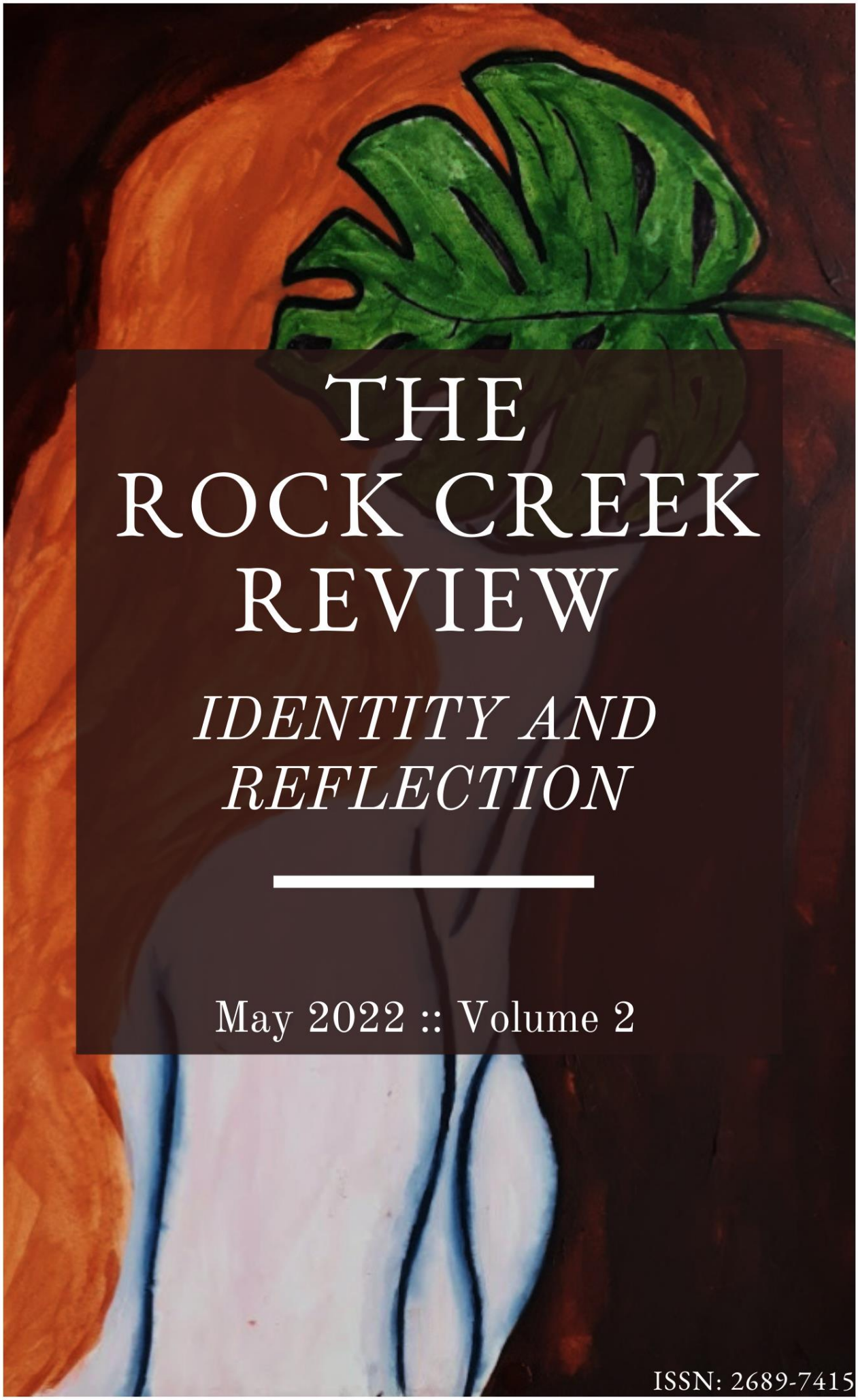

THE ROCK CREEK REVIEW

IDENTITY AND REFLECTION

May 2022 :: Volume 2

ISSN: 2689-7415

The Rock Creek Review

Identity and Reflection

Volume II

May 2022

Heidelberg University

English Department

ISSN: 2689-7415

The Rock Creek Review

An Undergraduate Journal of Literary Studies

ISSN: 2689-7415

https://inside.heidelberg.edu/departments-offices/english/rock-creek-review

Founding Editors, Dr. Barry Devine and Danielle Lester

Logo design by Ethan White

Cover design by Chayenne Powers

Published from the English Department of Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio.

Chair: Dr. Emily Isaacson

310 E Market Street, Tiffin, Ohio, 44883

About the Editors

Chayenne Powers is the Managing Editor for *The Rock Creek Review* 2022 and an Editor for *Morpheus Literary Magazine* 2022. She is a junior Philosophy and English (Writing) Major, with a minor in Literature and Art. Chayenne was awarded the Elizabeth Conrad Zartman Prize in Philosophy in 2021 and 2022. Last year, she served as an Editor on *The Rock Creek Review* team for its inaugural issue. She was an Editor for the *Pfleiderer Humanities Showcase Journal* in 2020. She's currently in three honors societies: Alpha Alpha Alpha, Alpha Lambda Delta, and Sigma Tau Delta. In her spare time, Chayenne is consuming an abundance of coffee and dubiously writing poetry.

Kelsey Stanfield is a Communication and English Writing major with a minor in Philosophy from Rushsylvania, Ohio. When she is not working in the admission office or in the tutoring center, she can be found practicing her original addresses for speech team or planning events for the Berg Body Positivity Association. Kelsey loves to connect with people on campus, whether through meeting others through her many extracurricular activities or sparking random conversations about mothman whenever she has the opportunity. Her contributions to this journal stem from her childhood love of reading and writing and she hopes to continue to follow these passions wherever they lead her.

Carolyn Schutte is a sophomore English (Writing) and Spanish major from Rossford, OH. She worked as an Editor for *The Rock Creek Review* 2022 and as an Editor for the 2021 *Pfleiderer Humanities Showcase Journal*. She is involved with Heidelberg's Alliance for Sustainability club and gets far too excited about composting. In her free time, she loves learning new languages (French and Italian currently) and working on a pseudo-textbook of Spanish grammar. She also offers amateur Spanish translation services on campus.

Jenna Farr is an Editor for *The Rock Creek Review*. She is a Junior at Heidelberg University from Green Springs, Ohio. She is majoring in English with a concentration in Writing.

Alyssa Amor is an Editor of *The Rock Creek Review* for its May 2022 edition. They are an English Writing major from Clyde, Ohio, and they were previously an Editor for the 2021 *Pfleiderer Humanities Showcase Journal* along with *Morpheus Literary Magazine*. One of the main focuses of their undergraduate career is queer and feminist criticisms. They have a strong passion for writing and hope to write a novel someday.

Dr. Barry Devine is the Editor-in-Chief and a Founding Editor of *The Rock Creek Review*. He is an Assistant Professor of English at Heidelberg University and teaches British literature, Irish literature, and Literary Theory.

A Note from the Managing Editor:

Dear Reader,

If there's one thing I'm not good at doing, it's writing about myself in a journal full of so many interesting conversations. This issue marks the second official issue of *The Rock Creek Review* and my first time being a Managing Editor. Following the success of the previous Managing Editor, Emilio Swain, is no small task.

When I was selected for the managing position, Emilio had created a timeline for the project, and had left it up to me and my team to finish what they had set in place. Like any project, however, nothing goes according to plan and time after time, my team and I had to be resilient and work together to create something everyone could be proud of. My team, Kelsey Stanfield, Carolyn Schutte, Jenna Farr, and Alyssa Amor, worked throughout a year while adapting to a campus life that was slowly readjusting from a world-wide pandemic that is still not officially over at the time I'm writing this.

Despite any challenges faced, things were easier this semester. I had learned so much my previous year working under Emileo's direction. I was part of a team of student editors working on the first volume of a new journal, and you can be certain that it was absolutely stressful. With the beginning of a pandemic, we had thought that people might focus their thoughts on other contagions in literature. We were wrong. We received a variety of pieces dealing with themes of reflection, distortion, perspective, separation, magnification, and more incredibly interesting pieces of literary research. We changed our theme to reflect what students were writing about—the strangeness of our world. It's ever clearer that the resilience that students show in our strange, ever-changing world, is phenomenal.

This year, the theme of *Identity and Reflection* is a recognition of this resilience and adaptability in a world that can never quite stay the same. We can only determine who we are in it and what that means.

In our shared resilience, I and everyone involved with the publication of *The Rock Creek Review* hope you enjoy the works of the authors who have dedicated extensive time and energy into the works they have produced.

Thank you for reading *The Rock Creek Review*.

Chayenne Powers.

The Rock Creek Review

Volume II: Identity and Reflection

Contents

Erica Oney is a 3rd year student at the University of South Dakota studying addiction counseling and prevention. Erica grew up in Attica, Ohio, but now resides in Vermillion, South Dakota. After graduating, Erica hopes to move to the Pacific Northwest to work in harm-reduction efforts. Outside of her area of study, Erica also enjoys philosophy and literature.

A New View of Misogyny in *The Power*

Erica Oney

University of South Dakota

Misogyny is a term that often is misinterpreted as a simple hatred of women. Kate Manne took the initiative to define misogyny in the terms of its victims in her philosophical writing, *Down Girl*. The reversal of misogyny in a matriarchal society in Naomi Alderman's *The Power* brings this definition to attention and sheds light on misogyny through a system of revenge. Using Manne's philosophy as a theoretical lens, attention is drawn to the incomplete reversal of misogyny in Alderman's novel in areas such as ties to physical violence, the historical presence of a patriarchy, continued attempts at enforcement of patriarchal norms, and the radical government standards put into place by women. Each of these areas lack an intersectional approach. Alderman's objective is to present a moving account of the plight of women by applying similar circumstances to men, but she fails to do so in a truly effective way.

Physical violence toward men at the hands of women is not nearly as prevalent or tolerated in a patriarchal society as its male-to-female counterpart. Naomi Alderman replicates this in her

writing through both physical and sexual assault. About seven months before the Cataclysm takes place, two of the most striking examples of Alderman's reversal of these roles are presented. The first is in one of Tunde's chapters. In this scene, he is hiking on a road through the mountains when he comes across a man who has been beaten and left tied to a pole. Alderman writes, "They had simply bound him tightly and left him there. There were marks of pain across his body, livid and dark, blue and scarlet and black. Around his neck was a sign with a single word in Russian: *slut*. He had been dead for two or three days" (296). The description of the man's body draws parallels to the atrocities that women face. In Kate Manne's writing, she discusses a series of crude remarks from Rush Limbaugh about Sandra Fluke after she had argued that birth control ought to be covered by health insurance. Limbaugh did not seem to consider that birth control would be used for any reason aside from preventing the risk of pregnancy, despite its many hormonal benefits outside of contraception. He even goes so far as to propose that Fluke should post pornographic videos to the internet in return for having birth control covered by insurance at the taxpayer's expense (Manne 57). Metaphorically, this circumstance is comparable to the man Tunde finds in the mountains. Sandra Fluke has been bound, beaten, and labeled a slut by Limbaugh's words, and it was completely unwarranted. This analogy highlights a missing piece in Alderman's puzzle of reversed misogyny: a lack of microaggressions. This can be ascribed to the early stage of the matriarchy. This female dominated society has not been in place long enough for men to "settle in" to their subordinate roles and allow for smaller, verbal aggressions to present themselves.

In addition to the man on the mountain, another example of physical violence presents itself shortly after. In this scene, a man is sexually assaulted at the hands of a group of women, wielding their skein as a weapon of intimidation and submission. By the end of the scene, the man is pleading for his life, but the women surrounding him are only encouraging his attacker. This scene is difficult to read but incredibly important in drawing a parallel to today's society. While men may not always

form a group to attack women in a physical or sexual nature, it is a mentality to preserve their masculinity that drives them as a group to do unspeakable acts on their own. Women are ostracized in our society for seeking out or even alluding to the idea that they may enjoy sex, while men are shamed if it is not a priority in their life. This dynamic suggests that women should not want sex, but men should nearly feel as if they need it, which is problematic when it comes to consent. This seems to be the conclusion that Alderman wants us to draw from this scene; it is about women taking back their sexual desire while shaming men the way that they have been shamed. However, implying that all women would believe that men should suffer the way they have in the case of this transition from patriarchy to matriarchy, rather than establishing equality, is entirely unfeasible. This is a problematic solution to the problem, which raises questions about the reversal of misogyny in the novel.

With the unnatural examples of physical violence committed by women, Alderman fails to transition naturally into a matriarchal society. Kate Manne makes the observation that "...a woman is often expected to play the role of a man's attentive, loving subordinate" (57) early in her work. This traditional view is upheld in society still, and Alderman attempts to replicate this in her book as the power of women, provided by their skein, begins to put men into a lower social bracket. It is especially prevalent in the section of the book one year before the Cataclysm. In one particular scene, Tatiana Moskalev forces a young servant boy to lick brandy and glass off the ground after she purposely drops it. The young man follows orders while being taunted by onlooking women and begins bleeding from the mouth. Tatiana calls him repulsive. This again implies that women as a group would implement the same kind of suffering that they have experienced upon men in a matriarchal society. In a later chapter, Tunde describes the aftermath of this scene, in which he is helping the servant boy remove the glass fragments from his mouth. This scene seems to mirror the treatment of women in current society. Not only is the man obviously presented as a servant, but the scene also portrays the comradery of the lower social class in helping each other. However, this

representation seems incomplete. The seemingly necessary presence of a physical strength implies that women could only overthrow men and hold power if they had the brute strength to do so. Another piece of the incompleteness can be attributed to the fact that the matriarchy is a newfound circumstance, but that does not excuse it. Manne insists that a prerequisite for misogyny is a history of a patriarchal society. In order to implement a complete reversal of misogyny, the society Alderman creates would have to have begun with and maintained a matriarchy.

Alderman's writing does not allow for a reversal of misogyny, but instead readers witness the transition from patriarchy to matriarchy, which leaves room for ordinary misogyny to shine through. Misogyny can be observed early in the book when the transition begins; however, it becomes much more nuanced as the book progresses. For example, the scene where Roxy's skein is surgically removed and placed into Darrell demonstrates this with the transfer of power. While this procedure may be viewed as a last-ditch effort of men to reclaim their livelihood and escape the tyranny of women, it is a form of enforcing the norms of a patriarchal society. Manne states in her work that "...misogyny should be understood as the 'law enforcement' branch of a patriarchal order," (63) which meshes well with this piece of Alderman's novel. The transfer of Roxy's skein represents the forceful nature of attempting to reconstruct the norms of a male dominated society. Darrel's character has a chapter of his own in which he discusses making a business out of skein transplants. Darrel had Roxy's skein forcibly removed and placed into his own body. The skein is a body part exclusive to women. Darrel not only steals Roxy's skein, but also intends to have this procedure done on other men and women. This suggests that even in Alderman's reality women do not have complete bodily autonomy, another form of male dominance. Similar to the way that Alderman does not allow for the transition of patriarchy to matriarchy, she also misrepresents a female-dominated government.

Additionally, the way that Alderman presents the entirely female-run government is absurd. With Tatiana in place as the President of Bessapara, Alderman seems to begin comparing the men in her story to slaves rather than the current woman. This piece of the novel is not only unrealistic, but also sets back Alderman's objective of bringing the plight of the current woman to light by at least a century in today's time. The following quotation presenting the new laws of the matriarchy displays this:

> Men are no longer permitted to drive cars.
>
> Men are no longer permitted to own businesses. Foreign journalists and photographers must be employed by a woman.
>
> Men are no longer permitted to gather together, even in the home, in groups larger than three, without a woman present.
>
> Men are no longer permitted to vote – because their years of violence and degradation have shown that they are not fit to rule or govern.
>
> A woman who sees a man flouting one of these laws in public is not only permitted but required to discipline him immediately. (Alderman 273)

If Alderman's aim was to draw attention to the inequality of all women in today's society, she has missed the mark entirely with this inclusion. These laws do not exist for American women anymore. White women in this country are, and have been, permitted to do all of these things for over one hundred years. This distinction made between women and specifically white women introduces a new flaw in Alderman's writing.

Alderman fails to address intersectional issues, especially as they relate to women. Alderman does not describe any discrepancies between the treatment of white people and people of color, or any other minorities. There is no representation of the LGBTQ+ community in Alderman's writing, which poses a very important dilemma. One core foundation of true feminism is a pursuit of

equality for all women, which must include transgender women or risk being undermined by trans-exclusionary radical feminism. Another major void in Alderman's writing is a reduction to one religion. Her character, Mother Eve, hears the voice of what readers assume to be God, which effectively replaces all other interpretations of a deity in the global society of Alderman's universe. It is not only ridiculous to assume that all of the women in Alderman's world would convert to the same religion, but it is also incredibly disrespectful to polytheistic religions to imply that there is simply this one true deity. As is the case in all of the previous examples, the diversity missing from Alderman's work is an integral part of presenting an accurate world view, even in a world that seems to be turned upside down. The lack of intersectionality in *The Power* is not conducive to truly representing the struggles of all women. While it is understandable that inclusions of these identifiers of humanity may have been difficult to make sense of in reversed society, they are necessary to the message being conveyed in the text. It is therefore impossible to effectively compare Manne's philosophical argument to Alderman's writing, as Manne at the very least attempts to engage intersectional issues in her writing.

Alderman's attempt to draw attention to the horrors that women experience in society today is incomplete, and nearly paints feminism as a radical concept of overpowering men rather than fighting for equality. While this was not her intended effect, the transition from a male dominated society to a female dominated society points to this conclusion in ways that would not be possible if there were not history of a patriarchy in the book's society. By Kate Manne's definition of misogyny, the society Alderman has created lacks the necessary qualities to create a sort of reversal of this phenomenon. This becomes apparent through the continued implications that although they are in power, women should still abide by patriarchal norms of power and strength rather than redefining these concepts for themselves. This is achieved through an exaggeration of physical violence bestowed upon men at the hands of women, the historical presence of a patriarchy, continued

reinforcement of patriarchal values, and government policies put into effect by female leaders, which notably lack any sort of diversity or intersectional solutions.

Works Cited

Alderman, Naomi. *The Power*. Little, Brown and Company, 2017.

Manne, Kate. *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Beck is a graduating senior from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In her free time, she enjoys photography, creative writing, wandering around bookstores or libraries, and hiking. In the fall, Molly will be attending graduate school at Colorado State University, where she will be pursuing a M.A in Literature. In her scholarly research and writings, Molly is fascinated by how identity, both individual and collective, is represented in eighteenth and nineteenth century novels, particularly through descriptions of the physical environment and their connection to a character's emotional state.

Autonomy, Identity, and Doubles in *Jane Eyre*

Molly Beck

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* can be seen as a bildungsroman of sorts, as it not only details the physical growth of Jane, but also the moral and psychological growth of her character as she matures from a child to an adult. Throughout the novel, Jane's personal identity is connected to others through her interactions and relationships, but she is perpetually trapped in this state as her restrictions come from those around her. It is only at the end of the novel, when she decides to return to Thornfield, and accepts Rochester after he is maimed and blinded, that Jane is truly liberated, for she has established herself as her own person, set in her own identity, and has found love through this emotional growth.

However, Jane's development is not only hindered by the people around her but is also set in juxtaposition of Rochester's first wife, the insane Bertha Mason. These two characters are both described as trapped and mad at different times within the novel, and this juxtaposition between the two reveals that they can be seen as oppositional doubles, as the contrasting light and dark.

Arguments can be made that the reason Jane does not become like Bertha --fully snared and insane-- is because Rochester loves her and thus his love proves to be the liberation Jane so desperately needs in her life. However, this does not take into consideration Jane's own actions to shape her identity, as well as her personal values of both ownership and autonomy. Therefore, a different and distinct argument can be made that Jane's salvation from becoming like dependent and insane Bertha is not because Rochester loves her, but rather because she insists on developing an integrity of the self.

Jane's experiences in the red-room at the beginning of the novel affirms these ties to possible insanity. When the red-room is first introduced to the reader, there is an immediate assertion of its shameful nature as Jane "resisted all the way" and also that the room is reserved for wickedness, as Jane is referred to as a 'mad cat' and locked in (Brontë 15). These descriptions Brontë writes are intuitive of someone who is more animal than human and, furthermore, is one of the first glimpses into Jane as a character. These images also appear later in the character of Bertha. This carries the effect of a person who is stunted in her psychological growth and exiled by all around her, leaving her to burrow within herself and develop a specific exclusion that is her own. Jane's lashing out as she fights to not get locked inside of the red-room is described alongside constant reprimands by the other characters at Gateshead Hall. It is therefore made clear at the beginning of the novel that Jane is so ostracized by those around her that she is considered scarcely human, or a complete other. Therefore, with her arrival in the red-room, it seems clear to the reader that she exists dually as a human girl and also an uncontrollable monster.

The red-room is indeed red, with the repetition of the color observed in descriptions of the curtains as being "of deep red damask" as well as, the "carpet was red" and the "table at the foot of the bed was covered with a crimson cloth" (Brontë 17). Red as a color in Gothic literature often represents intensity and passion, as well as aggression, and thus Jane is embodied by these traits as

well while in the room. Even as she grows agitated, there is also an assertion that Jane knows she is being treated wrongly, as she thinks, "'Unjust! — unjust! — ' said my reason" (Brontë 19). This asserts that Jane's so-called rescue from insanity and ferocity stems from her own conscious decision-making. For, even though she is treated cruelly, Jane is aware of how she should be treated and confident in her inner capability. These scenes in the red-room establish Jane as both being enveloped with fear and isolation, but also firmly resolute in how she knows she should be treated by others.

Jane's loss of self-control while in the red-room does not indicate that madness has its roots in puberty or adulthood, but rather, as Whitney Jones describes, "in the transient stage that comes before" (2). While the red-room is symbolic of how Jane is deprived of the love and relationships from which her independence and freedom would otherwise be obtained, John Hagan, Professor Emeritus of English at Binghamton University, argued that so too does it mark the beginning of the development of Jane's identity (354). Ultimately, the red-room is Jane's inner self and her alienation from the external world, something that carries through the rest of the novel. Notably though, is Jane's juxtapositioning of her dread and her self assertion, in order to establish Jane as self-reliant but plagued by fear of loss of control. When compared to her experiences at Thornfield, as well as to her similarities with Bertha Mason, it seems fit to argue that the red-room operates both as a physical representation of Jane's stunted development and insane potential and, as an emotional memory that induces Jane's restoration and the full maturation of her inner psyche and integrity.

Jane's unhappiness at Thornfield Hall becomes evident quickly, demonstrating that it is another tool to escape her confinement and attempt to escape from her fears. Yet, though Jane is shaken by the hysterical sounds coming from the third floor, she is also drawn to them. At various times throughout the novel, when she is restless and disturbed, her "sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third story...and allow [her]mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose

before it…[a] feeling, that [she] desired and had not in [her] actual existence" (Brontë 129). This wandering and almost supernatural attraction to the third floor where, unbeknownst to her at this time, lurks Bertha Mason, reflects Jane's inner turmoil and her absorption with the creation of her identity. Having gone from Gateshead, to the Lowood School, and now to Thornfield, Jane is seemingly no closer to finding fulfillment, both internally and externally. Indeed, all three locations are prisons for Jane as physical similarities, particularly between Gateshead and Thornfield, are described in order to solidify Jane's tumultuous psychological maturation. The ghastly red and ghostly white that are used to illustrate the intensity of the red-room are also repeated in the Thornfield drawing-room, with its "general blending of snow and fire" and, as this is the room where Rochester and Jane are introduced to one another, the descriptions indicate a sense of foreshadowing for the constriction Jane later feels in her relationship with Rochester (Brontë 123, Hagan 357). Thus, while Thornfield is the home of where Jane falls in love, it is also an obstacle she must overcome, and an object, like the red-room, that stands in the way of her becoming a fully developed woman.

When one compares the beginning descriptions of Jane in the red-room to the unsettling depiction of Bertha Mason much later in the novel, it seems that *Jane Eyre* declares that if Jane continued to be trapped and isolated, both by others and by her own fears, then she could have easily become like Bertha. Her similarities to Jane suggest the idea of two women who were teetering on the line between insanity and sanity, and one fell either way. These consequences eventually become clear to Jane as she begins to understand her inner monstrosity and how her fate could be aligned with Bertha's if no action is taken.

Bertha is described in the text as utterly monstrous, while also, according to Peter Grudin, remaining obscure enough that complete categorization is impossible (147). She is described as a "wild beast" or a "strange wild animal" (Brontë 364, 338). She is compared to a dog, a tigress, a

hyena, and a vampire on different occasions, both to her face and not. Bertha is not even allowed to be a human woman when Jane first describes her; she is reduced to 'it' to firmly contend how exaggeratedly grotesque she is. In this way, from being locked away for so many years, Helen Small, Merton Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Oxford, argues that, "Bertha is out of time with the rest of the novel" and thus her characterization is exaggerated profusely as to concentrate on her otherworldly and subhuman nature (156). Yet Jane is also empathetic towards Bertha; when she first hears her laugh, she refers to it as "tragic" and later attempts to make her sound more human when Rochester is explaining his history with her (Brontë 127, 362). This juxtaposition between Bertha's outward monstrosity and the way that Jane is both drawn to and repelled by her suggests that, even though she may not be fully conscious of it yet, Jane relates to Bertha, both in her enormity but also in her being locked away.

While *Jane Eyre* hints at how easily Jane's inner psyche could have crossed into madness from her experience in the red-room, according to Bihal Tawfiq Hamamra, Professor of English at An-Najah National University, Bertha is depicted wholly as a being that burst "out of confinement in a destructive self-expression" (6). Thus, Bertha establishes herself as an oppositional double to Jane, whose pride and stability comes from her own stoic character and calm external integrity. Indeed, as Jane matures through the novel, though internally she is plagued by madness and conflict, she does reveal this internal fight to others. However, Bertha's madness is unrestrained and unrelentless, which Ruth Yeazell, Sterling Professor of English at Yale University argues emphasizes the "chaotic disintegration of the self which Jane so deeply fears" (135). Furthermore, this juxtaposition between the two women underlines the effect of a stunted development due to a lack of personal relationships. Bertha has been cast away and treated as unequal to the rest of Thornfield Hall, which is remarkably similar to how Jane finds herself isolated in the red-room; both are without proper relationships and with a feeling they are not the same as the others. In this way, Bertha's feral

character can be attributed in part to her dependence and her lack of development of her own identity, which reveals to the reader that Jane's forming of her own identity and gaining of personal freedom is of the utmost importance lest she become animalistic as well.

Bertha and Jane's roles as opposites are confirmed in the events surrounding Jane's initial wedding day. When Rochester describes Jane and Bertha, he makes sure to give Jane beautiful and definite personal descriptions such as how she is a "young girl" with "clear eyes" whereas he spitefully describes Bertha as having a face like a "mask" and a "bulk" in order to signify his domineering attitude and dismissal of his mad wife (Brontë 340). He also refers to Bertha as his property and his 'prize' which alarms Jane as she starts to become overwhelmed with the wedding (Brontë 340). She begins to feel as though it is a duty more than a desire and that she too will end up locked away like Bertha. Moreover, when Bertha breaks into Jane's room and dresses up in Jane's wedding gown and veil before leaning over her in bed, Jane describes the experience saying, "for the second time in my life...I became insensible from terror" as an emphasis to her horror at seeing a ghostly presence, so similar to that of what she saw in the red-room (Brontë 327). Indeed, this moment of terror asserts an emotional connection between her fears of losing her self-integrity and identity, whether as a child locked away or trapped in a marriage to Rochester. Regardless of the situation, it becomes clear that Jane dreads continuing to be a dependent body to another. Bertha as an emblem of marriage also corrodes Jane's passion and love for Rochester, as seeing such a frightful figure reveals her anxieties and alienation of her relationships. Jane seems to realize after this defining moment in her bedroom that she is not independent in her relationship with Rochester; rather, she is relying on him to formulate her identity.

The Gothic novel continues to increase tension but also interconnectedness between past and present, as seen in the example Gail Griffin, Professor of English at Kalamazoo College describes: "the red room and on the morning of her wedding, Jane fails to recognize herself in the

mirror" (96). Jane looks in the mirror on her wedding day and sees "almost the image of a stranger" which suggests a distancing from herself as a physical body and herself as the fragmented self within (Brontë 331). This sort of dissociation, while ominous and tragic at the time, enables Jane to later be reborn, in a sense, set in her identity and confident that she can endure her decisions of love and marriage.

After the reveal of the insane Bertha Mason, Jane flees Thornfield Hall and wanders around aimlessly for some time before finding the Rivers' family. During this initial wandering, she falls into a confused state and her anxiety and sense of dread are heightened as she suddenly finds herself without any stability to secure herself to. Jane begins "weeping wildly as [she] walked along [her] solitary way...a weakness...seized [her], and [she] fell...[she] had some fear, or hope, that here [she] should die" (Brontë 370). This particular description ties into the agitation she feels when she is locked in the red-room and, at both instances, Jane is plagued with mental confusion that does not allow her to see clearly the path ahead of her. The crucial difference between these two scenes is that, while in the red-room at the beginning of the novel, the young Jane lapses into unconsciousness, having given into her inner turmoil, but here, as she escapes Thornfield, she crawls "forward on [her] hands and knees, and then again raised to [her] feet, as eager and as determined as ever to reach the road" (Brontë 370). This reveals how, even though Jane is caught in a fearful state of confusion, she is focusing on her autonomy and inner strength. Thus, this falling down and then getting back up asserts that Jane's character has matured since her days at Gateshead and her once uncontrolled and raging passions have now started to subside into control and integrity.

The interactions between Jane and the Rivers' siblings in *Jane Eyre* provide a key change in the dynamics of Jane's relationships and how she relates to those around her. At Thornfield, Jane felt isolated from everyone else, especially when Rochester proposed marriage and began to exert more control over her. Her time at Gateshead and Lowood School were both marked by her

submissiveness and others' cruelty. Yet, Jane almost immediately befriends Diana and Mary Rivers at Marsh End, even before she finds out they are her actual kin. With these two, there is a sense of a "shared identity" that "binds Jane" and their acceptance of Jane even when she is at her most vulnerable affirms that, not only is Jane developing in her own relationships, but she is also growing in her independence and autonomy as well (Yeazell 130). She is open to these new friendships, but does not rely on them emotionally, as she began to do with Rochester. At Marsh End, Jane comes into her own because she has freed herself from the constraints of her past homes and past relationships, and has the courage to finally look within herself and use such introspection to create an established identity.

However, in contrast to her friendship with Mary and Diana, Jane's relationship to St. John, the two women's brother, is one of extreme tension and forcefulness. Not only does Jane struggle to resist his control, just as she suffered with Rochester, but, until her own sense of self is not so fragmented, when he speaks to her, she can't help but listen. When St. John asks if Jane will accompany him to India, not as his wife but as a missionary, Jane almost says yes because of his allure and coldness and her fear of spiraling out of control once more. Yet, her ultimate resistance comes from the realization that, for her, life without love is meaningless, and thus her liberating journey to an established self-integrity comes in part because of her insistence on love. Jane's spiritual journey and psychological development rely on independence, but not independence without love, and, in this sort of paradox, Jane realizes that she would be completely abandoning her passion that she once feared if she were to go to India. Indeed, when Jane retells the situation to Diana, Diana firmly says that Jane "...would not live three months there" and Jane agrees she would most certainly die (Brontë 478). It is clear to the reader through this self-assertion that Jane has been able to take the passion that previously plagued her, the same madness that drove confined Bertha

Mason insane, and transform it into a powerful tool for love and acceptance in interpersonal relationships.

While this intense self-transformation and move towards autonomy is followed by Jane's supernatural telepathic connection with Rochester, her defiance of St. John is rooted in her growing self-sufficiency. When St. John proposes that Jane accompany him to India, his proposal utilizes words such as "'forced,' 'compel' and 'imprisoned'" and this utilization "underlines that what St. John proposes is a violation of her [Jane's] psychic privacy" (Hamamra 7). This thus suggests that the most meaningful difference between Rochester and St. John Rivers is that of love and passion. Jane ran away from Rochester because she was afraid of becoming confined and insane like Bertha, and this possible scenario reminded her of the fear she experienced in the red-room. Yet, when she interacts with St. John's icy demeanor and complete lack of passion, she undergoes a change in which her own autonomy is solidified, and her wavering madness accepted as part of her own devotion to Rochester. Thus, Jane finally forms her own identity when she accepts that love must be a part of her life, and also understands her tormented psychological and emotional aspects as part of her identity. The connection between Jane's madness and her love leads to her telepathic connection with Rochester, and their eventual reunion. Just as the reader first observes when Jane attempts to assert herself in the red-room, so too does Marsh End function as a tool for Jane to develop and form her identity, independent of others.

This transformation of Jane's identity is cemented with the fire and complete destruction of Thornfield Hall, as well as Bertha Mason's death and Rochester's maiming. As Yeazell writes, "the transformation of the outer world reflects a transformation in Jane herself" so that, when Jane stumbles upon the blackened ruins of Thornfield and learns the fate of the man who once tried to control her and the woman that was set in juxtaposition to her, Jane's helplessness and inherent dependency on others are destroyed and she is fully set in herself, and her identity (129). In this way,

Bertha, her oppositional double, had to die so that Jane could be reborn. Her death marks a "transformation within Jane...the madness which she fought has at last been destroyed" and when she meets Rochester again, her love for him comes from her own autonomous will (Yeazell 142). Her freedom is attained with this death in part because she now has positive relationships around her, but, more importantly, because her love and identity are not stifled by the looming insanity and darkness that Bertha represented. *Jane Eyre* affirms that love is essential to one's forming of their own identity but that Jane could not be fully restored until she also had the unity of her inner psyche and her self-determination. Her so-called salvation from insanity is thus from the shaping of her identity and autonomy, rather than Rochester's bestowed love and acceptance.

Through descriptions of the red-room, Bertha Mason, and Jane's connections to other characters, as well as the prison-like object that is Thornfield, *Jane Eyre* argues that Jane was on the verge of becoming mad like her shadowy double, Bertha, and her insistence on maintaining her own self-reliance and integrity enables her to escape this fate and be reborn as a fully developed woman, set absolutely in her identity. Moreover, Jane's relationship with Rochester is one of liberation through love, but, more importantly, through her own awakening of autonomy. Jane could not have become the woman she is at the end of the novel, the woman who is narrating her past to the reader, if not for the destruction of both physical elements around her, such as Thornfield, and psychological elements inside her, such as her fear of unfettered passion and control. Thus, it is in Jane's own restraint that she is liberated, and in her release from the constrictions and cages, both physical and emotional, that she is able to defeat the alienation and insanity that Bertha was unable to. The novel therefore is not just a triumph of love and heroism, but also of freedom and self-identity.

Works Cited

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre.* 1847. Penguin Classics, 2006. Print.

Griffin, Gail B. "Once More to the Attic: Bertha Rochester and the Pattern of Redemption in *Jane Eyre." Nineteenth-century women writers of the English-speaking world*, 1986, pp. 89-97.

Grudin, Peter. "Jane and the Other Mrs. Rochester: Excess and Restraint in 'Jane Eyre.' *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction,* vol. 10, no. 2, 1977, pp. 145-157.

Hagan, John. "Enemies of Freedom in 'Jane Eyre.' *Criticism,* vol. 13, no. 4, 1971, pp. 351-376.

Hamamra, Bihal Tawfiq. "The Representation of Resistance and Transcendence in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*." *The Victorian,* vol. 6, no. 1, 2018.

Jones, Whitney Elaine. "Mad Girls: Creativity and Growing Up in *Jane Eyre* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*." *The Victorian,* vol. 4, no. 1, 2016.

Small, Helen. "The Hyena's Laughter: Lucretia and Jane Eyre." *Love's Madness: Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity, 1800-1865,* 1998, pp. 139-178.

Yeazell, Ruth Bernard. "More True Than Real: Jane Eyre's 'Mysterious Summons'. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction,* vol. 29, no. 2, 1974, pp. 127-143.

Sarah is currently a senior majoring in English at Creighton University. She is especially interested in 19th-century British literature and how these works are still relevant to our modern world. After she graduates, Sarah will be attending NYU's MA program in English Literature. She hopes to eventually earn a Ph.D. in English and teach at the college level.

Female Desires and Societal Validation in *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*

Sarah Sommers

Creighton University

The novels of Jane Austen have gained a reputation in pop culture for being romantic and light-hearted, but they contain an abundance of themes that deserve to be closely analyzed. From slavery to education to morality, the works of Jane Austen cover a broad range of issues that are complex and thought-provoking. Two of the most common themes in Austen's work are class and the status of women, and there are no two novels where these issues are more noticeable than *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*. Fanny Price, the main character of *Mansfield Park*, has been subjected to close speculation and analysis by literary critics for years. However, very few have discussed the parallels between Fanny's story and that of the naïve, overly trusting Harriet Smith from *Emma*. The most intriguing commonality between these young women is the threat they pose to society. Both have a desire to elevate their status through marriage to a wealthy man: Fanny to her cousin Edmund and Harriet to Mr. Knightley. By the end of their novels, however, only Fanny's desires are validated while Harriet accepts her lower standing. Why is Fanny able to achieve her dreams while Harriet is unable? What makes Harriet a greater threat to society than Fanny? These are the main questions this paper will endeavor to answer. This analysis will begin by examining how the wealthy

characters try and fail to improve Fanny and Harriet by reshaping their desires. The second focus of this paper will center on why Fanny's desires are validated by society while Harriet's are not by comparing these characters to Edmund Burke's ideas on revolution and the writings of Franco Moretti. *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* show us how society reshapes the desires of young women to keep the status quo. Through the parallel journeys of Fanny Price and Harriet Smith, and the wealthy characters that surround them, one can see how the desires of women have been rejected when they threaten societal norms and accepted when they preserve order.

The theme of improvement is at the very heart of *Mansfield Park*. Austen explicitly ties Fanny to this idea through the behavior of the wealthy people that surround her. However, Fanny does not undergo a significant amount of change by the end of the novel. In his article "'Mansfield Park:' Reading for 'Improvement'", Gerry Brenner, an emeritus professor of English, mentions how "the intent to improve" is the driving force behind the most significant events in the story (25). He acknowledges that one of the main motivations for Fanny's move to Mansfield Park is the hope of improving Fanny (25). Once the Bertrams and Mrs. Norris have decided to take Fanny in, they are concerned about what type of disposition she will have due to her lower-class upbringing. Sir Thomas states, "We shall probably see much to wish altered in her, and must prepare ourselves for gross ignorance, some meanness of opinions, and very distressing vulgarity of manner" (*Mansfield Park* 8-9). Improving Fanny Price's lower-class manners and education is supposedly at the heart of the Bertrams' and Mrs. Norris's intentions. However, once Fanny arrives at Mansfield Park, she is neglected by all the adults. The only person who cares for and pays attention to her is her cousin Edmund. Under Edmund's tutelage, Fanny adopts the same upright moral code as the future clergyman. Brenner believes that this moral education is why Fanny's improvement is a failure. Through her schooling from Edmund, Fanny becomes a pillar of "moral inactivity" (26). Brenner points out that, unlike the protagonists in Austen's previous novels, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and*

Prejudice, Fanny never finds a mid-point between her extreme morality and the immorality of those surrounding her. Her beliefs and desires are based solely on the education she received from Edmund. The negligence from her family leads Fanny to accept the morals of her cousin without question. It is also this poor treatment that allows Fanny to idolize Edmund and shape her desires around him.

The concept of improvement is also present in *Emma*, especially regarding the character Harriet Smith. Harriet is remarkably naïve and trusting, and the novel's titular protagonist quickly takes advantage of this trait. After meeting Harriet for the first time, Emma Woodhouse is struck by Harriet's natural beauty and believes that, with a little refinement and different acquaintances, she would "be quite perfect." Emma resolves to take Harriet under her wing with the narration detailing her thoughts: "*She* would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners" (*Emma* 19). Emma becomes for Harriet what Edmund is to Fanny: a source of guidance and education. However, while Edmund unintentionally shapes Fanny's desires, Emma intentionally warps Harriet's wishes to fit her own. Emma quickly realizes that Harriet is attracted to the farmer Robert Martin. Capitalizing on Harriet's lack of self-confidence, Emma dissuades her from reciprocating his affection by convincing her that Robert Martin is not a gentleman like Mr. Knightley or Mr. Elton (26-7). Also, since she claims that Harriet is "a gentleman's daughter," Emma encourages her to be more selective about the people she chooses as acquaintances (25). Author and editor Emmabel Orendain points out that Emma's pushing and prodding lead Harriet "to accept this misrepresentation of her social status as truth" (par. 5). By reshaping Harriet's desires, Emma accidentally reinforces the idea that Harriet can marry men from a high social standing. It is this meddling with Harriet's desires that leads her to emotional and romantic turmoil later in the novel.

A similar recurring theme in both *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* is patronage. California State University professor Danielle Spratt's article "Lady Bountiful" describes the English tradition of wealthy landowners and their wives providing for the lower-class people in their general vicinity (195-196). Similarly, both the Bertrams and Emma Woodhouse attempt to play the role of patron for Fanny and Harriet, respectively. In Mansfield Park, after he has resolved to let Fanny live at the titular estate, Sir Thomas Bertram becomes,fully resolved to be the real and consistent patron of the selected child" (*Mansfield Park* 7). This statement implies that Sir Thomas is committed to the idea of supporting and taking care of Fanny. However, he and the other adults at Mansfield Park utterly fail at filling this role. The only true patron Fanny has is Edmund. Furthermore, the adults are more wrapped up with how philanthropic taking in Fanny makes them look than with caring for her. When proposing the idea to Sir Thomas, Mrs. Norris claims, "The trouble and expense of it to them, would be nothing compared with the benevolence of the action" (5). Mrs. Norris is more concerned with the performative aspect of this good deed than helping Fanny. She has no real desire to improve her. Later in the novel, at Fanny's coming-out ball, Austen shows us some of Sir Thomas's thoughts about Fanny. While he recognizes that he has nothing to do with her beauty, the reader learns that, "he was pleased with himself for having supplied everything else;-education and manners she owed to him" (217). Here, Sir Thomas takes full credit for Fanny's behavior. However, as we've already established, the only member of the Bertrams that was committed to Fanny's upbringing was Edmund. The Bertrams and Mrs. Norris do not line up with the benevolent image of the wealthy patron that existed in late 18th-early 19th century England. Instead, they adopted Fanny so they could pat themselves on the back for their good deed. Fanny's improvement and desires mean nothing to them.

Like the Bertrams, Emma also fails to be a good patron. Spratt points out in her article that Emma is more obsessed with "her role as benefactress" than with helping others (200). This

problem is particularly evident in her charity work with the poor cottagers and her negligence towards women in risky financial situations – such as the Bates family and Jane Fairfax (Spratt 203). One can also see her failure to act as benefactress in her treatment of Harriet. While Emma claims that she wants to improve Harriet, there are ulterior motives for this move too. With the marriage of her former governess and closest friend Miss Taylor, Emma is left without any female companion and almost no acquaintances near her age. At this point, the reader is aware of Emma's intention not to marry and to play matchmaker instead. Harriet fulfills both of Emma's desires. She is a companion while also being wide-eyed enough to go along with Emma's matchmaking schemes. Emma's control over Harriet is also heightened by her status. In "Emma: A Prospect of England," Former educator and researcher Pam Morris states that the vertical class system endorses Emma's habit of treating lower-class people "like chess pieces" (93). Harriet is merely a piece in Emma's complicated games rather than a true friend. The spoiled protagonist is almost unaware that she is using Harriet for her benefit. Spratt points out that when Mrs. Elton assumes the role of Jane Fairfax's patron, Emma is repulsed by her behavior towards Jane. However, she fails to notice the parallels between Mrs. Elton's relationship with Jane and her schemes with Harriet. Emma, like the Bertrams, fails to fill the role of patron due to the selfish motives that govern her actions. These wealthy people do not care about the desires of the young women they are supposedly helping. Instead, the Bertrams, Mrs. Norris, and Emma are more concerned with how assisting Fanny and Harriet can fulfill their desires.

Now that it has been thoroughly established how Fanny's and Harriet's desires are simultaneously neglected and molded by the people who surround them, the focus can be shifted to why Fanny's wishes are validated while Harriet's are not. As previously mentioned, both Fanny's and Harriet's desire for marriage pose a threat to social norms. Their potential assimilation into a higher class could be considered a form of revolution. However, Fanny's desires are less threatening to

society's standards than Harriet's. Sir Thomas is initially reluctant to take Fanny in. His primary concern is that one of his two sons would fall in love with Fanny, who is significantly lower than them in status. The Bertrams come to the decision that by bringing Fanny and their sons up as siblings and reinforcing her lower status, they can stamp out any possibilities of romantic affection and remind her of her place in society. However, as the novel continues, Fanny's usefulness and natural beauty allow her to increase in importance to the point where Sir Thomas considers her to be a surrogate daughter.

Fanny's slow rise gives us a better understanding of why Jane Austen claimed the subject of *Mansfield Park* is ordination. In his article "Ordination and Revolution in *Mansfield Park*," Trevecca Nazarene University professor Michael Karounos mentions that the early 19th-century definition of "ordination" was more focused on how things are ranked in a hierarchy instead of on receiving holy orders (722). According to this definition, characters like Maria, Julia, and Henry Crawford are sub-ordinated because they break the rules of society. Meanwhile, Fanny is ordinated because she never steps out of line. She "epitomize[s] stability," while the characters around her are restless and seek sudden change (Karounos 720). Fanny's marriage to Edmund and assimilation into the upper-class is a revolution, but it is not the radical change Sir Thomas initially feared it would be. Instead, Fanny is representative of the type of revolution promoted by philosopher Edmund Burke. As Karounos describes it, "The proper mode [of revolution] depends upon regulating the manner and the velocity of change but not at the cost of changing the substance, whether of manners (that is, morals) or estate" (717). According to the Burkean model of revolution, change must come gradually and without dramatically changing the standards of society. Fanny checks both of these boxes. By marrying the second Bertram son, she will not inherit the Mansfield Park estate when Sir Thomas dies. Also, she is related to the Bertrams, so she has a connection to the family instead of being a random, poor outsider. This lack of change is also emphasized by Fanny's younger sister Susan

coming to take her place at the estate. Her spot amongst the Bertrams is filled once she leaves to live with Edmund. Fanny's marriage slightly changes the structure of society at the estate, but it is far from being a radical or sudden revolution. Therefore, Fanny's desires are validated because she does not pose a considerable threat to the social norms at Mansfield Park.

By contrast, Harriet's desires pose a legitimate threat to the structure of Highbury society. At the end of *Emma*, Harriet has now fully accepted Emma's teachings on social status and has completely transformed her wishes based on her miseducation. Inevitably, Emma realizes the consequences of her meddling when Harriet reveals her affection for Mr. Knightley, and, even worse, that Emma had unintentionally encouraged it. In a moment of rapid reflection, Emma wonders, "Why was it so much worse that Harriet should be in love with Mr. Knightley, than with Frank Churchill? Why was the evil so dreadfully increased by Harriet's having some hope of a return?" (*Emma* 320). Emma then has the sudden realization that she has romantic feelings for Mr. Knightley and that Harriet could come between them. While Harriet's desires endanger Emma's romantic interests, the threat she poses goes far deeper than that. Emma believes that a marriage between Harriet and Mr. Knightley would be a "debasement" on his part (325). She is not only convinced that Harriet does not deserve Mr. Knightley but also that marrying her would bring down his social status. Furthermore, since Mr. Knightley is the eldest son in the family, Harriet would be the mistress of his estate, Donwell Abbey. This marriage would cut Emma's nephew, and therefore, the Woodhouse family, out of the abbey's inheritance. Unlike Fanny, the recognition of Harriet's desires would lead to a radical revolution in Highbury. Societal norms would be directly challenged, and her marriage would have instant consequences on the lives of those around her.

One can also compare Fanny's and Harriet's desires, their coming-of-age journeys, and the threats they pose to society to the theories of literary critic Franco Moretti. In his novel *The Way of*

the World, Moretti explores the tension between society and the individual in the *Bildungsroman*. He claims that there is a paradox in every coming-of-age story where the characters are caught between, "the ideal of *self-determination* and the equally imperious demands of *socialization*" (15). The characters must discover who they are and undergo some form of transformation. However, they must still fit into the limits of what is socially acceptable. Moretti states that this tension is resolved when "one perceives the social norms as *one's own*" (16). The characters must accept the standards of society and use them to guide their transformation. There is a similar pattern present in both Fanny's and Harriet's coming-of-age.

When Fanny Price arrives at Mansfield Park, she is subjected to years of abuse and neglect at the hands of the Bertrams and Mrs. Norris. Fanny's outsider status is the basis for her timid and quiet persona. It also leads to her submission to society. Fanny does not go through much character development in *Mansfield Park* because she accepts the social norms as her own early in the novel. She becomes the upright moral pillar that Edmund teaches her to be. She rarely complains about feeling sick or having to complete the menial tasks her aunt Bertram and Mrs. Norris make her do. The negligence Fanny has endured turns her into the "*pliant* character" that a *Bildungsroman* requires (Moretti 21). It's her demure and morally upright nature that leads to her acceptance from Sir Thomas. She has fit her behavior within the limits of what is socially acceptable, thus, her non-threatening desires are validated. Her perfect marriage to Edmund is the ratification of her relationship with English society (Moretti 22-23). It also reinforces the idea that the social order is right. Since Fanny's desires were validated, and since she gets her happy ending, the system *must* be inherently good.

Harriet's journey to self-determination is more eventful than Fanny's. At the beginning of *Emma*, Harriet already seems to understand and accept her place in society. She is attracted to

Robert Martin, a man who has relatively the same social standing as she does. However, Emma's quest to improve Harriet "completely undermine[s] and confuse[s] whatever independence of mind and action Harriet might originally have possessed" (Morris 97). Harriet's naivety allows Emma to shift her desires away from the socially acceptable version she had at the beginning of the novel. Her new wishes and beliefs encourage her to aim for men of a higher social status, which inevitably leads to heartbreak. For example, she is rejected by Mr. Elton and continues to pine for him long after his marriage. However, this does not discourage her from aiming high. Harriet officially steps out of line when she challenges Emma directly through her affection for Mr. Knightley. It is only when Emma sends her away from Highbury and out of her influence that Harriet realizes what her true desires are. Through some matchmaking on Mr. Knightley's part, Harriet encounters Robert Martin and rekindles her feelings for him. Ultimately, she accepts her low standing in society and re-alters her desires to fit her position. Like Fanny's marriage to Edmund, Harriet's marriage to Robert Martin signifies that she has also accepted the norms of society as her own. When Harriet steps outside the boundaries of what is socially acceptable for a girl of her standing, she encounters confusion and heartbreak. It is only when her desires fit the status quo that she can find happiness. Both Fanny's and Harriet's coming-of-age support Moretti's theories about the *Bildungsroman*.

The similarities between Fanny Price and Harriet Smith and how their wishes are shaped and re-shaped can help us understand the limits society places on women's desires. The wealthy characters who educate Fanny and Harriet claim that they want to improve these women. However, they only end up twisting the young women's desires to fit their visions. Furthermore, the Bertrams and Emma Woodhouse fail to perform their role as patrons since they are motivated by selfish means. This analysis also examined how Fanny's desires are validated by society because she doesn't pose a significant threat to the way things are. Her marriage to Edmund is a version of a Burkean revolution, based on gradual change over time. Harriet's desires are rejected because of the threat

she poses to social norms. Since Mr. Knightley is from a much higher ranking than her and has a significant inheritance, a marriage between him and Harriet would be more akin to a radical and sudden revolution. Finally, by comparing Fanny's and Harriet's coming-of-age to Moretti's ideas about the *Bildungsroman*, we can see how society validates or invalidates the desires of women. Based on the conclusions of Fanny's and Harriet's stories, Jane Austen appears to believe that young women can only achieve happiness when their desires line up with the standards of society. Although we cannot be entirely sure that this was Austen's actual opinion or her intention, Fanny and Harriet do shed light on a particular issue for women that has been prevalent throughout our history. When acknowledging the desires of women threatens to cause drastic change, society becomes more reluctant to do so. When the desires of women stay within the limits of what is deemed acceptable by society, their desires are validated. Women who push boundaries have been ridiculed and rejected for centuries. While the characters in Austen's novels may find a happy ending by accepting the standards of society, the same cannot be said for other women in Austen's time and our modern world.

Works Cited

Austen, Jane. *Emma*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Austen, Jane. *Mansfield Park*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Brenner, Gerry. "'Mansfield Park:' Reading for 'Improvement'." Studies in the Novel, vol. 7, no. 1, 1975, pp. 24–32. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/29531701. Accessed 25 Nov. 2020.

Karounos, Michael. "Ordination and Revolution in 'Mansfield Park.'" Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, vol. 44, no. 4, 2004, pp. 715–736. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3844533. Accessed 25 Nov. 2020.

Moretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. New York, Verso, 1987.

Morris, Pam. "Emma: A Prospect of England." Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Worldly Realism, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2017, pp. 83–106. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g09tv4.7. Accessed 25 Nov. 2020.

Orendain, Emmabel. "The (Mis)Education of Harriet Smith: Confidence, Perception, and Character Development in Emma." Jane Austen Society of North America. jasna.org/publications/essay-contest-winning-entries/2016/the-miseducation-of-harriet-smith-confidence-perception-and-character-development-in-emma. Accessed 25 Nov. 2020.

Spratt, Danielle. "Denaturalizing Lady Bountiful: Speaking the Silence of Poverty in Mary Brunton's Discipline and Jane Austen's Emma." The Eighteenth Century, vol. 56, no. 2, 2015, pp. 193-208. Project MUSE, doi: 10.1353/ecy.2015.0015. Accessed 25 Nov. 2020.

Lauren Frick (she/her) graduated from Indiana University Northwest in December of 2021 with a BA in English and a BA in Spanish. During her time at IUN, she served as one of the Editors-in-Chief of Spirits, the student director of the campus Writing Center, a board member for the IUN community garden, and a member of Sigma Tau Delta (English Honor Society) and Sigma Delta Pi (Spanish Honor Society). Lauren will be pursuing a Master's degree in English with an emphasis in public engagement at the University of Nevada, Reno in the Fall of 2022. Her creative and academic work have been published in Spirits and Cutbank Magazine.

Practices of Resistance and the Forging of Identity in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*

Lauren Frick

Indiana University Northwest

Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Lucy* follows an adolescent Antiguan immigrant, who moves to New York to work as an au pair, as she grapples with her imposed identity derived from colonized Antiguan and Western society. Her identity, heavily imposed by her mother who remains in Antigua and unremittingly reinforced by her employer, Mariah, shapes the way in which Lucy engages with the world; simultaneously, Lucy seeks a new identity that subverts colonialism. While the role of colonialism is most apparent in the mother-daughter relationships in the novel, it is counterintuitively undermined by a woman-centered narrative that resists heteronormativity through budding queer relationships. Kincaid's work has garnered criticism from feminist critics, postcolonial critics, and queer critics, all of which note the function of each of these aspects of

Lucy's identity independently. Thus, an intersectional reading is required in order to understand Lucy's motivations to seek a way to escape her ascribed cultural identity and form a new one. Lucy often spends more time focusing on who or what she is *not* rather than who or what she *is*. Rather than being someone who seeks out romantic relationships—indeed, it appears as if she is pushing them away—Lucy is navigating America as an immigrant seeking individualism and independence from a colonized, patriarchal society. Lucy's continuous rejection of heteronormative structures raises a central question in the novel, as the novel concludes with Lucy expressing her wish for an all-encompassing love that terminates her existence. Lucy has spent so much time focusing on rejecting all that is embodied in a colonial society that her desire paradoxically appears as if all she wants is to be contained. Ultimately, Lucy's experiences and practices of resistance throughout the novel lead her to the final moment in which she craves love, sans the colonial implications.

Both Lucy's mother and Mariah, her employer who functions as a surrogate mother, impose their wishes and desires on Lucy with the intention of shaping Lucy into someone who conforms to societal expectations and succumbs to colonial pressures. These formative mother-daughter experiences result in a backlash from Lucy, with the strongest backlash being directed toward her mother. Firstly, Lucy has an ambivalent relationship with her mother. On the one hand, she unequivocally resembles her mother and sees qualities of her mother in others, and on the other, she rejects everything her mother has told her. Lucy notes that her mother's love was "designed solely to make me into an echo of her," where Lucy's mother's goal was to deprive Lucy of any sort of personal agency (Kincaid 36). In "Gender and Exile: Jamaica Kincaid's 'Lucy,'" Kristen Mahlis finds that "Lucy sees her mother's numerous prohibitions and attempts to guide her daughter's behavior as an extension of the power that colonizers exercise over the colonized, and Lucy instinctively resists the silencing power of these authorities" (169). In essence, Lucy and her mother's relationship mimics a colonized/colonizer relationship. A colonizer intends to subvert and

control by making the colonized a mere replica without a voice or agency –an echo. As an echo of her mother, Lucy would be incapable of producing anything independently and in turn become silenced. At the same time, Lucy's understanding of love, which is derived from her mother, is solely based on the idea of being an echo. To Lucy, loving is likened to echoing, and Lucy says she would rather die than become an echo (Kincaid 36). In either case, echoing or death, Lucy would cease to exist as an individual, which is why Lucy rejects love early in the novel. By avoiding love, Lucy is advocating for her own independent identity.

Even as Lucy expresses a hatred for her mother, she also acknowledges the fact that her immediate past lies with her mother and that in a sense she is her mother because they share the same blood. Lucy feels as if the inextricable tie to her mother is "a sentence for life in a prison whose bars were stronger than any iron imaginable" (90). She sees this unbreakable tie to her mother as constricting, something she tries to run from, but something she cannot ever lose completely. Lucy's ambivalence toward her mother is apparent as she intentionally withholds herself from reading the letters her mother sends her because she knows that she will long for her mother and motherland once she reads them. Even though the letters would evoke feelings of longing, Lucy acknowledges that if she were to ever return home, she would be subject to judgements "by people whose only power to do so was that they had known [her] from the moment [she] was born" (51). Those who know her in Antigua, and likely her mother in particular, would judge Lucy for being a "slut" and executing agency over her own body while in the United States, as indicated by her relationship and pregnancy scare with Hugh (67). The judgment is notable considering the root of Lucy's mother's guidance throughout Lucy's early adolescence was dedicated to preventing Lucy from becoming a slut (127). Her mother's objective was to shape Lucy into someone who complies with what patriarchal Antiguan society expects her to be —a pure and compliant woman—just as her mother is. Returning home would result in the people from her motherland seeing Lucy as

someone who has failed in the eyes of Antiguan society, solely because of the sexual encounters Lucy has in the United States. Yet Lucy boldly claims that "life as a slut was quite enjoyable, thank you very much," which emphasizes the personal agency Lucy exhibits to rebel against the rules her mother attempted to put in place (128). As a result, the tenuousness of the relationship with her mother and her motherland ultimately drives Lucy to continue to reject the identity that has been ascribed to her; it leads her to stray from restrictive societal expectations.

Still, while rejecting her mother and what her mother wants her to be, Lucy feels as if her mother is the only true love she will ever know (132). She shifts from completely denying her mother as someone of value to describing the end of their relationship as "the end of a love affair" (132). Lucy's possible queer attachment to her mother conflicts with how Lucy navigates the world, as she refuses to allow herself to fully love someone. One could interpret the romantically charged language Lucy uses to describe her relationship with her mother as Lucy being a "motherfucker," as Akash Nikolas deems her in "Straight Growth and the Imperial Alternative: Queer Reading Jamaica Kincaid" (60). Nikolas defines Lucy's relationship with her mother as one that "resembles an obsessive romance" where her mother "instigates queer longing" by consistently enforcing the idea that Lucy not have sexual relations with a man and therefore not be a slut (60). Thus, Lucy's relationship with her mother might be explained by two different psychoanalytic concepts, the Electra Complex and the female Oedipus complex. The Electra Complex defined by Carl Jung finds a daughter expressing jealousy toward the mother and blames the mother for depriving her of a penis, and Freud's female Oedipus complex finds a daughter rivaling her mother in response to the threat of losing the mother's love in order to fulfill a feminine role ("Electra Complex," "Oedipus Complex"). However, what Lucy is experiencing is more along the lines of the American feminist poet and essayist, Adrienne Rich's lesbian continuum. Rich defines the lesbian continuum in her article "Compulsory Heterosexuality" as expanding the definition of lesbianism to "embrace many

more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support" (1528). Rich's idea of the lesbian continuum allows for relationships between women that are neither inherently sexual nor romantic and can still resist the heterosexual paradigm. Whereas Lucy and her mother do not share a rich inner life, her mother does offer practical support in that she teaches Lucy how to act like a woman, and she urges Lucy to always trust the word of a woman over the word of a man (Kincaid 48). In essence, the relationship between Lucy and her mother is one of shared oppression as two women in colonized, patriarchal Antigua. Therefore, Lucy's relationship with her mother does not place her as "quite simply a motherfucker," as Nikolas contends (60). Rather, their relationship falls on the lesbian continuum as a source of solidarity that arises in a patriarchal society.

If Lucy's relationship with her mother falls on the lesbian continuum, so then does her relationship with her surrogate mother, Mariah. Not only does Lucy co-parent Mariah's children with her after her husband leaves, but Lucy also expresses a sort of love and/or attraction to Mariah early in the novel. Lucy often reflects on Mariah's beauty, and the two develop a deep bond, even though Mariah consistently tries to assimilate Lucy into Western society. The times when Lucy acknowledges Mariah's beauty are inherently tied to Mariah's privilege:

> Mariah, with her pale-yellow skin and yellow hair, stood still in this almost celestial light, and she looked blessed, no blemish or mark of any kind on her cheek or anywhere else…had never had to leave anywhere for any reason other than a feeling that had come over her. (Kincaid 27)

Here, Lucy depicts Mariah as an angel and directly differentiates herself and her mother from Mariah, where Mariah is everything Lucy and her mother are not. Mariah is not only Lucy's foil, but she is also the antithesis of Lucy's mother. At the same time, Lucy attunes herself to the way in

which Mariah resembles her mother and how that makes Lucy love Mariah more. Nonetheless, there are also instances where things Mariah does are dissimilar from what Lucy's mother would allow. From permitting Lucy to spend time with Peggy to helping Lucy get contraceptives when she has sex with men, Mariah engages in motherly acts that grant Lucy more freedom than her mother would permit. Lucy states that "the times that I loved Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother. The times that I did not love Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother" (58). Not only does Lucy's sentiment reflect the capriciousness of her relationship with her mother, it also conjures up the question of what Lucy desires from a mother. Lucy does not love Mariah when it appears as if she is trying to control or indoctrinate her with colonial ideology; however, Lucy does love Mariah when her individual needs are acknowledged, even if they differ from Mariah's wishes (63). Lucy wants a mother who will give her the space to become her own person while simultaneously nurturing her and guiding her.

Nevertheless, Mariah functions in a manner similar to Lucy's mother in that she too has constructed a sense of identity for Lucy. Mariah's overt goal of Westernizing Lucy is apparent in her fascination with daffodils. She needs to show Lucy the daffodils in New York because she is overly confident in the fact that everyone will find daffodils beautiful. Veronica Majerol finds that "within this very narrative of upward mobility there exists the mechanism to subvert such a story since the very fact that there is a need to *include* and assimilate Lucy implicitly conjures up the memories of her heretofore *exclusion* and the ways in which she continues to be excluded: namely, a history of colonization and a parallel history of racial subjugation" (21). Mariah has constructed a particular narrative about Lucy and hopes to show her the staples of an upper-class society in order to appeal to Lucy's desire to release her status as an immigrant. She hopes to turn Lucy into a Westernized echo of herself. Contrarily, Lucy's reaction to Mariah's act of introducing her to daffodils and spring evokes a memory that is rooted in colonialism. The poem about daffodils Lucy had to memorize as

a child indicates the emphasis on being non-Antiguan in Antiguan schools. It highlights the dominant, Westernized perspective that students are taught. Lucy had to memorize a poem about daffodils without ever having seen a daffodil, and when Mariah shows her the daffodils, her exclusion from Mariah's intended narrative is ever apparent. As Lucy makes the connection to the poem and shares the story with Mariah, Mariah notes that Lucy has an interesting history. Lucy's response to this is that Mariah is welcome to her history if she would like it (Kincaid 19). More than offering her personal history to Mariah, it appears as if Lucy is attempting to unburden herself from the embedded colonialism within her and her ascribed identity. Mariah, then, functions as the colonizer and Lucy as the colonized, but here Lucy is deliberately attempting to switch the roles.

Though Mariah deems herself a feminist, she also has a particularly white feminist view. She then uses her viewpoint to try to appeal to Lucy solely as a woman rather than acknowledging Lucy as a colonized, Antiguan woman. Mariah attempts to help Lucy overcome her feelings of rejection from her mother that stem from the arrival of her younger brothers but ultimately fails. Whereas Mariah feels that speaking of "women in society, women in history, women in culture, women everywhere" will help Lucy overcome her feelings of being worthless in her mother's eyes, Lucy fixates on the fact that her "mother was [her] mother and that society and history and culture and other women in general were something else altogether" (39). What Mariah fails to understand is that by telling Lucy about women in general, she is homogenizing the female experience to one singular experience of womanhood. Her understanding of women comes from the dominant Western perspective, and she views Lucy's experiences as uniform (assuming being a woman automatically translates into shared experiences), rather than from a position of intersectionality (acknowledging that not all women experience the same situations in the same ways). This, too, is complicated by the fact that while Lucy desperately wants to navigate the world without feelings, she reacts negatively to Mariah's perceived ignorance. Perhaps the way to read Lucy's reactions is by

following Ángela Castro, who describes Kincaid as "portraying how Lucy is aware of her role in Mariah's house…how she makes her passivity a source of subjectivity and her inner growth," and thus, "Kincaid explores the split subjectivity or 'two-facedness' that results from education imperialism" (20). Lucy is hyperaware of the fact that she fills a "colonized" role in Mariah's house as the servant. Because Lucy sees the world in two ways, colonized and colonizer, any split subjectivity or two-facedness likely stems directly from this point of view. The way Lucy navigates and engages with the world and those around her are in an attempt to subvert the colonialism that pervades such interactions.

While Lucy's mother and Mariah attempt to indoctrinate Lucy with colonial narratives, Lucy resists these ideas by observing what others do and claiming that she will do the opposite. The way she constructs her anti-Antiguan and anti-Western ideology is by analyzing what is deemed the norm and forming beliefs that go directly against what she sees. Her mother did not want her to become a slut; she became one. Mariah does not want her children saying bad things; Lucy decides that if she were to have children she would "make sure the first words out of their mouths were bad ones" (Kincaid 31). However, her intentionality in doing exactly what she is not supposed to do, according to fabricated standards, does not lead her to a newfound self. Whereas Lucy is dedicating herself to losing any form of group identity in order to find her personal identity, her personal identity simply becomes the antithesis of the group. What Lucy is working against is what French Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser calls interpellation. Essentially, interpellation is the way in which "ideology hails or interpellates individuals as subjects…ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects…an individual is always-already a subject, even before he is born" (Althusser 41). Thus, before she was even conscious of it, Lucy existed in a colonized society and was indoctrinated with Western, patriarchal concepts that enforced an ascribed identity. Therefore, the identity Lucy is working to reject is a product of society. She can either conform or resist, but an

individual identity is not achievable. Lucy cannot successfully un-interpellate herself, as doing so would result in an identity that is all negation. Veronica Majerol describes the phenomenon in which Lucy "simultaneously embraces and rejects the notion of the self-assimilated and homogenized into a paradigm of upward mobility through this act of creation and obfuscation" (26). Lucy is advocating for what she wants for herself and attempting to forge her own identity without the guidance and pressures of her mother and Mariah, but she is simultaneously blurring who she is. Heretofore, her identity was a reflection of her mother and Antiguan society. Now, she is trying to create her own way of living, but that way of living entails turning away from what has been deemed the right way to live. Lucy is attempting to be critical of her place in the world as she tries to ascend from her immigrant, servant status, but to do so requires a new means of subjectivity, or she will lose herself completely.

When Lucy comes to the United States for work, she has an ideal picture in her mind where she would be leaving all of her history and sad thoughts behind. Though she does try to unburden herself of her history by offering it to Mariah, Lucy also notes that "history is full of great events; when the great events are said and done, there will always be someone, a little person, unhappy, dissatisfied, discontented, not at home in her own skin, ready to stir up a whole new set of great events again. I was not such a person" (Kincaid 147). Lucy feels as if she is not the kind of person to take her discontentment with life and work to change it into something better. But actually, it does appear as if Lucy is that kind of person. Lucy's thoughts and her actions are in direct opposition as she expresses discontentment with life while she simultaneously executes agency over her life to actively diverge from social norms. As demonstrated in her relationships with Hugh and Paul, Lucy is executing sexual freedom and does not permit her relationships to extend further than she is comfortable with. Whereas Mariah assumes Lucy is in love with Hugh because she enjoys spending time with him, Lucy repeatedly states that she is not in love with him, as "nothing [they] said to each

other was meant to leave a lasting impression" (66). Being in love with Hugh would require her to become an echo and in turn become colonized. Similarly, when Lucy was with Paul, she was no longer intrigued by him once he believed he "possessed" her (155). If Lucy were to continue to see Paul, she would ultimately become what she is working against: being owned and restrained. Lucy is averse to having long-term committed relationships with men, likely because those relationships would make her complicit in a heteronormative, patriarchal society and would eventually result in her becoming an echo.

On the contrary, Lucy's relationship with Peggy functions as a means of resistance to the heteronormative, patriarchal society; in fact, it is the only relationship in the novel that counters such ideologies. While Lucy portrays her relationship with Peggy as a casual, noncommittal relationship, their relationship is arguably one of the strongest Lucy has over the course of the novel. The two often sleep in the same bed and make out, and they eventually move in together. They engage in a queer relationship that extends beyond mere friendship and differs from Nikolas' definition of "straight growth" as a way of understanding queer relationships in Kincaid's novels (59). Nikolas' use of the term "straight growth" is derived from Keja Valens' understanding of "Antiguan schoolgirls who sex-educate themselves by experimenting with each other and mimic heterosexual relationships through cyclical friendships" that pervades Kincaid's novels (59). The difference lies in the fact that both Peggy and Lucy are sexually experienced and open to other sexual partners. Lucy is initially drawn to Peggy because she and Peggy are not alike: Peggy is the antithesis of Lucy in a way that differs from Mariah as antithesis to Lucy's mother. Lucy's mother and Mariah are similar in their colonial-esque mothering but inherently different in their relation to colonialism. Peggy differs from Lucy in a way that Lucy wants to emulate, particularly in the case of Peggy's lack of restraint or longing tied to her family (Kincaid 91). Lucy and Peggy are different, yet Peggy is the first person Lucy wants to take after. At the same time, Lucy and Peggy are drawn to each other because they

share "the same restlessness, the same dissatisfaction with [their] surroundings, and the same skin-doesn't-fit-ness" (145). While they both lust for a life that is different from the one they are living, the two are able to begin to take steps toward a new life, though this comes as Lucy notes that "just when we began to feel the yoke of each other's companionship, just when we began to feel the beginnings of what might eventually lead to life-long loathing, we decided to move in together" (145). In this sense, Lucy and Peggy exhibit behaviors that may be complicit in compulsory heterosexuality in that they see moving in together as the only way to possibly further their relationship. And even so, their decision to move in together continues to counter patriarchal ideology because of the nature of their relationship. Although Lucy denies her ability to "stir [things] up," she and Peggy are beginning to do so together (147).

Even as Lucy commits to moving in with Peggy, she also feels apathetic towards certain events that are deemed momentous, or great events, by society. She is averse to greatness insofar as it is commensurate with events that would be considered a rite of passage into womanhood or adulthood. The day Lucy noticed that she was growing pubic hair was the day she realized people could look at her and know things about her (68). The presence of pubic hair meant that she would now be sexualized by society, which likely led to her willingness to lose her virginity. To Lucy, losing her virginity was a status she wanted to rid herself of (83). Waking up with a man in her bed, having her own space, and starting a new job all carry very little significance to her. In fact, Lucy finds that she "was now living the life [she] has always wanted to live," but this too does not bring her contentment (158). The only thing affording her mobility is her memory, anger, and despair (134). Lucy is pulling from those feelings and memories as she encounters momentous events and new ways of life. She is primed for identifying where things are saturated in heteronormative, patriarchal, colonized ideology, and she must find a life that is not reminiscent of the feelings that have previously defined her.

The moment where Lucy is likely the surest of herself and who she is occurs when she learns that her mother named her after Lucifer. Not only does Lucifer represent the devil, but Lucifer also means light. Prior to admitting that her mother named her after Lucifer, Lucy herself defines Lucifer as someone "doomed to build wrong upon wrong" (139). Therefore, the moment of identification with Lucifer is the moment in which Lucy goes "from feeling burdened and old and tired to feeling light, new, clean" (152). Whereas qualities of lightness and cleanness are previously associated with the angelic appearance Lucy uses to describe Mariah, here, Lucy repurposes that language in order to define herself (27). Lucy identifies herself with something that feels right to her, and this point of identification ultimately functions as the key point to her identity. In "A Tale of 3 Lucys: Wordsworth and Bronte in Kincaid's Antiguan Villette," David Yost argues that Lucy's connection with Lucifer is derived from Milton's *Paradise Lost* representation: as "the ultimate villain in the Western canon, Lucifer gives Lucy exactly the subversive figure she needs to build a new, independent identity upon" (153). With Lucy's intentions to embody the antithesis of Western ideology, her identity is founded upon the fact that Western ideology actively works against creating Lucifers. Ironically, Milton's Lucifer embodies qualities like self-reliance and rugged individualism, which are unequivocally American qualities, as indicated in Edward Simon's article "What's So 'American' About John Milton's Lucifer?", but the way Lucy intends to embody Lucifer is as a means of cultural resistance. If Lucy is to be as non-Western as possible, the only way for her to do so is to become what is abhorred most in society. Becoming Lucifer gives her a point of identification and a model for how she carries herself and engages with the world.

It appears as if Lucy has spent the entirety of the novel rejecting heteronormative, patriarchal structures and the idea of romantic love in general; however, the novel ends with Lucy writing, "I wish I could love someone so much I would die," in a blank journal that Mariah gives her (Kincaid 164). Whereas Lucy has been dedicating her time to chasing freedom and analyzing who she does

not want to be and who she does not want to become an echo of, it now seems as if Lucy is expressing a desire to be an echo since loving is synonymous with echoing. Yet her wish for love has thus far been unforeseen, especially because three pages earlier she says, "I was alone in the world. It was not a small accomplishment" (161). Lucy is proud of the fact that she is self-reliant, but she is also expressing a desire to cease to exist in her individual form. She counterintuitively craves something she has spent the entirety of the novel rejecting. Some critics read the ending as Lucy's success in achieving self-determination. Yost feels as if Lucy "has begun to rewrite the colonizer's text as her own," where "the action adumbrates the future Lucy who has gained the self-awareness and articulation to record her struggles in novel form" (153-154). Similarly, Mahlis argues that "Lucy embraces the persona of a rebel against the colonizer's god-like control" (180). Both of these interpretations fail to account for the fact that a love like what Lucy wants would place her back in a colonized space. Lucy in fact feels "a great wave of shame…and [she] wept and wept so much that the tears fell on the page and caused all the words to become one great big blur" (164). Thus, the moment is not as cathartic and self-actualizing as Yost and Mahlis believe it to be. Lucy's tears rid the paper of the sentiment and therefore relieve her of the thought, placing her back where she was before.

It is difficult to read Lucy's story and not want to romanticize the ending. She has been fighting to find her identity, and surely, she should have a firm grasp on it by the end. Unfortunately, what Lucy craves is a love that defies colonial structures—a love that does not necessitate echoing. Her independence is tied to the overthrow of colonialism, and she laments the fact that what she wants does not exist. Yet at the same time, we must also place Lucy's yearning among other radical acts of resistance: "isolation, self-hatred, breakdown, alcoholism, suicide, and intrawoman violence" because "we romanticize at our peril what it means to love and act against the grain" (Rich 1528). Lucy's feelings of discontentment and her desire to be alone are not done in vain. She leaves

Antigua in search of a new, self-affirming life, but her feelings associated with colonialism still follow her. Because she actively resists heteronormative, Western ideology as well as her Antiguan upbringing, the formative mother-daughter relationships she has fail in their attempt to indoctrinate her with colonial narratives. Nevertheless, Lucy continues to see relationships and interactions as replications of colonization, and this ultimately leads her to reject all forms of embedded ideology in an attempt to forge a new identity. She cannot be rid of her subjectivity nor will she become an echo, so she must find a means of resistance that grants her an individual identity that approximates who she wants to be. She is still on the way to finding herself, and the ending leaves her in a moment of distress not unknown to those who partake in radical acts of resistance.

Works Cited

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." Translated by Ben Brewster. Transcribed by Andy Blunden. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* Monthly Review Press 1971. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm

Castro, Ángela. "Power-In-Passivity: A Study of The Body and the Female Recognition in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*." *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2017, pp. 19-28.

"Electra Complex." *APA Dictionary of* Psychology*,* American Psychological Association, n.d. https://dictionary.apa.org/electra-complex. Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.

Mahlis, Kristen. "Gender and Exile: Jamaica Kincaid's 'Lucy,'" *Modern Fiction Studies,* vol. 44, no. 1, April. 1998, pp. 164-183.

Majerol, Veronica. "Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* and the Aesthetics of Disidentification." *Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, vol. 4, no. 3, Apr. 2007, pp. 17-27.

Nikolas, Akash. "Straight Growth and the Imperial Alternative: Queer-Reading Jamaica Kincaid." *African American Review,* vol. 50, no. 1, Apr. 2017, pp. 59-73.

"Oedipus Complex." *APA Dictionary of Psychology,* American Psychlogical Association, n.d. https://dictionary.apa.org/oedipus-complex. Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

Simon, Edward. "What's So 'American' About John Milton's Lucifer?" *The Atlantic*, 16 Mar. 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/03/whats-so-american-about-john-miltons-lucifer/519624/. Accessed 13 Nov. 2021.

Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality," *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism.* Editor: Peter Simon, 2018. Pages 1513-1533.

Yost, David. "A Tale of Three Lucy's: Wordsworth and Bronte in Kincaid's Antiguan Villette." *MELUS,* vol. 31, no. 2, June 2006, pp. 141.

John Riccardi resides in Marietta, New York. He is pursuing a BA in English at Le Moyne College with a specialization in creative writing. He has a passion for writing as well as a love for his two dogs, Bear and Sparky. He is set to graduate in May and plans to continue his education in the field of library science.

Frankenstein's Monster is an Incel

John Riccardi

Le Moyne College

At just eighteen years old, Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, a seminal piece of horror literature. On its surface, it is a tale of Victor Frankenstein, a sort of proto-Mickey from Disney's *Fantasia*, who, through dabbling in forces beyond his control, knows enough to make his brooms dance fantastically across the floor—but not enough to make them stop. The central conflict of the novel lies between our protagonist, Victor, and our antagonist, his unnamed yet pseudo-titular creation. For the purposes of this essay, it is not appropriate to call Victor's creation a "villain"; regardless of what evil deeds he performs, Frankenstein's monster often has understandable motivations, and the reader is compelled to feel sympathy for his misanthropic plight.

It is no shock to say that Frankenstein's creation has been bastardized over the years, sanded down from an intelligent, articulate person to a brute barely capable of grunting a nonsensical string of monosyllables and the occasional, terror-accentuated ***fire!*** The cause of this flanderization is anyone's guess: Contemporary audiences may not have wanted to hold much sympathy for a yellow-eyed murderer born from cobbled-together corpses. Or a rampaging brute may have been much scarier than Shelley's green-skinned literatus. He's the star of horror movies,

after all. But Frankenstein's monster, as portrayed in the original text, is perhaps most enduring when he represents a *human* evil, a human failing. He is not an outside, existential threat to humanity; he is the worst humanity has to offer. Particularly, Frankenstein's monster is an incel.

For those unfamiliar with the term, an incel is short for the phrase "involuntary celibate." As explained by linguist Ben Zimmer in the *Politico* article "How 'Incel' Got Hijacked," the term was coined back in 1997 by a young woman named Alana (who has not made public her last name) to share her frustrations with wanting sexual and romantic intimacy but not having any. Alana created an online support group of like-minded individuals to share their thoughts and cope with the stress of their unique social position. They called themselves "incels," a hip rebrand of "virgins," and had no idea what the term would later be co-opted for. As the decades passed, the incel community became one of toxic masculinity, proliferating online by frustrated and misanthropic individuals. Primarily composed of young, white, heterosexual men, they're often characterized by a belief that women owe them sex and that violence is an acceptable means to obtain it, whether inflicted on women themselves or more attractive men, whom they view almost in Darwinian terms, as their sexual competitors (Zimmer 1).

With the absence of a mostly anonymous, wide-reaching internet to proliferate this toxic subculture, the word "incel" did not exist in Mary Shelley's time—but the concept did. The idea that women exist for the purposes of men, and that a man's desires supercede a woman's—goes back, quite literally, to the days of Adam. Throughout the text of *Frankenstein*, the monster, lonely and alienated from society, reads a bibliocopia of classic literature, including John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It i in *Paradise* where the creature learns the story of Adam and Eve, and that from Adam's rib Eve was created for the purpose of his perfect companionship. The creature sees himself in Adam and, jealous of Elizabeth, Victor's fiancée, demands that the next chapter of his story be written: he wants Victor to make him an *Eve*. "I am malicious because I am miserable," the monster, prone to

melodrama, tells Victor. "If I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear, and chiefly towards you my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care; I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you shall curse the hour of your birth" (Shelley 148).

Despite this assertion, it is important to recognize that should Victor create a Bride of Frankenstein, there would be no guarantee that she would love Adam, or even *like* him. Why would she, when the creature specifies that Victor ought to handicap her with a commensurate level of unattractiveness? "'My companion must be of the same species, and have the same defects. This being you must create.'" (146). Frankenstein's monstress would be an entirely unique individual, with her own desires and academic interests. Ugliness does not ensure her fidelity. In alluding to Milton, Shelley is commenting on the biblical story of mankind's creation; she argues, through a dark mirror to the Book of Genesis, that women do not exist for the desires of men.

It's worth noting that what the creature asks for—an Eve, the biblical figure of which is perhaps the paragon of a wife, is not simply a companion to coexist with, and lessen the creature's loneliness, but a romantic *mate*. He does not desire mere friendship, but what Victor has with Elizabeth, what Adam has with Eve. Quite ambitiously, he wants a bride, and supposes that, by the laws of heteronormativity, a matched ugliness, and the premise of him and "Franken-Eve" literally being the last man and woman (of their kind) on earth, they would undoubtedly end up together.

Despite this compelling social subtext, Shelley offers a different explanation in the book. Victor tells his creation how he fears that should he grant his wish, the creature's new species would continue to reproduce until they eventually terrorize humanity. "'Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness may desolate the world? Begone!'" (147). By not acknowledging the biblical subtext which otherwise lurks so heavily in the background of *Frankenstein*, Shelley is perhaps critiquing God Himself! After all, note the speaker: the story is told primarily through Victor's point

of view, in epistolary form, and Victor, despite the deviations from *Paradise Lost*, is still a surrogate for God. Yet God, for all his putative omniscience, conceived Eve with the prerequisite of her *liking* Adam. That Victor does not acknowledge his creations' free will highlights the tacit misogyny which surrounded Adam and Eve's creation. Furthermore, the motivation that Victor does admit—that he fears a species inimical to humankind, calls to mind the unfortunate story of Adam and Eve's sons, Cain and Abel. This shows that Victor, our God figure, fears much more the possibility of man terrorizing man than man's more insidious control of woman.

The creature's desire for a wife is subsidized by his ostracization from the rest of society, paralleling the modern incel movement. Through glimpsing Victor and Elizabeth's happiness, the creature finds identity in his struggle: he believes he is entitled to a woman of his own. His purpose in life is to convince Victor to create him a wife, and he promises that, should his demand be met, he would willingly live far away from the rest of civilization. The monster recognizes that he will never fit in with society, so hideous is he to gaze upon; before his ultimatum with Victor, he says, "'a fatal prejudice clouds their [mankind's] eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.'" (135). This image of a detestable monster is perhaps unchallenging enough to modern audiences that adaptations of *Frankenstein* frequently drop the "test tube wife" motivation. Many men, after all, *do* see women like the creature imagines his mate: both as extensions of themselves and as responsible for their partners' happinesses. To portray these views as the motivations for a horror movie monster may lead them to question such misogyny, alienating a film's audience in a way that Boris Karloff's infamous portrayal does not.

We must now turn our attention to the victims of Frankenstein's monster. It is worth remembering that Frankenstein's first victim is a young boy, a crime implied to be accidental, while his next are both adult women. Women whom he could not have a relationship with, sexual or otherwise, as they come from the human world. It is also worth noting the method of

these deaths—strangulation, particularly strangulation by hand. This implies two things. One: through this continuity in the method of murder, Shelley suggests that the monster will not change his ways. He is beyond all possible reform. Two: apart from a forensic interest in the manner of killing, this undoubtedly calls to mind erotic asphyxiation. While Shelley may not have been thinking explicitly about the sexual nature of her monster's crimes, there is an undeniable intimacy with which he carries out his violence.

Justine's death, in contrast to the others, is carried out via hanging. Although this remains a form of strangulation (and so the continuity of murder is preserved), a peripheral statement is made about society's mistreatment of women. In this case, the crime that leads to Justine's execution is not merely premeditated to frame her, but to deliberately blame a woman for the crimes of a man.

Victor's third and final victim—Elizabeth—is an object of jealousy for Frankenstein's monster; she represents the ideal woman, whom he is striving toward gaining. Good on his promise, the monster murders Elizabeth when Victor refuses to create a female of his species. This represents Frankenstein's monster's, the original incel's, belief that *if I cannot have a woman, no one can.*

Later media robs *Frankenstein* of its intended feminist parable. It paints him not as an intelligent but sexually unfulfilled loner who lashes out against society but as a brute who, by his very nature, is an irredeemable monster. The second film in Universal Studios's *Frankenstein* series, in fact, gives the creature a wife! 1935's *Bride of Frankenstein*, much like the monster's plan in the novel, sees Boris Karloff having a wife created specifically for him, with later sequels detailing their marriage, relative happiness, and meeting with Abbott and Costello. The portrayal of Frankenstein's monster over the past century became less a commentary on Adam and Eve, societal outcasts, and insidious misogyny, and more a series of pulpy horror flicks to watch

through splayed, popcorn-grubbing, diacetyl-slick fingers—with Shelley's original message all but lost, save for in the original text.

Works Cited

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein*. Dalmation Press, 2010.

Zimmer, Ben, et al. "How 'Incel' Got Hijacked." *Politico Magazine*, 8 May 2018, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/05/08/intel-involuntary-celibate-movemen t-218324/.

Heather Phillips is a graduating senior from the University of Cincinnati. She is the recipient of the University of Cincinnati's Amrit R. Chatterjee Memorial Writing Award. Her previous work can be found it past issues of The East Fork Literary Journal. Heather currently resides in Goshen, Ohio with her family.

The Warrior Connection: Creating, Forming and Connecting Identities

Heather Phillips

University of Cincinnati

One's family traditions and values form much of the core of our identities and sense of self. One's parents teach them from a young age what is right from wrong. Parents form a foundation for their children and model how they believe one should conduct themselves on a daily basis. But what happens when a child grows up in a culture that is so drastically different from their own family dynamic? What becomes of familial relationships when parents are telling children the world works only one way? What happens when parental influence encourages "staying in one's place," but the world around the individual bustles with chaos and constant change and judgements that can make an individual feel that their cultural customs and beliefs are inferior? Imagine the internal conflict of the individual left in the crossfires of two clashing cultures attempting to co-exist in the same place and the struggle for a singular, cohesive identity. This is the emotional and mental turmoil faced by Maxine Hong Kingston in her memoir, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts,* where she explores her life growing up in America as the child of two Chinese immigrants. The hard contrasts between what is expected of Chinese women and what it means to be an American woman

causes a deep rift between Kingston and her family, particularly her mother. However, in this memoir Kingston takes crucial steps to find a way to exist as both Chinese and American and mend the fractured relationship she has with her mother. One way Kingston does this in *The Woman Warrior*; is by reclaiming the Chinese legend of Fa Mulan as a way to form a connection with her estranged mother. She parallels Mulan's story with Kingston's own account of her mother's battle with the Sitting Ghost in the section of her memoir titled "Shaman." It is through this method of storytelling that Kingston is able to see her mother as a warrior, like Fa Mulan. This realization gives Kingston a way to cope with the reality that, in some ways, she is like the mother she has spent most of her life resenting and this allows her to begin the process of reconciliation.

Kingston's estrangement from her mother, Brave Orchid, caused Kingston to resent the traditional ideas of Chinese femininity, causing her to reject a large portion of her own cultural identity. Brave Orchid wants Kingston to act like a proper Chinese woman, to be quiet and delicate and eager to serve her husband and family. Kingston says, "we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves," (Kingston 19) and because of the expectations her mother held her to, Kingston began to resent Brave Orchid and pull away from both Brave Orchid and her identity as a Chinese female. Kingston made it her mission to be everything her mother told her she should not be: she was an exceptional student, opinionated and loud, and did everything in her power to shatter the image of the delicate, subservient flower her Chinese heritage said she should be. Kingston's downright defiance of her mother's wishes provokes Brave Orchid, making her come down harder on Kingston, further perpetuating the familial confrontation and leading to a complete rejection of Chinese culture by Kingston.

This rejection of the Chinese culture by Kingston causes Kingston to develop a strong sense of internalized racism. Not only does she reject her Chinese culture, but she also becomes ashamed

of it. For much of the book, the reader can see Kingston thoroughly trying to convince herself that she is the one in the right for favoring American customs. The reader finds her during her college years really striving to become "American-feminine" as opposed to "Chinese-feminine," which she argues is inferior and undesirable by the people she finds herself surrounded by (Kingston 47). Kingston becomes quick to point out the flaws she sees in her mother and other members of her community, fixating on the cultural stereotypes she believes they exhibited:

The immigrants I know have loud voices, unmodulated to American tones even after years away from the village where they called their friendships out across the fields. I have not been able to stop my mother's screams in public libraries or over telephones. Walking erect (knees straight, toes pointed forward, not pigeon-toed, which is Chinese-feminine) and speaking in an inaudible voice, I have tried to turn myself American-feminine. (Kingston 11)

Her obsession with not presenting herself as "Chinese-feminine" comes across to the reader with a sense of conviction that appears as if she has accepted the lie that "American-feminine" is superior as truth. This in turn causes Kingston to choose to assimilate to the dominant American culture rather than embrace her hybrid identity in its entirety. We can see this trauma in Kingston's constant arguing with her mother about it being okay for her to act like an American when her focus should have been on embracing every part of her identity, not putting one part of herself in a position of superiority over the others. There should not be a hierarchy when it comes to one's own cultural heritage. Her argument instead should have been that it was okay for her to be herself,; that it is healthy to embrace the good elements of both cultures in a way that makes an individual feel happy and complete.

However, this memoir is Kingston's attempt to explore and understand her culture, and to reach some level of common ground with Brave Orchid. The section of *The Woman Warrior* titled

"White Tigers" is Kingston's attempt to create her own idea of a female Chinese identity that she can connect with. Doing this allows her to both establish and accept her Chinese heritage. This concept is referred to as mythopoesis and is defined by independent Jordanian scholar Sohaib Malkawi as, "the reinternalization of existing myth to reflect personal development – the personalization and appropriation of myth." (Malkawi 3). Essentially, by taking the legend of Fa Mulan and making it an integral part of her own identity by telling it in the first person, Kingston is able to create an image of a Chinese woman who is fierce in battle, respected by all and able to be a successful wife and mother in the midst of combat. Creating this story allowed for Kingston to feel a connection with someone who is Chinese, a woman and someone she could imagine herself being like, which gives her a newfound sense of confidence in her Chinese identity.

The section that follows immediately after "White Tigers" is called "Shaman." It details Kingston's mother's experience at a Chinese medical school and her battle with an entity called Sitting Ghost. A strong correlation between Brave Orchid's story and Fa Mulan's can be seen when comparing the two sections side by side. For context, the readers learn that Brave Orchid was one of a handful of women at the time able to get into medical school where she studied to become a midwife. The school is believed to be haunted, but Brave Orchid refuses to let the ghost win by making her fear it. She decides to combat the entity Kingston calls "Sitting Ghost." Sitting Ghost in the story can be interpreted as a representation of fear and misunderstanding in the world, and it preys off of an individual's weakness, such as the way Chinese culture has misunderstood women, and uses the fear of dishonor to keep them in what has been deemed their natural place in society.

Brave Orchid's encounter with Sitting Ghost in the text is put there by Kingston to help the reader see and understand the connection between the warrior Fa Mulan and her mother, Brave Orchid. Brave Orchid decides to take up a profession that was typically very male-dominated, in

Brave Orchid's case that is medicine, which parallel's Mulan's choice to assume the identity of a man and go to war. Like Mulan, Brave Orchid fights a courageous battle with Sitting Ghost and finds herself close to death but chooses not to falter. And, just as Mulan led an army into the capital to behead the Emperor, Brave Orchid tells the women at her school, "You have to help me rid the world of this disease, as invisible and deadly as bacteria," (Kingston 74) and assembles an army of intelligent young women to rally together and cast the ghost out of the school. This comparison gives the reader more insight into how Kingston has begun to perceive her mother as an adult, which is in a notably different way from how she depicts Brave Orchid in the first two sections of the book. The reader begins to realize that all the negative feelings about Brave Orchid are still very valid for Kingston, but this section gives the reader a look into the complexity of family relationships and how people are composed of multiple layers in every direction, leaving the reader with confusing feelings of love, respect and animosity all at the same time.

The connections that can be seen between the story of Fa Mulan and that of Brave Orchid~~'s~~ indicate that Kingston has used this memoir as a way to begin the reconciliation process with her mother, which in turn allows her to begin to figure out how to exist in a liminal space as both a Chinese and an American woman. Kingston is able to identify with her own idealization of Fa Mulan~~,~~ and, at the same time, she is seeing a parallel between Mulan and Brave Orchid. This means that, through the idea of Fa Mulan, Kingston is finally able to feel an intimate connection with her mother. It was the lack of an intimate maternal connection that forced Kingston to turn her back on her own culture, but being able to reestablish the connection opened the door that allowed Kingston a better understanding of Brave Orchid and why she is a hard, serious individual. Learning that she can, in some ways, see her mother in herself helped her to reaffirm her own identity and realize that reconciliation with her mother is possible. This connection allowed Kingston to embrace the part of her that is Chinese alongside the part of her that is American.

Since its publication, Kingston's memoir has been in the midst of controversy between individuals of the Asian community. Kingston has been accused of distorting elements of Chinese culture by blending fact and fiction, like the way she decided to change the details of the legend of Fa Mulan. One of her biggest critics, Frank Chin goes as far as to claim Kingston's tactic, "is simply a device for destroying history and literature," (Chin 3). However, this is not Kingston's intent. In 1982, Kingston wrote a response to the backlash her memoir received with her article "Cultural Mis-Readings by American Reviewers." In the article, Kingston argues that readers who take her descriptions and generalize them to represent all Chinese Americans are beyond the limits of her control. She asks her audience why it is her responsibility to represent anyone apart from herself (paraphrase, Kingston). Her question lends to the idea that Kingston wrote this book for herself as a way to begin understanding her own inner conflicts about identity and her battle with internalized racism. It was a way to start the process of healing. She is discussing the truth about the events that surrounded her and her family and the stories that she either was told or invented as a child. Saying that *The Woman Warrior* is a work of fiction would be the same as someone telling a person that their personal experiences and struggles are false, that their feelings are invalid–nothing more than a work of fiction. Nothing about the human life is fictional. Everyone comes from some sort of mixed or muddled background. And everyone must find a way to live and balance that reality every day, because to live at all is to live in a liminal space. For Kingston, that balance comes from learning how to reclaim ownership of her hybrid identity as a Chinese American woman through the power of words and deep self-reflection.

Works Cited

Chin, Frank. "Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake." *The Big Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Chinese American and Japanese American Literature,* edited by Jeffery Paul Chan, Frank Chin, et. al., Meridian, 1991.

Kingston, Maxine H. "Cultural Mis-reading by American Reviewers." In: Amirthanayagam G. Asian and Western Writers in Dialogue. Palgrave Macmillan, London, p 55.

Kingston, Maxine H. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Childhood among Ghosts*. Vintage, 1989.

Malkawi, Sohaib. "Mother Complex and Mythopeic Influence in Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior." *East-West Cultural Passage*, vol. 17, no. 2, Dec. 2017, pp. 44–67. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=133701109&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Moira Armstrong is an undergraduate student at Kent State University majoring in English and history and minoring in LGBTQ Studies, Italian Studies, Religion Studies, and Ancient, Renaissance, and Medieval Studies. They are also the research assistant for the Queer Pandemic oral history project. They will be graduating in the spring and going on to graduate school.

Queering *The Decameron*: Queer Characters in Day 5 Story 10

Moira Armstrong

Kent State University

In *A Rhetoric of the Decameron*, Marilyn Migiel writes that Boccaccio's most famous work "reminds us that social reality is constructed by means of agreements—however provisional, however constrained—about narratives we produce" (32). This idea of social construction is undoubtedly familiar to those with a background in queer theory; the concept that everything in a given society, from ideas about gender and sexuality to those about power and time, is created by that society is one of the key themes in this field of study. However, while *The Decameron* has been thoroughly analyzed by feminist theorists like Migiel, it has only been given brief or tangential attention by queer scholars, and its queer elements are infrequently analyzed by mainstream *Decameron* scholars. This is a significant gap in research because *The Decameron* lends itself so readily to queering because of its queer characters.

According to Meg-John Barker in *Queer: A Graphic History*, queering is a method of reading literature that challenges and questions a variety of potentially oppressive systems, including norms of gender and sexuality, binaries, institutions, and power structures (102). It is also often applied to

texts that are already considered queer, either through authorship or content. This constantly evolving way of interpreting texts applies to a wide range of media across both genres and time periods. However, canonical works—pieces of literature considered the peak of their period or genre, as established by institutions like universities—typically resist queering because entrance into the canon relies on adherence to heteronormativity. However, as Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews write in *Queering the Canon*, "this is a repetitive illusion" that audiences and scholars can break by ensuring that "the petrified specter of homosexuality" becomes "raised, animated, and acknowledged" (xvii). Queering provides an important route to engaging with this specter.

Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* falls into this category of canonical work that resists queering, not because queerness is not present but because it is part of the canon, and scholarship on canonical works tends to focus on normative elements rather than non-normative elements. This book, *The Decameron*, a frame narrative written in 1353 and set during the time of the Black Death, follows a group of ten narrators known as the *brigata* (Italian for brigade) who flee the plague-ridden and forever-changed city of Florence for their safer country homes, where they decide to pass the time with entertainment; each day, a chosen king or queen decides on a theme, and every member of the company tells a story based on that theme. This continues for ten days, resulting in one hundred total stories on themes from tricks to love to generosity. Each narrator, and each individual story within the larger frame, introduces new themes.

This thesis will focus on Day 5, Story 10, a story told by Dioneo under the theme of "lovers who, after terrible accidents or misfortunes, finally found happiness" (Boccaccio 388). In this story, while a character named Pietro di Vinciolo goes to dinner with a friend, his wife brings a young man to their house to have sex with her because Pietro is not interested in her; he has been having affairs with men. However, Pietro comes home early and she hides the youth in a coop so that Pietro does not find out that he was visiting. Pietro sits down to dinner with his wife and tells her that a young

man was discovered in his friend's house, and his wife condemns the friend's wife's actions, even though she is engaging in the same behavior. Immediately afterward, a donkey steps on the fingers of the hidden young man and he yells out. Pietro then finds him and discovers his wife's infidelity, but also recognizes the man from his own infidelity. To resolve their disagreement, both have sex with the young man. Obviously, the story presents many opportunities for queering. In this essay, I will argue that Pietro himself is queer, not only because he engages in sex with other men but also in his identity, relying heavily on the writing of David Halperin and Jonathan Walters, who discuss Pietro at length in their work. I will also interrogate the bisexuality of Pietro and his wife's lover on this basis. In addition, I will examine how the story engages with theoretically queer sex through the sexual desire and agency expressed by Pietro's wife and the old woman "that virtually everyone considered...a saint" to whom she goes for advice (Boccaccio 461). These two characters can be queered because those traits were nonnormative for Boccaccio's time period.

The queer characters in Day 5 Story 10 begin with Pietro. Though Dioneo essentially advises his audience to ignore Pietro and instead focus on "laughing merrily at the amorous tricks of his wife," Pietro and his queerness remain at the center of the story (Boccaccio 460). There is no doubt that his actions themselves are queer; as soon as he is introduced, it is mentioned that he did not marry because he wanted a wife, but instead "to deceive his fellow citizens and to improve the low opinion they all had of him," and that, after their marriage, his wife "found herself with a man whose inclinations led him elsewhere other than in her direction" (Boccaccio 460). In other words, he is having sex with men. This is queer in the sense of queer as an umbrella term for "people outside of the heterosexual norm," which Pietro certainly is as a man having sex with another man because societal norms dictate that men have sex with women (Barker 7). Those queer actions then serve to drive the storyline. The entire plot of Day 5 Story 10 hinges on his infidelity, which hinges on his queer sexual preference; because he is "as fond of women as a dog is of a cudgel," he cheats

on his wife with men to gain sexual pleasure that he cannot find in his marital relationship (Boccaccio 467). This leads his wife to cheat on him in turn, which he then discovers.

The question of Pietro's identity becomes more complex, and David Halperin's book *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* and Jonathan Walters's article "'No More Than a Boy': The Shifting Construction of Masculinity from Ancient Greece to the Middle Ages" provide detailed explorations of the topic. Both acknowledge the importance of difference, or deviance, from the norm in regards to Pietro. They describe Boccaccio "at pains to tell us from the beginning that something is wrong with the husband," which the text reflects (Walters 24). Pietro's wife refers to him as a "pervert" because he is attracted to other men, and justifies her choice to cheat on him by rationalizing, "I will merely be breaking the laws of marriage, while he breaks those of Nature as well" by pursuing relationships with the male subjects of his sexual desire (Boccaccio 461). No other characters interact with Pietro in the text, but it implies their negative opinions of him and his behavior by referencing "the low opinion [his fellow citizens] all had of him" (Boccaccio 460). People who know Pietro know that he desires men, not women, and do not approve.

Dioneo, the narrator of the story, also echoes these sentiments. As he introduces his tale, he assigns varying levels of condemnation to Pietro's sexuality, from "a little unseemly" to "ill-fated" and "degenerate" because he does not feel sexual desire toward his wife (Boccaccio 459). Even Dioneo, whose narrations frequently involve lewd sexual matters which he addresses in a flippant way that verges on positive, marks Pietro as deviant because his patterns of behavior do not align with patterns of heterosexuality, even otherwise deviant ones such as adultery, premarital sex, and illicit or immoral sex with members of the clergy, that Dioneo typically endorses. The text supports Halperin's conclusion that Boccaccio marks Pietro's desire as deviant in two ways. First, he sexually

desires young men, which are "not the usual objects of desire for a man" (39). Secondly, he does not desire the usual objects: women.

However, Halperin continues to argue that "Boccaccio's narrator says nothing to indicate that Pietro is effeminate or in any way deviant in terms of his personal style," citing his wife's surprise to discover his lack of attraction to her after their marriage (40). Thus, he believes that Pietro's sexual preferences do not equal a sexual orientation or identity, as Pietro's queerness remains compartmentalized and unconnected to the rest of his character. One may disagree with this analysis because, as Halperin himself notes, Pietro's queerness represents "a distinctive feature of his life" (41). Walters agrees with this perspective and points out how the text communicates this message. First, while lamenting her situation, Pietro's wife states that she married him "acting on the assumption that he was a man and believing he was interested in the kind of thing men generally like, as they certainly should. After all, if I hadn't thought he was a man, I would never have married him" (Boccaccio 460-461). This implies that because he does not feel attraction toward women, Pietro becomes not only deviant sexually, but in terms of gender. Because he does not feel attracted to women, which exists as a factor inherent to manliness, he cannot make a legitimate claim on male or masculine identity, unlike a heterosexual man. This proves Halperin wrong; Pietro's queerness cannot stay compartmentalized. Those around him have connected the queerness of his sexual actions to his character, utilizing those connections to judge him and impose limitations on how he can and cannot engage with his gender. Though his sexuality is the cause, his inability to claim manhood because of others' assumptions marks him as deviant outside of sexuality.

Secondly, Walters's article proposes a vital difference between a person who participates in homosexual acts and a person who defines themself as queer. He writes that a queer person's "preference for those acts reveals his essential nature, and who is at the same time socially defined as

part of a particular subset," which contains "a group of people permanently characterised by this significant activity, or desire, that they have in common" (25). The issue of maleness and masculinity represents the "essential nature" aspect of this argument. The social definition comes into play in the quote "perhaps to deceive his fellow citizens and to improve the low opinion they all had of him" (Boccaccio 460). Pietro married in order to protect himself from further judgments and limitations imposed by a heteronormative, homophobic society, which negatively characterizes him as a queer person. He conducts his affairs in secret for the same reason. Walters notes that "No longer, as had been the case in Greco-Roman times, was a youth a legitimate object of sexual desire for a man, in the same way as a woman; now these object-choices are mutually exclusive" (26). Society considered sodomy a serious sin, and, simultaneously, sodomy became a defining factor for distinct social groups. This is reflected in the medieval penitentials, which were guidebooks for confessors that classified sins depending on their severity and suggested penalties. These texts penalize many forms of sexual activity, including sodomy between two men or its euphemism, sin against nature. Several major religious figures, including Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, viewed these as more serious than other forms of sexual deviation; Aquinas stated that "since the order of nature was derived from God, its contravention was always an injury to God and thus a more serious offense than those committed against one's neighbor or other people" and Magnus wrote that "such vices were as contagious as a disease and spread rapidly from one person to another" (McCann 33-34). While neither Aquinas nor Magnus were active in Italy, the ideas are still reflected. For example, in Venice, anyone who engaged in sodomy faced death by burning under the Catholic-controlled government, which was significantly more severe than the punishments for other sex crimes, even those with religious undertones. For example, fornication with nuns only resulted in a two-year jail sentence and a fine (Ruggiero 110). Though nothing is known about Pietro's life outside of this limited story, the idea of sodomy as sin reflected in the penitentials

supports the conclusion that Pietro can be considered queer in terms of his identity, not just queer in that he is a man who has sex with men.

There is not extensive scholarship on the identity of the unnamed lover, the young man who has affairs with both Pietro and his wife. Like Pietro, his actions are undoubtedly queer, as he has sex with both men and women. He is introduced as one of a series of lovers that Pietro's wife is seeing with the assistance of an older woman, who helps "get the guy the young lady had been talking about into her bedroom" every time she is attracted to someone, and, at the beginning of this story, they have "just sat down at the supper table" (Boccaccio 463). However, when Pietro discovers him, it is revealed that he is "someone [Pietro] had long pursued for his own wicked purposes" (Boccaccio 466). As he is having sex with both men and women, he fails to align with the heterosexual norm just as much as Pietro.

The same metric that Halperin and Walters utilize can be applied to analyzing his identity as queer. First, Halperin and Walters emphasize the idea of deviance from the norm. While Boccaccio was "at pains" to demonstrate the husband's deviance, the lover is a secondary character to this story, and his sexual attraction is not denigrated like Pietro's by characters in the story or by Dioneo, the narrator (Walters 24). Similarly, the reader is not privy to the lover's interactions with any other characters, and their opinions of him are not mentioned like Pietro's was. However, it can be extrapolated that he would be seen as a "pervert" whose fellow citizens have a "low opinion" of him because he has the same desires as Pietro (Boccaccio 460-461). There is also a historical element to consider. In this era, there was not a clear distinction between men who had sex exclusively with men and men who also had sex with women, "either with...official designations or with other vernacular terms" (Rocke 12, 124). Today, this is considered bisexuality or pansexuality. In

Boccaccio's time, this would have simply been considered part of the same category to which Pietro belongs. As a result, his sexual desire for men would always mark him as deviant.

Secondly, Halperin believes indications that a character "is effeminate or in any way deviant in terms of his personal style" mark him as queer in identity because such deviance would mean that queerness cannot be compartmentalized and unconnected to the rest of his character. This can also be applied to the lover. He is also described as "one of the prettiest...youths in Perugia," which is not a traditionally masculine descriptor (Boccaccio 463). Throughout the text of *The Decameron*, all other uses of the word "pretty" and its variants refer to women (Boccaccio 168, 234, 248, 259, 269, 307, 308, 379, 511, 603, 622, 690, 479, 752). This particular descriptor reflects medieval ideas about masculinity that explicitly excluded physical beauty; one medieval and Renaissance construct of beauty called on Cicero's delineation between "loveliness" and "dignity," stating that "loveliness is appropriate to women, and dignity is appropriate to men;" and exhibiting the trait associated with the other gender was inappropriate (Laughran 7). This adjective marks the lover as effeminate. Additionally, this means that the lover, like Pietro, does not have a legitimate claim on masculinity. Both of these elements mean that he is queer in identity. This connects to Walters's distinction between a person who participates in homosexual acts and a person who defines themself as queer based on essential nature and social subset. The issue of maleness and masculinity again fulfills the "essential nature" aspect of this argument. While not enough textual evidence is provided about the lover to provide the social context, historical information can fill in the gaps. The lover did not marry to protect himself from the limitations of a heteronormative, homophobic society; but still conducts his affairs in secret because there are religious and legal repercussions for sodomy.

The desire of the women in the story can also be queered for the same reason: deviance. During the medieval period, women were expected to conform to a specific type of sex that was

within a marriage and with the goal of procreation, not pleasure. These borders of acceptability were communicated in a very similar way to the rules against sodomy. The penitentials are particularly strict on the subject of adultery because adultery not only violated the boundary between the sacred and the carnal, which was meant to be maintained at all times, but it also disrupted the social order, causing friction within households and sometimes the dissolution of households altogether. Its punishments were prescribed through not only the penitentials, which usually required five to seven years of penance and occasionally included lifetime penance, excommunication, or even death, but also through the law. Men were occasionally permitted to murder the men with whom their wives had affairs, and could physically punish their wives as well (McCann 88). Additionally, a constant theme throughout the penitentials is to correct all sexual practices that are non-procreative. Pleasure was considered inherently sinful while children were "the good of marriage and the factor which redeems marital sexual intercourse" (McCann 52). Thus, any sexual practice that aimed for pleasure rather than procreation was sinful and should be avoided as well as punished.

Pietro's wife and the old woman to whom she goes for advice break both of these rules. First, both have had many extramarital affairs. As mentioned, the wife has sex with men that "happened to catch the young lady's fancy," meaning that she is engaging in repeated affairs with a variety of people based solely on her desire for them at the moment, and she "never failed to take advantage of any opportunity" to have sex with another man (Boccaccio 463). She is not concerned about having sex outside of marriage or even about limiting the number of men she has sex with, and she is willing to break this rule specifically because her husband is not fulfilling her sexual needs within their marriage. The old woman expresses similar sentiments:

> Now that I'm old, I experience the sharpest, most bitter pangs of regret in my heart whenever I realize, all to no avail, how many opportunities I let slip by. Actually, I

> didn't waste all of them—I wouldn't want you to think me a complete idiot—but I still didn't do as much as I could have. (Boccaccio 462)

Essentially, she admits that not only did she have multiple affairs of her own, but she also wishes that she had had even more. She does not specify the circumstances of her marriage but the understanding she expresses toward Pietro's wife implies that she had been in a similar situation in which her husband was not satisfying her. She additionally confirms this by assisting Pietro's wife with her affairs, meaning that she not only found adultery acceptable and necessary in her own life, but she is also so passionate that it was the right choice that she wants to support another woman who is making that choice for herself. Overall, the thought of having sex with men to whom they are not married does not faze these women at all; in fact, they are enthusiastic about it.

Secondly, both pursue these affairs with the goal of sexual pleasure, not procreation. Pietro's wife explicitly states "I shall get my pleasure from the same thing he delights in," meaning sex outside of marriage, as she is aware that he is having sex with men (Boccaccio 461). She is not pursuing men so that she can have children, but so that she can experience pleasure, which she feels she deserves. As mentioned, the old woman does not reveal much about her marital circumstances, but she emphasizes the differences between men and women in a revealing way. She says,

> [men are] born with a thousand different talents beside [sex], and for the most part, the older ones are worth much more than the young. But women are born just to do this single thing, and to make babies, and that's the only reason they're cherished. Now, if nothing else will convince you of this, then you ought to consider the fact that we women are always ready for it, which is not the case with men. What's more, one woman could exhaust a host of men, whereas a host of men can't tire out a single woman. (Boccaccio 462)

Through this statement, she reveals that she believes that women were created specifically for the purpose of sex. She acknowledges that the main reason that society values women is that sex can result in children, but emphasizes that women have greater desire and stamina for sex than men. This demonstrates that women's attitudes toward sex are not simply motivated by the potential for childbirth; women pursue sex for their own pleasure as well. As Marilyn Migiel writes, "human experience - particularly in the realm of sexuality - is articulated very differently by the Decameron's male and female narrators" but, across the board, "all of them emphasize that sex is of prime importance to women" (Migiel 71, 68). This was a revolutionary concept for the time period and thus allows the desire of the women in the story to be queered.

The views of Pietro's wife and the old woman are additionally queered by their dismissal of the religious aspect associated with boundaries around sex. Both women are Catholic, immersed in a Catholic society, so the boundaries around marriage and procreation had been communicated to them through sources such as the penitentials and messaging from religious leaders. However, during their conversation, the old woman says, "My child, God knows—and He knows everything—that what you'll be doing is right, because even if you had no other reason, you're bound to do it, you and every other young woman, rather than fritter away your youth" (Boccaccio 461). She tells Pietro's wife that God himself would not only endorse, but even require, as the word "bound" implies, that she and other young women have affairs outside of marriage if they were not sexually fulfilled because young people deserve sex and pleasure. This goes directly against the messages that the Catholic church promoted about sex; but the old woman does not seem to care. Neither does Dioneo, who narrates the story. He adds an additional religious endorsement to the pursuit of pleasurable extramarital sex with his description of the old woman as one

> who gave every indication of being a Saint Verdiana feeding the serpents, for she would go around to every pardoning service at church, always carrying her rosary in her hand, and

never talking about anything except the lives of the Holy Fathers and the wounds of Saint Francis, with the result that virtually everyone considered her a saint. (Boccaccio 461)

While it is aligned with Dioneo's style to ignore boundaries around sex, the fact that he associates such views with a saintly figure passes on the message that the ideas about sex promoted by the Catholic church were also constructed by the Catholic church; they do not actually represent what God, or saintly figures who are aligned with God, think. This is a queer concept, and so is the pursuit of that type of sex.

Interestingly, these queer views about sex do not stop the wife from expressing queerphobia. All of her relationships are with men, which does adhere to one rule that the church had; while lesbianism is not addressed frequently in penitentials, three to seven years of penance are prescribed for the offense when it is mentioned, and medieval clergy "extraordinarily looked down upon" lesbian relationships, expressing severe disapproval in their writings (McCann 44). Additionally, in the monologue in which she decides to pursue affairs, she states that "I should get my pleasure from the same thing he delights in, but whereas that pleasure will be strongly condemned in his case, in mine it will be commendable for I will merely be breaking the laws of marriage, while he breaks those of Nature as well" (Boccaccio 461). She believes that even though she is violating several societal and religious norms around sex, she is still upholding the ultimate value of male/female partnerships. As a result, she believes she has a right to have affairs, while her husband does not. As Marilyn Migiel says, when addressing human sexuality, *The Decameron* places "the prime focus on the desire for long-term intimate relationships," which can only be achieved between men and women (69). Marriage is not attainable for same-sex partners, and there is active persecution of queer men who engage in sex with other men (Najemy 244). This means that it is safer to engage in short affairs rather than long-term partnerships, as Pietro has.

Overall, this story introduces several queer characters. First, Pietro and the lover that he and his wife share are both queer in action, through their attraction to and sex with other men, as well as identity, because their deviance has societal consequences. Additionally, the two women in the story can be queered because of their sexual practices, which are non-normative for the time period since they are outside of marriage and pursuing pleasure rather than procreation. However, their queer sex does not prevent them from expressing queerphobia toward Pietro.

Works Cited

Barker, Meg-John and Julia Scheele. *Queer: A Graphic History*. Icon Books, 2016.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Decameron*. Translated by Wayne Rebhorn, W.W. Norton and Company, 2013.

Halperin, David M. *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*. The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Laughran, Michelle A. "A Man Must Not Embellish Himself like a Woman: The Body and Gender in Renaissance Cosmetics," 15th Annual Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Interdisciplinary Symposium, 2006, University of Miami.

Lorey, Christopher, and John L. Plews. *Queering the Canon*, Camden House, 1998.

McCann, Christine A., "Transgressing the Boundaries of Holiness: Sexual Deviance in the Early Medieval Penitential Handbooks of Ireland, England and France 500-1000," *Theses*, 76, 2010.

Migiel, Marilyn. *A Rhetoric of the Decameron*, University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Najemy, John M. *A History of Florence: 1200-1575*. Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Rocke, Michael J. *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Ruggiero, Guido. *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*. Oxford University Press, 1985.

Walters, Jonathan. "'No More Than a Boy': The Shifting Construction of Masculinity from Ancient Greece to the Middle Ages," *Gender & History*, Vol. 5 No. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 20-33.

Bio: Stephen Huffaker studies English Literature and Communications at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, NY. He is a member of Le Moyne's Integral Honors Program, and will graduate in 2023. After graduation, Stephen hopes to earn his master's degree at the S.I. Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University and pursue a career in the publishing industry.

Hareton Earnshaw, Gentleman: English National Identity in *Wuthering Heights*

Stephen Huffaker

Le Moyne College

English national identity is a multifaceted concept. In addition to containing a number of intersecting characteristics, including race, class, and gender, it is defined through opposition to

Stephen Huffaker

the identities of groups and individuals marked as Other. The oppositional and intersectional nature of English national identity is featured prominently in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Though most of the text features a notable dearth of idealized figures, an application of Catherine Hall's *White, Male, and Middle-Class* allows us to examine how the character of Hareton Earnshaw functions as the closest representation of the ideal Englishman, through his race, class, and gender. In keeping with oppositional English identity, Hareton's identity emerges through comparison with Heathcliff's racialization and Linton's gendered coding, and his essentially English nature enables him to rise above his initial degradation.

As Hall writes in *White, Male, and Middle-Class*, for the English, "identity was always defined in relation to 'others'" (258). English national identity, while also intersectional, is fundamentally defined by what it is not and what Others are. It develops through difference, and is expressed through deliberately constructed distinctions between the English and various groups coded as Other. Such constructions of English identity are also viewed as both inherently superior and inborn in the ideal English figure.

In true English form, Hareton's identity emerges through comparison with other characters, initially Heathcliff. Heathcliff is consistently Othered throughout the text, particularly in racial terms. He is repeatedly described as subhuman, an animal or a monster. Such language was often utilized to dehumanize non-English and especially non-white people, though it was also applied to the white Irish. For example, Hall quotes Thomas Carlyle's description of the enslaved Jamaicans and writes that "the blacks, best compared in Carlyle's mind with horses or dogs, were 'sitting yonder with their beautiful muzzles up to their ears in pumpkins, imbibing sweet pulps and juices; the grinders and incisor teeth ready for ever-new work…'" (270). Notably, Carlyle describes the Jamaicans as possessing "muzzles," assigning them animal qualities. Hall's point regarding Carlyle's view of the Jamaicans as dogs is extremely reminiscent of Nelly's description of Heathcliff after Catherine's death. Nelly states that "he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog" (Brontë 141). Heathcliff is also repeatedly referred to as a "devil," and when he is first brought to Wuthering Heights as a child, Mr. Earnshaw describes him as "dark almost as if [he] came from the devil" (Brontë 31), associating his dark complexion with a lack of humanity and emphasizing his savage qualities. Heathcliff is thus dark, animalistic, and devilish, marking him off from the English in racial terms. Heathcliff's coding is that of the racial Other: non-white, non-English, and non-human.

By contrast, descriptions of Hareton are far less racialized. He is referred to as a "brute" (Brontë 209) and a "clown" (Brontë 10), but he is never dehumanized to the same extent as

Heathcliff. Though Heathcliff is primarily coded with bestialized racial difference, the use of "clown" to describe Hareton indicates how his association with Heathcliff has lowered him in class as well as race, highlighting the intersectionality of English national identity. "Clown" implies a lower-class coding and "brute" indicates an animal quality such as those linked to race, but these degradations are explicitly due to his association with Heathcliff, the poisonous Other. As Heathcliff himself states, regarding his efforts to degrade Hareton, "If he were a born fool I should not enjoy it half so much—But he's no fool...I've taught him to scorn everything extra-animal as silly and weak" (Brontë 193). Hareton's subhuman, animal qualities thus stem directly from his association with Heathcliff, and are "taught" rather than "born." The fact that Hareton's vices are learned rather than inborn emphasizes the essentialist nature of English national identity. As Heathcliff says, Hareton is not a born fool; his "true" nature as an Englishman is not reflected by his degraded state.

The significance of Hareton's birth is reminiscent of that of John Halifax, the fictional epitome of ideal English national identity discussed by Hall. Though John Halifax begins poor and parentless, "in a classic twist, he turns out to be a gentleman by birth" (Hall 259). Likewise, Hareton is not a lower-class clown after all, though his association with Heathcliff has lowered him. His good nature, like that of John Halifax, emerges partially because of his true upper-class birth. The assumption is that his upper-class birth reflects his true nature, while his lower-class status is the result of outside circumstances. As the son of Hindley Earnshaw, rightful owner of Wuthering Heights, Hareton's birth lends him an inherent superiority, in opposition with Heathcliff's corruption of him.

Hareton is similarly contrasted with Linton, Heathcliff's son, though in gendered terms. While Heathcliff functions primarily as a racial Other, Linton epitomizes the weak, effeminate stereotype of the English upper class, as opposed to the perceived masculinity of the middle class. As Hall writes, "[The middle class'] critique of the degeneracy and effeminacy of the aristocracy

focused on its softness, sensuousness, indolence, luxuriousness, foppishness, and lack of a proper sense of purpose and direction" (257). English national identity is masculine, assuming femininity to indicate weakness. Nelly's initial assessment of Linton is of "[a] pale, delicate, effeminate boy" (Brontë 177). Later, upon Catherine and Nelly's imprisonment at the Heights, Nelly states that Linton "lay on the settle, sole tenant, sucking a stick of sugar-candy and pursuing my movements with apathetic eyes" (Brontë 247). Linton is thus characterized as feminine, weak, and self-indulgent, just like a stereotypical member of the aristocracy. Hareton, by contrast, is described as a "well-made, athletic youth" (Brontë 173), indicating his activity and masculinity. Linton is effeminate and passive, while Hareton is manly and dynamic. Through comparison with Linton, Hareton is constructed as masculine, in keeping with English ideas surrounding gender, oppositionality, and national character.

Hareton's value is also directly contrasted with that of Linton. As Heathcliff states, contrasting Hareton and his son, "there's this difference; one is gold put to the use of paving stones, and the other is tin polished to ape a service of silver—*Mine* has nothing valuable about it" (Brontë 193). Again, Hareton's identity emerges through contrast with another character. Gold is inherently more valuable than tin, indicating Hareton's inherent superiority over Linton. In addition to the problem of gender, it is important to note the significance of blood relation; as the son of Heathcliff, the Other, Linton is tainted. The fact that Heathcliff himself indicates this demonstrates how ingrained the concept of miscegenation is in the text. It is odd for Heathcliff to speak this way about his racial corruption of his own son, but conceptions of racial difference even override narrative logic. The word "ape" functions as a double entendre; while it can mean to imitate, it also refers to an animal. This subtle bestialization of Linton is similar to the bestialization of Heathcliff, and is presumably derived from his relation to Heathcliff, the racial Other. Hareton is similarly negatively influenced by Heathcliff, but his lack of blood relation means that his degradation is the result of

external forces rather than being inborn. Hareton's essentially English nature, including his masculinity and high birth, here emerges through his contrast with Linton.

As such examples illustrate, the idea of an inborn, intrinsic nature functions as a central part of the construction of English national identity. In regards to Carlyle's conceptions of Englishness, Hall writes that "Some men were made to rule over others" (266). Though referring specifically to conceptions of Englishmen's right to rule over women, Hall's point highlights the idea that there is something within Englishmen which is "made" and grants them superiority. In *Wuthering Heights*, Hareton is repeatedly described as possessing a nature of greater quality than his position might suggest: the new housekeeper of the Heights characterizes him as "not bad-natured, though he's rough" (186), and upon his education by Catherine, Nelly describes how Hareton's "honest, warm, and intelligent nature shook off rapidly the clouds of ignorance and degradation in which it had been bred" (Brontë 286). Hareton thus possesses an inherent good nature which, while tarnished and buried beneath learned bad qualities, is nonetheless preserved. This inborn nature points to how Hareton epitomizes English national identity; such essentialist ideas serve as a central component of English national identity. Because of his Englishness, Hareton's true nature cannot be corrupted, and he is eventually able to rise to his true station.

Hareton thus represents the central components of idealized English national identity in a variety of ways. His identity is oppositional, and constructed in relation to characters defined as Other. While association with the racially bestialized Heathcliff degrades Hareton, this degradation is not reflective of his true nature, and his class lends him value not reflected by his position. Similar comparison with the feminized Linton constructs Hareton as thoroughly masculine. Finally, such comparisons reveal his identity to be constructed essentially as well as oppositionally, reflecting another important component of English national identity. Hareton's essential, intersectional English identity, including his race, class, and gender, thus emerges through difference.

Works Cited

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Edited by Ian Jack, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Hall, Catherine. "Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre." *White, Male, and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, Routledge, 1992, pp. 255-295