The DROVER REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF STUDENT WRITING AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS OF OKLAHOMA

VOLUME 3 | 2020

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Editor's Introduction

DR. BEN WETHERBEE

BEFORE SPRING BREAK OF 2020, I tasked the *Drover Review* Editorial Board with scoring and commenting on the year's remarkably diverse and impressive body of submissions. I sent out all the requisite files and explained the familiar plan: After break, sometime during the first week back, we would schedule a time to convene, compare notes, and make some very, very difficult decisions about what to publish in the journal's third volume. New year, same drill.

Of course, you already know the looming twist to this story. In-person classes never resumed. The COVID-19 pandemic rerouted USAO and other universities nationwide into makeshift digital spaces, and we Board members—four faculty and two senior students—scrambled to make sense of our new online-only educational experience. As the University necessarily jettisoned so much of its business-as-usual procedure, it would have been understandable—logical, even—to scrap volume 3 of *The Drover Review*, as well, or to delay its publication until 2021. Elsewhere during the Spring 2020 term, my mantra indeed became, "Let's simplify, simplify, simplify, and get through this."

In the moment, though, the thought of canceling or delaying *The Drover Review*, volume 3, never crossed my mind. I would have worried, to begin, about letting down the many students who had submitted work to this volume. Amid the COVID-19 upheaval, moreover, this journal emerged to me as something durable, feasible, and rewarding—a small bulwark against the uncertainty and sadness eroding the academic experience for students and faculty alike. To put things a bit romantically: the pandemic can drive us from our traditional offices and classrooms, but it can't erase the good work of USAO's student writers; nor can it erase the circulation of that work through venues like this journal.

So, the Board met over Zoom, deliberated, made some very difficult decisions about what to publish, and things pressed on. Not only was it delightful to see my colleagues' digitally rendered faces checkered across my laptop screen one afternoon, but it has brought me enormous joy and satisfaction to continue working on this journal during this otherwise frightening and uncertain time. I hope that reading, thinking about, and discussing the work the outstanding student authors featured here brings you some of the same feelings of hope and stability.

IN OTHER WORDS, I THINK it's important right now to take stock of things that make us glad and proud. Toward that end, please indulge me as I offer some figures and accolades reflecting the first three volumes of *The Drover Review* and the work that has appeared in their pages.

Since its inaugural Spring 2018 volume, this journal has published now 47 individual essays by USAO students, representing the work of 36 different authors. In addition to the 19 essays from writing-intensive first-year Interdisciplinary Studies classes (Writing I, Writing II, and Rhetoric & Critical Thinking), the journal's complete contents now include 26 essays from upper-level courses, whose disciplinary frameworks include literature, rhetoric, linguistics, sociology, history, psychology, biology, and religion, as well as

interdisciplinary work from upper-level IDS classes addressing topics like life science, economics, political science, literature, and cultural studies. The journal has also published two winning essay submissions for the Betty Baker Jernigan scholarship prize.

A few individual accolades are in order, too. The following eight authors can claim the impressive feat of appearing in multiple volumes of *The Drover Review*, whose publication spots, since the first volume, have been highly competitive:

Kylea Caughman	Summer Laurick
Hannah Freeman	Tia McCarley
Eren Hall	Korbyn Peebles
Wendell Hixson	Emily Rand

Furthermore, two authors claim elite bragging rights by appearing in all three (!!!) of *The Drover Review's* existing volumes:

Baylee Bozarth	Genevieve Gordon

These ten authors headline a smart, eloquent, ambitious cadre of USAO students, past and current, who have steered the pages of this journal among diverse avenues of intellectual inquiry, reflecting the range of liberal arts experience that occurs at USAO. It has been my privilege to read this writing each year and work with its authors.

THE PRESENT VOLUME of *The Drover Review* subtly revises the journal's previous organizational structure. To better reflect this year's range of publications, the Editorial Board has opted to simplify, breaking the volume into two main sections: one of writing from first-year IDS courses (Writing I and II, plus Rhetoric & Critical Thinking) and the second encompassing upper-level work from across the majors and disciplines.

The First-Year Writing section includes six entries that cumulatively demonstrate a vast range of writing carried out in USAO's

freshman-level IDS courses. Kitty Lancaster provides a very fitting introduction to this section with her bold defense of liberal arts education, which she likens to a "forge" designed to fortify the weapons of communication and critical thinking against outside manipulation. In "Quiet," Scotty Hinds next offers a meditative and poetic personal essay about the experience of divorce from the perspective of a child. Kati Robbins and Savannah James then contribute two sharp researched arguments; Robbins's "With Liberty and Justice for All" deals with the pernicious infiltration of religious preference into public education, while James wrestles with the common but vexing trope of the "Mad Artist" in science and culture. Next, the first-year section includes the anonymously published but deeply powerful "End the Stigma," a personal account of sexual abuse and its devastating effects on mental health. Wendell Hixson's "Her Dear Smile," finally, rounds out the section with a thoroughgoing, inventive literary analysis of a comic story by Aldous Huxley.

In the Writing across the Disciplines section, readers will find eight scholarly works spanning the disciplines of religion, sociology, literature, economics, and political science. Claire Smith's pithy essay "Buddhism as a Solution in the Western World" kicks off this section with an endorsement of Buddhist *sunyata*—or voidness—as an antidote to the West's frenetic, individualistic materialism. Kylea Caughman and Hannah Freeman then offer two sociological essays, Caughman's "Dividing Labor" offering an eye-opening comparison between hetero- and homosexual couples' labor distribution in the home while Freeman's "The Stigmatization of Addiction" surveys research on how to identify and mitigate the social shame of addicts. Next, initiating a collection of literary and textual analyses, Rhiannon Quillin's "Nothing Is Something" examines how the conventions of architectural Minimalism augment the tone and characterization of Haruki Murakami's novel *A Wild Sheep Chase*. Summer Laurick, in "The Racism of Misrepresentation in *The Last Airbender*," then poses a trenchant critique of M. Night Shyamalan's film for whitewashing the Asian-inspired cultures and characters

from the animated series it adapts. Next, in an especially clever and inventive look at the *Harry Potter* universe (and perhaps winning my vote for best essay title to every appear in this journal) Baylee Bozarth's "Psychoanalyzing Draco Malfoy: A Queer Werewolf?" intellectually substantiates fan theories that Harry's rival is really a lycanthrope, and one of great symbolic import. In the final literary analysis, "Reproductive Nostalgia," Genevieve Gordon then contrasts the tropes of pregnancy and natural birth in classic and modern dystopian narratives, noting and validating a skeptical feminist shift against the romanticization of traditional childbearing. Wrapping up the section is the first mutliauthored essay to appear in *The Drover Review*: Emily Rand, Caitlyn Hatfield, Mikaela Malloy, and Shelby Strangfeld, in "The Struggle Is Real," weigh their own revelatory calculations about minimum-wage budgeting in Oklahoma against the assumptions of various political ideologies to examine where beliefs and economic realities meet.

Finally, this volume also includes Hannah Dawson's essay "The Impact of Social Inequality in the United States of America," which identifies privatized healthcare, incongruities in law enforcement, and the cyclical problems of poverty as impediments to America's claim to be the land of opportunity. Dawson's essay is this year's winner of the Betty Baker Jernigan Endowed Scholarship Fund, which, each year, offers $1000 to the winner of a contest open to qualified continuing and incoming USAO students. *The Drover Review*, in order to publicize the contest and celebrates its winners, also offers to publish winning essays like Dawson's.

As ALWAYS, I OFFER A necessarily abridged thank you to everyone across campus who has made this journal possible. Thanks to Editorial Board faculty members Shelley Rees, Tonnia Anderson, John Bruce, Genevieve Gordon, and Emily Rand, for your intelligence, reason, and flexibility—and, in particular, for navigating around the COVID-era impediments to make this volume happen. I offer further thanks to Emily, who, before graduating cum laude from USAO

in April, served as the English department office's work-study and helped enormously to publicize the journal, both around campus and on social media, during the 2019-20 academic year.

Thanks, as well, go to faculty and staff who have supported the journal and to faculty across the divisions, majors, and IDS program who integrate intellectually sophisticated writing into their classes. In addition to Editorial Board members, faculty whose coursework yielded submissions to the 2020 volume include Alex Coleman, Jennifer Long, Chris Garneau, James Finck, Zachary Simpson, Aleisha Karjala, and Alex Kangas. My gratitude extends, as well, Steve Weber for his continued patronage of this journal and Beckie Brennan for her enduring help through the Communications and Marketing office.

Most of all, though, thank you to the students who have submitted writing to this volume. Publication spots in the 2020 volume proved even more competitive than usual, so we had to turn away very strong work to winnow the volume down to the usual size. This reality reflects the sweeping breadth of smarts, wisdom, and bravery seen in student writers at USAO.

And as always, thank *you*—the readers of this journal. Good writing wants to be read, so let's go. ►►

FIRST-YEAR WRITING

Liberal Education: A Forge

KITTY LANCASTER

In this bold opinion piece, Kitty Lancaster likens liberal education to a forge, or a furnace used to sharpen the weapons of communication and critical thought against outside manipulation. This essay was written for Rhetoric & Critical Thinking with Dr. Jennifer Long.

I USED TO ASK MY HUSBAND what he was thinking. He almost always replied with, "Nothing." This would lead to arguments. I thought he was avoiding conversing with me about whatever was on his mind, because I couldn't fathom the possibility that someone could actually be thinking about nothing. What does that even feel like? My brain is always thinking—thinking about anything and everything all at the same time. It can be difficult to narrow my focus down to one specific subject, to communicate my point.

I have always found that putting my ideas on paper helps me to gain some control over my thoughts. Fareed Zakaria states in *In Defense of a Liberal Education*, "The central virtue of a liberal education is that it teaches you how to write, and writing makes you think" (72). However, my mind is already thinking long before the writing process begins. Writing helps me organize my thoughts so that I can see them in all their details and fully understand what it is that I

think. Writing leads to understanding. It's about making the connection between thoughts and words. It forces us to make choices and bring clarity and order to our ideas. The thoughts are there first, but we can't see them clearly, so we put them into a language and suddenly we have a full thought with verbs and nouns and punctuation. A liberal education gives us the tools to unscramble these thoughts.

But why is understanding these jumbled thoughts important? We need to know our own minds. We need to be able to speak our own opinions and express ourselves in a logical, filtered way. A liberal education teaches us to speak, and speech is important. If we don't know our minds, if we can't clarify our thoughts and articulate them, we are subject to being manipulated by someone else. Empowering our voices to be able to express our thoughts clearly is a shield that others cannot break through. When we know what we are saying, we don't hesitate, and people who don't hesitate are not easily swayed.

So now we have organized logical thought, which we can put on paper, and we can speak our minds in a sharp, straight line resembling a katana. So then what do we do with this sword? We sharpen it. The most important aspect of a liberal education is that it teaches us to strengthen our thoughts. It teaches us to seek out knowledge for ourselves, to practice learning. It is a tremendous advantage to be able to acquire knowledge on our own. A liberal education shows us how to look at every side of a situation, analyze all possible outcomes, decide the path that seems optimal, and move past any hindrances, forcing our way to that desired position or outcome. It breeds individuals. It encourages asking questions in a society that was raised on "because I said so."

The world is ever-changing, and society is by no means at a standstill. Therefore, learning a targeted set of skills that will eventually be irrelevant is a waste of time and money. What will never change are the skills that we acquire and learn over time because of our experiences as human beings. The most valuable skills are the

ones that are uniquely human: creativity, problem solving, decision making, persuasive arguing, management skills, emotional intelligence, value judgements, curiosity, a sense of adventure, and ambition. These are the muscles that a liberal education will exercise. These are the weapons that will carry us to freedom and liberty. So, let's write our thoughts and speak our minds and discuss our feelings. Let's remember iron sharpens iron.

Our sharpened thoughts and feelings could save our world. A liberal education would ensure the survival of democracy. Learning in the style of a liberal education leads citizens to think for themselves, therefore protecting themselves from governmental overreach. Being willing to constantly ask questions leaves no room for deceit from others. A liberal education is our protection. A liberal education shows us how to marshal our thoughts, strengthen our minds, solidify our words, nurture our talents, and forges each of us into a weapon that can be used to free our world. ► ►

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Quiet

SCOTTY HINDS

In this moving and richly textured personal narrative, Scotty Hinds recounts his parents' divorce and the ominous quiet that character-ized this period of his childhood. Hinds's immersive storytelling high-lights the importance of reassuring children during traumatic times. This essay was written for Writing I with Dr. Ben Wetherbee.

B Y NO MEANS IS THIS meant to evoke pity. It's been eleven years since everything started, and I have since come to terms with all that has happened. My one regret is that while part of me knew what was happening, and though my parents were communi-cating with us, I simply didn't understand.

My parents divorced in 2008. My siblings and I had taken notice of the escalating arguments and muffled shouting matches coming from the kitchen and our parents' bedroom. We certainly noticed how frequent they had become. We would hide in our rooms even long after the arguments ended (though they were never truly re-solved).

We had been attending DC4K (Divorce Care 4 Kids) at Frasier, a church in Montgomery, Alabama. I never really understood what it was, and especially not what we were doing there. All I knew was that we would get either Subway before or Dairy Queen after our

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sessions. Still, I could tell something wasn't right. After all, we had only started these classes when our parents started fighting vehemently.

We were sitting at the dinner table one evening, the yellowish light above our heads accentuating how dark it was around the house. One of the parents asked us what we thought about the classes.

"It was sad," one of said.

"Yeah. I'm glad you guys aren't getting divorced," I added. My mom turned to me.

"We are, Baby."

It was quiet. It was the eerie kind of quiet where one sits there dumbstruck as they hear the last words bouncing around like a bullet, ricocheting off the inside of their skull as it deals untold trauma to the brain. I sat there in such a manner. I cried.

I don't remember finishing dinner that night, but I do remember that night being the one of the last times we ate dinner together while Mom and Dad were still married.

That summer had an eerie atmosphere about it, even when we went outside to play. It was like we should have been having fun, but we were physically incapable of doing so. Mom had moved into a small apartment. The house was quiet. It was the kind of quiet that is commonly associated with a funeral march. It was akin to those who mourn walking slowly forward as they carry the weight of a coffin, the hollow container for that which is dead.

 My dad was a ghost, silent and dead as he sulked and shuffled around the house. There was a factor of awe in that. To see someone who had been a towering paragon of fortitude be reduced to a lifeless, empty shell of something almost human that drifts aimlessly around the hallways was, in a way, terrifying. I had never seen my dad in such a state, and I pray that I never have to again.

On the other end, things weren't looking too different. The apartment Mom moved into was a dreadful place. For three children

and one adult, the size of the place was almost comedic, and it wasn't uncommon for fire ants to get inside in their search for food.

As for my mom, she had become frantic. As a RN who worked at Jackson Hospital in Montgomery, she was always busy. Mom had also picked up a nasty habit. If she wasn't dashing around and had time to sit, she would go out to the back porch and smoke a cigarette.

My dad remarried in 2009 to a woman named Angie, whom he had met in church one day. As if meeting her wasn't awkward enough, I now had to attend the wedding. Regrettably, I would have rather done anything else at that time.

I was quiet. I was the kind of quiet that one would find with a mousetrap, sitting quiet and still, but ready to snap if something so much as brushed the trigger. It was great that Dad had found someone who made him happy, and it was also good that he was back to his regular and healthy self, but, for me, the wedding meant that any hopes of my mom and dad getting back together were now futile. It also served as a reminder of everything that had happened in the past year, and I resented that with every fiber of my body. While I was happy for my dad, I was very unhappy in general.

My mom would remarry later that year to a man named Shane, who was a paramedic. For some reason, I felt less awkward about Shane than Angie. I speculate that this is mostly because they had gotten married only after Dad and Angie. Regardless, it was nice to see everyone happy for once, and I was starting to see the silver lining in all that had happened.

When I print this paper, it will be 2019. Things seem to be going very well. I have a six-year-old sister named Hannah, whom I love very much. I'm at the college of my choice studying the things that drive me to get out of bed in the morning alongside my now close friends. Still, I think of how things have changed since 2008.

By far, the worst part is that for around ten years I blamed myself, of all people, for what happened in the span of two years. It wasn't until more recently that I finally got some closure when I told my dad about this.

"It wasn't your fault. None of it was your fault."

I wish I had heard that when I was younger.

"It wasn't your fault," Mom would've said as I wept at the dinner table.

"It wasn't your fault," Dad might've uttered as he slinked miserably around the house.

I wish I could have curled up in a tiny ball of flesh, bone, and emotions in my mom's lap as she rocked us gently in my favorite rocking chair as she whispered in my cheek, "It wasn't your fault. None of it was your fault."

Looking back, I can't help but think about how quiet it would be. It seems strange—ironic, even—that moments of quiet would appear in a time when in my mind I had none. ► ►

With Liberty and Justice for All

KATI ROBBINS

In this heavily researched argumentative essay, Kati Robbins cites legal precedent, current events, and personal experience to condemn preferential treatment of Christianity in American public schools, while simultaneously urging that all students learn *about* Christianity and other religious traditions. This essay was written for Writing I with Dr. Ben Wetherbee.

THE FIGHT TO KEEP RELIGION out of public schools should be a thing of the past, but it's all too prevalent in today's society. I'm not arguing by any means that religion as a whole should be excluded from the public school curriculum; however, there's a difference between teaching children religious doctrines and teaching children about different religions. Religion as a subject is just fine. In fact, religion has played a huge part in the development of the world's culture, history, art, and literature. It is the morning prayers, the obvious favoritism, and the subtle hints from teachers that aren't right. Public school is not the place to hold religious activities, especially not during the time when the child should be learning other, more important things.

Before we get too deep into religion's place in school, we should discuss religion itself. A factor underlying the inclusion of religious

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practices in school activities is the idea that people, especially children, "need" religion. Some religious theists believe that religion is important because it provides structure and comfort for curious children, but the argument that being religious is always better than not is a faulty one. I acknowledge that religion can be good. I have personally been saved, I have been baptized, and I regularly attended a few different Southern Baptist churches for about six years. I learned that religion can inspire hope, peace, and love in the darkest of times. It brings together communities of likeminded people who aspire to serve others and serve their god(s). However, I also learned that religion can also be very toxic. There are radicals in all religions who take the teachings too far. From these groups, we get religious terrorist organizations, hate crimes, and, possibly worst of all, conservatives. Sure, telling your children that their deceased dog is now in a doghouse in the sky might be easier than explaining the whole "death" thing, and it might be easier to force your child to behave because a magical man in the sky is always watching them, but this isn't always better for your child. Reality may be harder to swallow, and it might take your child longer to learn the difference between what's morally right and wrong, but Austin Cline explains this dilemma perfectly: "This is vastly superior to basing morality on the alleged command of an alleged deity because if a child merely learns to obey orders, [s/he] won't learn enough about how to reason out moral dilemmas in new situations." To date, there is currently no surmountable evidence that religion is necessary to raise a good, morally straight kid.

Parents who decide not to introduce religion to their children deserve the same respect as parents who do. The majority of court cases that handle the separation of church and state involve a school that decided to introduce a religious practice, which resulted in parents becoming upset when they found out. Take the Supreme Court case *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), for example. The state of New York passed a law that required all public schools to start the day off with the Pledge of Allegiance and a "nondenominational prayer" that

went as follows: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our Country" ("Engel v. Vitale"). The law also stated that children reserved the right to exclude themselves if they weren't comfortable with the prayer. One aggravated parent came forth and sued the state on the grounds of violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which states that neither federal nor state governments are allowed to establish an official religion nor establish laws that favor one religion over another. The court found that this law did, in fact, violate the Establishment Clause; justices believed that the exception rule was not enough to make the law constitutional. The assumption that there is a singular prayer that will cover the remaining percentage is faulty and ignorant; not all religions believe in God as a singular, all-powerful entity. While about seventy percent of American citizens do identify as Christian, there are also a remaining thirty percent who deserve to be recognized as well ("Religion in America").

As a country, we have seen many cases responding to state laws that condone the practice of specific religious doctrines as long as children have the option to not participate, exclude themselves, or leave the room. However, at a young age, children learn to follow the majority: "On the playground, we first begin to notice the differences between ourselves and other children, and we start to mirror the behavior of a dominant group in order to be accepted by them" (Cannon). This behavior translates into the classroom as well. When they see other children participating in prayer, for example, children may mirror that behavior in order to belong, even if they weren't raised to pray. Exception to the rule or not, religious or not, chances are a child will choose to pray in order to feel a sense of belonging. Not to mention, this whole process happens on a subconscious level, so it's not as though children can necessarily stop if they try. Parents who send their children to public schools should be able to trust that no religious teachings, methods, or rituals will not be forced upon their children and that their children won't be alienated

from nor assimilated into social groups because of their religion or lack thereof.

FOR YEARS, COURT CASES FLOWED through the higher courts regarding school-sanctioned prayer. *Abington School District v. Schempp* brought about an important quote from Associate Justice Tom Clark: "[I]t might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of Civilization" (qtd. in "School District"). Religion as a subject, I concur, is beneficial to children. Religion played a very important role in the development of America. The United States, before its official founding, was a refuge from the religious persecution in Great Britain beginning in 1630 ("Religion and the Founding"). However, Clark brings up another important point earlier in his deliverance: "This is not to say, however, that religion has been so identified with our history and government that religious freedom is not likewise as strongly embedded in our public and private life" (qtd. in "School District"). Religion is very present in our history and is still ingrained into our government today. We see it most obviously in the Pledge of Allegiance, although it was fairly recently that President Dwight D. Eisenhower urged Congress to include the phrase "under God" as a spiritual combatant within the Cold War (in 1954, to be exact; see "Pledge"). Despite all of our deep religious roots, whether old or new, Justice Clark reminds us that these secular practices don't negate the idea of true religious freedom as guaranteed in the First Amendment, which includes the freedom to not practice religion at all. This statement should be very prevalent on school board members' minds as they plan curricula and/or make decisions to include religious practices in school functions. In fact, as I was in the process of writing this paper, the American Civil Liberties Union sued the Smith County School District in Tennessee for violating the Establishment Clause by incorporating prayer into school functions and attempting to convert non-Christians into believers of the Christian faith ("ACLU

Sues"). You would think that this century-old fight would be over, but it's still as prevalent today as it was back then.

As Americans, we reserve the right to raise our children in the manner we see fit, which includes the right to choose whether or not religion will play a role in your child's life. As a parent, if you are determined to give your child a religious upbringing, there are multiple ways to do so outside of the hours they spend in public school classrooms. For one, you could enroll your child in a religious private school. You could also dedicate some of your evenings at home to your chosen religion. A lot of churches host Wednesday night group meetings for a wide variety of ages. Also, the Equal Access Act of 1984 guarantees that every school must treat all student-led clubs equally, including religious ones, so the child could join a club on school grounds as well ("Student-Initiated"). All of these functions occur outside school's operating hours and still give your child the opportunity to freely study their religion.

Public school is a place where learning should blossom and where curiosity takes root along the winding riverbed of thought. Children are the future of our nation. They will be the next political leaders, doctors, philosophers, and teachers. Students need to feel safe in their own bodies as well as among their peers to truly learn and grow, yet the backlash some students receive—be it real or imagined—for opting out of religious activities diminishes the necessary sense of security. It's time that we realize the importance of keeping religious practices out of our public schools because those schools include children of many backgrounds. It's simply not fair to assume that one prayer, practice, or activity will be right for everyone. After all, our very own pledge preaches "liberty and justice for *all*." ► ►

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Evidence of the "Mad Artist"

SAVANNAH JAMES

Savannah James synthesizes diverse cultural, biological, and psychological evidence surrounding the "Mad Artist" trope. While conceding a valid link between mental illness and creativity, James argues finally that "madness" remains a reductive, damaging, and counterproductive label for a wide range of human experience. This essay was written for Writing I with Dr. Ben Wetherbee.

"I CAN NOT GET RID OF my illnesses, for there is a lot in my art that exists only because of them," wrote expressionist painter Evard Munch, most famous for *The Scream*. The "Mad Artist" is a cultural trope that's endured for centuries, even as far back as the 4th Century (Sussman 21). In ancient Greece, Plato supposedly said, "Madness . . . is the channel by which we receive the greatest blessings. . . . Madness comes from God, whereas sober sense is merely human." Because centuries of human belief have insisted that madness is the source of creativity, does that mean it's true? There is proof that this cultural trope has logical and scientific evidence. There is a link between madness and creativity, but of course, it is not as simple as it seems.

First of all, to find the link between creativity and madness, one must define "creativity" and "madness," which are awfully broad

terms. According to behavioral and social sciences professor Jonathan Appel and his team of researchers, "The definition and depiction of madness can greatly alter the opinion on whether or not creativity and 'madness' are related. 'Madness' is often a social construction of non-conformity and creativity" (95). "Madness" itself is only a term used for any person behaving strangely according to the traditions of the time. The term was once used to describe anything from homosexuality to being a "hysterical" woman (AKA, not behaving as a woman should). "Madness" is an outdated and derogatory term, but "mental illness" can also be applied to the "Mad Artist" trope. This term is more reliable and easier to analyze.

Mental illness is a condition of the brain and its neurology that negatively affects a person's mood, thinking, and behavior. "Creativity" can be defined as the ability to find novel ideas and solutions that are useful. One thing that makes them similar is that they both involve thought processes that are unusual compared to the general population, or as Appel el al. put it,

> The connection between 'madness' and creativity may be found in the shared biological, cognitive, or personality features, related to the presence of cognitive and social disinhibition. Hence, 'madness' may mean something more than merely 'bad' genetics and malfunctioning neurotransmitters, or cognitive variation. (108-09).

In the case of cognitive originality, creativity and mental illness overlap by definition.

Another point that supports their connection is that creativity is correlated with the actual physical presence of mental illness, namely bipolar disorder, mood disorders, depression, and schizophrenia. A lot of creative processing happens in the frontal lobe of the brain, and that activity can be observed through various brain scans. As psychologist Adrienne Sussman writes,

> Unusual activity in the frontal lobe, and in particular the prefrontal cortex, is characteristic of both schizophrenia and manic depression. Hyperactivity in this region may cause a person to draw unusual connections between seemingly unrelated items or ideas, resulting in the delusions of the paranoid schizophrenic or mania. (22)

These "unusual connections" are the very mark of creativity.

Schizophrenics draw inspiration from their unusual sensational experiences. Schizophrenics with creative success include Nobel-prize-winning mathematician John Nash and painters Vincent Van Gogh and Louis Wain. In artists with bipolar disorder or mood disorders, mania leads to bursts of creative activity. According to Sussman, "some manic-depressive artists also credit their depressed periods with giving them important insights that manifest in their work" (23). Artists Van Gogh and Georgia O'Keefe, composer Ludwig Van Beethoven, and writers Jack London and Virginia Woolf are all suspected to have suffered from bipolar disorder, as evidenced by recorded periods of high creative output alternated with periods of severe depression. Mental illness can sometimes naturally lead to artistic expression as evidenced here.

Another thing that links creativity and mental illness is intelligence. According to a study led by psychology researcher Emmanuel Jauk,

> Intelligence is highly relevant for creativity, but the kind of relationship depends on the level of intelligence as well as on the actual indicator of creativity. . . . [I]ntelligence may increase creative potential up to a certain degree where it loses impact and other factors come into play. At this, it possibly applies that the more complex the measure of creativity that is considered, the higher the threshold up to which intelligence may exert its influence. For the most advanced indicator of creativity, namely creative achievement, intelligence remains relevant even at the highest ability range. (219-20)

Intelligence and creativity are linked because they also involve thought processes that are different from the general population. Intelligence and creativity are both means of problem-solving. Creativity is the finding of novel ideas, and intelligence is the effective application of those ideas and the skills of creativity. What ties intelligence to mental illness, however, is that with intelligence comes a separation from average peers and a lack of mental similarity. Because an intelligent brain is gifted differently, it also has different flaws, those that are less acceptable to society. Creative people are often intelligent, but their cognitive gifts are alienating, and, as mentioned before, madness has been defined as being different. That mental difference may lead to "unusual" thought patterns that fit the diagnoses of mental illness: "Those with high intelligence are at significantly greater risk for the examined psychological disorders" (Karpinski et al. 20).

All of these connections have shown how the "Mad Artist" stereotype is true. *However*, I have reason to believe that those artists labeled "mad" are *not* as people say they are. The "Mad Artist" is the collective symbol of centuries of categorization. It is a character invented by a species that just loves to make sense of things it does not understand by creating labels: "One should not ignore that the stereotype of the eccentric artist or of the mad scientist also plays a protective role in the collective imagination. It acts against the fear and suspicion that excellence and the diversity of others always engenders in the majority" (Preti and Miotto). This trope is a fiction because no individual artist fits it entirely. Artists, just like people in general, are diverse individuals. The label is only meant to separate people based on their eccentricities. It is easier to think of these artists as a different breed. The label enforces the idea of conformity, that there exists a group of people who are "normal," and whoever doesn't fit the "normal" standard is "mad." In fact, none of those groups exist. They are only words. Humanity is too complex to categorize. Because of those who push for conformity, there are those who, in rebellion, try to be more different than ever. According

to Antonio Preti and Paola Miotto, individuality encourages creative people to behave even more eccentrically, because the eccentric artist stereotype is glorified by society. The crazies are enshrined as geniuses in the annals of history. Therefore, to some point, the concentrated focus on mad artists perpetuates a cultural trope that doesn't match up to the fact that the majority of creative people are *not* mentally ill.

Despite the stereotype of "madness," the effects of mental illness are unfortunately real. This is where mental illness is counteractive to creativity. Those artists that do suffer mental illness may experience things that cripple their creative ability. The depressive periods of mood disorders result in a dramatic plummet in motivation. A bipolar artist may spend weeks creating many pieces, but not create anything at all for months afterwards. Those who suffer from depression may lack motivation to create for long periods of time. It is also very difficult to create when hospitalized for suicide attempts or institutionalized for mental breakdowns, and—dare I say it?—nothing is created at all if they kill themselves, as did Van Gogh, Mark Rothko, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, Jack London, and Sylvia Plath. In an occupational working situation, mental illness negatively impacts productivity. As Dr. Lipskaya Velicovsky's team found, "People with mental illness scored lower on work performance, cognitive functioning, and hand dexterity while sitting and working with tools. They were assigned lower job loads than were controls, and perceived the physical environment at work as more constraining than did controls" (1396). This can be detrimental to those making a living from their creative work.

Although a person's symptoms of mental illness can negatively affect them, those very symptoms can be a source of inspiration. Some mentally ill people use creativity as a constructive coping mechanism. Cognitive struggle can be a driving force to express the torments of the creator, to find meaning in the way they experience the world, and to gain understanding within their chaotic situations. These are the reasons why there are higher levels of mental illness

within creative communities. An intelligent person is more likely to be tormented, but at the same time their intelligence gives them a great capacity for creativity. Therefore, they turn to creative expression to alleviate their inner struggles. Their biggest problems come from having a different mind, but that very difference also contributes to their greatest attributes: a vibrant experience of the world's sensations and emotions that many do not perceive with such intensity and a frame of mind that interprets things differently and therefore finds novel ideas and solutions. Who are we to say a mind that is different from the majority is "wrong"? "Mental illness" is broadly defined as a condition in which one's mind deviates from *normal* psychological function, but what authority defines what is normal? All people have flaws, but societies tend to ostracize those who make the biggest disturbances to the natural order. Each mental illness is a category, based on thousands of similar individuals with similar behaviors and thought processes, but any mental illness is still only a label, invented by people who are flawed themselves. The fact that any mental illness has a spectrum of variability and function emphasizes the biggest problem with such labels: humanity is incredibly varied and cannot be divided into boxes without contradictions or exceptions. To be flawed is part of being human. Some people just have different problems from others. To call artists "mad" is a capital insult to the diverse range of survivors, innovators, and dreamers that call themselves artists. It creates a divide between "us" and "them" when we are all human. As David Wolpe from *Time* puts it, "To be a person is to be unbalanced, struggling, wounded. So long as we see these things as deviations from what should be and not the natural condition of life, we will be less willing . . . to learn the ways affliction can yield mastery." The mark of a great artist is an exceptional nature, a type of mind that sees and interprets everything in a unique way. Their "madness" may just be creativity with a different label, or they may just be brave enough to let everyone see the strangeness inside. ►►

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End the Stigma

ANONYMOUS

The author recounts how her unpunished rape in high school exacerbated a spiral of depression and isolation. Combining vivid, unsparing personal testimony with scientific findings about neurology, the author powerfully condemns the stigma surrounding open discussions of trauma and mental illness. This essay was written for Writing I with Mr. Alex Coleman.

At the author's request, this essay appears here anonymously; Anne Miller, the speaker's name in the text, is a pseudonym.

Content warning: This essay includes descriptions of sexual abuse and self-harm that readers may find disturbing.

I WASN'T A HAPPY KID. Don't worry, I wasn't beaten by my biological father, who I never met. I wasn't bullied in school, and I was never hungry or neglected. My life was seemingly perfect, or as perfect as anyone's could be. I had a loving mother and stepfather, who has easily taken on the role of my father. I had many siblings close to my age, so I always had someone to hang out with. I had a big family who would do anything and a half for me. I was raised in a half-black, half-white household, which meant we had family over every Sunday for cookouts, watching football and, believe it or not,

contests for who could make the best Kool-Aid. My father always won.

I had absolutely no reason to be sad, but I've always felt like something was missing. I've always had this bad case of butterflies in my stomach, and not the good kind. I would struggle to breathe and would collapse gasping for air. This was when my misdiagnoses started. The first time I was misdiagnosed was when they thought I had asthma. Next was with ADHD, due to my inability to focus and sit still. When I slept too much during the day, I was told to sleep at night. When I couldn't get the motivation to get out of bed, I was called lazy. I was suddenly a "moody bitch on her period" when I was irritable. When I started to engage in self-harm, I was called dramatic, but when I stopped wearing sleeves and bracelets, I was called attention seeker. I was sad, and their solution was to tell me to "get over it." When mental illness is brought to attention, people tend to deny its legitimateness because it isn't visible. That denial complicates things more.

In seventh grade, I was raped in the girl's locker room. The guy was in my gym class. He would harass me and my friends every day, and he would touch our behinds even after we continuously told him to stop. We told the gym teacher, and his solution was to separate us from him. The guy was probably six feet tall. He towered over me like the Empire State Building. He was a football player, one who my brother played with. They were not the best of friends, but they had no resentments against each other. When it happened, it was a normal day, until it wasn't. Volleyball practice was over, and I had to stay after late waiting for my ride. When I was sitting outside, I realized I left my clothes from the school day in my locker. When I went back inside, he followed me in, and he attacked me. I tried to fight, but he was six foot and I was five-one. He had the upper hand. Looking back now, I don't blame my gym teacher. I don't blame my volleyball coach for leaving me. I don't blame myself. I blame him.

I told my gym teacher, and he told the principle. Then, a week later when I was in math class, I was called to the office.

"Come in, Anne," the principle said after I knocked on the door. I swung open the heavy wood and I saw him. My principle and my rapist, sitting in the small room. The guy turned around is his chair and gave me a dirty look. A threat. "Please have a seat, Miss Miller."

My heart was beating out of my chest. I took a deep breath and shoved my emotions down, trying to stay strong, trying to not seem weak. I walked around the guy, keeping away from him, and sat in the other seat. I scooted the seat further away from him. The principle asked me about the situation. While trying to push the tears back, I told him quietly. I kept my head down watching my fingers fidget with each other. As I told the brutal story, my rapist kept denying what happened. He kept screaming that I was lying. Standing up to pace around as if he were a victim.

The principle did nothing. "... is a good athlete; he just made a mistake." "Boys will be boys, Ms. Miller." "I think maybe you said yes and changed your mind? Forgot you said yes? Could that be possible?" "This is all just a big misunderstanding." "Did your friends convince you to lie about what happened?" "Maybe next time don't wear such short shorts to volleyball." "... didn't mean it. You don't want to ruin his life, do you?"

Yes. I do want to ruin his life. I want him to suffer. I want him to rot in hell after what he did to me. I want him to feel guilty for the rest of his life. I want him to feel the repercussions for doing such a horrible thing. I hate him. I want him gone. I want to ruin his life.

"I think we are done here aren't we, Anne?"

I looked at the principle with tears in my eyes. His eyes cold, trying to tell me to drop it. "Yes, I'm sorry."

I left the office quickly, feeling so much shame. Feeling so much hatred towards myself. I left that office and blamed myself for what happened. I questioned my own memories. My own pain. I ran to the bathroom around the corner and barely made it to the toilet before my breakfast came up. Did that just happen? This is when I had one of my first panic attacks. There I was on the dirty floor of my middle school hyperventilating because I was told my story didn't

matter. I was told I didn't matter. My heart hurt in a way I can't explain. After gathering myself, I stood up and looked at myself in the mirror. A broken girl. Black eye and bruised neck hiding behind makeup. I looked at a girl in the mirror and I didn't see myself. I saw a stranger. A ghost.

After that day, I never saw him again. Not in person, just in my dreams. I wish I could say I forgot his face. I wish I could say I don't have nightmares and flashbacks. I wish I could tell you I can talk to boys without a problem. I wish I could tell you I forgave him. But I can't. Because that would just be a lie. A lie I wish was true. But wishes don't always come true.

I've never told anyone about that day. I never went to the police. I never told my mom or sister or dad or brothers. I never told my best friends that story. I've hidden it away deep down inside. This led me to a dark part of my life. This is the cause of my depression. This is how my depression really began.

I started to pull out my hair. No, not like the comic drawing you see when you type "stressed" into Google. I'm talking about pulling out one strand at a time, frequently. I knew what I was doing, but I never questioned why I was doing it. It started with my hatred for my hair. He liked my big, curly, frizzy hair. I would search for the most coarse and curly strand and pluck it out. Wishing if I pulled all the biggest curls, I would have straight hair. I know it sounds crazy, but I just wanted his hands to be removed from my memory. That's all I ever dreamed of. Before I knew it, everything got out of hand. I soon had two very big bald patches starting near my temples going back, I had to start wearing hats to school. Rumor was I had cancer.

As time passed, I got more insecure. I cried every night, slept too much, ate too little, and stopped smiling. I completely lost myself. I completely forgot who I was before this began. I couldn't find any good memories. I was a completely different person. I was so irritable, mean, and passive-aggressive. I was nothing good. A monster. I felt stuck in this dark hole. I felt like I was suffocating. I didn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. I didn't like who I was becoming.

I didn't think it would get better. Every night I debated if this was the day to die.

Everything I just described was hell, obviously, but I couldn't let anyone know I was struggling. I was the class clown. I was an athlete. I was smart. I was popular. Of course, I couldn't let anyone know I thought about suicide every night. Of course, I couldn't let anyone know I was hurt, broken. Of course, I couldn't let anyone know I hurt myself. I couldn't let anyone know I was sad because it would ruin my reputation. At least that's what I thought. I couldn't really tell any of my friends because they were suffering too. One was an anorexic, one was a cutter, one was suicidal, and one did drugs to numb the pain. I think a small part of me believes that I became depressed because I was surrounded by depressed people. But that isn't true and isn't fair to them. They coped in the wrong ways but, in my head, if it worked for them it would work for me.

I struggled a lot with trying to get help. I didn't want to talk to anyone about my struggle because I didn't want them to look at me differently or call me a psycho or be demeaning. I was scared someone would just push me aside and ignore what I was telling them. I was scared someone would say I didn't matter. My story didn't matter. Like the principle said.

When I gathered enough courage to express what I was feeling, I told my best friend. Let's call her Susan. The conversation didn't start with me sitting her down in her room with the door closed then pouring my heart out to her. I wish. The conversation started at the drive-in movies in line for the concession stand. We went to drive-in movies a lot. I stood there and listened to her complain about her boyfriend for the millionth time. With my arms crossed over my chest I stared at the pavement below our feet. After five minutes of her going on and on about her boyfriend, she realized I was totally zoned out and asked if I was okay. Of course, I said I was. But inside my heart ached with sadness.

After getting our root beers and sitting back down on the blanket beside her car, she brought her phone up to take a photo. I adjusted

and smirked just a little bit. I can't really explain the situation very well, but I will try my best. My not making a silly face in the photo made her furious. Confusion and judgement painted over her face. With a tight, demanding voice, she asked what the hell was wrong with me. "What happened to my Anne? What happened to you? I miss the old you. So, whatever is going on, build a bridge and get over it." I was scared. Terrified. I was shaking in my boots and looked at her with big, fearful eyes. It felt as if she were towering over me.

Susan, I'm just sad. I feel like I have this black hole in my heart that is sucking up every bit of happiness in have left. I feel like my happy memories are fading away, so all I know is sadness. All I remember is sadness. I can't seem to find a single thing that makes me genuinely happy. I have to fake it because of you and everyone else in my life. I'm sad, Susan. I'm fucking sad, and I'm struggling. How did you not see this? I was broken, and I need your help. I need someone. I can't find a reason to stay alive anymore. I'm just so sad. How could you not see this? How can you not hear me?

"I'm fine. I've just been tired this past week."

I knew she wouldn't understand. I knew she wouldn't hear me out. She wouldn't help. I smiled the biggest fake smile and finished my soda.

When I say depression is hell, I mean it. It won't let you do anything. When you have depression, doing the simplest things seem to be the hardest. I struggled to get out of bed in the morning and could never find a reason to. There is no point to go to school if we all die in the end, unremembered anyway. Your grades and GPA drop so quickly with depression. I would wait at least four days to shower because it was a chore to get in without sitting on the ground and crying. Not knowing what were tears or just the running water. I went days without eating, then I would overeat and throw it all up. My relationship with food was very unhealthy. When I say depression is hell, I mean it. It won't let you do anything. It won't let you smile, have fun, or breathe without ruining your day.

Weeks after the drive-in, I faked listening to every conversation. My zombified self just sat there and stared into nothingness wishing this endless loop of life would end soon. Most of my memories from that year are hazy because I was so absent minded. At lunch every day, I would grab a salad and pick it apart, staring at the food and the way it moved. The group I hung with joked about things I used to laugh at. Jokes I would die laughing at, holding my belly and crying joyful tears. Jokes that made me happy. But something changed in me and when Brian—who was dating Susan—said a joke. I halfway smiled and continued to play with my food.

"Anne, are you going to eat that?"

"Yeah." I placed the piece of dry lettuce in my mouth and chewed. "I'm not that hungry." A lie I would end up telling for too long.

I got a text. It was one of my closest friends. Let's call her Don. She said she wanted to talk to me and asked me to go to her house with her after school. I agreed after debating for a while. She just wants to help, I told myself. Don't be nervous. She just wants to help. It's okay.

Don's house smelled of roast that had been cooking all day. Her mother was in the kitchen slicing up some more onions. I followed her back to her room, and we sat there in awkward silence. Her dog was barking loudly at the squirrel outside. Don broke the silence by talking about her school day. She continued on about her crush and how he isn't flirting with her anymore. She said she is struggling. This worried me. I knew that Don used to engage in self-harm. Maybe this was my chance to seek help?

"Me too. My life is going to shit, and I don't want to live anymore. I am so sad and broken, and I don't know what is happening." I remember this day well. I remember the look on her face. I remember the fear I felt. She laughed at me and told me I was being dramatic. Don was convinced I didn't have depression because I didn't hurt myself. I wasn't being real, and I didn't count. Don said I was selfish and never listened to what she said. I reached out for help for

the third time, and I was dismissed for the third time. I was tired of the disappointment.

My mother didn't know I was struggling with such intense feelings. I don't really blame her now, but at the time, when this happened, I hated her for not noticing her daughter drifting away. At the time this happened I was pissed she didn't see that I was gone. I lost weight. A lot. I'm not hungry, I told her every day and she went with it. When my room was a mess, she called me lazy. I didn't like having a messy room, but I couldn't find the motivation to clean it. I didn't like having nappy hair, but I couldn't find motivation to shower. My mother was completely oblivious when it came to me.

She only started to ask questions when I started having a stinky attitude. I was raised in a household where you respect your parents. You don't talk back; you do what your told or you will get a belt to the ass. I was raised in a household that would clean and watch football on Sundays. I started to give attitude to my mother when she would ask me a simple favor; that's when she started questioning what was wrong with her daughter.

After my mother finally connected the dots, she sat me down on her bed in her room. Her eyes were warm and soft. I was scared. I was terrified until I realized, this is great. I can finally get help. I can finally tell someone how I feel. I'm free. Finally. God came through. My mother started the conversation by mentioning my hair. I expressed to her what I had been doing, and she said she already knew. She asked how I felt. I told her I felt scared. Anxious. I felt like I had been suffocating. I felt like I was trying to swim but I couldn't. I was in the ocean, drowning. I felt like I want to go to sleep forever. She understood what I was saying. She said that she talked to Don's mother and she suggested a place where I could go to see a therapist. Finally.

 I'm telling you all of this to prove a point.

Too many people don't believe mental illness can kill or is even real. A lot of people struggle with the idea that just because you can't

see it, that doesn't mean it's not there: "Instead of treating those facing mental health conditions with the compassion we would offer to someone with a physical injury or illness, we ostracize, blame and condemn" (Lady Gaga and Tedros). Since mental illness isn't completely visible to the naked eye, like a broken arm, people are skeptical about believing in such a thing. It's easy to look at a broken arm and see that its broken, but you can't look at someone and see that they are broken too. People are quick to say, "You are sad; get over it," around people expressing depression, but I assure you, no one says, "It's cancer; get over it."

There is a stigma around mental illness, and it is dangerous and toxic. People have been in denial about mental illness and its effect for ages. Though there is scientific proof—which I will talk about later—that people still commonly deny the idea that medicine can help: "To deny the role of medication can do great harm to those who may need it" (Novella 19). Finding resources for mental illness was very difficult until recent times. There should be more options for people to get help when struggling with mental illness: "Previous literature has demonstrated a history of bias, misdiagnosis, and cultural insensitivity that has resulted in skepticism and mistrust of the usefulness of mental health service" (Curtis-Boles 1). Denial is keeping people from being correctly diagnosed and getting the right medicine.

When denial is widespread in the field of psychology, it can be extremely dangerous for many. If a mental illness goes too long undiagnosed or unspoken for, it is more likely to explode, meaning the illness will progress until the person with the illness either kills themself or somebody else. According to John Snook, "It should horrify but not surprise us that people with untreated mental illness are overrepresented in deadly encounters" (qtd. in Sifferlin). Mental illness is important to talk about and recognize because without treatment it can lead to death.

There is new scientific proof that brain waves can fluctuate and sometimes change the brain entirely in people who are diagnosed

with certain mental illnesses. The different types of brain scans work because the neurons require nutrients, oxygen, and blood sugars. Position emission tomography (PET) scans send radioactive glucose that moves to areas that are more active. This form of scanning shows where the most active parts of our brains are. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), another popular brain scan, focuses on the oxygen in various levels rather than focusing on the radioactive glucose: "MRI scans have provided useful insights about depressive disorders. For example, they were critical in determining that depression is associated with shrinkage of the hippocampus" (Weiten 96). By looking at the brain and which parts are the most and least active, we can track the differences in mental disorders.

Psychology is a science, arranged facts and truths, meaning there is factual proof that mental illness isn't just in your head: "Glial cells may play an important role in mental disorders such as schizophrenia and depression and in neurodegenerative diseases" (Griggs 45). Dysfunction in the cell can be caused by genetic faults. The substantia nigra is the area of the brain that controls movement. Parkinson's can develop when dopamine-generating cells die, because dopamine is a chemical functioning as a neurotransmitter. If the substantia nigra is overactive with dopamine, it can cause hallucinations and delusions relating to schizophrenia.

I was raped in seventh grade, which left me in pieces. I stopped eating; I stopped caring; I stopped being happy. I stopped being me. I was in the darkest place for so long, and it was fucking exhausting. For years, I've had suicidal thoughts because I thought my story didn't matter. I thought I didn't matter. Now I know, of course my story matters and so does everyone else's. No one should have to go through the experience of being told that what they are struggling with isn't real. No one should have to be shut down because others are closedminded. Suicide rates are as high as they are because people believe they are alone in their fights and have no one to talk to. If people deny the existence of mental illness, then it can kill a person's soul, a body and a being. End the stigma. ▶ ▷

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Her Dear Smile

WENDELL HIXSON

Wendell Hixson offers an expansive, in-depth analysis of Aldous Huxley's "The Giaconda Smile," combining psychoanalytic and archetypal perspectives to illuminate how Huxley's comedic tale of sex, death, and betrayal ironically deconstructs human psyche by comparing its characters to figures from Roman history and Dante's *Inferno*. This essay was written for Writing II with Dr. Ben Wetherbee.

THE PASSION, PANIC, PAIN, poison, and intricately well-hidden allusions to classical Italian literature and Ancient Roman history—all of these elements characterize Aldous Huxley's dense and yet relatively short story "The Gioconda Smile" and its tale of ironic betrayal due to unrequited love. A cruel and perfidious man, Mr. Hutton finds himself falling away from his invalid wife and gravitating towards a young and naïve girl named Doris, but worse still, little does he know the extent to which his wife's aide Ms. Spence loves him. The story unfolds with Mr. Hutton analyzing himself and those around him, as told by the narrator, with respective understanding and disdain. But soon his life contorts itself. His wife is dead and after falling away from an empty promise, and running away from a love-confessing Ms. Spence, Mr. Hutton marries Doris. The story ends, however, with him being framed for the murder of

his wife by Ms. Spence and a final, momentous revelation by the doctor. Huxley remains a master of hidden and vague symbolism, and with his balance of imagery he establishes a strong interwoven pattern of animalistic sexuality and sexual innuendos—ones that'd even cause a reddening of Freud's cheeks in their overwhelming presence—alongside integrated archetypes that enhance his characters and their purpose within the story. The chthonic nature of this story's lines and their meanings strongly mirror the mystery of the story itself. Huxley's structure aids the overall themes; he uses archetypal ideas and characters to foreshadow the plot, while still retaining an element of surprise through the ending. The overall tone of the story is relatedly enhanced. Through strong reference to sexuality, primal desire that feeds psychoanalysis, as well as aptly entwined allusion that brings about effective flavors of archetypal elements, Huxley's "The Gioconda Smile"—the title referencing the enigmatic smile of the *Mona Lisa*—implements psychoanalysis to empower the story's narrative of betrayal and passion and comment on the mysterious irrationality of human nature when experiencing unrequited and fatuous love.

In the beginning and middle of this story, passion and sexuality display a clear sense of true infatuation with zealous and hidden infidelity, and through psychoanalysis one can see that the story presents these feelings with similes, metaphors, and animalistic comparisons that enhance the imagery to stretch the highly emotional and insightful text to new heights of understanding for the audience. Huxley, in his second paragraph, immediately discombobulates his reader with the sheer sexual imagery surrounding Janet Spence—a woman with a "Gioconda smile" (269)—that has nearly no subtlety: "She made you feel that part of his glory had entered into Janet Spence. . . . She was implying a compliment to her own taste and penetration" (268). This blatant language continues, describing her mouth as a "penholder" (279), a strongly phallic image, describing the air of the room that Doris and Hutton lay in as

"quivering" (285), and even discussing Freud's theories of sexual repression straight on (273). And to a more humorous degree: a "sacrificial knife" for a "virgin," a "sausage" (272), and even, "Mrs. Hutton opened out, like a flower in the sun" (277). Yonic symbols are comically represented just as strongly. Huxley's narrator also presents primal language in the form of animal imagery, for animals exhibit a beautifully effective symbol of sex for sex's sake. They are seen as purely instinctual creatures, and this translates easily to hedonism in human terms. Huxley implies humanity is innately hedonistic. Doris even refers to the hypersexual Hutton as "Teddy Bear" (283). Additionally, earlier in the story, Huxley describes Hutton with these terms: "Mr. Hutton bent his large form and darted into the car with the agility of an animal regaining his burrow" (271). And even still he slyly places a fairly entertaining thought in Hutton's head: "He kissed her again. . . . The scientific appellation of the sea mouse, he was thinking" (272). This name—to alleviate your confusion—is Aphrodite, as in the Greek goddess of love. And though it seems romantic, that Mr. Hutton has redeemed his hedonistic self, the reason the sea mouse is named so is actually because its ventral side resembles a woman's vulva. Yonic imagery, once more, prevails in the subtext.

Within all of this information Mr. Hutton clearly establishes that he, for a lack of better terms, has sex on the brain. The narrator simply aestheticizes Hutton's rich thoughts and presents how sexual the world appears to him, whether intentional or not. However, Hutton's unintentional use of sexual imagery only elevates the Freudian idea that his hypersexual id has near full control of his unconscious and conscious minds. His ego also resides at a high level of power. The story follows his thoughts, but Hutton's criticisms rarely apply to himself, and his constant stream of self-compliments for his sexual prowess, wealth, intellect, and morals can't go unnoticed, especially because his morality never leaves the scrutiny of the common reader. As was established earlier, he embraces his adul-

tery and thus dismisses his wife as sickly and worthless. Like an animal, he wishes to mate only with the young, attractive, and fertile. He quickly abandons the sickly creature he married. Commitment means nothing to an animal. Furthering the examination, the psychoanalysis of this story reveals many phallic and yonic symbols and illuminates countless accounts of sexual thoughts and desires, as categorized earlier; these symbols and desires emanate from many characters and their behaviors continuously, though Mr. Hutton epitomizes the sentiments. These underlying motives drive animal survival, but humanity has a tendency to separate itself from its own animal kingdom, even when humans desire sex for the same ultimate reasons fellow animals do. Humans simply add layers of reasoning, whether genuine or in the subconscious name of cognitive dissonance. The passion dripping from the interactions and passing thoughts allows the story to illustrate vigorous craving, though these humorously depicted desires lighten the story and enhance the intentional perceptibility of comic irony. But irony within this story can best be explained through the archetypal lens. With that, the powerful and almost superfluous use of sexual imagery in the subtext builds an undeniable sense of lust and lost morality that builds Huxley's narrative into an extremely vivid description of basic human desire: sex for the sake of sex. Huxley seems to claim that hedonism ultimately usurps all morality in humanity, and our ephemeral and whimsical emotions, the id, will dictate our decisions.

Arguably, the greatest use of subtextual reference resides in Huxley's allusion to other literary and historical works to ironically tinge some of his characters and situations with archetypal connotations of love. First, the use of Roman history reflects the purpose of each character within the story and foreshadows their function. Starting in the first few paragraphs, Hutton states that he hates the pictures of the Roman Forum upon his walls and speaks of Shakespeare twice (268), which can easily be interpreted as references to Julius Caesar, the builder of the Roman Forum and subject of one

of Shakespeare's most famous plays. Hutton also, when speaking of going to Ms. Spence to laugh about the unrequited love she holds for him, says, "He would go and see her as soon as he returned, see and conquer" (285). His sentence's end a hearkens back to Julius Caesar's famous quote, "I came; I saw; I conquered." Ms. Spence even receives this characterization by being illustrated as Agrippina by Mr. Hutton: "Her hair was dark and equally Roman; Agrippina from the brows upward" (269). The significance of these comparisons lies in the history of these characters. Julius Caesar is famous for being powerful and thinking himself godly, but equally for the fatal betrayal he suffered from those closest to him. Obversely, Agrippina is known for being a strong-willed woman, but also for famously being accused of assassinating an emperor by poison. Ms. Spence not only secretly poisons someone, but also in the end betrays her master, causing his downfall, while Mr. Hutton is the prideful and powerful man who has his life concluded with said betrayal. Ms. Spence therefore becomes associated with the archetype of the Terrible Mother, and more specifically the witch. An evil and sexually driven beast of a woman with cruel motives and awful powers that result in the demise of our protagonist, Ms. Spence curses Mr. Hutton even though she had claimed to love him so ardently. However, it is important to note that Hutton hates the Roman Forum, unlike Julius, who commissioned it. And Agrippina was a boastful woman of influence, while Ms. Spence continuously appears to be timid and almost inconsequential, though she ultimately proves to be pivotal. The irony of these situations highlights the contradictions that inhabit the human mind when impassioned; human emotion holds no rationality and, when absolute love and desire goes unreturned, humans seek revenge for something they have no control over. The human mind in extreme circumstances seems to almost work dichotomously, and human nature refuses reason in favor of selfishness for not giving it what it desires and feels it deserves. This leads us once more to the control of hedonism. Nevertheless, the most prominent archetypal analyses of the characters

and situations originate from another piece hidden in the text and subtext of this story: Dante's *Inferno*.

What better explanation for human nature than comparing the pursuit of pleasures to a descent into Hell? The narrator's words conjure this allusion as Hutton literally descends, on stairs, to yet again indulge in his lusts: "He saw a vision of himself descending from one circle of the inferno to the next, from a darkness full of wind and hail to an abyss of stinking mud" (292). The wind and hail evoke Dante's Second Circle of Hell, where the lustful suffer, and connect back to an earlier part of the story where Ms. Spence confesses her love to Mr. Hutton amid a raging, lightning-filled and thundering storm (288). Also, the use of "Stygian," meaning "dark" or "of the river Styx," and its double- and triple-meanings in the story richly give way to Huxley's beautiful use of allusion. Mr. Hutton is noted as having made a "Stygian oath" when his wife died (283); the River Styx in mythology allows one to cross into Hell and in the *Inferno* comprises a ring of Hell where one sinks into the fateful river—i.e., the referenced "stinking mud." While one could go through and overanalyze different parts of the story to chronicle Hutton's journey through every ring, the most important level remains Dante's final ring: Betrayal. Huxley uses this ring interestingly, as he brings Roman history into light once more and seemingly replaces Mr. Hutton with Ms. Spence as the inhabitant of the rings. Within the ninth and final ring of Hell, Satan sits frozen from the waist down and with his three heads chews on the three worst traitors known to history: Judas, Brutus, and Cassius. Interestingly, Mr. Hutton is not guilty of betrayal in the way that Huxley seems to present it. As Ms. Spence has murdered his wife and accused the man she worked for and loved, she is the one who belongs in this ring. She similarly belongs in this ring, since Mr. Hutton has been established as Julius Caesar, and the people who betrayed Caesar—Brutus and Cassius, and in this case Ms. Spence—are condemned here. As this traitor has already been accused of witchery,

it leaves Doris and Mr. Hutton to the discretion of archetypal distinction. Doris seems to offer an odd spin on the soul mate and femme fatale trope, as she seems to be completely naïve of this role. She unintentionally causes Mr. Hutton's fall from grace and final ostracization from the people's sympathies, even when early on she takes the role of Mr. Hutton's soul mate. Doris creates a disconnect that begs the question of who truly caused Mr. Hutton's demise and whether humanity is responsible for its irrationality, or if we're simply naïve of the role we play. Mr. Hutton ironically ends without having descended every ring, but more ironic is the fact that our protagonist seems to fit the archetype of a demon lover, a male sexual monster who preys on younger women for the sake of lust, control, and concupiscence. Yet, "evil" doesn't generally fit his character. He may remain sleazy and lustful, but he isn't explicitly evil. He even claims God and "Fate" are real and have finally caught up with him (296). Huxley potentially reveals through this disconnect that, in spite of humans being irrational when in love or when experiencing extreme emotion, our nature doesn't reveal us to be intentionally evil. Humans simply can't establish a superego when emotions have every variable to run rampant, so it may not truly be a fault of character, but rather a fault in our nature that can be ultimately corrected and deserves some form of empathy. Finally, perhaps these archetypes don't enhance the image of human nature as much, but rather present it as intentionally and extremely vague in contrast to the surrounding black and white thought processes of his characters, a final piece of abstract irony.

Huxley's heavy use of subtextual material and allusion only complements the use of archetypal and psychoanalytical literary criticism. These perspectives are able to delve into the human commentary that Huxley makes throughout his story by integrating outside information that Huxley himself intended to sharpen the story. Through these devices, he is able to lead the reader in one direction, but once the entire story is holistically revealed—paralleling the unexpected and mysterious ending—it quickly becomes an open-

ended question: does human nature leave humanity knowingly or unknowingly in a state of hedonistic despair, or does humanity possess the ability to transcend these desires and find true meaning in our actions? Perhaps the answer to that question is one or the other or both or neither. Perhaps, Huxley and da Vinci are Gioconda smirking in their graves from the enigmatic, unanswered havoc they released on our imaginations. Perhaps these ideas will always be like a Gioconda Smile in nature. And, really, perhaps this question will always remain a mystery, but—much like *Mona Lisa's* dear smile—that usually makes it all the more interesting. ►►

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WRITING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

Buddhism as a Solution in the Western World

CLAIRE SMITH

Drawing from Buddhist scripture and scholarship, Claire Smith argues that the principle of *sunyata*—or voidness—provides a valuable antidote to the frenzied commercialism and hyperindividualism that pervades Western culture, especially that of the United States. This essay was written for Comparative Religion with Dr. Zachary Simpson.

T HROUGHOUT HISTORY, metaphysicians and theologians have tackled the looming, fundamental questions of human existence: What *is* existence? How do we know reality exists? What is the meaning behind it? Religions and schools of thought have brought comfort to people by creating and assigning meaning to the absurdity each of us is trying to navigate. The values and answers Buddhism provides are drastically different from the values that shape Western culture, especially when considering that Western culture has been heavily influenced by the Judeo-Christian traditions. But in the context of the current Western world, Buddhism could be very liberating for people.

We are living in a rapidly changing world, and as we progress in the realm of science, we as human beings often feel more and more insignificant. This world does not exist for us; we only exist within a

small slice of the timeline of life on Earth, floating on a very small speck in the grandness of the universe. With all of this in mind, Buddhism could provide us with solutions for the questions that particularly plague people today.

Many of the values and concepts within Buddhism can be incomprehensible and even shattering for those with Western worldviews. Buddhism focuses on the transience of things. It asks us to detach, as desire and attachment only cause suffering. It asks us to deny the existence of the self and the world as we know it. It suggests to us a nature of reality as described by *sunyata*, or formlessness, a sort of nonexistence of reality. These concepts are radical when applied to Western culture—a consumer culture that feeds on attachment and that defines happiness and success by material wealth.

Our world is abundant with *things*. We attach ourselves to material things because our culture and economy thrive off of them. Manipulative salespeople are successful because they profit off of gullible consumers. We put ourselves in debt because we want the latest car models, even though they depreciate in value as soon as they are driven off the lot. We consume because we worry about other people's perceptions of us; we consume because we think we will be happier if we *own* these expensive material things, though their value is determined by this culture which profits off of our desires.

But Buddhism tells us to strip away these perceptions. Reality is not how we perceive it to be. Taken to the extreme, none of this exists, and this is where we encounter the concept of *sunyata*.

A concept foreign to Western thought, *sunyata* is difficult to define in English. It is often translated as emptiness or formlessness, but it is more than that. It is described as transparency and wisdom and absoluteness.[1] It is a process; it is an acceptance of this voidness;

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[1] Mu Soeng, *Heart Sutra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality,* (Cumberland, RI: Primary Point Press, 1995).

but paradoxically, even the acceptance of *sunyata*, the conceptualization and labeling of the concept, goes against what *sunyata* embodies.

This concept of nothingness is hard to grasp in a world so defined by material things, but this passage by Mu Soeng from *Heart Sutra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality* describes it well:

> The only way to apprehend the dynamic nature of sunyata is through the transitory/momentary appearance of forms. If no forms were to be manifested through it, sunyata would be a dead, static mass but sunyata's function is to infuse the myriad forms. Thus, while sunyata itself is a process, the forms are a manifestation of that process and the process can be understood only through the momentary existence of the forms. It was in this sense of a dynamic, universal energy that ancient Mahayana Buddhism used the term *sunyata*.[2]

This brings us to the transitory nature of things. Buddhism reminds us that all is impermanent. Every second is fleeting, our lives are fleeting, and Buddhism embraces this. We are, right now, only a temporary embodiment of *sunyata*. The current human civilization that we live in is not the end goal of existence, and that can be hard to remember in an anthropocentric culture. One person's life is not more important than any other person's, or creature's, for that matter. This concept of impermanence can help us to climb down from the pedestal we have placed ourselves upon. It can help us to become more reflective, introspective beings, and to regard others with compassion. The knowledge that even this suffering is temporary in the grand scheme of things can help us live our day-to-day lives with more peace.

[2] Ibid., 24.

The "Hymn to the Dharmadhatu" of the Buddhist Scriptures is filled with musings on impermanence: "Because of arising dependently and ceasing dependently, not one thing exists as imagined by fools" and "the form of the sun, moon and stars are seen reflected in a clear vessel of water. The perfect nature (of all things) is like that (that is, appearing, but not existent)."[3]

In the same vein, Zen Master Soko Morinaga writes, "true existence is birth and death, repeating itself, every instant."[4] He writes that we become different versions of ourselves—a spouse one instant, a neighbor the next. He suggests that we die and be born again in each moment. Being present in each moment, accepting impermanence and allowing ourselves to die and be reborn, can be very freeing. It eliminates the burden of the past and future, though we can still influence the future by doing what we can *in this moment*. It forces us to focus on the now rather than worry about what cannot be undone or worry about the unknown.

In Western society today, it is more difficult than ever to be present. Having access to news, the Internet, and social media essentially whenever we want is a hindrance to presence. But making the effort to detach from this excessiveness of information can help us to destress. It can help us filter out some of the anger, fear, and despair we sometimes feel from this overabundance of information, and it can remind us to focus on what we can do directly in this moment to help others. And sometimes that means helping oneself first, for we cannot care for the world if we do not care for ourselves.

Focusing on oneself can be taken to the extreme, however, and Western culture, especially within the United States, is highly individualistic. When Americans think of happiness, we tend to think in terms of our individual selves. Funnily enough, we collectively cling

[3] Donald S. Lopez, ed, *Buddhist Scriptures*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 469.

[4] Morinaga, Soko. *Novice to Master: An Ongoing Lesson in the Extent of My Own Stupidity*, trans. Belenda Attaway Yamakawa (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2004), p. 134.

to the idea of independence. We worship the ideal of the "self-made man," and we want to be self-sufficient. We want the government to intervene in our lives as little as possible; we don't want to pay taxes or pay for social welfare. We like capitalism because we think it gives us independence and we think we find freedom in the endless choices it gives us. We like that we can choose between generic unscented bar soap and name brand high-priced perfumed body wash. These choices allow us to define ourselves. They give us a sense of validation and agency in our lives. Finally, with the advent of social media came the ability to build platforms for virtual selves to exist. We could create a sort of personal brand based on carefully crafted images of a self that we want the world to see.

But this individualism can be lonely, and the plethora of options can be overwhelming. It is easy to actually lose one's sense of self in this kind of society. We are unique, yet we conform; we feel pressured by other individuals to present ourselves as successful or self-sufficient, etc. We must try to sell ourselves to gain any attention. We start to lose authenticity.

Buddhism asks us to deny the existence of self. This is shown in a quote taken from a conversation between the Buddha and the arhat Subhuti: "The Buddha says that a bodhisattva must vow to lead all beings in the universe into nirvana, with the knowledge that there are no beings to be led into nirvana. 'If, Subhuti, a conception of a living being were to occur to a bodhisattva, a conception of a personal soul, or a conception to a person, he is not to be called "a bodhisattva."'"[5]

This may seem extreme, or hard to understand, but when thought of as an extension of *sunyata*, it is almost relieving. We are all just manifestations of this absolute truth, this emptiness we are trying to achieve. Even though we perceive life through our own experiences, we are equal to every other being as a part of *sunyata*. We are equal to every other being in wanting relief from suffering. In the

[5] Lopez, *Buddhist Scriptures*, p. 451.

end, each of our lives end in the same ceasing of consciousness, the same returning to earth, to emptiness, to nonexistence. And emptiness, or nonexistence, is the alleviation of suffering.

Buddhism actually coexists quite well with what we know of science and spacetime and life. We know that we are transitory creatures, that in the grand scheme of things each of our lifetimes is but an instant, unnoticed by the vast, ever expanding universe. We know that the universe might end in heat death anyway, meaning entropy will prevail and existence will cease. Time will cease to exist, and without the conditions for life, so will consciousness. All of this will likely end in emptiness. The ancient Buddhists seem to have discovered some of the fundamental aspects of reality through spirituality and philosophy rather than modern science and technology.

We live in a culture in which science and religion frequently clash—from the discovery that the sun does not revolve around the earth to the theory of evolution. Suddenly we are no longer at the center of the universe, and we are but a part of the process of evolution. These scientific findings can cause life to seem meaningless, where religion provides us with meaning. Meaning brings comfort to people—it dispels the uncertainty and angst that stem from the questions of human existence. People feel safe under the control of a supreme being; they feel safe thinking that life has a greater meaning and that their *individual lives* have meaning. We cannot carry out basic functions if we have no reason to continue doing so.

Buddhism presents solutions that I think can lead us to be happier social creatures. It shifts the focus of happiness and achievement from a self-oriented, material sense to a more thoughtful sense of achievement—a broader, altruistic, authentic sense. It can help us to achieve presence and peace. And while religions can sometimes seem bound to the times and places from which they came, Buddhism strikes me as very adaptable. The fact that it is even appealing to Westerners is significant. It applies to every time and place, with little contradiction. The essential questions and experiences of the

human conditions have not changed, and I think Buddhism is a viable option which can provide us with relief in these uncertain times. ►►

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Dividing Labor
A Review of Heterosexual and Homosexual Couples

KYLEA CAUGHMAN

Kylea Caughman offers a comparative survey of sociological research on labor distribution among heterosexual and homosexual couples, noting the greater proclivity for egalitarian labor practices among same-sex couples. Caughman argues, finally, that the heterosexual couples stand to attain a higher quality of life by resisting gendered labor norms, as many same-sex couples have. This essay was written for Sociology of the Family with Dr. Chris Garneau.

D UE TO CHANGES IN SOCIETAL norms of gender-based work, many heterosexual couples end up having an unequal division of labor in the household. Rational work has been defined as masculine, leaving it up to the man in the relationship. Emotional work has been defined as feminine, meaning the woman in the relationship must be responsible for it. However, as women have entered into labor markets at a greater rate, taking on more and more rational work, this division of labor has become even more unequal than it had been before. Most of the time, men are still only dealing with rational work, while the woman in the relationship takes on both rational and emotional work.

As Western society has become more open about sexuality, more researchers have been able to study homosexual couples, allowing

for a comparison between heterosexual and homosexual couples. Because homosexual couples cannot follow typical gender norms within the household, new research shows how homosexual couples navigate the division of labor between the couple. There is no current norm for how homosexual couples divide up labor, which leads to thoughtful discussion between the partners, rather than each person falling into the role they believe is expected of them. Because of this, homosexual couples often settle into egalitarian forms of division of labor.

This literature review is an examination of how gender-based work influences heterosexual couples, and how homosexual couples deal with breaking these norms. I will determine how heterosexual couples and homosexual couples divide up labor within the household, and whether gender influences only heterosexual couples, or if it also plays a role in homosexual couples. I will also determine what types of divisions of labor lead to higher rates of satisfaction within couples, heterosexual and homosexual both.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Division of Labor in Heterosexual Couples

Over time, men have started taking on more emotional work at home, but the majority of domestic work is still handled by women in heterosexual relationships. According to van Hooff (2011), women in heterosexual relationships, on average, take on about 70 percent of the household labor. Women are staying in charge of the home and family, resulting in a second shift of work for working mothers in heterosexual relationships. As Moras (2017) found, even when the woman of the household reaches out for help by hiring cleaning laborers, she still wants to stay in control of handling this work. Women supervise and select the employees themselves, still leaving part of this household work in their own hands, rather than their male counterparts'.

Despite the existence of unequal distributions of labor in heterosexual couples, the couples often claim to share the labor equally. The couples hold egalitarian values, but the values do not exist in the actual division of labor between heterosexual couples. When this fact is pointed out, both members of the couple are there to defend the inequality. They will claim that one is more competent doing certain tasks, or has preferences for certain tasks (van Hooff, 2011). Though heterosexual couples don't call household labor "women's work," this labor is taken up by the woman in most cases and considered obligatory because of gender expectations. The women in these situations do not claim it as unfair, usually praising their significant others for helping out once in a while (Moras, 2017).

Traditional gender roles within the household significantly explain why heterosexual couples often fall into these forms of unequal division of labor. Both men and women use strategically defend inequality, not challenge it, even when these practices contradict the couple's own beliefs about gender equality. Even when heterosexual couples decide to arrange the division of labor in an anti-sexist way, the woman in the relationship still finds herself reliant on the man's agreement and follow-through (van Hooff, 2011). Among couples where the man is employed and earning money while the woman is not, this role of "homemaker" becomes even stronger. Because the women see the men as the breadwinners, they take on the traditional role of homemaker by default (Moras, 2017).

Division of Labor in Lesbian Couples

In a study conducted by Chan, Brooks, Raboy, and Patterson (1998), the researchers found that lesbian parents on average showed a more equal distribution of unpaid labor than heterosexual couples. However, this relative equality was not found in shared household work, which was relatively similar to that of heterosexual couples. The difference was in childcare, in which lesbian couples had a more equal share of responsibilities than the heterosexual couples examined. Lesbian mothers recieve much more help than heterosexual

mothers. Anecdotal evidence from Dunne (2000) suggested that lesbian mothers opt to find help outside of the household as well, allowing friends and extended family to be very involved in the raising of their children.

However, because lesbians do not have specific gender-normed roles in the household, the division of labor becomes quite complex. It is not always the case that lesbian couples are more equal in the distribution of labor. Lesbian couples have the potential to challenge the breadwinner/homemaker norms, but sometimes choose to adopt them instead. However, a study conducted by Rawsthorne and Costello (2010) showed that the lesbian couples who did adopt this style of labor-division experienced the greatest number of conflicts over the subject. In these cases, it was often the birth mother who ended up in the role of the homemaker. Despite these interesting findings, the majority of families' studies did have some form of negotiation over the division of labor in the household, which minimized conflict between the couple.

Compared to heterosexual men in the study by Chan et al. (1998), the non-biological mother in lesbian couples shows a greater involvement as a caregiver. The researchers attributed this development to identity-formation differences between the genders. Socialization tells women to take on nurturing, caregiver roles, while men are socialized to take on paid employment as a means of providing for the family. As a result, the division of labor when it comes to childcare is more equal between lesbian couples than heterosexual couples, which leads to higher rates of satisfaction of lesbian mothers over heterosexual mothers (Farr & Patterson, 2013).

Divisions of Labor in Male Homosexual Couples

Compared to heterosexual couples, homosexual male couples on average have a more equal distribution of labor. According to the findings of Gotta, Green, Rothblum, Solomon, and Balsam (2011), this equality of shared household labor has actually decreased over time. However, the division of labor between a homosexual male couple

is still markedly more equal than heterosexual couples' division of labor. These researchers, along with Goldberg, Smith, and Perry-Jenkins (2012), found that homosexual male couples equally share not only "feminine" household tasks, but also typically "masculine" tasks within the home as well.

Tornello, Sonnenberg, and Patterson (2015) also found that the distribution of labor in gay male couples was relatively equal, especially when they had negotiated to be egalitarian in the division of labor. Higher levels of life satisfaction were associated with the gay couples who used the egalitarian model for distributing labor, while the gay couples who felt that they had not met that standard held lower levels of life satisfaction.

Male homosexual couples are not completely equal in their division of labor, either. While Nico and Rodrigues (2013) found that gay male couples were more egalitarian in dividing household labor, they were less equal in sharing labor than lesbian couples. The researchers hypothesized that rather than outside factors, such as socialization and gender-normed work, influencing this inequality, that the couple is actually responsible for the inequality. Though they do not gender housework, the inequality is justified by the couple as preference and difference in competency, similar to the justifications given by heterosexual couples.

DISCUSSION

THE LITERATURE REVIEW HAS examined the different ways that couples, depending on their sexuality, choose to negotiate the division of labor within the household. Studies found that heterosexual couples often did not heavily negotiate the division of labor in the household. Instead, they often separated the work by relegating the "masculine" work to the man and the "feminine" work to the woman in the couple. This often resulted in the woman taking up a second shift of work, leaving her less satisfied in this area of the relationship.

Among lesbian couples, division of labor was usually negotiated. In the research, there were some exceptions, in which one woman took on the homemaker role, while the other took on the breadwinner role. These couples showed greater dissatisfaction with the distribution of labor between the couple. However, the majority of the research showed that lesbian couples had the most equal division of labor between the types of relationships examined, most notably in the aspect of shared child-care between the couple.

Homosexual male couples also had a more equal distribution of labor than the heterosexual couples; however, it was less equal than that of the lesbian couples studied. The homosexual couples were not perfect in the research reviewed either, showing some couples that had an unequal division of labor. However, it is hypothesized that this is due to poor negotiation, rather than adapting to couple and gender norms. In terms of couple satisfaction, the couples that had egalitarian forms of division of labor rated higher satisfaction in the relationship than those who had more unequal distributions of labor.

These studies are not only important for expanding the research on LGBTQ+ couples, but also for reading into and understanding the forms division of labor between couples. Questioning and evaluating norms that have been ingrained into couples for decades allows for conversation about why those norms are in place, and whether those norms still represent what we want to see couples do today. Because the typical division of labor in heterosexual couples is gendered, looking at different strategies used by lesbian and gay couples can help create insight into how to change these norms.

Looking at negotiation, specifically within lesbian and gay couples, creates a new understanding of how households can run at the spousal level. Not only does egalitarian division of labor in couples make partners feel more equal, but it also gives both parties within the couple greater levels of satisfaction in their relationship. This can be the key in helping heterosexual women feel more equal and

satisfied in their relationships regarding the distribution of labor and help them reduce or eliminate the second shift altogether.

In America, proposed policy changes are difficult to enact. Marriage and family are institutions that resist outside forces. However, more open discussion about the unequal distribution of labor between heterosexual couples needs to begin. Just as testimonies in the studies illustrate, most of these unequal couples do not realize how unequal they are. They just fall into this outdated system of gendered work and become unequal. In most cases, both parties of the couple even defend the inequality, defensive over their roles.

This should no longer be the case when research shows that equal labor distribution leads to greater satisfaction in the relationship. The division of labor needs to be something unique to each and every couple, and always negotiated beforehand. Gender should not determine how much work is put upon one member of the couple's shoulders. As seen in both lesbian and gay couples, there is a different and better way to handle the division of labor.

This is not something that can happen overnight. Couples have practiced these gender norms for decades, and many still do today. Some couples are already working toward progress, but it might be a long time before the gender norms are broken. Open discussion and criticism can only do so much and reach so many people.

Future research should look more into heterosexual couples who have adopted egalitarian forms of labor distribution. It would be interesting to compare these practices to those of both gay and lesbian couples. Comparing the levels of equity, satisfaction, and strategies used would perhaps shed some light on the effectiveness of negotiation in heterosexual couples regarding the division of labor. ►►

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The Stigmatization of Addiction
Surveying Social Shame

HANNAH FREEMAN

In this literature review essay, Hannah Freeman brings together diverse scholarship detailing the relationship between addiction and social shame. Freeman concludes that only a multipronged strategy accounting for actionable knowledge, education, and public marketing can most effectively destigmatize addiction and allow addicts unfettered access to healthy rehabilitation. This essay was written for Drugs and Society with Dr. Chris Garneau.

ABSTRACT

The stigmatization of shame that addicts face is multifaceted. The objective of this literature review is to examine the relationship in all forms. To begin, multiple types of addiction are explored: substance addiction and pornography addiction. The relationship between treatment and shame is examined. Harm reduction as a drug education approach for children is advised. Primary care bias concerning addicts is reviewed. Drugs laws and how they contribute to the stigmatization of addicts are discussed, along with the best way to combat stigmas: social marketing.

Keywords*:* addiction, stigmas, shame, drug use, treatment

S TIGMA AND SHAME WEAVE a tangled web with addiction. It is a classic chicken-and-egg situation; which came first, the shame or the addiction? That is still unknown. What is known is that stigmas about addiction exist and permeate the lives of millions. Shame among addicts exists and is an unnecessary roadblock to have today. There seems to be a cycle of shame that cannot be broken until we as a society have changed. Stigmas concerning addicts refuse to allow addicts to be seen as people. This literature review addresses two types of addictions: drugs and pornography. Treatment focusing on the impacts of shame is addressed. Optimal methods for children's drug education are discussed, along with how drug laws produce stigma. Stigmas concerning primary care providers are also discussed, as well as the best way to publicly combat stigmas.

The word "shame" conjures up many images, all inherently negative. Wiechelt (2007) examined the array of shame in relation to substance misuse. In the United States, being shameful is not something one needs to ever admit. The Western culture of hiding shame only creates a cycle of shame upon shame. Wiechelt (2007) looked at two types of shame: internalized shame and shame as a self-conscious and moral emotion. Internalized shame is something some individuals are born to have as a response. Shame is even considered something that translates across cultures. The psychological effect of shame also produces a cycle of shame. Shame can be a healthy way of realizing when social norms have been broken. However, shame becomes inappropriate when it is integral to one's identity. The second type of shame, self-conscious and moral emotion, evidences that shame and guilt are two separate constructs. Shame stems from feelings towards oneself while guilt stems from a behavior. To explain addiction, Wiechelt (2007) claimed addicts use their substance to relieve their shame. However, using a drug creates more shame. This leads to abusing a substance in order to relieve the cycle of shame. Wiechelt (2007) also said shame from substance

abuse stems from two places: family of origin and trauma. Dysfunctional families and trauma are closely tied into high rates of substance abuse in individuals.

Belief systems also contribute to the shame. Wiens and Walker (2015) analyzed problem drinkers' belief systems for addiction in relation to stigma and shame. The two belief models studied for addiction respectively emphasized disease, psychosocial conceptualization, alongside a control group with no specific belief model. The results did not show that differing beliefs about addiction had any effect on stigmas regarding a past addiction. There was also no correlation between beliefs and stigmas regarding a current addiction. However, Wiens and Walker (2015) found that people who conform to the disease model and psychosocial model do have a stigma level higher than those from a control group. This concludes that belief, in any model, does have a relationship with stigma and shame. The stigmas only applied to current addictions and not ones from the past. Limitations of this study includes the generalizing of stigmas and a small sample size. There are different forms of stigmas, and people's stigmas in relation to the models could differ.

Chisholm and Gall (2015) examined men's addiction to pornography and how shame plays a role. The study noted how 20% of men admitted to watching pornography and did not find their own actions to be appropriate. Chisholm and Gall (2015) suggested that shame is the underlying behavior. Shame creates room for rumination and potentially sparks feelings of lacking responsibility for one's actions. However, it is important to create a clear distinction between shame and guilt. If a person has guilt, they are taking responsibility for what they have done. "Shame is saying 'I am a bad person' while guilt is saying 'I have done something bad'" (Chisholm & Gall, 2015, p. 261). Among men in treatment for a pornography addiction, those with high levels of shame were found to be more hypersexual than those with high levels of guilt. It was also found that men who were willing to modify their behavior had high levels of shame and low levels of guilt. Those who have high levels of

shame seem to be more likely to perform hypersexual behaviors like watching pornography excessively. Self-compassion was found to be a slight reliever of shame. This suggests self-compassion could be a valuable key to rehabilitation for individuals with a pornography addiction.

If an addict seeks treatment, depending on their own view of themselves, stigmas can play a role in the course of recovery. Luoma, Kulesza, Hayes, Kohlenberg, and Larimer (2014) examined three levels of stigmas in relation to time spent in residential treatment for substance abuse disorder. The three levels of stigmas reviewed were self-stigmas, enacted stigmas, and shame. The results found that increased levels of a self-stigma correlate to longer stays in residential treatment. Luoma et al. (2014) argued that what they found suggests that the users receive a type of comfort in the treatment facility. They also suggested users especially find comfort away from the societal judgement or stigma they would receive on the outside. A notable limitation from this study was its small sample size. Luoma et al. (2014) encouraged treatment facilities to devise specialized treatment for people who report a high self-stigma level in the hopes that their stay is decreased, and the cost is not as high.

Da Silveira et al. (2018) examined the self-stigma concerning addicts who were seeking treatment. Individuals who were alcohol or crack cocaine addicts were used for this study. Three models were compared to help gain a clear understanding of self-stigmas: socio-demographic, psychological, and psychosocial models. The results concluded that the psychosocial model has a clearer explanation for self-stigma than the other two models. Building from this result, da Silveira et al. (2018) suggested that those with higher self-stigmas are afraid of the outside world. They are afraid of rejection and the stigmas from others they would have to endure. A limitation in this study is that only correlation, not causation, can only be found. Da Silveira et al. (2018) suggested a longitudinal study for more conclusive results.

Meehan (2017) reviewed drug education for schools in relation to stigmas in Ireland. Since 1992, a policy has been in place that requires drug education. However, the information approach is used there. An information approach implies adolescents will try drugs because they are blind to the dangers of the drugs. To combat this, educators try to make the drugs as unappealing as possible. They do this through fear with shocking images or stories. It is well known that this approach does not work. Meehan (2017) documented the teachers' own biases towards drugs. These could make students feel like they cannot ask questions in fear of alienation or judgement. Meehan (2017) also suggested a harm-reduction approach to drug education in schools. This type of approach would provide actual, not fear-based, knowledge of drugs and encourage a safe environment for questions.

Seear, Lancaster, and Ritter (2017) reviewed drugs laws in Australia and how they produce stigmas. Seear et al. (2017) began by stating that an important first step is working out how drug laws produce stigmas. Stigmas result from the ways the laws are written and enforced. Those in power often have people they want to send a message to, whether it is addicts, criminals, etc. Burris (as cited in Seear et al., 2017, p. 599) said it best concerning power and stigmas: "Sensitivity to the way stigma operates, particularly through self-lacerating shame and self-discrimination, invites reflection on whether it is morally acceptable to use stigma as a means of social control, even for public-health purposes." Before studying future laws, stigmas must be reevaluated under performative theory. This means stigma must be seen as something that is made, not natural.

Flanagan et al. (2016) investigated primary care stigmas towards individuals with a mental illness or addiction. To do this, participants were taught how to create a Recovery Speaks Performance. A Recovery Speaks Performance involves a retelling of a person's recovery, in detail, with pictures. Twenty-seven primary care providers were split up into two groups: a control and a performance

group. The primary care providers in the performance group reported on average liking the performance, a slight change in their perception, and a slight change in their practice. One primary care provider said, "I was impressed that people stood up and shared their stories. I found it very moving. I learned a lot about how people feel about stigma and how they are perceived and how that affects how they perceive themselves" (Flanagan et al., 2016, p.567). Comparing the two groups, the primary care providers who viewed the Recovery Speaks Performance reported a general better understanding of people who suffer from mental illnesses and addiction.

Lavack (2007) analyzed current stigmas for addictions and the best way to combat them. Lavack (2007) suggested in order to help individuals who are addicted to substances or abuse substances, the stigma needs to be removed. Looking at the attribution-emotional model of stigmatization, two responses are elicited: anger and pity. Anger is produced when it seems an individual is at fault for their own predicament. Pity is produced when it seems like the individual is not at fault. Addiction, in the eyes of most, produces anger. People who fall under the pitied category are better liked and are given more leeway. Lavack (2007) suggests social marketing as a way to correct society's stigmatization of addiction. First, advocates would market a better understanding of the relationship between addiction and stigmas. The second task would be to convince people to give up their stigmas to ensure addicts receive help is a worthwhile cause. The third task would be to introduce this message to the media. The final step would continuate promoting the message and idea.

The stigmatization or shame that addicts face is multifaceted. There exists plentiful research on stigmas and addiction, all of it confirming a relationship between the two. However, an all-encompassing view seems to be lacking, and rectifying that was a goal in this paper. This issue is important because the world is currently in an opioid epidemic, and prosocial behavior is key. People cannot fall suspect to incorrect fears or views of addicts. Addicts need to receive

compassion from society, and then maybe they can start turning that compassion in on themselves.

Harm reduction is a crucial way to start the process of prosocial behavior. It is also an effective educational approach. Empathy for addicts needs to be introduced. An effective way to implement this would be in schools across the United States. Individuals out of school already should follow Meehan's (2017) guidelines for the social marketing of de-stigmatization. The evidence that empathy for addicts exists is already know due to the study by Flanagan et al (2016); the primary care provider, after exposed to the reality of trouble addicts face, had empathy. Following Seear et al.'s (2017) example, politicians could review the current drugs laws to see if the language and the execution of the laws are reinforcing stigmas. The most important step to take is the reintroduction of empathy which calls for the ending of stigmas and the cycle of shame concerning addicts. ▶▶

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Nothing Is Something
The Concept of Minimalism in A Wild Sheep Chase

RHIANNON QUILLIN

In this highly innovative piece of literary criticism, Rhiannon Quillin draws from scholarship on art, architecture, and design to analyze how Haruki Murakami uses minimalist aesthetics to enrich the atmosphere and characterization of his novel *A Wild Sheep Chase*. This essay was written for World Literature III with Dr. John Bruce.

THE MINIMALIST MOVEMENT in interior design and architecture was notably influenced by the traditional designs of Japanese architecture, which later became adopted within American culture and society. In Japanese architecture, the layout of minimalism in interior design and décor typically featured a limited amount of furniture and simple arrangement of composition to emphasize the spacious and open quality of a room or building (Vaughan and Ostwald). This method of design experienced a resurgence in America during the late 1970s that lasted throughout the 1980s, as many apartment-dwellers in upstate New York desired to transform their compact, dense apartments into sophisticated, seemingly spacious living areas. However, the "sophistication" of minimalism tends to carry negative undertones of isolation and emptiness, leading to an overall feeling of discomfort and estrangement with familiarity. Minimalism, as a concept, is believed to occur

in four different modes of discussion: "a minimality of means, a minimality of meaning, a minimality of structure, and a minimality in the use of patterns" (VanEenoo 9). Haruki Murakami specifically, and strategically, captures the overwhelming discomfort residing within different modes of minimalism in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, where the majority of the plot occurs within a spacious, black-and-white, minimalistic backdrop, effectively contributing to the bleak mood of the novel.

The American stylization of the novel coincides with the rising popularity that Minimalist architecture and décor had in the busy cities of America during the 1980s. Minimalism also spread to other forms of art with the concept's prevalence in the popular rock music genre "as early as the mid-sixties when Young's drones were transmitted via John Cale...and from there to the punk generation and their belatedly fashionable nihilism as described by Strickland in 2000" (VanEenoo 8). The narrator of *A Wild Sheep Chase* references many rock bands from this era, including The Stooges, the Yardbirds, and the Doors, all of whom are arguably related to the Minimalist movement with their simplistic styles and composition in songwriting that occurred in rock music at the time. Although these pop-culture references add pigment to the black-and-white tone of the novel, the art form's presence is not solely confined to short references within the novel. Minimalism is also present within the dialogue and identity of the characters and their relationships within the setting.

Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* specifically mimics the style of American detective novels and film with many American pop-culture references, as mentioned previously, residing within the humorous yet cynical dialogue. The dialogue's seemingly "void of meaning" delivery is directly proportional to the setting where, even though the novel begins in the expectedly busy city of Tokyo, the description of the location is established in the concept of "perceived seclusion" within a heavily populated, industrialized city. This seclu-

sion is further emphasized by the emptiness detailed within the narrator's apartment. After an upending divorce with his wife, the narrator takes note of his solitude and describes his current situation as comparable to the experience of "a tiny child in a De Chirico painting, left behind all alone in a foreign country" (23). De Chirco, a Metaphysical painter later influencing the Surrealists, often depicted scenes of "partial bodies in illogical spaces," hence the comparison drawn to the detachedness the narrator experiences with his own environment (McCulloch and Goodrich). Although the apartment was already decorated in a simplistic, minimal fashion, the narrator's split with his wife emphasizes spatial awareness and the frequently occurring concept of feeling lost in continuous, foreign space even further.

The concept of space and Minimalism is specifically referred to within several of the main backdrops of the novel. The structure that the mysterious characters of the Boss and the black-suited secretary reside in is described as "a grand manor" accompanied with an internal emptiness and silence (124). This concept of monotone open space continuously contrasts with the absurdity of the plot, adding a nihilistic, realistic overtone to the unrealistic situations that the narrator, or protagonist, experiences. Interior design also becomes a topic of relevancy in the Dolphin Hotel and the house the Sheep Professor initially constructs, a space the narrator's friend Rat inhabits for a period of time as well. The Dolphin Hotel's lobby is initially described as "bigger than expected" (193). However, the narrator soon learns that the size of the room is an illusion, as it only seems spacious because there is an extreme lack of furniture and décor. The only furniture that the hotel contains is the "necessary amount," as the girlfriend of the narrator identifies the Dolphin Hotel as being a "no frills" type of establishment (193). Again, this concept of "no frills" minimalism is applicable to the house where the narrator discovers the truth about his friend, the Rat, and the mystical Sheep. The house was initially described as "[l]arge, quiet, and smelling like an old barn," holding the essential amount of comfort

and necessities for the narrator to survive on for the length of time he is held up there during the Winter (280-81). Still, both structures, the Dolphin Hotel and the Sheep Professor's house, conjure a rhetorical image of denoted distance, a concept that can be visually detected, and a connoted foreign quality that occurs in undertones (Barthes).

Minimality is present with the identification of the characters, offering the same detachment that is associated with more conventional forms of the art movement as well. Most of the major characters in Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* are not explicitly named. The name of the narrator is never actually revealed, further emphasizing objectivity that is comparable to the extensiveness of minimality in space and the remoteness that is paired with it. In other words, the lack of identification in characterization metaphorically creates space between the reader and the characters, lengthening the space between the characters themselves. This white space, created by the strategic choices of the author, effectively blends among the different aspects of the story and adds a cold and seemingly desolate overtone to the novel.

The adoption of detachment within *A Wild Sheep Chase* conceptually aligns with ideas and perspectives in minimalism, where minimalism—in its effects as a tangible art form directly manipulating space—can then be attributed to providing a solid foundation of setting and tone for the novel. The discomfort and unfamiliarity stemming from the minimalist manipulation of space, or setting, pervade the entirety of the novel in instances that initially may be deemed unimportant or mundane to the plot. However, the white space inherent to minimalism lying between those instances is then emphasized, giving meaning to "the void" of meaning, as well as emphasizing the "décor" that is tangibly there. ►►

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The Racism of Misrepresentation in *The Last Airbender*

SUMMER LAURICK

Summer Laurick compares the animated series *Avatar: The Last Airbender* it's live-action film adaptation, noting how the movie whitewashes the deliberately Asian-inspired cultures and ethnicities featured in the original, thereby, as Laurick argues, exemplifying Hollywood's common and pernicious marginalization of nonwhite characters and cultures. This essay was written for Critical Approaches to Literature with Dr. Shelley Rees.

I N HER ARTICLE "Theatre and the Autobiographical Pact," Sherrill Grace states that acting in theatre has great potential for providing a platform for the stories of minority people who are often excluded or silenced. This is truer still of acting in film, which tends to reach a much wider audience and thus have a larger impact. Some believe that specifying needs such as race or gender in casting a role are unnecessary restrictions, and that the point of theatre and acting is the ability to take on different perspectives—essentially, anyone can become any role. However, desiring accuracy in casting goes further than wanting someone to "look" the part; too often, misrepresentational casting is done to conform to an ignorant public's preconceptions or schema about what a certain group must *be*, therefore sating old stereotypes for hegemonic comfort rather than

breaking the boundaries of diversity and causing a stir. There is still a growing problem in the pop-cultural world of pushing characters of color to the sidelines or whitewashing them when their works are adapted into movies, thereby absorbing their identities and spitting out reinvented versions of minorities' works that are similar to their original versions in name only. *The Last Airbender* is a prime example of taking characters who are clearly non-white and reinventing them through whitewashing in the movie adaption, contributing to the continuation of racial insensitivity in the film industry.

When it comes to race and casting, there is still division on what is considered acceptable. Why is it such a problem for a white actor to play a character of color when we are (mostly) past the days of blackface? The answer is simple: When certain groups of people are mis- or underrepresented in media and storytelling, their few outlets of expression to share personal and historical experience—or, at the base level, simply to exist as visible figures—should not be given to those groups that, repeatedly, are given the literal and metaphorical spotlight over them. Unfortunately, this is exactly what happens in *The Last Airbender*. *Avatar: The Last Airbender* is an animated television show that ran from 2005-2008 and proposed a world in which individuals possess the ability to control (or "bend") the four elements—water, earth, fire, and air. The world of *Avatar* is heavily based on East Asian design, with each elemental nation styled after a different culture: the Earth Kingdom after China, the Air Nomads after Buddhist monks, the Fire Nation after Japan, and the Water Tribes after Native Inuit peoples. Characters are given obviously Asian-esque names such as Aang, Mai, Ty Lee, and Ozai; furthermore, they are clearly drawn in a manner meant to evoke Asian ethnicities, with epicanthic folds (aside from those characters drawn with quasi-anime features, which also implies Asian influence) and non-white skin tones. The different styles of elemental bending are based on different forms of martial arts, and many aspects of Asian and Native cultures are respectfully woven into the plot and the

world. In essence: the world of *Avatar* is exclusively non-white, obviously and intentionally so. However, when the show received its own live-action movie adaptation directed by M. Night Shyamalan in 2010, there was a major, jarring difference: the protagonists were white.

M. Night Shyamalan's reimagining of the *Avatar* world appears to move it out of Asia and give it a more globally inclusive feel. The ethnic makeup of the Water Tribes and Air Nomads is largely white, somehow supposedly European despite retaining cultural similarities to the original peoples who inspired them. Because the movie is based only on the first season of the show (which focuses on the Water Tribes), the Earth Kingdom is not shown in detail, but it appears that Shyamalan decided to shepherd any Asian ethnicity to this area alone. Finally, it is the Fire Nation—the antagonists—who are mostly cast as Indian and Middle Eastern. The message received through these casting choices, whether intentional or not, is disturbing. The protagonists, the *heroes*, are white; they still possess the cultural characteristics and influences of their original sources but have been given white skin and faces, essentially appropriating the cultures which were formerly respectfully represented in *Avatar*. Although East Asian peoples are not completely removed from the movie, they are shuffled to the background, part of the massive and populous Earth Kingdom (a comparison to China that is far less tasteful than *Avatar's* symmetries) but not allowed to hold a title role. Perhaps most disturbing, though, is the juxtaposition of the white heroes against the brown-skinned villains. Creating a cast of Indian and Middle Eastern antagonists to pit against a group of white heroes in an American movie cannot go unnoticed and cannot be considered a subtle, harmless choice. It is a classic trope that is usually left in the past: stylizing villainous characters after a group of people deemed to be "othered" and frowned upon. Not only did this choice take away opportunities for Asian actors to portray such powerful, vibrant, beloved characters, but it dealt a racist blow to perceptions

of people of color and controverted the very message that the original show perpetuated: that no one group is evil or good, and it must be the individual whose morality is examined.

In addition to the overt "racebending" in the movie, Shyamalan also twists another crucial aspect of the characters' identities: their names. Although the spellings are presumably kept the same, pronunciations are changed. The sharp, obviously East-Asian-sounding Aang is given a more open pronunciation, now rhyming with "song." Katara's name is left alone, but Sokka is reintroduced with a short O, as in "soak." Even Iroh has his name changed from EYE-roh to EE-roh, sounding more Russian than Asian. These changes were especially jarring to fans, as the pronunciation of character's names was something clearly understood through the original show. This changing of names is symbolic of the way Shyamalan has rewritten the characters' identities: they are not and can no longer exist as they were, and have been shaped to fit the whitewashing they endured. This misrepresentational casting is, at its very base, an insult. This blatant dismissal goes beyond one role, beyond one incident; it sends the message that a white person was considered better to play a person of color than any actual person of color would. Never mind that such decisions normalize atrocities like blackface to a receptive public who praises them as "tastefully done," completely rewriting the steps that have been taken since the days of minstrel shows to break out of these oppressive boxes; it is an affirmation that audiences don't care if what they see is a caricature whose actor is appropriating a role that could have been used to further underrepresented voices in the so-competitive, so-discriminatory film industry.

In the case of theatre and film as platforms for minority voices to be heard, it must be understood that such representation only works if sensitivity is used during casting. *The Last Airbender* faced immense backlash for its racist-tilted whitewashing of beloved characters, thus removing opportunities for non-white actors. It is irrelevant if the character's race can supposedly be changed without

damaging the story; it damages the story of the group, if not the in-
dividual, rewriting and reducing until the general public only has to
face what they want to believe is true, never having to question if
there is more to the story. ▶▶

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Psychoanalyzing Draco Malfoy:
A Queer Werewolf?

BAYLEE BOZARTH

Drawing from psychoanalytic theory, queer theory, and folklore studies, Baylee Bozarth investigates the prevalent fan theory that Draco Malfoy – a chief antagonist of the *Harry Potter* saga – is actually a werewolf. Noting the thematic connections between lycanthropy, queerness, and racial othering, Bozarth explains why this theory holds water and potentially enhances readers' appreciation of the *Harry Potter* universe. This essay was written for Critical Approaches to Literature with Dr. Shelley Rees.

W EREWOLVES HAVE LONG been studied by theorists as a symbol of queerness because of the way that they actively defy normativity in the same "beastly" way that society ascribes to queer individuals (Bernhardt-House 188). In the *Harry Potter* series, Remus Lupin and other werewolves can be psychoanalyzed as characters who are queered. The way that other characters respond to them can also be analyzed to explain fan theories, specifically the theory that Draco Malfoy is a werewolf. Combined with the significant amount of homoromantic fanfiction written about Draco, these aspects together show a connection between psychoanalysis and queerness that is expressed through werewolves in the series.

The idea that Draco Malfoy is a werewolf comes from evidence in the series, which suggests something outside of the canon. Some of the evidence is speculative, such as the fact that Harry is almost never correct in his assumptions about people, and Hermione is. Harry thinks that Draco is a Death Eater, and Hermione disagrees (Super Carlin Brothers). However, there is also evidence that, at the very least, Draco is not a Death Eater. Throughout the last two books his Dark Mark (the symbol branded on Death Eaters) is never revealed. He seemingly cannot pass through barriers intended only for people with Dark Marks. Fenir Greyback famously places himself near children of the people who have failed Voldemort, which Lucius Malfoy does the end of the fifth book. Draco might be a werewolf, assuming Voldemort had chosen to enact revenge. All of this information was gathered by fans in a productive and creative way. This engagement suggests Draco is a psychologically interesting character for fans to speculate about.

Judith Butler wrote "Passing, Queering" as an analysis of how differences of race might be derived from differences in sex and sexuality, which lead to the oppression of queerness in many ways (282). For the purpose of this essay, we can view race the way characters do in *Harry Potter*. There is a race of pureblooded wizards. To them, people who are not full-blooded wizards are seen as racially inferior. They are obsessed with keeping their lineage pure, and often marry cousins (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 113). Werewolves are viewed as even worse. Lupin resigns from his post as a Defense Against the Dark Arts professor after the student body finds out about his lycanthropy (*Prisoner of Azkaban* 423). Draco Malfoy is born into one of these pureblooded families with racial prejudice, which is evident by their involvement in the Death Eaters, a group meant to racially cleanse wizardkind.

In Butler's essay, she explains that part of what connects sexuality and race is the question of "passing" (284). In the novel she analyzes, *Passing* by Nella Larson, a black woman is able to pass as white (Butler 284). In *The Prisoner of Azkaban,* Lupin is able to

pass as a wizard who is not a werewolf for most of the book. Butler suggests that the ability of a character to pass as what is considered normative stems from simple association. If Lupin associates with non-werewolves, they operate under the assumption that he is also not a werewolf. The underlying fear that presents itself to the non-werewolves is that, if Lupin can pass, then there is nothing to constitute their own non-werewolfness (Butler 285). Therefore, the purebloods' hatred of werewolves is useful to them, because it identifies them as not that.

Werewolves reflect more than race in the series. As Butler says, the underlying issue is sexuality. Medieval werewolf stories are often blatantly sexual (Bernhardt-House 165). This is not the case in *Harry Potter*. Remus actually fears intimate relationships because of the possibility of turning either the person he is with or his children into werewolves as well (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 213). While he eventually does choose a seemingly heterosexual partner, she also lives outside the realm of normativity in the same way that he does: transformation. Nymphadora Tonks mirrors Lupin's queerness in that way (Bernhardt-House 173). Both werewolves and metamorphmagi can represent transformation in the queer community, specifically transgender or gender-nonconforming people. Werewolves in the series are both a race of characters and a representation of sexuality and gender.

Jacques Lacan believes his theory of the mirror stage is fundamental in human development. This is the period of time when toddlers begin to be able to recognize themselves in the mirror (269). The period occurs before children have to ability to speak, and therefore it is the first time they are faced with the idea that the world exists outside themselves. This is called the *I* formation (270). They also recognize the image in the mirror as their ideal selves, which Lacan calls their ego. They become incredibly jealous and hate their reflection, while simultaneously loving and adoring it (271). Recognizing oneself in the mirror, for Lacan, is the foundation of social relationship for the rest of their life. Post-mirror stage, after

children gain language, they also recognize other people as also outside of themselves (272). This stage can lead to different results, depending on how adults deal with the pressure of society, and their own idealized self. One possibility is narcissism, in which one centers their ego, allowing for, in some cases, the manifestation of the Freudian id. The way that a person understands themselves is entirely dependent on how they compare to the world outside their own body.

Draco Malfoy, throughout the series, is obsessed with himself in relation to other characters. He has grown up in a family belonging to a racist organization. Before Voldemort even returned to power, Draco's father participated in an attack on muggles at the campsite outside the Quidditch World Cup (*Goblet of Fire* 120). Draco mocks Hermione, telling her to flee the scene, because her parents are muggles, and she is racially impure (122). We also find out that the Death Eaters have a prejudice against werewolves when they mock the Bellatrix and Narcissa for having a niece (Tonks) who married a werewolf (Lupin) (*Deathly Hallows* 10). This occurs after the speculated transformation of Draco, and the Malfoys do not laugh along with the other Death Eaters (10). Voldemort asks Draco if he would plan on "babysitting the pups." Draco looks terrified at this thought, possibly because he might be outed as a werewolf. Another possibly is that he is disgusted by the thought. Ultimately, we can assume that Draco's family held the same level of hatred for werewolves; they discriminate against all wizards without "pureblood."

Malfoy's extreme hatred for werewolves is an acknowledgment of the fragility of his pureblooded status, which constitutes his entire sense of selfhood. Lacan speaks briefly about the way that the *I* formation manifests in dreams. These dreams include a central tower of some sort, which is heavily fortified, and impossible to infiltrate (271). Draco is fortifying his inner werewolfness with an ironic aversion. Since werewolves are a representation of queer

identities in the series, he is, in another way, repressing his queerness. Psychoanalysis can explain both of these fan theories about Draco Malfoy.

In Butler's essay, she discusses more than just how being white is constituted by through aversion to black people or other people of color. She also, when talking about the relationship between the white husband and his wife, points out that he both idealizes and loathes her. The feelings he places upon her create her, and by association himself (285). This is similar to the way that Lacan describes how people feel about their ideal-*I*. Both the hatred and love of someone seemingly outside themselves creates their personality and selfhood. Therefore, Draco's hate for werewolves might actually be a repression of his true self. When fans theorize about Draco being queer, they most commonly write fanfiction and create fanart about Draco and Harry Potter, whom he hates diligently throughout the series. On the Hogwarts Express during their sixth year, he stuns Harry, hides him under his invisibility cloak, breaks his nose, and then leaves him on the train to be taken back to London (*Half-Blood Prince* 153-54). This relationship is often viewed as homoerotic from both sides, because their hatred for each other is a product of separating themselves from their queerness.

On the popular fanfiction website *Archive of Our Own*, it is possible to sort stories by "pairing," or romantic relationship. The most popular is Harry and Draco, which has over twice as many as the next most popular: Remus Lupin and Sirius Black. This makes Draco and Remus two of the most commonly queered characters in the *Harry Potter* series. P.J. Falzone talks about the history of what has been known as slash fanfiction, or simply slashfiction, including common tropes used in stories, as well as possible reasons for the popularity of the genre among heterosexual women. He quotes Camille Bacon-Smith, who states, "the homoerotic stories stimulate sexually through the fantasy while at the same time they distance the woman from the risk sexual relationships with men represent" (qtd. in Falzone 248). Remus Lupin is a known werewolf, and Draco

Malfoy is a suspected Death Eater or werewolf. Both of these characters symbolize possible dangers, which make them interesting to queer for fans.

The psychoanalytic function of werewolves in the *Harry Potter* series is to express queerness. Remus does this by transformation, and by the reception he receives from wizarding society. By exemplifying werewolves as a symbol of the queer in the series, Draco Malfoy becomes a much more interesting character, because he is often theorized to be queer or a werewolf. According to Lacan's mirror stage theory, and Judith Butler's analysis of race and sexuality, the act of identifying himself against queerness and werewolfness stabilizes his own identity in his mind, but not in actuality. In fact, the stronger his aversion becomes, the weaker his identity becomes with it, making it possible for him to be both. While this is not canon in the series, fan participation helps create the story and the characters within it. ► ►

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Reproductive Nostalgia
Pregnancy and Birth in Dystopian Fiction

GENEVIEVE GORDON

In this detailed comparative analysis, Genevieve Gordon configures Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* and the film *Mad Max: Fury Road* as latter-day feminist responses to the nostalgic and arguably regressive yearning for natural birth and childrearing seen in classic dystopias – here represented by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*. This essay was written for Bad Space: Rhetorics of Place in Dystopian Fiction & Film with Dr. Ben Wetherbee.

AMONG THEIR MANY PURPOSES, the terrifying worlds built by dystopian texts serve to reflect the cultural fears and tensions of their genetic contexts. Often, what a dystopian regime seeks to rid its society of is indicative of what the text's audience or creator is terrified of losing; in this way, the selective presences and absences in dystopian fiction represent what is considered truly important and worthy of preservation. Perhaps this is why problems of reproduction and childbirth figure so prominently into so many of the hallmark pieces of the dystopian canon—the processes of childbirth and parenting are among humanity's most sacred rituals. In many of these texts, the condemnation or criminalization of natural childrearing connotes an alienation from

humanity in general, making it an avenue by which to reconvene with humanness.

There are two general trends treating the issues of childbirth and reproduction in dystopia. The first is that of many of the core texts of the old dystopian canon, which revolve around the aforementioned anxiety about losing touch with the "natural" elements of humanness through developments in science that make childbirth unnecessary. These works, most notably Aldus Huxley's *Brave New World* and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, hold birth and parenting as sacred institutions, the threatening of which can rob a society of its humanity. In these dystopias, birth and parenting become taboo subjects, and a woman's desire to become a mother becomes a rebellious instinct. Conversely, more modern dystopias approach these issues from a different perspective: that of the women on whose bodies this burden of natural human connection falls. These feminist dystopias, including Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and the postapocalyptic, cinematic dystopia of 2015's *Mad Max: Fury Road*, flip the script to question the romantic worship of childbirth and speculate on the dangers of a return to "traditional values" that Huxley and Zamyatin foreshadow. Comparison between these two general ideological treatments of reproduction reveals differences between the values of the old dystopian canon and new, feminist dystopias, as well as suggesting distinction between male-centric and female-centric speculative fiction.

The themes of family and sexual desire in dystopian fiction are symptoms of an overwhelming preoccupation with nature and the natural. This is what Gorman Beauchamp calls "cultural primitivism," the reaction to overly logical, overly civilized civilization that sets the "'natural' man against the rigid and reductionist rationalism of utopia" (88). The desire to reconvene with nature comes from a paranoia about excessive development of industry, science, and technology and their capacity to usurp the role of the individual. Spaces like the wilderness outside the Green Wall in *We* and Mal-

pais in *Brave New World* serve as preserved specimens of the primitive natural world that protagonists trapped in emotionless regimes can yearn for and escape to. While there is a lack of research regarding the role of childbirth in dystopian fiction, there is extensive commentary on the dystopian obsession with sex and how it relates to this nostalgic, naturalistic tendency. Dystopian scholars frequently discuss the role of woman characters in dystopian novels as sexual catalysts for rebellion and revolution. In "Revolutions from the Waist Downwards," Thomas Horan suggests that these texts highlight the differences between the male and female body, allowing rational, logical male characters to be emotionally and sexually persuaded. "The female body reflects a mysterious, ungovernable, potentially dangerous space," he writes, "offering always the possibility of upheaval and renewal" (322). Female fecundity and pregnancy represent potentiality and promise; a pregnant woman in a dystopian narrative extends the timeline of the text to the future, beyond the novel's confines, to the next generation. Additionally, dystopian criticisms of artificial reproduction and government-controlled childrearing are so prominent because of the societal, supposedly natural sacredness of the family institution. Utopian scholar Bruce Christensen attributes this dystopian obsession with preserving the family unit to a reaction against the "utopian assault against marriage and the family" (34). He contrasts utopian ideals of communal parenting and shared spouses like those expressed in texts like Plato's *Republic* with the importance placed on the family in the book of Genesis (33-34). Dystopian fiction sees a danger in minimizing the importance of emotional attachment and family bonding, while the utopias they retaliate against see collectivization and government involvement as rational and progressive.

Aside from its tangential relationships to primitivism, sexual politics, and family relationships in dystopian fiction, there is little scholarship on the actual function of pregnancy in these narratives. In its place, feminist theories on reproduction and body experience

are extremely useful in deciphering the ways feminist dystopias re-configure the role of pregnancy. In *The Second Sex,* Simone de Beauvoir expresses a much grimmer opinion of the processes of pregnancy, birth, and motherhood. Pregnant, a woman becomes "ensnared by nature," she writes, and becomes "plant and animal, a stock-pile of colloids, an incubator, an egg" (495). Although a woman may feel like she is doing something grand and productive with her body, she has really become "life's passive instrument" possessed by a "parasite" of a fetus against which her body constantly revolts (498). De Beauvoir paints a picture of pregnancy and birth that is far from the beautiful and miraculous representation it gets elsewhere. She continually characterizes these processes as "animal," but also "terrifying" and "morbid." A pregnant woman becomes neither subject nor object, but a passive means of existence for the fetus; society "invests it," de Beauvoir writes, "with a sacred character," giving the woman a sense of humanity and productivity when, in fact, she has none (496). The misconception of maternal instincts and love as natural leads to the gross manipulation of women. "A social and artificial morality is hidden beneath this pseudo-naturalism," she asserts, "that the child is the supreme aim of women is a statement having precisely the same value of an advertising slogan" (523). To de Beauvoir, women suffer at the hands of nature, rather than gain autonomy from it as men do.

A strangely similar sentiment about birth finds a voice through the totalitarian regimes of the old-canon dystopian novels: a dismissal of natural birth as base, dangerous, and disgusting. In no text is this more heavily discussed than in *Brave New World*; childbirth is associated with "diseases" and "endless isolating pain" that are avoided by bypassing the natural birth process with science (41). Huxley goes to great pains to explain that birth has not only fallen out of favor and been replaced by eugenic cloning, but the very concepts of parenthood and mothering have become social taboos. The word "mother" is a vulgar curse word, while children are encouraged to sexually experiment from an early age; the sacred is replaced with

the perverse, and sex is alienated from biological notions of family and lineage. The relationship between mother and child, along with sexual monogamy and family in general, is rejected because it is selfish and illogically passionate. "Try to imagine," Mustapha Mond lectures to onlooking students, "what it was like to have a *viviparous* mother" (Huxley 36). "What suffocating intimacies, what dangerous, obscene relationships between the members of the family group!" (37). The use of the word "viviparous" here, repeated frequently throughout the novel as an expression of disgusting naturality, likens pregnant women to breeding captive animals.

Part of what distinguishes John the Savage from the characters around him is his having experienced a mother-child relationship; this gives him a psychological depth of character that the others lack (Christensen 35). This distinction serves to more fully associate birth and motherhood with naturalness and primitivity. Combined with his obsession with Shakespeare, this makes John a nostalgic representative of the past who, like the readers, finds himself unable to comprehend the society Huxley has fabricated. *Brave New World* does not provide an outright rejection of civilization and progress; with its violence and danger, Malpais is no Edenic utopia, either. The suspicion of genetic science is pervasive, however, and extremist versions of birth control and abortion procedures present a skeptical view of medical interference with natural reproduction.

Predating even *Brave New World*, Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1921 novel *We* represents a cultural anxiety about losing the emotional connections involved in the entire reproductive process. Pregnancy is highly regulated, and children are raised by the One State in a "Children-Rearing Factory" (107). While the reader is not given an extensive description of test-tube eugenic processes as in Huxley's novel, *We* expresses the fear of bureaucratic invasion into the private and sacred family institution. The confessional thoughts of the narrator, D-503, convey a mourning of maternal bonds as he gradually realizes the bleakness of his surrounding society. "If only I had a mother like the Ancients: my—yes, exactly—my own mother," he

laments, "she would know me" (189). The narratives of mothering and biology culminate in the character of O-90, deemed too short to have a baby by the One State. Eventually, her overwhelming maternal desire overrides her respect for the law, and she begs D-503 to impregnate her illegally. He does so and helps transport her outside the Green Wall that separates their hyper-logical and modern world from the nature outside. O-90's narrative paints pregnancy as the overwhelming biological desire of womankind, and her pregnancy becomes a rebellious act against a regime that seeks to eliminate impulse and feeling of all sorts. Once pregnant, she exclaims to D-503, "I am so happy—so happy. . . . I am full—you see—full to the brim" (149). When describing her pregnant body, our narrator imagines a scene of "springtime over there, in the green thickets," where "new sprouts fight their way through the earth just as stubbornly—to yield branches and leaves and to blossom as quick as they can" (149). What is happening in O-90's body is a symptom and manifestation of the erotic and primitive earth.

Her escape to the area outside the Green Wall, though her exact fate is uncertain, is bestowed with a primitive optimism; she avoids the disastrous fate of Zamyatin's other characters and completes the "return to nature" that so many dystopian narratives endorse. This rebellious motherhood trope appears again in 1971 in George Lucas's sci-fi dystopia *THX 1138,* where similar restrictions on intimacy and reproduction ensure the continuation of a Huxleyesque breeding situation. Here, the rebellious pregnancy is not a manifestation of inward primitive maternalism, as in O-90's case, but a representation of forbidden love and an uncertain future. These women become heroes of their narratives—they become rebels, martyrs—for desiring and acting upon traditional notions of maternalistic femininity that coincide with the hegemonic social norms of Zamyatin's and Lucas's authorial contexts, which these dystopias express fear of losing.

The treatments of pregnancy, childbirth, and maternal relationships in the narratives of Huxley, Zamyatin, and Lucas hold up these

traits and processes as core tenets of the human experience and that are at risk of being lost in their own contexts. There runs through these texts an overarching fear of rapid modernization that will leave the natural world and its primitive knowledge behind. The threat of idealistic, totalitarian, communal parenting threatens the relationship between mothers and children; advances in genetic science and birth control question the necessity of natural birth as a consequence of sex. Characters like D-503, who long for a maternal relationship, and those like O-90, who yearn to feel the sense of purpose that accompanies pregnancy, are representative of real human need—this is what makes these novels so compelling. However, they are also instruments of a rhetorical cause that borders on a dangerous nostalgia for pre-science, pre-sexual-liberation ideology. This nostalgia accompanies an assumption that what is natural is preferable, and what is natural is for women to bear children.

Whether it was what Huxley or Zamyatin would have endorsed is uncertain, but the return to "old-fashioned" reproductive ideology for which the classic dystopian canon mourned emerged in the late twentieth century with the rampant conservatism of the 1980s. Alongside the Reagan administration came loaded rhetorical terms like "family values," symbolizing a widespread disdain of non-"traditional" behavior from homosexuality to birth control to abortion. Backed by powerful political and religious institutions, this movement was operating at full force in 1986 when Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* was published, making what takes place in the Republic of Gilead even more believable. As dystopian scholar Peter Fitting points out, "this renewed regulation of women's bodies—for 'breeding purposes'—marks the triumph of the Moral Majority and its 'family protection' agenda" (144). Margaret Atwood's novel serves as an interesting feminist counterpoint to the desire for the "natural" of Huxley and Zamyatin. It asks the question: what happens when birth, a natural function of a woman's body, is valued so much that it becomes the woman's destined, exclusive purpose and a tool

by which society exercises a nostalgic impulse towards revived patriarchy? For Handmaids like Offred, this is the case. Offred, like O-90, yearns to inhabit the pregnant body—but for her, it's so she might avoid exile and death.

In Gilead, an ideology like the nostalgia expressed through *Brave New World* and *We* surfaces in the religious explanations used to justify the treatment of the handmaids. The biblical story of Rachel and her handmaid, Bilhah, is repeated to Offred on each sexual ceremony day to urge the heroic, honorable, and sacrificial nature of her work. These verses stress the natural, divined purpose of a woman's body, the debt she must pay to her species for being born female. Through this ritual, the patriarchal structure of Gilead represents real-world ideology, what Dorian Cirrone identifies as "cultural scripts on reproduction and mothering" that cause women to "unwittingly sustain their own positions of subordination and eventual enslavement" (6). In "Millennial Mothers," Cirrone suggests that *The Handmaid's Tale* masterfully shows how these assumptions about pregnancy and birth as the natural functions of a woman's body—and the subsequent control of those bodies that results—can be so easily justified by ideology and can, in turn, perpetuate those cultural paradigms (5). As forward-thinking as some elements of Huxley and Zamyatin's work are, their novels are still complicit in this sort of abstraction of women's roles.

In Atwood's dystopia, natural reproduction is not a beautiful tool for reconvening with a primitive consciousness, but a means by which the power structure exercises social control of women. These women become reproductive vessels, the "incubators" that Simone de Beauvoir warns about, trapped by their bodies' natural functions rather than empowered by them. Offred's first-person narrative is not anti-motherhood in the slightest; throughout the novel she mourns for the daughter she had before the establishment of Gilead. Pregnancy, as de Beauvoir suggests, "ought to be freely willed" and not determinate of a woman's value or purpose (522). The novel also

acknowledges the suspicion of science and medicine that accompanies a return to "traditional" reproductive values; among those publicly hung with bags over their heads are doctors accused of performing abortions. The Handmaids live in constant fear of delivering a deformed or dead "unbaby," yet are denied access to developments in medicine that could prevent these dangerous mishaps.

The dystopian trope whereby women become breeders in sex slavery appears again nearly thirty years after Atwood's novel in *Mad Max: Fury Road*, a postapocalyptic action film which, while directed by a man, George Miller, has won acclaim for its feminist revision of a predominately male genre. In an environment ruined by excessive capitalism and nuclear disaster, the tyrant Immortan Joe holds all resources from the starving, emaciated populous. Among these resources is a harem of "prize breeders," imprisoned as reproductive slaves, and "milking mothers" whose breastmilk is used for the general public's sustenance. The film follows a strong woman warrior, Furiosa, who helps the breeders escape their captivity and search for a matriarchal utopia. Like *The Handmaid's Tale*, the film cautions against the treatment of fertility and the female body as natural resources akin to water or fuel. *Fury Road* is an especially Marxist take on this issue; as Taylor Boulware asserts in her analysis of the film, it exposes and rejects "the reduction of certain bodies into commodities" (7). Along with Atwood's work, it suggests that in times of extreme scarcity, women bear the responsibility of continuing the species, literally becoming a natural resource to be protected and consumed. As opposed to O-90's pregnancy which allows her to feel human, the breeders' escape from Immortan Joe allows them to reclaim their bodies through their choice *not* to be reproductive vessels.

The ways that Margaret Atwood's dystopia and *Fury Road* diverge from the standard, romanticized treatment of birth and reproduction in the classic canonical dystopian texts not only reflects a shift in perception of these issues over time, but also suggest larger differences between speculative fiction based on men and women.

The nostalgia and cultural primitivism that drives Huxley and Zamyatin to center issues of reproduction in their novels carries with it dangerous assumptions that ignore the experiences of women. The patriarchies of Gilead and *Fury Road* are exaggerations, as are most dystopian settings, but they are reactions to the genre's concerning tendency to romanticize the "traditional values" of the past. As feminist dystopias suggest, the past was not kind to women; the dystopia crafted in *The Handmaid's Tale* is not an abstract, hyper-technological future civilization, but a past one rooted in religious nostalgia for strict, patriarchal gender segregation. For women, progress and science are optimistic, and male-centric retreatism, where maternity is considered the sole biological drive of woman, is the true dystopia. ►►

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The Struggle Is Real
A Look at Poverty

EMILY RAND, CAITLYN HATFIELD, MIKAELA MALLOY,
& SHELBY STRANGFELD

Beginning with extensive mathematical, budgetary research on the expenses of minimum-wage households, Emily Rand, Caitlyn Hatfield, Mikaela Malloy, and Shelby Strangfeld conclude that working-class families in Oklahoma face a steep uphill battle in attaining their basic financial needs. The authors weigh their own findings against a spectrum of ideological positions to demonstrate how financial realities measure against political belief in America. This essay was written for Political and Economic Systems and Theories with Drs. Alex Kangas and Aleisha Karjala.

POVERTY IS DEFINED AS the scarcity of material possessions or money. A person is poor if they fall below the current societal standards of living. Currently, 15.8% of Oklahomans fall under the poverty line, but perhaps a more sobering thought is the number of children that fall under this line as that percentage increases to 21.5%, meaning that nearly 1 in 5 Oklahoma children lives in a household with income below the poverty line (Cullison). In this paper, we examine our hypothetical budget for a single mother of two using the Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) projected yearly

budget for this size of family, as well as examining how these numbers compare to a family of two working parents and two children; after looking at these items, we will also examine the current financial situations of minimum-wage workers in Oklahoma and how the poverty line fails to align with reality these families face financially. Additionally, we will discuss how the different ideological perspectives view minimum wage, as well as our thoughts on the subject.

For this essay, we began by estimating a monthly budget for a family of three in the Oklahoma City metro area. Generally, our group's guesses were close to what EPI estimated; however, our transportation and healthcare guesses were the furthest off from what was estimated. In the transportation section, we estimated $300 a month if the mother was filling up her tank once a week, 4 times a month, at $2.50 per gallon in a 15-gallon tank. But we did not account for insurance or car payments, so we were more than $700 under EPI's $1,006 estimate. And in the healthcare segment, we were less aware of what these numbers should look like, as most of us are still on our parents' insurance plans. So, once again, we were underbudget by more than $300, as we guessed $500 a month, and EPI's estimate was $833. Our other guesses for the monthly budget section include housing at $750, the food at $600, childcare at $1400, other necessities at $480, and the amount for taxes was given to us at $800. Meanwhile, EPI's monthly estimates were $851 for housing, $555 for food, $1225 for childcare, $567 for other necessities, and $800 for taxes. This leaves our monthly budget totaling to $4,830 and EPI's monthly budget totaling $5,839 ("Family Budget Calculator").

After comparing the two sets of numbers, we calculated what this mother would be making per week if she worked 40 hours a week while making the minimum wage in Oklahoma—$7.25. Her weekly pay before taxes comes out to $290 per week. Monthly, she makes about $1,160 if the month has 4 weeks; however, a more accurate number comes from multiplying that weekly number by 52. This gives us her yearly earnings and leaves her making $15,080 a

year, significantly below the poverty line, which lies at $21,330 for a family of 3. Next, we looked at changing the family composition to include two working adults (both making minimum wage) and totaled up their yearly earnings before taxes to come up with the number of $30,160. Unfortunately, the poverty line for a family of 4 is $25,750—a number that doesn't reflect the addition of a second income, even for minimum wage workers ("Poverty Guidelines").

Families that fall below the poverty line have a few different benefits or assistance programs available to them, but the quantity of available benefit programs becomes more limited as the family makes more money. One example of a program that both families would potentially qualify for is the Head Start Program. Head Start is one of the longest-running programs to help children in poverty, and the mortality rates among children ages 5-9 have fallen due to screenings conducted as part of Head Start's health services. Launched in 1965, this program helps fight systemic poverty through education (Sherman et al.). Over 20 million children have been helped by this program, which is available to families making less than $2,925 a month with two children in care (Rachidi). If both parents make $580 together before taxes in a week, and a month is constituted of 4 weeks, then this leaves both of our families qualifying for this assistance, because even the double-income family is left making only $2,320 a month before taxes.

Other programs like the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provide access to food through an ACCESS Oklahoma Card—a card provided by Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which is sent to the family and loaded with money for food each month based on the size of household, income, and allowed expenses ("Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program"). Despite the importance of food for basic survival, this benefit is less widely available, as seen by how our family of 3 would qualify for it, but our family of 4 would likely not. For a family of 3, the monthly gross income cannot exceed $2,177, but for a family of 4, this num-

ber increases to only $2,628, which puts our 4-person family dangerously close to not qualifying, as in just a 4-week month they were already pulling in $2,320.

Another, more selective, program is Medicaid ("SoonerCare"). This program provides coverage for low-income children and adults. Children under Medicaid are provided with the medical attention they need, such as check-ups that can spot health issues early on. Adults under Medicaid are less likely to go into debt, they have access to preventive care, and they have a lower mortality rate compared to the adults who lack insurance. However, many working-poor parents are not eligible for Medicaid because states have set eligibility limits for parents far below the poverty line if their earnings reach 61% of that line (Sherman). In Oklahoma, the guidelines for our families leave all of the children in both families qualifying for Medicaid, but none of our working parents would qualify. Even the mother making only about $15,000 a year makes nearly $6,000 too much (statistically) to qualify under the current guidelines.

Our fulltime, working mother of two earns less than half of what the IEP estimates should be in a minimum monthly budget. If she makes $15,080 a year, and the IEP estimates that a minimum monthly budget is $5,839, then it's excruciatingly obvious that the minimum wage doesn't support even the basic living expenses of those it's meant to maintain. The government treats the poverty line as though it is a good indicator of the poverty in America; however, from all of this information we can see how families that don't fall under those lines aren't thriving. In fact, they're hardly surviving—and these lines are so grossly low that when someone makes even just $500 more, they may be missing out on thousands of dollars of government assistance that the "extra" $500 comes nowhere near covering. Seeing the numbers splayed out this way makes it impossible for our team to feel as though the minimum wage shouldn't be increased, because a mother working 40 hours a week to support her children shouldn't be struggling to afford basic necessities.

While our group sees a great need to increase the minimum wage, not all four political perspectives would agree. One of those that wouldn't agree to increase the minimum wage is the Classic Liberal perspective because this perspective believes that hard work will be naturally rewarded by the market. For example, Classical Liberals believe that people with limited skillsets need to improve those skills to make themselves more marketable and therefore worth more in wages than a less proficient worker. Many Conservatives also disagree with raising the minimum wage, but for different reasons. One of these reasons is because the Conservative perspective opposes government interference; furthermore, offering assistance of this magnitude would, in Conservatives' minds, be overstepping the responsibilities of government. This perspective believes that poor people were born to into their roles as poor people to satisfy the natural order of society; however, some Conservatives would potentially be inclined to agree with the minimum wage increase if this increase were posed as being essential to helping the family unit—such as allowing parents more time to bond with children instead of working.

The two perspectives that would agree with raising the minimum wage are Radicals and Modern Liberals. Modern Liberals are most likely to be in full support of raising the minimum wage, because they see the need for equality in the market that prevents discrimination of race and gender—two types of discrimination that can affect a person's likelihood of receiving a raise regardless of that person's work-related qualities (such as skill, work ethic, etc.). Modern Liberals also believe that wealth needs to be distributed evenly, and our research shows that the current minimum wage does not uphold this value. Modern Liberals emphasize the importance of human rights and freedom, and, to uphold those ideals, the basic necessities for life need to be accessible through means like a minimum wage that enables citizens to obtain these "qualifiers of freedom" that the Modern Liberals believe everyone is entitled to. Likewise, most Radicals would agree because, by increasing the

minimum wage, lawmakers allow more people to afford (mentally and financially) to do what they please, which is an integral idea in the Radical concept of freedom. And, since increasing the minimum wage would increase the number of people who have access to the necessities needed to survive, more people will be able to meaningfully contribute to society, thereby furthering the development of said society and efficiency—a primary goal in Radical ideology. An example of this is that a mother may be able to stay home with her child when that child is sick if money isn't so tight that she is unable to miss even a single day of work. When an increase in the minimum wage allows for enough financial stability to attend to minor illnesses when those illnesses are in their beginning stages, the mother (or parent) can immediately attend to their child and consequently avoid letting that illness progress to a point where it would be more costly and result in her missing more work in the long run—something that hinders the overall efficiency of society on a larger scale.

Throughout this project, our team got a glimpse into the financial hardships that many people face when trying to provide for themselves and their dependents on a minimum wage-based income. Although we all knew that the minimum wage wasn't a sufficient enough income to live luxuriously on, we were startled to realize just how insufficient it truly was—a year's pay wouldn't even support our mother of two children for more than three months despite being the result of 2,080 hours' worth of work. We also came to realize that benefits and assistance for these families don't function as the "safety net" many have been led to believe. This led our team to conclude that the minimum wage should be raised, much to the chagrin of the Classic Liberal and Conservative perspectives. Overall, our team aligned with the Radicals and Modern Liberals, who we think would agree—the struggle is real.

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JERNIGAN
AWARD WINNER

The Impact of Social Inequality in the United States of America

HANNAH DAWSON

Each year, the Betty Baker Jernigan Endowed Scholarship Fund offers a $1000 award to the winner of an essay contest open to qualifying continuing and incoming USAO students. The contest asks students to write 300-500 words addressing the question, "How is America doing – politically, socially, economically?" *The Drover Review* also offers to publish winning submissions.

The winner of the 2020 Jernigan Award is Hannah Dawson, who argues that systematic inequalities in the availability of healthcare, the enforcement of justice, and the entrenchment of poverty mar America's claims to be the land of freedom and opportunity.

P ERSPECTIVE IS EVERYTHING when it comes to looking at any society critically, and the same is true for the United States of America. Compared to many other countries around the world, the United States is seen as a land of freedom and opportunity. There are many freedoms and personal rights secured and protected by both state and federal governments, particularly for minorities. However, it is important to note and to understand that

there are many issues that could be improved upon in the many social structures of America. Economic equality is one such issue.

On both small and large scales, America is struggling in its structure of economic equality among its citizens. The privatization of the healthcare and the criminal justice system both directly impact the lives of the citizens who live here. Both also threaten the equal rights of the people. While the privatized capitalistic system stimulates economic growth overall, the price to be paid results in the suffering of many vulnerable individuals. In addition to this, the lack of accessible, affordable healthcare kills off a multitude of struggling low-income households in the country, and rates of incarceration are directly affected by prison privatization. The upper class are given a significant advantage as a result, being able to pay legal fines and afford expensive medication with little problems. On the other hand, many of those who are economically struggling can barely feed themselves, let alone afford many other necessities.

Poverty, meanwhile, is a difficult subject to discuss, as it is tricky to discern its specific causes. It is also true that poverty in the United States looks far different than it would appear other countries. In the United States, people typically question and place blame on the individuals going through economic struggle, but poverty does not always result from the actions of the individual. Sometimes the system put in place directly puts certain individuals at a disadvantage, particularly minorities. These disadvantages include high competition in fields of work, leading to lower rates of pay due to supply and demand, as we underemployment. Unemployment is relatively low in the United States of America, but it is steadily on the rise. Fewer hours and no benefits are becoming more common, leading to many poor individuals having to work two or three jobs and still struggling to pay rent. Financial stability among many citizens of the U.S has weakened, and these vulnerable individuals are looked down upon in the current economic state. These populations can become incarcerated due to debt and sometimes must decide between food or

monthly rent. Furthermore, those who are homeless often struggle to vote since they lack home addresses,

The United States struggles when it comes to equality pertaining to social class. Different opportunities and resources come and go as a result of one's economic standing. The rising rates of underemployment and social institution privatization lead to an overall inequality among the citizens. The United States may be the land of opportunity, and America does have its share of advantages and freedoms granted to the citizens. However, the state of economic inequality is impossible to ignore. ► ►