

2021-2022

Vol. 59

# Charter

*Gonzaga's Journal of Scholarship and Opinion*

## Rebuild



Charter

2021-2022

Rebuild

I  
must be given words to shape my name  
to the syllables of trees

I  
must be given words to refashion futures  
like a healer's hand

I  
must be given words so that the bees  
in my blood's buzzing brain of memory

will make flowers, will make flocks of birds,  
will make sky, will make heaven,  
the heaven open to the thunder-stone and the volcano and the  
un- folding land.

**Kamau Brathwaite**

("Negus" 61-73)

*Charter*

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2021-2022

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# Charter

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## **Gonzaga's Journal of Scholarship and Opinion**

**Volume 59  
2021-2022**

# *Letter from the Editor*

February 23rd, 2022

Dear reader,

Despite it being the middle of February, we have been given some uncharacteristic sunshine in the last few days. While it is certainly not the beginning of spring yet, and Spokane will inevitably give us some more snow before the month is through, it is hard not to see how the hope and warmth of this community are always present in the times that we do not expect them—even as we continue to face the next challenges of COVID-19, racial justice, political unrest, and prejudice in all types. There are students hammocking by Aluminum Jesus, laying on Foley, and sitting down on those ugly cement benches to talk. There are conversations. And that is where we begin to build.

Kamau Brathwaite reminds us of the simple function of language in “Negus” as “It is not / it is not / it is not enough / to be pause, to be hole / to be void, to be silent / to be semicolon, to be semicolony;” (Brathwaite 74-79). His description of language implies that words are not something that we possess, but something we become. That in the discussions we leave silent, the positions we fail to grapple with, and the questions we refuse to answer, we are not simply minding our own business, but avoiding the opportunity to build. Especially in the context of these difficult years we are passing through “To be hole, to be void,” is to diminish the value of our own education.

Contained in this journal are the voices of students and faculty who seek to repair, reinvent, and reclaim. Our team chose the theme “Rebuild” this year in as a way of envisioning the future and acknowledging the past at the same time. In the wake of the destruction caused by broken systems, separation, and the darkness of the pandemic, these pieces address how we can begin to move forward.

Pieces like Delaney Sousa’s interview of Dr. Yuki Kang speak of how we must rebuild through our language: “It doesn’t all collapse at once; it might crumble, and then you build upon it. So I think about it more as adding on. I think we’re rebuilding everyday bit by bit” (52).

Or take Kyle Burkey's sentiment in "Ready, Aim, Shoot!" that reminds us that, in order for something to be rebuilt, it must first be broken apart and cleared. On photography, Burkey writes, "By simply capturing parts of a scene and taking pieces of the world, photographed images propagate the same appropriative ideology present in colonialism" (149).

So whether a piece offers us a vision of how to build something, assists us in the process of questioning what needs to be rebuilt, or actively seeks to dismantle a system, all of them have taken the first step to rebuilding what is broken. Through reading these pieces on Religion, Society, Politics, Language, and Image, I hope that you are exposed to the new and unfamiliar—that these works are the beginning of conversations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Jonas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Jonas  
Editor-in-Chief

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# Religion

# Knowing Christ Crucified and Twentieth-Century American Christianity

Cora Kim

In the twentieth century, American Christianity had to contend with two world wars, the Great Depression, the war in Vietnam, and perhaps greatest of all, a shifting cultural reality that fundamentally changed the way that most Americans viewed themselves and their country. Religion naturally evolved to reflect the changing cultural situation, and the result was a stunning breadth of what is called American Christianity, with one of the greatest religious divides being, like in much else, between liberals and conservatives. Catholic theologian M. Shawn Copeland's book *Knowing Christ Crucified* comes from within this complicated and divisive scene and is a meditation on the African American religious experience and its theological and practical consequences. Reflecting both the growing contradictions and the changing Catholic experience in twentieth-century American Christianity, the vision of Christianity offered in *Knowing Christ Crucified* opposes the rise of conservative evangelicalism but embraces the dream offered by Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement.

Modern-day divisions in American Christianity already had strong foundations by the beginning of the twentieth century but grew dramatically in the period after the Second World War. The roots of conservative, fundamentalist, and evangelical Christianity were laid during the Second Industrial Revolution and the end of the

nineteenth century with the rising divide between doctrine-based Christianity, which concentrated on “fundamentals,” and mainstream social-gospel type Protestantism (Marsden 171). However, it was only after the Second World War that evangelicalism emerged as a distinct and culturally potent part of Christianity, in part signaled by the preaching of Billy Graham and the resurgence of born-again Christianity in popular culture (198-200). One of the major developments that led to the current conservative Christian movement was the entry of white evangelicals into politics and the rise of the so-called Moral Majority in the 1970s and 1980s. They began to feel the need to push against a culture that they saw as increasingly opposed to their values, including relaxed standards of sexual morality and the legalization of abortion with the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973. The consolidation of fundamentalist doctrines regarding creation and the literal reading of the Bible helped to make the Moral Majority culturally distinct and moved evangelicalism firmly to the political right. This politicized evangelicalism sought legislative and political agendas that fostered what they considered to be Christian morality, including banning gay marriage, reinstituting prayer in schools, teaching creationist accounts of history, and banning abortion (241-244). Much of this agenda remains in force today and has caused popular understanding to conflate the idea and tradition of evangelicalism with the modern conservative white evangelical (259).

Shawn Copeland self-describes her work as one in practical-political theology and supports Christian involvement in the public sphere; however, she fundamentally disagrees with the political goals set forth by modern conservative evangelicals. She bitterly disputes that these policies even make up Christian doctrine; in “Marking the Body of Jesus, the Body of Christ,” Copeland argues that opening the Church to be inclusive of members of the LGBTQ community is an essential part of Christianity (61-80). She firmly contradicts the idea that excluding queer individuals and ordering homosexuals to “deny their bodies and their selves” can ever be legitimate Christian doctrine (69). Copeland declares that “If Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, cannot be an option for gay, lesbian, transgender people, then he cannot be an option” because “Jesus of Nazareth declared himself with and for others—those ... marked as poor, excluded and despised—and offered a new ‘way’ and new freedom to all who would hear and follow him” (73-74). Copeland fervently believes that following Jesus means to “follow with attention, reverence, and devotion the

moans and tears of the brutalized and burned, raped and mutilated, enslaved and captive across the centuries,” because following those who are crucified themselves leads to “the ground beneath the cross of the crucified Jewish Jesus of Nazareth” (135). Copeland’s idea of Christianity does not originate from a literal reading of the Bible or a list of fundamental doctrines but from the ideas that Jesus Christ stood and died for. Her stance on the LGBTQ community is one clear example of the practical consequence of this orientation. Clearly, her understanding contradicts conservative evangelical policy in multiple substantive ways.

Shawn Copeland’s rejection of the agenda of fundamentalist Christianity, one that she considers un-Christian, combined with her use of the African American Christian experience, suggests the way in which she is drawn to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Christianity of the American Civil Rights Movement in the middle of the twentieth century. King was a minister and drew on both the African American experience and the civil religion of America to encourage his fellow Americans to embody Christian values and create social change. Many of these similarities can be drawn from a comparison of *Knowing Christ Crucified* and King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Like Copeland, Martin Luther King, Jr. saw the fight for justice as a part of the mission of humanity and used his religious beliefs to inform his concept of justice. He describes a just law as “a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God,” one that “uplifts human personality,” whereas an “unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law” (King 3). He shared Copeland’s belief that authentic Christianity is a fight for justice and joins her in criticizing many of the Church’s institutions, in this case, those of the white church that failed to actively participate in the civil rights crusade. Finally, King also draws inspiration from the character and the person of Jesus in promulgating his action and orientation to the world, asking “Was not Jesus an extremist in love?” (4). By rooting his action in the lived experience of justice and injustice and centering Jesus’s life in his examination, King creates an ideology that serves as a prelude to the themes explored by Copeland.

As well as embracing Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Christianity of the Civil Rights Movement, *Knowing Christ Crucified* is in many ways a reflection of the Catholic revolution that occurred both in the United States and around the world during the twentieth century. The role of the Church was essentially changed by the reforms of the Sec-

ond Vatican Council that concluded in 1965, as the Church changed its understanding of itself from the dispenser of grace and sacraments to the body of Christ at the service of the world (Marsden 225). In the United States, these reforms went along with the acceptance of Catholicism in the mainstream and contributed to a loss of distinctiveness in Catholic culture. Vatican II also created and solidified a divide between liberals and conservatives within the Catholic Church, a divide that was, as in the rest of Christianity, coming to overshadow the divides between denominations (226-228, 259). Copeland's ideas in *Knowing Christ Crucified* and her criticism of the Church's official policies are a profound reflection of this divide within today's Church. Her ideas reflect the change in the nature of the Church as it sought to increasingly engage and serve the modern world.

It would be impossible for any coherent theological work to represent all sides of twentieth century American Christian thought because of the stunning breadth and diversity of opinion. Shawn Copeland and her book *Knowing Christ Crucified* stand within a liberal Catholic tradition, one that follows in the spirit of the changes brought in by the Second Vatican Council. She is also consciously within the tradition of African American Christianity, especially as lived by enslaved peoples and articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr. She uses her stance and her place in history to work to a broader theological conclusion about who Jesus is and what it is and means to be Christian. Her work demonstrates in many ways the contributions of the American experience and its civil religion to the larger question of what it means to be Christian and even human. *Knowing Christ Crucified* uses this theology to make a practical argument and serves as a reminder that the study of American Christianity is much more than a study of history. Instead, it is a project for all who call themselves Christian or American: a call to understand this tangled network of belief and to rebuild Christian faith around the example of Jesus Christ.

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# Rebuilding a Vision for Humanity

Fisher Ng

In the world of nature, nothing remains static. Everything either arranges itself into greater order or dissolves into disarray. These forces of composition and decomposition are inseparable and interdependent. In nature, the decomposition of plants and animals produces fertile soil for the growth of new life, while the new life, as it runs the course of its usefulness, becomes spent and falls into dysfunction. The same phenomena of integration and disintegration applies to the organic development of human society. The prevailing beliefs, customs, laws, and social orders that impel intellectual, economic, social, and moral advancement become outmoded as society progresses. For example, the right to prioritize personal capital gain, which once may well have motivated and enabled people to attain the fruit of their labors and thereby cause society to progress, has, due to modern technology and industry that further widen the disparity between wealth and poverty, become a burden on the collective well-being of society. Yet, while this attitude toward wealth now plagues society, as a consequence of the suffering it has caused, a renewed belief that individual well-being is contingent on collective prosperity has emerged. Although the process of passively learning more suitable behaviors through suffering consequences works, albeit slowly, in order to build a better world humanity must act together in implementing a collective vision of the moral, social, and economic

practices that rehabilitate the fortunes of humanity. The Bahá'í Faith serves as a source of inspiration by which humanity can rebuild a better world, owing to its unique reconceptualization of the three protagonists—the individual, the community, and the institutions—as agents of change capable of implementing a shared vision for a better world into tangible, unified, and systematic action.

### **Background**

The Bahá'í Faith is a world religion that began in 1844 in Persia and was founded by Bahá'u'lláh, Whom Bahá'ís believe to be God's Messenger for this day. Bahá'u'lláh teaches that one God, Who transcends the understanding of humans, created humanity inherently noble. Humans are spiritual beings with souls living in a physical world and are in need of moral, spiritual, and intellectual education to enable them to rise above their baser animal nature toward their higher spiritual nature. In order to provide such education, from time to time, God sends Messengers to humanity—including Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna, Jesus Christ, Muhammad, and Bahá'u'lláh—Who provide humanity with laws, principles, and teachings commensurate with their present capacity of understanding, ultimately to enable them to lead a joyful life and establish flourishing societies ("The Bahá'í Faith"). The precepts a Messenger of God prescribes unto humanity must conform with reason and apply universally. Among the teachings Bahá'u'lláh has brought to humanity are: that each person must independently seek after truth; that prejudice of any form, whether racial, religious, or gender-based must give way to a society that embraces diversity; that science and religion must exist in harmony; and that all people deserve an education that unlocks their true potential ('Abdu'l-Bahá).

Bahá'ís believe that humanity stands at a turning point for social change. Over thousands of years, through the inspiration of moral and spiritual teachings, humanity has increased its capacity to order society from the family unit to the nation-state, to investigate science and dispel superstition, and to embrace the diversity of the human family. Shoghi Effendi, the great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, remarks, "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should, if we be faithful to its implications, be regarded as signaling through its advent the *coming of age of the entire human race*" (Effendi, "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh"). Just as how

in the life of a person the transition from youthhood to adulthood demands an individual to wield new responsibilities through great struggle and reflection, so too does the coming of age of humanity require the world to carefully consider the structure and features of the future society in which the individual aspires to live.

### ***The Individual***

The teachings which Bahá'u'lláh has entrusted everyone in His Writings redefine the attitudes individuals should adopt in their relation to society. In writing, “the purpose for which mortal men have, from utter nothingness, stepped into the realm of being, is that they may work for the betterment of the world and live together in concord and harmony” (“Trustworthiness: A Cardinal Bahá'í Virtue”), Bahá'u'lláh charges every individual—regardless of their profession, level of education, and social status—to approach the world as active agents of change, holding the well-being of the entire human race as their loftiest objective, as opposed to existing as neutral bystanders or as those who merely suffer the changes and chances of fortune and rely on the goodwill of others. Serving the world is not merely a moral obligation to be fulfilled grudgingly. Rather, as the Universal House of Justice—the supreme governing institution for the Bahá'í Faith designed by Bahá'u'lláh—writes, humanity is endowed “with a strong twofold purpose, both to develop their inherent potentialities and to contribute to the transformation of society” (“12 December 2011”). The world Bahá'u'lláh envisions is one in which every individual strives alongside others to improve the conditions of the world and thereby reaps the benefits of becoming a more honest, caring, and capable person through acts of service, reinforced by the emergence of a culture that encourages people to acquire such values.

### ***The Community***

In order to implement sustained, systematic action, individuals must contextualize their efforts in the work of a community, which is a protagonist of change in its own right. While every individual has the capacity to instigate change in society, if every person worked to improve society based on their own ideas of what activities prove most beneficial, the results would not be as systematic or impactful compared to the efforts of a community united by a common vision and plan of action for the welfare of its people. A community taking action together does not mean every member completes the same set

of actions. Rather, just as one may think of an ecosystem, which is composed of many diverse species that may seem to contend with one another, as an organism, so too does the community, whose members have diverse talents and seemingly unrelated interests, possess characteristics absent in its individual members. Communal life prevents individuals from becoming too self-centered in their lives, directs the efforts of individuals along lines of action helpful for the entire community, and fosters a culture that can shape the thoughts, actions, and patterns of behavior of its members.

### ***The Institution***

In a world in which trust in institutions is fast deteriorating and the individual and the institutions are increasingly diametrically opposed, Bahá'u'lláh has designed a fully democratic Administrative Order that enables individuals and communities to trust institutions and to exemplify mutual reciprocity. The Bahá'í Administrative Order, which is not ecclesiastical in nature in that its members as individuals neither wield authority over others nor have the exclusive right to perform religious duties, facilitates the affairs of Bahá'í community from the level of the town through Local Spiritual Assemblies to the scope of the world through the Universal House of Justice (Effendi, "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh"). The election procedures and methods of administration offer a glimpse into the potentialities awaiting the institutions of society.

The electoral process Bahá'ís use to elect members to administrative positions enables only those who have demonstrated their merit through their action and conduct to occupy positions of service to the community. Campaigning for administrative positions is forbidden (Bowers), as those with the loudest voice often triumph over those who are the most worthy and capable candidates. Nominations are likewise forbidden because, as Shoghi Effendi explains, "it gives the right to the majority of a body that in itself under the present circumstances, often constitutes a minority of all the elected delegates, to deny that God-given right of every elector to vote only in favor of those who he is conscientiously convinced are the most worthy candidates" (Effendi, "Bahá'í Administration"). Only when each voter is held responsible for independently considering the needs of the administrative role and choosing, without external influence, those who they believe would best be able to serve the interests of the community can the electoral process be free of conflict and ego. Not only

does such an electoral process empower the individual and reinforce the sense of community, but it also ensures that only trustworthy and reliable individuals serve on institutions.

Another valuable practice Bahá'ís adopt when electing members of their community to assemblies is the that of electing an assembly instead of individuals. While many individuals may capably serve an institution, institutions require diverse thoughts and temperaments, which can only come about through a diverse group of people. When electing an institution, voters vote not based on the qualities of an individual person, but they instead vote for a group of members who would best combine to serve the interests of their community. Furthermore, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that “If any discrimination is at all to be tolerated, it should be a discrimination not against, but rather in favor of the minority, be it racial or otherwise” (Effendi, “Advent of Divine Justice”). He further explains that “when an equal number of ballots have been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between the various races, faiths or nationalities within the community, priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it, and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community” (Effendi, “Advent of Divine Justice”). The mindset of electing an institution rather than its constituent individuals proclaims that no members of an institution have authority as individuals; instead, only the institution wields authority. When only institutions, and not the members composing them, hold authority over individuals and the community, individuals serving on institutions cannot exert undue influence on others, which thereby ensures the community, now able to distinguish between the decisions of members of the institution and the institution itself, can trust its leadership.

In terms of administrative practices, when assemblies convene to decide on matters, they employ the practice of consultation. ‘Consultation’ is when a group of people convene to investigate the truth of a matter with an open mind or to determine the best course of action to resolve a pressing issue. In consultation, members share their thoughts freely, without belittling ideas (“Consultation”). Once a member shares an idea, the idea belongs to the group and not to the individual. Should the majority decide on a particular course of action, so long as the decision is ethical, the remaining members are encouraged to support the decision wholeheartedly. If all the mem-

bers work wholeheartedly to determine the merit of a solution, it will either succeed or fail (“Consultation”). In the case of failure, the group will not become disunited and can determine a better course of action through further consultation. If members of the group refuse to support a solution, their lack of support may not allow the full potential of a solution to be ascertained. The practice of consultation ensures that the idea of an institution whose members are united in thought prevails, rather than that of an individual who has bent other’s thoughts to align with their own. The practice of acting in unity also ensures full transparency in the dealings of the institution. When an institution employs consultation, the truth-seeking nature of consultation ensures that the institution sets as its highest aim the welfare of all individuals and the community.

### ***A Collective Vision***

To build the world anew, individuals, communities, and institutions must cast aside outmoded, conflictual approaches to problem-solving and commit to collaborative, long-term action. It must be noted, however, that at the outset of change the emergence of communities and institutions depends chiefly on the initiative of motivated individuals. Bahá’u’lláh assures us that, “The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct” (“9 November 2018”). This conveys that regardless of one’s place in society and the injustice one endures, everyone has the capacity to improve the world through their actions and behaviors. The work of building a better world does not ask us to sacrifice a career to become a champion of justice; rather, we can reorient our lives by seeing the ways in which each element of our lives, such as family, friends, work, and service, can be directed, in whatever smallest measure possible, toward actively making the world a better place through our thoughts, words, and actions. In order to maintain the drive required to improve the world in spite of the crises that will inevitably torment humanity, Bahá’u’lláh affirms, “Wert thou to consider this world, and realize how fleeting are the things that pertain unto it, thou wouldst choose to tread no path except the path of service to the Cause of thy Lord” (Bahá’u’lláh), emphasizing that only through reflecting on our high purpose as humans can we adequately trust that our efforts will begin to make a difference in the world. While the path forward is daunting, in light of the ever-intensifying calamities that rock the world, this reflection

is necessary. We have our vision of the future world in which we hope to live to provide us with the drive to bring into reality a world devoid of conflict and violence, a world characterized by universal peace and cooperation. We can be certain, however, that through patient and persistent effort, in time the communities and institutions society has long yearned to establish will materialize and thereby enable individuals to rise to new heights of civilization.

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# The Importance of Queer Theology

Muriel H.

I have often thought that so many people manage to stay homophobic, even with the improving social progress of our society, because they are unaffected by members of the LGBTQ+ community. This was true in my life; I was displaying homophobia rooted in Christianity until confronted with the need to question my own sexuality. I was worried, rather, terrified, that I could no longer be a Christian. It was not until I began to deconstruct what it meant to be a Christian and was introduced to the insights of Queer theology that I realized the immeasurable way in which queerness deepens my faith. This essay supports the conclusion that I found myself at, being both queer and Christian. I argue that the history of interactions between the Church and LGBTQ+ community supports the necessity of the formation of Queer theology, which is upheld today by the richness this theology brings to Christianity as a whole. The history of interactions between the Church and LGBTQ+ community serves as a reminder that the historical discrimination by the Church against Queer people cannot be erased. From that Queer perspective, Christians can have renewed understanding of Jesus, the Bible, and the Church.

Hervormde Theologiese Studies defines the term Queer as, “an umbrella term for marginalized sexual and gender identities,” which in relation to theology has been developed recently and aims to speak

on the “lived experiences” and “from the perspective of” those who fall within the category (Reygan). The study continues that it is a “safe space” for a Queer interpretation of Christian theology. This safe space does not exist without the understanding that members of the LGBTQ+ community are deserving of rights and full participation in the Church. This paper will be working based on that understanding. Furthermore, this paper emphasizes the fluidity of sexuality in relation to Christianity, while still acknowledging the fluidity of gender.

The early interactions between the Church and queer community during the 1960s–70s mark the emergence of a type of Queer theology in the form of apologetics. Queer Christians began small protests against the idea that homosexuality is a mental illness, which grew to noticeably large movements by the mid 1970s. Theologians noticed these social changes and began to question the Church’s teachings that “homosexual activity was not only sinful but *illegal*” (Roberts). The combined efforts of both Church members and theologians led to the development of apologetics that reinterpreted scriptures to exclude queerness from churches. This in turn created caused the reevaluation of how to handle homosexuality in the Church, ranging from the previous outright rejection to full acceptance of LGBTQ+ members. The divisions this made through different types of denominations cultivated both positive and negative views of Queerness; although there was finally some acceptance of homosexuality in the Church, opposition from some denominations only grew stronger. This led to even more discriminatory relations and the development of groups who, as theologian Marvin Nelson puts it, “reject homosexuality as a viable expression of human sexuality and encourage punishment” of it (Roberts). Over history, we have seen the serious implications of this discrimination with conversion therapy and “queer bashing” in the name of Christ (Isherwood).

However, despite the backlash faced by the church for the use of apologetics, these apologetics are important in laying the groundwork of Queer theology. Even limited acceptance of Queer theologians and members allowed the start of theology from a Queer perspective, whereas before, it had come almost exclusively from a cis-gendered, straight point of view. The ability to further explore the implications of Queerness in the Church alleviated constraints for theologians, allowing Queer theology to emerge as a form of Liberation theology.

Queer theology was able to take on this tone of Liberation theology, a theology dedicated to understanding Christianity from

a perspective of the oppressed, after the Stonewall Riots<sup>1</sup> in 1969. Apologetics became more forceful with growing social change and the identity-based movements that aimed to secure legal rights of the marginalized. This collective force meant that members of the Church finally began fighting against the silencing of their voices within their religious spaces. Queer theology's intersection with other Liberation theologies, most notably Feminist theology, became an important element to include women in a discourse that was mainly focused on male homosexuality. This intersection was a key recognition as it helped realize how the "regulation of sexuality" served to uphold the patriarchy and united them to a common goal of deconstructing gender roles through the "rethinking of relationships between men and women" (Isherwood; Roberts). By attempting to de-centralize religion from sexuality, gender, and social constructions, theologians could turn their focus outside of tradition. For Queer members, that meant a more genuine expression and understanding of self, outside of societal expectations, which could only allow for a truer understanding of their relationship with Christ.

As a result of discrimination both in and outside of the Church, these social strides had large impacts bringing the community where it is today, but the fight was not over. The AIDs epidemic during the 1980s brought a new wave of discrimination and rejection from the Church. Many homophobic groups and conservative churches saw the epidemic as God's "judgement day" and justification for their treatment of the LGBTQ+ community (Roberts). Furthermore, affirming churches began excluding Queer members from things like communion because of the frenzied fear around transmission. Not only was a group of people suffering and dying, but they were being ostracized for it. Gustavo Gutierrez's Liberation theology explains the act of Queer rejection in its effort in "trying to make sense of human suffering" and "organized oppression and exploitation" to make children of God seem "less than what they are: human" (Gutierrez). A Queer perspective on the AIDS epidemic comes to the same conclusion that Gutierrez did: God lets innocent people suffer. This conclusion, however, is more hopeful than it may at first seem. Accepting the fact that innocents suffer means that the oppressed are not

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1 The Stonewall Riots were protests over a six-day period that took place in New York after the gay club Stonewall Inn was raided by police. It catalyzed the gay rights movement across the nation.

punished because of sins; members are no longer waiting for God's action but can see themselves as an extension of God to do his work and fight injustice in the world. Here, Queer theology stood as a call to fight back against sinful injustice, to stand in solidarity, as Jesus would, with the suffering.

This has been the call of Queer theology for over thirty decades—which means the discrimination hasn't gone away. Eventually, though, Queer theology had to move past apologetics, spending less time “trying to convince the majority that they deserved to be treated as humans,” and began to develop a theology “with that assumption already built in” (Roberts). The discrimination still visible today proves that Queer theology is needed past apologetics, and limited acceptance of Queer members is not enough.

This discrimination is magnified through LGBTQ+ youth suffering in the face of religion. A study done on LGBTQ+ young adults was released in 2015, finding parents with “anti-homosexual religious beliefs [are] significantly associated with an increase of internalized homophobia” (Gibbs and Goldbach). It also found that increased internalized homophobia is “significantly associated with suicidal thoughts,” and concludes, “dissonance felt between religious beliefs and LGBTQ+ identity was associated with higher risk of suicide.” These findings match the results of the 2020 national survey on “LGBT Youth Mental Health” done by The Trevor Project, which showed 40% of respondents “seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months” (The Trevor Project 2020). These statistics are saddening, but what is worse is how desensitized our society has become to them. Based on this study alone, the work of apologetics obviously doesn't go far enough. The relationship between Queer youth suicide and religious institutions shows there cannot be indifference on this issue, especially from the Church. That is why Queer theology just existing is not enough; it needs to be developed, shared, and included in the conversation because it can *save lives*. As someone who has been in the exact position as these kids, I can attest to this fact. Queer theology saved my life, not just my faith. These statistics are not something I can live with. I will not sit and wait for *children* to die when churches have a chance, just like with the AIDS epidemic, to do what is right for those suffering.

Many theologians have accepted this fact, and Queer theology has been developing over the past few decades, with or without the support of the Church. Queer theology does more than just save

lives too; it adds immensely to Christian theology through the (re) understanding of Jesus, Scripture, and the Church. Deconstructing popular religion into one that accepts Queerness brings us closer to the heart and teachings of Christ. Western society has sanitized Christ to the point that we are not comfortable calling expressions of love “Christ-like” unless they are within rigid, Church-controlled structures of gender and sex. As mentioned earlier with Feminist theology, dismantling social constructions of gender allows everyone to be more fully human, understanding their relationship with Jesus as “friend and lover rather than Lord and King” (Isherwood). Furthermore, ‘de-throning’ Jesus helps to point out his teachings; he chose to eat with tax collectors, sinners, sex workers—all people who were marginalized. Jesus never once mentioned homosexuality, but he reiterated that the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord your God” and “love your neighbor as yourself” (*New International Version*, Mark 12:30-31). A Queer perspective offers an aspect of Jesus that would be otherwise lost because it is the “ones on the margin who, as in Jesus’s day, can best carry the message of liberation and justice” (Isherwood). This message is one of love, especially to those who preach hate in the name of the Lord.

Furthermore, this new understanding applies to interpreting Scripture. The LGBTQ+ discrimination, coupled with that of women and people of color, shown through Church history, warns us of how the Bible can be twisted. It is from that Queer historical perspective that Queer theology has a specific way of handling Scripture that is unlike any theology I’ve ever encountered. Queer theology comes from an understanding that we “cannot ever claim to ‘know’ either scripture or Christ in the immediate sense” because there can be so many interpretations; we can only be a “proximate witness” to living out love on earth (DiNovo). Based on that assumption and the knowledge that the Church has misinterpreted the Bible numerous times in ways that harm marginalized groups, Queer theology creates an environment that is much more inclined to inclusivity. Moreover, there is a certain unknowability of Christ where we can “never speak *for* him but only *of* him and *to* him” (DiNovo). Because we do not know what the correct interpretation of Scripture is, the Church must work off the example of Christ, a man who said, “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (*New International Version*, John 13: 34-35). For me, this applies directly to

Queer theology, as Christianity will shine through in loving and accepting others.

Finally, Queer theology, when applied, opens new doors for all of Christianity. When the interpretation of Christ and Scripture is no longer centered around modern pillars of Christianity like sexual purity, gender roles, and family unity, the Church can realign its values with Jesus. Often, oppressive and heteronormative churches ignore that openness, acceptance, love, and friendship are all teachings of Christ. Hospitality, as an example, is a huge teaching often ignored because of the impossibility to employ it with the disconnect between the Queer community and Church. Hospitality “prevents ‘us’ and ‘them’ thinking” and unites the Church in our divided world (DiNovo). If we don’t take Queer theology seriously, we are “in danger of being more [like a] club than [a] Church” (DiNovo). The matter of Queer theology affects more than just the members of the LGBTQ+ community; it is a matter of Christian importance that will shape theology into the future.

Queer theology is changing the world. The implications of this theology can only be understood within the context of how it emerged in the face of discrimination and oppression. Theologians started by fighting for the rights of LGBTQ+ members in the form of apologetics, then began to demand respect, and now they further Queer theology in understanding its systematic implications. The oppression that still exists today against this community continues to root Queer theology in Liberation theology and amplifies the fact that the Church still has a long way to go in acceptance. However, because the Church has gradually become more accepting, Queer theology poses an even stronger message, one of a deeper understanding of Christ and Scripture that should entice the Church to unify their members to its cause. The interactions between the LGBTQ+ community and the Church prove just how much Queer perspectives had and have the potential to benefit Christianity; acceptance *all*, not just Queer, Christians in on the conversation. As someone who is deeply affected by this issue in my faith life, I cannot stress the value of this theology enough. There are thousands of people just like me whose faith and *life* can be saved by this theology. Please, remember the importance this message carries not only for Christianity, but for the Queer lost sheep all over the world that Jesus has never forgotten.

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# Leibniz's *Theodicy* and Human Freedom

Cora Kim

Modern philosophy, characterized by a turn to the subjective and a new way of approaching traditional beliefs, split in the early modern period into the Empiricist and Rationalist schools, each advocating their own way in which reality can be described, understood, and acted upon. Rationalists tended to embrace more traditional ideas than Empiricists, as they focused on the power of human reason and the existence of innate ideas. While the Empiricists struggled to accept or to justify traditional philosophical beliefs such as the existence of God, the immortal soul, and the ability to truly know the material world, the Rationalists accepted these ideas enthusiastically. Descartes posited that the human soul and God are the two most knowable things in the universe, and Leibniz confidently structured the nature of the world from principles of reason. Because they accepted these traditional beliefs, particularly the existence of God, the Rationalists also embarked on a traditional philosophical and theological project: the theodicy. A theodicy attempts to justify the existence of an all-good and all-loving God in the face of evil. The famous Rationalists Descartes and Leibniz both offered theodicies, although their working of the problem differed significantly. This paper argues that Leibniz's famous theodicy is ultimately unsuccessful because, when taken to its logical conclusion, it implies the contradiction that

an all-good God created and wills evil. As a result, human free will is a necessary component of any successful theodicy.

Rationalist philosophers placed great emphasis on innate ideas and the power of human reason; their conception of human reason and the method from which philosophy should proceed falls at the extreme of reason over experience. Descartes famously claimed that the things that are the most knowable are in fact immaterial: first his immaterial mind and secondly the existence of God (Descartes 18, 28). It is only through the knowledge of these immaterial things that one can arrive with certainty at a knowledge of material things. In the Fourth Meditation, Descartes offers his own theodicy, coming directly after he has proved the existence of God to his satisfaction in the Third Meditation (37-43). The fundamental premise of the theodicy is that “The scope of the will is larger than the intellect ... I extend [the will’s] use to matters which I do not understand ... [and] it easily turns aside from what is true and good, and this is the source of my error and sin” (38). God has given humans both free will and the intellect to be able to discern what is good and evil, and human error and sin comes when people make decisions that they have not thought through using their intellect. Descartes defends the existence of this imperfection within himself and others on the assumption that God, who has perfect knowledge, has created a perfect world out of imperfect parts, and Descartes has “no right to complain that the role God wished me to undertake in the world is not the principle one” (39). Importantly, God is not the cause of any evil, as humans have free will. Evil is caused by humans who misuse their will, and it is justified and tolerated because the totality of the cosmos may be brought into perfection using imperfect pieces.

Gottfried Leibniz, another famous Rationalist, offered his own theodicy, which is perhaps the better known of the two and differs sharply from Descartes’. However, despite their differences, they each begin on relatively similar ground. Like Descartes, Leibniz claims that the universe as a whole, although containing imperfect pieces, is perfect, which he justifies through his principles of sufficient reason and perfection. The first, the principle of sufficient reason, states that “no fact can be true or existing ... without a sufficient reason for it being so and not different” (Leibniz 290). Drawing this principle to the grand scale, God is the reason that the universe is the way that it is. God is the substance containing an infinite positive reality which is also “absolutely perfect, *perfection* meaning the quantity of positive

reality” (291). Because God, the reason that everything exists, is the perfect container of all positive reality, the universe must therefore be the best universe that is logically possible: this is the principle of perfection. A perfect God who orders the universe according to sufficient reasons by logical necessity creates the best possible world.

Although he has established a firm belief that God has created the best of all possible worlds, Leibniz is left with the problem of explaining how evil can be part of a world created to be the best that it can possibly be. Leibniz does not deny the existence of evil; on the contrary, he specifically argues “that it may happen that *the evil is accompanied by a greater good*” (281). Indeed, evil is justified because “God has permitted evil in order to bring about good, that is, a greater good” (281). He appeals to Augustine and Thomas Aquinas to give his opinion of evil more weight, saying that they accept the existence of evil for its redemptive value, as “the permitting of evil tends to the good of the universe” (281). There is good that is only possible through the existence of evil and suffering; Leibniz’s example of this is the traditional one of the “incarnation of the Son of God, who has given to the universe something nobler than anything that ever would have been among creatures except for it” (281). Because of the power of evil to lead to a greater good, Leibniz argues that although “it is sufficient to show that a world with evil might be better than a world without evil,” he in fact has “proved that this universe must be in reality better than every other possible universe” (281). At the center of the “Theodicy” is the redemptive power of evil as not only justifiable but necessary for this universe to be the best of all possible worlds.

However, the theodicy as it is structured by Leibniz contains a fundamental contradiction when considered with his metaphysics. Although Leibniz affirms that perceptive monads, or cognizant substances such as humans, do act according to their own will, he argues that God knows all the decisions that will be taken by the person and has set the universe so that it will unfold in perfect harmony, for according to the “Monadology,” “It is impossible to explain how a monad can be altered ... by any other creature” (287). Because no monad can truly change any other monad, all sensible movement and change and what seems to be human free choice is rather the unfolding of the perfect harmony that is set forth by God, without any true causal interaction between monads. Within this system, it seems impossible that humans have true freedom, for their wills and

actions are all pre-planned and the movements pre-orchestrated by God. If the movements of humans are all pre-orchestrated by God, then evil is deliberately pre-orchestrated by God and created by God. An all-good, all-loving, all-powerful, and perfect God seems to be contradicted by the idea of God setting forth and executing evil in the course of the events of the world.

Leibniz's response to this apparent contradiction would likely be that the greatest good can in fact only be brought about by the existence of evil, as in the example of the incarnation of Jesus Christ resulting only because of evil within the world. However, even granting this point does not alter the original contradiction of God deliberately willing evil; that evil is necessary for the formation of good based on the laws of the universe set forth by God still places evil and suffering as the means by which God achieves his ends, however glorious they may be. The contradiction is placed eloquently within *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky: "If the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price" (Dostoevsky 186). Within Leibniz's metaphysics, there is no room for God to transform an evil that he did not create; instead, God is the author of the evil in order to bring about the desired ends. The question is not one of whether suffering and evil can be redemptive, but of whether it is logical that a perfectly good God would use evil as a tool to achieve his goals. Dostoevsky asks, "Imagine that you are erecting the edifice of human destiny with the object of making men happy at last ... but that to this end it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature ... would you consent to be the architect on those conditions?" (186). Even to bring about some greater good, God is still associated with evil; the possibility that this evil is a means to a good end does not reduce the contradiction that it is a supposedly all-good God who promulgates all evil.

Leibniz's theodicy fails precisely because it denies true and authentic free will to humans and instead claims that God ordains the existence of evil in the universe. There is an important difference between a God who creates genuinely free human beings who do evil acts in a perversion of their ability to create and to freely choose, as this God tolerates evil on the grounds that abolishing human freedom is an evil in itself, and a God who plans evil in the world specifically to work towards a greater goal. Similarly, the greater good that can be brought about by suffering can be attributed to the grace and

benevolence of an omnipotent and loving God who is able to transform suffering but who is not the author of it. This is distinct from a God who creates and uses evil as an instrument of a greater end; it satisfies the logical contradiction, making God's ultimate benevolence a possibility. Descartes's theodicy does contain elements of Leibniz's where it justifies imperfection with the greater perfection of the whole, and it seems to fail to grapple with deliberate evil and intentionally inflicted suffering. Nevertheless, Descartes's theodicy is more compelling because it locates the production of evil entirely within human error, instead of with God's plan and agency, and therefore avoids a fundamental contradiction or a reduction of God's benevolence.

A theodicy is an interesting philosophical project because it is not simply concerned with logical coherence but implies a large affective dimension. The problem of evil is a problem that all humans must face and is inherently filled with emotion and personal experience. As such, there is likely no single solution to the problem of evil or no one way in which humans will manage to deal with it. Nevertheless, tackling the problem of evil is an immensely important and intense human activity, and it is worth trying to understand from what logical grounds it may be approached. The theodicy is a useful project, even though logic may never solve the problem and even if there is no God. From the consideration of Leibniz's theodicy, especially in comparison with Descartes's, it seems fundamentally incompatible that a deterministic world could lead to a successful theodicy, for theistic determinism seems to necessitate that God is the direct author of all that happens and therefore the creator and preserver of evil. If God is to exist and be all-good and all-powerful, then evil must not be a creation of God but instead produced by human beings in a perversion of the freedom of choice and the ability to create. It is true that the conception of God and of evil gained from a theodicy will not change the existence of evil and the reality of suffering, but it may change the way in which we react to evil and the way in which we approach God.

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# Language

# Dreadlocks: The Critical Role of Interpellation in Gentrification

Ben Gonzales

Interpellation<sup>1</sup> is a process deeply entrenched in our everyday lives. It is impossible to divorce interpellation's effect from reality; it governs our lives without our recognition. Through interpellation, individuals' consciousnesses are called into the existence of the abstract consciousnesses of culture and ideology which claim individual subjects, here, in reality. Thus, to recognize interpellation's decisive function in everyday life, it must be necessarily subjected to systemic analysis to illustrate this critical process; and the abstraction of fiction is likely more useful for such analysis than real life.

Interpellation was coined by Marxist theorist Louis Althusser as a process by which

Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or transforms the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by

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1 In, *Key Terms in Literary Theory*, Dr. Mary Klages writes "The word comes from the term 'appellation,' meaning a name; to interpellate is to call someone by a name, to recognize them. Althusser insists that ideologies exist only by and for subjects—someone has to believe in an idea, and practice that belief, for an ideology to exist. Ideologies thus must always be recruiting subjects, getting people to believe in them as 'truth,' and to act accordingly" (43).



the very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: ‘Hey, you there!’ (Althusser 1356).

When a subject hails another subject, the recipient not only recognizes they are the one being acknowledged but is recognized within their individual subject position relative to the other subject and society at large. The effect of interpellation is that if an affluent white man is the subject hailed by the police officer in Althusser’s example, he will respond differently than if an impoverished Black man is hailed; when the white man recognizes himself within his subject position relative to the police officer, his subject has power relative to the police officer’s within America’s legal ideological state apparatus (or ISA),<sup>2</sup> while the Black man is a subject to the power of the ISA. In his story, “An Orange Line Train to Ballston,” Edward P. Jones illustrates the role of interpellation in our everyday lives through the interaction between a single mother, Marvella Watkins, her three children, who are firmly interpellated within the Family ISA,<sup>3</sup> and a single man with dreadlocks, who is much less so.

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2 Klages defines Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA)s as “the social mechanisms that teach us the right and wrongs ways to behave by interpellating us into specific ideologies. Schools, churches, families, political parties, sports, and arts all create a particular worldview or way of thinking about reality, to which individuals subscribe or do not subscribe” (45).

3 The Family ISA originated alongside the rise of industrial capitalism. The rise of industrial capitalism called men and women out of what we might think of as village life, or the *Gemeinschaft* in this essay (see note 5), and into distinct, separate family roles necessary for the rise of industrial capitalism. Amanda Fehlbaum writes in the Encyclopedia of Family Studies entry on the “Cult of Domesticity” that “much of the work necessary for the rise of industrial capitalism depended on the labor of women and the comforting, loving, stabilizing influence associated with true womanhood.” Barbara Welter defines “True Womanhood” in her pivotal essay *The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820 – 1860*; “The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter,

The story revolves around the Watkins family's routine trip on the Orange Line of the subway where they occasionally encounter the man with dreadlocks. While Marvella and her children repeatedly interpellate each other and the man within normative social mores, the man barely interpellates them. He only loosely recognizes them within the Family ISA; instead, he has a broader, looser, more inclusive definition of family which he calls them into. Here, Jones alludes to the nationalized ideological debate surrounding the correct way to raise a family and the appropriate sphere of influence through which children should be nurtured. When the man with dreadlocks acknowledges the Watkins's subjectivity, he does not call attention to the aspects of the subject positionality within their distinct, contested family roles, which create ideological dissonance between him and the Watkins within the American national ISA.<sup>4</sup> The mythic ideology of the American Dream contributes to the formation of an American national ISA which sustains ideologies of American nationalism and exceptionalism. The American national ISA is an intersectional ideological force which relies on various political, cultural, and media ISAs. The myth of the American Dream is central in the process of gentrification and the deterioration of *Gemeinschaft*.<sup>5</sup> Ideological

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sister, wife-woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power" (152).

4 It is useful for the purposes of this analysis to think of the ways "family" has served as a contested metaphor for the American populace, as well as how individuals are interpellated within such a contested ideological battleground and "family values" which govern parenting and familial relations are translated to subjects. Indeed, Carla L. Peterson writes in *Keywords for American Cultrual Studies* entry for "Family," that "Beginning in the nineteenth century, writers often cast the nation in familial, domestic terms as an expansion of the bourgeois home that stands in opposition to the foreign (A. Kaplan 1998). In all of these instances, family operates as a system of both inclusion and exclusion. Family members are kin, belong to the same lineage, share the same blood, but they reserve the right to exclude strangers not related by blood, not descended from the same ancestor, not living under the same roof, not belonging to the same class or race. These processes of inclusion and exclusion have frequently been rearticulated as a tension between 'norm' and 'deviance'" (Peterson).

dissonance is created when we interpellate each other because it reminds us of our subject positions within Gesellschaft,<sup>6</sup> and of our varying levels of interpellation within the various ISAs. “An Orange Line Train to Ballston” demonstrates the functioning of ideological state apparatuses in the process of gentrification and the deterioration of Gemeinschaft. Jones demonstrates that community bonds of Gemeinschaft generate collective efficacy and reciprocity necessary to fight gentrification succumbs to the mythic American Dream which sustains Gesellschaft. Through the disparate interpellations of the man and the Watkins family, Jones thus explicates the inability to generate a broadband class consciousness to resist the social ills of gentrification and inequality.

Interpellating the Watkins family intersectionally within multiple ISAs, Jones evinces the process by which the myth of the American Dream interpellates families as economic, colonized subjects. Althusser writes, “there is a *plurality* of ISAs” (Althusser 1341). This is explicated in the passage, as the man calls Marvella and her children to loosen their interpellation within the intersectional American national ISA claiming them. As the Orange Line train first approaches, Marvella subconsciously interpellates her son: “He studied the lights and as he did they began to blink. The boy was nine. My son the engineer, his mother thought” (Jones 106). Marvella demonstrates the intersectional nature of her interpellation as she demonstrates her economic ideologies as a subject firmly called into the domestic, a space traditionally unconcerned with economic transaction. This interpellation allows the audience to infer the economic pressure she experiences as a subject within the American national ISA and the neoliberal economic alienation which situates the contemporary American family within the American national ISA. The Watkins family’s interpellation within neoliberal ideology is further evidenced

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5     Gemeinschaft loosely translates to “community” but moreover refers to a sense of reciprocity, mutuality, and comradeship present in a community often exemplified by village life. Coined by German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies. Contemporarily, this concept is often helpful in understanding marginalized urban communities within the United States.

6     Gesellschaft is the converse of “Gemeinschaft,” it loosely translates to “society,” but specifically to the alienation present within capitalistic, neoliberal exchange systems, identified by a lack of reciprocity.

by the children's recognition of the man with dreadlocks. They interpellate the man with dreadlocks: "Why you got your hair like that?" Marcus asked the man" (107). Marcus's question hails the man with dreadlocks the same way the police officer in Althusser's example hails a subject ("hey you!"), whereas here, Marcus's interpellation draws attention to the man's hair as a defining feature of his subject.

The man with dreadlocks is hailed by his deviance from dominant society's aesthetic ideals. The Watkins children are well-attuned to the economic implications of the man's deviance: "They let you come to work with your hair like that?" Marcus said" (109). He recognizes the aesthetic significance to market implications demonstrating the intersections in well-established ISAs which propel the myth of the American Dream, white beauty standards, and sustain myths of American exceptionalism as the broader American national ISA. Marvella's consciousness illustrates the aesthetic ideals which she infers through her interpellation within the national ISA. When "the man laughed. Marvella had been surprised that he did not have a West Indian accent" (107). Based on her aesthetic ideals, Marvella assumes the man is an immigrant, reflecting the impulse of colonialism on the American psyche as well as the American national ISA's ability to sustain ideologies which enable displacement. Neoliberal, economic alienation is the cornerstone of Tonnes's conception of *Gesellschaft*. This is supported by the perspective of African American literary critic bell hooks, who writes, "marginalized groups, deemed Other, who have been ignored, rendered invisible, can be seduced by the emphasis on Otherness, by its commodification, because it offers the promise of recognition and reconciliation" (hooks 26). The American national ISA thus interpellates individuals as subjects alienating them to their subject positions, which in the case of marginalized groups in the context of *Gesellschaft*, means erasure and being "rendered invisible."

While the Watkins are firmly interpellated within the American national ISA, evinced by how they interpellate others, so too is the man's loose interpellation within the American national ISA shown by how he interpellates others. His responses to their questions emphasize the extent to which he is not interpellated; the responses do not conform to the children's ideological expectations due to their own interpellation. The man embodies Althusser's claim that "There is no ideology except by the subject and for the subject," as he recognizes himself as a deviant subject within the American national ISA

(Althusser 1355). Moreover, the few times the man does interpellate the Watkins children, he interpellates them solely within a distinctly different family ISA, an ideation of *Gemeinschaft*. At issue in this ideological clash is the man's right to nurture Marvella's children as a parental community caretaker, even though he is just a passerby, even a vagrant. Given his subject position outside the nuclear family, the man distinctly interpellates the children within *Gemeinschaft*. When the children ask him if he is a zombie from a scary movie they saw at their grandmother's, due to his hair's aesthetic deviance, he paternally cautions them, "They give you nightmares" (Jones 108). He hails them as subjects and as children relative to a media genre and postulates parental-lite ideology about such genre. The children respond, "Hey! ... That's what my granny said" (108). This recognition of the man as a subject with ideological beliefs similar to their grandmother's morphs his subjectivity relative to her and constructs him as a parental-lite figure for the remainder of their interactions.

He interpellates another sibling, calling attention to their specific subject positions within their family ISA. He asks Avis, the youngest, "You go to school?" (110). The man calls attention to the child's positionality as the youngest within the family when he asks if she is of school age yet. The sole instance the man interpellates Marvella he hails her subject positionality within the family ISA. Marvella interpellates her child, grasping her subject position within the family ISA, after Marcus asks him what she perceives to be an inappropriate question to the man. The man in turn touches one finger to her hand and states "You have wonderful kids" (109). His interpellation of the Watkins emphasizes the extent to which the man does not conform with society's ideological expectations of him. Marvella interpellates her child, attempting to remind her child of the ideological expectations to show good manners toward his subject. The man responds, seconding her interpellation of her child as that subject's mother, or authoritative figure, but flips Marvella's interpellation, asserting that she is a good mother with wonderful children. This evinces to the audience the man's far looser interpellation within the family ISA. While Marvella interpellated her son to remind him of his manners, the man asks Marvella to allow the son to continue expressing his curiosity unhindered by the ideological expectations of the national ISA. The man evidently has a broader, looser conception of family than Marvella. When Marvella sees her children as rude, he sees them as wonderful, demonstrating his loose interpellation. Through

their piqued curiosity, expressed through questioning the man, unhindered by typical ideological expectations, the man temporarily parents the children while on the train.

Enabled by his defiance of the nation's interpellation of him as a subject within the American national ISA and his interpellation with the ideology of *Gemeinschaft* leading the man to reciprocally share of Marvella's duties as a parent, rekindling the collective efficacy and reciprocity of *Gemeinschaft*, if only while on the train. The man would not have been able to subvert neoliberal alienation, shifting the responsibility of mothering to the community, and reciprocally relieving Marvella of entertaining three children on the subway every day had he strictly interpellated them within the national ISA. According to Althusser, the man "participates in certain regular practices" of a *Gemeinschaft*-oriented ideology "on which 'depend' the ideas which he has in all consciousness freely chosen as a subject" (Althusser 1353). He could have dismissed them as annoying little kids, yet instead, he answers their seemingly stupid questions within the national ISA. These questions are of profound importance for the Watkins's cultural competency as exhibited by the man's responses. When interpellated by Marcus, "Whatcha call that kinda hair?" he responds with "We call them dreadlocks" (Jones 110). The man's response invokes Marcus's positionality as well as his own, calling Marcus into his ideology and interpellating him into his ISA. Marcus interacts with this aspect of Black culture, as his own, something he would not have done had he remained interpellated within the American national ISA. The man's presence in the Watkins's lives reconstructs their perception of Black masculinity. Marcus exclaims, "My granny says there ain't no good men left in the world," to which the man answers: "Well, if that's so ... it wouldn't be a good thing for the world" (109). While Marvella attempts to intervene by silencing her son, and thus interpellating him back into the Family ISA; the man retorts the Watkins's ideology on masculinity. The Watkins's interpellation within the American national ISA shatters their view of Black masculinity; bell hooks explicates: "this cultural narrative relies on stereotypes of the 'primitive,' even as it eschews the term, to evoke a world where black people were in harmony with nature and with one another" (26). As a father figure, the man challenges Marcus to prove his grandmother's perception of this cultural narrative wrong. When he interpellates her, the physical contact between the man and Marvella juxtaposes the ideological contact occurring between the parties

as well as provides a source of the man's materiality in Marvella's life. Marvella recalls, "as she and the children were crossing Franklin Square that the dreadlock man's finger touch the day before had been the first time a man had touched her—outside of handshakes with men at work—since the doofus she met at the club" (111). This narration demonstrates the effect that the interaction with the man even has on Marvella and reconstructs a more positive view of Black masculinity. The man's willingness to allow the Watkins children to express their curiosity despite their interpellation enables the temporary rekindling of *Gemeinschaft*.

Ultimately, "There is no practice except by and in an ideology," and despite their contact with the man with dreadlocks, the Watkins reassume their former subject position, fully interpellated within the American national ISA (Althusser 1355). The story concludes with Marvella disciplining Marcus and firmly reiterating their subject positions relative to the family ISA and the American national ISA at large:

"I'm the boss around here, and you seem to be forgetting that," she said to him. He was utterly surprised and began to shake. "Who's the boss around here, you or me? Who? Who? Who's the mama in charge around here?"

His eyes filled with tears. "You are," he said, but not loud enough for her.

She did not like scenes like this, particularly around white people, who believed that nothing good ever happened between black people and their children, but she could not stop herself. "Who's the mama in charge around here, I said?" she kept asking the boy.

"You are," he said louder, crying. "You the mama. You the mama. You the mama in charge" (Jones 114-115).

Marvella asserts her ideological expectation of white people due to their interpellation within the American national ISA. This evinces that despite their interaction with the man, Althusser's belief that there is nothing outside of ideology stands. Interpellation inhib-

its the construction of *Gemeinschaft*, enabling the permeation of *Gesellschaft*.

Indeed, the apparatuses of state power which segregate, criminalize, gentrify, objectify and commodify are reliant upon interpellation to label their subjects; "The centrality of minoritized space may stem from the fact that the minoritized subject cannot be seen outside its relations with the majority and those relations are spatial in nature" (Laguerre 9). *Gesellschaft* relies on our alienation between each other which interpellation accomplishes by recognizing us within disparate subject positionalities. The ideological state apparatuses rely on us viewing difference as weakness to keep us oppressed, "But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor a pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist" (Lorde 26). Interpellation recognizes the differences between us within our subject positions. It is an intrinsic part of everyday life. Ideally, we would be mature enough to embrace each other's differences within contemporary society, but our communities are under active assault by neoliberal, economic alienation which relies on our division. Thus, we must be strategic about when we recognize differences and use the difference created by our subjectivity as a means to sow unity. Nationalized ideologies of family values which other our neighbors as less American than us. Such repressive ideologies divide us of vital community bonds needed to raise children, preserve communities and resist artificial, neoliberal, capitalistic forces of change such as gentrification. This is at the heart of the tension between Tonnes's conceptions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Jones story evinces interpellation is at the heart of this struggle between the alienation of society, *Gesellschaft*, and community bonds, *Gemeinschaft*. A subject's awareness of the extent of their own interpellation within ideological apparatuses during times of disruption and change, such as gentrification, affects their ability to resist corrosive social changes.



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# A Stepping Stone to Build On: An Interview with Dr. Yuki Kang

Interview by Delaney Sousa

## **What is your field of research and study?**

I was trained in the field of writing studies. It's under English. I looked it up the other day to get a sense of what they [authorities in the field] officially say writing studies is. We call it the 4 C's: Conference on College Composition and Communication ("CCCC Position Statements"). It's one of the biggest conferences in our field. It's not only for college instructors, but it's also for K-12 teachers. They explain that the field of writing studies is about communication, writing, and the research of both. It's where scholars and teachers study and research on what writing and communication is all about, and that's basically it.

(Dr. Kang references a definition of the field she identifies with from the UC Santa Barbara Writing Program.)

"Writing studies is a research-based field broadly focused on analyzing the production, consumption, and circulation of writing in specific contexts. The field incorporates subspecialties such as composition and rhetoric," where a lot of the academic writing in the context of first year instruction lies, "computers and writing, second language writing, genre studies, and textual analysis. It is both interdisciplinary and international, attracting researchers from diverse depart-

ments and countries. Writing studies researchers examine the ways in which writing serves to construct and perpetuate communities of practice—academic disciplines, community groups, civic enterprises, or professions. These studies frequently combine multiple research methods, including textual analysis, ethnographic observation and interviews”—like my own research—“discourse analysis, and statistical analysis” (“Ph.D. Emphasis in Writing Studies”). It has a mixed method in approaching research. “While studying the production, consumption, and circulation of texts, Writing Studies scholars often cultivate a primary or secondary focus on helping writers analyze and practice the expectations for writing in specific contexts. Thus, experts in Writing Studies also work with writers to develop writing, reading, and critical analysis strategies necessary for successful participation in diverse communities. Experts may be writing faculty or faculty in other disciplines who deliberately analyze writing as a learning activity” (“Ph.D. Emphasis in Writing Studies”).

This was written in UC Santa Barbara’s Doctoral Writing Studies program, and I thought this did a very nice job of explaining what the field is and what the field does, as well as what the people in it are interested in and focus on.

So that’s the field I was trained in for a long time before coming to Gonzaga.

### **What drew you to your field of study?**

Actually, I kind of stumbled on it. I have a Master’s in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. I came to the U.S. to enroll in this program, and then to go back to South Korea, where I came from, but my thesis advisor said, “How about going for a Ph.D.?” And I said, “Huh? A Ph.D.?” He said, “How about a Ph.D. in Writing Studies?” I did not know what the field was back then, but it attracted me because of the idea of “writing” in the title. I thought maybe this was a fit for me because I always had an interest in writing and testing anxiety for my master’s, and that’s what I wrote my master’s thesis on.

So I kind of stumbled into it, but, as embarrassing as it is, I really did not have an idea of what it was. It was attractive to me because it was within English—not education, but English—along with the writing portion of it. I decided to look into what writing was about. To tell you the truth, when I started my doctoral program, I didn’t

know what a Ph.D. program was about. I eventually found out, so that was good. Once I was in, it was a revelation; I did a 180 with all my thinking, processes, [and] ideologies about what English is and what writing is. It was a life-changing process. I say process because it didn't happen in one sitting, but it was through my coursework and being exposed to all these books and theories about how education should be. I still remember reading Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and it blew my mind. It's a very old and foundational text, but it just blew my mind that people were doing this, that people were studying more to better the livelihood of others, the minorities and the ones who were more in the dark. I was so humbled and fascinated by what our professors were doing, why they were researching, and what my peers were looking into.

I grew up in Korea always hearing the saying from my mom, along the lines of "To get these kids studying." I'll paraphrase: the saying goes that by studying, you don't give it to someone else. It was to motivate you, preaching that if you study, you'll enhance your livelihood, and it all comes back to you. I realized that a lot of people were studying and doing research and putting their time and energy into their studies to benefit others, to give to others rather than giving to themselves. I was blown away by that realization, as the ideology that I grew up with was to study for your own development and progression. That was turned around for me. Going through coursework made me realize why I wanted to study; a purpose was there.

As I was doing my coursework, I found that there were some injustices done to international students, as I was, there at my university. I had so many questions, so that's where my research took me. I had questions about literacy and rhetorical practices among international, multilingual students in particular, at the institution I was studying at. I was determined to find out what was going on. That's what kept me going; it was bigger than me. Looking into this made me realize the whole thing was bigger than me, and I was just there to make small progressions in the larger, broader field, as well as in my smaller sub-field of writing studies.

This was the topic of my first paper, and I was so proud of it because it felt like I was telling the story for not only myself, but for a population in that moment that not a lot of people were interested in. I wanted to see what I could find and how best to represent what was going on. It was very meaningful in that way. I think that's what keeps me going and gets me up in the morning. There are moments

when I don't know why I'm doing it and agonizing over it and pushing myself, but the idea that it's not about me keeps me moving forward and pushing on because it's for a bigger reason.

### **How does our theme of “Rebuild” resonate with you and your work?**

I was thinking about that question. What does that word mean for you? When you were coming up with the theme, what were you thinking about? Did you mean literally rebuilding? I wanted to ask you that first so I could see how I could best answer.

Of course. First and foremost, our goal when we make the themes for *Charter* is to make them the perfect balance of broad and narrow so that we are able to accept a wide range of works, from literary analysis to opinions that we couldn't have expected to fit with the theme, but they surprise us in the best way. When we were creating this theme, we were thinking about how we've been in the pandemic for almost 600 days now. We thought of this theme in the face of trying to come out the other side of the pandemic, cultural conflict, new discourse on racial equity, especially here in the United States as well as abroad. We wanted to prompt the community to look into how to move on from that in a constructive way and with an eye to the future.

To me, when I hear rebuild, there's that connotation for me that something has been demolished, then you rebuild from it. But when I think about everything that's going on, especially in my field, I don't see it as rebuilding, but as continuously building. I think it doesn't all collapse at once; it might crumble, and then you build upon it. So, I think about it more as adding on. I think we're rebuilding everyday bit by bit. As we progress, we look back and see what we have missed, and then we try to fill in the gaps. It's like with a sewing machine, going forward and backward; as you proceed forward, you come back and cover a little bit of the space you did previously before going forward. That's how I see the rebuild aspect.

When I think about how “rebuild” resonates with me...I think that's life. We are always thinking we're innovative, progressive, and moving forward, but when we think about it, we're always continuously building from what has happened before and going off of that. We can't ignore everything that's there and start from scratch because it's all there, and we are building off of that as we combat and maybe dismantle things and process. It's very abstract.

When I hear the word “rebuild” in terms of me and my work, I see that going on all the time. Sometimes it feels like I am running in one place and not going forward, but I’m hoping in the long run when I look back, I will have made some small increments of progression and development. That’s how I see myself in my work; it’s not going to be evolutionary. It’s never going to be that I make some big discovery. It will be in the moment, but hopefully in a moment where someone else can pick it up and progress it as well. So I’m in the moment, just a speck in rebuilding the whole thing.

**So just to hit on that point a bit, it’s like you want to pass on the torch.**

Yes, yes, absolutely.

**You want to make a small contribution so that other people can build and rebuild off of that.**

Exactly. And of course it’s my contribution, but they can also come back and see if there’s anything to change or revise or even dismantle. It’s a very little stepping stone that others can step on and progress. So that’s how I see myself and my work– not too important, but still somewhat important.

**To get a bit more specific, what systems, practices, and values need to be rebuilt, or rather built upon, in your field and why?**

I went back to see what the field has been doing for the past few years during the pandemic. Our field has always been very progressive; you might even get that from the research I’m doing. It’s very progressive in ways that some people not in the field might be uncomfortable with. It’s been progressive in racial and ethnic themes.

I went through the position statement from the CCCC mentioned earlier that was produced and published more recently. If you look at the titles, it’s fascinating. They have to do with ethical issues in research and composition, but also outside it, responding to threats of violence in terms of sexual harassment, bullying, crimes against marginalized populations, and more (“CCCC Position Statements”). The field is about what’s going on, it is about our current lives. A lot of people and students think scholarly work is just theory and very abstract, but for our field it’s very practical. It has to be situated in

what's going on.

The scholars and teachers in the field try to adapt that to what they're doing, whether it's teaching or in their scholarship. My most recent work, I presented an oral presentation on an autoethnographic piece. It's more of a starting piece. This was presented at a conference in March. It talks about my language, literacy, and rhetorical practices and my history with all my changing language ideologies, but I also had to bring in what was going on at that time with all the anti-Asian violence. I think it just needs to continue being more inclusive as ever as the field progresses. We see this in studies in Ebonics, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), as students write in their own languages, which connects to my own research, and the list goes on. It's situated within what is happening and what we need to do.

**It seems like there's a lot of hope to come from that as we move forward in that direction.**

That goes back to how I perceive rebuilding. It's just going in that direction, but also always looking back to see what we can change or adjust going forward. It goes back and forth, back and forth as we proceed.

**How has the pandemic, cultural conflict, and discourse on racial inequity in recent times exposed areas of your field that need to be rebuilt or built upon?**

The position statement I mentioned earlier also has a statement from June 2020 on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The field has addressed what needs to be done because it's about teaching. I went into the position statement, and it talks about how we should as teachers in the classrooms and with our curriculum adapt to the regulations and the science that was being put out by experts and scientists. I thought this was very specific and articulate. It talks about core principles of teaching writing as well as how to support both students and instructors in this time with the virtual tools we have.

In response to the question, I think most everybody in the field is thinking about it and incorporating it into what they are doing. Our field is very practical; it's not only about going into books and developing theory, it's about developing theories that we can reflect into our everyday practices as teachers and scholars.

**I had a follow up question about teaching during the pandemic and adapting to that. I've been hearing from a lot of professors and reading articles about how these practices might be shaping education going forward and that we might keep some of the pandemic practices in a post-pandemic world. Do you have any thoughts on this?**

Sure. My colleagues and I talk about this because the virtual way of teaching has made us realize that it might benefit some students who learn differently. We always talk about different types of learners, and although this format might be very new to us and cumbersome and sometimes a time-consuming process, we also recognize that this is really an excellent way of reaching out to the learners we haven't been able to. On the flip side though, we have to consider that this format might not fit some other students or not be amicable or beneficial to other students who have other characteristics, such as difficulties being on screen for a long period of time, depending on what population they're talking about. It forces us to think about different avenues of teaching and about different types of learners and teachers. I think it has been a good opportunity overall. I don't like teaching over Zoom, but I also learned that it is needed in certain situations; it's not my preference, but I have to think about the bigger needs of the students.

**What concrete steps need to be taken to initiate this rebuilding?**

I think putting it into action, not just words but with action. Trying things out is scary because we are often afraid of failure, but with all the conversations about the critical thinking we've done it's most important to put it into action because without trying, we don't know if it will work or not. For me, those are the steps that need to be taken, not just with the big theories, but with everyday thinking, trying new things and being okay with failure as something to learn from. It happens with me every class when I teach. When I decide to do something new in the classroom, it is always scary going in, but I'm not the only one who learns from it; the students learn along with me. Being transparent and open about it is very important in the process as well. So being transparent, trying new things, and being able to say that it didn't work, but we can make it better.



## **In your pedagogy and curriculum, how do you make efforts to rebuild?**

Going back to the conversation part, scholarship and research is about having conversation not only with yourselves and your subjects, but with the people who are looking into similar or even totally different topics, as well as continuously making connections. I think that's what I need to do in my pedagogy and curriculum to rebuild the field as a member and participant. [It's] one of the first things I talked about [earlier in the conversation]. Contributing incrementally, it's not much, but being part of that movement is very important. Trying to figure out my part and doing my part as a member of the field is what it comes down to.

It's interesting, before grad school and before going into the field, I used to think about the ivory tower and what we think about Ph.D.'s, doctoral programs, and scholars. Now that I have gone through the training and I'm in it, I think, not that it [the work] is nothing, we're also just people trying to figure things out. We might have spent a little more time on it, but we're trying to figure things out as we talk to people and continuously re-evaluating our thoughts and ideologies. I think that's the most exciting part about all of this. You find those aha moments, and it just completely humbles you and makes you realize the more you study and look into things, you realize you know so little. So what can you do? Just stop? It's all those little pieces that come together to help us rebuild what's in front of us.

That was for me my life journey in the field. I've never done something this long in my entire life, and the reason I can do this is that purpose. I can do something little, but it's a little contribution that makes up the whole picture.

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# A Moment in Time: Scientific Futures and Occultic Pasts in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Modern Novel of 1851, *The House of the Seven Gables*

Antonio Campos

## *Introduction*

In contemplating the setting of the nineteenth century and the culture of the Victorian era, the contemporary reader likely envisions a world of gloom and ignorance. Certainly, the public imagination of the first half of the nineteenth century, prior to the widespread scientific frenzy of the industrial revolution, fell prey to numerous superstitions, misbeliefs, and practices carried over from older eras. Spaces of the early and mid-nineteenth century were “physically dark”: isolated country dwellers were separated from civilization by lengthy carriage rides, and “the lack of modern medicine made the average lifespan half of what it is today” (Koropisz). This all led to a Victorian “obsession with death” (Koropisz), wherein “horror,” “preternatural,” and “gothic” narratives were not only popular but widely believed (Streeby 458). However, the same century that fully accepted these antiquated and misinformed paranormal and supernatural tales also saw the development of a scientific and progressive “modern environment,” as well as “a distinctively modern world” filled with such novel inventions and sciences “as mesmerism, telegraphy, photography, and the railroad” (Swann 2).

Published in 1851, precisely in the middle of this curious century and its unique milieu, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s famous tale *The House of the Seven Gables* is deeply interested in this cultural shift

from superstitious antiquity to empirical modernity. In the preface to his work, Hawthorne asserts that the text is not a novel, but rather a “romance” and a “work of art” full of “legendary mist” (Hawthorne 1). Hawthorne asserts that he desires to “mellow the lights” of his text and “deepen and enrich the shadows” (3) so as to turn the book into something legendary or even mythological, akin to a popular ghost story or a historical tall tale. Then, throughout the book, Hawthorne superficially seeks to maintain this legendary or ghostly declaration by continuously mentioning spirits, myths, and curses. The central and titular setting of *The House of the Seven Gables* is, apparently, a haunted mansion; the sinister natures of the “East Wind,” and other omens are mentioned numerous times, and a haunted portrait acts as a central symbol to the text, as does the curse of the condemned wizard, Matthew Maule.

However, even as he presents these more legendary and paranormal elements, Hawthorne also seems to reject them in his work, along with the very mythology, “romance,” and “legendary mist” that he originally proposed. The “ghosts” of *The House of the Seven Gables* are not really spirits at all, but only figments of the moonlight, confusions of the narrator’s senses, or metaphorical apparitions. The house and the well beside it are not really haunted or cursed either, but merely corrupted by old age and poor, “unscrupulous...foundations” (Hawthorne 13). Even the aforementioned portrait is not as possessed or haunted as it seems, but its only secret is an ordinary, old map hung upon the wall behind it.

Thus, Hawthorne explains away all of the truly “legendary” paranormal elements of his so-called mythological romance. Instead, he replaces these older notions of ghosts, spirits, and ghouls with modern inventions and developments. Mesmerism, considered in the nineteenth century to be a “valid... clinical science” (Huang 151), takes center stage in some chapters rather than more spiritual ghosts and curses. Similarly, steam locomotives, daguerreotype photographs, and other elements indicative of modernity and industry dominate certain sections of the book (Swann 2). Thus, for as much as *The House of the Seven Gables* strives to be, or pretends to be, a retrogressive novel of colonial and Puritanical legend, akin to the more gothic works of Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe, it actually embodies a more progressive text, discussing modern developments and inventions rather than older myths and curses.

This project seeks to analyze these and other ways in which *The House of the Seven Gables* rejects, accepts, or modifies the legends that it proposes. Moreover, this work aims to demonstrate how the book is also a forward-thinking and scientific text of American Renaissance literature, as well as a rearward-looking legend or ghost story. Finally, this paper attempts to demonstrate how *The House of the Seven Gables* successfully combines both of these story-telling techniques to make a new and complex statement about what it means to live in the present, ever rebuilding towards a scientific and progressive future while remaining firmly founded in a conservative and legendary past.

### ***The Past***

In his preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, Nathaniel Hawthorne explains that his work “is a Legend, prolonging itself from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight” (Hawthorne 1). The distant “epoch” to which Hawthorne refers is, of course, New England’s Puritan period, which is both a primary focus of this text, and an “obsession... [that] nostalgically pervaded virtually every form of popular literature in the antebellum period” (Streeby 446). However, unlike other authors, Hawthorne does not seem to lionize the Puritanical past, but instead he juxtaposes its “gray... distance” with the “broad daylight” of 1851, definitively suggesting a differentiation between an older and eerier time, versus a present age of literal and metaphorical enlightenment. Thus, *The House of the Seven Gables*’ presentation of the past and its “preoccupation with history” (Huang 144) are not meant to be nostalgic or wistful, but in fact the contrary.

In the initial chapter of the romance, entitled “The Old Pyncheon Family,” Hawthorne describes both the house of the seven gables itself, and the strange incidents that led to its initial construction (Hawthorne 9). Unlike the rest of the book, which “is carefully set in a single contemporary summer...this first chapter looks back to the 1690s...and deploys the decent vagueness of ‘once upon a time’” (Swann 1). According to mythic history and local legend developed throughout the first chapter, the book’s titular mansion is the old house of the Pyncheon family, a wealthy and established tribe that dates back to New England’s Puritan era. The original head of the Pyncheon family, Colonel Pyncheon, procured the land for his opulent home by arranging for the execution of its tenant, Matthew

Maule, on the charge of witchcraft, thereby causing Maule to curse the Pyncheon line with his final words “God will give [them] blood to drink!” (Hawthorne 12). Then, apparently in confirmation of the curse of “the reputed wizard” (12), the colonel inexplicably dies by choking on his own blood at the housewarming intended to commemorate the completion of his new mansion.

Through its frequent and obvious discussions of witchcraft, wizardry, curses, and legends, the first chapter of *The House of the Seven Gables* superficially seems to support both Puritanical and early nineteenth century conceptions of the reality of the supernatural. The notion that Matthew Maule really was a wizard is supported by the apparent effectiveness of his curse against the colonel, and the justice of his execution is supposedly evidenced by his identity as a wizard. However, a deeper reading of both the opening chapter and the rest of *The House of the Seven Gables* more directly suggests a complete *rejection* of these very claims. Rather than being a legitimate judicial effort to stamp out otherworldly dangers, “Maule’s witchcraft trial merely shows religion [and superstition to be] convenient mystifications of [Colonel] Pyncheon’s economic motives” for seizing desirable land and building a house (Swann 2). Colonel Pyncheon’s apparent death from Maule’s curse can likewise be explained in less than fantastic ways. Later in the novel, when Phoebe believes she hears cursed blood gurgling in the throat of another ruthless Pyncheon, Judge Jaffrey, she immediately recognizes the curse as the “exceedingly ridiculous...absurdity which it unquestionably was” (Hawthorne 111). Moreover, even later in the novel, the entire curse is almost explained away as a perfectly natural “hereditary liability” of the Pyncheon family (270). It seems that, due to some reasonable, underlying medical condition rather than magical curses, members of that bloodline may spontaneously “choke with blood” (270). Thus, although Hawthorne claims to present his story as a “Legend,” even in a chapter dealing exclusively with mysterious past events, he still refuses to incorporate real magic or devilry into the text, relying instead upon mysteries which economic greed, medical science, and coincidence can fully explain.

This pattern, in which Hawthorne presents mysterious or otherworldly folklore only to retract or question the fantasy of it, is repeated elsewhere in the story as well. For example, in the first chapter of the novel, the house of the seven gables is predominantly described as a cursed estate, sitting beside a corrupted well on a property haunted

by the spirit of Matthew Maule. The house is reported to be a “a ruin” made of old material” (10), “a heart, full of rich and somber reminiscences” (28), and a place where “Death [sleeps] across the threshold” (18). The “quaint exterior” of the home grows “black from a prevalent East Wind” (9), which is a popular nineteenth century symbol of approaching evil, and “only ghosts and ghostly reminiscences” are said to roam the passages of the haunted mansion, playing “dead music” upon a cursed harpsicord (68). Additionally, the natural well beside the house is considered to be “cursed” since it used to have fresh water, but it is now corrupted by underwater gasses and sediments (12).

Once again, this language all suggests a definitive, if antiquated, fantastical element to the story, which Hawthorne ultimately chooses to reject. Rather, the ominous and chilling attributes of the house of the seven gables only “assume *figurative* importance in the novel, with regard to the themes of history, folklore and tradition” (Huang 147). Moreover, the mansion bears “a striking resemblance to British gothic houses” inasmuch as it is not actually “haunted, but [instead] reminiscent of the inhabitants’ collective experiences” (146). Thus, the mansion itself “plays upon the tension between the literal and figural aspects of art...[exemplifying] Hawthorne’s well-known concern for the problematic relationship between the actual and the imaginary” (Ullén 2). Otherwise stated, the house is metaphorically haunted because of the cumulative emotions and symbolic associations that it possesses, but the ghosts of *The House of the Seven Gables* are not intended to be real, material phantoms. Every time actual poltergeists are mentioned in the narrative, they are disavowed as mere figments of the narrator’s imagination, tricks of the moonlight, or fictive rhetorical devices. This can be readily appreciated in passages of the book like Chapter 18, wherein “a whole tribe” of Pyncheon ghosts, from the time of the Puritans to the present day, are described in minute detail, gathering around the lifeless corpse of Judge Jaffrey as it sits at the mansion’s dining table (Hawthorne 242). Even after this obvious and frightening ghost story, the narrator explains that “the fantastic scene, just hinted at, must by no means be considered as forming an actual portion of our story,” and he further asserts that he was merely “betrayed into this brief extravagance by the quiver of the moonbeams...and shadows” (243).

Thus, the reader, like the narrator, must reject the potential ghostly or folkloric elements of the story, even when they are precisely and faithfully described upon a page of text. Hawthorne lends pur-

poseful ambiguity about the existence of ghosts to his narrative, but he ultimately seems to undermine the possibility of the reality of the supernatural. He explains the tainting of Maule's well in practical engineering terms concerning the nearby mansion's bad "foundations" (13), and he asserts that the house itself is only black and foreboding because of old age, pervasive bad weather, and a "wilderness of neglect" resulting from bad grounds stewardship (132). Indeed, rather than machinating phantoms or malevolent curses, "the real horror of Hawthorne's republican gothic" is actually focused upon "historical injustice, class antagonisms, and the hypocrisy of wealthy public men" (Streeby 458). Dark elements of the story, such as the execution of Matthew Maule and the apparent murder of Clifford's father, are all explained not by spiritual curses or ghostly occurrences, but by the real problems of social injustice, malevolent deception, false accusation, and self-blame. Just as Matthew Maule's witchcraft trial is explained by Colonel Pyncheon's overwhelming greed and coveting of his good property, the death of Clifford's father is explained by Judge Pyncheon's greed and pride.

Thus, Hawthorne defies older, early nineteenth century notions of the reality of spirits and ghosts in favor of more definite ideas of justice, vengeance, and material explanation. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne is rebuilding a new path for the American novel. He moves away from the sinister and macabre preternatural and metaphysical notions of the past, towards the scientific, natural, and physical ideologies of the future.

### ***The Future***

Functioning in sharp contrast to the older topics of folklore, myth, legend, and history heretofore discussed, in *The House of the Seven Gables*, Nathaniel Hawthorne also spends a great deal of text discussing modern technologies and topics that were at the futuristic forefront of human industry and innovation in 1851. While some portions of the romance detail the "Gothic mansion" and the "comically old-fashioned spinster" who inhabits it (Reynolds 270), other sections of the text conversely describe "the paraphernalia of a distinctively modern world" (Swann 2). Scientific topics, such as photography, telegraphy, railroad construction, and electricity all symbolize the advent of the modern age and the industrial revolution in *The House of the Seven Gables*, as do pseudoscientific developments, like spiritualism, phrenology, and mesmerism. Similarly, social move-



ments like prison reform, abolition, and progressive developmental reform all provide evidence for the radical cultural revolution that dominated the 1850s and 1860s, up to and including the American Civil War.

A major passage of the romance that deals with the advent of modernity is the train scene of Chapter 17, wherein the two old “owls,” Clifford and Hepzibah, flee their mansion after the death of Judge Jaffrey, falsely implicating themselves in the judge’s entirely coincidental death. As opposed to the domestic scenes of the novel’s beginning, wherein Hepzibah is described as an impossibly aristocratic homebody, absolutely chained to her ancestral domain, the scenes aboard the express locomotive, “the magic carpet of the day,” feel incredibly fast-paced and extreme (Swann 15). After the train begins whirling through the countryside at a rapid velocity, Hepzibah fearfully questions “Am I awake? Am I awake?” in fear of the “fretting and fuming” locomotive speeding her “onward like the wind” (Hawthorne 221). In this scene, Hepzibah shows both a literal and metaphorical fear of her life ‘running off the tracks,’ as the “structural unity” of her life seems to be “seriously threatened by the turbulent forces of modern American culture” (Reynolds 268). While the train itself, representing “the era’s prime symbol of brute force and modern technology,” (268) blasts across the countryside, the narrator joins Hepzibah in fear that the outside world seems “unfixed from its age-long rest,” by the upheaving forces of industry (Hawthorne 222).

To the same extent that Hepzibah hates and fears the locomotive, her brother, Clifford, adores the experience as one of freedom and vivacity. A former criminal falsely convicted of murder and tormented in prison by an outdated system of incarceration, Clifford feels free and comfortable on the train and in the modern world at large. “Here we are in the world, Hepzibah!” he claims multiple times, “[We are] in the midst of life! In the throng of our fellow-beings! Let you and I be happy!” (223). Clifford “praises various aspects of the modern scene—improved transportation, spiritualism, electricity, mesmerism—all of which, he insists, are dissolving our ties to an oppressive past and preparing the way for a more fluid, mobile, [progressive, and modern future] existence” (Reynolds 268). Clifford also touts a laundry list of Victorian reform and cultural movements, including the liberal treatment of criminals, the upward mobility of classes, the creation of modern pamphlet novels, the publication of new cultural periodicals, animal magnetism, and sensationalistic news coverage.

Through Clifford, Hawthorne seems, at least on a superficial level, to fully endorse the great advancements of the nineteenth century, claiming that novel technologies will uplift humanity and improve everyday life. However, on a deeper level, Hawthorne's endorsement of modernity seems just as shallow and superficial as his detestation of history. No sooner does Clifford tout the excellence of the future than another passenger onboard the train, perhaps representing Hawthorne himself, insists that all of Clifford's ideas are "nonsense" and "humbug" (Hawthorne 225). Indeed, as much as Clifford hates the Pyncheon mansion for being "a rusty, crazy, creaky, dry-rotted, damp-rotted, dingy, dark, miserable old dungeon," his alternative vision of nomadic life on the road, always being "everywhere and nowhere," seems little better and certainly unmaintainable (226). Thus, while Hawthorne does not "necessarily endorse [Clifford's] radicalism...he does approve of his hope" (Swann 2) for an improved future, if not one totally severed from the physicality and character of the past.

Similar to Clifford, another character in *The House of the Seven Gables* who represents progressivism and the future is Holgrave, the daguerreotypist and professional mesmerizer who lives in the mansion thanks to Hepzibah's charity. Holgrave "is a full embodiment of the anarchic elements of modern popular culture," as much as other characters, like Hepzibah and the judge appear "old-fashioned and conservative" (Reynolds 270). Moving away from old myths and legends and towards modernity, industry, and science, Holgrave embraces mesmerism, electricity, and daguerreotype photography specifically "because they were all the trendiest ideas of 1851, all to do with communication, and all somehow connected with the new ideas of a universal electromagnetic field" (Swann 5). By embracing mesmerism, which was considered to be a "respected technique of clinical hypnotism [and a] valid form of reformatory psychological science" (Huang 151), Holgrave asserts his revolutionary belief that science and psychiatry can access what Hawthorne might call "the truths of the human heart" (Hawthorne 1) better than faith, religion, myth, or tradition. In Chapter 13, Holgrave also shows that he writes popular fiction for "penny-papers" as he tells the narrative of Alice Pyncheon. Such pulp stories also represented futuristic practices of the mid-nineteenth century, since "opportunistic publishers took advantage of new technological improvements, particularly the cylinder press introduced in 1847, to manufacture such lurid, [and

sensational] pamphlet literature” (Reynolds 170). Through all of these avenues—mesmerism, photography, and sensationalist literature—Holgrave advocates the newest ideas of the day, butts heads with the ultraconservative spinster, Hepzibah, and prepares to step boldly into the future at the cost of obliterating the past.

Nowhere is Holgrave’s radical progressivism seen more vividly than in Chapter 12 of the book, which is named “The Daguerreotypist” in his honor. In that chapter, Holgrave delivers his famous (or infamous) “dead men” speech to Phoebe, in which he advocates a sudden overthrow of current conservative systems in exchange for a rapid, progressive, and continuously evolving new form of society, somewhat like the nomadic or gypsy lifestyle previously attributed to Clifford. In his speech, Holgrave pushes back against conservatism, tradition, and old-fashioned mentalities as he exclaims “What slaves we are to bygone times—to Death, if we give the matter the right word!” (Hawthorne 160). Later, Holgrave continues:

A dead man sits on all our judgment-seats; and living judges do but search out and repeat his decisions. We read in dead men’s books! We laugh at dead men’s jokes, and cry at dead men’s pathos! We are sick of dead men’s diseases, physical and moral, and die of the same remedies with which dead doctors killed their patients! We worship the living Deity according to dead men’s forms and creeds. Whatever we seek to do, of our own free motion, a dead man’s icy hand obstructs us! (160)

Clearly, this fearsome and energetic speech demonstrates “Holgrave’s enterprising and radical reform plans,” (Huang 150) which are completely antithetical to older notions of ghosts, ancestral veneration, and the conservative factors of tradition. Holgrave’s wholesale love of all things new and progressive “commits him to a visionary future built upon the complete destruction of the past,” (150) as well as the obliteration or transformation of visible symbols of the past, such as the house of the seven gables itself. Furthermore, Holgrave’s complete orientation towards the future makes him “the sworn foe of wealth and all manner of conservatism; ... he [becomes] a wild reformer...who advocates for continuous revolution based upon a complete break from the bondage of the past” (157).

Both Clifford's spastic declarations aboard the train and Holgrave's speech discussed above provide vivid and descriptive calls for radical change and futuristic reforms. However, Hawthorne neither seems to wholeheartedly agree with Clifford's vibrant dream of futuristic technology, nor does he approve of Holgrave's revolutionary attitude and liberation mentality towards current social systems. Although Hawthorne *does* employ such diction as "old," "black-shingled," "damp," and "dark," to describe the physical problems of the house of the seven gables, he does not seem to advocate the revolutionary destruction of the house that Holgrave desires. Similarly, although Hawthorne builds Clifford's excitement aboard the train to a point of childlike jubilation, he does not seem to agree with Hepzibah's brother that technological innovation will lead to a perfect world.

If Hawthorne truly advocated for the sudden and violent overthrow of current conservative systems, like Holgrave and Clifford seem to desire, he would paint both of these characters as glorious heroes who are ultimately successful in their goals. But instead, Hawthorne tends to portray both characters as madmen at the fringe of society, oftentimes rebuked by others and ultimately unsuccessful in their extreme aspirations. Even though he was wrongly accused, as a former prisoner and a convicted murderer Clifford's character would be the subject of severe social stigmas in the mid-nineteenth century, when convicts were popularly seen "in the blackest hue" as henchmen of the devil, operating against the "shining forces of civilization" (Reynolds 251).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Clifford's speech aboard the train, in which he touts technology and modernity, makes him appear like a mere child with an overzealous imagination, provoking the disdain and discomfort of fellow passengers. Similarly, Holgrave's character appears overzealous and extreme throughout much of the novel. While his work as a mesmerizer would have been accepted in the mid-nineteenth century, it certainly was a fringe occupation, as Hepzibah notes when she considers Holgrave to be a "practicer of

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1 Quoting *The Trial of George Crowninshield*, by J.J. Knapp and John Francis Knapp, page 587, volume iv. This was a popularized penny-paper account of the prominent Salem, Massachusetts, White murder trial, upon which Clifford's conviction in *The House of the Seven Gables* may have been based. In the Victorian era, penny-papers like this one, also known as penny-dreadfuls, were known for their dramatic portrayals of court cases, horror stories, and other events.

animal magnetism ... and the Black Art" (Hawthorne 78). Moreover, while Holgrave's work as a daguerreotypist may have been seen as a trendy new occupation, such work would not have been considered respectable in 1851, as is evidenced by the fact that Holgrave lives in Hepzibah's garret.

Based upon his correspondences and personal conversations, it is clear that Nathaniel Hawthorne appreciated several elements of modern life and new technology. He considered Edward Hitchcock's avant-garde scientific treatise *Religion of Geology* to be among his favorite books, along with such other thoroughly modern texts as Oliver Wendell Holmes's *Three Essays on Photography* and certain works concerning Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage's development of the analytical engine (Swann 7). However, throughout *The House of the Seven Gables*, "Hawthorne seems to be suggesting that these new technologies are less liberating than [they] at first appear" (14), and, by the romance's ending, Hawthorne ultimately seems to reject all of the claims presented about violent reform or nomadic lifestyle made throughout the text.

So, if Hawthorne both rejects antiquated expressions of folklore and superstition, as aforementioned, and he also rejects an absolute transition to modernity, what is the stance of his book upon these matters? Can any middle ground be located between total acceptance and total rejection of the modern world?

### ***The Present***

As hinted at above, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, uses both ancient and futuristic elements to develop a resounding message that progressive growth and development are splendid, but only so long as they are firmly founded in the conservative stability of the past. While early chapters describe the "Old Pyncheon Family" in terms of historic legend, tradition, and myth, later chapters describe "The Pyncheon of Today" before moving on to alternative visions of future development and growth that consist of extreme advancements in technology, society, and humanity itself. Whereas Maule's witchcraft trial in Chapter 1 "presents the imaginary as the actual," by describing wizardry as a real and legal offense, the train scene, and other passages from near the end of the book, "present the actual as the imaginary," since they portray real types of technology as almost too good or exciting to be legitimate (Ullén 30). Thus, the overall structural principle of the novel is characterized

by “chiastic inversion, to the effect that the second half of the narrative subtly, but significantly,” questions, complexifies, and repeats “the events of the first half, in an approximately inverted order” (2). Through this genius structuring, “the dialectical allegory of Hawthorne’s romance admonishes us ... to turn towards the past with the ambition of finding within it the potential, if unrealized, ideal [future that] it once held” (31). In this way, Hawthorne’s romance encourages readers to look backward in the spirit of looking forward, and the text thematically compels its audience to find hope, interest, and idealism in the past, rather than the mere degradation and perverse disrepair seen in the physical house of the seven gables.

Beginning in Chapter 18, wherein Judge Pyncheon’s corpse is described *ad nauseam*, Hawthorne also repeats this symbolic proposal to live in the present, relying on both aspects of the past and the future, as he simultaneously warns against living in only one or the other. In the same way that the judge is reduced merely to a lifeless corpse and a ghost, fading away into the haunting legions of the past in Chapter 18, so too is the judge reduced to a mere modern photograph by Holgrave in Chapter 19. In either case, the judge suffers a “grotesque... and terrible invisibility,” as he loses the possibility of actually living in the present, rather than being condemned to either the past or the future (Kelly 250).

Similarly, Hawthorne embraces the present and its myriad possibilities as he contemplates *both* the mythical *past* of the Pyncheon family in Puritan times in the first chapter and various characters’ interpretations of the *future* in later passages. While, “on the one hand, Hawthorne lends retrospective historical depth to modern themes by tracing the Maule/Pyncheon connection back to Puritan times” and the seventeenth century (Reynolds 270), Hawthorne also addresses the slippery slope between “future reformism and revolution,” as he embraces the one but disavows the other (Swann 3). Thus, Hawthorne “asks for historical continuity regarding *gradual* sociohistorical progress and renewal,” and he rejects the total overhaul of the past in favor of the technologically driven future that both Holgrave and Clifford recommend (Huang 163). In some ways, Hawthorne’s romance “suggests that the dominant mode of representation is always historical... [with] an implied criticism about the failure of modern technology [because it] cannot truly abolish or redeem history” (Swann 16).

Indeed, *The House of the Seven Gables* reflects not only Hawthorne’s attempts to grapple with the implications of modern

technologies on a transcendental conception of personal identity, “but also, specifically in the love story of Holgrave and Phoebe, his continued efforts to reconceptualize the meaning of the romance as an artistic and decidedly ethical mode of relation between the self and others” (Kelly 233). This latter message is exemplified only at the very end of the book, when Holgrave proposes marriage to Phoebe at the house of the seven gables, despite the fact that the dead body of the judge is in the adjacent room. Although he is “the daguerreotypist” and the symbol of modernity, progress, and revolution, in that scene, Holgrave also reveals that he is secretly the descendent of Matthew Maule, thus affirming his own connection to New England’s rich history. Therefore, the happiness of marriage is only achieved for Holgrave when he finally voices his connection to the past, rather than only to the future. In a similar way, Phoebe must embrace the liberal element of the future by agreeing to wed Holgrave, despite her personal and familial tendencies towards the strictly conservative Puritanical past.

Although Phoebe is part of an ancient lineage, she is also active, efficient, and cheerful, and she comes to represent a new generation of dynamic and modern American women full of pluck and industriousness, in juxtaposition to the “odd and cranky Hepzibah” (Reynolds 376). In parallel, Holgrave represents a modern member of an ancient family when he reveals his ties to the wizard Maule (376). Thus, both Phoebe and Holgrave, as representatives of an entire generation of young Americans from the 1850s, experience an existential “transformation from the past to the present” as they recognize their ancestral roots whilst simultaneously “symbolizing desperately-needed reform” and “the possibility of change and progress” (Huang 150). Additionally, the union of Phoebe and Holgrave in the final pages of *The House of the Seven Gables* “interrogates the convention of the happy ending” by providing a complex marriage of both characters and ideologies “which seems to recognize the reconciliation of a [broader] struggle between two classes, [the Maules and the Pyncheons,] that have lasted for over one hundred and fifty years” (Swann 17).

Finally, as exemplified by the marriage of Phoebe and Holgrave, a dramatic union of old and new, Pyncheon and Maule, progressive and conservative, is accomplished in the present, which, “Hawthorne optimistically insists, is the task of romance” (Kelly 285). Moreover, it is only once this union is achieved, in the very final paragraphs of the

text, that the past ghosts of *The House of the Seven Gables* are released to “float heavenward,” (Hawthorne 277) and the possibility of a *future* paradise really seems attainable.



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# Subjected to Subjectivity: “Jolene” through Feminist & Queer Lenses

Delaney Sousa

Feminist theorist Luce Irigaray argues for linguistic approaches to overcoming patriarchy through “womanspeak,” which is “more diversified, more multiple in its meanings, more complex, and more subtle than patriarchal language” that objectifies women and relegates them to traditional gender roles (Tyson “Feminist Criticism” 97). Because womanspeak linguistically combats patriarchy in an intentional way, it can come into conflict with women’s positional comfort in subservience within patriarchal structures. Dolly Parton’s song “Jolene” is a breeding ground for such conflict between, on the one hand, overcoming patriarchy and building one’s subjectivity against the grain of dominant heteropatriarchal society, and, on the other, enjoying one’s comfortable, yet repressive subjectivity within such a society. The intentions behind the speaker’s plea to Jolene in this song can be interpreted in multiple ways: as fending off Jolene for the speaker to keep her comfortable subjectivity under the male gaze; as encouraging Jolene to turn down the man’s interest to keep themselves<sup>1</sup> from the oppressive subjectivity of the male gaze that the speaker

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1 Jolene is referred to with they/them pronouns throughout this piece. This is a rhetorical choice to signify Jolene’s potential position outside heteropatriarchy. As explained later in the paper, the audience only hears about Jolene through the speaker of the song, so one cannot know Jolene’s gender identity or sexuality except

cannot liberate herself from; or as desire for Jolene as a partner rather than her man, i.e. taking the man out of the equation and thus freeing both the speaker and Jolene from the patriarchy. Dolly Parton's "Jolene" contains feminist and queer undertones that support a negotiated reading that contrasts heteropatriarchal norms and suggests that women and queer folks should subjectify themselves, rather than be subjectified by the patriarchy.

A reading of this song with the grain first and foremost perceives the conflict over the speaker's man, as he is a source of subjectivity. According to Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytic and feminist analysis "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," man's recognition of himself in the Mirror Stage<sup>2</sup> is "overlaid with misrecognition: the image recognized is conceived as the reflected body of the self, but its misrecognition as superior projects this body outside itself as an ideal ego, the alienated subject," which can be defined as narcissism (Mulvey 2087). Man, as portrayed in the media, is narcissistically jaded by his recognition of superior self in the mirror stage, which results in him dominating others by his gaze. In the context of the song, the man is put outside and above the scuffle for his attention between the women who have been subjectified by their purported desire for him. The speaker suggests that Jolene and herself "compete" with one another for the man, but the man does not seem to have any part in it (Parton 0:49). The speaker instead attempts to level with Jolene as a fellow woman caught up in the gaze of the man, rather than opening a dialogue with her man directly as her partner. The speaker tells Jolene, "He talks about you in his sleep," and "there's nothing I can do" (0:54-0:58). She cites the man's unconscious ramblings, as she is unable, unworthy even, to communicate with him directly due to his

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through the speaker's perceptions of Jolene. They/them pronouns used for Jolene in this piece signifies this lapse in information by nature of the perspective this song is composed from.

2 A term referring to a stage of development in the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan, the Mirror Stage occurs in children between the ages of six and eight months. This is when the child is able to recognize itself in a mirror, thus for the first time knowing themselves as a unified being, rather than as a fragmented mass of bits of perceived knowledge. Here, Mulvey focuses on the significance of specifically male recognition of self in the Mirror Stage (Tyson "Psychoanalytic Criticism" 26).

narcissistic subject positionality above her. Furthermore, the speaker's repeated pleas of "Don't take my man" are markers of the man as her own source of subjectivity and livelihood (0:15-0:16, 1:23-1:24, 2:09-2:10). She is subject to his power within their relationship and shapes her identity through her relationship with him, demonstrating her internalization of the male gaze.

The speaker is captivated and identified by the male gaze of "her man," which gives way to two different readings of the song in terms of the relationship between the speaker and Jolene. Mulvey explains that "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly" (Mulvey 2088). The speaker clearly defines herself in relation to the man and places her ability to be happy in his hands. Her tone is desperate throughout the song, "begging of" Jolene to not "take my man" because "you [Jolene] don't know what he means to me" (Parton 2:09-2:10, 1:09-1:11). She even says, "My happiness depends on you," implying her happiness is tied up in her relationship with the man. Accordingly, Jolene taking her man would revoke the speaker's capacity for happiness (1:53-1:55). The speaker even goes so far as to depreciate herself in comparison to Jolene's "beauty... beyond compare" to plead with Jolene because the speaker knows that she is losing her man's attention, and without this male attention, she is nothing (0:32-0:34).

In terms of subjectivity, we only hear about the speaker's identity in relation to her man as subordinate to him. This can be connected to Mulvey's concept of scopophilia, which is defined as "taking other people as objects [and] subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze," otherwise thought of as the pleasure of looking (Mulvey 2086). Inherent in this definition is the idea of control, as the looker (the male) controls the subject with his gaze by projecting his own curiosity and perceptions onto the subject without concern for the dimensionality of the subject itself (2086). For the speaker, being the subject of her man's scopophilia is comfortable. Her identity is wrapped up in her man's perceptions of her, so she does not have to forge her own identity outside of the patriarchal gaze. Forging this new, self-determined identity would mean the speaker was independent, which would be freeing, but also would be subject to perversion by the dominant male gaze. This would warrant a crisis over her identity outside the patriarchy, as she would have to actively fight to stay true to the

identity she creates for herself, rather than falling into comfort in an identity within the male gaze. The speaker begs Jolene not to take her man; on Jolene's part, rejecting the speaker's man would be their rejection of the patriarchy and the male gaze.

Here we see room for two readings of this song and its relationship to the patriarchal male gaze. For one, the speaker could be pleading with Jolene to reject the patriarchal dynamics the man desires with Jolene so that the speaker can stay comfortably probed by and subject to the male gaze. Conversely, the speaker could be hoping to live vicariously through Jolene. While the speaker is captive to the male gaze, Jolene is presumably in a position of freedom outside male subjectivity as the speaker experiences. Thus, the speaker could be looking out for Jolene's best interest, begging Jolene to liberate herself from the man's gaze so Jolene can create their own identity outside the patriarchal gaze, something that, for the speaker herself, is simply too ingrained to overcome.

The latter perspective opens the door to analysis of Jolene herself and to a potentially queer reading of this song against the grain. As the song is distinctly a plea from the speaker's perspective, and the speaker is firmly entrenched in the realm of the patriarchy and is captivated by the male gaze, Jolene too is presumed to be in the same situation as the speaker in relation to the man. From the perspective of the speaker, Jolene is subjectified by the man's scopophilia and male gaze, even though the audience never knows if they reciprocate the man's desire for them. The speaker is aware of the obvious attention her man is diverting from her onto Jolene, but her own descriptions of Jolene match the man's attention toward them. She offers some specific, seemingly sincere compliments for Jolene's beauty, saying, "With flaming locks of auburn hair / With ivory skin and eyes of emerald green / Your smile is like a breath of spring / Your voice is soft like summer rain" (Parton 0:32-0:40). The impulse of the speaker when realizing Jolene's beauty is to revert to the heteropatriarchy and internalized homophobia by begging Jolene to stay away from her man, to reject the patriarchal, heteronormative relationship presented by the speaker's man. The reality of the text, however, is that the audience knows less about Jolene than we do either of the other two fairly one-dimensional characters presented in the song. The audience does not know if Jolene is seriously considering a relationship with the speaker's man or if the man's affections and desires are not reciprocated at all. If one assumes Jolene would at least consider a relation-

ship with the speaker's man, a queer reading would be negated, but paying attention to the considerate, specific comments of the speaker on Jolene's beauty gives rise to a queer reading of the text.

Leaning into this reading incorporates the queer gaze. In Monique Wittig's essay "One is Not Born a Woman," she writes, "A lesbian society pragmatically reveals that the division from men of which women have been the object is a political one and shows that we have been ideologically rebuilt into a 'natural group.' In the case of women, ideology goes far since our bodies as well as our minds are the product of this manipulation" (Wittig 1906). In conjunction with Mulvey's theory, Wittig demonstrates that on an ideological level, women are divided into a "natural group" that is subservient to men, but specifically, Wittig says that it is a lesbian society that draws out the presence of this supposedly natural grouping. Further, Wittig argues against the binary out of which the idea of "woman" is born: "It [Being 'woman'] was a political constraint, and those who resisted it were accused of not being 'real' women. But then we were proud of it.... To refuse to be a woman, however, does not mean that one has to become a man" (1908). Thus, women who refuse the subjectivity of the patriarchy are free to subvert the idea of "woman" altogether, thereby gaining agency over their identification outside the traditional gender binary.

Jolene embodies much of this idea. As evidenced by both the speaker's pleas not to take her man and the speaker's own bountiful compliments for Jolene, Jolene can be read as being pursued by both man and woman. Although Jolene cannot respond to the speaker by nature of her musical monologue, they are afforded a sense of agency that is greater than that of the speaker. As a presumably feminine-presenting individual by nature of the man's heteropatriarchal desire for them, Jolene's ambiguity as a subject acts as a "refusal to be a woman" and frees them to exist outside the binaries of man and woman, of straight and queer. In terms of Wittig's work, Jolene serves as a hallmark of lesbian society that draws out the 'natural' (socially constructed) divisions between men and women, calling participants in a queer reading of this text to consider the queer gaze to be opposite to the male gaze elicited in a feminine reading of this text. Specifically, the male gaze divides and patronizes, while the queer gaze unites and empowers.

Dolly Parton's "Jolene" gives rise to several theoretical readings beyond the scope of what the artist likely intended with this 1970s

country hit. Upon further examination, one can discover feminist and queer readings that refute heteropatriarchal norms and question how women and queer folks are subjectified within those norms. Even though “Jolene” was released in an era and as part of a genre that were both still deeply embedded in heteropatriarchy, Parton herself has become “a queer icon” and an advocate for marriage equality and LGBTQ+ rights (Barker). Another of her songs, “Coat of Many Colors” has become “a queer anthem” (Barker). The song, which depicts a coat Parton’s mother made for her when her family lived in poverty, is about living without shame for where one comes from and who one is. It has become especially popular with LGBTQ+ fans, empowering them to take pride, rather than shame, in their identities (Barker). Parton’s involvement with the queer community in modern times encourages us to revisit her earlier works with a feminist, queer lens. Modern theorists can not only utilize “against the grain” readings of the song from the era it was written in, considering constraints on women and queer folks typical to the 1970s, but they can also bring the piece into the present moment, reinterpreting the song in light of current cultural paradigms. Thus, viewing the song through feminist and queer theories encourages modern audiences to rethink dominant heteropatriarchal standards and to define their subjectivity on their own terms.

## *Appendix: "Jolene" Lyrics*

Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
I'm begging of you please don't take my man  
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
Please don't take him just because you can

Your beauty is beyond compare  
With flaming locks of auburn hair  
With ivory skin and eyes of emerald green

Your smile is like a breath of spring  
Your voice is soft like summer rain  
And I cannot compete with you Jolene

He talks about you in his sleep  
And there's nothing I can do to keep  
From crying when he calls your name Jolene

And I can easily understand  
How you could easily take my man  
But you don't know what he means to me  
Jolene

Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
I'm begging of you please don't take my man  
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
Please don't take him just because you can

You could have your choice of men  
But I could never love again  
He's the only one for me Jolene

I had to have this talk with you  
My happiness depends on you  
And whatever you decide to do Jolene

Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
I'm begging of you please don't take my man  
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene  
Please don't take him even though you can Jolene, Jolene



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# Mast-Head to Sea-Floor: The Plunge

Isaac Katcher

Prescribed by well-studied and honest landlubbers, megalohydrothalassophobia is defined as a fear of large underwater sea creatures or objects. While modern psychology leaves practically no fear unnamed, mankind's trepidation and subsequent obsession with the ocean and its inhabitants date back millennia. From diagnosed phobics to Herman Melville's narrators, Tommo and Ishmael, this aquatic fear never subsides. Yet, as realists take flight from such horrors of the deep, Melville's characters act quite the opposite. Enveloped in sublimity, these heroes feel drawn to the very notion of terror and uncertainty.

Irish philosopher Edmund Burke describes the sublime, the terrible, as the strongest human emotion: "Without all doubt, the torments which we may be made to suffer are much greater in their effect on the body and mind, than any pleasure..." (Burke 110). Moreover, the sublime inspires a sense of awe that is both tangible and ungraspable. Throughout Melville's works of *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* and *Moby Dick*, this concept of the sublime remains a constant theme, highlighting the narrators' struggles for a deeper meaning in life. Furthermore, as a product of Romanticism, undertones of the sublime communicate a larger insight into the characters' thoughts and feelings as a whole. Rooted in human emotion and individualism, the Romantic era not only provides morbid interpre-

tations of nature but also acts as the line between man and creation. According to famous Transcendentalist and Romantic Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind" (Emerson 136). Moreover, he follows this statement by claiming that the world is emblematic. As these romantic ideals proffer metaphorical readings of Tommo and Ishmael's interactions with the surrounding world, they also ultimately communicate how an individual should approach living as a whole. As we will see, the romantic sublime places the characters' lives in perspective and culminates in a demanding request for compassion.

To begin, paralleling the sublime's elusive nature, both Tommo and Ishmael frame their stories as agitated and restless journeys. Upon describing his sole companion and confidant as a dark and morose individual, Tommo relates himself to somber Toby by claiming that they both "moved in a different sphere of life ... rambling over the world as if pursued by some mysterious fate [they] cannot possibly elude" (Melville, *Typee* 32). From the beginning, Tommo displays that apprehension of some unknown destiny fuels his adventure. By describing his actions as "ramblings," Tommo disregards any use of logic and reasoning behind his escapades. In fact, he may only access this very fate through the aesthetic experience of the sublime. Appropriately stated by Edmund Burke, "The mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force" (Burke 130). Whereas the sublime emotions obscure his reasoning and awareness, its subsequent effects thrust him towards the dangerous and unknown Typee valley in further pursuit of the sublime.

Similarly, Ishmael's whaling expedition initially takes him to New Bedford, where the transient mate searches for a nightly berth. Assessing his surroundings, Ishmael cries, "Such dreary streets! Blocks of blackness, not houses, on either hand, and here and there a candle, like a candle moving about in a tomb" (Melville, *Moby Dick* 21). Ishmael's internal premonitions permeate throughout the setting, as both sides of his path become enveloped in foreboding blackness. Likened to a tomb, the constricted passage signifies his fated destination. As well, Ishmael's descriptors of the unsavory New Bedford streets mirror the language employed by Edgar Allan Poe's narrator in the romantic classic "The Fall of the House of Usher." Approaching

the house on a journey not unlike Ishmael's, the narrator solemnly recoils while gazing "upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—" (Poe 22). In both situations, the characters approach a temporary residence. However, rather than finding a warm, hospitable haven, they discover sublime images that invoke ideas of death.

Professor Anthony Vidler further defines this adverse reaction to the habitations as "unhomeliness," in contrast to "the idea of the homely ... a sentiment of security and freedom from fear" (Vidler 11). As Romanticism purports that these uncanny images reflect dread within the narrators' travels, Vidler adds that "nothing is expressed except a sickness of the spirit" (10). Employing the sublime, both Ishmael and Tommo encapsulate more than a dissatisfaction with life. The macabre settings elicit the chains of their worldly entrapment, of a beaten and ill spirit.

However, as the characters offer their lost, melancholy ramblings, they recognize that they must seek the sublime to find purpose in the world and heal their damaged souls, venturing into the very depths of the dark tomb to find a brazier for their trifling candle. The only direction is onward. As Ishmael lies in his humble Spouter Inn bed, he philosophizes, "no man can ever feel his own identity aright except his eyes be closed; as if darkness were indeed the proper element of our essences, though light be more congenial to our clayey part" (Melville, *Moby Dick* 54). Despite recognizing the fact that one's body serves better purpose in "light," or amid the pleasantries of life, Ishmael serves to prove that darkness provides the best insight to one's soul. By symbolizing death with the closure of one's eyes and darkness, the narrator claims that spiritual healing manifests in the very proximity of the sublime. Aligning with such sentiments, a damaged person cannot be made whole in running away and escapism. Rather, allowing the flames of mortality to lap at one's psyche ameliorates a broken soul.

In a manuscript written by Melville about contemporary Nathaniel Hawthorne, the author himself supports Ishmael's idea of darkness. In particular, "Hawthorne and His Mosses" theorizes that a side of the titular romantic poet's soul "is shrouded in a blackness, ten times black. But this darkness but gives more effect to the ever-moving dawn, that forever advances through it, and circumnavigates his world" (Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses" 549). As Ishmael believes that darkness brings out one's essence, "Hawthorne and His

Mosses" describes this transaction as blackness accentuating the dawn. Properly emphasized by the darkness, or sublime, this dawn may permeate throughout his whole life, providing enlightenment.

Additionally, Tommo echoes these thoughts while visiting the cannibal chief's mausoleum on Typee island, reflecting, "The place had a peculiar charm for me; I hardly know why; but so it was" (Melville, *Typee* 173). In the presence of the very nature of the sublime—a morbid sepulcher—Tommo experiences gravitating repose. Vidler's analysis of "The Architecture of the Uncanny" expounds upon this particular moment by offering the idea that such metaphorical burial grounds are not merely "haunted, but rather revisited by a power that was thought long dead. To such a force the romantic psyche and the romantic aesthetic sensibility were profoundly open; at any moment what seemed on the surface homely and comforting, secure and clear of superstition, might be reappropriated by something that should have remained secret" (Vidler 12). In other words, the mere structure of the mausoleum does not fully captivate Tommo's emotions. Contrastingly, his encounter with the sublime lies in the conceptualized resurrection of the immortal chief's secrets and ancient understandings, which can point his lost soul forward. As a result, Tommo utters his only devotional appeal of the novel in this house of the dead, for the ephemeral adventurer finds spiritual integrity in the macabre darkness.

Whereas the grisly and dark practices of the Typee resurrect Tommo's search for essence, Ishmael's grappling for purpose lands him in the dangerous, terrifying profession of whaling. Within the bulwarks of the Spouter Inn, a painting attributed with an "indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity" captivates his attention (Melville, *Moby Dick* 23). The artwork, thought "to delineate chaos bewitched," conclusively renders an image of "an exasperated whale, purposing to spring clean over the craft, [in] the enormous act of impaling himself upon the three mast-heads" (23). Fixated on the "soggy, boggy, squitchy," nature of the painting, the narrator finds satisfaction in his appetite of the sublime (23). Subsequently, this very image of self-destruction, a romanticization of the whale, recalls Ishmael's own wavering spirit and points to the Leviathan as a pathway to his Mecca.

In a similar manner, as a lookout aboard the *Pequod*, Ishmael opines that "the whale-fishery furnishes an asylum for many romantic, melancholy, and absent-minded young men" (129). Aptly issued

forth atop the masthead, this sentiment parallels romantic ideals of individualism. In particular, Emmanuel Kant suggested that “moral judgment was, ultimately, the aspect of our experience where all stand single” (Ferguson 314). While whalers must keep constant, solitary watch over the waters, they render themselves available to the ultimate mental space that cultivates moral judgement and meditation. In encountering the dark and perilous depths of the ocean, Ishmael reaps an illuminating and exhaustive reaction to the true scope of his mortality in the universe.

Yet, simply travelling aboard a whaling vessel cannot wholly soothe Ishmael’s soul. Akin to Jonah, one must jostle with the great Leviathan itself and breathe in the salty, horrid, spectacularly sinister odors of its gaping maw to descend towards the ever-growing light amidst the dark sublime. Aptly placed inside the Whaleman’s Chapel, marble dedications to lost seamen fully alert Ishmael to the danger and terror in whaling. Captivated by the haunting inscriptions, the whole congregation immerses themselves in the remembrance of “[one of the] crews OF THE SHIP ELIZA ... Who were towed out of sight by a Whale,” and “The late CAPTAIN EZEKIEL HARDY, Who in the bows of his boat was killed by a Sperm Whale” (Melville, *Moby Dick* 40). Just as Tommo morbidly relishes the presence of the chief’s mausoleum, Ishmael discovers philosophical essence in the despairing whaling memorials. Not only do the inscriptions provide a gawking glimpse at the terrors of whales on the high seas, they also shortchange the individuals lost amongst the deadly dangers. Questioning the legacy of these perished souls, Ishmael broods, “What deadly voids and unbidden infidelities in the lines that seem to gnaw upon all Faith, and refuse resurrections to the beings who have placelessly perished without a grave” (42). To the narrator, these cold, empty marble inscriptions deface the lives of the courageous sailors. He argues that these men, now serving as fear-mongering spokesmen for the Christian faith, should symbolize an all-encompassing faith. This faith, demonstrated by the whalers’ spiritual desire to encounter the great whale, delivered them to the very flame that keeps Ishmael’s searching soul alight. Rather than immortalize their deaths, Ishmael cries for an understanding of the tremendous stature of their actions: purposefully chasing fate at the mercy of the Leviathan.

From a romantic standpoint, Ishmael’s strong, personal support of the fallen whalers is completely justified. In order to invoke the sublime, the sailors’ deaths must depict greater images than a brief,

undescriptive plaque. Asserted by Frances Ferguson in a reflection on Romanticism, “Kant did not count it as a properly aesthetic experience for someone to ponder the term [“sublime”] as a simple abstraction. (Ferguson 314). Alternatively, one requires “materials to react to,” that captivate the onlooker (314). By commemorating the whalers in a proper form of sublimity, observers can comprehensively react to the whalers’ noble lives and follow in their transcendent footsteps.

Further elaborating on the monstrous, blubber-bearing vessels of fate that are whales, Ishmael assesses his own relationship to the creature, proclaiming, “To grope down into the bottom of the sea after them; to have one’s hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world; this is a fearful thing. What am I that I should essay to hook the nose of the Leviathan!” (Melville, *Moby Dick* 110). Upon realizing that his quest for meaning ultimately leads him to the whale, Ishmael balks and wonders if he truly possesses the facilities to hunt such a mighty, terrifying fish. Additionally, Ishmael equates the whale to more than the epitome of the sublime. Defined by the esoteric sailor as the world embodied, the Leviathan is exalted to a daunting, ethereal stature among creation.

Fearful of succeeding in his expedition, yet also fully devoted to the task at hand, Ishmael adheres to Kant’s romantic theories concerning the unattainability of nature. Interpreted by Donald E. Pease, “Reason, wishing to know the unattainable expanse of nature, ceases to identify either with the subject or the object of its desire but instead identifies with the blocking agent, the unattainability” (Pease 263). Disregarding the Leviathan and its very symbolism, Ishmael discovers sublime awe within the unattainability of the whale, itself.

Nonetheless, the fearless Captain Ahab soothes Ishmael’s qualms and rallies the crew. Comprehending the necessity of this quest to conquer the whale, Ishmael forges on, declaring his commitment “because of the dread in my soul” (Melville, *Moby Dick* 144). He elaborates, “A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab’s quenchless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of violence and revenge” (144). Again invoking the sublime, Ishmael attempts to resolve his innate attraction to the whale in an ultimate battle against Moby Dick. However, in binding Ahab’s crusading pilgrimage to his own, Ishmael commits a cardinal sin against romantic ideals. Harkening back to Kant’s belief in individualism, the intrepid sailor abandons his “autonomy of individual

judgement” (Ferguson 314). Thus, Ishmael bars himself from true emotional reception of the sublime and rains down destruction on the *Pequod* and its crew.

Accordingly, both of the pensive shipmates in Melville’s tales demonstrate an affinity for dangerous and mysterious adventure, encapsulated in Tommo’s abandoning ship on a cannibal-inhabited island and Ishmael’s desires to champion the white whale. Pitted against the terrifying brute, Moby Dick, Ishmael relishes the opportunity to sail into the deep and collide with the sublime panacea for his soul. Yet, in striving to pierce the profound white hide, Ishmael realizes that Moby Dick’s striking paleness even exceeds darkness in communicating the sublime. He ponders, “Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way?” (Melville, *Moby Dick* 157). By transforming Moby Dick’s whiteness to the unfathomable stars of the universe, Ishmael voices the unsung perils of his fateful, enlightening quest. In chasing such profound answers, reality might destroy this fragile romantic.

Analogous to seizing up the great celestial whale, Burke declares, “whilst we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of almighty power, and invested upon every side with omnipresence, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner, annihilated before him” (Burke 143). Face to face with Moby Dick, a supernatural force of nature, physical victory proves impossible. Moreover, the sheer mortal weight of the encounter reveals the true sanctity of life to the sailor. Ishmael’s own confrontation with the Leviathan, and subsequent failure to defeat the unconquerable, redeems his respect for Creation and adequately cements his place in the world. Rather than impose claims upon the universe, we must live in harmony with it. Only through confronting and encountering the most real and terrifying parts of life does Ishmael validate the sanctity of his own life. If not a tale of Jonah, Melville’s work ministers the message of the prophet David who, in response to the wonders of wisdom and power, cried out, “*fearfully and wonderfully am I made!*” (Burke 143).



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# Society

# American History, Individualism, and Exceptionalism in an Age of Pandemic: A Study in Cultural Psychology and Philosophy

Antonio Campos

The global coronavirus pandemic, now entering its *third* year, has caused unprecedented destruction to people and communities around the world. Moreover, while cases and mortalities resulting from COVID-19 continue to rise both domestically and internationally, the impacts of the pandemic have also been “superimposed on unresolved tensions between people and technology, between people and the planet, and between the haves and have-nots,” thus leading to differing levels of community and individual suffering (Conceição, et al.). In responding to this public health crisis, the United States of America has been uniquely challenged with increased “social, environmental, and medical” problems (Gray & Jackson) associated not only with slow federal recovery measures, but also with general resistance to public health mandates, such as social distancing, mask wearing, and vaccinating.

The causes of this public resistance are not arbitrary or unexpected, but they are in fact the entirely anticipatable results of certain, relatively unique aspects of American culture, history, and values. As members of a psychologically and philosophically W.E.I.R.D. (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) culture, Americans tend to reject communalism, academic intellectualism, and common good measures in favor of stalwart individualism, personal intelligence, and personal liberty (Henrich, et al.). These

values have served Americans well in specific historical contexts such as the founding of early colonies, the American Revolution, westward expansion, and later international conquests, including the Spanish-American War. However, ideals of individualism, liberty, and exceptionalism have conversely proven themselves to be problematic in the context of a virulent pandemic, leading to mistrust of authority figures and disregard for mutually beneficial health measures. On the other hand, Americans' individualist and exceptionalist tendencies have also led the nation to become a leader in vaccination numbers, medical technologies, and progressive healthcare practices (Shao). Thus, American individualism, and, more broadly speaking, American exceptionalism, becomes a "double-edged sword" (Lipset), capable of both scuttling communal efforts and raising the nation to new innovative heights.

This paper will specifically work to explain the origins, causes, and effects of such American individualist and exceptionalist sentiments, drawing principally on historical documents to explain current attitudes and mindsets. In describing the genesis of American individualistic thinking and national idiosyncrasies, this essay also hopes to identify some chief causes of current pandemic issues, many of which stem from attitudes of American primacy and invincibility. Findings will be presented in a generally chronological manner, attempting to develop a narrative-like American culture model that may help to explain current behaviors and attitudes.

As a country "born out of revolution" against European hierarchies and traditions (Lipset), America's national culture has always been psychologically and philosophically "powered" (Vukov & Lassiter) by personal work ethic, meritocracy, and belief in the nation as an "exceptional" utopia (Lipset). Early pronouncements of these ideals date back all the way to the country's earliest origins, including the Protestant founders of America's New England colonies. One "perennial favorite amongst American politicians of any party," is John Winthrop's 1620 characterization of the Massachusetts Bay Colony as a "City upon a Hill," which has long been a touchstone phrase of American exceptionalist discourse, not only emphasizing the excellence of the New World as a "light upon a hill," but also "reminding citizens of their vulnerable and exposed position" (Roberts & DiCuirici). In preaching that America could be a place free from sin, Winthrop also stressed the importance of personal, Puritan work ethic and individual hardihood, thereby contributing to a notion

that personal grit and determination could bring American colonists success and achievement without reliance upon the help of others (Bellah).

Following Winthrop's example, numerous other archetypal American figures likewise demonstrated and applauded the virtues of hard work, "utilitarian individualism," and ideas of success through gumption, persistence, and tenacity (Bellah). During the later Puritan era, for example, influential Massachusetts minister and author Cotton Mather emphasized that American "New-Englanders [were] a people of God, with a personal mission to settle that which were late the Devil's territories," and he preached a "sacred-secular mission-tradition" for the residents of what would become the United States (Mather, *Invisible World*). Similarly, as the colonial period drew to a close with the American Revolution, both well-known leaders like Benjamin Franklin and lesser-known immigrants like J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur contended that Americans represented "a new kind of man," capable of "leaving behind...all ancient prejudices and manners, governments, and ranks" (Crevecoeur).

Thus, from the very origins of the new nation, Americans culturally embraced individualism and separation from society. Indeed, many colonists viewed themselves as entirely independent from outmoded cultural norms and communalistic mindsets like those presented by European feudal systems. As early as the seventeenth century, citizens of the American colonies such as Increase Mather<sup>1</sup> believed that they inherently possessed "original rights of mankind freely to subdue and improve the earth," "better the country," and act "in ways consistent with self and self alone," thereby abolishing any systems that might impinge on an individual's ability to act as a free agent, taming the wilderness to meet his own needs and ends (Mather, *Original Rights*).

Clearly, these intense philosophical beliefs in absolute free will, complete autonomy, and unhindered individual agency enabled these early authors and their contemporaries to establish a foothold in the American continent and begin to colonize the "savage"

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1 Increase Mather (1639-1723) was a prominent Boston clergyman and the first president of Harvard College. He was the father of Cotton Mather (1663-1728). The Mather family was heavily involved in colonial politics in New England, and its members published numerous treatises, essays, and pamphlets on topics of theological, philosophical, and political interest.

landscape (Mather, *Original Rights*). However, similar sentiments in later centuries have led to severe environmental degradation and an extreme emphasis on individuality at the cost of wild spaces. Unlike many more traditionalist or collectivist cultures, like those of Japan, that emphasize community ties, external respectability, and “saving face” (Heine, et al.), Americans have fundamentally become more shameless and disinterested in the opinions of others concerning social norms and environmental prudence. Rather, Americans are more likely to express “personal guilt” than “public shame” (Heine, et al.), and they are more likely to be guided by internal ethical views or spiritualistic faith than communal religiosity (Rolheiser).

Some might worry that this kind of intensive individualism could lead to a total degradation of morality and society. However, many classic thinkers and so-called ‘wise observers’ have argued the opposite. Early witnesses to the formation of the United States, especially French diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville, who toured the country in 1831, commended the “civic cultures of individual initiative” that they observed in the young republic (Bellah). Moreover, Tocqueville noted not only egalitarianism in America, but he also stressed how individualism brought people together to form “faultless, enlightened, and decentralized” communities based upon personal work ethics and moralities that “emphasized liberty” rather than imposing “restraint or servitude” (Tocqueville). To describe this unique and positive circumstance, Tocqueville himself even coined the term ‘American exceptionalism’ when he espoused the notion that “the position of Americans is...quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one” (Tocqueville).

Indeed, during America’s antebellum period, between the War of 1812 and the Civil War, many outsiders were impressed to find strong and hardworking communities throughout the country, each driven by meritocratic values, ideals of personal and cultural uniqueness, and a belief in individuals who could be either “self-made or self-unmade” (Lipset). Because of citizens’ belief in their own capabilities, many developed a “concentration on freedom from government interference” (Lipset) that greatly differed from older, Puritanical notions of freedom from sin or freedom of conscience. Many Americans, especially wealthy planters, opposed external controls in their lives, thereby demonstrating Jeffersonian beliefs in ultimate free will, autonomy, and the notion that “less government

is better” (Lipset). Furthermore, Americans came to value egalitarianism and equality of “opportunity,” rather than actual or “physical equality,” since they believed that all people should have the ability to build themselves up through faith, work, and values (Tocqueville). Likewise, Americans supported wars on individualistic philosophical and psychological grounds that pitted America against “evil and Satan,” and citizens supported individualized philanthropic actions rather than the rapid growth of the welfare state or codified systems of social justice (Lipset).

While these antebellum-based libertarian values of free will, autonomy, and personal philanthropy work well to keep American lives private and independent under typical conditions, it must also be noted that these same values have undermined the ability of the government to quickly deal with the current coronavirus pandemic. Whereas countries with more centralized healthcare systems and direct governmental orders succeeded in rapidly implementing public healthcare measures, the United States was initially slow to embrace even simple techniques, like mask wearing and social distancing to prevent pathogen spread (Conceição, et al.). On the other hand, American values of personal philanthropy and morality also encouraged certain generous citizens, like Dolly Parton, to donate time, money, and resources to the rapid development of the COVID-19 vaccine (Treisman). Thus, private businesses and individualistic tendencies prevented America from rapidly responding to the crisis, but they also prevented the United States from entering a phase of complete civic shut-down (Shao), as they enabled the country to find, test, and distribute a cure to the virus through primarily non-governmental channels, including private businesses (Madhavan). These examples clearly demonstrate how Americans’ obsessions with freedom and individuality can work in both positive and negative ways when responding to a public health crisis. Certainly, individual freedom, when applied in the name of egotism and arrogance, can become a dangerous folly that endangers the health and welfare of others. However, individual liberty and freedom of choice can also be applied in positive ways that support the common good. Hence, liberty itself can become either a danger or a boon, depending upon the ethics of individuals and the wisdom or foolhardiness of the masses.

In keeping with both Tocqueville’s observations on antebellum America and contemporary visions of the spirit of the American public, it is obvious that citizens have long valued individualism,

fortitude, and personal experiences over community, solidarity, or collective thought. Once again, it must be stressed that these characteristics of American identity are deeply rooted in the nation's history and culture. Specifically, several of these concepts have been prominently voiced in significant "popular literatures" from American history, including the poems, essays, and novels of the legendary American Renaissance authors who dominated the mid nineteenth century (Reynolds).

While American Renaissance poets like Walt Whitman incorporated distinctly individualistic experiences and personal "celebrations of bodily life" into their works (Bellah), it was the American transcendentalist essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson who explicitly tapped into America's individualistic psyche in his 1841 essay "Self-Reliance." By applauding unique and radical behaviors, in this essay Emerson calls upon Americans to embrace a national identity founded upon rejection of imposed belief systems. He asserts that Americans should be freethinking leaders, rather than followers, and he demands that Americans be flexible and spontaneous, since, as he puts it, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, [only] adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines" (Emerson). Like Emerson, many Americans seem to adore ethical philosophies based upon individualism and self-definition, as well as "liberty, egalitarianism, populism, and laissez-faire" policies (Lipset). All of this points to a perennial national philosophy oriented towards self-formation, individuality, and uniqueness, at the cost of centralized government, united ideology, collective thought, or trust of authority.

This latter fact is particularly well-demonstrated by Americans' mistrust of unelected authorities, experts, and, in particular, "intellectuals" (Hofstadter). Indeed, while few or no Americans "question the value of [pragmatic] intelligence, [because,] as an abstract quality, is it universally esteemed...intellect is often looked upon with resentment or suspicion" because it represents authority and collective knowledge, rather than self-made intelligence (Hofstadter). Thus, Americans become more primitivistic as they rely almost exclusively upon personal intuitions and experiences, rather than broad authority findings, scientific principles, or documented rules. Moreover, these characteristics of contemporary American attitudes towards knowledge again recall Emerson's injunction to "trust oneself" since, through reliance upon their own experiences and faculties, individuals can become more factually and situationally intelligent, powerful,



commanding, and even God-like. Because of this, stalwart individualism, personal industry, and personal integrity are highly valued American attributes, but they also come at the price of questioning founded intellectual progress and legitimate academic research. Americans believe in innate and self-created character traits, rather than broad analytical investigations. As a consequence of these philosophical preferences, Americans overwhelmingly prefer laissez-faire capitalism to communism (Lipset), homespun wisdom to documented analysis (Hofstadter), and personal judgement to authority findings.

The philosophical and psychological observations discussed above combine to paint a picture of Americans as a group of people who value individuality, self-reliance, small community, less governmental regulation, and more autonomy in their own lives. The personal psychologies and biographies of prominent Americans including John Winthrop and Benjamin Franklin demonstrate patterns in American values and expectations that also exist on broader scales, such as value of self-made characters and belief in self-definition. Moreover, these psychological tendencies and ideas shed light on broader, American philosophical values, like noncooperation, small government, individual decision-making, democracy, populism, and meritocracy. Finally, these philosophical principles explain many specific American actions, such as why Americans value voting as a means of choosing their own elected officials, why Americans appreciate optional philanthropy more than social welfare taxes, and even why Americans choose to disregard climate change, evolution, or mask wearing, even when intellectual authorities have demonstrated the significance of these subjects.

Personally, I recognize and applaud many of the inherently American, individualistic and meritocratic notions discussed above, and I highly value personal autonomy, especially in matters of morality. However, it is also obvious to me that individual choice, if separated from solidarity or care for the common good, can be dangerous, and even antithetical to the goals of liberty and safety. For example, while personal freedom entitles me to flaunt pandemic regulations by refusing to wear a mask or get vaccinated, I must also recognize that such decisions endanger public welfare and could even cost me my own freedoms and liberties if I become incapacitated or perish from the coronavirus. Thus, the empowering blade of liberty only remains

strong and sharp when it is tempered with brotherhood, solidarity, and common sense, all of which are also classic American values.

Although liberty, industry, and victory have long been associated with American culture, America is not invincible, and the classical “ideals of work and achievement, coupled with individual initiative” alone (Bellah), cannot save us from the perils of the pandemic. Still, personal enterprise and American grit can help to uncover potential solutions to our current problems, which may include innovative vaccines, novel medical treatments, and critical infrastructural resource reorganizations. Furthermore, free, individual decisions to live safe, ethical, and empowered lives can help to curtail coronavirus cases through compassion and solidarity with the vulnerable.

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# Rediscovering Shared Meaning: Rebuilding Shared Experiences and Shared Stories

Dr. Daniel O'Dea Bradley

The theme of this issue of *Charter* is an extremely important and timely one. In the face of the social, economic, and ideological fracturing that has been such a prominent feature of recent life in the United States and much of the world, we must, indeed, find ways to rebuild and to renew. My contribution will be to suggest that, perhaps counterintuitively, we must rededicate ourselves to pluralism in order to achieve the possibility of shared meaning. In particular, I argue that we need to cultivate a more robust *values* pluralism. This would be a pluralism that recognizes a rich diversity of goods other than 'autonomy' and 'equality' and the principles of 'fairness' and 'safety' that are necessary for safeguarding them. For while these are clearly important values and principles that must be protected and nurtured, our preoccupation with them has led to a very narrowed outlook that threatens to deny any legitimacy at all to *other* values and, thereby, forecloses the possibility of shared meaning with those for whom these other values are important.

Please allow me to conclude my introduction by pointing to our recent public debates over COVID-19. I believe my diagnosis will explain why these debates have been so impoverished, and for readers who might not otherwise be inclined to care, this concrete example may provide a reason for why we should be concerned about the values-blindness I tackle in this article (if you are tired of the topic

of COVID, however, please feel free to skip to the main argument below).

It is apparent to me that the discussion of COVID policy has been a very narrow and simplistic one, even among highly educated and talented commentators, such as those on NPR and at the New York Times. As they tell the story, on one side we have the good people (wearing the white cowboy hats) who have agreed to “follow the science” and defend the autonomy of the vulnerable by promoting safety. On the other side, our cartoon villains defend the right of the strong to use their autonomy in pursuit of their own economic interest at the expense of the vulnerable. If this were the only way to tell the story, I would say that any and all measures for combating the spread of the disease should be employed, the more the better. Notice, though, that in these discussions there is only one value at stake, and all mitigation measures have the same moral structure: they infringe on the (so-called) rights of the strong in order to protect the rights of the vulnerable. But the problems posed by COVID are much more complex and actually involve so many values other than autonomy and safety. These include the value of education, the value of community, of friendship, of face-to-face relationships, of traditions, of labor (its intrinsic and not only economic value), the value of rituals (public burial of the dead, weddings, etc.) and many others. Correspondingly, restricted autonomy is not the only dis-value; there is also loneliness (including the loneliness of dying and grieving alone), alienation, anxiety, despair, violence, recklessness, disrupted education, delayed social development, the loss of meaning, etc., and these too have led to a great number of deaths, through suicide, murder, drug overdose, car accidents, the health effects of stress, etc.

With this values-pluralism in mind, policies that at first looked the same, now look very different. Mandatory vaccinations and mandatory social distancing policies had at first seemed identical; they both violate the ridiculous demands of absolute autonomy espoused by some lunatic libertarians (none of whom we know personally but who presumably live somewhere in Idaho). Aside from the urban-centric chauvinism, I have no quarrel with that moral calculus. But there is much more involved, and a values-pluralism leads me to a very different policy view one that differentiates between various mitigation strategies. I favor even tougher vaccination policies than we currently have. That is because mandatory vaccinations have minimal impact on most values other than autonomy. But I also argue that

we should end our social distancing and masking, and in fact should have done so many months ago, for the cost of these policies involves not only restrictions of autonomy but catastrophic breakdowns of relationship, education, and community. This in turn leads to a rise in anxiety, depression, and alienation, the effects of which may last for generations. I am not developing that argument in this article, and I certainly don't expect you to agree with me on the basis of this sketch, but I hope the poverty of a public debate that asked *only* about a trade-off between public safety and individual rights will be one indication of our society's axiological poverty, and this poverty is what I do aim to address in this article.



I seek axiological pluralism as a way of rebuilding the possibility of shared experiences and the social harmony they ensure. However, in the face of our fractured social reality, shared experiences cannot solve the problem on their own. As the great 20<sup>th</sup> Century Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan, explains:

Community is not just an aggregate of individuals within a frontier, for that overlooks its formal constituent, which is common meaning. Such common meaning calls for a common field of experience and, when that is lacking, people get out of touch. It calls for common or complementary ways of understanding and, when they are lacking, people begin to misunderstand, to distrust, to suspect, to fear, to resort to violence. (*Method in Theology* 356)

Or as he succinctly formulates the problem, “as common meaning constitutes community, so divergent meaning divides it” (357).

This emphasis on shared meaning *prior to shared experiences and shared narratives* is an important insight for contemporary culture, particularly in the academic world. Over the last few decades, my own philosophical sub-discipline of hermeneutics has put a great deal of emphasis on narrative and the ability of storytelling to overcome differences and build bridges between communities heretofore in conflict. In his book, *On Stories*, my mentor Richard Kearney points out that as early as Aristotle we knew that “the art of storytelling ...

is what gives us a shareable world” (3). Kearney goes on to argue that contemporary philosophers need to recover this insight. His work is more than merely speculative, and in collaboration with Sheila Gallagher, his *Guestbook* project has had practical results in opening a space for people to tell stories and thereby effect real concrete reconciliation across bitter divides, such as between peoples in Northern Ireland, Palestine, and other conflict-torn regions around the world. There are limits, however, to the ability of storytelling to affect integration. This is highlighted when tensions arise primarily *within* rather than *across* group boundaries, and fundamental questions of meaning are already contested within that group. In that case, what is at stake is how ‘we’ are to tell *our own* story, particularly to the next generation. This was true at the Scopes Monkey trial when people felt that what was at stake in those origin stories was the meaning of the human species as a whole. It has arisen again in the resistance to Critical Race Theory. In light of this origin story, people feel that the meaning of the country with which they identify the meaning of their own lives is at stake, and this closes their ears to our project. In these cases, the telling of conflicting stories, alone and without recourse to other strategies, only makes matters worse.

As another way of seeking harmony and the integration of world-views, and partly in response to the limits of narrative to achieve this goal, we have also recently emphasized the cultivation of *common experiences*. If we can cultivate shared experiences, this can help to bind us together in a common project, despite certain philosophical and political differences. In other words, even if I don’t like the way you want to tell our story, if I can start to experience what your life is like, I can begin to understand why you would want to tell our story that way. This can be extremely fruitful. Again, however, there are limits to the project. I used to tell people that I loved the Super Bowl ... because it meant the lift lines at our local ski resorts would be so short. But I have come to see that this caused irritation and hurt to my friends for whom that game was a valuable experience that I was so flippantly disregarding. And, in a Gonzaga journal of all places, gee whiz, I had better not say anything about whether I watch college basketball! Of course, it goes the other way as well. When I ask my kids to go for a Nordic ski with me and they say that they would rather watch the paint dry, their disregard for an experience I value so highly is not pleasant.



When what is at stake has more directly political implications, the limits of shared experiences can go from a little hurtful to enraging and almost unbearable. Let me provide an example from university life. In general, pedagogies that foster shared experiences, such as Community Engaged Learning, provide truly transformative education and rich rewards for the students and faculty that participate in them. However, I have heard from colleagues around the country that bringing students from privileged backgrounds to share the experiences of the economically disadvantaged can sometimes have the opposite effect, bringing about not shared meaning but greater hostility. Sometimes, a student will spend time with a single mother in a shelter for the unhoused and come away saying that this woman should have worked harder to get a job and not gotten pregnant in the first place. In other words, he will come away saying that her difficulties are due to her own bad character. This is extremely frustrating, but it does not help the situation, or increase its intelligibility, to say that the student's callous response to suffering is just due to his bad character, in turn. A better explanation is that our student's ideals of economic liberalism, on which his own meaning depends, block him from seeing this woman's suffering in the first place. His divergent meanings have made sharing her experience impossible.

This blindness, however, cuts across political orientation. It can be the case that when a socially liberal faculty member is presented with the crippling anxiety faced by the children of middle-class families and the loneliness and alienation of lives increasingly bereft of community, he or she may literally be unable to see their suffering. The social liberal sees only privilege and thus must, again, blame those who are experiencing their lives as difficult, claiming it is their own moral deficiencies that are causing their discomfort. The fact that Trump was elected president should have been a major wake-up call that exposes how out of touch the academy has become from the plight of many people. But we still haven't learned that lesson. When I ask my colleagues why so many women voted for Trump (which should be surprising since he is clearly such a misogynist), they just get mad and say it is because those women are racists. But, again, saying someone disagrees with you because they are a bad person is a sure sign that you are unable to share in their experience. Then, even when your opponent's bad character is involved in your disagreement, you will never know what pressures are corrupting them, and their situation becomes unintelligible. My point is that this is not just

a matter of trying harder to see what their experiences are like. If we are blind to the meanings that structure their life, no amount of staring at their experience will do any good, and we will just get angry.

Now, it goes without saying that not all forms of suffering are equal, nor are the injustices that underlie them. Thus, we must prioritize which evils to tackle and which goods to pursue first. It is also probably true that we have to toughen up somewhat as a society and take the minor injustices and irritations that are an inevitable part of finite life with a little greater equanimity. Even further down this road, it may also be the case that we would do well to recover a certain sensibility toward the potentially redemptive aspects of suffering. In the face of the difficulties of life, many of our grandparents or great-grandparents would have told us to “offer it up.” There is a wisdom in this traditional spirituality that we have been hesitant to embrace over the last 70 years, particularly in the academy. I am writing this on the feast day of Josephine Bakhita, and she could certainly be the patron saint of this renewal. Bakhita, however, was far beyond us spiritually, and we live in such a divided culture that everything—especially those things that are complicated, difficult, and elevated—become poisoned when turned into ideological weapons in our fight. Thus, Bakhita, along with similar thinkers such as Rose of Lima, John of the Cross, and Margaret Mary Alacoque, may be a good place to look for the seeds of an alternative modernism that would provide a more relational version of the turn to the subject than the dominant Cartesian strand. For now, however, they are probably helpful only for those already bound together into a spiritual community, and there are good reasons to think that a recovery of their voices for the wider culture will require that we first cultivate a greater common understanding. Only then would their contributions not be immediately distorted in light of our polarizing differences.

Thus, leaving the question of the redemptive nature of suffering to the theologians for now, I can return to the more directly philosophical question about how we can work to cultivate a shared meaning. Lonergan again will be our guide, as he tells us, “the genesis of common meaning is an ongoing process of communication, of people coming to share the same cognitive, constitutive, and effective meanings” (357). It is only by talking to one another in respectful and open dialogue that we can slowly grope our way toward expanding the common meanings that in turn open the possibility of shared experiences and shared narratives. As Lonergan notes, there is already

a strongly cognitive element to this elementary level of intersubjectivity, but this does not yet rise to the level of dialectic where entire philosophical systems are compared. This is the strength of personal conversation, the place where we can come to understand what it is that moves our interlocuter on a personal level, i.e., what it is that matters to him or to her as a person.

It is at this level of the ordinary conversation between people that the conscious cultivation of an axiological pluralism comes into play. We must all make the intellectual choice to accept the legitimacy of a multiplicity of goods in order to hear what the other is saying. We have had bad training for this through our experience of a century of ideological wars. These wars have given us the wrong impression that the job of politics is to decide whether the best human society should be liberal *or* communistic *or* national socialist *or* theocratic *or* traditionalist. In reality, though, there will never be any pure forms of these political ideals. The fact that in America ‘the people’ own the roads does not make it Communist (nor would public healthcare), and a little gambling in North Korea does not make that country Capitalist. All societies combine elements of autonomy, equality, community, the power of social integration, tradition, and priestly authority, even if they give these goods different relative valuations. We would be better to recognize a multiplicity of values and to think of politics as the art of mediating between differences in relative rather than absolute values.

This tendency towards extremism (the absolute valuation of one good and the denial of the legitimacy of any others) is not only a product of historical habit but is a deep tendency within the intellectual culture of modern thinking itself. Thus, an openness to a multiplicity of values as a guiding principle in our discussions with others requires a change in intellectual culture. Luckily, due to the pioneering work of people like Jon Haidt, there is a growing body of literature in the social sciences that shows that what we took to be the conflicts between competing political systems (autonomy vs community, fairness vs loyalty) are much more about differences in personality and human temperament and, ultimately, about the irreducible axiological diversity of the human species.

Philosophy also has its contribution to make to this intellectual renewal. We have seen Lonergan argue that divergent meaning divides community. He goes on to explain that whether this division is destructive or not “arises from the presence and absence of intel-

tual, moral, or religious conversion” (357). The religious resonances of the word ‘conversion’ would immediately divide us, again, on the basis of our ruptured world of meaning, but Lonergan immediately precludes this by continuing, “a person is a true self inasmuch as he or she is self-transcending. Conversion is the way to self-transcending” (357). This, I think, is the clarion call for our time. And self-transcending is the proper way to describe it, rather than transcendence as such, for Lonergan’s formulation reminds us to withhold judgement about that toward which we are moving in the movement of self-transcendence. That goal, or *telos* can include the absolutely unknowable other of transcendental philosophy, deconstruction, liberal politics, and some apophatic theology, but it also includes an incredibly rich world of nature: rivers, mountains, plants, animals, and ecosystems that are mysterious and far beyond our current understanding, but nonetheless knowable, i.e., open to discovery and relationship. This self-transcending ought also to include the metaphysical as that toward which we move, for except in very rigid and foundational systems or extremely fundamentalistic religions, the metaphysical opens a horizon of mystery that encourages listening and dialogue; there are many paths leading up into the misty heights of the mountain, and we should surely be curious to ask about where those paths have taken other thinkers and other traditions.

This emphasis on beauty, goodness, and a values-pluralism still has a long way to go in our intellectual culture, which throughout the modern period has been permeated with negativity, formalism, and abstraction. We have long been marked by a dour spirituality that emphasizes the depravity of nature (Calvinism, Jansenism), an anti-metaphysical skepticism dedicated to policing the boundary beyond which we must not trespass (critical philosophy), and social sciences that highlight scarcity (economics), the hermeneutics of suspicion (interpretation theory), and the imperialistic nature of knowledge (deconstruction). This diagnosis may seem, at first glance, to be repudiated by the permissiveness of popular culture (pornography, McBurgers, and McMansions), but the refusal to say ‘no’ to anything is only the popular expression of the pessimistic view that we cannot come to know higher goods for which it would be worth sacrificing lower ones. I am certainly not arguing for a return to some pre-reflective and primordial naivete. However, in the development of a culture as well as the development of a person, an angsty and accusatory attitude does indicate one has left childhood, but it also means one has

not yet reached maturity. Rather than rejecting the critical sensibility of modernity, we must move through it toward a “second naivete” (Ricoeur and Kearney) that celebrates the goodness of the world in a mature and reflective way.

This hunger to know, to transcend ourselves in growing relationship with the goodness and beauty of the world will open, again, the possibility of listening. Then you might be able to show me those goods you have experienced that are as yet beyond my purview, and I might be able to do the same for you. Yes, these goods will often come into conflict such that more of one means less of the other. When those conflicts come, dialectic will still be necessary. But I hope that we can begin our conversations in a more personal way and from an attitude of trust, confident that when the time comes, we will be able to make the necessary compromises. Then we might be able to hear each other again.

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Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, 2022  
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# The Moral Responsibilities of Civil Engineers in the Age of Pandemic

Antonio Campos

## *Introduction*

It is an indisputable fact that the current, global coronavirus pandemic has had significant impacts on human lives and livelihoods. While cases and mortalities resulting from COVID-19 continue to rise worldwide, the effects of the pandemic have also been “super-imposed on unresolved tensions between people and technology, between people and the planet, and between the haves and have-nots” (Conceição, et al.). Because of this, the pandemic has disproportionately impacted particular countries, groups, cohorts, and ethnicities (Gaynor & Wilson). Thus, it is obvious that *all* professionals have an ethical responsibility to recognize virus-associated problems and take steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 while simultaneously showing solidarity with those who have been most negatively impacted by the outbreak. What is less clear, however, is what responsibilities civil engineers *specifically* possess in the struggle to curtail and ultimately end the pandemic.

This paper argues that members of the civil engineering profession, beyond merely following prescribed virus mandates, also have a definite, ethical responsibility to take a leadership position in the fight to stop the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, this report demonstrates that, although they do not specifically operate in the health-care industry, civil engineers are particularly well suited to combat

the coronavirus pandemic via a three-prong approach. First, civil engineers possess the requisite technical knowledge needed to improve current logistical systems that can help to curtail virus cases. Second, civil engineers can implement unique and creative solutions to help oppose the virus or mitigate its consequences for society. Third, civil engineers can innovate new and improved measures for incorporating social justice and environmental justice into their works, thereby simultaneously lessening socioeconomic rifts exacerbated by the pandemic and improving chances for equality in post-virus sociopolitical landscapes.

### ***Improving Logistical Systems***

Proven coronavirus transmission prevention tactics, including vaccinating, social distancing, testing, and mask wearing, are crucial to slowing the spread of COVID-19. However, “while amateurs talk tactics, professionals discuss logistics” since a long-term solution to the current crisis must ultimately come from the orchestrated implementation of a physical virus solution (Madhavan). Thus, it is expected that “much of the conversation [concerning a definitive end of the pandemic] will come back to engineering, which has historically advanced public health far more than medical care has” (Madhavan). This is because many of the systems associated with overcoming disease are also closely connected with civil engineering and infrastructural projects, including “sanitation, water supply, electrification, refrigeration, highways, transportation safety, body scanning, and mass production” systems (Madhavan). Because both patients and equipment, including vaccines and PPE,<sup>1</sup> must effectively be stored, moved, and maintained, many civil engineering jobs are connected to nationwide COVID-19 solutions, which require “engineering logistics” and “flexible supply chains” for successful roll-out (Madhavan).

Moreover, while COVID-19 may be “novel” in many ways, there is nothing unprecedented about engineers’ involvement in organizing logistics against disease (Madhavan). In previous eras, civil engineers were lauded as “pioneers of our civilization” for their abilities to move equipment efficiently, and to adapt seamlessly to sudden global developments (Arciszewski). During the worldwide Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, for example, civil engineers, like the Danish inventor Agner Krarup Erlang, were extolled for their improvements to telecommu-

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1     Personal Protective Equipment.



nication and transportation systems, which allowed for rapid news dissemination and faster medical services (Madhavan). Likewise, more recently, transportation engineers have sought faster ways to distribute vaccines and medical equipment “at a time when hospitals are furloughing staff, reducing salaries...and screaming for PPE” (Shao). Thus, “engineering systems” have continuously played “vital” roles in keeping medical systems afloat (Madhavan) and able to handle the influx of new COVID-19 patients with the help of improved delivery times (Shao) and telemedicine technologies.

### ***Implementing Creative Solutions***

Notwithstanding the fact that globalized issues, like the current pandemic, “bring additional challenges ... to civil engineers ... creative people and true leaders of [the] profession have always used [such] challenges to change and adapt to new demands, consequently converting adversities into advantages” (Arciszewski). Because of this need for new ideas and adaptations, civil engineers have an ethical responsibility to take calculated risks and be creative in their confrontation of the COVID-19 pandemic. This way, new solutions to the rapidly evolving situation can be ascertained, society can continue to function effectively during the outbreak, and worldwide communities can work on returning to normalcy.

In order to respond to the pandemic with novel solutions and creative, new ideas, in addition to their traditionally analytical, “factual, and quantitative” knowledge, civil engineers must also be willing to develop “out-of-the-box solutions” for fluctuating global problems that adequately serve a constantly changing world on both local and international levels (Arciszewski). Thus, civil engineers do not merely have a responsibility to create effective systems and propagate them throughout the world. Instead, they must *also* be willing to be attentive to new, local ideas and research, even from traditionally marginalized sources (Gaynor & Wilson), in order to ensure that they have the very best designs for combating the virus. Therefore, instead of acting like analytical engines or impersonal data-mongers, civil engineers must seek to implement human elements and “qualitative knowledge” into their work, paying attention to “creativity, computing, and globalization” (Arciszewski). In this way, engineers can use “balanced paradigms,” “both quantitative and qualitative data,” and “the present challenges, to change and adapt [their] profession to meet new demands” (Arciszewski).

Additionally, “since the [COVID-19] crisis has multiple, interconnected dimensions, a [similarly] systematic approach—rather than a sector-by-sector sequential approach—is essential” to overcoming the pandemic (Conceição, et al.). Consequently, civil engineers are ethically required to reach out and work with other professionals as they produce creative, new ideas. Specifically, companies should take advantage of long-distance attendance and virtual communication in order to reach out to other organizations, including universities and hospitals, so that they can hear alternative opinions prior to implementing proposed measures, such as reevaluating construction priorities for new buildings or redirecting traffic flow to allow for lines of cars at testing and vaccine centers. Overall, by being more creative and always communicating with others, “the twenty-first century civil engineer [should style himself] as a reincarnation of the [global] Renaissance man, or *uomo universale*...with a focus on creative tools” and broad experiences (Arciszewski). In this way, a “wave of innovation” can be “scaled up to support the response [to the virus] on multiple fronts,” thereby integrating engineering, medical, political, and social skills to effect a long-term solution to the current COVID-19 crisis (Conceição, et al.).

### ***Innovating Social and Environmental Justice***

Although the successful distribution of a vaccine to the coronavirus may feel like the exclusive priority today, it is also important for people—and civil engineers specifically—to remember that there are still other issues of ethical and moral weight, even in this time of pandemic. While the more “quantitative” and “pragmatic skills” of civil engineers (Arciszewski) tend to focus upon numerical assessments of the challenging COVID-19 situation, it is important to consider not only the economic and medical angles of the virus, but also the wide-ranging social and environmental issues that it has magnified. Therefore, one crucial objective of current engineering designs must be social justice and the “promotion [of] inclusive human development in the coming years and for future generations” (Conceição, et al.). In other words, social equity issues must be considered alongside logistical engineering tasks like designing transportation systems and urban plans to meet vaccine goals. Because a “coherent multi-dimensional approach to the pandemic” is necessary to support the members of ethnic and economic minorities’ communities that have been particularly impacted by the virus, any attempts at “unilateral,

macroeconomic policies are doomed to fail” at both political and engineering levels (Kohlscheen, et al.).

To further support the members of minority and impoverished neighborhoods that have been disproportionately harmed by the pandemic, engineers and engineering corporations must make liberal use of the assets that they possess and the skills that they have developed in order to counter systemic injustices exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation. Thus, urban planners and metropolitan engineers must focus economic revitalization efforts on those neighborhoods that have been most impacted by COVID-19. Transportation engineers must modify streetscapes to help direct traffic towards those businesses that have been most harmed to help them recuperate faster. Large engineering corporations with enough money to do so should dedicate a certain amount of their revenues to the support of local communities, especially since the engineering profession has been relatively unharmed by the pandemic as compared to, logically, the restaurant, travel, and personal service industries that cannot meaningfully transition to online business.

In addition to social justice, another important topic that has often taken back seat to the coronavirus pandemic is environmental justice, which includes the development of more sustainable and ecologically friendly practices in civil engineering. According to the United Nations’ 2020 *Human Development Perspectives*, environmental concerns have continued to be at the forefront of many minds throughout the COVID-19 crisis; however, governmental and industrial support for environmental measures has slackened since the beginning of 2020 because the pandemic presented a bigger perceived threat to human health than pollution (Conceição, et al.). This finding was based upon the *IPSOS Earth Day Report* (Gray & Jackson), “a recent survey conducted in 14 countries [that] found that 71 percent of adults globally consider that climate change is as serious a crisis as COVID-19, with two thirds supporting government actions to prioritize climate change during the recovery” period from the pandemic (Conceição, et al.). Thus, it appears that “the thirst for renewable energy and [sustainable engineering] has only been intensified by the coronavirus pandemic,” (Gray & Jackson) and human concerns about the virus have not entirely superseded or replaced ecological reform measures in the public mind.

This data clearly indicates the need for civil engineers to continue to focus upon sustainable, environmental, and ecological strategies

even as they work to address particular aspects of the coronavirus pandemic. Specifically, civil engineers who work in the energy sector should strive to “actively shape local economy and promote renewable” energy measures because they, like the public at large, should remain ethically bound to environmental sustainability regardless of other widespread issues, like contagions (Ørsted). Hopefully, “renewables [will continue] to post growth in demand,” even in a post-COVID-19 world, “driven by low operating costs, larger installed capacity, and priority dispatch” (Ørsted). Overall, even as they work to focus on human health and safety during the pandemic, civil and environmental engineers cannot afford to forget about social and ecological issues as well. Both present needs for safety and future needs for clean air and resources must be considered, since civil engineers, as leaders of the present and the future, have moral responsibilities to support both.

### ***Conclusion***

Although questions of integrity and ethics are by no means new to the field of civil engineering (“Development of the First ASCE Code of Ethics”), the current COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on ethical questions concerning engineering practices and priorities in a way that was, perhaps, never considered in the American Society of Civil Engineers’ original, 1913 “code of ethics” (“Development of the First ASCE Code of Ethics”). Indeed, many modern questions of engineering ethics do not pit engineers against one another, nor do they suggest malintents of clients or professionals (“Development of the First ASCE Code of Ethics”). Instead, they demonstrate both the capabilities and the responsibilities of engineers in a variety of unprecedented ways.

Day to day, modern civil engineers must weigh the concerns of the present global health situation with the environmental future of the world. They must make affirmative decisions to promote social justice and community wellness. They must continue to fulfill the obligations of their important vocations as they simultaneously look out for the welfare and safety of their families and communities. As designers and constructors of the humanmade environment that surrounds them, civil engineers have always built the world and molded the future. Now, they must continue to do so even in the midst of a worldwide health crisis, which may shape the future of their industry and their society for decades to come. Since engineers have the

knowledge, the creativity, and the mentality necessary to help combat the pandemic and make a difference, they surely must fulfill their moral obligations to do so by both supporting and improving society through their work.

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# Politics

# A Crumbling Wall of Prosperity: CICIG and Guatemala's Endemic Corruption

Nathan Remcho

## *1. Introduction*

The issue of corruption faces any and every country regardless of geographic location or size, but some countries have struggled to respond to the issue in any meaningful way. One such country is Guatemala, where corruption has been a long-standing issue (Maihold). Government impunity in any country is such a factor in hindering economic growth that combatting it is a priority for global economic organizations. It seems logical that corruption and a slowing of economic growth would be connected, especially when it comes to developing nations. This was certainly one of the beliefs that contributed to the creation of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)<sup>1</sup> by the United Nations in 2006 (“Agreement between the United Nations and the State of Guatemala”). Analyzing the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of CICIG depends on numerous factors, including public perception both within Guatemala and abroad as well as through the activities of CICIG, such as the removal of corrupt politicians and officials from their positions of power. One factor that is useful in analyzing CICIG and its impact on Guatemala is the economic impact it has had on the country as a whole.

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1 This acronym refers to the Spanish spelling of the commission.



Before moving on, it is important to recognize that the economic and political situation in Guatemala and Central America is volatile and constantly changing. In a recent interview, Guatemala's president, Alejandro Giammattei, said he still has hopes for a "wall of prosperity" that can serve to halt emigration from his country (Finnegan). This quote, the inspiration for the title of this paper, is one of multiple seemingly ironic actions or statements made by Guatemalan presidents regarding economics and corruption. Despite Giammattei's statement of hope, the economic situation in Guatemala has been far from prosperous and does not seem to be improving with any real speed (see Figure 1). Although many factors go into promoting economic prosperity and the process of creating an economically stable country, the nature of this research focuses mostly on economic and political changes in recent years relating to the various activities of CICIG.

In the following paper I will outline connections between corruption in Guatemala and the economic hardships facing the country. These connections require at least a rudimentary knowledge of the recent Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996) as well as other historical factors which have impacted Guatemalan development. These historic factors are outlined in Section Two of this paper. I will then analyze how CICIG has impacted not only the political sector but also the greater economic wellbeing of the country. In this, I will recognize the presence of systemic issues of inequality that plague Guatemala, although the issue of this inequality is not itself the topic of this paper. Finally, I will look towards the future to seek an understanding of what might be required to reverse or at least steady the current trajectory of Guatemalan economics and politics.

## ***2. Corruption, History, and Economics***

The connection between corruption and economic hardship cannot be overstated. A quick look at Transparency International's global corruption perception rankings shows that it is almost always the countries that are struggling economically that are home to the worst levels of corruption ("Corruption perceptions index"). This is certainly the case in Guatemala where despite the introduction of CICIG in 2006, the level of corruption in Guatemala compared with its geographic neighbors has only grown (see Figure 2). The data in Figure Two show that CICIG was unable to effectively change the economic situation and the program was not able to dislodge corrupt

leaders and disrupt corrupt institutions in Guatemala. Figure Two further shows that any economic development in the country has taken place beneath a government that is largely seen as corrupt both at home and abroad.

According to studies using international foreign direct investment data, Mohsin Habib and Leon Zurawicki were able to conclude generally that “corruption is a serious obstacle for foreign investment” (303). Their research goes on to identify the various barriers that arise when a country is perceived by foreigners as corrupt. What might be most applicable from this study is the relationship between the corruption levels of the investing country and the country in which the firm may be investing. In general, the study found that firms based in countries with a higher level of corruption are more likely to invest in other countries with higher levels of corruption. Unfortunately for Guatemala, these firms are not common in the region. Habib and Zurawicki’s research demonstrates that the presence of corrupt institutions prevents and hinders foreign investments that could lead to a diversification of Guatemala’s economy and aid economic and social development throughout the country.

The corrupt institutions in Guatemala have become solidified as a result of past foreign involvement in the country. Throughout much of the nation’s history, much of Guatemala’s economic activity has been tied, willingly or not, to the United States. The predatory economic and social policies of U.S. companies such as the United Fruit Company primed the country for political institutions that would take advantage of already corrupt social and economic orders (Schoultz). Analyzing and understanding the connection between corruption and economics in Guatemala, then, is just as much of a historic endeavor as it is a modern one. However, while it is valuable to consider the question of why corruption seems endemic to Guatemala, it should be separated from the question of how this corruption is impacting Guatemalans today. It should be acknowledged that the roots of corruption run deep as do the roots of systemic racism against the Indigenous population.

The Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996) deepened preexisting issues on social, political, and economic levels. Despite being independent from external ruling forces since 1821, the history of Guatemala has been largely shaped by external pressures which eventually led to a civil war between the U.S.-backed government and leftist rebels (Schoultz). The long war did little to root out corruption, instead serv-

ing to further entrench it in Guatemalan society (Schoultz). Economic development in Guatemala has been dependent on foreign investment which was overwhelmingly predatory; furthermore, any economic development in Guatemala has been built on foundations that are shaky at best. Peace within the country is still relatively young and many of the current institutions show the scars of past violence. Now, under President Giammattei, signs are not all positive that a more solid political and economic foundation is on the horizon.

The connection between corruption, economics, and migration must also be addressed before looking towards possible future policies. Many Guatemalans migrating to the United States cite a lack of economic opportunities as a major reason for leaving (Martin). This is an interesting and important point as it shows that it is not only violence that is driving all migration from Guatemala, as is commonly believed. Included in the multifaceted factors of migration are both social and economic inequality. These factors are only enhanced by the systemic corruption which prevents social and economic reforms in Guatemala that could serve to better the lives of those living there. According to data collected by scholars at Columbia University, it is largely people living in the rural areas of Guatemala that fall below the extreme poverty line ("Gridded Population of the World"). Furthermore, the portion of the country that fell below the poverty line in rural areas, such as the highlands which are largely populated by Indigenous people, increased between 1994 and 2002 ("Gridded Population of the World"). This data shows that policies in Guatemala have not served to diminish inequality but have had the opposite effect. Although this inequality cannot be tied directly to corruption, there seems to be a relationship between the corrupt political institutions in Guatemala and the fact that economic inequality has grown despite relative peace following the end of the Guatemalan Civil War.

In Guatemala, as in any country struggling with issues of corruption, the economic impacts of impunity are such that they cannot be ignored when analyzing the current economic situation and when drawing plans for improvement in the future. The purpose of CICIG was then not only political but also economic. The effectiveness of CICIG, however, must be analyzed in order to determine if the mission was at all successful in stemming corruption in such a way that economic growth and recovery could ensue. With a brief historical background of Guatemalan economic and social issues, as well as the

connection between corruption and economic issues, the foundation and actions of CICIG can be better understood and analyzed.

### **3. CICIG and International Pressure**

CICIG was originally established as a cooperative effort between the United Nations and the Guatemalan government, but it seems that since its establishment this cooperation has essentially ceased (Maihold 18). Perhaps it is unsurprising that CICIG was relatively ineffective in Guatemala, as the state itself is often seen as failing and unable to combat transnational crime (Brands). However, the question must be asked as to whether CICIG has been wholly unsuccessful or if it simply has not had the time or commitment to fulfill its potential. CICIG's efforts have been virtuous and with the explicit intent to improve the lives of Guatemalans, but the result has not been overwhelmingly positive. The failures of CICIG are just as much a reminder that the problems facing Guatemala extend far beyond corruption. After all, the systemic issues regarding inequality cannot be blamed on corrupt politicians. In reality there were some areas where CICIG was successful which can serve as an example that there is hope that international participation can encourage positive change in Guatemala.

The 2006 establishment of CICIG between the United Nations and Guatemala begins as follows: "*Considering that it is the duty of the State of Guatemala to protect the right to life and personal integrity of and provide effective judicial redress for all the inhabitants of the country,*" ("Agreement between the United Nations and the State of Guatemala"). This statement places the responsibility for the protection of the country squarely on Guatemalan political institutions but reaffirms the necessity of international cooperation to ensure these institutions remain just. However, in 2019, CICIG was expelled by then-president Jimmy Morales which shows that the political establishment is not fully committed to combatting corruption. This would imply that fighting impunity is not part of the protection of the Guatemalan people (Malkin). Although CICIG was expelled in a rather shocking fashion, it is still valuable to analyze their activities prior to expulsion that may have contributed to Morales's decision to dismiss the organization.

Returning to the data displayed in Figure 1, it can seem difficult to see any real impact that CICIG could have had on the economy as a whole ("Combatting Corruption"). However, despite having crept

closer to pre-2007 levels, the Guatemalan economy took a slight dip in 2015. This was the same year that CICIG exposed the “La Línea” corruption scandal that led to the indictment of former president Otto Pérez Molina (Wilensky). Public perception following this indictment could have gone two ways: towards further distrust in the political system or towards an increased faith in CICIG and its ability to reform political institutions. The economic decline in the year following the indictment of Molina and the immediate growth the following year could indicate a renewal of faith in the political institutions of Guatemala. On the other hand, the slow recovery could indicate that there was perhaps no large impact on the economy caused by the indictment of the former president. The indictment, however, can be seen as incentive for Jimmy Morales to expel CICIG in fear that his administration could face similar issues.

Jimmy Morales began his time as president by extending the mandate of CICIG, thus supporting the project wholeheartedly (Wilensky). This decision was met by international appreciation as well as celebrations in Guatemala. However, his support quickly faded and in 2019 CICIG was expelled in classic “caudillo”<sup>2</sup> fashion (Malkin). By expelling CICIG in a brash and power-grabbing manner, Morales removed the only way international pressures could have any real impact on Guatemalan politics and economics. Without an international investigatory institution, the United Nations is essentially powerless in the country. Although the United Nations was quick to express its dismay at the decision of Morales, the United States was not so quick or clear (Schneider). Morales claimed CICIG was both no longer necessary and that it had overstepped its bounds, however there is evidence that “the sudden removal of the CICIG could be disastrous for justice reform in Guatemala,” (Schneider). Why would the removal of CICIG be disastrous if they had not been able, in more than a decade, to prevent a level of corruption that could effectively end their mission? The answer to this question could simply be that without CICIG, the global community, represented by the United Nations, would not have power or information regarding Guatemalan politics and elections.

Once CICIG had been expelled, much of the world suddenly saw that the corruption in Guatemalan politics guaranteed that any economic or political activity in the country could not be carried

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2 A political and military leader: dictator.

out with any confidence. At the time of the expulsion, there was by no means any international consensus that Guatemala was free of corruption (Schneider). Even though CICIG itself will not be able to contribute to stopping corruption in Guatemala, its social impact has been such that there is some hope for the Guatemalan people. There are increased efforts in Guatemala and throughout Latin America to combat “rampant institutional dishonesty” in a meaningful and swift manner (Wilensky). CICIG, then, should not be viewed as a mission acting solely upon the political sector but instead as acting upon the social and economic structures in Guatemala and beyond. Accordingly, the mission of CICIG was successful in some concrete ways, such as the indictment of a former president, but the greatest success came in the form of social progress and awareness within Guatemala.

Only through increased pressure will Guatemala’s endemic corruption be confronted (“The International Commission Against Impunity”). Although prosecutions can at times seem trivial, and they may even have a slight adverse effect on economic growth, they are essential to creating an environment conducive to foreign investment. According to Santander Trade Markets and the World Bank, Guatemala’s main industries of coffee production, textiles, and paper industries are set to grow over the coming years. However, the service sector, including tourism, is the largest employer in the country. It could be expected, then, that if the country were to be politically stable, all the main industries could see more growth than they are currently experiencing (“Guatemalan Economic Outline”).

There must be pressure on Guatemalan institutions, whether it be CICIG or another source of international pressure, to root out corruption on all levels. Because corruption is a serious obstacle for foreign investment and any type of economic growth, any international pressure can be put into context as an economic policy (Habib & Zurawicki). Corruption itself is a complex socio-political issue that has become endemic to the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras), but with increased and continued international pressure to counter corruption in the region, a favorable economic environment can be established.

Economic issues, which are related to corruption that prevents economic growth, are a driving factor for migration and a facilitator of violence (Martin). The issue of combatting corruption must remain an international priority. Corruption cannot be solely responsible for all issues in and around Guatemala nor can CICIG be

credited with solving corruption as a whole. But there is evidence that if Guatemalan politicians hope to build a prosperous country that serves to halt migration and stem violence, ridding the country of corruption is a logical first step. However, any hope for a wall of prosperity is crumbling.

#### ***4. The Future of Guatemalan Corruption***

To say that corruption should be curbed in any country is not a controversial statement. As was shown in Section Two, corruption can be linked with economic stagnation and is often the result of outdated and discriminatory political norms. It cannot be expected that all corruption can be rooted out of Guatemala overnight. For that matter, it cannot be expected that corruption could be eliminated even in the course of a decade. In Guatemala, government corruption is entrenched and endemic as a result of decades of foreign involvement and violence. Because of the nature of corruption in Guatemala, it is difficult to conclude as to whether or not CICIG had a positive economic and social effect while it was operational; CICIG simply did not have enough time to fulfill its full potential or show that it had failed to do so. It can be concluded, however, that any long-term effects that CICIG might have had will be difficult and near impossible to pinpoint as a result of its recent expulsion from Guatemala.

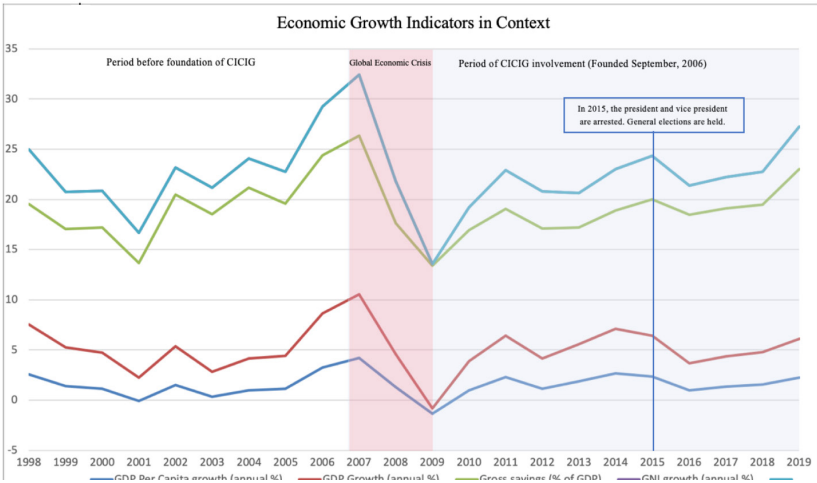
Looking towards the future, then, it can be reasoned that only a stronger iteration of CICIG could have immediate and long-lasting effects on the Guatemalan economy. If President Giammattei truly believed in building a “wall of prosperity,” he would welcome the immediate and unilateral prosecution of corrupt politicians and officials (Finnegan). As was indicated by the study done by Habib & Zurawicki, foreign investment that can encourage economic development will not happen when corruption is unchecked. How, then, can there be a brighter future for Guatemala without external powers that are able to establish checks and balances that can prosecute and prevent corruption?

The expulsion of CICIG was an ironic and alarming action that, according to many, should be reversed (Hornsby). Although the expulsion itself was proliferated by former president Jimmy Morales, the fact that Giammattei has not called for its reestablishment shows that there are no real efforts within the current administration to curb corruption and thus no real efforts to create an environment in which economic prosperity can be found. Following the expulsion of

CICIG, Acción Ciudadana, the Guatemalan chapter of Transparency International, filed two legal actions against Morales accusing him of “violating the Constitution and disobeying the rulings of the Court,” but these actions seem to have had no effect on the current administration (Hornsby).

It is clear, then, that a simple reestablishment of CICIG would not be enough to truly curb corruption and allow for an environment conducive to economic growth. Thus, a renewal and revitalization of CICIG would be necessary in order to ensure the economic future of Guatemala can be secure and positive. Perhaps a changed social approach towards the issues of impunity facing the country is the most important factor to dismantling corruption and developing the Guatemalan economy. Corruption in Guatemala is an intersectional issue that must be dealt with in an intersectional and interdisciplinary manner. Although corruption cannot be blamed for the difficult history of the nation or the social issues facing the nation today, it is, in one way or another, related to these issues in a concrete way. Economically, it seems that without an effort to rid the government of systemic corruption there can be no true hope for improvement with any true longevity. If Guatemalan politicians aim to build a wall of prosperity, its government must first be willing to knock down the walls of its corrupt and discriminatory institutions; until this happens, any hope for Guatemalan prosperity is crumbling.

**Figure 1**



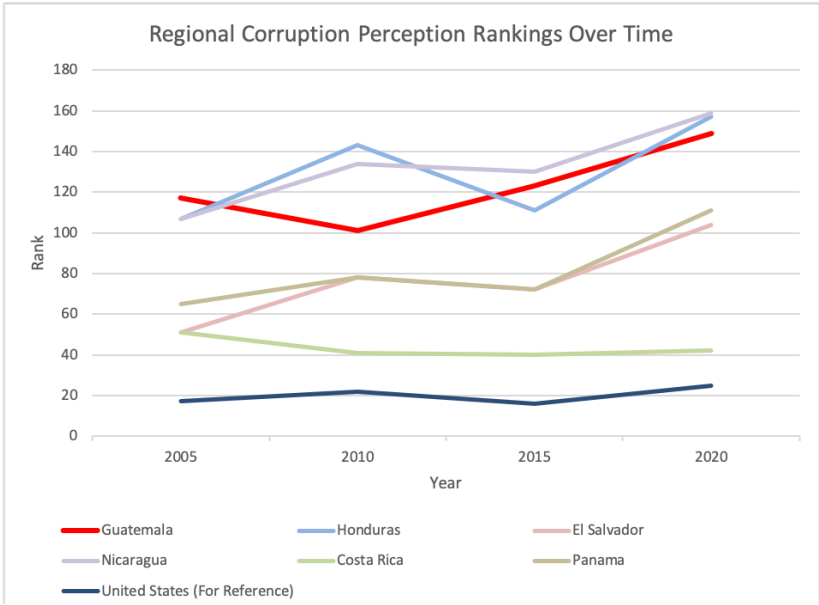


*Figure 1 (continued)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GDP Per Capita growth (annual %)	2.543	1.415	1.118	-0.097	1.507
GDP Growth (annual %)	4.994	3.847	3.609	2.333	3.867
Gross savings (% of GDP)	12.004	11.790	12.479	11.408	15.100
GNI growth (annual %)	5.426	3.663	3.658	3.034	2.711
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	
	0.319	0.982	1.137	3.266	
	2.531	3.152	3.260	5.380	

<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
4.224	1.309	-1.347	0.997	2.284	1.156	1.891
6.304	3.281	0.526	2.869	4.162	2.970	3.698
15822	13.03	14.20	13.06	12.58	12.95	11.60
6.070	4.193	0.162	2.263	3.878	3.733	3.422
<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	
2.654	2.346	0.989	1.360	1.576	2.237	
4.444	4.092	2.678	3.023	3.215	3.845	
11.77	13.57	14.82	14.73	14.68	16.91	
4.128	4.306	2.906	3.090	3.250	4.271	

Figure 2



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# Constraining the Court and Preserving Democracy

Claire Booth

In his chapter from *The Hollow Hope*, “The Dynamic and Constrained Court,” author Gerald Rosenberg laments on how the US Supreme Court possesses a weakened role in creating social and political change. He concludes that our “constrained Court” cannot “produce significant social reform in civil rights, abortion, women’s rights, the environment,” and other policy areas (Rosenburg 420). Specifically, our Court heavily relies on other political actors and institutions to carry out its decisions. An unfavorable Court decision results in a weakened public willingness to enforce it. The only opportunity the Court receives to enact social change lies in maneuvering around weak legal precedents, but even then, Justices cannot expect that their legal victories will produce the desired change.

Despite Rosenberg’s unfavorable attitude toward the matter, our Court’s power must be constrained to preserve its central purpose and legitimacy, our democracy, and the original, collaborative nature of our three branches of government. Without such restrictions, the Court threatens the strength of our democracy by overstepping on the executive and legislative branches. Constraints are necessary to remind the Court it is not a legislative body but rather an enforcer of the Constitution within legal disputes. Any move outside these parameters would place our nation’s fate in the hands of nine unelected, life-tenured Justices.

First, the Court's restrictions on hearing natural rights cases ensure it maintains its intended purpose and legal, rather than legislative, nature. In describing the constraint, Rosenberg states, "Not all social reform goals can be plausibly presented in the name of constitutional rights" (Rosenburg 11). However, given Justices' life tenure and presidential appointments, the Court lacks the necessary public receptiveness and selection process to actively engage in social and political reform. Consequently, Justices' seclusion from public opinion and accountability justifies their limited enforcement powers. Their reliance on the legislative and executive branches for implementing Court decisions preserves our democracy that centers around the will of the people.

Moreover, this constraint is necessary for social reform goals to channel into our legislators and representatives, whom we elect to respond to such issues. By contrast, our judicial branch is tasked with maintaining the constitutionality of our laws and regulations. As Hamilton affirms in Federalist Paper No. 78, the judicial branch is the weakest for its sole power in judging, not acting (Hamilton). We need all claims going to the Court to be tied to the Constitution or some form of legality to maintain the branch's subservient stance and original purpose. Without such requirements, the Court is merely another legislative body, serving for life under appointments the public has no say in. Given these features of the Court, it is crucial it adheres to Rosenberg's belief that not all social reform cases can reasonably fall under its jurisdiction.

However, some may argue such a rule strips socially affiliated court cases of their "political and purposive appeal" by restricting them to legal appeals (Handler 33). In arguing legal reasoning for a case, the Court's decision-making process offers opportunities to appeal to emotional facets through oral arguments. According to Justice Kennedy, oral arguments serve as "the passion and the power, and the poetry of law," reminding the Court how abstract principles are applied to real-life situations (O'Brien 247). Oral arguments allow litigants to expand upon the legal facets of a case to illustrate its nationwide impact. Thus, concerns over the Court's selectiveness on accepting cases natural hampers the emotional appeal of social issues brought forth are remedied through the critical installment of oral argument in the decision-making process.

Second, the Court's lack of enforcement is essential to preserving our checks and balances system. Its inability to enforce its decisions

provides opportunities for the well-equipped executive and legislative branches to assist in its implementation. Such collaboration divides the work of handing down and implementing Court decisions according to each of the branches' strengths. It also maintains the Court's primary role of judging the constitutionality of our nation's laws. To illustrate an example of enforcement and collaboration, one can look nearly seventy years into the past to *Brown v. Board*.

When the landmark decision was handed down in 1954, many Southern states were reluctant or unwilling to desegregate schools. At the time, Governor Faubus of Arkansas dispatched the state's national guard at one high school to prevent nine prospective Black students from attending. While the Court had no power to stop the governor's orders, President Eisenhower did. Using his executive power and supreme authority over all states, Eisenhower told Faubus he could not violate the decision made in *Brown v. Board*. To ensure the nine Black students could attend school, Eisenhower enlisted the national guard to protect each high schooler entering the building and walking to and from classes. Eisenhower used his presidential power as commander in chief to carry out *Brown v. Board* where the judicial branch could not.

While *Brown v. Board* had its rocky beginnings that did not end with Governor Faubus, the executive branch used their unique powers endowed in Article II of the Constitution to help desegregate schools. Years later, the legislative branch enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964, using its unique role in policymaking to solidify *Brown's* implementation and expand upon its precedent. Although slow-going in its enforcement, *Brown v. Board* and the Civil Rights Movement provide an excellent example of how all three branches effectively utilized their roles to pave trails toward a more equal and just nation. In viewing their collaboration, one can see how the question should not be *why* the Court does not have the power to enforce its decisions, but *how* the other branches can and should enforce them.

Lastly, Justices are incentivized to pursue a constrained model to preserve the Court's legitimacy. As mentioned above, Hamilton intended for the judicial branch to be the weakest. Thus, its power stems from how political actors, organizations, and the public view its status. Richard L. Pacelle Jr. affirms this view in his piece, "The Emergence and Evolution of Supreme Court Policy." He states, "The fact that the justices are not elected requires them to be careful in the scope of their decisions," and creates a norm of a constrained



Court (Pacelle 177). Given that legitimacy is the central pillar in the Court's sustainment throughout history, one should be cautious of relying on the nine Justices to pave trails in social and political reform. Its power is vested in our perception of its abilities, which can easily crumble if the Court stems overtly out of its jurisdiction and intended purpose.

If the Court wants to maintain its prestige and source of power, it should be cautious of making broad social change and be willing to defer to the other branches' support. It is in the best interest of the Court to act in a restrained manner given its seclusion from public accountability. While such a court model dilutes Justices' ability to enact change themselves, it also requires them to evaluate the extent of their abilities. The Court may be independent in its seclusion from public accountability and receptiveness to the other branches, but it depends on them to enforce its decisions. Moreover, as our nation's Court poses a last resort, Justices must maintain legitimacy from the subservient lower courts and consider how they will uphold its opinions.

Before we look so eagerly to the Supreme Court for answers to our nation's biggest problems, it is essential to understand our foundational checks and balances system that weakens their opinion oversight. Once Supreme Court decisions are published, it is up to the people to hold their local, state, and national institutions accountable. This can be achieved by utilizing our rights to vote in political elections and responsibly express our opinions. Oftentimes, it is easy to take for granted our nation's roots in a democratic republic and neglect our duty as US citizens. But if the Supreme Court teaches us anything, it is that no branch can enact meaningful change alone. Just like the nine Justices, we must utilize our unique role as citizens to its fullest while relying on other groups for support. Without this collaboration, we risk wasting our civil liberties and nation's resources to create change.

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# Fighting the War Against Human Trafficking Through the Lenses of Criminological Theory

Emma Randich

As our world develops, our society has left many behind—treating human trafficking as an after-thought in a short-sided world. Today, there are an estimated 40.3 million people in modern slavery, including 24.9 million in forced labor and 15.4 million in forced marriage which is only projected to increase (ILO). To understand this growing phenomenon, I will be addressing some aspects of human trafficking including organized crime groups, human trafficking for sexual exploitation, and the media's coverage of human trafficking in the United States. The criminological theories that I will explain will be able to confront a multitude of distinct aspects of human trafficking including the variety of reasons for trafficking to occur including sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage, which are the three most common forms of human trafficking, as well as domestic servitude, slavery, forced labor, forced marriage, etc. I will explain the macro and micro forces that give human trafficking the ability to continue growing which allows for more productive policy implications. Such implications that I will be proposing will help direct public understanding of traffickers and steps towards prosecuting traffickers to the extent that is needed while providing more care to the victims of modern-day slavery.

One major aspect of human trafficking is best described by Dr. Vanessa Bouche from Texas Christian University, who outlines the

significance of organized crime intersecting with human trafficking crimes. Between 2000 and 2015, federally, 58% of all defendants who are prosecuted in human trafficking cases in the United States operated as part of an organized crimegroup (Bouche ii). One of the largest contributors to organized crime cases of human trafficking is “mom and pop” groups, such as massage parlors/brothels, which make up 35% of human trafficking cases that are reported (Bouche ii). Dr. Bouche explains how 71% of Mom-and-Pop groups engage only in sex trafficking (ii). The second-largest contributor to human trafficking through organized crime is Crime Rings (Bouche iii). Crime Rings make up 33% of human trafficking cases which is for the purpose of commercial sex only (Bouche iii). The rest of the organized crime groups that contribute consist of gangs and illegal enterprises. One of the most despicable traits of human trafficking is that 16 million people are trafficked for forced labor in the private economy and 4.8 million people are trafficked for forced sexual exploitation (ILO).

It is important to focus on the crime aspect of human trafficking since identifying these groups helps to target those who commit these heinous acts; however, we need to keep in mind that this is not just a crime issue but a major abuse on human rights in contemporary society(s). Every aspect of a victim’s human rights has been stolen from them so that others can benefit from their labor. Human trafficking not only undermines human rights, but also compromises the health, safety, and security of all nations it encounters. Further, this desire to benefit from somebody else’s labor and someone’s body has been going on for centuries. It occurs in every sector of the world, but sex slaves are easier to retain from inhabitants living in extreme poverty rather than people who reside in countries with a higher GDP per capita. Though many who are trafficked are taken from countries outside of America, they are typically brought here to be exploited considering how much money people are willing to invest in human trafficking within our country. However, as technology advances, it makes it easier to exploit more people, specifically women in America. In our country, most of the people trafficked are in inferior communities due to the lack of economic opportunities, lack of income, unemployment, etc. (Templeton 7). These are the key traits that traffickers look for in people so that they can begin their grooming process more easily through manipulation and make false promises for a better, more favorable life, as well as promising them they will make considerable amounts of money. The increasing public

interest in the various elements of the sex industry adds to the problem of sexual exploitation. This is where organized crime factors in with the increase of massage parlors, sex/strip clubs, escort agencies, and lap dancing venues. These are all effective locations for prostitution activities which lead to individuals pressured to participate in live sex shows seen via the internet and pornography; these people should also be considered as victims of sex trafficking which needs to be recognized more often.

Along with the call to attention for exposing different forms of human trafficking, this comes with the problematic news media. The issue is, when reporting sex trafficking, the news is notorious for the lack of coverage and the common association of covering trafficking as voluntary prostitution. This is a major reason why so many Americans associate domestic sex trafficking in the United States with “juvenile prostitutes” who choose to be “in the life” (Austin). In addition, the news media, most of the time, also only talks about the criminal aspect which is growing in popularity as politicians continue to campaign on the focus of governing by being tough on crime. This adds to Dr. Bouche’s point about the disregard for human rights issues needing to be called to attention rather than solely focusing on the crime proportion. Another way that the media has played a role in understating human trafficking is through films and television. For example, the film *Taken* (2009) showed an organized crime network to rescue his daughter from being trafficked. Though it shed light on the occurrence of trafficking, the adventure-packed movie took away from the seriousness of human trafficking. This is a recurring problem within our newmedia and television productions.

Addressing the root causes of trafficking is a fundamental facet necessary to succeed in the fight against trafficking. That is why, as members of the United States, the number one country for human trafficking consumption, we need to understand the different theories to explain where the desire to traffic human beings begins. Before we address extensive theories, we need to recognize the driving theme that follows in all the theories I will be outlining. This common theme is excessive egoism, a contribution to criminology made by Karl Marx. Excessive egoism explains greed and self-interest and when it is added to our capitalistic society, it causes inequalities, alienation, and an increase of crimes committed by corporate or political elites. This is important to understand before diving into

criminological theories because behind every case and every instance of trafficking a human being, there is self-interest involved.

The first criminological theory that helps explain why human trafficking occurs is Rational Choice Theory. This theory was first presented by Ronald V. Clarke and Derek B. Cornish. They explain how crime is a choice that is committed in alliance with the person(s) situation and personal constraints. Before the crime is committed, one considers the risks and the rewards. The process of decision-making exhibits rationality or lack thereof, and the cost benefits from economics with the idea of free will from former classical deterrence theories. This applies directly to both large-scale human trafficking (those who administer the trafficking) and on the smaller scale (those who invest in trafficking). This theory explains how people are not always “rational,” so it interferes with their decision-making, allowing them to believe that the risks, for example being charged for trafficking/sexual crimes, are less than the rewards, receiving labor, sexual gratification, domestic servitude, etc. There are three aspects to the decision-making process. First, it is choice structuring which is when a person assesses their own needs as well as their skills concerning the particular crime. Second, the involvement decision occurs which is where one’s background influences their final decision by interpreting the context of the crime. Third, is the event decision which is based on the person’s “rational” response to changing the crime and events as well as testing their readiness to engage in illegitimate acts.

The second criminological theory is Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson’s Routine Activities Theory. This theory focuses on day-to-day activities which, in today’s society, human trafficking occurs increasingly in public settings where people are doing their day-to-day routine. One major aspect of this theory explains the trafficker’s abilities to begin the trafficking process. This aspect is the key influence on an offender’s decision to act. These influences are value, inertia, visibility, and access (NSW Government). Along with this, Cohen and Felson outlined the factors needed for the result of a crime. First, a motivated offender. In this case, the offender is motivated by money, sex, and/or labor. Second, a suitable target(s), typically minorities and lower income women. Lastly, the lack of a capable guardian. This explains the trend of people of low income and poor communities as well as young women from broken homes becoming trafficked more. This is because they have more incentives to be groomed into the process of trafficking due to the false prom-

ises traffickers make that I mentioned previously. Another aspect this theory addresses is how one crime creates more opportunities for another. In the case of human trafficking, this is an ideal way of showing the exponential involvement of people from all types of backgrounds and economic statuses who get involved at various levels of human trafficking.

The third criminology theory I want to explain is General Strain Theory, coined by Robert Agnew. This theory explains how multiple strains caused by failing to achieve positively valued goals, removal of something of immense value to a person, and the presentation of noxious stimuli, can lead to a person committing a crime. The reason why this is important to consider in the conversation about human trafficking is that General Strain theory, when evaluated with victims' circumstances, are apparent during the present time that they were coerced or forced into sex trafficking which is important in determining why they became victims initially. General Strain Theory focuses on an individual's immediate social environment and argues that people are pressured into deviant acts by negative influencing states (Templeton 4), which as research will show, is a critical factor in determining those at the highest risk of being a victim of any one of the several types of sexual exploitation. Not only can this theory help explain why some people become victims in the first place, but it also can help us understand the many unfortunate outcomes for survivors of human trafficking. Such outcomes inflicted by poor mental health are depression, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, PTSD, anxiety, etc. These are all major strains that could lead to further negative outcomes unless there becomes an increasing number of on-the-ground resources which I will address towards the end of this letter.

In addition to criminological theories, it is important to understand the micro and macro forces that play a leading role in human trafficking. Some microelements include manipulation through recruitment, facilitating activities, exploitation, as well as the bystander effect. Additionally, many traffickers manipulate victims through trust and manipulation of vulnerabilities. The exploitation micro force includes forced marriages as well as explains how in some cases of labor trafficking, the victims receive an exceedingly small amount of the money from the work they provided to the trafficker which can be an incentive for those who come from third-world countries and/or are extremely poor. The bystander effect explains when so many people see a crime occur that they believe somebody else will report

it, however, nobody ends up doing so. This effect is important to consider as human trafficking continues to grow by recruiting people in vast public spaces such as shopping malls, grocery stores, downtown scenery attractions, etc.

The macro forces that have an enormous influence on human trafficking are social media, gang relations, capitalistic business overlaps, poverty/homelessness, and war. Social media has given a whole other platform for exploitation especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which saw an increase in child exploitation with their education being moved online (UNHR). Gang relations are a large factor in the intersectionality of organized crime and human trafficking, which I have explained. However, they continue to grow in cases since gangs are becoming more aware of the economic return, they receive on trafficking which adds to the capitalistic business overlaps. Gangs also are starting to realize this crime can make their profit even further since you can only sell portions of drugs, and individual guns once however with humans, they can be sold repeatedly. In a study produced in San Diego, CA, 85% of facilitators were gang-affiliated and over 110 gangs are involved in the underground sex economy (Carpenter). In addition, poverty and homelessness are unfortunately a large target for traffickers considering their vulnerability, the more people become homeless and in the state of poverty, the more likely they become to be a victim of human trafficking. Lastly, war is a large force that does not receive as much attention. With war, it creates an environment in conflict zones of sheer vulnerability due to armed groups holding women as sex slaves and using children as soldiers of their army to spread fear and more violence (Guilbert).

In terms of policy implications, I used my analytical findings to find the most productive policies that are needed to successfully fight the war on human trafficking. First, any anti-trafficking law should criminally define both sex and labor trafficking because, in some countries, labor trafficking is considered a civil offense, which seldom captures the seriousness of the infraction, nor provides proper penalization. By using the Rational Choice Theory to guide policy implications, there need to be policies that can act as an effective deterrent so that people, before they become traffickers, understand that their risk of prosecution is far greater than the potential gain. Another form of policy I think can act as a strong deterrent is a policy that recognizes trafficking as a crime motivated by and results in profit. Because of this, policies should effectively target assets. Seizing assets from traf-



fickers provides a deterrent for them to commit the crime since they could potentially lose economically rather than gain which is a prime motivator for traffickers. The money that is seized should then be used to assist victim recovery, as well as increase funding to combat the crime. This can provide foundational resources that can help provide local organizations, such as the Jonah Project in Spokane, WA, at which I volunteer, and resources they need to provide for survivors of human trafficking. This can include mental health services, food, clothing, feminine products, support groups, etc.

As human trafficking continues to grow, as a nation we need to come together to confront this violation of human rights as well as the forces, such as the media, which contribute to its growth. The theories I have outlined will allow us to think further in the crime of trafficking as well as be able to pinpoint trafficking more effectively. Along with this, it is important for America going forward to use the policy framework that focuses on human rights violations, prosecuting accordingly, and preventing the crime from occurring originally. As members of a society that contributes to human trafficking, whether it is directly through consuming the exploitation of humans or indirectly through purchasing from exploited labor ran businesses, we can be the ones to take the first step in backing productive policies that will fight to end modern-day slavery.

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# Image

# Ready, Aim, Shoot!

Kyle Burkey

Melting beneath the blazing New Mexican/Coloradan/Utahn/Arizonan sun, a raised altar deep within the American Southwest draws weary travelers from their automobiles and air conditioning. Enticing pilgrims with its fabled offering of standing in four states at one time, Four Corners Monument is a major basilica for road-trip vacationers. My family was no different. After an auto-tour through southwest Colorado for the 2013 Fourth of July holiday, we unloaded into the sweltering parking lot. In the high-summer desert, we found ourselves lined behind dozens of other picture-hungry tourists, impatiently waiting for the chance to claim mastery over state lines. All around were merchants living on the Navajo reservation, offering fried food, jewelry, postcards, and other keepsakes to the pilgrims. After what felt like hours of waiting, we had our chance to document our devoted travel. Together we had made the journey, our family had joyously stood in all four states at once—or so the photo shows. No photograph is as innocent as it seems, though.

Rooting this thought in Susan Sontag's *In Plato's Cave*, no photograph can be innocent since "to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed" (Sontag 4). That week-long road trip was a brief escape from months of chemotherapy for my mother fighting against stage four appendix cancer. That week meant perhaps her final vacation with her family as she looked towards a major surgical

procedure. That week appropriated normality in our family, curating a sense of togetherness that had long since disappeared. Such appropriation is nothing new to tourism, especially within destinations and cultures where the tourist feels “compelled to put the camera between themselves and whatever is remarkable that they encounter” (10). Avoiding any discomfort, the lack of security within unknown experiences, Sontag identifies the tourist-photographer as a voyeur—that is, one who mastered the scenario around them and again has control (10). Chasing after control in such a way is closely linked to colonialist ideology, defined by Lois Tyson as “based on the colonizer’s assumption of their own superiority, which they contrasted with the alleged inferiority of native (indigenous) peoples” (Tyson 400). By simply capturing parts of a scene and taking pieces of the world, photographed images propagate the same appropriative ideology present in colonialism.

Global tourism has long relied upon colonial mindsets, inviting wealthy consumers to explore and experience a novel foreign land and culture. In these often short and truncated vacations, the camera is considered, even advertised, as one of the most important items to have. Transfixing and anesthetizing, the images of a place “certainly become more real than ... if one had never seen the photographs” (Sontag 20). Before visiting, tourists first know a place by photos, resulting in a preconceived vision of the place, a reality built entirely in the imagination. Once there, the place has already been made real by previous photos. The act of photographing then confirms its imagined reality, isolating a culture and people in a constructed moment of the tourist. The reality of a place known by the tourist is known by its constructed reality, assumed to remain in the same condition the tourist left it in. Subjugated to the tourist-photographer, the infiltrated place exists only within the image and the preconceived expectations of the tourist (who is formed by their dominating cultural ideologies). Colonization operates within the same parameters, entering lands with a vision to be carried out and enforcing boundaries necessary to enact an imagined reality known through cultural ideology. The colonist and the tourist-photographer both gain an active role, commanding mastery over situations they previously did not have access to.

Returning to the arid scene of Four Corners Monument, the land offers many insights for understanding the connections between photographic appropriation and colonialism. Referencing Edward Said’s work on Orientalism, Lois Tyson provides a framework for postcolo-

nial criticism that “often involves moving the ‘margins’ of the work... to the center of our attention” (Tyson 425). The peripheries of a story and of a place tell a greater story, observing who and what goes unseen and how attention is diverted away from them. Recentering the focal point of Four Corners from state line markers and picture-hungry crowds and placing it on the merchants and adjacent land instead, a new vision emerges. Predominantly staffed by Indigenous people, the merchants and the Native economy depend upon American tourism and the colonial ideologies underpinning it. Considering that the land is entirely part of the Navajo nation yet is advertised foremost as a conjunction of the surrounding states, the attraction itself is produced by American colonialism. While borders can overlap, such prioritization of state boundaries emphasizes the elevation and valuing of that which is American (colonizer) over the subservience of Navajo land and people (colonized).

Four Corners now operates as an attraction almost solely meant for taking photographs, it is important to recognize that “photographs cannot create a moral position, but they can reinforce one—and can help build a nascent one” (Sontag 17). In the stark desert climate, the photographs taken at Four Corners reinforce the exoticism of Native Americans and Navajo land. Appropriating the land as a place of entertainment and its people as a convenience, tourists are free to leave after their brief excursion and to return to familiarity. Satisfied by the exoticism of Native peoples and places, the reality of Four Corners Monument and its Navajo people are erased from memory as the common photo focuses entirely on the personal experience of tourism. The colonial mindset of American tourism asserts the tourist-photographer as the superior and vital person and is unaware of the margins of the experience. This is clear from the photos taken: photos of tourists front and center, placed before the landscape or monument. Reflecting the values of colonialist society, these photos prioritize appearance, success, visibility, and the upholding of behavioral norms, leaving no room for the Indigenous culture and people to exist without the weight of colonial oppression bearing down on them.

Intentionally avoiding compositions of locals and their day-to-day lives, “photography makes us feel that the world is more available than it really is” (Sontag 24). The photo imbues its imaginary world with a sense of being unexplored, fostering a yearning within the tourist to place themselves in that reality. Unable to explain reality,

these photos “are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy” (23). Such invitations are unnecessary. The excluded Navajo people and other colonized populations have stories to tell; they have explanations and histories that no photograph can encapsulate. The photography of tourism does not foster a postcolonial identity, the “constant evolving *hybrid* of native and colonial cultures” (Tyson 404). Such photography only supports the colonial culture, asking for no information or input from the people and land being appropriated. Nothing is truly objective as the presented images are filtered through ideology and form a world of single images. Attempting to preserve fleeting moments, the singular visions of “photography came along to memorialize, to restate symbolically, the imperiled continuity and vanishing extendedness of family life [and life as a whole]” (Sontag 9). For my family, the photos of us at Four Corners memorialized a moment of family life, a fabricated continuity supposedly existing within time. Preserving appropriated moments, the true reality of a situation is threatened—especially for the colonized people and surrounding places that aren’t photographed.

Evicted from their ancestral lands, many Native populations have been forced to leave their homelands for the sake of “preserving natural environments.” Conservation efforts, largely spurred onwards by landscape photos presented without their human inhabitants, are often enacted by colonialist attitudes (Tyson 418). Such wilderness must exist without permanent human presence, certain conservation groups argue, despite the protection and care that Native stewards have given since their ancestors lived. This preservation, necessitated by American consumption and expansion, is done for the dominant, American good, not the Indigenous good. Dominating and restructuring, this exclusion and forced relocation results in “millions of native peoples...[living] in poverty just outside the confines of what is now the park; to take low-paying jobs as waiters, porters or day laborers within the park; or to drift into poverty in the cities” (418). While the Native merchants of Four Corners are marketed as artisans and local craftspeople, it is not difficult to imagine how the colonial pressures behind the tourist impulse have forced such occupations.

When these natural wonders are reserved for the American eye, nature becomes something to be captured—a notion entirely connected to the same capturing of foreign people and cultures. While the rudimentary technology of the past resorted to physical weapons, modern colonialism often relies on “‘loading’ and ‘aiming’



a camera” (Sontag 14) before going shooting. In *taking* a photo and *capturing* a scene, it becomes clear that “there is something predatory in the act of taking a picture” (14). Not limited to landscapes, “To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed” (14). Such photographic aggression is alienating, an unwelcome appropriation of people’s homelands and even themselves. Completely normalized within colonial tourist culture, there is often no hesitation to *take* a photograph of a complete stranger without their consent. Such appropriation has been so normalized that “what has been left behind is a deeply embedded cultural colonization...a psychological ‘inheritance’ of a negative self-image and alienation from [people’s] own indigenous cultures” (Tyson 400). Native populations are treated as bucket-list sights, their own culture interrupted and interpellated by tourists seeking to obtain them as an experience. The act of being is reduced to playing a role within photographic colonialism, a constructed aesthetic to satisfy the tourist-photographer’s imagined expectations.

A perverted art, photographic colonialism attempts to make a group of people into a vision serving the beholder. As an instrument of colonialist behavior, the camera “may presume, intrude, trespass, distort, exploit, and, at the farthest reach of metaphor, assassinate” (Sontag 13). These singular images of deformed reality must be resisted. The objectification of lands and especially people cannot be allowed. These subjugated groups and cultures cannot be simplified to features of colonial and tourist experiences. Practiced by the wealthy and powerful, colonialism and photography have resulted in minorities being included in history only through the vision of affluent ideologies. Such photos have shaped experience and given evidence to existence, resulting in even more powerful cultural colonization. Alienated from their ancestors’ experiences, colonized anxieties imposed by wealthy colonizers center upon the belief that minorities and foreign cultures only have evidence of existence through the eyes of the powerful.

As the effects of colonialism continue to surface across the globe, it is fair to ask these questions to a modern population uprooted and unsure of their ancestors—while acknowledging the particular harm done to Native peoples, their cultures, and the lands in which they dwelled. Can humans exist without having evidence to prove it

in the form of photographs? As record amounts of photos are taken daily, why are people so anxious to validate their existence? More accurately, why are people so anxious to have others validate their existence by seeing their photo? Do humans know they exist without others? Alienated from our past and inheriting negative self-image from cultural colonialism, these “photographs give people an imaginary possession of a past that is unreal, they also help people to take possession of space in which they are insecure” (Sontag 9). Experience is supposedly made real by images, giving ‘tangible’ proof to life and dominant narratives of history.

For my family at Four Corners Monument, our vacation, my mom’s health, and our happiness were brought into reality by photos. These are treasured photos, yet I must acknowledge they were not the truth. Indeed, the experience was not identical to the photograph. As a photographer and someone who loves images, here lies the crux. It is vital that photography is seen only as art, nothing more nor less. It cannot be documentary, for the image is never objective, never representative of existence. Photos are not inherently bad or good, they simply reinforce. It is time to let them just be art, to view all photography knowing it can neither be true nor real. It is also time to decolonize the use of photography—first by emphasizing Native perspectives and experience in photography.

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# Not in My Movie<sup>1</sup>

Patrick Gillaspie

The 1996 slasher film *Scream*, directed by Wes Craven, explores Freudian concepts of the id, ego, and superego through the gender of its characters and the town of Woodsboro. The movie seemingly contradicts Sigmund Freud's assertion that women "hav[e] little sense of justice" due to the "predominance of envy in their mental life" and dismantles the idea that men are symbols of the superego (Freud 361-362). The women of *Scream* constantly demonstrate an ability to "put envy aside" in order to secure a "demand for justice" for the safety of their town; therefore, they express their status as forces of the superego and refute Freud's claim that women cannot be symbols of justice (362). To preface, the superego is "society's rules ... and social values ... that we internalize and experience as our sense of right and wrong" (Tyson 24). Furthermore, it is also in "direct opposition to the id," which holds our "repressed aggressive desires" (25). *Scream* demonstrates what happens when an individual's id spirals out of control and jeopardizes the safety of the community. By acting as representatives of the superego, the women of Woodsboro combat the brutality and desires of the id—personified by dual slashers Stu Macher and Billy Loomis—through the means of communication and defense

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1     Quote by Sidney Prescott after defeating Ghostface (*Scream* 1:42:35).

in order to restore Woodsboro to a state of justice and maintain the Freudian concept of the ego.

Casey Becker's character counters Freud's concept of the male superego by demonstrating her ability, as a woman, to interact with the id and defend herself and the community from its influence by using methods of diplomacy and defense. In the opening scene of *Scream*, Becker becomes the movie's first example of a personified superego. This is proven when Becker converses with the slasher and asks questions over the phone such as "Who is this?" and "What do you want?" (*Scream* 1:26, 4:13). These questions demonstrate the superego's attempt of maintaining the social order of Woodsboro by interacting with the id in a direct and honest way. By engaging in acceptable codes of conduct, the superego begins to search for the balance of desire and learned social standards to reestablish the ego. In contrast to the humanity and rationality of Becker, the id is introduced in *Scream* through a male voice on the telephone, who sounds taunting and animalistic. The id is symbolic of the unconscious desires of Woodsboro that soon overpower the town's forces of the superego. As the superego communicates with the id over the phone, it becomes clear that the attempts of negotiation will be fruitless. Therefore, Becker's warnings—"I am two seconds away from calling the police" and "you've had your fun ... you better just leave or else"—demonstrate how the superego responds to the desires of the id, after gauging what seems right and what seems wrong, finally resorting to the inclusion of forces of justice to secure the ego (4:06, 4:46-4:50). Becker's subsequent murder propels the peaceful town of Woodsboro into a state of crisis and showcases that the id of Woodsboro has overpowered the town's sense of ego.

Throughout the film, the phone emerges as the chief phallic symbol for the id while the home resembles the womb and the victim's desire to retreat to safety. The opening scene unravels into chaos as the slasher, known as Ghostface, finally reveals his intentions to kill Becker. This moment symbolizes that the superego is now under the id's control. The id's desire is finally revealed to the superego when the Ghostface wants to "see what [Becker's] insides look like" (4:15). The desire to penetrate and maim the superego, represented again by female imagery of a womb, demonstrates an aim to destroy the balance of Woodsboro's social order. Furthermore, Freud's assertion that women cannot be symbols of justice is further disputed when analyzing the largely male-dominated police force of Woodsboro. The

police do not save Becker and continuously fail to protect the citizens of Woodsboro by failing to capture the Ghostfaces,<sup>2</sup> releasing one of the slashers from custody, pursuing a red herring, and arriving late to crime scenes. Therefore, the lack of lawful protection suggests that the order of the ego has been momentarily destroyed by the id, which is a lawless and immoral force. Additionally, the id's ability to manipulate the phone, which should be a means of contacting safety through the form of the police, illustrates a lack of power of the male superego.

The storyline then shifts focus to two of Woodsboro's high school students, Sidney Prescott and Tatum Riley. These young women are central heroines who play a large role as the community's forces of the superego. Before discussing Prescott, it is important to talk about Tatum Riley's role as an agent of the superego and her struggle to maintain the forces of the id. Riley, whose character appears to be liberal-minded, is an inevitable threat to the id, a power that seeks "gratification of prohibited desires .... without an eye to consequences," due to her belief in the social and moral equality of all people (Tyson 25). As the sister of Deputy Sheriff Dewey, Riley is also linked to the symbol of the law. Moments before her death, Riley is sent by Stu Macher, her boyfriend and one of the two slashers, to the garage to grab more beers. As Tyson mentions, the "superego determines which desires the id will contain" (25). Ironically, Riley, a superego force, indulges in Stu's id-driven desire for amusement, to get drunk, and unknowingly satisfies his own desire for power and death. In *Scream*, the id's phallus continues to wreak devastation on womb-like safe spaces brought forth by the superego. It is in fact Stu's request for Riley to gather beer bottles, which represent the phallus, that results in the death of another superego force.

Freud asserts that women cannot be identified as agents of the superego due to their penis envy. As Tyson notes, penis envy is "power envy" when a woman's safety is vulnerable due to the "physical violation of the opposite sex" (25). By associating power with the penis, a Freudian psychoanalyst might declare that the lack of a penis makes Woodsboro women susceptible to a system of loss and defeat. However, this is not the case. The sequence which plays out in the garage is truly a mutual demonstration of power envy between Riley and the Ghostface. The transaction of power centers itself on phallic and womb-like symbolism. The power shifts occur once Riley moves away

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2 Two killers dressed as the same persona, "Ghostface."

from the locked door, which leads back into the house, to the partially opened garage door while holding an armful of beers. The threat of the id only resurfaces when Riley can no longer retreat further into the womb, this being the outside world beyond the garage door. Therefore, the Ghostface gains power as he is in control of the garage door switch. At this point in the film, the id's desires for power and amusement are out of control. The fighting sequence demonstrates gender reversals and the deadly power of the female womb. Tatum Riley weaponizes the penis, in this case, an armful of beer bottles, and hurtles them at the Ghostface's body and mask (*Scream* 1:06:50). In return, Ghostface retaliates by weaponizing the womb, ultimately crushing Tatum Riley's skull because she gets stuck in the pet door of the garage door. Although this highlights another victory for the id, the utilization of womb-like symbols foreshadows the eventual demise of the slashers by the forces of the superego at the end of the film.

After the deaths of Casey Becker and Tatum Riley, the two remaining women of *Scream*, Sidney Prescott and Gale Weathers, transform into symbols of the superego through the method of justifiable homicide. After receiving an ambiguous phone call, the majority of the party crowd leave to see their murdered principal hanging from a "goal post on the football field," leaving Randy, Stu, Billy, Dewey, Sidney, Sidney's father, and Gale near the area of the house (*Scream* 1:16:22). Stu's house is the setting of the final scene in the film and the last remaining opportunity for the superego to overcome the id and restore the ego of Woodsboro. As one of the two remaining superegos, Gale Weathers, the local "antichrist of television journalism," demonstrates that she is far more capable of resisting the external threats of the id due to her influence as an outsider and her maturity (1:17:43). After discovering Sidney's father's car abandoned off the road, Gale and Dewey return to Stu's home where Dewey gives his flashlight to Gale and heads into the house by himself. The flashlight, a phallic symbol, signifies an exchange of power between Dewey and Gale, resulting in Dewey's reliance on Gale Weathers to call the police from the news van. However, like most womb-like symbols in this film, the van is not safe from the id. While Dewey is stumbling around the house waving his gun in the air in panic, Gale can be seen running with a sense of determination toward the van ordering Kenny, her recently murdered cameraman, to give her "the cellular" (1:25:28). There is a stark contrast between the demeanors of

Deputy Sheriff Dewey and news broadcaster, Gale Weathers. This directly contradicts Freud's assertion that "women hav[e] less capacity for sublimating their instincts than man" (362). Yet, Weathers often uses her fight-or-flight response to her advantage. When surprised by Randy, Weathers takes the cellular phone in her van, and like Casey Becker, hits Randy in the face with it several times (1:26:03). Eventually, Weathers makes a wrong turn and crashes off the road into a lining of trees just on the periphery of a forest, signifying that, in order to restore justice, the superego force could no longer return to the womb. Instead, Weathers will have to confront the id head on and outsmart Billy and Stu.

In the final moments of the film, Weathers returns to Stu's house and takes the gun without the slashers' knowledge. The men have just stabbed each other, to carry out their plan of appearing innocent, but are beginning to lose control as evident when Billy does not follow his own advice, given to Stu, to "stay to the side and don't go too deep" (*Scream* 1:35:08). Instead, Billy stabs Stu four times, further increasing the distrust between the duo, resulting in a gradual loss of power. The gun demonstrates a transfer of power from the dual slashers, Billy and Stu, to Weathers as she answers Billy's question regarding the location of the gun: "Right here, asshole" (1:36:47). Although Weathers is briefly knocked unconscious, she, along with Sidney, eventually "foil[s] the plan and save the day" when Weathers shoots Billy as he is about to stab Sidney (1:37:07-1:37:10). Weathers uses justifiable homicide as a last resort to deliver the town to safety by destroying the forces of the id and demonstrates that the superego is a portrayal of society's "social values" and "sense of right and wrong" (Tyson 24). The sunrise occurs only after the threat of the id has been exterminated, symbolic of the ego's resurface as a result of the superego gaining control (*Scream* 1:43:05). Gale Weathers is the last person to have dialogue, further enforcing the superego's ability to "determine which desires the id will contain," thus demonstrating that the id has been restrained in Woodsboro (Tyson 24).

Finally, this analysis concludes with Sidney Prescott, the girl-next-door turned superego powerhouse. Prescott combines all the abilities of the superego demonstrated by her counterparts: Becker's utilization of language as a form of communication, Riley's ability to weaponize the phallus to her advantage, and Weathers' ability to transfer power envy from the id back to the superego. In the final sequence, Prescott steals the Ghostface voice changer and taunts



Billy and Stu over the phone, saying “We’re gonna play a little game,” informing them that she has called the police, thus ushering in the eventual arrival of a restored ego (*Scream* 1:38:25). Prescott demonstrates the ability to weaponize the womb and the phallus by utilizing the structure of the Macher house to her advantage, pushing a television on top of Stu’s head, inserting her finger into Billy’s stab wound, and using a gun to shoot Billy in the head. Each example demonstrates the weaponization of Freudian imagery. Therefore, through language and physical confrontation, Prescott exhibits a proficient ability to transfer the power of the id back to the superego.<sup>3</sup>

*Scream* illustrates what occurs when the ego collapses as a result of an uncontrolled id within a community. The movie showcases that not all men are capable of being forces of the superego, most notably exemplified by Dewey and the slashers. Each of the women manages to fight back in some capacity against the dual Ghostfaces with varying levels of success. By attempting to do so, and often succeeding, the women demonstrate that they can “put envy aside” and “sublimate their instincts” in order to restore the ego (Freud 362). Furthermore, the women modify their supposed envy by weaponizing the phallus and gaining control of the power envy. With a drive for justice, the women of Woodsboro demonstrate that they can be symbols of justice and ultimately, can restore Woodsboro back to a “peaceful community” (*Scream* 1:43:24).

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3 In a longer analysis of *Scream*, Sidney Prescott’s role as a superego will be explored more heavily in depth, examining her relationship with her deceased mother and her relationship with her boyfriend, Billy. However, for the purposes of this essay, it was crucial to analyze Becker, Riley and Weathers as superegos in order to refute Freud’s claim. Furthermore, the main bodies of work prove that Prescott can combine all of their strengths and ultimately result as Woodsboro’s main source of justice.

## Appendix A

General plot, free clips and quotes are available on IMDb for those not familiar with *Scream*.

## Appendix B

Character list (in order of appearance within the essay):

**Stu Macher** – Secondary antagonist (Ghostface No. 2), obnoxious boyfriend of Tatum Riley, played by Matthew Lillard.

**Billy Loomis** – Primary antagonist (Ghostface No. 1), master-mind, motivated by his mother's abandonment, boyfriend of Sidney Prescott, played by Skeet Ulrich.

**Casey Becker** – Supporting character, first superego force killed by Ghostface in the movie, represents innocence and the town's spiral into chaos, played by Drew Barrymore.

**Tatum Riley** – Secondary protagonist, second superego force killed by Ghostface, best friend of Sidney, protective and caring, represents the superego's ability to weaponize phallic symbols and introduces the concept of power envy, played by Rose McGowan.

**Deputy Dewey** – Supporting character, brother of Tatum Riley, represents Woodsboro's police incompetence, well-intentioned, played by David Arquette.

**Gale Weathers** – Supporting character, driven and at times selfish, a truth-seeker, represents the ability to transfer power from the id to the superego in order to secure justice, played by Courteney Cox.

**Principal (Himbry)** – Featured character, represents the failure of authoritative male figures against the id, played by Henry Winkler.

**Randy** – Featured character, a horror movie buff who gets himself in trouble, played by Jamie Kennedy.

**Sidney Prescott** – (mentioned earlier) Primary protagonist, courageous and crafty, breaks slasher stereotypes, demonstrates the superego's ability to combine the techniques of Becker, Riley and Weathers in order to restore Woodsboro to justice, played by Neve Campbell.

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# We Must Not Look At Goblin Men—A Freudian Analysis of *Doctor Who*’s “Midnight”

Meagan Graves

In the *Doctor Who* episode “Midnight” directed by Alice Troughton, we follow the eponymous Doctor’s seemingly ordinary day trip across an abandoned planet with a group of tourists. This trip takes a rapid descent into claustrophobic fear as their train breaks down and one of the passengers becomes possessed by a mysterious being attempting to steal their voices. Due to the bone-chilling otherness and magical capacities of the episode’s antagonist, “Midnight,” with its claustrophobic setting and spiraling character studies, is best interpreted through a Freudian<sup>1</sup> psychoanalytic reading focusing on the Uncanny<sup>2</sup> and the subsequent negative psychological effects it has on its terrorized passengers.

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1 Sigmund Freud was one of the foremost psychoanalysts of his time, and many of his original concepts and speculations have evolved into a much broader understanding of human psychology and how it interacts with literary analysis. Freud’s psychoanalytic technique deals predominantly with how the unconscious mind, experiences throughout different stages of childhood development, and sexuality affect people’s psyches.

2 The Uncanny is a Freudian concept described as the “class of frightening things that leads us back to what is known and familiar” (Freud 829). It refers to the discrepancy between the dual meanings of *Heimlich* as simultaneously intimate, comfortable, and homelike, and secretive, private, and hidden. Freud contrasts our

The Uncanny is predominantly seen in Sky Silvestry,<sup>3</sup> whose possession by a strange being portrays her as a doppelgänger. At the beginning of the episode, Mrs. Silvestry is presented to the audience as an aloof businesswoman who descends quickly into hysteria when the train breaks down and a mysterious entity haunts the passengers. This early character establishment juxtaposes the jarring changes she undergoes when possessed by Sky, who has a disheveled appearance and complete lack of emotion, staring at the passengers with wide, uncomprehending eyes. This distinguishes the dichotomy between *Heimlich* (“not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly” (Freud 826)) and *Unheimlich* (what “ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light” (828)) in Sky—what was Mrs. Silvestry is gone, leaving Sky in her place. Another aspect of Sky’s Uncanniness is her progressing imitation of the passengers’ speech, which expounds upon the deep sense of *Unheimlich* she conveys.<sup>4</sup> As Freud asserts that there is an “uncanny effect attaching to magical practices” (835)

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understanding of *Heimlich* with his conception of the *Unheimlich*, which refers to the sudden revelation of these familiar, secretive experiences as being somehow warped and changed. Freud specifically focuses on the Uncanny concerning repressed childhood memories and unconscious thoughts reappearing later in life but additionally highlights the Uncanny’s role in fiction, wherein a narrative and characters grounded in reality are forced to contend with unexpected fantastical details.

3 For ease of understanding, I will distinguish these characters as Mrs. Silvestry (the possessed woman), and Sky (the Uncanny, alien being who takes over Mrs. Silvestry).

4 There are also Lacanian influences over Sky’s Uncanniness. Her “magical power” that preys upon the passengers is dependent on her use of language and relationship to Lacanian stages of development. Sky is unable to utilize language before possessing Mrs. Silvestry, which is symbolic of the Real. After the possession, she claims full Uncanniness and begins her Imaginary Stage, where she can only “mirrors” the Doctor and the other passengers to learn from them, communicate, and understand herself as a being. She moves to the Symbolic when she begins to speak before the Doctor, and takes his use of language as her own. Adding to Sky’s Uncanniness, she does not appear to be overly affected by the traditional sense of lack and longing – she feels empowered by her acquisition of language and loss of self rather than enfeebled and hurt by it.

due to its breaking with worldly expectations, Sky can perfectly repeat the passengers' words. This ability grows more powerful as the episode progresses, as her simple mimicry morphs to synchronizing her speech with the voices of other passengers, to siphoning the speech out of the Doctor to steal his life and personality from him. The more energy she siphons from the Doctor, the more emotive, intelligent, and verbal she becomes—her approximation of humanity has grown even closer to the real thing, cementing her Uncanniness. The Uncanny also emerges through the physical environments of the train and the planet the passengers find themselves in, as both harken back to Freudian infantile anxiety. The train is representative of female imagery, as it is almost completely isolated from the outside world with no assured means of communication. The train is also dark and self-sufficient in physical needs like oxygen, which connects to infantile anxiety over returning to the womb. For its part, the planet "Midnight" is similarly silent, dark, barren, and lifeless: a truth that the passengers believe in wholeheartedly until faced with the truth in the Uncanniness of Sky.

The appearance of Sky's Uncanniness results in increased anxiety for the passengers, which in turn leads to the destruction of the passengers' superegos.<sup>5</sup> The passengers' anxiety, "the disturbing, often overwhelming, feeling that something is wrong or that we are in danger" (Tyson 16), is expounded by Sky's *Unheimlich* persona and the shattering of their beliefs of Midnight's safety, as they "are not quite sure of their new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within [them] ready to seize upon any confirmation ... [that gives] a feeling of the uncanny" (Freud 838). This reversal of repressed fears about Midnight's unoccupied state and Sky's presence leads their egos to depend more fully on their destructive, violent ids rather than their lawful superegos. This is primarily seen when the Hostess suggests that they

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5 The superego, ego, and id are important theoretical terms regarding Freud's methods of psychoanalysis. The superego represents "the social rules and taboos that we internalize and experience as our sense of right and wrong" (Tyson 24). The id is the direct opposite of the superego, and is "the psychological reservoir of our repressed aggressive desires, and to our libido, or sexual energy ... devoted to sex, for amusement, for food—without an eye to consequences" (Tyson 25). The ego is "the conscious self that experiences the external world through the senses and is the source of our self-image and feeling of stability" and "tries to play referee between the id and superego" (Tyson 25).

throw Sky out of the airlock to end the immediate danger she and her mimicry present, which is swiftly agreed upon by the others. Their fearful reactions to the Uncanny force the passengers to abandon the superego's "social values and taboos that we internalize ... as our sense of right and wrong" (Tyson 24) to focus primarily on survival. Each character loses touch with their superego at varying speeds, but the discussion of and attempted murder reveals their ids' full control of their egos via their newfound aggressive desires. Conversely, the Doctor retains control of his superego in the face of anxiety and the Uncanny, due to his stalwart beliefs preserving life and the frequency with which he faces the unknown. His rationality and attempts to reason with and analyze Sky are interpreted as threatening behavior by the other passengers, who immediately turn on him because of his perceived Uncanniness.<sup>6</sup>

These desperate accusations are an example of the defenses of displacement and projection employed by the passengers to manage their anxiety due to the antagonist's Uncanniness and the effective destruction of the passengers' superegos. Anyone who offers a different opinion or threatens their survival strategies is branded an enemy. This is seen in the immediate willingness of the passengers to murder Sky and their later swift animosity towards and attempted murder of the Doctor, as Sky drains him of his language and power. Because his retained superego, intelligence, and his identity as an alien mark him as different and against the panicked group mentality, the passengers

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6 "Midnight" also contributes to Uncanniness by breaking with the traditional episodic narrative patterns and genres in *Doctor Who*. We have seen the Doctor encounter many dangerous incidents before, but always see him succeed due to his cleverness, environmental advantages, and aid from his companions. In "Midnight," the Doctor is severed from these typical advantages. His intelligence is useless against an enemy he cannot predict nor stop, and his overconfidence in his abilities contributes to the other passenger's general suspicion and eventual betrayal. He is removed from environmental advantages because of the confined nature of the bus, leaving him unable to even flee if the situation demands it. Finally, his companion, Donna, who typically accompanies him and pulls him away from danger should the occasion arise for it, has opted to leave him in favor of their hotel spa. The writers of the episode have pretended to operate in the reality of *Doctor Who* while breaking all set norms, which makes the Uncanniness portrayed even more disturbing. The comfort of genre and episodic patterns has shattered, leaving audiences to feel even more anxiety and fear over whether the Doctor will survive.

begin to displace their fears of the Uncanny and project them onto him. Each passenger highlights different concerns about him based upon projection about their core issue of low self-esteem. The Kanes and Professor, all of whom are typically in dominant positions via their level of education and parental status, are distrustful of the Doctor's heightened intelligence, expertise, and immediate command of their dealings with Sky. Jethro, a teenaged boy incapable of treating the Uncanny seriously, is concerned about the Doctor's "glee" about encountering a new life form, which shows a projection of his feelings of inadequacy surrounding his propensity for humor. Dee Dee and the Hostess, both of whom are intimately acquainted with the inner workings of the ship and the planet, target his sudden participation on the tour and his meddling in the inner workings of the ship while he was trying to fix the damage caused by Sky. The reasons that the passengers chose to displace their fears about the Uncanny onto the Doctor are largely rooted in their insecurities. Their projection and displacement are reflective of an unstable sense of self, which makes the passengers particularly "vulnerable to the influence of other people... [and] changing the way we look or behave" (Tyson 16). This results in their aggressive id-based group mentality exacerbated by Sky's influence once she gains the full capacity for language.

This dangerous group mentality is supported by selective memory and perception, as they are only willing to see and interpret the information given to them that directly supports their manic quest to destroy the Uncanny. After confronting their primitive, repressed beliefs about Midnight, the passengers seek out information that confirms their violent ids and projection and displacement. While Dee Dee, Jethro, and eventually the Hostess rely on direct observations and facts, the Kanes rely upon each other and weaponized projection to force others to see their points of view about killing Sky, and then the Doctor. Any piece of information offered by the Doctor is subconsciously reinterpreted into grounds for avoidance—"staying away from people... that make us anxious by stirring up the unconscious" (Tyson 15) based on their fears of the Uncanny and desire for safety. Additionally, Dee Dee represses her conflicting superego when it becomes clear she could be targeted as Uncanny, Jethro regresses into a younger state as his parents become more actively involved in his protection, and Professor Hobbes maintains denial about Sky's Uncanniness (instead opting for Freudian excuses of fragile mental health) until forced to help murder the Doctor. The Hostess is marked



by her singular commitment to safety for the passengers considering her professional obligations, showing an inkling of the superego's influence behind her id-driven plans for murder. It is this subtle morality-driven influence that allows her to regain her senses and act against Sky.

The episode concludes with a culmination of the Freudian concepts previously explored. The Hostess regains her superego when realizing that Sky truly is the Uncanny entity due to her exact usage of the Doctor's unique use of language and sacrifices herself to save the rest of the passengers. With Sky gone and the Doctor freed, Mrs. Kane once again tries to use selective memory to absolve herself of guilt by claiming that she knew Sky was truly Uncanny but is met with silent disapproval and condemnation from the Doctor. The absence of the Uncanny returns the passengers' superegos and dispels their dangerous defenses, thereby forcing the passengers to grapple with their murderous ids and unstable sense of self. With the Doctor absolved of suspicion and Sky dead, the passengers abandon their group mentality and recognize that the true recipients of their blame-giving projection must be themselves.

At the halfway mark of "Midnight," the passengers gather in the back of the train to cower from the Uncanny, and Dee Dee references the poem "Goblin Market" by Christina Rossetti. The poem tells the story of a young woman who accepts enchanted fruit from the strange, malicious goblin men, and is nearly robbed of her youth and dies before her sister saves her. As Sky speaks synchronously with Dee Dee, they quote "We must not look at goblin men,/ We must not buy their fruits:/ Who knows upon what soil they fed/ Their hungry thirsty roots?" While this haunting warning makes a small appearance in the episode, it cements the Freudian themes of the Uncanny in "Midnight." As the passengers succumb to the anxiety wrought by Sky with violent ids and overly responsive defenses, their initial attempts to repair their fractured relationships and sense of safety are left in shambles. "Midnight" leaves us with the haunting reminder that despite our best intentions to rebuild damage done and maintain peace and unity with others, even we, as humans, can be vessels of the Uncanny if we are pushed beyond recognition to monstrosity.

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# “Me and My Shadow”: Femininity in the Shadow of the Wrestler

Alicea Alford

The professional wrestling industry relies heavily on reverence for masculinity. Men receive most of the screen time, character development, and championship opportunities. Two men in All Elite Wrestling (AEW) who epitomize this idealization of masculinity and reap its benefits are Maxwell Jacob Friedman, better known as MJF, and Chris Jericho. Their segment,<sup>1</sup> “Le Dinner Debonair,” in all aspects, is a competition between MJF and Jericho in asserting their masculine dominance. However, during the typically femininized competition method of song and dance, MJF and Jericho resist the traditional admiration for masculinity in the professional wrestling industry. As progressive as that may appear, the femininity praised in MJF and Jericho does not transfer to the women in the segment who are a mere afterthought to support the male gaze. In “Le Dinner Debonair,” MJF and Jericho blur the line between resisting and upholding traditional patriarchal standards by embracing femininity in each other while contributing to the subjugation of women and the ultimate domi-

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1     Segments occur between matches to further a feud between wrestlers. They may look like a “promo” where one wrestler verbally promotes himself to the camera, another wrestler, or the audience; an interview; a backstage attack against an unsuspecting wrestler; or any sort of competition presented in a skit-like format.

nance of masculinity. With these issues at the forefront of “Le Dinner Debonair,” Lois Tyson’s discussion of traditional patriarchal gender roles and Laura Mulvey’s commentary on showgirls and the male gaze are vital to understanding the implications that this segment has on professional wrestling.

To establish their masculinity, MJF and Jericho begin mistreating their waitress, Velma, while she is taking their order. Their poor treatment of Velma highlights the suppression of femininity in favor of masculinity in a patriarchal society. Having a woman serve these two men who are trying to outperform each other in their expressions of masculinity makes her a target for mistreatment. While introducing herself, Velma points out to MJF that he must be enjoying his wine, and he quickly shuts her down, saying, “You’re stretching it, I’ve had better, Thelma” (\*Tony Award Nominee\* Chris Jericho and MJF “Me and My Shadow” 0:21). Jericho attempts to correct MJF on Velma’s name, and after agreeing her name is Velma, MJF continues to call her Thelma and order his steak in a condescending tone (“Tony Award” 0:32). Velma’s function as a server promotes the traditional gender roles of women listed by Lois Tyson in her chapter on feminist criticism from *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, as “weak, nurturing, and submissive” (Tyson 81). Velma’s job as a server promotes femininity’s association with nurturing as she provides these men dinner. While caring for these men’s basic needs, she ensures their survival and promotes femininity’s position in supporting masculinity.

Further perpetuating the traditionally passive role of femininity in a patriarchal society, Velma stays silent and never corrects MJF on the pronunciation of her name or responds to his patronizing tone and “sweetheart” comments (“Tony Award” 0:30). She allows MJF to belittle her, presenting femininity within the segment in a weak and submissive light. Velma’s representation of femininity appears inadequate in comparison to MJF, who appears as the model of masculinity according to the traditional male gender roles outlined by Tyson as “rational, strong, protective, and decisive” (Tyson 80). MJF knows exactly what he wants for dinner and orders with such specifics; it is clear he is protective over his food. By making it clear he has had better wine than what Velma served him, MJF demonstrates his strength through blunt honesty. When MJF tells Jericho he understands he misnamed Velma, he comes across as more rational despite continuing to refer to her as Thelma because he admitted he was incorrectly

pronouncing her name. Everything MJF has done thus far shows him as the patriarchy's definition of ideal masculinity, reaffirming the patriarchy's function.

When Jericho orders his meal, he dualistically perpetuates traditional masculine gender roles while demonstrating the toxicity of patriarchal gender roles on men. He appears to respect Velma's name, pronouncing it correctly, but still uses a condescending tone, letting Velma know she is below him. Jericho presents his rationality by correctly addressing Velma when ordering and comes across as strong, protective, and decisive through the rest of his order that he uses to create competition with MJF by ordering a medium-well steak instead of MJF's well-done steak. Jericho's one-upping of MJF's order forces MJF to change his steak order to medium. This cycle continues until both men order uncooked steaks because they refuse to let the other man win ("Tony Award" 0:29-1:40). MJF and Jericho's need to outdo one another through their dinner orders is a way of securing their masculinity. Allowing the other man to have a better dinner order would be a failure to their manhood. Tyson details this through an example of economic success as

Men are not permitted to fail at anything they try because failure in any domain implies failure in one's manhood...If men can't achieve the unrealistic economic goals set for them in contemporary America, then they must increase the signs of their manhood in some other area: they must be the most sexually active (or make others believe they are) or be able to hold the most liquor or display the most anger. (Tyson 83)

In the case of "Le Dinner Debonair," MJF and Jericho order a rarer steak than the other as an expression of their need to increase their manhood after recent failures in wrestling matches. MJF's desire to join The Inner Circle, Chris Jericho's wrestling faction,<sup>2</sup> is coming off the back of him failing to win the AEW World Championship and failing to get another opportunity to challenge for the title. Meanwhile, Jericho had just lost two big matches in a row to a wrestler,

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2 A faction in professional wrestling refers to a group of wrestlers that come together, forming a larger team to have each other's backs.

Orange Cassidy, who is considered a layup<sup>3</sup> in AEW. After failures, both men enter “Le Dinner Debonair,” creating a mentality where they must regain their masculinity. MJF and Jericho chose to demonstrate their masculinity over their dinner order, showing how the patriarchy not only pressures women but also pressures men in harmful ways. MJF and Jericho ordered inedible steaks to outdo the other man and prove their masculinity while putting down the woman serving them. “Le Dinner Debonair” presents the fine line between supporting the patriarchy and exemplifying its detrimental effects.

As masculine as MJF and Jericho want to appear, they further resist expectations placed on them by the patriarchy by complimenting and sympathizing with one another. MJF lets down some of his defenses by admitting to Jericho that they both need each other. According to MJF, his joining The Inner Circle is a “gigantic opportunity for both of us. We’re the two biggest stars in all of professional wrestling. Us working together, man! The Demo God and the Ratings Ruler” (“Tony Award” 2:09). This vulnerability from MJF combats his previous need to present himself as the most masculine man in the room. Not only that, but he outwardly admires Jericho for his accomplishment of being The Demo God.<sup>4</sup> According to the patriarchal gender roles discussed by Tyson, MJF is breaking the mold of traditional masculinity. Tyson states, “It is considered unmanly for men to show fear or pain or to express their sympathy for other men. Expressing sympathy (or any loving feeling) for other men is especially taboo” (Tyson 83). MJF feels insecure without a faction in AEW, so he praises Jericho for his Demo God status to ease his way into The Inner Circle. MJF’s fear of being factionless in AEW and his loving words MJF towards Jericho is considered unmanly by the patriarchal definition of masculinity. Still, MJF willingly opposes the ideal masculinity he wanted to establish previously to get closer to his end goal.

MJF is not alone in his rejection of masculine characteristics in this conversation. Jericho displays the typically unmasculine trait of

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3 A layup is someone who should be easily defeated in a match.

4 Chris Jericho declared himself the “Demo-God” because he brings the highest ratings in AEW for the 18-49 age demographic. MJF emulated Jericho as he attempted to nickname himself the Ratings Ruler because he was on average, per minute one of the biggest ratings draws in all of professional wrestling regardless of the wrestling promotion.

sympathy while mentoring MJF by saying, “All right, let me just say this—cut through the bull. The ratings ruler sucks. It’s terrible. It’s got about as much chance of getting over as Orange Cassidy” (“Tony Award” 2:25). Jericho expresses his honest feelings and sympathizes with MJF when advising him against the Ratings Ruler nickname and bonding over their mutual hatred for Orange Cassidy. This sympathy Jericho gives MJF is unusual for traditional standards of masculinity. The patriarchy does not want men to appear vulnerable, empathetic, or overly emotional. Those characteristics are considered feminine and therefore condemned. These men previously bonded over their hypermasculinity through rejecting femininity, but at this point, “Le Dinner Debonair” becomes MJF and Jericho bonding over their rejection of patriarchal ideals.

MJF and Jericho embrace femininity and form a connection through their performance of “Me and My Shadow” by Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. However, this performance is not as simple as entirely rejecting masculinity; singing “Me and My Shadow” became a battle to prove they can compete at each other’s level of masculinity within the feminine modality of song and dance. Femininity has become the new space to demonstrate their masculine power. In doing so, MJF and Jericho praise the femininity they themselves have while simultaneously subjecting the women around them to the male gaze to enhance their masculinity. A curtain opens behind MJF and Jericho, revealing dancing showgirls in the background clad in gold sequined bodysuits, black tights, and heels (“Tony Award” 3:29). These background dancers’ appearance intends to pull the audience’s attention away from MJF and Jericho and should draw the eye of the men performing. In Laura Mulvey’s essay entitled “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” she discusses the use of the showgirl, stating, “the show-girl allows the two looks to be unified technically without any apparent break in diegesis. A woman performs within the narrative; the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude” (Mulvey 2089). Without breaking the reality of the story told by “Le Dinner Debonair,” these women support MJF and Jericho’s performance. While the audience’s male gaze may pay attention to the women, MJF and Jericho could not be less focused on them. The men are far more enchanted with each other and themselves to utilize the women as anything more than a prop to promote their masculinity. The audience watching MJF and Jericho dance with highly sexualized

women makes them appear more masculine while in the traditionally feminine space of song and dance. The functionality of the showgirls to the audience supports the patriarchal objectification of women through the male gaze to promote MJF and Jericho's traditional masculinity.

MJF and Jericho resist elements of the patriarchy and male gaze through their disinterest in the showgirls surrounding them in favor of focusing on each other. At one point, MJF and Jericho each have a showgirl as a dance partner. Rather than looking at their partners, they give all their attention to the camera and the other man. Further demonstrating the women's irrelevance, MJF and Jericho throw their partners to the ground to look directly at each other ("Tony Award" 4:03-4:21). While the showgirls' presence supports patriarchal perspectives of women being submissive objects of desire, the disinterest in the women by MJF and Jericho presents another instance of rejecting ideal masculinity. This disinterest feeds into the "buddy movie" concept introduced by Mulvey, where she mentions how Molly Haskell believes "the active homosexual eroticism of the central male figures can carry the story without distraction" (Mulvey 2089). The relationship between MJF and Jericho is the main concern of this segment. Their homosexual eroticism allows the space for the women in the segment to be unimportant and not detract from the story being told. MJF and Jericho being the main focal point of each other is a rejection of traditional masculine ideals. Their attention remaining on the other man expresses loving interest in a way not considered traditionally manly, given that the setting of their interest is a song and dance instead of the accepted masculine bonding that is "mute or stoic (or boisterous and boyish) [and] free of ... homosexual overtones" (Tyson 83). However, as much as they reject traditional patriarchal masculinity through their relationship, MJF and Jericho continue to validate patriarchal views of femininity through their treatment of the showgirls.

"Le Dinner Debonair" is not clearly a feminist or patriarchal segment in professional wrestling. It is a macho competition that leads to two men only having eyes for each other rather than the women around them. In the typically hyper-masculine professional wrestling industry, it is impressive to see a segment managing to embrace the possibility of men rejecting stereotypical masculinity while still presenting men in competition over their manhood. Despite "Le Dinner Debonair" landing MJF a spot on *The New York Times*' list



of best performances in 2020, this segment garnered a large amount of criticism online for focusing on narrative rather than wrestling. Those critics preferring purely athletic competition over character and story missed the point of the segment. MJF and Jericho gave the audience a segment that was wrestling at its core: in its essence, wrestling is competing and striving to outperform another person. “Le Dinner Debonair” presents the audience with entertainment in a more feminine landscape than fist fighting, making the historically predominantly male audience uncomfortable. When confronted with hypermasculine wrestlers embracing a feminine environment over a wrestling ring as the setting for masculine competition, these men in the audience revolted because this segment was not “real” wrestling. In professional wrestling, femininity is largely looked down upon; women continue to have fewer opportunities, championships, and screen time than their male counterparts. The criticism around “Le Dinner Debonair” shows that the denouncement of femininity in professional wrestling also impacts men, displaying the deep-rooted patriarchal ideals of the industry. While “Le Dinner Debonair” does not directly promote greater acceptance of femininity within the professional wrestling industry and audience, it does combat the patriarchy as it opens the door for wrestlers to be less confined to traditional masculine gender roles.

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*A Song-Story:*

# **Rebuilding by Disruption for Rebuilding**

**Dr. Jaishikha Nautiyal  
(Dr. j)**



Little girl doing all she can  
 You had your eye on only a few things  
 And maybe it wouldn't go anywhere  
 Hard to be real with your dreams  
 No silent movie and no puppet strings  
 Can't hold you up, you've got to hold yourself, no  
 Don't mean it's show time for everything,  
 You never listen though,  
 There she goes, there she goes  
 You burn like you never burn out,  
 You try so hard, you can still fall down,  
 You keep it all in but you don't let it out,  
 You try so hard, don't you know you've burned out  
 Let it go in, over my lungs,  
 Fire's always there, no one needs to get hurt  
 You let yourself burn, you burn yourself out  
 There she goes, she is falling down.  
 —“Burn,” Jorja Smith

**Rebuild an affirmation of breathing in a faithful *entredeux***

*(sonic mood(s): burn, jorja smith; beautiful day, u2; the age of worry, yebba...olfactive mood: ébène fumé, tom ford)*

I'll start this song-story with a *you* who is just another you like you in our little microcosm called GU. You just cannot forget that piercing, fall afternoon. You broke down in thorny ambivalence about your time and value and use here at the familiarly quiet altar of aluminum Jesus. But what could the almighty Jesus do? And you, this frail human with that mortal coil, what could you do? Or as one of your profound loves and poetic kin, Hélène Cixous, would remind you with much more gravitas:

When an event arrive which evicts us from ourselves, we do not know how to 'live.' But we must. Thus we are launched into a space-time whose coordinates are all different from those we have always been accustomed to. In addition, these violent situations are always new. Always. At no moment can a previous bereavement serve as a model...At times we are thrown into strangeness. This being abroad at home is what I call an *entredeux* (*Rootprints* 9-10).

**We have all been here in this strange in-between, well maybe, not exactly with the same words, but with a similar sentiment:**

So there you were with your useless tears pouring down your sweet face like hot lava. You burnt like palo santo, fragrant, meditative, burnt out, in-between. Disrupted. Disoriented. Feeling evicted from your home abroad and suspended abroad at home with your disenchantment with everything. Composed exterior though. Strange. The bitter sting of rejection and estrangement. So cold. So anaerobic. So unresponsive. So restrictive. So surreal. It wouldn't look you in the eye. Like nothing you did mattered in all this while, as if your cloak of invisibility was your only proof of existence all this while. Your

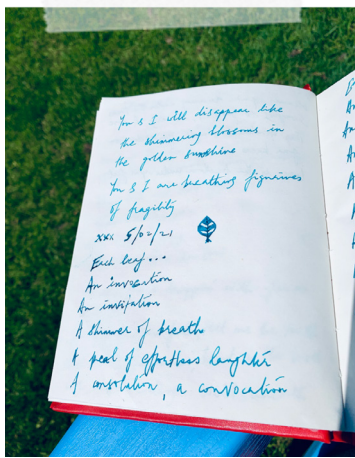
useless tears and smashed self-worth are demanding answers from every sign and façade around you while “defending your innocence” (Yebba). After all these years, where is home for you? Where and with whom do you belong? Doomed to be an eternal visitor, a perpetual foreigner? Then a disgruntled and autonomous breath. The irony of a deep and faithful breath in the midst (or is it mist?—*love this bit from Portlandia for those who are familiar*) of nerve-jangling titillations is that no answers come to save you when you need them. All you find is an incalculable silence that screams: “no escape hatches, please.” But then...fast forward to several months later...you will resonate with the quotidian wisdom of all the universe's music (*anhad naad—the unstruck sound*). In this case, here is U2 one more time since March 2021: “*The heart is a bloom, shoots up through the stony ground*”... not right in that moment of your limited you despairing of itself but someday unexpectedly out of the blue. During another fleeting moment in-between suffering and joy, you find you are writing this note from your heart whose words bloom and shoot up from the stony ground. Ultimately, you are so grateful for this generous student responsiveness and institutional invitation to write and rebuild hope in the very space it last seemed to abandon you...*for all those who love, who lose, who hurt, who have felt abandoned, who are simply sentient*



by knowing that they care for some other you in the teensiest of gestures. This is where faith still grows.

**Rebuild the potential of belonging through queer use and attention by dint of simplicity** (sonic mood(s): it's amazing, jem; come smoke my herb, meshell ndegeocello; mariposa radiant children...olfactive moods: neroli portofino, tom ford & greenley, parfums de marly)

Whenever a plan derails from how you thought it was supposed to unfold, it's surprising how much the bitter aftermath wants to destroy all that you tried to build over time. **The reverie goes something like this for most of us I guess:** It was all an illusion. As American as the dream of that sweet and illusive slice of an All American apple pie and all its stars and stripes. It's cool—you don't eat sugar anyway. But, you don't even get to be an All American Reject (*bahaha—courtesy OG*). You never really belonged. You thought you were smart (enough). Each space and its refrains that inspired you every day now mock you. You thought you'd made it. Stop!



At this point right here...this is THE exact, inextricable, self-replicating trap of rejection. In relationships. In all expendable forms of attachments. However, you can still celebrate the extra-relational drama of your contingency to riff on another one of your profound loves, Sara Ahmed. It will be painful, but rebuild by resetting the form of stability you seek in living limb by limbo.

Instead of making the proverbial lemonade out of neoliberal lemons—because, of course, everything must have a proper use in an economy, even somber affects of failure—turn your academic precarity to *queer use*. Recall the words of Ahmed once again:

Queer use: [in queer use], we linger; we do not get to the point. Queer use can be about lingering over things, attending to their qualities. To use things properly often means to paper over them...Queer



use: a refusal to empty oneself of a history, a refusal to forget one's language and family, a refusal to give up land or an attachment, a refusal to exercise the terms that lead to one's own erasure...A refusal can be an inheritance. (Ahmed *What's the Use?* 206-207)

Rebuild your aortic rhythms by refusing the destructive impulse



to compartmentalize their capacity to feel. Don't erase your pain, and prepare for limitless joy with more than human materiality... simple like the flowers like Meshell Ndegeocello would remind you in her soulful voice. Make your heart like the ocean, mind like the clear blue sky through a Nietzschean affirmation of preparation for jubilation up to heavens-grief unto death (38). Dionysiac. Refuse and pervert the profitable entrapment of assembly-line time that fetishizes every ounce of your tanning supplies, your difference and

wants none of it. Because refusal is an inheritance of queer use. Linger, if only as a willful, sore object, for an extra second of laughter, of joy-pain, for the last tear in a heart-rending melody, with a trembling leaf in the crisp spring breeze, in the biting intimacies of that lonesome yet determined walk from home to school everyday (Ahmed *Willful Subjects* 114). Linger for the carefree pockets of freedom in fleeting hellos and goodbyes, those recognitions and silly mis-recognitions, the crisis apples and pick threes (*courtesy—the sweet, curly-haired boy of GU's missed connections and the persecution complex you both share*). Linger for jamming to the impromptu tune of soft kitty by the sunny lake. Linger with type-B affection for the chaos of deflated tires (of OG proportions—cars, bicycles, basically anything that will deflate except for type-A energy). Linger in the alleys of play to tease and be teased—like sneaking up on your former students and force-treating them to sweets and savories at shame foods (aka *Starbucks*). Linger in abiding fidelity to simply belong with someone, some space, some ecology for a useless moment. Leafy, leafy.

Most importantly, linger for love in all the forms it greets you through all your senses everyday. Rebuild the potential of belonging by orienting to queer use of and attention to time/space in your environs. Rebuild your belonging with academic precarity itself through what Ahmed and José Muñoz call a *queer archive* of lingering traces, ephemeral sillages, specks, glimmers, shimmers of joy-pain that slip through your fingers everyday, despite all the ways in which your labor might seem invisible and useless (*What's the Use?* 218; 6-10). Replace all your bitterness with the joy of lingering and attending to the material evocativeness of everyday spaces and the bodies animating their energies. This is a gathering of fainter trails as Ahmed writes. Always already disappearing. Light tread, give us today our daily bread. Fleeting, flickering, ephemeral but so intensely real. Refuse to give up your attachment to each inherited ontology of everyday experiences with your students, all the hard-working Hemmingson folks, and all the sentience of everyday life at GU that is painfully real. Refuse to empty yourself of a history of an honest in-between. It is proof-less which is why “profoundly queer” as Muñoz echoes in your ear on the ethic of celebrating ephemera (6). *We are the ephemera of this planet's queer archive. Poof!* This is where potential still expands.

**Rebuild the fractured promise of connection with an affirmation of the ephemeral** (sonic mood: *daisy, switchfoot, dhoop ke makaan* (acoustic), *shekhar ravjiani, hitesh sonik*...olfactive mood: *bigarade jasmin, fragonard*)

*Moments of joy hung so high up on their branches. Yet we managed to jump and snatch their fragrance. Yes, we were the stuff of glass, and we fell down. So we re-glued ourselves and went away to remake ourselves...Somewhere far across a river, life is gesturing something...there are new stars in the sky.*

—dhoop ke makaan (acoustic), shekhar ravjiani and hitesh sonik





Rebuild your fractured spine of connection by reminding yourself that redeeming yourself from the concept and experience of failure is a zig-zag path of repair. That fainter trail is jagged. It is prickly. It teems with despair and tears that fall silently and shine invisibly in the middle of the bulldog alley. Shades are cool for another reason that *Ray-Ban* doesn't foreground as part of its oh, so seductive brand value. On a more serious note though...in the scheme of our pulsional earth, your life force is peppered with aerated moments of breathing and effervescence. And then flat. Yet these prickly reminders are incitements to un-forget the profound joy-pain of being sentient. Don't paper over the joy you felt in the classroom when everyone laughed in the presence of much despair; that was real. The care you felt for others, the concern they felt for you and exuded in moments rare and quotidian were real. Don't paper over the gift of all things ephemeral: queer attention and queer use. Rebuild heart-felt connections not with façades but what is real, fleeting, impermanent, and full of breath. This is where promise still begins.

*There is rain in your thoughts. Everything will be awash with it. A bright, new path will open up and the fleeting specks of yesterday will flow on. You'll find another colorful caravan, let's go...this house of sun and this journey is like a slope...this turn in the road is so generous.*

—dhoop ke makaan (acoustic), shekhar ravjiani and hitesh sonik

You won't be compartmentalized into your greatest hits and most marketable self. Rebuild your smashed self-worth with irony and humor and more importantly becoming a subject of living the dying and not a victim of it—*just like the freshest burst of neroli blossoms distilled as a most uplifting essence from the heart notes of the most bitter oranges*—in the incalculable reverberations of Cixousian depths. You refuse to be a martyr. Rebuild the everyday practice of living the dying not with a linear narrative of cruel, pan-optic optimism but with jagged hope. And while Emily Dickinson got almost everything right about hope, you'd amend her poetic proposition on just one sensation by dint of experience. Hope is really light as a breezy, summer feather, but it is the willful stuff of canker-sores.

**What it takes to commit to hope on a moment-to-moment basis, I dare you to ask the cherry blossoms.** This is where faith still grows. *Rebuild by holding out for hope with an open hand and with the refrain in U2's Beautiful day:*

*See the world in green and blue, See China right in front of you,  
See the canyons broken by cloud, See the tuna fleets clearing the sea  
out, See the Bedouin fires at night, See the oil fields at first light, And  
see the bird with a leaf in her mouth, After the flood all the colors came  
out...It was a beautiful day, Don't let it get away, Beautiful day, Touch  
me, Take me to that other place, Reach me, I know I'm not a hopeless  
case, What you don't have, you don't need it now, What you don't  
know, you can feel it somehow, What you don't have, you don't need it  
now, Don't need it now...It was a beautiful day—"Beautiful Day," U2*

**Rebuild purpose with your more-than-human kin** (sonic mood(s): my foolish heart/bhagavad, krishna das; while we wait, dominique fils-aimé...olfactive mood infused with memories of nanaji: sandalwood incense cones)

While feeling trapped and isolated in the belly of the whale with your own belly aching, you won't rebuild your morale by pulling yourself up by the bootstraps. You don't have the capacity for that kind of hubris. You'll find yourself descending into the night sea of rhizomes

to connect with your more-than-human kin in extra-atmospheric humility instead and amplify your life force with their choral grace. Both alive and dead (courtesy—his long-gone heart that found a way into your eyes)...

As Krishna Das sings somberly—"my foolish heart, when will you learn?...you are the eyes of the world, and there's nowhere else to turn, nowhere else to turn, Govinda, Bhagavinda...my foolish heart." Ipso facto as the universe is suffused with mirror neurons which enable



tiny toddlers and their day-cared fingers to mirror the shape of your shaky hands and jubilant heart just for a second just as you pass them by on a frigid walk, you'll get over yourself. Insofar as your heart explodes with awe and reverence in response to the rhythms of care and concern you witness every spring in that **tiny, little aluminum squirrel** ferrying its chotu, kinder-joys in its daring mouth from one tree nest to another, you will be alright. Insofar as the gentle and hilarious movement of ducks waddling across the *Riverfront park* makes you laugh to yourself to the point of composing a ridiculous joke on the go that no one will find funny, you'll be fine. *Aside j/yoke*: "I am having so much fun. Waddle you have?" Insofar as the verdant wonder of spring in Spokane recharges the circuits of breathing every year with its cherry blossoms and the green fecal matter of Canadian geese and their babies, and the sweet shennannigans of their marMotley crew spread across so willfully along all of the *Centennial Trail*, you will encounter the wild responsiveness of sentience again and again. With Morrisonian hope and not cruel optimism. With Nietzschean joy and not alignment demanding happiness and its happy objects (Ahmed *The Promise of Happiness* 27-45). In willful opposition to the sneaky politics of good feelings, may the more-than-human kin of feminist killjoys and affect aliens prosper and proliferate in queer use, attention, and refusal.

And don't forget that it's not just animate matter as a sticky counterforce that moves you against your will by dint of affective arrest. Inanimate matter moves you too. You aren't the arrogant master-subject that ascribes meaning to materiality—de-hierarchize the Cartesian hangover. Everyday spaces mark and unmark you in powerful ways that you don't understand. You can't just dine and dash. Their ambient sensations pervade your everyday undulations. In a matter of wanton rage when you feel disillusioned about your usefulness to a space, remember to rebuild your limited human footprint with the realization that spaces



can claim you as their own too, an extra-relational counterforce you simply cannot contain.

So it's not that table 11 at the *Bulldog restaurant* is YOUR TABLE magically manifested as a result of your narcissism. You are table 11's magnetized animate matter—comforted every time by its still comportment and the writerly space of sunny refuge it offers you when you feel dispossessed, “unseated by [other] tables of happiness” as Ahmed would say and evicted by other spatial forms of prickly heat and alienation (*The Promise of Happiness* 20). All of the sentient interactions in that space and countless others remind you that hurting and healing with your more-than-human kin is not really about you but about the unrelenting responsiveness of your more-than-human materiality. It is alive. It is vivacious. It despairs. It decays. It dissolves. So that you learn not to despair of yourself but suffer well in choral amplifications of connection. stickiness. relationality: “The other constitutes a source. You are not your own source in this case. And as a result, you receive your life, which you do not receive from yourself” (Cixous *Rootprints* 37). To suffer well from the source of joy-pain is Cixous's vivification of the fact that “suffering and joy have the same root. Knowing how to suffer is knowing how to have joy in suffering. Knowing how to enjoy is knowing how to have such intense joy that it almost becomes suffering” (*Rootprints* 12). In the drama of your contingency, remember to rebuild your attention to the privilege of suffering well. *That privilege is your bitter, broken, whole gamut of joyful breathing especially when breath is everything compromised during this never-ending pandemic all the while precarious on most democratic/climactic fronts.* Because held down by an inhumane chokehold, he couldn't breathe. Because surviving in a hidden attic with her hidden hopes and beaming future of becoming a writer, impoverished, dying of typhus at an extermination camp, she couldn't breathe. Because in the face of human greed, corruption, and terrorizing disruptions, our broken earth cannot breathe.

*Senses flow, circulate, messages as divinely complicated as the strange microphonetic signals, conveyed to the ears from the blood, tumults, calls, inaudible answers vibrate, mysterious connections are established. It is not impossible in the unrestrained conversing that among disjunct, remote, disproportionate ensembles, at moments,*

*harmonies of incalculable resonance occur. (Cixous "To Live the Orange" 92).*

This tentacular, lingering evocation flows out to you from the sensate source of the other. It enriches your compositional range... this love touches everyone who crosses your path including these words with which you try to rebuild what has felt broken and hopeless and disrupted in you. You came here to build and rebuild with love. You write in the hope for inaudible answers of reciprocity in microphonetic vibrations. You compose in and for the joy of suffering well through incalculable moments of connection within remote, disproportionate ensembles with all the sentient spaces and ecologies around you in our microcosm called GU. And you know what? After the flood, all the colors *do* come out. You accept what you don't have and that you don't need it now. And what you don't know you can feel it somehow. All in all, you know that it was a beautiful day. And maybe, just maybe, this is where purpose still unfolds...and...and...and...

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# Authors

## *Alicea Alford*

Alicea is set to graduate in Spring 2022 as a double major in English Literature and Criminology. She absolutely loves professional wrestling, so don't ask her if it's fake unless you're ready for a passionate explanation that will last admittedly too long!

## *Antonio Campos*

Antonio Roman Campos is a Gonzaga University Honors College junior currently pursuing a major in civil engineering along with minors in English, writing, Catholic studies, and philosophy. In addition to being a hard-working student researcher currently investigating transportation engineering technologies, he is also an officer in Gonzaga University's chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers, he is the leader of the concrete canoe design team, and he is a member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the Jesuit International Honor Society. While he hopes to find a career in STEM, in his free time Mr. Campos enjoys reading and writing, with an emphasis on the styles and topics of late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature. A highly decorated Eagle Scout from Colorado, Mr. Campos also considers himself to be an outdoorsman, and he enjoys hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding. He has won awards for speechwriting, visual, and performing arts. He enjoys volunteering at local charities, and he believes that all people have the capacity to become great men and women. He is a committed environmentalist, an active member of the Catholic community, and he hopes to own a ranch one day.

## *Ben Gonzales*

Ben is a junior majoring in Criminology and English Literature with minors in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Religious Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies. They aspire to become a professor of American literature and language, colonially known as "English." They live in Evergreen, CO, with their rescue dog, Ollie, and Hobbes, their tabby cat, and three people. Their hobbies include drinking coffee, going on walks, thrifting, reading, and skiing. They are proudly non-binary, neurodivergent, and formerly incarcerated.



### ***Claire Booth***

Claire Booth is a senior political science student with minors in philosophy and international relations. She is currently the Speaker of Senate for GSBA and hopes to work for FEMA after she graduates.

### ***Cora Kim***

I am a senior history, philosophy, and French major from Corvallis, Oregon. In my free time, I enjoy hiking, skiing, riding my bike, and spending time with my friends. On campus, I am involved in volunteering with CCE, Bulldog Band, and the honors program. I hope to teach English overseas and become a lawyer one day.

### ***Daniel O'Dea Bradley***

Bradley spent his teens, twenties, and early thirties working on small farms in Eastern Washington and fishing boats in Southeast Alaska, work that cultivated a life-long love of the natural world and our creative integration into it. He eventually earned a PhD from the National University of Ireland in Galway and is now a Professor of Philosophy at Gonzaga University in Spokane, where he lives with his wife, fellow philosopher Róisín Lally, and their children, Laura, Maria, and Ciara. While continuing to value the intellectual asceticism and iconoclastic rigor that marked 20th Century thought, Bradley's research project attempts to nurture a renewed appreciation of the beauty and sacredness of being, thereby allowing for dialogue with liturgical and sacramental religion, environmental philosophy, and Native American thought.

### ***Delaney Sousa***

Delaney Sousa is a sophomore English and Philosophy double major with a Religious Studies Minor. She was born and raised in San Diego, California, but the Pacific Northwest has captured her heart. She enjoys reading poetry, hiking, creating art, and cooking for friends and family. One of her top bucket list items is to visit as many National Parks as she can during her lifetime. She hopes to become an English professor and publish a novel someday.

### ***Emma Randich***

My name is Emma Randich and I am a senior in Criminology with a minor in Political Science here at Gonzaga University. I am passionate about fighting to end human trafficking as well as studying

criminal justice. After I graduate from Gonzaga in the Spring, I plan to continue my education by attending law school so that I can pursue my future goal of becoming a prosecutor for the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit of the United States Department of Justice. By doing so, I hope to contribute a positive impact on our Department of Justice and end human trafficking.

I wrote this essay for my Criminological Theories class however; this essay encapsulated my passions and calls human trafficking to the attention of students and faculty at Gonzaga University. It provides insights into what human trafficking is, how and why it occurs, as well as provide productive policy implications to help end human trafficking. I have worked with the Jonah Project which is a human trafficking organization here in Spokane, Washington. They provide the resources needed to those who are survivors of human trafficking including food, clothing, mental health resources, etc. This essay explains the urgency and the need to help fund human trafficking non-profit organizations such as the Jonah Project.

### ***Fisher Ng***

Fisher Ng is a mechanical engineering and applied mathematics major. He enjoys learning about how to build community.

### ***Isaac Katcher***

Isaac Katcher is a Junior from San Jose, CA, double majoring in Sociology and Criminology with a minor in Spanish Language. An avid lover of the outdoors, he spends many hours on Mulligan playing spikeball, throwing the pigskin, or taking ankles for the GU Mens Rugby Club. When winter weather persists, he can be found geeking over literature and philosophical wonderings in the Humanities Building Reading Room-if not on the ski slopes.

### ***Jaishikha Nautiyal***

Jaishikha is a rhetorical scholar whose research takes place at the intersections of new materialist rhetorics featuring the body in everyday life, communication ethics, pragmatist aesthetics, and affect theory. Her pedagogy emphasizes experientially immersive approaches to learning with a deep attention to the rhythms of everyday life (particularly those entailing musical currents). Currently, she is speculating on the relations between India's sensory state apparatuses and their state-sponsored aesthetic violence within emergent Hindu

nationalist rhetorics. Furthermore, she is also interested in unpacking the surveillance techniques of a sexist and gendered terroir around alcohol consumption in India (Quarantine Edition). In her free time, Jaishikha enjoys quiet vibe-checks with all manner of more-than-human entanglements, meditative ambles, coffee shops (pre-pandemic), fragrances, ambient music amidst hefty doses of *entspannung*, playful writing, amateur photography, and belly-aching laughs with loved ones, whenever and however possible.

### ***Kyle Burkey***

Kyle Burkey is a senior English and Psychology major with a minor in Physics. He spent the 2020-2021 school year volunteering in homeless outreach in Denver rather than attend GU. One of his favorite opportunities of the past year was to create portraits of his friends on the street, hoping to bring more art into their lives and to remind them of their humanity. Beyond photography, he also enjoys backpacking, climbing, playing guitar, and prayer. He plans to attend grad school for speech-language pathology and to learn how to carve wooden cutlery.

### ***Meagan Graves***

Meagan Graves is a junior at Gonzaga University and is majoring in English with a writing concentration and minoring in Communication Studies. She was born and raised in Portland Oregon, and loves returning home to visit her cat, Phoebe. In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, watching television and movies, and spending time with friends. She first developed a love of writing at the age of six in short stories, and began to pursue it again in high school in the form of one-act plays. She enjoys critically analyzing media, so her essay combines her love of Doctor Who with her interest in psychoanalysis.

### ***Muriel H.***

I am a second-year student here at Gonzaga. My love for poetry is deep and the purest way of expressing myself. I identify as queer and much of my work shows the time, dedication, and pain it took to accept myself, as well as reconciling my identity with the repressive home environment I've experienced in the past and present. I also find comfort in pouring my struggles with mental health into my poetry, finding writing to be my closest friend in hard times.

### ***Nathan Remcho***

I am a current senior at GU studying political science, international relations, and Spanish with a minor in Hogan entrepreneurial leadership. I was born and raised in Corvallis, Oregon with two siblings who have been an inspiration of mine throughout my life. My academic interests are in the field of international relations. More specifically, I am interested in sustainable development, international organizations, and humanitarian aid. After completing my time at Gonzaga I hope to pursue a postgraduate degree that will lead to a career in humanitarian service and (hopefully) higher education as well.

### ***Patrick Gillaspie***

I'm a junior at Gonzaga University studying English with a concentration in literature and minoring in French. I like to explore the world of horror using a theoretical approach in order to dismantle stereotypes and discover new interpretations of the genre.

### ***Yu-Kyung Kang***

Yu-Kyung Kang is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at Gonzaga University. She researches and publishes on transnational literacy, multilingual writing, and writing center practice and theory and teaches topics such as writing, language diversity, global Englishes. Yu-Kyung was born and raised in South Korea and came to the U.S. for graduate school. She, now, with her family, enjoys her life in Spokane.

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– P.J.