingly flat. It was initially difficult to decide which characters to focus on in my essay, but I eventually chose the Noth sisters from *Mother Night* and Susanna from "Miss Temptation" because their personalities are almost entirely dependent on men. Because of their one-dimensional nature, I thought it would be fascinating to analyze these female characters' identities by applying Butler's revolutionary ideas on gender identity and sexual performance.

LAUREN HIGGINS is a rising sophomore majoring in physical therapy and minoring in women's studies. She was born in Boston but has lived in Old Town, Maine for most of her life. She has been an avid reader since a young age, and enjoys playing with her dog, listening to music, and spending time with friends. She would like to thank Ken Alba and Ashley Cui for helping her succeed in WR 100, and her entire family for supporting her no matter what.

LAUREN HIGGINS
Prize Essay Award

REFLECTIONS OF BUTLER'S FEMALE GENDER AND SEXUAL PERFORMATIVITY IN VONNEGUT

In her essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," feminist philosopher Judith Butler writes that gender is "a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and perform in the mode of belief" (520). Many of Kurt Vonnegut's writings, especially his 1956 short story "Miss Temptation" and his 1961 novel *Mother Night*, explore personal identity and performative acts in a way that relates to Butler's reading of female sexuality and gender. This performance, examined closely by Butler in works such as *Gender Trouble*, is shown by Vonnegut through his female characters. Although these characters have been largely forgotten by most literary critics and scholars, they are nuanced and deserving of the same analysis as their male counterparts. Their absence in critical commentary, combined with Vonnegut's focus on identity and performance, make them prime candidates for analysis using Butler's philosophies on females, gender, and sex. Vonnegut's depictions of Helga Noth Campbell's role as an actress and sexual muse, Resi Noth's communist ruse, and Susanna's status as the object of Norman Fuller's desire creatively mirror Butler's concepts of the hyper-feminine drag queen performance, the inability to change one's identity at will, and the objectification that results from the pressures of the feminine sexual masquerade.

I. THE NOTH SISTERS AND IDENTITY PERFORMANCE

In *Mother Night,* Vonnegut introduces the Noth sisters, two German women that play significant roles in Howard Campbell's life. Helga, the eldest, was an actress, his wife, and his reason for living. She was his muse both on the stage and in the bedroom, and his most treasured works are inspired by this other half of his "nation of two" (42). These works include his plays and his diary, *Memoirs of a Monogamous Casanova*, which records the "six-hundred and forty-two" sexual encounters he had with "all the hundreds of women my wife had been" (*Mother Night* 127). Helga's position as a performer in all aspects of her life is accentuated by the fact that Vonnegut never develops her into a character independent of Campbell or his fantasies.

The only inkling of identity she has is as an actress, a role which bears resemblance to a drag queen. Butler writes of drag queens as demonstrating "three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance…. *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency*" (*Gender Trouble* 187). Similarly to the way in which drag queens imitate gender, actresses imitate reality by adopting identities created for them by someone else. Helga, by being an actress, is molded throughout the novel to be whatever Campbell remembers her as and wants her to be, making her drag-like figure in Campbell's memories and fantasies. Whenever she is referenced, it is often as "my Helga," a phrase that strengthens her place as an image perpetuated and manipulated by Campbell's desires. Most often,

he imagines her as "the angel who gave it [love] to me. Copiously…. the nation of two my Helga and I had—its territory… didn't go much beyond the bounds of our great double bed" (*Mother Night* 42). Because her identity is shaped by her ability to perform as whatever Campbell imagines her as, she exists to the reader only as a pornographic, hypersexualized imitation of a woman, rather than as a human being with a real sense of identity.

Resi Noth, Helga's younger sister and communist spy, also struggles to develop an identity of her own. Instead of developing an individual identity, she impersonates her sister. Although the disguise is intended to lure Campbell to the Soviet Union, she plays the part astonishingly well and appears to gain satisfaction from impersonating Helga. The root of this expert performance is her lifelong love for Campbell. During an encounter with Campbell at the age of ten, she tells him "'I mean I really love you…. When Helga was alive and you two would come here, I used to envy Helga. When Helga was dead, I started dreaming about how I would grow up and marry you and be a famous actress, and you would write plays for me'" (*Mother Night* 104). Even at an early age, she wants to be her sister. She has always envied Helga's marriage, career, and life, and her performance as a communist spy allows her to finally live as the person she has always wanted to be, to the point where she struggles to accept the fact that she is not really Helga.

Butler said in an *Artforum* interview with Liz Kotz that, with gender, one cannot "get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today" (83). In this same vein, Resi could not simply decide one day that she was going to be Helga. Although she possesses a natural sisterly resemblance, alters her appearance to appear older, and is so genuinely in love with Campbell that she gives up her life for him, she remains Resi. The most she could hope to achieve is something along the lines of wearing a costume, albeit a convincing one. Resi, however, insists on resisting the impossibility of switching identities. When Campbell questions why she posed as his wife, she exclaims, "'It's who I am… It's who I am. I'm Helga, Helga, Helga. You believed it. What better test could I be put to?" (*Mother Night* 137) She does not defend her performance by giving a rational explanation. Rather, she begs him to see her as the person she wants to, but cannot, be. Additionally, no matter how much Resi wants to be Helga, she has her own traits that set her apart and make it impossible to actually become her sister. Physically, Resi has naturally honey-blonde hair that she elects to grow out again after dyeing it white for her performance, and her laugh is much livelier than her sister's, a difference significant enough for Campbell to note. These are small things, but they make Resi uniquely herself. Unfortunately for Resi, her wish to be her sister and take over that identity merely create well-executed imitations of the real Helga, reinforcing the idea that identity cannot be changed at will.

Resi's inability to cope with the impossibility of switching identities is most aptly shown in her death scene. Before this scene, Campbell tells Resi that he used to live for love, but no longer has that, or anything else, left to live for. His words make it clear that Resi cannot replace Helga or win his love. Resi, who has spent her life fixated on obtaining what Helga had, is left without an identity of her own. This lack of identity, when the persona she has assumed for so long comes crumbling down, leads to the realization that she has no purpose or reason to live. Unable to deal with that reality, Resi, when faced with arrest, states, "'I am sorry I have nothing to live for…. All I have is love for one man, but that man does not love me…. I will show you a woman who dies for love" (*Mother Night* 230) and then commits suicide by swallowing a cyanide pill.

II. Miss Temptation and the Feminine Sexual Masquerade

Vonnegut's "Miss Temptation" is almost entirely dedicated to the portrayal of female performance and reception. Susanna, the story's Miss Temptation, is "as startling and desirable as a piece of big-city fire apparatus" ("Miss Temptation" 75). This is Susanna as viewed by the male townspeople and by repressed, sexually-frustrated Norman Fuller. As a woman, she is the object of their gaze. She embodies the ultra-feminine, appealing, ideal woman. For Fuller, Susanna's perfection is unbearable. She reminds him of a sex symbol, specifically "the professional temptresses who had tormented him in Korea, who had beckoned from makeshift bed-sheet movie screens, from curling pinups on damp tent walls, from ragged magazines in sandbagged pits" ("Miss Temptation" 80). Fuller, who is ashamed of his sexuality but cannot escape from it, cannot handle a woman like Susanna. She is the physical embodiment of his overwhelmingly erotic thoughts, so he berates her to compensate for his feelings. Fuller's treatment of Susanna both cements her unfortunate position as an object and reinforces the impact that her performance has on men.

Outside of the male gaze, Susanna is far less mesmerizing. When Fuller goes to visit Susanna in her apartment, he fantasizes about finding a gorgeous woman in a seductive nest, "dark and still, reeking of incense, a labyrinth of heavy hangings and mirrors… with somewhere a billowy bed in the form of a swan" (85). Rather than seeing his fantasy, he is surprised to find a vulnerable girl that lives in "a dirt-cheap Yankee summer rental" ("Miss Temptation" 85). Despite her failure to meet Fuller's expectations, her childlike appearance and lack of a sultrier residence do not change her status as a temptress. However, left alone in her apartment, Susanna is not required to give the same ostentatious performance. By herself, she can exist without having to perform as anything in particular. Outside, she is subjected to a male audience that expects her to please them. The behavior that results from this expectation relates to the concept of the feminine sexual masquerade, which Butler explains in *Gender Trouble*:

> On the one hand, masquerade may be understood as the performative production of a sexual ontology, an appearing that makes itself convincing as a "being"; on the other hand, masquerade can be read as a denial of a feminine desire that presupposes some prior ontological femininity regularly unrepresented by the phallic economy. Irigaray remarks in such a vein that "the masquerade… is what women do… in order to participate in man's desire, but at the cost of giving up their own" (64)

By applying this concept to Susanna's behavior, it can be concluded that she behaves provocatively in public not out of her own volition, but in an attempt to accentuate her femininity due to pressure from male spectators who expect this sort of behavior. Vonnegut reflects this pressure through his description of Susanna's attire, which includes "chains with little bells on them" ("Miss Temptation" 75) around her ankles. These chains evoke the image of a slave. By wearing chains around her ankles, Susanna can be read as behaving as slave to the male gender. The bells that adorn the chains further this idea. The bells' ringing beckons to potential male spectators, letting them know Susanna is around for them to ogle and objectify. These chains, both literal and metaphorical, keep Susanna bound in her role as a temptress.

Susanna, unfortunately, is unable to break free from this masquerade, as she ends the story in the same place she started. After her argument with Fuller, she asks him to "welcome me back to the human race" ("Miss Temptation" 88) as retribution for his actions, but it is more a moment of

resignation than one of happiness. Although she received an apology from Fuller, and effectively won their quarrel, her reentry into society continues the feminine masquerade that Butler describes. Her performance as a temptress has become a solidified identity, and changing it would be nearly impossible. For Susanna, being a part of the human race means performing this role. She has been conditioned by male expectation to believe that her performance is her place and her identity, and as a result she cannot help but make herself carry on playing the part of the temptress, regardless of whether this masquerade aligns with her personal desires.

III. Conclusion

Butler's conception of female gender and sexual identity, as it relates to appearance, performance, and social pressures, is reflected in Vonnegut's *Mother Night* and "Miss Temptation" by Helga Campbell, Resi Noth, and Susanna. Helga's caricatured version of femininity and desirability reflect that of Butler's drag queen, as Vonnegut never makes her more than a performer in Campbell's mind. Resi's attempted assumption of Helga's identity and her desire to be someone that Campbell can love recalls Butler's argument that one cannot change their gender nor their identity at will. Susanna's position as an object subjected to the male gaze relates back to Butler's idea of female masquerade, where a woman's identity is shaped for men at the cost of her own wants. Generally, Vonnegut's works were not meant to detail women or how their actions, personalities, and relationships exist in relation to gender and sexual performance. Rather, Vonnegut's female characters were often swept under the rug, existing only as bit players who are overshadowed by his complex male leads.

However, in his broader examination of performativity and personal identity, he managed to create interesting female characters that warrant the application of Butler's philosophies. Still, some readers might wonder if these characters only become interesting when viewed alongside Butler's ideas. Vonnegut's female characters are notoriously shallow, to the point that he even describes several of them using the same wording. For example, Susanna is described as having "hips like a lyre" and a body that makes men "dream of peace and plenty" ("Miss Temptation" 75). In his later novel *Cat's Cradle*, Vonnegut recycles this description for Mona, a young woman whose "hips were a lyre" that inspire the narrator to feel "[p]eace and plenty forever" (140). The interchangeable nature of Vonnegut's female characters causes them to become one-dimensional, seemingly verifying the idea that Susanna, Helga, Resi, and Vonnegut's other fictional females can only gain complexity through Butler. Yet, it is their emptiness that makes them so compelling. Their apparent lack of identity invites unique perspectives and theories about their characters; if Vonnegut had not written these women as empty vessels, the application of radical ideas like Butler's would not have such a striking impact on the way readers interpret them.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

Chekhov's stories are difficult to write about. Even professional literary critics will often preface their analyses by reminding readers of the subtle, delicate, nuanced nature of Chekhov's innovations. Imagine my delight then when, in the context of our WR 100 seminar on nineteenth century Russian literary masterpieces, I sat down to read Sandya Kola's final paper. It is an ambitious and original investigation into one of Chekhov's most famous—and most studied—stories, "The Lady with the Little Dog." The psychological depth of this piece is matched by Sandya's careful and inspired attention to Chekhov's poetics, scene by scene, detail by detail. Using two important critical studies to frame her argument, Sandya does a wonderful job balancing their insights with her own, and comes up with a convincing conclusion about ways in which Chekhov's characters are truly individuals.

Maria Gapotchenko
WR 100: Russian Literary Masterpieces

SANDYA KOLA

AN EXPLORATION OF CHEKHOV'S TANGIBLE WORLD

During Anton Chekhov's time, nineteenth century Russian literature often followed common formulaic literary techniques, which created a logical development of thought that moved towards a larger idea. Literary critic Alexander Chudakov notes in his "Randomness: Chekhov's Incidental Detail" that these larger ideas would, more often than not, belong to an abstract and "high spiritual plane [that] does not permit the intrusion of material things" (554). Chekhov, on the other hand, breaks many of these formulated rules, creating "a totally different method" (Chudakov 551) of writing, in which his "portrayal of the spiritual world is frequently interrupted by representations of the tangible world" (Chudakov 555). This can especially be seen in one of the author's more mature works, "The Lady with the Little Dog," in which Chekhov often creates a juxtaposition between the material and the abstract in order to question whether ideas such as spirituality and love are only—as they are commonly portrayed in literature—responses to a higher abstract sphere, or also—as Chekhov suggests—sense-based reactions to the more immediate tangible world. John Hagan's "Chekhov's Fiction and the Ideal of 'Objectivity'" claims that Chekhov believed it was a writer's duty to maintain an "artist's impartiality and disinterestedness" (411) towards external views and conventions when presenting such questions. Therefore, Chekhov uses this juxtaposition in "The Lady with the Little Dog" as an opportunity to suggest that intimate ideas like spirituality and love should not be solely defined by their conventional meanings or codified by their societal constructions, but interpreted though a more private and personal meaning that is relative to the individual, making Chekhov revolutionary in not only his innovative literary style, but also his redefinition of the purpose of literature.

Chekhov's, "The Lady with the Little Dog" follows an initially fleeting relationship between two married people, Anna Sergeevna and Dmitri Dmitritch Gurov, which later turns into a painful and difficult affair, ending with the realization that the two characters are in love with each other. In an artistic situation like this, in which characters experience a dynamic process of realization and change, they are also, at a literary level, undergoing a process of characterization. Chudakov states that in order to communicate this, authors use select tangible details in their texts that can serve as "reliable and expedient means of characterization" (551). However, this is not the case in Chekhov's writing. Chekhov's details throughout Anna and Gurov's transformation do not clarify the personality of the hero; they have no "characterological" (Chudakov 551) significance. Take the scene before Anna and Gurov's reunion in a provincial theatre:

> A haze hung over the chandeliers, the gallery stirred noisily; the local dandies stood in the front row before the performance started, their hands behind their backs; and here, too, in the governor's box, the governor's daughter sat in front, wearing a boa, while the governor himself modestly behind the portière, and only his hands could be seen. (Chekhov 372)

What is the significance behind repetitive images of hands, or a particular accessory of the governor's daughter's evening dress? The purpose and meaning of these details have no direct connection to the characters, events or development of action. In fact, because these details do not appear to be obligatory, "the link in characterization within the *fabula* chain would not be harmed" (Chudakov 552) if we were to remove them entirely from the text. They are what Chekhov's critics would call "senseless and unnecessary" (Chudakov 555) details. However, Chudakov argues that these details are only "unnecessary" from the viewpoint of non-Chekovian principles, and are otherwise "important and obligatory" (554) to Chekhov's new method.

This new method does not follow "characterological goals" (Chudakov 552), but rather attempts to advance the viewpoint of the character as an observer. Pre-Chekhovian methods of writing that attempt to use motivated, not random, details as a means to develop these "characterological goals" often lead to characters becoming associated with certain ideas. Characters become symbols that act as comments on the author and the reader's world, outside of the immediate text and outside the character's world. This is the very reason why Chekhov disperses random details throughout his text. They eliminate the possibility of his characters becoming symbols and endorsements of external ideologies, and allow these characters to act as mere observers and individuals within the constructions of their own world. Therefore, Chekhov allows his characters the ability to express their emotions and comment on the abstract and spiritual world, but also—unlike his literary contemporaries such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky—allows his characters' experience with the spiritual world to be interrupted by their observations of their more immediate and tangible environment—men with "hands behind their backs," or a "boa" around a woman's neck, if you will (Chekhov 372). When viewed through a non-Chekhovian function of description, such interruptions may, therefore, seem random and unnecessary against the background of a logical discussion, but are otherwise imperative to Chekhov's intentions—to afford his characters the opportunity to be mere ordinary individuals who experience everything that exists within a person and observe everything that surrounds them, both spiritual and material. He does not try to convey a logical and "continuous flow of thought" (Chudakov 555) through motivated details, as this does not accurately represent an individual's thought process, but a logical development that advances the author's personal ideologies.

This is why Chekhov does not restrict his details to the direct dialogue or scene in which they are present, but instead associates them with a larger connection to the character's overall experience and emotions at that moment. Because of this, Chekhov's works are not, unlike non-Chekhovian literature, "directed toward its own semantic center" (Chudakov 555). By using random and unnecessary details that create "an element of chaos in an otherwise harmonious system of motivated details" (Chudakov 553), Chekhov's images and details shoot out of orbit instead of creating a centripetal progression of thought. In other words, or in those of John Hagan's, it is a refusal to make one's works "an organ for the propaganda of any sect or party" (411).

Unlike his contemporaries, "Chekhov remained notably aloof during this early period [the nineteenth century] from the various kinds of revolutionary ferment" (Hagan 411) that influenced many of his fellow writers. These other writers believed it was their social and literary duty to use their works as "trademarks or labels" (Hagan 411). In other words, the purpose of such works was to advance the competing political and social agendas of, say, liberals, conservatives, evolutionists, etc. However, this wasn't the case for Chekhov. Chekhov believed that an artist must display a kind of impartiality and disinterestedness towards these external ideas. This does not mean "the artist

should suppress his personal feelings and attitudes"; instead, he should "treat his subject with perfect neutrality" (Hagan 412). By doing so, Chekhov is not presenting his works as an endorsement of ideas from a group ideology, but as an honest and faithful representation of "things as they really are" (Hagan 412).

Chekhov's rejection of external ideologies and conventions is easily seen in his unique treatment of spirituality. Authors like Tolstoy, for example, used numerous religious symbols and "details [that] give meaning to the whole story" (Chudakov 555). However, this meaning is often driven by ideas of religion and Christian ideals; it endorses ideas from Christianity. Chekhov, on the other hand, often uses similar religious images and dialogue in order to stir the reader's mind—a mind that has been conditioned by literature like that of Tolstoy—to expect these details to carry a religiously symbolic meaning. One night, during the beginning of Anna and Gurov's affair, the two lovers decide to take a late night drive to Oreanda, where "they sat on a bench not far from church" (Chekhov 366). Here, Chekhov introduces the image of a church, which, in works of Tolstoy or non-Chekhovian literature, would normally be used as a religious symbol. Perhaps it would serve as a juxtaposition between the morality of religion and the immorality of two adulterous lovers. Yet Chekhov does not use this image in a religious way. Instead of employing the image of the church as an opportunity to digress into discussions about religion, morality and spirituality, the narrator instead continues to comment on more descriptive observations of the tangible world, making no reference to ideas of religion or Christian beliefs. He notes the "white clouds" hovering above mountaintops, and the "dull noise of the sea" from below (Chekhov 366)—random but tangible details that drive the meaning of this image away from any kind of religious symbolism or semantic center. Ironically, Chekhov uses a traditionally religious symbol not to associate this scene with the higher spiritual plane of religion, but to draw attention to the more immediate, literal and tangible world. Hence, though the church carries symbolic potential to be a sign of Christianity or religion, Chekhov does not treat it as a religious symbol; to Chekhov, the church just so happens to be a building near to which two lovers sit silently. This is the honest and literal representation of things that Hagan was referring to.

Yet there must be a motivation for Chekhov to purposely lure his readers into anticipating a discussion on religion through associated religious images in the text. This motivation is to raise questions on how we define spirituality. Take, for example, the contrasting spiritual rhetoric of Anna and Gurov. Anna, who believes her affair has turned her into a "trite, trashy woman" (Chekhov 366), often uses religious interjections—such as "God forgive me" (Chekhov 365), "I swear to God" (Chekhov 366), and "I adjure you by all that's holy" (Chekhov 373)—to express a desire for moral redemption. Hence, Anna's connection to her spiritualty is through religion. Gurov, on the other hand, often criticizes this. In a scene where Anna uses such religious rhetoric, Gurov remarks: "'It's like you're justifying yourself'" (Chekhov 365). This suggests that Anna uses religion as a justification for her actions. She considers her religious speech and rhetoric an absolution of her sins. Hence, Gurov is implying that Anna relies on religion to find her path to salvation, without creating her own relationship with her spirituality. She uses religion as means for, as Hagan calls it, "easy moralism" (412). This is quite a contrast to Gurov's connection with his spirituality. Gurov, unlike Anna, does not depend on religious stimulation to engage with the spiritual world, but rather a tangible stimulation. This can be seen during the scene at Oreanda. As Gurov and Anna look down on the sea, Gurov observes the motionless "leaves of the trees" and the foggy haze of "morning mist" (Chekhov 366). And he notes that in this unceasing perfection of life on earth "perhaps lies

hidden the pledge of our eternal salvation" (Chekhov 367). Hence, Gurov uses his senses to not only see the tangible world, but to also engage with larger spiritual ideas.

Chekhov raises similar questions when he deals with ideas of love. Like he does with the definition of spirituality, he questions whether love should only be seen as a response to the incomprehensible abstract world, or also a reaction to the material and more immediate world before us. For example, once Gurov and Anna's affair starts to become less of a tempting and "fleeting liaison" (Chekhov 362), and more of a serious and passionate relationship, Gurov notes that Anna "seemed to transform him" (Chekhov 367). But what transformed him—"the heat," "the cascade," or the "smell of the sea" (Chekhov 367)? It seems that Gurov's stimulation for developing feelings towards Anna was through impressions of the physical and tangible world around him. This turns conventional ideas of love on its head, as Chekhov is suggesting—as he has done with the idea of spirituality—that love is not merely a spiritual transcendence, but also a change stimulated and inspired by the senses.

This can lead readers to a common misreading that Gurov and Anna were never really in love. After the two parted ways in Yalta, they were left with only memories and thoughts of the other, which unintentionally fueled their nascent and undeveloped feelings into what they believed was love. This is usually the source of such objections. Anna and Gurov's relationship was inspired by impressions of the tangible world and intensified by mere memories and recollections. Because this relationship was not based on a more conventionally accepted idea of a deep, spiritual connection, but is instead built upon what would be called the trivial and transitory nature of raw human senses and perceptions, many readers assume that their relationship was not love, but something more superficial—a tempting, romanticized idea of love. And although I consider this a misunderstanding of Anna and Gurov's relationship as well as a misunderstanding of Chekhov's message, there is a degree of truth in this claim that I agree with.

After Gurov returns to Moscow, he states how he cannot forget Anna: "Yet everything was as clear in his memory as if he had parted with Anna Segreevna only the day before" (Chekhov 369). But everything was not "clear"; his memories of Anna are but romanticized imaginations. In these memories, Anna "seemed younger, *more* beautiful, *more* tender" (Chekhov 369), more than what she actually was. Anna herself claims that she "lived by my thoughts of you [Gurov]" (373). Hence, I agree that Gurov and Anna's love was a product of their imagination. Yet this does not mean they were not in love. Gurov acknowledges that "he thought and dreamed" (Chekhov 372) of his love for Anna, but "Anna Sergeevna was not a dream" (369), and nor was their love. Perhaps they lived by a love "their imagination had created" (375). But why should this mean they did not love each other?

Anna and Gurov's relationship does not fit a conventionally accepted definition of love. They loved each other "*like* husband and wife, *like* tender friends" (Chekhov 376), yet they are none of those things. Instead, they are merely two individuals who "loved each other like very close, dear people" (376). Perhaps Anna and Gurov's love was a product of their imagination. Perhaps their relationship cannot be understood through definitions of socially accepted relationships like marriage, friendship, etc. And this forces Gurov himself to question: "Had he been in love then?" (369) He acknowledges that there hadn't been anything "beautiful, poetic, or instructive, or merely interesting, in his relations with Anna Sergeevna" (369); his relationship did not meet traditional expectations of what love should be. Yet he also acknowledges when he finally sees Anna in the

theatre that "there was now no person closer, dearer, or more important for him in the whole world" (372). Does this not convey the emotions that love should elicit, regardless of the nature of this relationship and how the two came to these emotions?

In his "Randomness: Chekhov's Incidental Detail," Chudakov includes a comment from literary scholar A. G. Gornfeld on the significance of Chekhov's revolutionary and innovative style, in which Gornfeld calls Chekhov's works a "'genuine work of art'" (Chudakov 561). But although Gornfeld was saying this in reference to the aesthetic significance of Chekhov's literary style, I think this artistic greatness touches on something deeper. As we have seen, Chekhov does not blindly adopt group ideologies and project societal conventions in his works. His treatment of spirituality and love, for example, raises questions on ideas whose conventional definitions have become accepted without question as the sole and only definition for such ideas. But abstract human emotions and their relation to the individual who is experiencing them cannot be codified by such convention; there is more to spirituality than its definition through religion, just as there is more to love than its definition through marriage.

Hence, Chekhov encourages not only his characters, but also his readers to reject conventional definitions of spirituality, love, etc., and to create more personal and intimate meanings that are relative to the individual. For this reason, Chekhov's works affect us deeply, far beyond the confines of the text and into societal conventions and norms. This is the "genuine work of art," the true depth and complexity of Chekhov that makes his works great literature. In John Hagan's "Chekhov's Fiction and the Ideal of 'Objectivity,'" he notes that Chekhov "accused nobody, justified nobody" (412). Chekhov was never the "judge of his characters or of what they say, but only an objective observer" (Hagan 412). He offered a realistic treatment of his characters and the ideas that he worked with, making his depictions of such people and ideas not conclusive, but potentially interrogative. And by doing so, he gives his characters the freedom to be mere individuals, not vehicles for advancing personal and social agendas; he gives his stories freedom to be art, not propaganda; and he gives his readers the freedom to question ideas in both Chekhov's works and their own personal lives.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

In the EN 120 course "Masked Women and Handsome Sailors: Gender and Sexuality in 19th Century America," we read a range of literary texts that illuminate the complexities of gender and sexual identities. As we investigated how nineteenth-century Americans understood gender and sexuality alongside race, class, and other facets of identity, we also considered how the intersections among these categories shape contemporary individuals' self-conceptions. For their third paper, students were asked to develop an argument about how particular characters from our course readings perform their gender and sexuality—and what these performances reveal about the fluidity and peculiarity of these seemingly stable and familiar categories.

Although several students in the course produced strong papers in response to this challenging prompt, Ai Hue's paper on Louisa May Alcott's "Behind a Mask" and Zitkala-Sa's "A Warrior's Daughter" stood out as truly outstanding. I was so impressed by her incredibly precise and nuanced analysis of the texts' main characters as well as her ability to use these two different tales to support a compelling argument about femininity as a powerful tool that can be used to outsmart and overpower men. I am always particularly delighted when students write papers that teach me new things about texts I have taught many times before; in that respect, Ai Hue's paper was a true pleasure for me to read!

Heather Barrett
EN 120: Freshman Seminar in Literature

FROM THE WRITER

I've often felt that in modern society, girls and women face a pressure to reject traditionally feminine activities, interests, and roles in order to avoid appearing shallow or superficial. In addition, I've noticed that girls and women who demonstrate strength, assertiveness, or independence are often compared to their male peers while simultaneously held in contrast with other members of their gender—typically with the use of the phrase "not like other girls." As a result, I've often sensed that our society treats femininity as a natural sign of weakness and ineffectiveness and masculinity, conversely, as a symbol of success and power.

While reading Louisa May Alcott's "Behind a Mask" and Zitkala-Sa's "A Warrior's Daughter" for my EN 120 class, I was intrigued by how the female leads of these stories harnessed their traditionally feminine traits to achieve their goals, as if they recognized their femininity as a unique gift rather than a hindrance. I was also struck by the irony in how these characters played upon oppressive norms and expectations of women to outwit their opponents. My essay, motivated by these ideas, strives to highlight the notion that strength, courage, and independence are every bit as fundamental to a woman's nature as to a man's.

AI HUE NGUYEN is a rising sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences, currently majoring in English. From Washington Township, New Jersey, she chose to attend college in Boston in order to fulfill her dream to live in a major city. She enjoys running, playing tennis, playing the guitar, reading, and writing. She would like to thank her family, especially her parents, for their constant support and guidance, as well as her awesome English professor, Ms. Barrett, for all of her constructive feedback, encouragement, and positivity.

AI HU NGUYEN
Prize Essay Award

REDEFINING WOMANHOOD: *BEHIND A MASK* AND "A WARRIOR'S DAUGHTER"

In nineteenth-century America, men were undeniably the more advantaged sex, endowed with a greater range of legal, political, economic, and social rights than women. In addition, empowering characteristics, such as bravery, fierceness, and assertiveness, were often associated with masculinity, whereas inhibiting characteristics, such as submissiveness, passiveness, and vulnerability, were frequently associated with femininity. As historian Barbara Welter states in her article "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860", "…men were the movers, the doers, the actors. Women were the passive, submissive responders….Man was 'woman's superior' by God's appointment, if not in intellectual dowry, at least by official decree" (159). As a result, to accomplish their goals and to feel empowered, many women deemed it necessary to reject traditionally feminine traits and to adapt more stereotypically masculine roles and behaviors; men, on the other hand, rarely assumed traditionally feminine qualities in order to achieve their goals or to feel empowered. However, Jean Muir, the main female character in Louisa May Alcott's novella *Behind a Mask,* contradicts this standard in her clever manipulation of the Coventry family. In regards to Jean's ploy, scholar Judith Fetterley states, "Jean acts out of necessities and on motives that are precisely the same as those of the men, and she evinces emotions and desires that would be considered quite ordinary and acceptable in a man" (11). Fetterley then claims that Jean's materialistic goals are "hardly surprising…in an age of rampant capitalism" and that her emotions—"the desire to win; the desire for revenge; the desire to manipulate, dominate, and control"—are "'normal'" and "'human'" (11). Summing up Jean's motives, Fetterley states, "Obviously, Jean is no different from the men" (11). Though I agree with Fetterley's implication that Jean's goals, emotions, and desires are normal and merely reflect human nature, I believe that Fetterley's argument strives too much to equate Jean to a man. Though Jean's motives may be the same as a man's, her means of achieving her goals are notably different, as they rely on a display of traditionally feminine characteristics. By drawing on her sense of femininity to manipulate and undermine her targets, Jean redefines femininity, portraying it as a dangerous weapon instead of an inherent weakness. Another text from the time period, Zitkala-Sa's "A Warrior's Daughter," similarly illustrates the power of femininity by showing how a woman, Tusee, uses her feminine charm to bring about her enemy's downfall. By reading these two texts alongside each other, we can begin to view femininity as a unique power and to see the ways in which women can become empowered through their own gender, rather than by resorting to masculinity.

In *Behind a Mask*, Jean performs gender through both her physical appearance and her mannerisms. To create an illusion of youth and loveliness, Jean assumes a physical disguise, which the reader becomes aware of as Jean undresses in the privacy of her bedroom on her first night in the Coventry house: "Still sitting on the floor she unbound and removed the long abundant braids from her head, wiped the pink from her face, took out several pearly teeth, and slipping off her dress

appeared herself indeed, a haggard, worn, and moody woman of thirty at least" (Alcott 123, 124). The attributes of her disguise give her a soft, traditionally feminine appearance—a contrast to the "weary, hard, [and] bitter" features of her natural expression (Alcott 124). Besides performing gender through her physical appearance, Jean performs gender through her actions and behaviors. Fulfilling the nineteenth-century American ideal of a true woman, she displays a "meek, modest, faithful, and invariably sweet-tempered" air (Alcott 137). Her mannerisms charm the Coventry family, particularly the Coventry men. Alcott states that Jean "amused, interested, and won Edward with her wit and womanly sympathy," "piqued indolent Gerald by her persistence and avoidance of him," and "charmed [Sir John] with her respectful deference and the graceful little attentions she paid him in a frank and artless way" (Alcott 136, 137). Furthermore, to appeal to Sir John and Gerald, Jean depicts herself as a stereotypical damsel in distress. To Gerald, she provides a false account of Sydney's relentless pursuit of her, casting Sydney as a threat and herself as a victim. Gerald becomes mesmerized by her tale, "unconscious of the dangerous power which the dusky room, the midsummer warmth and fragrance, the memory of the 'romantic nonsense,' and, most of all, the presence of a beautiful, afflicted woman had over him" (Alcott 168). He responds by "heartily [doing] his best to console the poor girl who needed help so much" and declaring, "'Miss Muir—nay, I will say Jean, if that will comfort you—listen, and rest assured that no harm shall touch you if I can ward it off'" (Alcott 169). Likewise, to accomplish her marriage to Sir John, Jean expresses a false fear that Sydney will attempt to destroy her newfound happiness and peace with Sir John. "As soon as he hears of this good fortune to poor little Jean, he will hasten to mar it," she frets. "Let me go away and hide before he comes, for, having shared your confidence, it will break my heart to see you distrust and turn from me, instead of loving and protecting" (Alcott 191). In response, Sir John rushes to comfort and protect her. "'Be easy. No one can harm you now, and no one would dare attempt it,'" he reassures (Alcott 192). He goes on to announce, "'I will make you my wife at once, if I may. This will free you from Gerald's love, protect you from Sydney's persecution, give you a safe home, and me the right to cherish and defend with heart and hand'" (Alcott 192). In each of these interactions, Jean appeals to each man's sense of masculinity. Her helpless, vulnerable state evokes the traditional masculine characteristics of protectiveness, assertiveness, and gallantry within each man, causing each of them to fall into her ploy. Overall, by maintaining a traditionally feminine appearance, displaying traditionally feminine behavioral traits, and appealing to especially to the inner senses of masculinity of Gerald and Sir John, Jean successfully manipulates the Coventry family and reveals femininity to be a powerful, unique weapon.

In addition to illustrating the power of femininity to readers, Jean's behavior causes other characters in the novel to reconsider their conceptions of gender. At the end of the novel, Jean's seemingly meek, modest, and submissive demeanor is proven completely false as the members of the Coventry family discover that they have been blind victims in her plot to reap Sir John's fortune by becoming his wife. This discovery challenges their notions of womanhood and manhood. Upon hearing the first of Jean's letters to Hortense read aloud, in which Jean states that she intends to humble the Coventry family by "'captivating the sons, and when they have committed themselves, cast them off, and marry the old uncle, whose title takes my fancy,'" Lucia reacts with denial and shock (Alcott 206). "'She never wrote that!'" she exclaims. "'It is impossible. A woman could not do it'" (Alcott 206). Clearly, Lucia's view of women is in line with the nineteenth-century American definition of true womanhood, which paints women as sweet, nurturing, compassionate creatures. Jean's actions invalidate this view and prove that women are as capable of being calculated and cold-hearted as men. In a following letter, Jean recounts her manipulation of Gerald, proclaiming

triumphantly, "'What fools men are!'" (Alcott 209) Upon hearing these words read aloud, Gerald mutters, "'She is right,'" and "[flushes] scarlet with shame and anger, as his folly became known" (Alcott 209). Whereas, earlier, Gerald considered Jean a poor, defenseless girl and himself her valiant protector, he now finds that the imbalance of power is reversed—Jean has proven herself to be the dominating manipulator and him to be her hapless victim. By challenging Lucia's definition of womanhood and Gerald's view of his own masculinity, Jean contradicts notions of gender that were prevalent in nineteenth-century America.

The power of femininity is reaffirmed "AWarrior's Daughter" by Tusee, a Dakota woman whose lover is captured by the enemy during battle. To rescue her lover, Tusee uses her feminine charm to lure out the man who captured her lover and slays him. Like Jean, Tusee performs her gender through both her physical appearance and her actions. With her "finely penciled eyebrows and slightly extended nostrils" that cause her to resemble her mother, Tusee's physical appearance is traditionally feminine (Sa 61). When she stands among the crowd at the enemy's camp, surveying the dancers in the arena, her appearance is described as alluring and beautiful: "The dancing center fire shines bright into her handsome face, intensifying the night in her dark eyes. It breaks into the myriad points upon her beaded dress" (Sa 64). Thus, like Jean, Tusee has a stereotypically feminine appearance that makes her appealing and that she uses to her advantage. As the man that she has deemed her "vile foe" leaves the center of the arena and goes to sit at his resting-place momentarily, she catches his attention and smiles at him (Sa 64). This gesture appeals to his inner masculine senses of pride and vanity; he believes that he has impressed her with his bravery and battle prowess: "'Ah, she would speak to a hero!' thumps his heart wildly" (Sa 64). When she asks him to follow her away from the arena and into the darkness, he willingly goes, eager to "know what sweet words of praise the handsome woman has for him" (Sa 65). Here, Tusee exemplifies the role for women described by Welter's article on True Womanhood. By pretending to be an admiring bystander, she fulfills the role of a "passive, submissive responder," while her enemy, fancying himself a mighty and capable warrior, fulfills the superior masculine roles of a "mover," an "actor," and a "doer" (Welter 159). Deceived, the man follows Tusee out into the darkness, where his conceit proves to be his downfall; Tusee promptly kills him and ultimately manages to rescue her lover. Thus, by acting towards her enemy in the reverential manner that women were expected to display towards men and appealing to his masculine ego, Tusee portrays masculinity as a fatal weakness and femininity as an effective tool; she illustrates the power of femininity much in the way that Jean does.

One may argue, however, that Tusee takes on a masculine role in this story rather than a feminine one. Certainly, by venturing into the enemy's camp, confronting her foe, and delivering death swiftly and mercilessly, Tusee displays characteristics that are more commonly associated with masculinity than with femininity. The comparisons that are frequently struck between Tusee and her father also suggest that Tusee represents a masculine role. Initially, Tusee is presented to readers as the "wee black-eyed daughter" of an exalted warrior, who is well known for his bravery and "had won by heroic deeds the privilege of staking his wigwam within the great circle of tepees" (Sa 59). Prior to embarking on her mission to rescue her lover, Tusee prays for the Great Spirit to instill her father's courageous spirit in her, pleading, "'All-powerful Spirit, grant me my warrior-father's heart, strong to slay a foe and mighty to save a friend!'" (Sa 63) Though Tusee's visage resembles her mother's, Zitkala-Sa also notes that "in her sturdiness of form she resembles her father" (61). This observation seems to imply that sturdiness, like courage, is a masculine trait that Tusee has inherited from her father that contradicts her female essence. Despite these implications, I believe that the story's final scene depicts Tusee's strength as a feminine quality that comes to her naturally, rather

than a masculine quality that has been gifted to her by her father or by a greater power: "The sight of his weakness makes her strong. A mighty power thrills her body. Stooping beneath his outstretched arms grasping at the air for support, Tusee lifts him upon her broad shoulders. With half-running, triumphant steps she carries him away into the open night" (Sa 66). The empowerment and motivation that Tusee feels upon seeing her lover "numb and helpless" indicate that her strength is not something that has been borrowed from her father or merely put on as a costume or act, but something that comes from within her and is intrinsic to her nature as a woman—rather than a contradiction to it (Sa 66). In addition, the sharp contrast between the weak physical state of Tusee's lover and the power and strength that Tusee exudes during this scene casts women as the stronger of the two sexes. Like Jean, Tusee illustrates a triumph of femininity over masculinity and redefines nineteenth-century American conceptions of womanhood by showing that women are as capable of displaying strength, calculation, and resolve as men.

In conclusion, by juxtaposing *Behind a Mask* with "A Warrior's Daughter," we notice a multitude of similarities between the two texts. In performing gender both physically and psychologically, Jean and Tusee both demonstrate the appeal of traditionally feminine characteristics as well as how these characteristics can be strategically used to achieve a goal. Jean and Tusee also both show that the widely held perception of women as frail, delicate creatures and men as strong, valiant protectors can be ironically used to exploit men. Finally, Jean and Tusee both redefine womanhood, showing that the distinctions between masculine traits and feminine traits are not clear-cut and that such traits as courage, fierceness, and strength can belong to the feminine category as well as the masculine category. Emerging from an age in which women were strictly defined by the ideology of True Womanhood, *Behind a Mask* and "A Warrior's Daughter" challenge both nineteenth-century and modern perceptions of gender and provide an innovative perspective on femininity.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

In "Minstrelsy and Brechtian Epic Theater: An Analysis of Satire," James Robson investigates Kander and Ebb's musical *The Scottsboro Boys* in order to formulate an appropriate critical response to an enigmatic and, some say, offensive musical by the men who created *Cabaret*. The play is set up as a minstrel show in the same way that *Cabaret* is set in a 1930s Berlin cabaret, but the problem for the audience is that the German cabaret tradition is grounded in social and political satire, while the American minstrel tradition is grounded in promoting racism and offensive stereotypes as "entertainment." Are Kander and Ebb being disrespectful to the nine "Scottsboro boys," who were wrongly convicted and imprisoned for raping two white women, by placing them in a minstrel show in a way that seems offensive, or at the very least insensitive, or are they employing a more complex dramatic strategy?

Robson's answer is that Kander and Ebb have created an approach to satire based on "Brechtian epic theater." This is a sophisticated argument well supported by reference to the primary text as well as to a range of critical sources, the core of which is that Brechtian theater is politically motivated and not intended to create identification between characters and audience. The effect is supposed to be alienating, confusing, off-putting, offensive, the point of which is to place the audience in the position of taking responsibility for their own response—which in this case means taking responsibility for racial injustice in America. This is an approach to musical theater that is bound to make many theater-goers uncomfortable, and that is the point, though it is certainly not the point of most American musicals.

Robson's argument is valuable because it can help us to make sense of a work that stands in a theatrical tradition that we in America might not be familiar with, or know how to respond to. *The Scottsboro Boys* turns the traditional American musical on its head: we don't walk out feeling good and humming the tunes; we walk out feeling bad and wondering what to do about the problem at the heart of the drama, and of the "entertainment." Robson astutely investigates the tension Kander and Ebb have created between the American minstrel tradition and the Brechtian tradition of alienating or "epic" theater, the unbearable tension created by the duality of characters who are both minstrel-show caricatures and real-life men who were the victims of a Depression-era tragedy that, upon further reflection, turns out to be our ongoing national tragedy.

Anthony Wallace
WR 100: The Theater Now

FROM THE WRITER

The Scottsboro Boys premiered on Broadway in 2010 for a run of only two months and received twelve Tony Award nominations, but failed to win any. How was this possible, I wondered? How could a show that lasted a mere 49 performances receive so many nominations? After attending the performance at the SpeakEasy Stage Company, our class had a discussion about the musical. Among the foremost things examined was the racial tension present in the show brought forth by the minstrel themes. From there, I read an abundance of theater reviews on the show and discovered it wasn't merely the fact that the musical wasn't "entertaining" that led the musical to close on Broadway, but that the structure of the play as a minstrel show and the use of blackface caused an abundance of discomfort and anger towards the musical and its writers.

I then realized I wanted to take the methods of Brecht, a German playwright, and apply them to this show to analyze the play as a Brechtian work. In doing so, I give light to the fact that *The Scottsboro Boys* is a piece of satire to comment on historical racism; Kander and Ebb's use of minstrelsy is designed so that the audience is challenged to formulate a critical response not only on the events of the Scottsboro Trials, but also on an entire time period in American history. This paper is a way for me to help myself and others by explaining how this entertaining, upbeat, and shocking show represents the oppression and dehumanization present at a dark time in America. Although the show applies the racist form of minstrelsy, Kander and Ebb scrutinize the medium of theater itself through the use of satire. While the show may not have been performed for long, the actors, book, and music combine to create an impactful piece of theater through Brechtian methods.

JAMES ROBSON is a rising sophomore who is majoring in Biomedical Engineering and intends on pursuing a minor in Music Performance. From a small town north of Boston, he has a passion for both the arts and sciences; while he studies engineering, he works as a musician and actor in the greater Boston area and hopes to continue bridging his interest in theater, music, and writing after his time at BU. He would like to partially dedicate the publication of this paper and thank his writing professor Anthony Wallace, who has encouraged his interests, passionately guided his writing, and offered a kind, helping hand throughout his first year at BU. He extends his sincerest thanks to his family, friends, and classmates for their guidance; their support was immensely helpful throughout the writing process.

JAMES ROBSON

MINSTRELSY AND BRECHTIAN EPIC THEATER: AN ANALYSIS OF SATIRE

Kander and Ebb's musical *The Scottsboro Boys* addresses a historical event in which nine African American males are unjustly accused and convicted of raping two white women, a conviction based on racist fears that were present in the deep South. Throughout the show, Kander and Ebb use vaudeville music and the form of the minstrel tradition in a way that entertains, but also alienates the audience. The intended satirical application of minstrel theater as a means to comment on racism in America establishes a duality within *The Scottsboro Boys* between minstrel theater and the Brechtian characteristics of the play. While minstrel theater isn't inherently Brechtian, the means by which satire is used within the musical creates a dynamic that uses racism and the minstrel tradition to create Brechtian theater in *The Scottsboro Boys*. The structure of the musical as a minstrel show offers compelling connections between past and present racial tensions while simultaneously developing Brechtian characteristics and satirical commentary on minstrelsy.

Based on the concept of white supremacy and the belief in black inferiority, minstrelsy is distinguished by the presence of exaggerated stereotypes of African Americans. Black performers during the Jim Crow era combined blackface with the newly popular genre of vaudeville and brought a black political agenda to their stage performances, a premise very prevalent in *The Scottsboro Boys*. However, the traits of minstrelsy in the play used in a satirical sense by Kander and Ebb also contribute to Brechtian elements of the show. The epic theater of Brecht appeals not to the spectator's feelings but encourages the audience to adopt a more critical attitude; Bertolt Brecht, a German playwright, believed that an audience should not become emotionally involved in a play and that theater should be capable of provoking social change. Brecht's plays may be typified by blurred lines of characterization and an objective style of acting so that observers and actors become detached. ("Epic Theatre of Brecht"). The duality of the presence of both minstrel and Brechtian elements within *The Scottsboro Boys* ultimately leaves the audience to think critically on this satirical commentary on the racist attitude in the South at the time of the Scottsboro trials and the minstrel tradition.

In Brechtian Epic theatre, characterization is especially important in establishing an emotional disconnection between the audience and the actors on the stage, a device effectively used by the creative team of *The Scottsboro Boys*. Ayşe Yönkul states that within Brechtian theatre, "disabling the emotions and enabling the critical thinking are mostly achieved by the characterization" (61). Mr. Bones and Mr. Tambo, two African American figures also prevalent in minstrelsy in the nineteenth century, present characterizations of the Deputy and Sheriff. Mr. Bones exclaims in an exaggerated fashion: "All you colored boys, unload! You're talking to a white man. Sherriff white man, to you!" (Kander et al.12). Sympathy that could be felt for the Scottsboro boys is upended as the characterization provides a comic element to what is otherwise a serious moment when the boys are getting arrested. In a review of the 2010 Broadway production, Belinda Chiu

contends that the two roles of Mr. Bones and Mr. Tambo are "both essential to the minstrel theme that prevented the play from making any advances in emotional progress" because the minstrelsy structure requires there be little emotional attachment to the characters in the play. The many characters Mr. Bones and Mr. Tambo perform within the play adhere both to the minstrel tradition and also contribute to an essential aspect of Brechtian theater: a lack of connection between the audience and characters present. While the structure and face of minstrelsy is upheld through their characters, the white caricatures that they represent at times provide racist tension that is unsettling.

Characters in *The Scottsboro Boys* follow both the qualities of the minstrel show and Brechtian epic theater. In her definition of the Brechtian epic, Yönkul comments that "among the technique of [Brechtian] thought, there is surreal casting, naming the characters in relation to their social roles and professions, and letting one actor play several roles on the stage" (61). The names of the roles played by Mr. Bones and Mr. Tambo are written solely as their social roles: "Public Defender," "Deputy," and "Sheriff." Many of the characters exist only as caricatures, conforming to the theatricality of a minstrel show where a core group of actors play multiple roles, which is a typical Brechtian device. Maryanne Boelcskevy, Director of Undergraduate African American Studies at Boston University, claims that the minstrel show "offers up a rich mixture [of characterizations] including female impersonations," which is evident through the inclusion of drag present in *The Scottsboro Boys*. In the play, Charlie and Ozie, two of the accused boys, appear in drag to portray Ruby Bates and Victoria Price. *The Scottsboro Boys* includes representations that blur the lines of identity between the characters rather than the usual distinctive individual, which is often used in Brechtian theater to prevent the formation of empathy for characters in the play. Due to the various caricatures each actor is responsible for playing, the musical adheres to the definition of minstrel theater, as the several roles and generic names further develop Brechtian features.

Perhaps one of the most important Brechtian aspects of the play is the way in which the creators use the characterizations and racist conventions of minstrelsy at the conclusion of the show to question and provoke the audience instead of providing resolution. In the final song, "The Scottsboro Boys," the actors come out in blackface makeup, and when the Interlocutor calls for the minstrels to commence the closing dance, the Cakewalk, the minstrels refuse, wipe their faces, and leave the stage. The stage directions read, "There is no anger or animosity" in the act, but simply, "just a feeling of pride and resolution," not leaving a sense of closure by the end of the show, but a questioning, critical sense of racism and freedom (Kander et al. 94). Characteristic of Brechtian epic theater, the style, as Yönkul claims, "does not serve for certain ideologies because it does not give direct messages; it lays bare the facts and figures from several aspects and wants its reader or the audience to think critically on the data and to render a verdict themselves" (76). The ending of the show conforms to these traits because there is no sense of closure, and the audience is left to think critically about racism and the fairness of the Scottsboro trials.

Instead of eliciting emotion through the individual characters, Kander and Ebb's emphasis on the structure of the show and its satirical portrayal of minstrelsy is another important aspect of the play's duality. In Megan Stahl's article "Too Big for Broadway: The limits of historical and theatrical empathy in *Parade* and *The Scottsboro Boys*," she contends that the multivalent qualities of the minstrel show "allow the actors to seamlessly transition among the various characters they embody throughout the story, but in doing so they limit the opportunities for theatrical empathy" (71). In this way, *The Scottsboro Boys* aligns itself with aspects and goals of Brechtian epic theater to limit audience connection as the form and message of the show are developed through the multiple

characters each actor performs; Kander and Ebb use these exaggerated stereotypes to highlight the satirical elements of the show and alienate the audience. Here, this Brechtian device allows the audience to more clearly understand and experience the racist conventions of minstrel theatre.

Although the musical exemplifies typical characteristics of minstrelsy, it challenges the form and moves past traditional boundaries of the genre as racist elements depict a reversal of the structure that further highlights the play's Brechtian characteristics. In one instance, the Scottsboro Boys are portrayed as minstrels and mock white supremacy, while traditionally whites used blackface as a caricature of African Americans. Kristin Wolski observes that

> Kander and Ebb use minstrelsy to tell the story of the historic Scottsboro Boys trials with actors portraying the Scottsboro Boys as minstrels; at the same time, they employ a number of devices to subvert minstrelsy stereotypes and thereby comment on racism.

The devices Wolski mentions relate directly to the minstrel structure of the show through the usage of blackface by the Scottsboro boys and the racist lyrics that Tambo and Bones sing. In "The Minstrel March/Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey," Tambo and Bones exclaim: "Wheel about, turnabout, and do just so. Every time dey wheel about, dey jump Jim Crow!" (Kander et al. 6) The direct mentioning of Jim Crow with its racist connotations in such a pointed confrontation with the audience unsettles in a way that alienates and disturbs. Similar to the conventions of Brechtian epic theater, Kander and Ebb use this spin on a typical theatrical style to highlight not only the racist conventions of minstrelsy, but also the historical perspective of racism present in the trials.

The Scottsboro Boys not only comments on racism towards African Americans in the South, but also offers a broader depiction of discrimination and prejudice occurring in America at the dawn of the Great Depression. When the character of Samuel Leibowitz is introduced, the Scottsboro Boys' attorney from New York is presented as a savior but is also depicted as a racist. In the song "That's Not the Way We Do Things," Leibowitz expresses his astonishment at the segregation present in the courthouse, but then goes on to sing "Just ask my maid Magnolia […] Just ask my cook Jemima […] Just ask our colored Laundress and I'm sure they'll agree […] the folks up north all want to see you go free" (Kander et al. 59). Although Leibowitz states that he is for equality, he describes the conditions in which African Americans in the North are still subjected to jobs in which they are slaves, although they are "free." Meghan Stahl contends that "Leibowitz's song broadens the show's sociopolitical focus further to include the misguided assumption that racial prejudice has been eradicated in the northern states" (76). Kander and Ebb further comment through the exaggerated characterizations in the minstrel show to critique racial and ethnic prejudice, and leave the audience to think critically on minstrelsy. Through this mechanism, the satire of the play showcases the historical racism during the trials and simultaneously develops Brechtian elements that force a critical outlook on the show instead of only enjoyment.

The use of minstrelsy is inherently Brechtian, as blackface, for some critics, is extremely uncomfortable. The critical response following the opening of the show at the Lyceum Theatre mainly focuses on the ironic and satirical elements juxtaposed with the seriousness of the subject matter. Michael Feingold's review in *The Village Voice* proposes an analysis that criticizes the use of minstrelsy in such an upbeat manner and questions the permissibility of staging a blackface minstrel troupe. Feingold asserts that the "minstrel-style heartiness defuses the historical agony. You can sometimes please people by shocking them, but trying to please them and offend them at the same

time achieves neither." Given the grim reality of the Scottsboro trials, Feingold contends that satirical portrayal of characters based on historical events is inappropriate. Feingold, and critics with a similar point of view, maintain the use of a minstrel narrative, a theatrical device used for the perpetuation of racial stereotypes, lacks empathy and respect for the gravity of the subject matter.

Meghan Stahl examines the effect of the show in an empathic sense, but does *The Scottsboro Boys* truly "present a form of entertainment now considered detestable" (78)? Boelcskevy claims that there is "little space now for theater as Verfremdung [distancing or alienation]. Audiences tend to want to be entertained and maybe educated, not alienated or assaulted." However, Kander and Ebb's comment on social injustices in a manner that goes beyond the limits of conventional musical theatre is extremely effective in *The Scottsboro Boys*. Although current audiences may want to be entertained more than alienated or challenged, Brechtian theater, through the provocation of social change, is a necessity in modern American society in which these problems still exist. The Brechtian elements are used to comment on past historical failures as the minstrelsy structure is used to comment on the racism present during the trials, but both strategies point outward to the audience and the present historical moment.

In their satiric representation of the trials, racism, and the minstrel tradition, Kander and Ebb create Brechtian theater in *The Scottsboro Boys*. The racist conventions of minstrel theater establish a Brechtian dynamic throughout the play as the musical entertains but also promote social change through heightened historical consciousness. The play thrusts a satirical representation of racism during the trials and the racist conventions of minstrel theater upon the audience, a convention widely observed in Brechtian works. These inescapable and troubling historical realities impede the audience's imagination; spectators are limited in their ability to derive their own meaning from the show as it is predetermined by history. Through the Brechtian portrayal of the story, however, the show is impactful, and while this strategy may not be viewed as socially acceptable by some, it is a necessary commentary on the racism present throughout American history, and toward which the audience is challenged to formulate its own response.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

In his prize-winning essay, "Hwa-Byung: The "Han"-Blessed Illness," Wooyoung Cho taps a global skill set to shed new light on how culture shapes definitions of mental illness. His paper is an outstanding example of student-driven inquiry. I had never heard of the Korean culture-bound mental illness called hwa-byung when Wooyoung proposed this project. But even if I had, I would've had no idea where to find narratives about hwa-byung written by young men, let alone be able to translate them from Korean. (Are you curious yet?)

In his research, Wooyoung learned that scholarly studies of hwa-byung have focused on middle-aged women and interpreted their symptoms as reflections of Korea's patriarchal social structure. When he discovered that today more young men are being diagnosed with hwa-byung, he wanted to understand the social causes of their distress. One way he gathered evidence was by searching a Korean online forum and reading posts by young men about their hwa-byung experiences.

When students in Marisa Milanese's "Global Documentary" class read a draft of Wooyoung's essay in a cross-section peer review exercise, they were understandably skeptical about his methodology. They asked for "a clearer understanding of why analyzing narratives is a credible method to gain insight into this illness." Wooyoung responded with a revision that provided the theoretical framework necessary to explain the kind of authority those anonymous online posts have in the context of his project. He was wise to listen carefully to his readers. Marisa's students pinpointed what readers from outside our class—including the *WR* editorial board—would need to be persuaded by his argument.

Wooyoung's fascinating essay provides one small example of what international students contribute to a Boston University education. It was a delight to teach him and to learn from him.

Sarah Madsen Hardy
WR 150: Representing Illness

FROM THE WRITER

The topic of my paper, "hwa-byung," is a culture-bound mental illness that is specific to my home country, Korea. Initially, I didn't intend to write about anything like hwa-byung (HB) for my research paper in "Representing Illness." As a matter of fact, I had thought of HB as a "dead" mental illness that is only used metaphorically, much like hysteria. However, I soon found out HB is still very much "alive." As a matter of fact, as a mental illness closely associated with the Korean culture, HB is more about the current Korean culture than its symptoms. Hence, I hope that this paper will help readers learn a fraction more about Korean culture.

WOOYOUNG CHO is a Korean sophomore in the College of Engineering who will be taking a leave of absence for the next two years. Staying less than five years in each, he has lived and studied in five different countries: United States, South Africa, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates, and South Korea. He would like to thank Professor Madsen Hardy for her teachings about not just writing but also about illnesses and different paradigms for understanding illnesses. He would also like to thank his peers in "Representing Illness" for creating an amiable atmosphere in class and making the writing experience enjoyable.

WOOYOUNG CHO
Prize Essay Award

HWA-BYUNG: THE "HAN"-BLESSED ILLNESS

Abstract: Hwa-byung (HB) is a Korean culture-bound illness that includes symptoms of insomnia, depression, and somatization in the lower abdomen. This illness is unique in that it is found mostly, but certainly not only, in middle-aged Korean females. Previously, the research approach to HB has been predominantly sociological and focused on middle-aged females. Consequently, the cultural significance of HB has been understood in relation to female gender roles and patriarchal social structure. However, by analyzing online narratives of HB from the Korean website Naver, the current cultural significance of HB can be described using the Korean emotion of "han." The online narratives suggest that HB is not just a response to gender inequality, but also to social concerns of different populations, including young men. Learning more about the cultural significance of HB will facilitate the communication between HB patients and clinicians.

> "Clinicians and scientists will perhaps acknowledge that reading novels and poems might contribute to one's being a well-rounded person, but probably wouldn't contribute much to the design of an experiment nor help a surgeon perform a triple bypass, even if the patient happens to be an English professor."
>
> —Lennard Davis and David Morris, "Biocultures Manifesto"

As illustrated by Lennard Davis and David Morris's analogy, it is very common to conceptualize culture and biology as two polar entities that are incapable of interacting with each other, much like oil and water. In the same context, it is equally easy to categorize illnesses *only* as biological entities. In fact, even in the case of mental illnesses such as depression, recent research has been focused heavily on neuroscience. As such, the current research has strived to classify all illnesses as biological phenomena, explained with hormones, viruses, bacteria, and specific parts of the human anatomy. However, the connection between biology and culture does exist. Illnesses have both inextricable biological and cultural aspects that have been focused and researched by many. For instance, bioethicists try to understand how cultural values affect medical choices; the medical educators study how narratives affect therapies, and the list goes on (Davis and Morris 413). Judy Segal, a scholar of health rhetoric, claims it is impossible to separate the cultural aspect and the biological aspect of a disease because not only do people tell narratives of diseases but also the narratives of diseases tell a story about the people (10). This approach to illness as both a cultural and a biological phenomenon is called a "biocultural" approach and it helps understand illnesses beyond the scope of science.

With this connection between culture and disease in mind, one category of illnesses that highlight this connection is culture-bound illness. Culture-bound illnesses are illnesses that occur

specifically in certain cultures. One notable example of culture-bound illness is hwa-byung (HB). HB is a Korean mental illness where the patients experience symptoms of depression and insomnia along with somatization in their abdomen (Lin 107). Though there is some controversy as to whether the disease should be instead classified as a subset of major depressive disorder, HB is still considered as a distinct illness due to its characteristic differences from depression. Whereas depression often induces an impulse for suicide, HB has not been found with the same effect and, in fact, found in some cases to give the patients the will to live (Kim 497). Also, HB has a unique set of symptoms such as shortened temper, an increase in talkativeness, and somatization in the form of heat (Kim 497). The most important distinction of HB is that it is associated with building up of anger that generally develops over a long time (Kim 497). In addition, HB is claimed to be somewhat common in Korea, affecting approximately 5% of the general population (Kim 497).

Due to such prominence and uniqueness, sociological and statistical research has been conducted to gain a better understanding of HB. In their article, "Hwa-byung Among Middle-Aged Korean Women: Family Relationships, Gender-Role Attitudes, and Self-Esteem," Kim and colleagues collect surveys from 395 women who are aged over forty and recruited from the four major metropolitan cities of Korea (Seoul, Incheon, Daejon, and Busan). The paper analyzes the causes of HB in middle-aged Korean women, based on their outcomes, and calls for further research on the effect of family relationship problems and gender roles on HB. Similarly, other sociological research on HB has been conducted to expand the understanding of HB. "Gender Differences in Factors Affecting Hwa-byung Symptoms with Middle-age People," by Kim and Lee, takes a similar approach to subjects that included men as well as women and "A Review of the Korean Cultural Syndrome Hwa-byung: Suggestions for Theory and Intervention," by Choi and colleagues, provides a new sociological model to studying HB. These sociological approaches to HB are useful methods for enhancing our understanding of the illness. However, by analyzing contemporary online discourse about HB, we can see how HB "tells a story" about Koreans. Analyzing these stories will lead to fuller understanding of the cultural aspect of HB.

Most of the current research focuses on HB as a product of patriarchal social structure and gender inequality. For instance, in their article, "Hwa-byung Among Middle-Aged Korean Women: Family Relationships, Gender-Role Attitudes, and Self-Esteem," Kim and her colleagues survey 395 Korean women aged forty years or over, from four metropolitan cities of Korea (500-501). From the analysis of their results, Kim and colleagues claim the main causes of HB in middle-aged women to be family conflicts and their social roles as mother and wife (506). Also, in "A Review of the Korean Cultural Syndrome Hwa-byung: Suggestions for Theory and Intervention," Lee claims the cause of HB to be the patriarchal social structure: "Hwa-byung is the syndrome that is fundamentally associated with the Korean traditional male dominant culture and the patriarchal social system" (60). The similarity between these articles is that they identify gender roles and Korean features of patriarchal social structure, such as marital conflicts with in-laws, to be the main cause of HB (Lee 60, Kim 498). In these manners, the papers of the past have mostly implied HB to be an expression of the gender inequality that has been faced by Korean women.

It is undeniably true that part of HB's cultural significance is its representation of gender inequality and familial structure that has manifested in Korean culture throughout history. However, it is also important to note that the cultural significance of HB is not limited to these few particular social issues, though it appears so in many papers. In fact, a fundamental issue with this implication is that this explanation is applicable to only the female patients. For the male patients, the cultural

experience of their HB could not be formed by the patriarchal social structure. This issue arises from the fact that previous research is lacking on the recently increased numbers of male HB patients. Analyzing the online HB narratives in the context of the Korean emotion "han" reveals the cultural significance of HB as a representation of social issues that reflect the male patients and the consequent change in its cultural significance. By using the Korean emotion of "han" and taking a biocultural approach to HB, it is evident that HB is not tied only to gender inequality but can also be a response to social concerns that affect men, such as military service, isolation, and hostile working environments.

HAN

To understand the cultural significance of HB, it is useful to understand its relationship with the emotion of "han," as suggested by Hwang in his article, "A Study of Hwa-Byung in Korean Society: Narcissistic/Masochistic Self-disorder and Christian Conversion." "Han" is a unique Korean emotion that cannot be directly translated to a corresponding word in English or many other languages, much like "schadenfreude" or "weltschmerz" in German. Although varying definitions of "han" exist, the definition of "han" worked with in this paper will be that of Young Hak Hyun, who defined it as "a sense of unresolved resentment against injustice suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the over-whelming circumstances, a feeling of total abandonment a feeling of acute pain of sorrow in one's guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and wriggle, and an obstinate urge to take revenge and to right the wrong—All these to a greater or lesser degree in combination" (Hwang 32). Comparing this definition with the description of HB given in the introduction, there are various connections that can be drawn between "han" and HB. The "resentment," "sense of helplessness," and "urge to take revenge" that defines "han" can be generalized as a form of anger, which may be a part of the piled-up anger that is said to trigger HB. Also, the metaphorical description of "a feeling of acute pain of sorrow in one's guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and wriggle" is represented verbatim in the somatization symptoms of HB. With these striking similarities, it is evident that there may be a close connection between HB and "han." In fact, Hwang defines the relationship of HB and "han" to be the following: "the term 'Han' refers to the various kinds of emotional states of mind which result from experiencing Han-full (heart breaking) incidents, 'Hwa-Byung' refers to the psychiatric term designating a psychosomatic illness caused by Han-full incidents" (35). In other words, "han" can be perceived as the emotion that can be felt from being heart-broken, angry and vengeful that, if accumulated too much, may cause HB in an individual.

HWA-BYUNG (HB) IN NARRATIVES

Although the relationship between HB and "han" already seems somewhat evident, the relationship between the two becomes more definite through the analysis of HB narratives found online. "Han" appears in various forms and emphasis in these HB narratives. Furthermore, associating HB with "han" facilitates the understanding of the cultural significance of HB beyond gender inequality. Upon analyzing the narratives of HB in the context of "han," HB seems to reflect the major issues of different social groups in Korea, such as hardships in Korean national service, isolation, and hostile working environments.

In contrast to the gender inequality explanation of HB, HB narratives by young males tend to contain some form of "han" against the national service. For instance, in one anonymous online

narrative by an anonymous Korean male HB patient in the Korean website Naver Knowledge-in, the author writes his personal account of his life with HB and reveals his "han" towards the Korean military. Naver KnowledgeiN is a very popular website sponsored by a major Korean portal called Naver that often features personal questions or stories to which the author feels the need for replies. While posts to Naver KnowledgeiN can't be considered a reliable source of accurate information, they do offer insight into how the current generation of Koreans thinks and talks about HB. In this particular narrative, the anonymous male writer in his twenties shares his personal life experience as a HB patient. In this narrative, the man confesses he has had some temper control issues since childhood due to the bad relationship between his parents. Moreover, the man also admits to being subject to peer pressure due to his short temper. However, the man claims his symptoms had worsened and developed into HB after his national service duties in Korea. His words become especially emotional when he starts talking about the national service. The writer claims, "Because of the strict hierarchical structure of the military, I couldn't complain or express my anger to anyone and had to obey my superior's commands, regardless of how unjust or how old he was. [These things] were exactly what I was afraid of before I went to the military… and things turned out just as I had expected…. [My heart tells me] that locating every single one of those superiors and killing every single one of them should cure my HB, but I can't."[1] From these words, the "han" of the man can be identified. The feelings of injustice and the hierarchical structure that forced him to suppress his emotions are revealed through the author's sense of helplessness in his tone and sentence structure. Also, his rather frightening desire for revenge, along with his sense of helplessness, is an essential part of "han." Therefore, it can be seen that the man blames the emotion of "han" that he has felt during his national service duty for his worsened symptoms of HB. Moreover, similar observations can be made in other narratives about HB. Many young men have posted narratives about HB identifying national service as the major source of their symptoms and indicating similar emotions of injustice, vengeance, and anger: "A guy in the military always caused anger in my body to rise"[5]; "Sometimes I even dream about getting my revenge. My biggest mistake was not taking my revenge before I left the military."[6] Hence, from the patterns in these narratives, it can be seen that these young, male HB narratives tell us a story about their writers; the narratives seek to share and represent their writer's discontent with the national service, not gender inequality.

Isolation is another common issue that frequently appears in online narratives of HB. In another HB narrative from an anonymous but apparently male writer who claims that he has had HB for seven years since high school, the writer blames the stress he has gained from familial conflicts for his symptoms: "During high school, I got into conflicts with my father because I was caught fighting another kid in school. From then on, my family and the school has treated me as if I'm a criminal; and I think I've gotten HB due to the mental stress that I've received from them."[2] In this narrative, the writer points out his feeling of helplessness that he felt from his family and peers as the main cause of his HB. Also, though it is hard to directly translate to English, his word choice in Korean reveals signs of anger that, together with his sense of helplessness, show his "han." Regardless of the ethical validity of his treatment by his family and peers, this case illustrates that isolation can cause "han" and in turn, lead to HB. Other narratives reveal a slightly different effect of isolation in their HB experience. In one narrative by a man who says he has been diagnosed HB for over ten months, the writer does not associate isolation as the *cause* of his HB. Rather, he refers to it as a major side effect *after* he was diagnosed with HB: "Because HB doesn't really display any visible symptoms, no one around me understood my hardships and I had a hard time in my social life."[5] From these narratives, it can be seen that HB is also closely related to social isolation. Not

only can isolation cause HB, but also HB can cause isolation that in turn, worsens the experience of HB.

Another cultural significance of HB commonly shown in HB narratives is "han" felt from a hostile working environment. A blog post by a traditional Korean medical professional, Im Hyeong Taek, describes his experience of dealing with HB patients. The analysis of this blog post illustrates the relationship between HB and "han" given from the eyes of a clinician:

> Just a few years ago, most of the HB patients that used to visit me were female housewives in their fifties and sixties. Nowadays more male HB patients in their thirties and forties come and visit me……The thirties and forties male HB patients usually have worked in the same company for over ten years and feel like they have no one on their side, although they do work with other people. Occasionally, they get the credit for their work stolen by partners or bosses and receive undeserved hatred and discrimination due to their friendship with certain personnel.[3]

Similar to the previous narratives, the elements of "han" can be seen in various parts. The feeling of "helplessness" is expressed in the form of "feel[ing] like they have no one on their side" and the unfair hatred and plagiarism of work corresponds to the unjust element of "han." The most important thing to note, however, is the fact that the doctor has experienced an increase of male HB patients in their thirties and forties. Furthermore, the doctor notes that these patients have different causes for their HB than the middle-aged female patients studied in previous research. This differing experience of HB within different groups of people and the increasing number of HB patients illustrate that the social significance of HB is not limited to gender inequality in the patriarchal social elements of Korea. HB represents different types of "injustice" for different groups of people and consequently illustrates the social issues that change with time and demography.

It is important to note that patriarchal social structure is still a factor in the cultural makeup of HB. Many middle-aged women diagnosed with HB still identify patriarchal social structure to be the main cause of their HB. Hence, previous research, which has been mainly focused on middle-aged female patients, was partially justified to associate HB with the patriarchal social structure. However, focusing on sociological and statistical research on HB in the middle-aged female HB patients gives the false impression that HB is *only* a feminine disease that arises from the gender inequality of Korea. The different online narratives of HB illustrate different social issues, such as national service, isolation, and working environment, showing that this is not the case. As Segal has claimed in another context, the HB narratives "tell a story" about their writers and the Korean social issues that they feel "han"-full of. The emotion of "han" represented in these HB narratives comes from different origins that show different social issues in Korean culture. As suggested by Kleinman in his article "Culture and Depression," it is important to understand these cultural contexts of depression-like illnesses, such as HB, in order to learn how the experiences of HB differ for different subcultural groups (952). Using this knowledge, the clinicians and patients can cooperate to deal with HB together and establish a better relationship (Kleinman 952).

It is worth noting that the missing, important key to developing our knowledge about illness perhaps isn't extra surveys or new experiments. Perhaps it isn't sociological models based on complex statistical analysis. Perhaps it is reading novels or poems or any form of illness narratives that will contribute to expanding our understanding.

NOTES

1. "I Am Going Insane Due to Hwa-byung." *Naver KnowledgeiN*, Naver, 05 Feb. 2016, http://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=7&dirId=70109&docId=244823966&qb=7ZmU67ORIOuCqOyekA&enc=utf8§ion=kin&rank=6&search_sort=0&spq=0. Accessed 6 Nov. 2016. The essay's author has translated this and all subsequent quotations from this website from their original Korean.

2. "How Can I Cure HB." *Naver KnowledgeiN*, Naver, 21 Jan. 2015, http://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=7&dirId=70109&docId=216034307&qb=7ZmU67ORIOuCqOyEsQ&enc=utf8§ion=kin&rank=7&search_sort=0&spq=0. Accessed 6 Nov. 2016.

3. Im, Hyeong Taek. "Records of Treatment Cases of Young 30s and 40s Working Patients." *Naver Blog*, Naver, 11 Feb. 2016, http://blog.naver.com/drlimht/220623650063. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016.

4. "I can't get rid of HB even after my service." *Naver KnowledgeiN*, Naver, n.d., http://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=7&dirId=70109&docId=212220446&qb=6rWw64yAIO2ZlOuzkQ&enc=utf8§ion=kin&rank=3&search_sort=0&spq=0. Accessed 12 Nov. 2016.

5. "I've been suffering from HB for years… Help." *Naver KnowledgeiN*, Naver, n.d., http://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=7&dirId=70305&docId=125537860&qb=6rWw64yAIO2ZlOuzkQ&enc=utf8§ion=kin&rank=6&search_sort=0&spq=0. Accessed 12 Nov. 2016.

6. "Am I HB?? What is happening to me??" *Naver KnowledgeiN*, Naver, n.d., http://kin.naver.com/qna/detail.nhn?d1id=7&dirId=70109&docId=117698638&qb=6rWw64yAIO2ZlOuzkQ&enc=utf8§ion=kin&rank=5&search_sort=0&spq=0. Accessed 12 Nov. 2016.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BACKGROUND:

1. Lin, Keh-Ming, M.D. "Hwa-byung: A Korean Culture-bound Syndrome?" *American Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 140, no. 1, 1983, pp. 105–07.

A peer reviewed article on Hwa-byung cases and analysis of symptoms, this article illustrates three instances of Hwa-byung and analyzes and discusses the symptoms of Hwa-byung and seeks to spread awareness on Hwa-byung so that physicians have a better understanding of the illness and Korean culture when treating potential Korean immigrant Hwa-byung patients. The authors call for further research on Hwa-byung is perhaps impeded in part due to the prolonged description of individual cases. Nonetheless, the article explains the phenomena with some helpful details and facts that do go along with the examples that he gives.

EXHIBIT:

1. *Naver Knowledge IN*. Naver, n.d., http://kin.naver.com/index.nhn.19 Oct. 2016.

A Korean community driven question-and-answer site founded and sponsored by a Korean major portal website called "Naver." Similar to many Q&A format sites, this website features questions about numerous topics made by individuals. Due to its many features such as rankings, approved professionals that answer questions, including clinicians and scholars, it was prolific as a Q&A source and functions solidly as a Q&A site. However, there are some issues with this site, such as prevalence of posts that are in actuality advertisements. This source will be useful as a provider of exhibit source of male narratives on HB that I shall analyze, as many posts often feature narratives to describe their situation/problems. Also many posts are made for the sole purpose of writing their story anonymously and are not really questions but rather narratives. Yet, I should be careful to seed out any possible advertisements. There will be about total of six narratives that I will use as exhibit sources from this source.

2. Im, Hyeong Taek. "Records of Treatment Cases of Young 30s and 40s Working Patients." *Naver Blog*. Naver, 11 Feb. 2016, http://blog.naver.com/drlimht/220623650063. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016.

A Korean blog post from a Korean blog called 'Naver blog.' As it may already be apparent, this blog site is also a service provided by the Korean website Naver, the same company as Naver Knowledge-in. The author claims that he is a Korean traditional doctor and, judging by his former posts and revealed information, seems to be true. However, due to the informal and uncertain nature of these posts, this source cannot be a reliable source for facts, regardless of how seemingly qualified the man appears to be. Regardless of whether the man is actually a doctor or how good of a doctor he is, the blog posts by him are also narratives about HB that is part of the cultural representation of HB.

ARGUMENT:

1. Kim, Eunha, Ingrid Hogge, Peter Ji, Young R. Shim, and Catherine Lothspeich. "Hwa-byung Among Middle-Aged Korean Women: Family Relationships, Gender-Role Attitudes, and Self-Esteem." *Health Care for Women International*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2013, pp. 495–511.

   A scholarly article from a journal on nursing, this article analyzes the causes of Hwa-byung in middle aged Korean women from the Korean culture and calls for further research on the effect of family relationship problems and gender roles on Hwa-byung. It argues that Korean male are responsible for not changing patriarchal values and consequently causing Hwa-byung in females. It also states that the level of female depression is much higher than the males This article is valuable in that it is one of the few peer reviewed scholarly articles that have been published relatively recently on Hwa-byung. Yet, the author's call for more research on gender-role and family relationship problem is not supported using any specific reference or example, perhaps due to potential word limit or the diversity of these issues. Nonetheless, this article is used as an argument source to which I argue against its possible implication that this is the only cultural implication of HB. It is also used as a background source for some facts about HB (as the primary sources that it quotes are hard to find).

2. Lee, Jieun, Amy Wacholts, and Keum-Hyeong Choi. "A Review of the Korean Cultural Syndrome Hwa-byung: Suggestions for Theory and Intervention." *Journal of Asia Pacific Counseling*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2014, pp. 49–64.

   A scholarly article that provides a new ecological model to studying HB, this article makes few claims about causes of HB in female HB patients based on other scholarly articles. Though this article suggests a new model of research for HB, few sources that support her model are old and makes some statements about HB that are not necessarily true, such as its definition of HB as a disease arising only in females from female inequality (which cannot be true because there are statistics, narratives, articles, records of male patients as well). Nevertheless her model is not particularly relevant to my research and this article can still be used as an argument source for my paper as it makes some claims on generalized causes of HB that I dispute against by doing my research on male HB.

3. Kim, Nam-Sun, and Kyu-Eun Lee. "Gender Differences in Factors Affecting Hwa-byung Symptoms with Middle-age People." *Journal of Korean Academy of Fundamentals of Nursing*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2012, pp. 98–108.

   A Korean scholarly article which attempts to fill in the missing research on difference between male and female HB patients. This source compares and analyzes statistics based on a survey from male and female HB patients. However, this source doesn't include any narratives that could accompany their findings. Nonetheless, this source is useful as an argument source as a source of an argument that I will be somewhat be challenging as I focus on the cultural side of HB rather than the sociological aspect that this paper focuses on.

THEORY:

1. Kleinman, Arthur. "Culture and Depression." *New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 351, vol. 10, 2004, pp. 951–53.

   A scholarly article from a medical journal that claims a strong relationship between culture and depression. Urges clinicians to understand the patient's cultural background when diagnosing depression. This source is useful for my paper as depression is closely related to HB, and has many symptoms in common and discusses the importance of studying culture in relation to depression in great detail. Provides an interesting view on culture and many illustrations of how culture is related to treatment of depression but doesn't focus on specific examples or data. Regardless, this source can be utilized as a theory source as it justifies the significance of the critical lens of "bioculture," which I use to look at my topic of HB.

2. Hwang, Yong Hoon. (1995) *A Study of Hwa-byung in Korean Society: Narcissistic/masochistic Self-Disorder and Christian Conversion (Doctoral dissertation) Retrieved from ProQuest.* (Order No. 9530825).

   A scholarly article arguing the connection between narcissism, religion (Christianity) and HB. Describes HB thoroughly and even goes into some possibly relevant historical context. This source offers the theoretical model of linking HB with the Korean emotion of "han" that I would like to explore and utilize in more detail. Provides an interesting relationship between two seemingly distinct phenomena: HB and masochism. However, the article is not too effective in delivering its point (over 200 pages) and uses a special definition of masochism that is a bit complicated to understand. Yet, the source offers various explanation of HB that includes history, emotion and culture, which cannot be seen in any other work and its definition of "han" serves as one of the critical lens through which I analyze HB.

3. Segal, Judy Z. "Breast Cancer Narratives as Public Rhetoric: Genre Itself and the Maintenance of Ignorance." *Linguistics and the Human Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2008, pp. 4–23.

   A scholarly article arguing that the narratives of breast cancer contribute to the ignorance of breast cancer. This article describes a link between narratives and diseases that I will use to justify my choice of narratives as my main exhibit sources. The source effectively illustrates how the narratives contribute to the shaping of our breast cancer knowledge through various examples of narratives and analogies, but isn't directly related to my topic. However, it is still used as a theory source to justify the lens of narratives that I will be using.

4. Davis, Lennard J., and David B. Morris. "Biocultures Manifesto." *New Literary History*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2007, pp. 411–18.

   A scholarly article arguing the strong relationship between biology and culture, and the formation of an academic field called "bioculture." This article describes the link between biology and culture that is a more general form of the explanation of the link between disease and culture. The source uses somewhat informal language and hypothetical analogies that help the material be more understandable. However, on the same note, the examples are

hypothetical and general overall, so may not be a great background source or exhibit source. Nonetheless, serves as a theory source that goes along with the Segal's article. Also serves as the source of the hook analogy for my essay.

FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

The final paper for WR 150 "Modern and Contemporary American Poetry" builds upon the analytical, argumentative, and research skills introduced in the first two papers. In order to enlarge the scope and complexity of their arguments, students are asked to conduct a more substantial exploration of multiple poems or a longer poem by any American poet of their choosing. Similar to Papers 1 and 2, students must find their motivation for writing in the arguments of others; however, this time students are not provided any exhibit or argument sources for their consideration. Paper 3 requires students to locate and engage with all source material independently. Beyond this, the paper has to be 2000–3000 words in length and use at least five sources, at least two exhibits and two arguments.

Molly Doomchin's paper "Sylvia Plath: The Dialogue between Poetry and Painting" demonstrates an extraordinary amount of critical and creative thinking, particularly her use of the "academic gap" as her motivation to write. After conducting a substantial amount of exploratory research, Molly found that most of what has been written about Plath has to do with the more sensational or psychological aspects of Plath's work, with poems such as "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" receiving primary attention. Molly's paper also ambitiously blurs genres; it is both literary and art criticism, offering exemplary close readings of linguistic and visual exhibits in support of her claims. Ultimately, she has composed a source-based academic argument that both general and scholarly audiences will find thoroughly engaging and enjoyable to read.

Jason Tandon
WR 150: Modern and Contemporary American Poetry

FROM THE WRITER

When exploring potential topics, I discovered that Sylvia Plath had written a poem about one of my favorite paintings, *The Dream* by Henri Rousseau (1910). Upon researching further, I uncovered an academic gap; I noticed that critics focused on labeling Plath as a confessional poet, absorbed in her own thoughts and feelings. I could not find any scholarship discussing Plath's poetry about paintings. My paper claims that through her ekphrastic poetry, Plath engages herself in a conversation with artists of the past, debunking the selfish, narcissistic label critics are so quick to throw at her.

MOLLY DOOMCHIN is a rising sophomore in Boston University's College of Arts and Sciences, majoring in Art History. A lifelong New Yorker, Molly has always had a passion for paintings and someday hopes to become a curator. She also loves playing guitar and songwriting. She would like to thank Professor Jason Tandon for his guidance, patience, and kind words.

MOLLY DOOMCHIN

SYLVIA PLATH: THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN POETRY AND PAINTING

As documented in her journals, Sylvia Plath was a frequent museum patron. Plath's relations with paintings were particularly strong in early 1958, when she and her husband, Ted Hughes, were living in New England. Attempting to get out of a "publishing drought," Plath sought inspiration for her works by going to the library to "pore over books of reproductions of paintings" (Alexander 214). The majority of her painting focus was on more contemporary artists, such as the twentieth-century Italian De Chirico, the French Symbolist Post-Impressionist Gauguin (Plath, *Journals* 324), the Naïve Post-Impressionist Rousseau (332), the Cubist Picasso (338) and the Swiss Klee (334). She discussed her encounters with paintings with a deep sense of serenity and joy, declaring "how lovely it will be to spend my mornings, after coffee, working on poems, an art poem… and a long poem about the spirit, luminous, making itself manifest in art" (352). Looking at various paintings in great detail, dissecting each of their forms, she eventually picked a few to focus on in her works, aiming "to have my art poems: one to three (Gauguin, Klee & Rousseau)—completed by the end of March (345). Upon completion, she wrote about such poems very highly, going as far as stating "'I feel these are the best poems I have ever done"' (*The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath,* Hughes, 210).

Despite her apparent fondness of works of art and her poems they inspired, critics typically do not discuss Plath's art poetry, nor her affinity for particular pieces and artists. Instead, the focus of both scholars and the general public is overwhelmingly centered around Plath's personal life and the works that highlight her mental state and experiences. Plath committed suicide the morning of February 11, 1963, by submerging her head in a running oven (Alexander 214), a mere week after writing "Edge," a presumed suicide note, and two weeks after publishing "The Bell Jar," one of her best known works. Prior to her death, Plath had attempted to take her own life numerous times, a culmination of years dealing with personal trauma and battling depression (Wagner-Martin and Davidson). Poems critics frequently discuss are "Daddy," a poem intended "to kill her father's memory" (Phillips) by utilizing Holocaust and World War II imagery, and "Lady Lazarus," where she "again equates her suffering with the experiences of the tortured Jews," further highlighting her depression (Aird).

Because of the naked honesty and vulnerable pain associated with such works, Sylvia Plath has garnered the title of a "confessional poet." Poems of this variety are ones where "they [the poets] put the speaker himself at the centre of the poem in such a way as to make his psychological shame and vulnerability an embodiment of his civilization" (Britzolakis). Her categorization as a confessional poet has led many to criticize her works; for example, Irving Howe claims that "Sylvia Plath herself, has abandoned the sense of audience and cares nothing about—indeed, is hardly aware of—the presence of anyone but herself." Additionally, Peter Davison claims that her poems "are written for nobody's ears except the writer's. They have a ritual ring, the inevitable preface to doom." All of these criticisms exemplify the belief that Plath's poetry is self-absorbed and

narcissistic, that she is blind and deaf to the rest of the world, only aware and receptive of what is going on in her own mind; she is pigeonholed as a poet stuck in her own world. This presumed poetic selfishness coupled with her well-known biography contribute to the romanticism of depression and suicide, something she never intended to do.

Plath recognizes the personal aspect of the poem but denounces the title critics and the general public have bestowed upon her. In an interview, she asserted, "I think that personal experience is very important, but certainly it shouldn't be a kind of shut box and mirror-looking, narcissistic experience. I believe it should be *relevant*, and relevant to the larger things, the bigger things…" ("The Poet Speaks," 593). Plath believed that her poems were greater than her experiences, even though her experiences *did* play a role in what she wrote. Critics that instantly label her confessional fail to acknowledge the significance of her poems about paintings. By writing about works of art, Plath inserts herself into an ongoing dialogue, a dialogue larger than the one in her own mind. In certain instances, like in "Yadwigha, On a Red Couch, Among Lilies" (based on Henri Rousseau's *The Dream*), Plath engages in conversation directly with the artist and the painting's subject, offering up her criticism and praise for controversial works; she shows that she is aware of and respects the art of the past and wants to use her poems to connect with past works. In other instances, like in "The Disquieting Muses" (based on Giorgio de Chirico's painting of the same name) Plath uses striking, memorable images from paintings and utilizes them in her poetry to aid a narrative she creates; her innovation and the painting work in tandem to tell a story, and she is building upon past art. While both cases are different, Plath always pays homage to the painter by integrating specifics in the painting into her poem, essentially painting with her words. Due to this intimate relationship with painters and their canvases, one cannot claim that Plath is merely a self-absorbed poet of confessional nature, but one conscious and receptive of the art world around her.

Defining Plath

While Plath is traditionally categorized as a confessional poet, critics like Howe and Davison fail to recognize the ekphrastic quality of many of Plath's poems. As defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, ekphrasis is "a literary device in which a painting, sculpture, or other work of visual art is described in detail." Each poem in which Plath comments on or discusses a work of visual art can be defined as an ekphrastic poem. Ekphrastic works are interactive and draw clear links between writers and artists. By writing an ekphrastic poem, one enters a pre-existing conversation; one work could not exist without the other. In essence, many of Plath's works are dependent on works of others, showing her deep veneration for the painters whose works she incorporates in her own.

HENRI ROUSSEAU: PLATH IN THE JUNGLE

The Dream, Henri Rousseau, 1910.

"Yadwigha, On a Red Couch, Among Lilies," Plath's 1958 poem, was written in response to Henri Rousseau's *The Dream*, painted forty-eight years prior in 1910. The painting, Rousseau's last and largest work, places a young nude female reclining on a red sofa in the middle of a lush jungle, full of vibrant foliage and lively animals. According to the *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago*, "Though the public was thoroughly perplexed, the artists rightly hailed The Dream as one of the milestones of modern art" ("The Henri Rousseau Exhibition," 20). Plath, in her poem, points to the perplexed reaction of the public, choosing to address Rousseau about his painting by discussing their questions.

Plath responds to the structure of Rousseau's painting in a compelling way. The painting appears to have a random composition; elephants, lions, birds, monkeys, and other animals seem to be randomly strewn about the canvas, interlaced with overwhelming amounts of greenery and lilies; mysterious snake charmer is shown emerging out from some trees, and the nude figure, Yadwigha, is arbitrarily thrown onto the canvas lounging on a sofa. There is no clear order to how Rousseau arranges things. Additionally, the subject depicted, a nude on a couch in the jungle, is incredibly random and perplexing. However, Plath contrasts this randomness by approaching her poem in a methodical way. She chose to write her poem in sestina form; a sestina is "a poem of six six-line stanzas (with an envoy) in which the line-endings of the first stanza are repeated, but in different order, in the other five" (Oxford English Dictionary). The form is structured, complicated and deliberate. Plath clearly put a lot of thought into how the poem was arranged.

For the sestina's six line-endings she repeats, Plath picks the painting's most pertinent images and concepts: "you," "couch," "eye," "moon," "green," and "lilies." "Lilies," "green," "couch," and "moon" are all visuals that stand out in Rousseau's work. The repetition of the painting's pertinent images allows the reader to envision the painting through her words and points to her astute attention to detail and respect for the painting. Her use of "you" underlines that this is a poem in which she is talking both to Rousseau and Yadwigha (depending on the stanza) because she wants to interact with both the artist and the subject. "Eye" represents the "eyes" of different aspects of the painting ["under the eye/Of uncaged tigers and a tropical moon," (4–5), "Dreamed yourself away in the moon's eye" (28)]; Rousseau's vision ["But to a friend, in private, Rousseau

confessed his eye" (35), "To feed his eye with red" (38)]; and the eyes of critics and museum patrons ["It seems the constant critics wanted you… To turn you luminous, without the eye" (8, 12), "The couch glared out at the prosaic eye" (20)]. This emphasis allows Plath to differentiate between artistic vision and critical response, recognizing that there is merit to both points of view. She notes that art is meant to be created and commented on. Plath features the imperative relationship between artist and critic, taking on the role as critic by writing her poem. In turn, her poem is a piece of art—she is aware that it will be criticized, just as Rousseau's painting was. This recognition through mentioning critics directly in the work signals a parallel Plath draws between Rousseau and herself, making her connected to the art of the past. She is clearly mindful of "the presence of anyone but herself," unlike what Howe asserts.

Like the planned juxtaposition of her structured poem and Rousseau's scattered painting, Plath's carefully planned diction points to her opinions of the work. Her critique is unquestionably favorable; it is clear that she does not agree with the tepid and confused response of the public. She begins her poem "Yadwigha, the literalist once wondered how you" (1). It is clear that she is not "the literalist" she mentions because later on, she writes "Yadwigha, pose on, that he put you on the couch" (37). "Pose on" signals that she approves of Rousseau's inclusion and placement of Yadwigha and of the painting holistically. This positive outlook is further exemplified through positive word choice. She writes of "bird of paradise" (24), "gigantic lilies,/Marvelingly numbered the many shades of green" (29–30), and "those great lilies" (39). "Paradise," "marvelingly," (a word Plath made up) and "great" all suggest positivity; such words would not be included if Plath were responding negatively to the work. Additionally, Plath would not describe Rousseau's painting in such vivid detail if she did not appreciate the details she described. Particularly vivid images she portrays are "intricate wilderness of green" (5), "Heart-shaped leaves" (6), "leaves and lilies flattened to paper behind you" (16), "mille-fleurs tapestry" (17), "red against fifty variants of green" (19), and "bright moon lilies" that "Nodded their petaled heads around your couch" (29–30). One can envision the "heart-shaped leaves," and "bright moon lilies" and is impressed by the countless shades of green Plath claims are in the work. By writing that the leaves and lilies "flattened to paper," Plath recognizes the flat, two-dimensional aspect of Rousseau's work; she does not mention this in a negative light, but rather she speaks of the paper-like quality fondly. If this were not a work she enjoyed, she would not have gone into the level of detail she did when describing what she saw. Every word used was calculated, conveying to the reader that she loved *The Dream*.

Plath's deliberate diction also points to her feelings about art and poetry critics. In the fourth stanza, line 2, she refers to the "prosaic eye" of the critic. "Prosaic" indicates "dull or commonplace matters, considerations, observations, etc." (Oxford English Dictionary). Effectively, she condemns the public that condemned Rousseau; in her mind, their reactions to the work are pedestrian and simple and, thus, should not be taken seriously. Her dissatisfaction with the general public is also shown when she writes, "And that, Rousseau told the critics, was why the couch/Accompanied you" (31–32) followed by "But to a friend, in private, Rousseau confessed his eye" (35). Here, she subtly hints that Rousseau had to dumb down any explanation of his work for the general public, but any explanation he gave was not what truly motivated his questionable subject. In Plath's opinion, he provided the simpletons with answers they desperately wanted for their questions, though they were not the answers he felt. She hints that while people crave answers and explanations for art, some art remains unanswered—some art has no answers.

In "Yadwigha, On a Red Couch, Among Lilies," Plath relates Rousseau's experience with critics to her own. Around the time she wrote this poem (1958), Plath was handed countless rejections by publishing agencies, bruising her ego. In an April 22, 1958 journal entry, she vented, "A day of misery: The New Yorker rejection of all the poems (O, Howard Moss, or 'They' liked The Disquieting Muses & The Rousseau Sestina)—a burning sense of injustice, sobs, sorrow: desire to fight back." It is evident that Plath did not respond well to rejection; she forges a connection to Rousseau, an artist she believed was unjustly berated and misjudged by critics, just as she felt she was.

Giorgio de Chirico: The Dark Side of Art

The Disquieting Muses, Giorgio de Chirico, 1916–1918

While Plath makes it clear that "Yadwigha, On a Red Couch, Among Lilies" is a poem about a specific painting, that kind of clarity is not present in "The Disquieting Muses" (1957). In this instance, her poem's subject is not the painting itself but her own narrative. This poem is deeply personal, made evident by Plath's use of "I." The speaker of the poem, presumably Plath herself, addresses "Mother" throughout the poem—she repeats it at the beginning of the first, third, and sixth stanzas, placing emphasis on the importance on the mother figure presented. The poem is a deep manifestation of the feelings she felt toward her mother. According to the Norton Anthology, "The Disquieting Muses" showcases "Plath's ambivalence toward her mother" (594). However, if Plath were truly ambivalent toward her mother, or feeling "contradictory emotions (as love and hatred) towards the same person" (Oxford English Dictionary), she would not have utilized de Chirico's painting as inspiration for her work; she describes the figures as "three terrible faceless dummies" and a "sinister trio of women" (Norton Anthology, 594), clearly pointing to the negative feelings she intended this poem to portray.

De Chirico's work showcases three figures, or "muses," seemingly made out of wood with balloon-shaped forms for heads. The sky is an unnatural shade of green, adding to the peculiarity of the image. De Chirico makes his painting even more unsettling by adding violent contrasts between light and dark, creating intense shadows and particularly rigid, sharp, and angular lines. In "The Disquieting Muses," Plath references these three figures on various occasions. Every time they are

mentioned, they are painted in a negative light. First, she writes "that she/Sent these ladies in her seed/With heads like darning-eggs to nod" (4–7); the figures are vaguely called "these ladies," giving the poem a mysterious, uneasy quality. In the following stanza, she references "Mouthless, eyeless, with stitched bald head" (15), "but those ladies broke the panes" (24); the reader is forced to envision a head with no mouth nor eyes and a bald head that has been "stitched," which is a rather ugly, alarming image. In the third stanza, Plath discusses a hurricane hitting, about to destroy the windows keeping her family safe; of the figures she writes, "But those ladies broke the panes" (24), directly citing them as causers of harm, making her unsafe. The fourth stanza points to "the shadow cast by my dismal-headed/Godmothers"; "dismal-headed" is an incredibly negative way to describe someone or something, affirming the stance that these figures are negative that had been established early on. In the fifth stanza, Plath discusses feeling abandoned by her mother, leaving her to "[face] my traveling companions" (47), companions she clearly does not want to be in the company of. She ends her poem discussing the figures' cruel natures, writing, "Faces blank as the day I was born/Their shadows long in the setting sun/That never brightens or goes down" (51–53). In the final lines, it is clear that Plath resents her mother for being an ineffective shield from the negative forces and people in the world: "And this is the kingdom you bore me to/Mother, mother" (54–55). Plath felt a strong negative emotional reaction toward the three mysterious figures in the de Chirico painting, using them as a visual representation of the evil she blames her mother for not protecting her from.

In addition to the muse motif, Plath inserts other integral aspects of de Chirico's *The Disquieting Muses* in her poem of the same name. For example, she focuses on shadows being cast; she writes "In the shadow cast by my dismal-headed/Godmothers" (29–30), "And the shadow stretched" (31), and "Their shadows long in the setting sun" (52). The shadows in the painting are harsh and abrupt, representing the harsh and abrupt darkness she felt she was subjected to in both her childhood and her adulthood. She also hints to darkness throughout, declaring "Nodding by night around my bed" (14), "The lights went out" (31), "Day now, night now" (49), and "Their shadows long in the setting sun/That never brightens or goes down" (52–53). De Chirico's painting pays close attention to contrast in hues and values, juxtaposing jarringly bright oranges and dull greens, for example. Plath relates this theme to her own life, discussing how all the lights in her life turned to irreparable darkness. The muses cast their deep shadows and left her in a never-ending dismal night. In both cases, Plath uses painterly characteristics of de Chirico's work and makes it applicable to her own, taking elements of his style and transforming them.

Plath also transforms the purpose of the balloon heads of the muses in de Chirico's painting. In the sixth stanza of her poem (lines 42–48), she writes of what she believes to be her mother's greatest betrayal, the poem's climax of sorts:

> I woke one day to see you, mother
> Floating above me in bluest air
> On a green balloon bright with a million
> Flowers, and bluebirds that never were
> Never, never found anywhere.
> But the little planet bobbed away
> Like a soap-bubble as you called: Come here!
> As I faced my traveling companions

She describes her mother floating away in a balloon, taking with her all the good and positive aspects of life Plath herself never experienced, leaving her alone with the horrifying muses. The balloon heads of de Chirico's muses represent her mother's emotional abandonment, the motivating theme behind Plath's poem. As she did with the muses themselves, shadows, darkness, and balloons, Plath reinterpreted them in a way that would best help her paint the story she wanted to, using the de Chirico work as inspiration. While critics like Howe and Davison might argue that this exemplifies Plath's selfish poetry, it is important to note that Plath's poem would not exist without the de Chirico painting. Instead of being labeled a narcissistic work, it should be labeled an innovative, inspired one.

A Commonality

While one poem aims to speak directly to an artist and his painting and the other aims to write a new script through an artist and his painting, Plath ends both "Yadwigha, On a Red Couch, Among Lilies" and "The Disquieting Muses" similarly. Plath chooses to end both poems on determined, relatively uplifting notes. In the Rousseau poem she writes "Yadwigha, pose on…In the midst of all that green and those great lilies!" (37–39); she offers her approval to Rousseau, voicing support for a painting so misunderstood, saying she understands. In the de Chirico, she ends declaring "But no frown of mine/Will betray the company I keep" (55–56); while she feels forlorn and in unwanted company, she suggests that she is still determined to tackle life's hardships and struggles, even though her mom is not there to guide her. Somehow, Irving Howe was blind to this in his declaration "Sylvia Plath's inability to do more with her theme than thrust it against our eyes, displaying her wound in all its red plushy woundedness" (*Sylvia Plath: a Partial Disagreement*). She proves, by ending her poems encouragingly, that she is more than her "wounds," more than the confessional, self-pitying box critics are so quick to throw her in. With these two poems in particular, it is made clear that she is more than her depression—she is part of something bigger than herself. She is strong: an admirer, an innovator, an artist.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

David (Ta-wei) Huang wrote this essay as the third paper for the WR 150 seminar "Anti-Immigrant Sentiments in the United States to 1930." The course explored trends in negative responses to immigration and their connection to an ongoing struggle to define the meaning of "American" since the early 1800s. The final essay for the course asked students whether the past can provide a useful guideline for understanding society in the present. David requested to pursue a topic outside of the United States, as he saw parallels between the past and current nationalist movements.

David engages with the essay prompt by suggesting how Japan should alter current responses to their foreign-born population to strengthen their nation, using the United States in the early twentieth century as a case study. David's success in connecting seemingly disparate societies arises from the depth of his research and ability to succinctly summarize the key concepts of Social Darwinism and *Nihonjinron*, structuring his essay to emphasize the parallels of these concepts. He grappled with making his argument while staying within the length limits of the assignment but ably reflected on his sources and culled appropriately without losing key supporting elements. David carefully acknowledged differences in the two societies while still crafting a reasonable policy proposal.

Rachel Schneider
WR 150: Anti-Immigration Sentiments in the United States to 1930

FROM THE WRITER

One of the most eye-opening, but also disheartening, takeaways from Professor Schneider's course on anti-immigration sentiments in the United States is that many of the arguments used against immigrants in the 1800s are still perpetrated against immigrants today. One notable and welcomed change in rhetoric is the shift away from using social Darwinism to justify nativist arguments against immigration. As an international relations major with a deep interest in Japan, I decided to utilize knowledge acquired from the course and extrapolate it to a completely different case. As such, I focused my research on anti-immigration sentiments in Japan—a highly homogenous country with entrenched xenophobic sentiments. Through my research, I was surprised to find that anti-immigration arguments used by politicians and the media in Japan mirrored those used by American nativists in the 1800s, except in Japan it was and still is veiled in the pseudo-scientific concepts of *Nihonjinron* (Japanese people theory). Intrigued by Japan's continued use of racial superiority in the immigration debate, I chose to analyze the factors that allowed America to phase out social Darwinism in mainstream immigration debate and how that might be applied to Japan.

DAVID (TA-WEI) HUANG is a rising junior at the Pardee School, majoring in International Relations with an independent major in Human Rights. Though he was born in Taiwan, David spent a majority of his childhood abroad and has lived in Suzhou, Prague, Los Angeles, and El Paso. His experience with immigration led him to pursue Professor Schneider's WR 150 course. David thanks Professor Schneider for her close guidance and instruction and for providing him with plentiful resources, suggestions, and grammatical edits for this paper. He would also like to thank his peers in the WR 150 course whose comments helped further refine his paper.

DAVID (TA-WEI) HUANG
Prize Essay Award

JAPANESE *NINHONJINRON* AND 1890S AMERICAN SOCIAL DARWINISM: LOOKING TO THE PAST FOR A SOLUTION TO JAPAN'S VICIOUS CYCLE OF HOMOGENEITY

With the advances of both the natural and social sciences, nativism and anti-immigration sentiments based on social Darwinism have largely fallen out of the mainstream culture in the United States. One would expect that Japan, a country known for its technological advances and innovation, would have also, like America, moved past using social Darwinian ideas to justify anti-immigration sentiments and policies. Yet, the post-World War II ideas of *nihonjinron*, a discipline dedicated to the study "of national identity and the exceptionality of the Japanese people,"[1] that promotes the "idea that Japanese people are inherently, essentially, and genetically distinct" still lingers and has, in fact, been ingrained into multiple facets of Japanese society.[2] Because Japanese exceptionalism and *nihonjinron* ideas "are still commonly accepted by Japanese people, including politicians and some academics,"[3] it has allowed some nativists to argue for apartheid in Japan if immigration were allowed and to justify Japan's anti-immigration laws on preserving the purity of the Japanese character without widespread societal objections.[4] By analyzing the historical cases of anti-immigration movements in the United States circa 1890 and modern day Japan, this paper attributes Japan's inability to overcome *nihonjinron* ideals to its low percentage of foreign-born inhabitants, enabling a self-perpetuating vicious cycle wherein foreigners are banned on the basis of stereotypes and misconceptions that are perpetuated by the lack of foreigners to correct these misconceptions.

While the pseudo-scientific arguments used to reinforce Japanese and American exceptionalism are termed differently—*nihonjinron* in Japan and social Darwinism in the United States—the underlying sentiments are the same; nativists in both countries believed that their respective populations are so far superior and advanced than other peoples that intermingling with the other so-called lesser races would dilute their greatness by contaminating their race with undesirable traits. Social Darwinism theorizes that all the races of mankind are in competition with each other and that only the fittest race can survive. Herbert Spencer's extrapolation of the Darwinian concept of survival of the fittest into human interactions empowered nativists espousing American exceptionalism. Before the advent of social Darwinism, nativists argued that Americans were exceptional because of their republican values.[5] After social Darwinism's inception, nativists could further argue that Americans were racially superior as well, grounding their exceptionalism in biological concepts.[6] Some of these nativists claimed that only the most successful Anglo-Saxons from Europe managed to reach America and, thus, America was the nation that fostered the most successful Anglo-Saxons, which the nativists already considered to be the most advanced race in the world.[7] Josiah Strong, an American Protestant clergyman controversial for his advocacy of using Christianity to uplift the savage races of the world, documents the different immigrant races in his

widely read book *Our Country* and concludes that almost every other race is inferior to American Anglo-Saxons.[8] He contended that they are better-looking, stronger, and more physically fit and have taller statures, more energy, and a stronger conviction of morals. These ideas of social Darwinian American exceptionalism were pervasive, such that they were even discussed in the upper echelons of academia, managing to stay relevant for decades. Writing thirty years after Strong's publication—a testament to the endurance of social Darwinian American exceptionalism—Edward A. Ross, a prominent American eugenist who taught at Cornell and Stanford, was one such academic who subscribed to ideas of social Darwinian American exceptionalism. Ross documented the purportedly deleterious effects of immigration in *The Old World in the New*, writing that Americans would lose their focus and composure if they were to "absorb excitable mercurial blood from southern Europe."[9] The idea of racial superiority and using science to justify the exclusion of other races, though, was not only limited to America at the turn of the century.

In Japan, the same sentiments of the exceptionalism and nationalistic sense of self were manifested in the form of *nihonjinron,* perpetuated in contemporary Japanese society through politicians and the media.[10] *Nihonjinron,* literally translated as Japanese people theory, is a field of study that emerged after Japan's failed attempts at imperialism in the twentieth century.[11] Japan's failure to create a pan-Asian empire forced Japanese academia and policymakers to reinvent the concept of Japanese identity from an ethno-racial hybrid to a homogenous national self-image.[12] This field of study analyzes Japanese uniqueness and the reasons for their supposed superiority over other races. In the United States, social Darwinism and American exceptionalism allowed nativists to dehumanize and criminalize immigrants, portraying them as "'unassimilable aliens,' 'unwelcome invasions,' 'undesirable,' 'diseased,' [and] 'illegal.'"[13] In Japan, politicians utilize the same rhetoric against immigrant workers. The more vitriolic of these arguments come from Ishihara Shintaro, conservative former governor of Tokyo, who has publicly disparaged immigrants on several occasions. Shintaro is known for espousing *nihonjinron*-esque arguments, generalizing that "'*Sangokujin* [third world people] and foreigners'" repeat serious crimes.[14] He even posits:

> Why don't you [Japanese citizens] go to Roppongi? It's now a foreign neighborhood. Africans—I don't mean African-Americans—who don't speak English are there doing who knows what. This is leading to new forms of crime. We should be letting in people who are intelligent.[15]

The onus of spreading and perpetuating stereotypes of foreigners is not just on the politicians; Japanese media also has a role in promoting Japanese uniqueness against the backdrop of immigrants.[16] Michael Prieler, an associate professor in South Korea specializing on media representations of race and ethnicity, in his study "Othering, racial hierarchies, and identity construction in Japanese television advertising*,"* empirically documents that foreigners "are often stereotyped in ways that differentiate them from Japanese," thereby "contributing… to the long-standing discourse of Japanese exceptionalism (*nihonjinron*)."[17] Japanese actions inspired by *nihonjinron*—stereotyping of immigrants as well as dehumanizing and criminalizing them—is reminiscent of 1890s and early twentieth-century America and the rhetoric of social Darwinian American exceptionalism, where nativists popularized sweeping generalizations of other races.

More telling of the pervasiveness of *nihonjinron* ideals are the Japanese citizens' reactions, or lack thereof, to these nativist sentiments. When Ayako Sono, a prolific conservative columnist, published her column advocating for an apartheid in Japan, the article only provoked a lukewarm

response from the Japanese people and was generally met with indifference.[18] Sono wrote that "all races can do business, research, and socialize with each other, but they should live separately."[19] In her article, Sono goes on to elaborate that if Japan were to increase foreign immigration, it should pursue racial segregation, unapologetically asserting that "Whites, Asians, and blacks should live separately."[20] While the international community saw the piece problematic and controversial, with the South African ambassador to Japan issuing a letter of protest, domestic Japanese media "scarcely mentioned the story."[21] The lack of widespread public outrage over Sono's *nihonjinron* statements is indicative of how entrenched such ideals are in Japanese society. The relatively few objections to her article suggests that a majority of Japanese still implicitly believe in and accept *nihonjinron*, that the Japanese race is unique and should not risk contamination by outsiders.

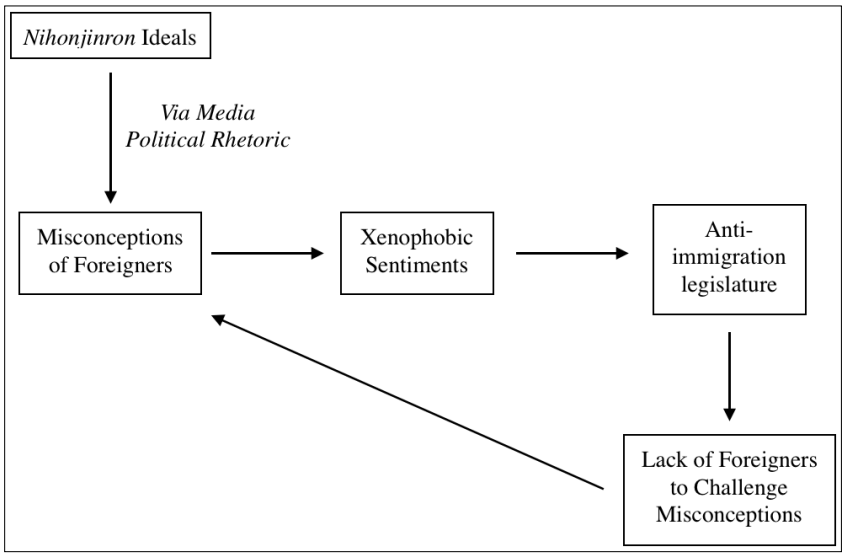

Figure 1: The Self-perpetuating Vicious Cycle of Homogeneity in Japan

Despite the fact that both social Darwinism and *nihonjinron* have been discredited in academia, the tenets of *nihonjinron* still pervade Japanese society; in the United States, it has become uncommon to base American exceptionalism on Darwinian concepts like the nativists had in the 1890s.[22] The reason Japan still retains concepts of Japanese uniqueness and superiority is because of its homogenous population, wherein the foreign-born immigrants comprised of around 1.2 percent of the population in 2014 compared to America's 14.77 percent in 1890.[23] The homogenous population in Japan allows for a vicious cycle to be perpetuated (*see Figure 1)*. The ideas of *nihonjinron* beget the vicious cycle by creating an in-and-out group dynamic, where the Japanese people see themselves as a unique group of people and everyone else as "agents capable of contaminating a pure ethnic Japanese identity."[24] Japanese exceptionalism, disseminated and ingrained in society through the media and political rhetoric, contributes to the misconceptions of foreigners and immigrant workers, feeding into xenophobic sentiments. These xenophobic sentiments, in turn, allow for the enactment of restrictive immigration legislation, as the Japanese people see these laws as a way of protecting their country from degradation and a form of self-preservation. The Japanese government's stance on immigration "was and remains that of limiting the stay of migrants and assuring their return to their home countries after two or three years."[25] These restrictive immigration laws thwart the flow of immigrants and foreign populations into the country to correct the misconceptions generated from *nihonjinron,* further perpetuating said misconceptions. The reason social Darwinian American exceptionalism has failed to carry over into popular discourse in the

twenty-first century is because the United States had a robust population of immigrants to challenge misconceptions, which prevented the formation of the vicious cycle.

In the 1890s, America shared all but one of the links of the vicious cycle of homogeneity—the lack of foreign-born residents, which effectively prevented the formation of the vicious cycle and allowed the country to cast social Darwinian American exceptionalism out of the mainstream and into the fringe discussions of immigration. As previously noted, both Japan and America had ideas of exceptionalism. Nativists were convinced that American Anglo-Saxons differed from every other race including the original European Anglo-Saxons. This generated, as *nihonjinron* did in Japan, misconceptions of foreigners and people of other races. The Dictionary of Races, produced as a result of the U.S. Congress' attempt at utilizing science to craft immigration legislation, is a collection of sweeping generalizations of different races and is one such example of the misconceptions born out of the nativists' beliefs of social Darwinian American exceptionalism.[26] These misconceptions generated xenophobic sentiments, as the nativists were wary of the effects of assimilation and what that might mean for the purity of the American people.[27] Fears of contamination led to anti-immigration laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and the Geary Act (1892). However, unlike Japan, the lack of foreigners link was not present in 1890s America and, thus, disrupted the formation of the vicious cycle.

By the 1890s, foreign-born residents already comprised 14.77 percent of America's population.[28] The immigrant groups in America were able to disrupt the vicious cycle by correcting misconceptions that had arisen from social Darwinism and American exceptionalism and by participating in the political process. Prior to being elected president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson had openly championed anti-immigration rhetoric based on social Darwinism, writing in his book *A History of the American People* that the Southern and Eastern European immigrants had "neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence."[29] However, when Wilson met with delegations of immigrants on multiple occasions during his campaign for presidency in 1912, he was forced to make commitments to "the offended groups during the campaign [that] were a matter of honor with him…. That honor and commitment was decisive in his vetoes of the restrictive immigration bills in 1915, 1917, and 1921."[30] By actively participating in the political process and lobbying against restrictive immigration measures, the immigrant groups contributed to the shattering of the vicious cycle and prompted a closer investigation of the social Darwinian claims of American exceptionalism. The decline of social Darwinism is evident when scholars emerged questioning the validity of extrapolating biological phenomena observed among animals (which was where Charles Darwin documented the phenomenon of survival of the fittest) to human interactions and the social sciences.[31] Now, in the twenty-first century, mainstream nativists no longer use social Darwinism to justify anti-immigration legislation. A majority of American nativists now base their anti-immigration sentiments not in racial differences and the idea of American Anglo-Saxon superiority, but rather on religious affiliation and perceived threat from certain religious groups. Because America had a large number of foreign-born residents in the country, these residents had the opportunity to band together to participate in the political process, correct misconceptions of ethnic groups, and advocate against restrictive immigration legislation—ultimately purging social Darwinian American exceptionalism from popular discourse. Conversely, Japan, owing to its low percentage of foreign-born residents, still clings to its perceived uniqueness, unwilling to let immigrants stay too long for fear of societal disruptions resulting from the immigrants' alleged inability to assimilate.[32]

The historical cases of social Darwinian American exceptionalism in 1890s United States and *nihonjinron* in modern day Japan exhibit striking similarities in the rhetoric used by nativists in championing their own respective population's racial superiority. What is troubling is that American nativists made these arguments over one hundred years ago. America has been able to move past using pseudo-science and racial superiority as justification for nativist and anti-immigration arguments and legislation in the mainstream. In Japan, though, *nihonjinron* is still being disseminated and perpetuated by politicians and the media and remains entrenched in their society. This paper contends that Japan's low-percentage of foreign-born immigrants is the reason why a self-perpetuating cycle of homogeneity has formed in Japanese society. By looking to America's past, this paper concludes that having a high number of foreign-born immigrants in a society is critical in breaking the vicious cycle, as they help correct the misconceptions born out of ideas of racial superiority. With a rapidly aging population, Japan can either actively pursue immigration policies that will boost the foreign-born population in the country, terminate the vicious cycle, and replenish their greying population with young immigrant workers, or they can maintain the status quo of letting immigrants stay for only a couple of years and expect their population to dwindle to around half of its current size in 2100, with the vicious cycle perpetuated *ad infinitum*.[33] If the latter were to happen, Japan—already in its third decade of economic stagnation with its gross domestic product per capita having shrunk for the past twenty years—can expect to see a multitude of problems including: a lack of young workers to pay into the top-heavy pension schemes (it is estimated that around thirty-six percent of Japan's population will be aged sixty-five and up) and food insecurity that threatens the extinction of "an estimated 896 Japanese cities, towns, and villages."[34] Allowing for more immigration in Japan is not just for the sake of creating a multicultural society; it is so that the Japanese can abandon embarrassing, antiquated racist sentiments of *nihonjinron;* it is so that they can address their demographic crisis; it is so that they can avoid enduring further economic drawbacks associated with a disproportionate aging population.

END NOTES

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3. Richey, "The Impact," 199.

4. Kyla Ryan, "Japan's Immigration Reluctance," *The Diplomat,* September 15, 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/09/japans-immigration-reluctance/.

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17. Prieler, "Othering, racial hierarchies and identity construction," 511.

18. Ryan, "Japan's Immigration Reluctance."

19. Ibid.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

Analisa wrote her outstanding research paper while enrolled in a unique section of WR 150 called "Burning Questions"; this section offers students the opportunity to complete a semester-long research project on a topic of their choosing. Analisa knew from the beginning that she wanted to tackle a challenging, practical issue for her research paper. She decided to confront the sensitive issue of what happens to women who give birth in American prisons and the shockingly limited ways in which the incarcerating institutions facilitate bonds between these mothers and their newborns. Two main strengths of her paper are the measured tone of her argumentation and the credible, well-supported proposals she offers that take in to account the need for flexibility in the face of varying prison resources. Of particular note in this paper is her deft strategy of linking successful systemic change in public education, a complex institution deeply embedded in our society, with potential positive change in the prison system; this strategy humanizes the administrators and prisoners of concern in her paper, and it also makes the situation itself seem both recognizable and solvable. Analisa's methodical, detail-focused research and writing processes allowed her to anticipate the objections of potential naysayers and respond to them with thoughtful consideration. By the end of the paper, it's hard not to be convinced that the solutions she offers could be steps toward real change in the treatment of imprisoned mothers and their babies.

Samantha Myers
WR 150: Burning Questions: Human Expression

FROM THE WRITER

When I began to brainstorm a possible topic that would result in an interesting and dynamic research paper, I became both fascinated and frustrated by the women's prison system. As I engaged further into my research, pregnancy and birth in prison struck me as a topic that required greater awareness in society. I quickly noticed that the treatment of women in our prison system was beyond poor, especially where pregnancy and birth are concerned. After discovering the effectiveness of prison nursery programs, I was astounded to find that they were not more widespread. This discovery sparked my curiosity and I soon began to brainstorm how we could open up a conversation concerning prison nursery programs and how to make them more widespread across the United States. Through extensive research looking at both the perspectives of mothers in prison as well as the correctional officers, I found that by establishing nursery programs a more positive outcome will result for mothers, babies, and the nation as a whole.

ANALISA JOHNSON is a rising sophomore at Boston University's Sargent College majoring in Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. She was born in San Francisco and moved to Sacramento, CA shortly after, where her love for writing and arts quickly flourished. In addition to writing, another passion of Analisa's is volunteering in her community, and she's spent much of her time involved in Staging a Miracle, a visual and performing arts program for marginalized youth. Analisa hopes to obtain her masters in speech pathology and early intervention work with young children. She would like to thank Professor Samantha Myers for her encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback throughout the process of writing this paper.

ANALISA JOHNSON

THE BENEFITS OF PRISON NURSERY PROGRAMS: SPREADING AWARENESS TO CORRECTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS THROUGH INFORMATIVE CONFERENCES AND NURSERY PROGRAM SITE VISITS

Over the past forty years or so, the United States has seen a steady increase in incarcerated individuals, with 2.2 million people currently in prisons and jails nationwide, according to an organization called The Sentencing Project, which provides updated statistics on prisons and the criminal justice system (2). In particular, the number of incarcerated females has risen dramatically, at a rate fifty percent higher than that of men since the early 1980s (The Sentencing Project 4). As recently as 2015, there are nearly 112,000 incarcerated women across the nation (The Sentencing Project 4). While there is a plethora of healthcare issues that women face when locked up, one of the most concerning is that of reproductive health, specifically pregnancy and birth in prison. Roughly one in twenty-five women entering prison or jail is pregnant (Yager). As a result, the number of babies born behind bars has also grown at an alarming rate. It is estimated that up to 2,000 infants are born to incarcerated mothers each year, only to be taken from them a scant twenty-four hours after birth and placed either with a family member, or more often, in the foster care system (Sufrin). Current scholarly sources have proven prison nursery programs—which allow mothers to keep their infants with them while they serve out their sentences—to be a very effective method in dealing with the issue of incarcerated mothers. Nevertheless, despite this fact, there are only nine nursery programs currently operational in America. In order to make prison nursery programs more prevalent, we need to better educate correctional administrators on the effectiveness of nursery programs so that mothers, babies, and the nation as a whole can benefit. I propose addressing administrators through an informative presentation at the American Correctional Association's annual conventions as well as sending correctional administrators without prison nurseries to successful facilities across the nation to experience firsthand the effectiveness of such programs. If we take the time to study this issue and better educate individuals on the effectiveness of prison nursery programs, we can begin to improve the prison healthcare system, which is currently failing many women and children alike.

When it comes to women's healthcare in the prison system, there are many areas that are lacking in adequacy, but several of great importance include the prenatal care and unsafe birthing practices of incarcerated mothers. According to the journal article "Timing of Conception for Pregnant Women Returning to Jail," "[a]pproximately 6% to 10% of women entering jails are pregnant" (Clarke et al. 133). This is a significant increase over the past four decades, mostly due to the fact that the number of incarcerated women has increased dramatically. In an article entitled "Perinatal Needs of Pregnant, Incarcerated Women," Barbara A. Hotelling discusses the lack of quality healthcare provided to expectant mothers behind bars. Despite adequate healthcare being mandated to all inmates through the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, women still make up a lesser percentage of total incarcerated individuals than men, which is used by correctional staff to justify providing scarcer healthcare and rehabilitative programs for incarcerated women (Hotelling).

Not to mention the fact that prisons aren't subject to any sort of external review, which doesn't encourage the improvement of healthcare services, especially if they are seen as costly endeavors (Hotelling). As a result, many incarcerated women face unnecessarily high-risk pregnancies. Another practice that increases the risk of complications in pregnancy in prison is the custom of shackling female inmates during labor, delivery, and postpartum. This practice is both degrading and inhumane and can pose a problem for healthcare providers in case of an emergency. In an official position statement made by the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses condemning the use of shackles on pregnant women, the board of directors' note that the unnecessary practice can interfere with the ability of nurses and health care providers to deliver the proper care and treatment (AWHONN). Only eighteen states in the U.S. currently ban the shackling of expectant mothers in prison while they give birth (ACLU). The remaining thirty-two states are left to their own devices, in some cases shackling mothers with no regards to the recommendations of nurses and other health care providers. This poor treatment of female inmates and lack of proper health and prenatal care is cause for concern. When looking at the nine states that currently operate prison nursery programs—California, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, South Dakota, Washington, and West Virginia—all but three have laws in place that prevent the shackling of inmates while giving birth (Sufrin). Prisons with nursery programs seem to better understand the necessity of protecting incarcerated mothers and babies throughout the pregnancy and delivery than other prisons. I believe that we should consider the positive effects that implementing prison nursery programs has on the correctional facilities themselves, as providing better healthcare seems to be one key component.

Before attempting to spread awareness of prison nursery programs we must first understand exactly what they are and how they service incarcerated mothers. Prison nursery programs offer women who become incarcerated while pregnant the option to keep and parent their child while they serve their sentence. It can be a rigorous process to get into these programs; with limited spots available, prospective mothers must have a nonviolent conviction, no record of child abuse, and be roughly within eighteen months of completing their sentence—which is the maximum amount of time a child can stay with his or her mother behind bars (Stein 11). When mothers do get into these programs, there are many benefits to be had while behind bars, for both themselves and their child. For starters, mothers are provided with parenting classes, support groups, substance abuse counseling, and complementary day-care services to attend these classes. Many prisons also provide high school and college courses for those mothers who have not yet completed their education (Wertheimer). Lastly, vocational programs are also offered, which aid in the job search once the women are released from prison. These enrichment and rehabilitative classes are an important part of reintegrating these women back into society upon their release from prison. As a result of the work put in while serving out their sentence, many of the mothers have been shown to have a reduced recidivism rate once they are released. According to a study conducted in the article, "Recidivism after Release from a Prison Nursery Program" by Lorie Goshin, Mary Byrne, and Alana Henninger, the recidivism rate within three years of women exiting prison nursery programs was found to be a mere 4.3% for a new offense and 9.4% for a parole violation. An astounding 86.3% of women remained in the community three years following their release from a prison nursery program (Goshin et al., "Recidivism"). This is a proven positive for both the mothers and their children.

In addition to prison nursery programs providing mothers and babies with the tools necessary to succeed upon leaving prison, they have also been proven to foster the imperative

mother-child attachment bond, which bears a positive effect on children later in life. In the article "The Price They Pay: Protecting the Mother-Child Relationship Through the Use of Prison Nurseries and Residential Parenting Programs," Anne E. Jbara discusses the emotional and cognitive benefits of the mother child bond. Jbara notes that the attachment bond is crucial to a child's psychological development; even in instances where a mother is reunited with her child at two to three years of age—before a child can actually remember their mother's absence—severe psychological trauma can ensue later in life (Jbara). Jbrara goes on to quote The American Psychological Society, which found that "…infants who bond securely with their mothers become more self-reliant and have higher self-esteem as toddlers" (Jbara). This is remarkable evidence showing the importance of the bond between mother and baby at such an early age. Furthermore, in the article "Preschool Outcomes of Children Who Lived as Infants in a Prison Nursery," by Lorie Goshin, Mary Byrne, and Barbara Blanchard-Lewis, a study was conducted examining the long-term effects of early childhood life in prison on infants ages one to eighteen months. This data was compared to that of children who were separated from their mother due to incarceration. Goshin, Byrne, and Blanchard-Lewis found that "[c]hildren who spent time with their mothers in a prison nursery had significantly lower mean anxious/ depressed and withdrawn behavior scores than children who were separated from their mothers in infancy or toddlerhood because of incarceration" (Goshin et al., "Preschool Outcomes"). This is promising evidence for the effectiveness of prison nursery programs, and shows that there are not only benefits to be had in the short term, but also in the long-term development of children as well. Still, the mother child attachment bond is not merely something beneficial if fostered, but can actually produce detrimental effects on the child later in life if not nurtured: "Studies have shown that children who fail to sufficiently bond with their mothers are more likely to suffer from developmental delay, an inability to connect with others, and a greater likelihood of being convicted of a crime later in life" (Jbara). Clearly, mother-child separation is neither good for the child, the mother, or the state, who would not only be putting more children into foster care but also more individuals into incarceration, two avenues paid for by the government.

Despite all of the benefits previously discussed stemming from the employment of prison nursery programs, it is quite alarming that there are only nine currently operational in the United States. Furthermore, what I have found to be most disturbing is the number of women's correctional facilities that reported being uninformed on what prison nursery programs even were or that they proved to be beneficial. In a study conducted by Julie Campbell and Joseph R. Carlson, out of twenty-eight women's correctional facilities interviewed across the United States, only eight had nursery programs (which proved to be 100% of all nursery programs in the country at the time). Out of the remaining twenty, a stark 50% had never heard of the programs before or had very little information on them (Campbell et al. 1096). This data is troublesome and proves that we need to be advocating for the expansion of prison nursery programs across the nation, providing more information to the source itself—women's prisons—who are currently largely uninformed in this area about the many benefits that prison nursery programs have to offer.

In order to make the benefits of prison nursery programs more widely known, we need to provide increased education of these programs to women's prison facilities throughout the country. One way in which to do this is through an informative presentation given at The American Correctional Association's (ACA) Annual Congress of Correction conference. Although little research has been conducted showing the effectiveness of conferences and talks on spreading information and boosting implementation of the ideas presented, much research has been done on

the effectiveness of professional development and its benefits in education. We can look at these statistics and apply the findings to our case, which presents a similar necessity—present information to be implemented in a different setting at a later date. According to the journal article, "What Makes Professional Development Successful? Strategies That Foster Curriculum Implementation," by William R. Penuel, Barry J. Fishman, Ryoko Yamaguchi, and Lawrence P. Gallagher, which discusses the effect of professional development on the implementation of an inquiry science program called GLOBE, "[p]rofessional development is widely believed to be required for supporting implementation" (Penuel et al. 922). This illustrates to us that by simply providing new information and teaching techniques through professional development, these techniques were more likely to make it into the classroom than if not offered through professional development. Thus, we can conclude that by presenting information on the benefits of prison nursery programs at the ACA's Congress of Correction conference to current correctional administrators, we can expect to see an increase in the number of prison nurseries across the country.

When marketing the benefits of prison nursery programs, it is imperative to recognize that not all states or correctional facilities are created exactly the same or possess the same resources. As a result, being able to take and customize the information presented at the ACA's annual conference is an important step in the augmented adoption of prison nursery programs across the country. We can see clear differences in the nine prison nurseries currently operational, as none are exactly the same, each with its own individuality. For instance, while many nursery programs are similar in the sense that they allow nonviolent offenders to keep their newborns in a well-stocked facility, many differ in the number of days that infants are allowed to stay, anywhere from thirty days at the South Dakota Women's Prison to three years at the Washington Correctional Center for Women (Women's Prison Association 10). Additionally, the capacity of these nursery programs varies considerably; facilities across the nation can accommodate anywhere from five mother/infant pairs at the Decatur Correctional Center in Illinois and the Lakin Correctional Center for Women in West Virginia to no limit on capacity at the South Dakota Women's Prison. Most programs, however, tend to waver in the twelve- to eighteen-month range (Women's Prison Association 27–29). Clearly, these differences can make it challenging to present a universally applicable model of how to implement prison nursery programs in new correctional facilities. Therefore, in order to get the highest rate of employment of prison nursery programs, there should be some flexibility presented at the conference so that attendees form different states feel that they are able to take the information presented and customize it to add a prison nursery program to their correctional facility's repertoire as opposed to completely uprooting their current structure in order to accommodate nursery programs. This was also a found to be significant marker for implementation in the GLOBE study on professional development, as it was discovered that "[f]or both protocol use and preparedness for student inquiry, the opportunity to 'localize' GLOBE—that is, to plan for how to tailor its implementation to local circumstances of teachers' classrooms—was a significant predictor of the extent to which teachers implemented these aspects of the program" (Penuel et al. 950). As it follows, not all schools and teachers are the same, and so the ability to customize the information and techniques presented through professional development programs is important. Hence, from the findings presented here in this study, we can gather that the more flexible the information provided to states concerning the gritty details of these programs, the more likely that they will be implemented in the future.

In addition to an informative presentation, I propose that there also be a panel discussion. This would include correctional officers as well as mothers currently in the program and mothers

who have successfully completed the program to discuss their individual experiences, give testimonials and answer questions that attendees may have. Research has shown that lively panel discussions have proven to leave a longer lasting impact on attendees, rather than merely a non-interactive speech. Additionally, it allows conference attendees to hear various perspectives on the positives and negatives of prison nursery programs from essentially the experts in the field: those who run and live/have lived in a prison nursery. Bernadette Melnyk examines in her book, *Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing and Healthcare*, the benefits of utilizing panel discussions to distribute information. Melnyk states of panel discussions that "[t]his type of presentation format is especially effective in convening colleagues from various clinical settings to disseminate information […]" (358). Furthermore, "[l]istening to a number of different views enriches the session for the audience" (358). As I've previously discussed, not all prison nursery programs are the same, and thus, not all experiences living in and running a prison nursery are exactly the same. Some programs are bigger than others, possibly making the day for officers more hectic and the nights for mothers prolonged, with more crying infants in the mix. These are all things that will have a bearing on the program, and by including different perspectives in a panel discussion, conference attendees can get a more holistic view of the day-to-day life and operations in prison nurseries. By including a panel discussion, we also gain the opportunity for ample question and answer time: "[q]uestions from the audience are taken as a means of delving further into particular areas of interest or understanding the panelists' views better" (358). Oftentimes, audience members will have questions about the information being presented or want to know more about a certain experience or topic. Through having a panel discussion, women and officers of different backgrounds and experiences with be available with a plethora of experience to answer any questions that may come up. Thus, a panel discussion is a positive means of making conference attendees more receptive to the idea of opening up nursery programs in their correctional facilities, and as a result, opening up opportunities for mothers who find themselves pregnant behind bars.

While giving an informative presentation and having a panel discussion at the ACA's Annual Congress of Correction conference will prove highly beneficial in spreading awareness of prison nursery programs, to really make sure that correctional officers and administrators are prepared to implement these programs, the second part of my proposal is that we send officers from prisons without nursery programs to prisons that have a program in order to see first-hand the benefits and ask any clarifying questions. This will allow correctional officers and administrators the opportunity to get a first-hand look at successful prison nursery programs across the country and how they have gone about helping expecting women in prison. Although giving an informative presentation at the ACA's Congress of Correction conference is a proven effective method of disseminating information to a widespread audience, by allowing officers and administrators to see the benefits of these programs up close, the hope is that they will be motivated to implement them in their own prisons. Looking back at the GLOBE study on the effectiveness of professional development in spreading information, it was found that "[a] common criticism of professional development activities designed for teachers is that they are too short and offer limited follow-up to teachers once they begin to teach" (Penuel et al 929). In order to mitigate this problem, we need to supplement the knowledge gained at the ACA's Congress of Correction conference with site visits to successful prison nursery programs. Through this mentor type program, facilities without nursery programs can get the advice and help that they need from facilities with prison nursery programs in order to start their own nursery programs.

Now that we've seen the benefits of an informative conference on the implementation of prison nursery programs across the country, I'd like to take a moment to address what many are probably questioning; the potential costliness of these programs on prison facilities. While it may seem as if implementing prison nursery programs across the country would be a costly endeavor, what I'd like for us to consider are the costs of putting children in foster care comparatively. On average, according to the report, "Children in Foster Care" by Amanda Fixsen, the total financial cost for one child to remain in foster care per year in Oregon is about $26,600 (Fixsen 3). Conversely, in her article entitled "Prison Born" in *The Atlantic*, Sarah Yager discusses the findings of Joseph Carlson, a professor the University of Nebraska at Kearney who evaluated Nebraska's prison nursery program. Yager speaks of Carlson's findings: "[h]e calculated that nursery supplies, staff salaries, and medical expenses would total about 40 percent less each year than foster care for the babies who would otherwise end up there, and predicted more-significant savings from a decline in recidivism." One of the most prominent gains to prison nursery programs is, indeed, a drop in the recidivism rate of these women. This is not only a positive for the mothers and their children, but also for the prison system as a whole, which would benefit greatly financially with less people in the system. Clearly, we can see here that while somewhat rapidly increasing the number of prison nursery programs across the country may result in some extra money spent, we will reap the benefits in the long run, both financially and socially.

Clearly, the benefits of prison nursery programs for mothers, infants, and the population as a whole are astounding. Not only will the costs pay for themselves down the line and provide incarcerated mothers with better healthcare, but they will also receive the rehabilitative programs necessary to succeed in society once leaving prison. Additionally, mothers completing nursery programs have been proven to have a reduced recidivism rate versus the general inmate population, which means less taxpayer dollars going towards constructing and staffing new prisons. While it seems obvious that more of these programs should be implemented nationwide, in order for this to happen, education demonstrating the benefits of these programs must be more widespread. Once we take this step in the right direction toward providing better care to incarcerated mothers, I believe that we should consider how to improve our flawed prison system as a whole and provide better care to all inmates. As a result, I believe that this will lead scholars to consider in the future the ultimate question of whether we want our prison system to be punitive or rehabilitative in nature—a rehabilitative system being more in line with the prison nursery program approach. As we can see, this approach is already proving to be beneficial even in small scale, and we can infer with a more rehabilitative prison system in the future, these benefits will only grow. While there are many reasons that could cause an expectant mother to be in prison, I'd argue that it's much better to focus our efforts on rehabilitation, an argument that I hope other scholars will take the time to study.

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This source was used to show the number of states that ban the shackling of women when giving birth. These figures were then compared to the states that have prison nursery programs to see if having a nursery program lowered the likelihood of shackling women.

The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses. "Shackling Incarcerated Pregnant Women." *The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses*, The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses, August 2011, http://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175(15)30763-2/pdf.

This source was used to corroborate the negative impacts that shackling can have on women during labor and delivery, including the ability of healthcare providers to perform emergency care if necessary.

Campbell, Julie, and Joseph R. Carlson. "Correctional Administrators' Perceptions of Prison Nurseries." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, vol. 39, no. 8, Aug. 2012, pp. 1063–1074. *SAGE*, doi: 10.1177/0093854812441161.

This source was used to demonstrate the fact that many correctional administrators did not even know about the benefits of prison nursery programs and, as a result, backed up the claim that with increased education, more prison nursery programs could be implemented.

Clarke, Jennifer G., Maureen Phipps, Iris Tong, Jennifer Rose, and Melanie Gold. "Timing of Conception for Pregnant Women Returning to Jail." *Journal of Correctional Health*, vol. 16, no. 2, Mar. 2010, pp. 133–138. *SAGE*, doi: 10.1177/1078345809356533.

This source was used to show the percentage of women entering prison or jail pregnant.

Fixsen, Amanda. "Children in Foster Care." *A Family for Every Child*, A Family for Every Child, November 2011, http://www.afamilyforeverychild.org/Adoption/AFFECreportonchildreninfostercare.pdf.

This source was used to demonstrate the total cost per child per year in foster care.

Goshin, Lorie S., Mary W. Byrne, and Barbara Blanchard-Lewis. "Preschool Outcomes of Children Who Lived as Infants in a Prison Nursery." *The Prison Journal*, vol. 94, no. 2, 2014, pp. 139–158. *SAGE*, doi: 10.1177/0032885514524692.

This source was used to prove that the long-term effects on children who spent the early years of their life in a prison nursery with their mother resulted in less anxiety and depression compared to children who were separated from their incarcerated mothers.

Goshin, Lorie S., Mary W. Byrne, & Alana M. Henninger. "Recidivism after Release from a Prison Nursery Program." *Public Health Nursing*, vol. 33, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 2014, pp. 109–117. *Wiley Online Library*, doi: doi/10.1111/phn.12072.

This source was used to show the low recidivism rate of mothers who completed their sentence in a prison nursery program. This source also showed the high percentage of women who remained in the community three years after being released from a prison nursery program.

Hotelling, Barbara A. "Perinatal Needs of Pregnant Incarcerated Women." *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2008, pp. 37–44. *PubMed Central*, doi: 10.1624/105812408X298372.

This source was used to show the poor quality of healthcare being provided to incarcerated mothers. This source also demonstrated that while the Eighth Amendment guaranteed healthcare to all inmates, it was often inadequate and ill monitored.

Jbara, Anne E. "The Price They Pay: Protecting the Mother-Child Relationship Through the Use of Prison Nurseries and Residential Parenting Programs." *Indiana Law Journal*, vol. 87, no. 4, 2012, pp. 1825–1845.

This source was used to support the necessity of the mother-child bond for both mother and baby, as it is crucial for cognitive development and self-esteem of the child and lowers rates of depression in mothers.

Melnyk, Bernadette. *Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing and Healthcare*. Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2005.

This source was used to corroborate the benefits to be had from a panel discussion in disseminating information and boosting likelihood of later implementation on the part of conference/panel discussion attendees.

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This source was used to establish the effectiveness of profession development at encouraging implementing of the practices taught. This information was then used to support the assertion that an informative conference on the effectiveness of prison nursery programs would result in great implementation of prison nurseries.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

In "T. S. Eliot's Profound Inquiry: Analysis of *The Waste Land* and *The Four Quartets* in the Context of the Restrictive Nature of Time," Sheila Sagear investigates Eliot's depiction of and attitude toward time in two canonical works of twentieth-century modernism. Saegar enrolled in the WR 150 seminar "Marvelous Modernism" because she was interested in writing about and researching *The Waste Land*, a poem she had some knowledge of before entering the course. Her final paper is what I call a long-arc research paper: Saegar wrote about and researched Eliot's depiction of and attitude toward time in *The Waste Land* for a shorter mid-term research paper, then extended that investigation into "Burnt Norton," the first of the *Four Quartets*, to develop a longer final research paper.

Saegar ponders the destruction and desolation of *The Waste Land* and considers Eliot's depiction of the futility of human existence bound by time and mortality, then asks the important question of whether Eliot posits a greater meaning and reality outside of time. She looks carefully at "Part V: What the Thunder Said," in which Eliot's modern epic seems to come to a climax and resolution. She writes that "Eliot breaks the confines of the 'beginning, middle, and end' narrative style and instead employs a speaker who transcends temporal *and* physical human restrictions, moving around time as humans move through space." This is a radical and imaginative reading of a poem that many critics argue ends with a sort of irony-laced pessimism. According to Sagear, Eliot gives the reader the experience of becoming unbound from time, "off the wheel," so to speak, and in doing so argues for a more optimistic reading of the poem that also points ahead to *Four Quartets*, in which she sees a similar strategy at work from the very beginning.

An important and compelling part of Sagear's argument is that there is more continuity than difference between *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*, an interpretation that is at odds with the mainstream critical view of Eliot as more pessimistic in *The Waste Land*, before he converted to Christianity, and more optimistic in *Four Quartets*, after he did so. Through a careful reading of the primary texts, and effective library and Internet research that brings a range of critical views to the conversation, Saegar argues successfully for this important connection and confluence between the two long major poems that bookend Eliot's career, and in doing so makes a valuable and original contribution to Eliot scholarship.

Anthony Wallace
WR 150: Marvelous Modernism: The Poetry of Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, and Allen Ginsberg

FROM THE WRITER

This paper was born of a profound sense of wonder and longing; it's about Eliot and his poetry, but it's more about mortality, physics, existentialism, and an ever-present confusion around how we got here and where we are going. I wanted to study the art of a poet exploring these questions, but I really wanted to vocalize this tension around uncertainties of existence that I think everybody experiences, but most of us have learned to internalize. This is what goes into a 2 A.M. phone conversation before your 8 A.M. exam when you can't sleep because you're too distraught by not knowing who you are, what your purpose is, or if you are truly alone.

SHEILA SAGEAR is a sophomore studying Astrophysics in the College of Arts and Sciences. She does research on exoplanet detection around ultracool dwarfs and hopes to go to graduate school to continue working in experimental astrophysics. She enjoys traveling, playing music, and making faces at her python scripts when no one else is in the lab. She would like to thank her writing professor, Anthony Wallace, for inspiring her to become a deeper and more observant thinker, writer, and human being.

SHEILA SAGEAR

MEDITATIONS IN *N* DIMENSIONS: *THE WASTE LAND*, *THE FOUR QUARTETS*, AND ELIOT'S INQUIRY INTO THE RESTRICTIVE NATURE OF TIME

We begin by building a tesseract with poetry. This object, the four-dimensional equivalent of a cube, can be thought of as having axes in the three spatial dimensions and in one fourth dimension, time. In the universe we live in, it is supposedly physically impossible to transcend these boundaries, but this deters few deep and conscious thinkers from speculating on what could lie beyond them. T.S. Eliot is one such thinker who builds his tesseract with his poems *The Waste Land* and "The Four Quartets," introducing meditations that create uncertainty around the true limits of the dimensions we live in. In his own way, he speculates on whether this tesseract has more than four axes, beginning in *The Waste Land* with an emotional response to the destruction and desolation of World War I. Especially considering these expressions in Part V, "What the Thunder Said," it might be tempting to see the poem as an exploration of the effects of death on a society and its perception of physical and temporal boundaries. Similarly, Part I of "The Four Quartets," "Burnt Norton," follows a speaker who muses on these boundaries and wonders whether there must be a more meaningful existence beyond them. David Soud describes "The Four Quartets" as a poem in which

> a crescendo of images, allusions, and quotations culminate in a Dantean anticipation of the afterlife… and point beyond the boundary of death, where, for both Eliot and Barth, the dialectic of time and eternity is resolved. (205)

He argues that the poem is an inquiry into death, what comes after it, and what this says about the existence of time outside of our own plane of existence.

However, I voice that Eliot does something much deeper than this in both *The Waste Land* and "The Four Quartets." He is not necessarily concerned with physical death. Instead, he asks a broader question: what exists out there, beyond time? Is there any way we can reach it, be it in death or even somehow in life? Perhaps it is only in death that we discover the answers to these questions, but Eliot asks these questions without specific consideration for death. Eliot's true inquiry is clear in the close inspection of how he treats the passage of time in Part V of *The Waste Land*. He breaks the confines of the "beginning, middle, and end" narrative style, employing instead a speaker who transcends temporal *and* physical human restrictions, moving around time as humans move through space. These questions are also posed in the opening of "The Four Quartets," as we presumably see into the speaker's mind as he or she muses on the nonlinear nature of time and the meaning of its restrictions for humans living inside it. Eliot does this to communicate that although we are bound to the restrictions of time, there is, nonetheless, a part of the soul that is able to see beyond these

restrictions. We experience a profound longing for freedom from time that is intrinsic to the human experience.

The Waste Land focuses on concrete objects and frames descriptions that are easily pictured by the reader. For example, the speaker references "Rock and no water and the sandy road" (Eliot, *WL* 332) and "doors of mud-cracked houses" (Eliot, *WL* 345), real objects that evoke images of the tangible world. The speaker similarly incorporates descriptions of real-world civilizations in references to "Jerusalem Athens Alexandria" (Eliot, *WL* 374) and "London Bridge… falling down" (Eliot, *WL* 426). However, the speaker does not use tangible references to study the actual objects of these civilizations, but uses these things to enable us to clearly see the abstract ideas and emotions he really wishes to present. The objects presented in this poem are of this world, but the ideas presented—destruction, pain, and finally rebirth—transcend the particular locations or objects used to communicate them. Eliot goes beyond the concrete literality of any of these references in exploring the pure concepts of death and birth without any "filters," or context and preexisting knowledge, to limit the exploration.

This use of concrete objects to describe abstract concepts is seen in Eliot's use of many contrasting and seemingly disconnected references. For example, he speaks of Eastern and Western cultures side by side, referencing "Vienna London" as "Unreal" (Eliot, *WL* 376) alongside references to *Datta, Dayadhvam,* and *Danyaya* (Eliot, *WL* 401–418), which are Sanskrit words associated with giving and compassion. He also works with sound in the contrast of "frosty silence in the gardens" (Eliot, *WL* 323) to "Prison and place and reverberation" (Eliot, *WL* 326). While all these references are of this world, they are, at first glance, disconnected. What connects them is the emotion they evoke, specifically the emotion of resolution after destruction, which is not specific to any one location or object. This emotion transcends the confines of space and time, an abstract concept made reachable by tangible references.

With his explorations of abstract ideas and pure emotions, Eliot is widely considered to be one of the great "high modernist" writers. He is often associated with contemporaries Ezra Pound and E. E. Cummings, both of whom make extensive use of imagism, pinpointing a single instant in space and time and studying the emotions that arise only in that moment. However, *The Waste Land* differs in that Eliot does not explore a single instant; instead, the work moves around in time. The poem opens describing April as "the cruelest month" (Eliot, *WL* 1), and then describes that "summer surprised us" (Eliot, *WL* 8) and that the speaker goes "south in the winter" (Eliot, *WL* 18). This first stanza introduces the way Eliot works with time, moving from one time to another in an unstable and unpredictable way and rejecting the traditional narrative style with a beginning, middle, and end.

However, Part V begins with the word "after" (Eliot, *WL* 322). While Parts I through IV lack a traditional narrative form, Eliot suggests that the events of Part V exist "after"—or outside of—what was described before. Within Part V is a self-contained narrative. It begins with the tension presented by the stream-of-consciousness style phrase that begins "Here is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road" (Eliot, *WL* 331). Here the speaker introduces the ideas of scarcity and need. However, when the speaker goes on to describe that *"Then* a damp gust [came] / Bringing rain" (Eliot, *WL* 393, emphasis added), suggesting that there is a movement of time, we find a before and after. "The black clouds / Gathered far distant" (Eliot, *WL* 396–397),

and suddenly there is movement, tumult, and a fundamental change. This change from the tension of "before" and the reviving clamor of "after" suggests the progression of time within Part V.

Not only does Eliot move around in time throughout *The Waste Land*, but he does so in a highly fragmented manner. In Part V, a speaker erratically describes a landscape with "no rock / If there were rock / And also water / And water / A spring / A pool among the rock" (Eliot, *WL* 347–352) using short and frequent lines that repeat sounds and words, giving an impression of desperation, fragmented thinking, and an experience bordering madness. The way the speaker weaves his description is analogous to spinning us around so we lose our orientation, or any sense of the period in which the events described are taking place. The speaker goes through similar verbal exercises, with the fragmented and disorienting phrases "Falling towers / Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London / Unreal" (Eliot, *WL* 373). In "T. S. Eliot's Concept of Time and the Technique of Textual Reading: A Comment on 'Cross' In *The Waste Land*, Line 175," Sukhbir Singh explores the meaning of the fragmented style of thought Eliot employs in Part V, claiming that "Eliot invites the reader to order the 'fragments' he has 'shored' against his 'ruin' into a 'coherent whole' by working out their possible relationships with each other" (38), and goes on to describe that this fragmentation allows the reader to interpret the movement of time in a variety of ways.

It is important to note that this fragmentation plays an important role in the interpretation of time in this poem, but instead of allowing the reader the flexibility to choose his or her interpretation, it actually necessitates the interpretation of the fragmentation of time itself. The fragmentation is used in a way that makes it difficult to see the progression of the narrative, and can most clearly be seen in the questions posed by the speaker at different points in Part V: the speaker asks "Who are these hooded hordes swarming / Over endless plains… What is the city over the mountains / Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air / Falling towers" (Eliot, *WL* 368–373). These questions emerge as if the mind that produces them is working erratically, creating short, disconnected phrases, and the questions posed are not tied to any specific time. The city could be any city, and the hooded swarms are not identified with a particular period. By these questions, Eliot creates the illusion that time is at least fragmented and discontinuous, and at most, absent.

It is then important to ask whether these communications refer to the past or the future. It is possible that Eliot has in mind a setting either long ago in the past or far out into the future; that is, periods no living person has experienced. As the fragmentation within Part V suggests a broken or absent sense of time, Part V does not occur in the past or the future, but simultaneously both and neither. Eliot communicates using tangible places and objects—he works within the confines of space—but he works outside of time, leaving in intentional ambiguities and communicating ideas as suspended in time. Charles M. Tung comments in "Modernist Contemporaneity: Rethinking Time in Eliot Studies and 'The Waste Land'" that Eliot's narrative of a population is "a static one whereby present and past are united in an eternal stasis" (381). The usage of the word "stasis" communicates quite well the way Eliot works with storytelling. He does not tell a story by concatenating events as first, second, and third; instead, he pulls ideas from this history and develops them alongside concepts related in ways other than time, as the history is "eternal," and something infinite has not a beginning, middle, nor end. This experimental narrative style configures *The Waste Land* as a unique aperture through which we see the timeless effects of long-term change, destruction and reconstruction, and death and life. This strategy allows us to experience these concepts out of context—even the seemingly inescapable context of time—and develop an emotional response to the concept itself.

"The Four Quartets" provide a complimentary perspective on the nature of time and our relationship with it. In Part I, "Burnt Norton," Eliot explores time as a malleable concept—something that can be examined and manipulated just like a physical object—rather than a fixed characteristic of existence. The speaker muses on the nonlinear nature of time in this part, and here Eliot refrains even from using objects, places, or people to communicate these thoughts, as he does in *The Waste Land*. Instead, he directly addresses these thoughts, calling Time by its name in a hypostatization of the abstract quality. The speaker muses that "Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past" (Eliot, *FQ* 1–3), and it seems he speaks of these ideas as an informal proposal rather than a definite statement (as seen in the use of the word "perhaps"), vocalizing a spontaneous and unfiltered thought process. The speaker notices that the linearity of time is just an abstraction; time is not a true restriction of the universe, but merely an illusion, as seen in the speaker's suggestion that time present, past, and future really coexist with each other in the same plane of existence. Humans must be able to get out of time—or at least see around it—in some way, and time is not an impenetrable wall, but instead a translucent sheet that vaguely obscures what is behind it.

The speaker goes on to suggest that "What might have been is an abstraction / Remaining a perpetual possibility / Only in a world of speculation" (Eliot, *FQ* 6–8), reinforcing his initial thought that time is truly an abstraction and adding that there are other possibilities that exist in other "times," where humans cannot reach them. He does this by mentioning the "perpetual possibility," suggesting the stasis instead of the movement of time, which means that this possibility must exist in some higher plane of reality. While apparently human and consequently bound by time, the speaker strikes us as quite enlightened—he notices that there may be a way to see beyond time. He notices the translucency of the sheet. Christopher Ricks points out that "[t]he confused distinction which exists in most heads between 'abstract' and 'concrete' is due not so much to a manifest fact of the existence of two types of mind, an abstract and a concrete, as to the existence of another type of mind, the verbal, or philosophic" (257), suggesting that the enlightenment of the speaker—his verbal, philosophic mind—is vital to the development of these thoughts. Ricks also reflects the space the speaker imagines in his description of the speaker's mind. In his comment that the nature of the speaker's mind is not abstract nor concrete but philosophical, he implies that the speaker is not exploring any dimension of this world, but rather that of another world. If he lives in a two-dimensional page, the speaker does not look left or right, but out of the page.

Having come to this conclusion, the speaker begins to think about his own role as a temporal being. "If all time is eternally present," he says, "All time is unredeemable" (Eliot, *FQ* 4–5). He suggests that if all time exists eternally—if time is fundamentally static instead of moving—then time must have no meaning. In "Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley," Eliot himself comments on these lines by pointing out that "that which is purely in time cannot be said to exist at all" (110) articulating the speaker's real-time realization by concluding that time itself is a construct, specific to this plane of existence, and therefore has no meaning outside of the universe in which we are bound.

The speaker goes on to ask "to what purpose / Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves / I do not know" (Eliot, *FQ* 16–18). The speaker begins to question his role in a temporal existence, asking what his purpose is here, whether it is merely to "disturb the dust," if he is bound by an illusion to begin with. The reference to dusty rose-leaves, a bowl of potpourri, brings to mind Henry Austin Dobson's poem "Pot-Pourri," in which a speaker "plunges [his] hands among the leaves: /

An alien touch but dust perceives … memory of the vanished days / When they were roses" (1–6). These few lines magnify the emotion the speaker of "The Four Quartets" implies in his reference to dried rose-leaves. His mind is occupied with death, dryness, and lack of meaning. The dried leaves imply empty purpose and an absence of opportunity, and "disturbing the dust" (Eliot, *FQ* 17) suggests a totally meaningless existence. He makes this statement with a slightly sarcastic and questioning tone, and coupled with his musings on the meaning of time, the speaker's greater suggestion is that there must be a way to break out of this lower, time-bound plane of existence and into a higher one where the true possibilities of the universe are not obscured. What purpose do we have here? he asks, and concludes that he does not know, suggesting that there must be something more meaningful to which we may aspire.

The question of what exactly this more meaningful purpose is not necessarily the question at hand. The point is that while the speaker is bound by time and may not be able to see beyond it, he is, nonetheless, able to sense that there is *something* beyond it. Furthermore, he longs for it. This longing can be seen in the speaker's tone as he disparages the actions of his life, "disturbing the dust," and senses something more meaningful beyond time. He questions the meaning of his own existence as he realizes that there must be some higher plane of being.

Having established that "What the Thunder Said*"* concludes a story told with a fragmented or completely absent sense of time and suggests a profound tension stemming from destruction and desolation, and that "Burnt Norton*"* presents an account of longing for an existence outside of time, it is necessary to study the narrator of both poems. The disconnected manner in which the story is told and the deliberate choices of the speaker of *The Waste Land* to disorient the reader and remove any previous bias suggest a speaker who goes beyond the confines of time and space. The speaker must take on a god-like omniscience. "What the Thunder Said" necessitates this type of storyteller because only a god-like figure could tell the story like this. Only this figure could know of a state beyond time and communicate the resolution that would pertain outside of these confines. Some of the last lines of *The Waste Land* illustrate the position and state of this omniscient speaker, as he recounts that "I sat upon the shore / Fishing, with the arid plain behind me / Shall I at least set my lands in order?" (Eliot, *WL* 423) The speaker looks behind him at the fallen world he has recounted, and implies he has the power and responsibility to "set the lands in order." The speaker communicates a resolution to the concepts of destruction near the end of the work, a resolution that does not exist in this plane of being, but one outside of time.

The speaker of "Burnt Norton" creates a sharp contrast with the god-like speaker of "What the Thunder Said." Instead of being omniscient, the speaker is very much bound by time. The speaker vocalizes a feeling of restriction, especially in his recounting of the passing day, as he says that "Time and the bell have buried the day, / the black cloud carries the sun away" (Eliot, *FQ* 130–131). These lines not only provide a look into what the speaker sees—the steady passing of time, unreachable by his own hands—but they also provide insight into the speaker's emotional response to the passing of time. He feels powerless and caged, "buried" like the day, living in darkness as black as the clouds overhead, restricted and limited by the passing of time. This evidence necessitates a temporal, human speaker who notices the restrictive nature of time but is unable to change or go beyond it.

Throughout Parts I through VI of *The Waste Land*, time is presented as an impediment to the hope of rebirth. The speaker moves erratically through time in an attempt to escape its confines.

However, the speaker finally concludes that "I have heard the key turn in the door and turn once only" (Eliot, *WL* 412), suggesting liberation from the world where "each confirms his prison" (Eliot, *WL* 414), the prison of time. Outside of time, "the boat responded/Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar" (Eliot, *WL* 418–419). There is rain, and there is again abundance. This is the purpose Eliot had in mind as he employed an omniscient speaker telling a story outside of time. The speaker conveys that there is hope, perhaps not within time as we know it, but outside of it. He reports from outside of time, "with the arid plain behind" (Eliot, *WL* 424) and communicates that there will one day be abundance; there will be "*Shantih,*" the peace of understanding. Similarly, in "Burnt Norton," the temporal speaker communicates a deeply rooted longing in himself for a more meaningful existence outside of time and communicates that he knows that there must be something outside of it: "What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present" (Eliot, *FQ* 47–48), suggesting that the linear nature of time as he sees it is merely an illusion, and that the "present" moment, the only moment that really exists, is the closest one can get to this state.

The coupling of a god-like, omniscient, and immortal speaker who is not bound by time and a human speaker who longs for that very existence provides a unique perspective on the human experience. In these works, Eliot argues that a higher plane of existence does exist, and that it is an intrinsic part of the human experience to long to reach it. It follows that Eliot is concerned with much more than exploring physical death and what lies beyond it, as David Soud argues. The ideas presented in this poem reach beyond these temporal, human topics, and Eliot instead explores and questions what is beyond without referring to physical death. He obscures the linearity of time and questions the impenetrability of physical bounds, and he often does so without reference that he *himself* is human and restricted in these ways. It may seem odd that Eliot would be raising these existential questions, as he had converted to Christianity by the time he wrote "The Four Quartets," but it seems that Eliot was not occupied with the implications these questions had on religious doctrine. He questioned because the questions were there, and they must be asked. If he were an artist, he would paint off the canvas and leave the observer to wonder how the brush strokes hover in mid-air. Instead of pointing "side to side" to another place or another time, as most writers do, he points "up" into another dimension that we cannot fully comprehend. He makes this inquiry into what exists beyond the laws of physics to question the most fundamental axioms of existence, using his poetic grace and luminous curiosity to propose other axes to our so carefully constructed tesseract. He works as a physicist with his art, studying overwhelming unknowns of the largest scale yet conceding to a deep desire for simplicity and truth. His questions leave us peering through the translucency of what we believed to be opaque and longing to explore this profound and beautiful tension between the certain and uncertain.

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FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

I eventually noticed the patient and bemused glances from other customers at the café where I was reading Katherine Thompson's WR 150 final essay, "The Grim Reality Hidden Beneath Freshkills Park's Bright Façade." The more I read, the more excited I became, and I can now remember exclaiming, quite audibly, "Nailed it!" and "You go!" and "Wow!" I was simply caught up in the beauty of Katherine's language and the power of her argument, and, well, I couldn't contain that silently.

Katherine hails from Staten Island, and she told me early in the course of the tug that her home and her family held on her. (Indeed, she has recently transferred to NYU to be closer to that area.) But it was her home landscape that she spoke to me about one day after class around the time Essay #1 had been completed. She was already thinking about the final essay, and she wanted to know if she could write about the Freshkills Landfill, an environmental feature that looms figuratively and literally over Staten Island.

Our environmental history course examines the ambiguous and reciprocal relationships between nature and culture. And in the issues raised by a human-engineered park atop a skanky landfill, Katherine was smart enough to see a whole range of the contested meanings that humans make about nature—and about our manipulation and modification of nature. Her essay begins with the guiding conceptual questions that focused her study, and her opening paragraph defines the conceptual problem she raises along with the claim she argues throughout her essay. I appreciated the exhibits she included, but I especially loved the complexities of her argument. As she examines "an ideal, yet manufactured nature…" and "the silencing of the history of the region," Katherine is simultaneously giving emphasis to the conviction of her own voice.

Frederic Fitts
WR 150: American Environmental History

FROM THE WRITER

Before enrolling in Professor Ted Fitts's "American Environmental History" course, I had never really considered the relationship between people and nature. Hailing from Staten Island, NY, reports about the impending Freshkills Park, being built on top of the closed Freshkills Landfill, didn't exactly excite me, but they certainly didn't bother me either. However, as I made my way through the course and became more intrigued by our somewhat damaged conception of our place in nature, I recognized that I had a more intense reaction to the issue to which I once was indifferent. As I approached the final essay, which was fairly open in topic, I knew that I wanted to reflect on Freshkills Park. What most interests me about this stretch of land is its shift from a massive, abused dump to an aesthetically-pleasing park, a change that I feel speaks volumes, in both a literal and metaphorical way, about our relationship with nature.

KATHERINE THOMPSON is a rising sophomore, majoring in biology. She was born and resides in Staten Island, NY. She would like to thank her WR 150 professor, Ted Fitts, for his continued support and guidance through the process of writing this essay.

KATHERINE THOMPSON

THE GRIM REALITY HIDDEN BENEATH FRESHKILLS PARK'S BRIGHT FAÇADE

In about twenty years, sometime around 2037, Staten Island's Freshkills Park will be fully complete. This expansive project, intended to be the second largest of its kind in New York City, will boast playgrounds, hiking trails, public art, and many other features sure to delight Staten Island residents and, as hoped for by the spearheads of the project, people from outside of the borough. For many people, this is a story of redemption, as it seems to represent a metamorphosis from a wasteland to an environmental oasis. Under this proposed aesthetically-pleasing façade, however, will lie over half a century's worth of New York City's garbage, covered and, ultimately, its significance downplayed with a plastic liner and eight layers of barrier material ("Freshkills Park"). In establishing such a massive space on top of the remnants of one of the world's largest landfills, we are attempting to erase our past misuse of the landscape and to instill an ideal, yet manufactured, nature in its place. This silencing of the history of the region and of the realities of urban development, however, only serves to demonstrate our seemingly contradictory intentions—to foster a connection with nature and to expand at its expense. Neglecting the realities of expansion, which undoubtedly produces unwanted byproducts, will only allow for the continuation of disastrous environmental practices, except in another, far-away location, ambiguously referred to as "somewhere else." This idea is comforting, as it reduces any legitimate blame, but it also serves to detract from the issues present at the core of human civilization and those pertaining to our tense relationship with nature.

Staten Island, a relatively suburban borough of New York City, has come to be heavily associated with its infamous Fresh Kills Landfill. This massive garbage dump, which handled New York City's garbage from its opening in 1947 until 2001, when the last garbage barge was sent, grew to be the largest site of its kind by 1955. Prior to this extreme management and use of the land, however, the site served a very different, but important, purpose. When Staten Island was quite rural and very disconnected from the rapidly expanding center of New York City, it largely consisted of species-rich salt marshes, which were in place to protect the shoreline from erosion and reduce flooding (Melosi 59-60). However, quite separate from the rural landscape that characterized Staten Island, was the continued growth of the rest of New York City, an element that inevitably produced drawbacks and a tremendous amount of trash. Many locations were selected as destinations for this trash buildup, but with resources having been exhausted quickly, there was a desperate need for a new home for New York City's garbage.

Relying upon the relatively new landfill method, Robert Moses, hailed as the "master builder" of the mid-twentieth century New York metropolitan area, proposed a filling of the Staten Island marshes with the city's solid waste, a practice that would work particularly well in Staten Island's salt marshes (Steinberg). The beneficial aspects of the salt marshes, particularly in their protection of the coastline and their encouragement of biodiversity, were thus seen as inconsequential to the more important interests of the urbanized New York City. Regarding this,

Moses remarked to Staten Island borough president, Cornelius Hall, who had initially opposed the landfill, "you have an immense acreage of meadow land in this locality which is presently valueless" (Steinberg). Therefore, business interests and the human desire for expansion ultimately took precedence in this matter. According to Moses's plans, this would only be temporary, persisting for a few years. However, it quickly became clear that this solution was a more permanent endeavor, and more time was requested to turn the land Moses, Hall, and city sanitation commissioner Andrew Mulrain described as "fallow and useless" into a reclamation project, featuring highways, parks, and industry and "the greatest single opportunity for community planning in this City" (Steinberg). Once again, this goal was not realized; continued population surges and denial of the drawbacks of this growth established an even more pressing need for waste management, which meant more dumping of trash on Fresh Kills, higher mountains of garbage, and less and less marshland (see Fig 1).

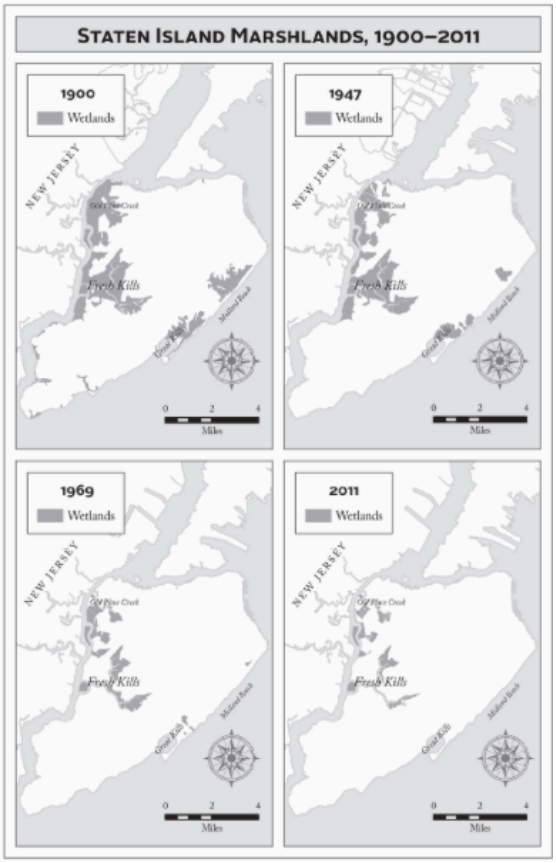

Fig 1. Staten Island Marshlands (1900–2011)

What the expansion of Fresh Kills didn't mean, however, was any legitimate change in lifestyle for the city's elite or those living outside of the city's dumping borough. Still a part of New York City, but yet very detached, Staten Island took the brunt of the city's garbage, while residents from the other boroughs continued to produce tremendous amounts of trash.

For the residents of Staten Island, the reality was not pleasant. While things may have been coming up roses for other New York City residents, the persistent stench of the ever-growing dump made it difficult to ignore the environmental degradation of the landscape. This established a sense

of hostility in Staten Islanders, as they felt a real disconnection from the city, indicated by the island's status as the "forgotten borough." Even still, they dealt with the immediate negative effects of the entire city's trash buildup; this was amplified with the closure of the city's other remaining landfills in 1991. A video entitled "The Fresh Kills Story: From World's Largest Garbage Dump to a World-Class Park," presented by the Staten Island Borough President's Office, features residents' reflections on their experiences with the Fresh Kills Landfill. Guy V. Molinari, a past Staten Island Borough President, recalled, "it was atrocious and I always had a feeling that the people in the other boroughs didn't give a damn about us," a notion echoed by others who were interviewed (AndyUpload). Rising piles of garbage and the negativity the landfill fostered for Staten Islanders coincided with election of Republican leaders in New York City's government, prompting action to close the landfill after its over half-a-century of service (AndyUpload; Lippard). On March 22, 2001, the last barge arrived at the Fresh Kills Landfill, marking the end of a significant era in Staten Island's history (The Freshkills Park Alliance).

Even though trash was no longer arriving in Staten Island, the expansive site still loomed over the island, in its four main trash mounds, particularly prevalent scent, and its influence on the overall reputation of the borough. But, perhaps most significant to the city's interest, was the former landfill's vastness, emptiness, and its ability to be molded. Adhering to a very Moses-like philosophy, a competition was hosted to establish building plans for a large, impressive park, intended to rest on top of the previous landfill site. Nearly fifty years earlier, this virginity, in a sense, was also admired, inspiring plans to embark on a similar path toward developing recreation and park sites. However, in this initial circumstance, these plans were overwhelmed by the pressing waste management needs of the city, leading to an extreme case of mismanagement of nature. In the current circumstance, however, goals involving a large-scale, beautiful park appear completely contrary to past action. In a sense, many believe this to be somewhat of a success story, in that the land and the surrounding borough itself are being reclaimed, representing a healthy management of nature, completely and irrevocably opposite to the previous mismanagement. This peachy assessment of the human-nature association is, on a purely superficial level, appealing, since it suggests that humans can break something and then build it up again. However, this idea relies far too much on surface aesthetics, neglecting what this morphing land indicates about human's distorted view of and misguided relationship with nature.

Chosen to lead the charge behind the new Freshkills Park project was James Corner and his architecture firm, Field Operations (The Freshkills Park Alliance). His plans for the landscape were selected because they demonstrated a different outlook on the significance of the land. His plans feature elements that are said to work with the human-created topography of the land, such as the four large garbage mounds, and also elements that are said appeal to the landscape that existed prior to human involvement. In this way, his design intends to "respond to the natural and constructed history of the site" (The Freshkills Park Alliance). In speaking about his future of the park, Corner noted "the whole process of this kind of technologically engineered ecology provides an opportunity for Freshkills to offer a great educational demonstration in environmental sustainability" (Rogers).

Fig 2. Design of Freshkills Park schematic plan.

Optimism associated with the park and how it represents the epitome of incorporating nature and society, is ultimately, however, quite short sighted and ignores the horrifying impact we had on the environment at Fresh Kills. For instance, Timothy Boyland, a member of the Staten Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, noted in a short promotional video for the park, "As we look around, you can see, as nature begins to take over and take back, reclaim, this is going to be an amazing spot." The positivity associated with the park ignores that the park is not nature in its purest form; it is in fact a very manufactured nature, carefully designed with many human interests in mind. Other overwhelmingly positive reactions to the park rely on the uncanny assertion that such a tremendous amount of garbage that ravaged this landscape can swiftly be covered up with an aesthetically pleasing park. Not only are we literally attempting to cover the scars associated with decades of mismanagement of nature, but we are also attempting to detach ourselves from the very pressing problems we, ourselves, ushered into the landscape. In this way, the establishment of a pleasing facade on top of a previously marred wasteland seems to perpetuate our role as shapers of nature. Past actions directed toward this land were outwardly negative, prompting calls for change from residents. To subdue this controversy, the land's purpose was altered to line up with what the surrounding people and organizations wanted—a nature of their own accord. This history and the views related to it rely on the assumption that our role in nature is quite a heavy-handed one and that we not only have the ability to, but that we should shape nature.

Freshkills Park likely wasn't spearheaded with inherent or entirely malicious intention. Of course, it was somewhat of a political and eco-capitalistic attempt to benefit from a massive out-of-use area, but it is still creating an impressive space that will by enjoyed by residents. However, no matter the intentions in building the park, this doesn't detract from the negative effect it will have, not necessarily on the immediate community, but more so on our relationship with nature. As we attempt to forget the atrocity that was Fresh Kills, we are becoming more detached from nature, and entering into the mindset that whatever damage we do to the Earth is reversible or can be easily patched over with a picturesque park.

This detachment from nature extends much further than just actively patching over the history of the Fresh Kills Landfill. It is also evident in what the closure of the landfill and the opening of Freshkills Park mean for the future of New York City's waste management. Even though the city's sole remaining landfill is now closed, this does not mean that New York City will stop producing waste; in fact, it remains one of the world's largest producers of garbage. Despite this

harsh reality, there now exists no obvious, widely known destination for citizen's trash. Instead of being loaded onto barges and being sent to Fresh Kills Landfill, the trash is being sent out to numerous different out-of-state sites, far away from anything deemed important by the city. In the same way that Staten Island residents noted that the Fresh Kills Landfill was "in an out of the way place, in a sense, for the rest of the city" and that other New York City residents were not bothered by the buildup of trash because it was not in their backyards, New York City's current trash destination is not of any real importance to residents (AndyUpload). Therefore, just as the "forgotten borough" became the home of the city's trash, the larger issue of exploitation of the natural environment and waste management is being outsourced, separating New York City residents from the reality of their trash. Karrie Jacobs asserts that, "somewhere, in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, or Virginia—or just about any other place with the exception of New York City—we are building more hills," which illustrates how the consequences still exist, but they exist just far enough outside of the reach of New York City residents. As long as current practices continue, there will be a growing need to dispose of more and more garbage, and we will continually push away the problem, until the issue begins to overwhelm us.

This trend represents the human desire for advancement and prosperity. The inclination to expand often comes with consequences, most of which no one wants precariously lurking in their own backyards. Instead, we have an inclination to push the issues to an unknown location, accepting the benefits and not wanting to know about what occurred to produce these benefits. Prior to the establishment of the landfill on Staten Island, central New York City and its industrialization were seen as more important than the nature and wildlife on Staten Island. Therefore, the byproducts of urban life and population growth—in this situation, trash buildup—were pushed to the farthest, most desolate area of New York City. Once this area became more populated and had more sway in politics, the long established landfill was repeatedly challenged and eventually closed. Now, the area is, in a sense, being compensated for its service as a trash receptacle with a beautiful, new park; at the same time, however, New York City's trash is once again being pushed further away from it. This ongoing chronicle of pushing trash farther from its source is a dangerous proposition, as it causes residents to become disassociated from their negative impact on the environment and only makes way for more mismanagement.

Fresh Kills Landfill represents an attempt to better an environment we've somehow deemed important at the expense of an environment that we've somehow deemed unimportant. In establishing a massive, pleasing park we are bettering more populated areas at the expense of rural ones. In an interview, Corner noted that "you could… argue that the Fresh Kills landfill is the best thing that has happened to Staten Island. What you have here is four square miles of land preservation" (Rogers). Corner's notion that the land is being beautified and will be much better for immediate residents is, of course, accurate. However, what it fails to address is that—in preserving this land that New York City has deemed significant because it may one day encourage tourism and profit—other land, unimportant to New York City on a financial basis but important on a trash basis, will be abused. This self-given power to determine what is important and what it unimportant in nature is highly indicative of our one-sided, controlling relationship with nature. This anthropocentric focus, which in this instance involves creating a park perfectly suited to our desires, continues to detract from the realities associated with growth and development and instead paints an overwhelmingly positive view of our association with nature.

Peeling back the layers of Fresh Kills Landfill and now the future Freshkills Park reveals a much starker, scarier reality than what the utopian illustrations of the landscape attempt to indicate, and, in a sense, hide. On a purely surface level, the park is a dramatic improvement for residents—the landfill most likely negatively impacted their health and damaged the reputation of the borough. Since its inception, Freshkills has represented extreme human manipulation of nature; however, in contrast to the initial decimation involved in filling the land, we are now, in a sense, filling the land again, except with fields, playgrounds, and restaurants. Underneath this immediate benefit, however, lies a much more widespread and evasive issue—our poor relationship with nature. Involved in this change is a great deal of irony, as below a perfectly constructed park will lie a once neglected, abused wasteland. However, even more pressing is the metaphorical symbolism that this morphing represents. In building something beautiful on top of something that was once so tarnished, humans are declaring a superiority over nature, one which may extend to other cases. This conception is an overtly negative one, as it sponsors the belief that human destruction of nature is acceptable, so long as we can swiftly patch this devastation with something we find appealing.

The Fresh Kills Landfill's transformation to Freshkills Park is quite a notable one in regard to a meeting between nature and culture. Many have attempted to paint the transition as an entirely positive one, in that it represents the notion that hope persists, even when the situation may seem dire. This overestimation of our capabilities in the face of nature is quite damaging and will only make way for more mismanagement. Instead of representing reclamation and hope, Freshkills Park is a strange symbol of our competing interests: our desire to expand culturally at the expense of nature and our desire to maintain a connection to nature. As the four mounds continue to lose height, with the usage of the methane gas present in them as an energy source, and signs that indicate the regrettable history of the land fade, the former interest will be buried deep beneath the latter interest. This will serve to perpetuate the false conviction that our impact on the environment is unimportant, that anything we do can be covered with a constructed nature of our own design. Continuing on this dangerous path, the consequences of human action will continue to be pushed further away from civilization, providing for more misuse and more disconnection from nature.

REFERENCES

Jacobs, Karrie. "How the World's Largest Landfill Became New York's Biggest New Park." *Curbed*, 13 Sep. 2016, https://ny.curbed.com/2016/9/13/12891320/freshkills-park-nyc-staten-island-engineering-design.

Jacobs's account is a fairly even one that is part of a five-part series which discusses landscapes that are both manmade and natural. She explores the history of the region with an appropriate amount of detail and then provides some well-constructed arguments regarding what our current and past practices reveal about human heedlessness regarding garbage production and dumping. In this way, the article explores a vast set of points and despite asserting an opinion, the opinion is well backed-up. This source assisted me in making some greater statements about the trends I located.

Levison, Andy. "The Fresh Kills Story: From World's Largest Garbage Dump to a World-Class Park." *YubTube,* 20 Sept 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hMhWOaX_0o.

Produced by the Staten Island Borough President's Office, this documentary is primarily centered around Staten Island residents' reactions to the Fresh Kills Landfill and how it impacted their lives and the overall conception of Staten Island. The video also documents how politicians collaborated in order to close the Fresh Kills Landfill. The majority of the residents spoke about how they felt having the city's garbage near them. The documentary itself does appear to champion the efforts of the politicians and is therefore very Staten Island-centric.

Lippard, L. R. "New York Comes Clean: The Controversial Story of the Freshkills Dumpsite." *The Guardian*, 28 Oct. 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/oct/28/new-york-comes-clean-fresh-kills-staten-island-notorious-dumpsite.

Lippard writes a much more casual article regarding the history of the region as well as future speculation about the fate of the park. It served as an impetus for the establishment of some of my key points, as she offered some interesting questions regarding who benefits from the establishment of the park. Additionally, she questions New York City's issues with waste management. It is definitively characterized by a more negative point of view of the park, but there is solid evidence to support her claims and concerns.

Melosi, Martin V. "Fresh Kills: The Making and Unmaking of a Wastescape." *RCC Perspectives: Transformations in Environment and Society*, no. 1, 2016, pp. 59-65. Web, http://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/2016_1_melosi.pdf.

Melosi explores the natural history of the area before, during, and after the Fresh Kills Landfill. It is a relatively valid account, in that it doesn't feature any radical points that aren't substantially explored. Melosi offers an interesting question as to the fate of the park near the end of this article, in that whether it should be addressed as a human or natural artifact, which I aimed to explore in writing this paper.

NYC Parks. "It's My Park: Freshkills – Staten Island." *YouTube*, 17 Mar 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X8ySoz_KlY.

This is a short video produced in conjunction with the Freshkills Park Alliance, offering quick interviews with many different types of Staten Island residents, including park tour guides, architects, and teachers. Naturally, as this is a video meant to make people excited about the future of Freshkills Park, it is reminiscent of propaganda and is inherently one-sided. However, it does offer some points of one side of the argument that I used to refute.

Rogers, E. B. "Green Garbage: Freshkills Park." *Green Metropolis: The Extraordinary Landscapes of New York City as Nature, History, and Design*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2016. *Google* Books. Web, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=bLg_CgAAQBAJ.

Rogers's book discusses different circumstances pertaining to landscape in New York City, but one chapter in particular focuses on Fresh Kills Landfill and plans for a park. Rogers doesn't really offer much analysis of the topic, opting for more of a report-style account. However, there is an element of bias, as a key component of the chapter is an interview with the park's designer, James Corner, which obviously offers a positive conception of the park, as he is the designer and would hope to excite people.

"Site History." *Freshkills Park*, The Freshkills Park Alliance, http://freshkillspark.org/the-park/site-history.

This webpage offers a very condensed version of the history of the Fresh Kills Landfill and the future of Fresh Kills Park, beginning prior to the establishment of the landfill. As this is one of the official webpages for the project, it offers a very positive outlook on the construction of the park, attempting to demonstrate the park plans as being somewhat of a reclamation. Therefore, it isn't the most reliable of sources, but it does offer one purposely positive view of the park and provides specific details relating to the plan.

Steinberg, Ted. "The Massifs of Fresh Kills." *Gotham Unbound: The Ecological History of Greater New York*. Simon and Schuster, 2014. Web, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=vlRXAgAAQBAJ

Ted Steinberg's book features a chapter that explores the history surrounding the creation of Fresh Kills Landfill. He offers a particularly in-depth look into the geography of the region prior to the landfill operation and a discussion of the politics surrounding the decision. Primarily, however, the emphasis was on how the landfill decimated the environment of the area, which signals a negative point of view surrounding the establishment of the landfill. He did not make much mention of the plans for a park on the land and focused on the landfill's beginnings.

FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

In the central research project for the WR 150 seminar "Interrogating Race in Contemporary America," students were asked to make an argument about the ways in which one or more representations contribute to our understanding of the cultural meanings of race in America today. In this essay, Kylie takes as her main exhibit source *Hamilton,* possibly the most popular cultural artifact of recent years, and interrogates the praise that critics have heaped upon the musical. Kylie's argument is well-developed, with a clear articulation of Swales's three research moves (establish the territory, establish a niche, occupy the niche), and relies on an impressive range of sources. I particularly appreciate Kylie's attentiveness to what readers may need to follow her argument: in providing sufficient context and clear transitions (both within and across paragraphs), she demonstrates how clarity and coherence depend upon moving from old to new information. Kylie's essay is also a valuable model for future students who wish to include an abstract, keywords, visuals, or usage notes.

Jessica Bozek
WR 150: Interrogating Race in Contemporary America

FROM THE WRITER

Throughout my academic career, I have learned the most from having my own beliefs challenged by others. In this paper, I decided to challenge those beliefs myself. In "Interrogating Race in Contemporary America," I was able to put words to my once-disorganized thoughts on identity politics through class discussions and various reading assignments, specifically on the idea of a "post-racial America." Though I immediately knew that I wanted to write about post-racial beliefs in my research paper, I had difficulty thinking of a main exhibit to analyze. After racking my brain for hours, I had the sudden realization to write about *Hamilton: An American Musical*. As a huge *Hamilton* fan and supporter of its political impact, I truly enjoyed analyzing and connecting such a passion of mine to a fascinating sociological concept. I encourage everyone to write about their passions, remain objective and honest, and to not be afraid to question anything and everything.

KYLIE UMEHIRA is a rising sophomore at Boston University studying advertising in the College of Communication and political science in the College of Arts and Sciences. Hailing from Kane'ohe on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i, Kylie is an avid writer, follower of national politics, and fan of the Oxford comma. She thanks her most inspirational English teachers, Edward Moore, Nora Okja Keller, and Joe Tsujimoto, for encouraging and mentoring her as a writer. She also thanks Professor Jessica Bozek for her endless support and guidance, her WR 150 classmates for their feedback, and her friends for the hours of verbal brainstorming and conversation throughout the writing process.

KYLIE UMEHIRA

ALL HAMMED UP: HOW *HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL* ADDRESSES POST-RACIAL BELIEFS

Abstract: *Hamilton: An American Musical*, the Broadway sensation that chronicles the life of Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, has received critical acclaim for its comprehensive plotline as well as its predominantly African-American and Latino cast, a deliberate choice made by the show's composer and lyricist, Lin-Manuel Miranda. Both the show itself and the cast of *Hamilton* evolved into a political statement of equality, unity, and an alleged indicator of a post-racial society. However, American society is far from post-racial, and most literature on *Hamilton* does not acknowledge the faults of *Hamilton,* specifically the public's perception of the show's content and casting. Though the racial representation in the *Hamilton* cast is positive and worthy of critical praise, my research will analyze the racial disparities within the casting of the musical and the story within the show itself to understand and disprove the belief that *Hamilton* signifies a post-racial society. I will examine reviews and current scholarship on *Hamilton* to explore public perception of the musical to further understand how representation of minorities in art benefit marginalized populations more broadly in America as well as develop a façade of overcoming racial barriers.

Keywords: Non-white casting, post-racial society, racial representations, diversity, minorities in art

On August 6, 2015, *Hamilton: An American Musical*, which tells the life story of Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, premiered on Broadway at the Richard Rodgers Theatre. Theater critics, journalists, and civilians alike held a practically unanimous opinion about *Hamilton*: that it is one of the best pieces of musical theater in this generation. It was praised not only for its well-crafted songs, relevant political rhymes, and unprecedented artistry, but also for its intentional non-white casting. Most of the actors in *Hamilton* are African-American, Hispanic, and Latinx, causing the actors in the musical and the musical itself to receive lots of media attention. This praise influenced many journalists and reviewers to make broader claims about the current state of American society. *Hamilton* sparked a national dialogue about race in America. Its positive representation of minority actors led many to believe *Hamilton* marked the end of a whitewashed American media, supporting the post-racial[1] narrative that many attribute to President Barack Obama's election and re-election. *Hamilton* has even been called a sign of the "twilight of white America" (Walsh 457). Despite these claims, the myth of a post-racial America is exactly that: a myth, which current scholarship about *Hamilton* fails to address. Through analysis of reviews, existing literature about *Hamilton*, and music from the show itself, I will disprove the claim that *Hamilton* indicates that American society is post-racial. Overall, I will analyze *Hamilton: An American Musical* and current scholarship about the production to provide insight into why Americans continue to pursue the post-racial narrative, the internal and external effects that representations of minorities in art can have on larger political conversations, and the importance of inspiring the "Hamiltons" of tomorrow in American media today.

The era of President Obama did generate larger, unprecedented opportunities for racial representation in American media. Television shows like *Black-ish, Fresh Off the Boat, Empire,* and *Jane the Virgin* emerged during Obama's presidency, all appearing on major networks. This kind of representation is fairly new in America, especially with its history of mainly showcasing white talent in film, television, theater, and other media. Author and playwright Warren Hoffman found that classic Broadway musicals like *42nd Street* and *The Music Man* exemplify white history and privilege in America (5). There are also musicals like *Anything Goes* that have racist elements in their plotlines. For many Americans, this pattern remained until recently. Broadway has been dubbed "The Great White Way," and though the term's genesis had nothing to do with race, scholars have given it a second meaning, as Broadway was largely considered an activity for the wealthier sector of American society because of its high price point. Due to systemic socioeconomic restraints, that second meaning inherently labels Broadway as a white pastime, as only the most affluent in society can afford to enjoy the expensive world of theatre. In the United States, the opportunities to reach that level of wealth are mainly afforded to white people, both directly and indirectly. Though this trend has historic roots, it also continues today. The Broadway League found that 77% of all tickets sold in the 2015–2016 season—of which *Hamilton* is a part—were purchased by Caucasians ("The Demographics").

Though Caucasians continue to comprise most of the Broadway audience, Broadway and American media at large have increased minority representation onstage. The 2015–2016 Broadway season boasted more minorities than seasons past (Lee and Rooney). *On Your Feet!* shows the life of Latina singer Gloria Estefan, while *Allegiance* casted a significant number of Asian-Americans with an all Asian-American crew. These musicals, alongside *Hamilton,* made many, including associate professor of theater at Tufts University Monica White Ndounou, claim the 2015–2016 season the "most diverse yet." Before this season, musicals like *Dreamgirls* and *The Color Purple* made waves on Broadway as well. Deviating greatly from the white stories of musicals past, both musicals revolve around African-Americans telling the stories of other African-Americans, which is where *Hamilton* strays from the pack.

Figure 1: Original Broadway Cast of *Hamilton*

The musical's creator and writer, Lin-Manuel Miranda, who also played the title role in the original Broadway cast, calls *Hamilton* "the story of America then, told by America now" (Paulson). Miranda wrote the roles to be played by non-white actors specifically, so in *Hamilton*, non-white

actors are playing white characters. In the original cast, Leslie Odom, Jr., Daveed Diggs, and Christopher Jackson are all African-American actors who played Aaron Burr, the Marquis de Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington, respectively. Philippa Soo, an Asian-American woman, starred as Hamilton's wife, Elizabeth "Eliza" Schuyler Hamilton, while Anthony Ramos originated the roles of John Laurens and Phillip Hamilton alongside Miranda as Alexander Hamilton; both Ramos and Miranda are of Puerto-Rican descent (*Hamilton*). These roles translated to *Hamilton*'s other adaptations, as its current Broadway cast and casts in its Chicago, London's West End, and national touring productions have adhered to the non-white casting method. When questioned about this method, Jeffrey Seller, one of the producers of *Hamilton*, stated that despite public backlash after a *Hamilton* casting call sought "non-white performers," producers will "continue to cast the show with the same multicultural diversity[2] that [they] have employed thus far" (Viagas).

These representations of minorities contribute to the overwhelming support *Hamilton* has garnered. Diggs stated it is important for him and many others to see people of color taking part in a typically all-white historical narrative through the show's main musical styling, rap, or "the voice of the people of [his] generation, and of people of color" (Mead). As an African-American himself, Diggs provides insight into the significance these representations have in the lives of racial minorities. From his statements, I derive that seeing people of color claiming and identifying with a story they have long been excluded from is important, and makes history an inclusive narrative all people can be a part of. I argue that the actual history that is told, however, is also significant, and can impact how people of color perceive the message of that historical narrative, which, in this case, is the story within *Hamilton*.

Though *Hamilton's* insistence in casting non-white actors is admirable, the show itself does have some problematic elements. I have found that in *Hamilton*'s retelling of American history, the musical adheres to the typical whitewashed history many Americans are familiar with. Though most of the actors in *Hamilton* are people of color, all of the characters portrayed in the musical are white; there are no people of color featured as characters. I believe this deficit is only underscored by Hamilton's privileges as a white man. Miranda, in the documentary *Hamilton's America*, stated that Hamilton is able to "write his way out of his circumstances." Hamilton literally says this in the song "Hurricane," where he describes writing a letter about the hurricane that devastated his hometown in the Caribbean, and how his letter inspired community members to raise money for him to leave and get an education in the North American colonies. He reflects on writing for George Washington during the Revolution, crafting love letters to his future wife Eliza, and writing the Federalist Papers and various pieces of legislation outlining his plans for the American financial and banking systems.

Though Hamilton was a gifted writer, I maintain that his ability to "write his way out" also came with a fair amount of both privilege and luck. Many people, both in Hamilton's time and today, are not afforded the privileges that come with quickly being recognized for their talents. This is not to undermine Hamilton's hard work, determination, and subsequent success. But I argue that Hamilton still benefitted from the system of white privilege that existed in the late 1700s and persists today. Racial, socioeconomic, and other political and cultural factors can prevent someone just as talented, if not more talented, than Hamilton from becoming successful in many professional industries, including politics. This reality is well-known for people of color, who face obstacles in personal, professional, and political spheres. The endurance and withstanding of these barriers over time clearly go against the post-racial belief that barriers no longer exist for people of color.

But the differences between the livelihoods of white people and people of color go beyond Hamilton's white privilege. One of the most prominent issues that *Hamilton* fails to address is slavery. Hamilton is portrayed as a staunch abolitionist throughout the show, which is not completely accurate. I found this portrayal evident when Hamilton criticizes Thomas Jefferson in the song "Cabinet Battle #1," a cabinet meeting rearranged into a rap battle, in which Hamilton and Jefferson debate Hamilton's proposal to allow the federal government to assume state's debts. Hamilton criticizes him: "A civics lesson from a slaver, hey neighbor / Your debts are paid 'cause you don't pay for labor / 'We plant seeds in the South, we create' / Then keep ranting, we know who's really doing the planting" (Miranda). University of Richmond professor Patricia Herrera analyzed another example of this portrayal in the song "Stay Alive," when John Laurens describes his new role in the American Revolution: "I stay at work with Hamilton / We write essays against slavery / And every day's a test of our camaraderie and bravery" (Miranda). These lyrics paint Hamilton as an aggressive opponent of slavery, though in reality, this was not the case (Herrera). Despite the confusion and misinterpretation of his political and personal relationships with slavery, I found that Hamilton's personal records indicate he did purchase, own, and trade slaves (Hamilton 268). Though he did work closely with John Laurens, who supported enlisting and freeing black soldiers during the Revolution, Hamilton's motivations to support abolition were overshadowed by his own desire to climb the social ladder, according to Professor Michelle DuRoss from the University at Albany ("Somewhere in Between"). She contests that Hamilton's desperation to enter the upper tier of American society was accomplished by marrying into the wealthy, slaveholding Schuyler family, causing him to overlook his own public stance on slavery as to assimilate into the opulent slaveholding world he was so desperate to join.

Both Hamilton and Aaron Burr—Hamilton's fellow politician and main antagonist—gloss over slavery in the show, erasing the significance of the existence of slaves during their time. In "The Room Where It Happens," Burr expresses his anger and desire to be in the "big old room" of important political decision-making, specifically the room where Jefferson, James Madison, and Hamilton decide the locations of the United States Capitol and the country's main financial center. Burr, played by Leslie Odom Jr., says that besides the "two Virginians and the immigrant," "[n]o one else was in the room where it happened." Lyra Monteiro found that this statement erases the role of slaves in the lives of these men, as there undoubtedly would be slaves serving and preparing the dinner that occurred in "The Room Where It Happens," hosted by Jefferson, who claims he "arranged the menu, the venue, the seating" (94). The character's dialogue on slavery—or lack thereof—removes slaves and slavery from the historical narrative presented in the musical. The absence of slave characters in *Hamilton* once again excludes people of color from this narrative, reinforcing the Anglo-centric history often taught in classrooms across the United States. The lack of characters of color in *Hamilton* perpetuates the idea that people of color do not have stories to be told, or rather, there was no place in American history for people of color then, and there is no place for people of color in America now.

Despite not mentioning slavery, *Hamilton* does often mention Hamilton's status as an immigrant, which empowers immigrants exposed to *Hamilton* in a political climate routinely hostile towards them. Born in Saint Kitts in the West Indies, Hamilton immigrated to the United States seeking an education. Miranda, hailing from an immigrant family himself, emphasized this part of Hamilton's identity, calling *Hamilton* the "quintessential immigrant story" ("Hamilton's America") about "having to work twice as hard to get half as far" (Ball and Reed). One of the standout lines in the show comes during the song "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)," when the Marquis

de Lafayette and Hamilton reflect on their accomplishments, stating "Immigrants / We get the job done" (Miranda). Frank Lechner, a professor of sociology at Emory University, found that *Hamilton* tells a comprehensive immigrant success story that says even immigrants can achieve the American Dream (123), combatting current inflammatory rhetoric against immigrants and Latinos around the country.

Miranda's telling of Hamilton's immigrant story creates a powerful, layered representation for Latinos, which has positive effects. In her review of *Hamilton*, Ariana Quiñónez described the significance of seeing a Latino man playing an immigrant on Broadway. For the first time, she saw herself in a Broadway musical and related to American history in a way that many minorities did not until *Hamilton* ("The cultural significance"). Patricia Herrera also examined the importance of this representation and its effects on her Hispanic and Latinx students. One of her students said that as an African and Hispanic-American, watching *Hamilton* and Miranda's first musical, *In the Heights*—the story of a Hispanic storeowner, Usnavi, and his life in one of the predominantly Latinx neighborhoods of Manhattan, Washington Heights—was particularly important to them and their family because that was the first time they ever saw themselves represented on stage ("*Hamilton,* Democracy"). Positive responses like these lead many to believe the post-racial myth. However, the amount of white representation versus representation of people of color is disproportionate.

Hamilton's representations of people of color have turned the musical into a powerful political statement that reached beyond Broadway. The most prominent incident that faced the musical occurred when Vice President Mike Pence attended a performance of *Hamilton*. Actor Brandon Victor Dixon, who played Aaron Burr that night, read a statement from the cast addressed to Pence, stating the cast of *Hamilton* is the "diverse America" that is nervous and apprehensive about Donald Trump's administration (Healey and Mele). Though many supported the cast for making a statement in the wake of President Trump's election, many Trump supporters—and even Trump himself—expressed disdain toward this act on social media. The cast's statement emphasized their fears as people of color, which ultimately faced public backlash. In a post-racial society, the anxiety expressed by the cast of *Hamilton* would not exist to begin with, let alone be subjected to racist public criticism.

This backlash is reflective of Broadway now, as the theater will not remain the "diverse America" it was in 2015 and 2016. The next two years on Broadway will make way for more shows slated to have very white casts, including *Titanic* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Miranda himself called the diversity in the 2015–2016 Broadway season an "accident of timing" (Seymour). Broadway will remain "The Great White Way," at least for now, despite the success people of color had along the Way. Though 2016 seemed like a success for minorities in the entertainment industry, there was not a significant change in minority representation and recognition in media compared to past years. Over 95% of all nominees in Tony Awards history are white, only slightly behind the percentage of all Oscar nominees (Seymour). There are only a handful of new television programs, films, and musicals that employ a significant amount of minority talent. Just because there is some representation for minorities in media does not mean that racial barriers have suddenly dissolved—they are just changing and being interrogated more than years past.

Clearly *Hamilton* and the buzz it created stood out from other works of visual art in the media, and the exceptionalism and sensationalism that comes with minorities in art translates to American media as a whole. Often times, art created by or featuring a significant number of

minorities—whether it be through film, theatre, paintings, or other forms of visual media—becomes inherently "othered"[3] by media at large. Once a merited piece of art, like Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*, is labeled as "diverse" or "groundbreaking for minorities," that piece is often praised heavily for that label alone. French philosopher Michel Foucault theorizes that any label exclusively used to describe something that deviates from a social norm immediately enters this category of "other" (41). Foucault's theory clearly explains why *Hamilton* has become a post-racial paragon in American media culture today.

Art created by minorities is often labeled as such. Essayist Erica Hunt asserts that most people have never identified a piece of art by the artist's race if the artist is white, but that reality is much different for non-white artists (171). Miranda, a Puerto-Rican man, created *Hamilton* as a piece of art meant to showcase the racial diversity he grew up with from his own personal experience as a Latino. Therefore, Miranda, his fellow non-white performers, and the show itself fit what the media labels "diverse." *Hamilton's* "otherness" means that *Hamilton* cannot stand without its status as a "diverse" show. Though that label is not necessarily malicious or bad, that label proves why *Hamilton* is not indicative of an American post-racial society. In a post-racial society, such a label would not exist. The "diversity" praised today would be considered normal, not "other." In theory, a post-racial society would not acknowledge "diversity" at all, as the "diversity" label would not be necessary.

Overall, the discrepancies between *Hamilton*'s unparalleled achievements as a positive, inclusive racial representation and its problematic regurgitation of whitewashed American history shed light on the importance of diversity on Broadway and in American media as a whole. The musical exemplifies the importance of racial representation for people of color who often find themselves excluded from historical narratives. But the disparities and issues within both the content and casting of the musical, as well as the public's perception of it, defy beliefs that *Hamilton* is the paragon of post-racial achievement. Despite its accolades and success, much of which is well deserved, to say that *Hamilton* symbolizes the United States' alleged overcoming of racial tension is undoubtedly false. Statements about *Hamilton*'s reflection of a post-racial America diminish the experiences, injustices, and systemic issues that people of color continue to face today. Beyond feeding into the post-racial myth, *Hamilton* is an example of how more "Hamiltons" should exist, and that the stories of people of color deserve to be told just as much as the stories of America's Founding Fathers. The history of all people must be shared if the United States ever wants to achieve the post-racial society many have dreamt of, and though *Hamilton* is a historic stepping-stone on that journey, the end goal has yet to be achieved.

NOTES

1. Throughout this paper, I will be using the term "post-racial" consistently as part of the backbone of my main argument. "Post-racial" is defined as "[d]enoting or relating to a period in or society in which racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist" by the Oxford English Dictionary ("Post-racial"). The general conclusion about the origins of the post-racial narrative in America is attributed to the election of President Barack Obama as the first African-American president. Because Obama's election was conclusively historic, many interpreted his election as an overcoming of racial tensions and barriers, that because a black man was elected to the highest office in the country, race is no longer an issue preventing people of color from becoming successful. However, many political, social, economic, and cultural factors counter this belief, including facets of the current American media landscape.

2. The term "diversity" is often used throughout this paper, sometimes within quotation marks and sometimes not. I use the word "diversity" in its typical definition in regards to race, meaning a mix of multiple races. When I use the word "diversity" in quotations, however, that signals the idea of diversity conjured by the media, essentially meaning non-white. "Diversity" in quotation marks also implies a negative connotation, because I find the media's definition of diversity often misused as a way to make people, companies, or other entities seem progressive or inclusive, when in actuality, using the word "diversity" creates a façade that goes against those perceptions.

3. The use of the word "other" as a verb means to stray away from what is normal. When something has been "othered" by society, that concept or item or belief is presented as something abnormal or unusual, for better or for worse.

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