The Altamont Beacon

2022-2023

The Altamont Beacon

ACADEMIC WORKS BY GRADE LEVEL

ABOUT THE BEACON

EDITORS

ALESHA DAWSON
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ARTHUR ANDERS '23

THE WAY TO RIGHT WRONGS IS TO TURN THE LIGHT OF TRUTH UPON THEM.

- IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT

DEDICATION

The Altamont Beacon is an homage to Ida B. Wells-Barnett. An advocate for women's suffrage and civil rights, and an investigative reporter who made white mob violence public, Wells-Barnett was determined to tell the truth about America. For doing so, she was labeled a 'slanderous and dirty-minded mulatress' by *The New York Times*,[1] lived under constant threat, and faced continuous efforts to deny her a chance at a livelihood. But still, she told the truth. As she wrote in her pamphlet, *Southern Horrors* (1891): 'It is with no pleasure that I have dipped my hands in the corruption here exposed. Somebody must show that the Afro-American race is more sinned against than sinning, and it seems to have fallen upon me to do so'. In 2020, Wells-Barnett was awarded a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for her work.

To put all of this differently, Wells-Barnett exposed an American crisis. The word *crisis* is derived from the Greek *krinein* 'to decide'. A crisis therefore is a provocation to action. To *remain* in crisis, then, is a decision to *not* decide – to, in effect, treat crises as though they just happen to us. In provoking crisis moments through her reporting and scholarship, Wells-Barnett motivated action by making readers *decide* to take responsibility. Today, there are crises everywhere. Sharing in Wells-Barnett's refusal to stay in crisis – *and to provoke some* – we have founded, *The Altamont Beacon*, a student journal with the goal of documenting the feelings and beliefs of the time in a way that highlights the kind of independent thinking and innovative ideas nurtured at Altamont within the framework of an academic journal.

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[1] 'British Anti-Lynchers'. *The New York Times*. August 2, 1894

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Altamont Beacon has taken many forms in its brief three-year run, moving from physical print to a digital medium and from a fixed theme to a broad one. Despite its many iterations, in my eyes it primarily functions to encourage a certain kind of thought that goes beyond the very insular and individualistic concept of academic achievement. It documents both the feelings and attitudes of Altamont's students and a form of thought that orients itself towards understanding and challenging the conditions of society, be they material or something else entirely. The Beacon welcomes work from 8th-12th grade students from a wide array of perspectives and subject areas that speak to social and political phenomena. It promotes a very different kind of work than the kind typically assigned within the classroom, by providing a semi-formal space in which students can publish work that celebrates student work based on content and ideas, rather than strict form. As I leave Altamont it is my hope that the Beacon will continue to evolve and change while maintaining its core focus.

Thus, it is my pleasure to introduce the 2023 issue of the Altamont Beacon.

Sincerely,

Arthur Anders

COVER ART:
CLASS OF 2023 MURAL
ARTISTS: INGRID SMYER AND THE CLASS OF 2023

LOCATION:
THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL
OUTER WALL
COMPLETED: SPRING 2023

A note from the artist:

Is there something specific about this medium, a mural, that lets you express what you wanted to express? Why do you think it is important to have this message painted specifically on the walls of a school?

When I realized I had the chance to represent my class with my art and have it displayed for so many to see, it was sort of a dream come true. Simply being given the opportunity to create an art piece of such scale gave me a huge spark of creative inspiration. This immediately fueled my ideas for how I would go about defining a whole community on one canvas.

Murals have a unique ability to captivate and engage viewers in an open, public environment. Murals are like big, emboldened letters pasted onto a wall, reading "THIS IS OUR MESSAGE!" but in a more enticing way with less words. What is a better way to wrap up senior year than with a star-spangled wall saying "Class of 2023 wuz here"?

Having this message painted specifically on the exterior wall of a school is important for several reasons. Firstly, schools are places of learning and growth,

where students and the educators of our youth spend a significant amount of their time. By placing the mural within the school environment, it becomes a constant reminder of the message it carries. Not only does Altamont get to keep the oh-so-sweet reminder of 2023's graduating class, but the school now bears the message of just some of the challenges we've faced during our years in high school.

- Ingrid Smyer '23

Arthur Anders

Against Western Time:
The Black Angel of History and Visions of a Cosmically Black Future

Black art and thought are subjected to a hegemonic white order, whose domain stretches across time itself. Afrofuturism is an attempt to resist linear western time. Through their art Black artists are able visit cosmic technological futures, spaces where racialized subjects wrestle and reappropriate technology and space. Afrofuturism thus stands in opposition to a "time presentism" (Rasheedah Phillips,436) and fear of the future. It rejects the pessimistic reading of the *Angel of History*, with its notions of linear time, doom, and progress. Afrofuturism circumvents the predicament of the *Angel of History* by resisting the very temporal understanding that reinforces linear white time. However, contained within legendary Afrofuturist Sun Ra's music, poetry, and other works lies a kind of pessimism and a clear connection to Walter Benjamin's interpretation of the Angel of History. We can critically analyze Afrofuturism by setting it against Benjamin's *on the Concept on History* and its conceptions of temporality, space, technology, and time. The Angel of History as conceptual metaphor for linear pessimistic temporality allows for the exploration of the diffrences in time perception between Walter Banjamin and Afrofuturism.

Afrofuturism is a collection of thought and art united by a common aesthetic of technology. Afrofuturism posits a black future, spun with contemporary black experience. It critically reorders time, rejecting linear notions that emphasize individual sites of trauma, reinterpreting the future. For many Afrofuturists the past does not exist as a definite beginning, instead blackness exists regardless of the racialization that linear time would dub the start of blackness.

The Afrofuturist temporal understanding is at odds with the western spatiotemporally, which "conceives of time as flow and inevitability." (Rasheedah Phillips, 433) Western culture creates institutions, religious and political, to reinforce its images of the future. The western controlled future ensures predictability via linearity. This structure of time orders past, present, and future into neat, fixed divisions, rejecting alternate spatiotemporal understandings. Central to this western model of time is the idea of a fixed endpoint of time, a chaotic apocalypse. That doom is ingrained into western imagination. Whether through the Christian rapture, science: the Chemistry concept of entropy, the unidirectional future is organized into an increasingly mechanical temporality. Another central aspect of western notions of time is conquest. As science and technology oriented themselves towards the future, so too did the drive towards conquest. "Stephen Kern notes how the 'annexation of the space of others' and the 'outward movement of people and goods' amounted to 'spatial expressions of the active appropriation of the future'." (Phillips, 434) Linear time and control over potential futures acts to confine oppressed people, to prevent them from creating political futures. "For those deprived of access to the future, they become stuck planning for the present while the society around them speeds forward in illusory, linear progress." (Phillips,437) This creates a mistrust of the future and futurity. A mistrust furthered by Walter Benjamin's spatiotemporal understanding that falls in line with a western spatiotemporal understanding, in spite of Benjamin's leftism.

"A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is

blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress." (Walter Benjamin)

Benjamin warns of both technology and progress, but in doing so reinforces the notion of linear time. The idea that we a hurtling towards a chaotic end, locked into an endless wind of progress. It inevitably reproduces the constraints of controlling potential futures, in turn creating mistrust of the future, and robbing the oppressed of the abillity to imagine potential futures. For Benjamin, Futurity in any capacity is dangerous and threatening, the future is a sight of blindness that we face with our backs turned. It is the unknown continuation of a single chaotic catastrophe. This stands in opposition to Afrofuturism and black speculative imagination which liberates future worlds and resist the current temporal order, by restructuring past, present, and future as perpetual. Unlike Benjamin, Afrofuturists peer into the future, without back turned on any temporal period.

Another important site within Afrofuturism is space, half of the time space dichotomy. A site that Benjamin is unwilling to explore. His cultural materialism is within itself a heightened focus on the conditions of the present rather than imagining those of the future, a key concept to Afrofuturism, which provides an alternative to the white domination of space and time, reclaiming space as a meditative cosmic body rather than a site of conquest and exploitation. "The Afrofuturist cosmos is an inter-sidereal space, not firstly a set of objects or subjects but a dark dimension, an atopia – a space out-of-space, a spacing – from which new ways of considering human beings and the Earth could emerge." (Neyrat, 121) Afrofuturism is the next stage in the Copernican revolution, a critical reimagining of space *as the place.* It rewrites the concept of the ship, altering the middle passage as a site of blackness. The ship is no longer a slave ship, it is a space ship, one propelled by a black imagination that rewrites history, disregarding western notions

of linear time. To frame the future, Architect of Afrofuture Sun Ra writes "the future is never / Never comes tomorrow / Never is not" (Neyrat,127) The future does not exist concretely, yet it demands that we invent the future even when we have been robbed of that future. It is shaping the present to transform it into a place of emancipation, by often imagining what seems like escape into the future. This is the inaugural paradox of Afrofuturism. The present only exists as so far as to bear the past and the future.

To resist the western time order, time rebels must arm themselves appropriately, what better weapon than art. This is a weapon that Benjamin is willing to use, though admittedly he picked a rather awful looking piece of art, however in the Afrofuturist movement, a primary weapon is music, one remains especially significant. Janelle Monae, a contemporary Afrofuturist musician, highlights the relationship between art, song, and imagination when she says "We believe songs are spaceships. We believe music is the weapon of the future." (Howard, 1)

Funkadelic and its sister band Parliament created an alternative Afrofuturism to the somber future envisioned by Sun Ra. Weaving together contemporary Black culture, the cosmic visons of Sun Ra, and the immutable power of Funk, they created P-Funk, a radical new form of Afrofuturism. This P-Funk creates a revolutionary solidarity and healing between listeners that jive with the groove of the beat. A perfect demonstration of the song as spaceship is Funkadelic's *The Song is Familiar:*

There is a song that I sing whenever I'm sad, feeling bad
There is a place in my head that I go when I'm feeling low
I can trust in the melody, in this song I can find me
Ever since I lost you, I've been so lost too
In our love there is harmony, and I want to see this love through with you
There is a song you can sing
When the love you had is love gone bad
There is a place you can go
There's a quiet place...all you gotta do is space

There is a song that I sing whenever I'm sad, feeling bad
There is a place in my head that I go, when I'm feeling low
To my song I can relate and I don't got to syncopate
Every word is in time, on time, at all times

In our love there is harmony, and I want to see this love through with you
There is a song you can sing whenever you're sad, feeling bad
There is a quiet place, you can go, when you're feeling low
There is a song you can sing
When the love you had is love gone bad
There is a place you can go
There's a quiet place...all you gotta do is space
There is a song that I sing whenever I'm sad, feeling bad
There is a place in my head that I go, when I'm feeling low

This song itself exists outside of white time and space, a melody deep within the oppressed that can be tapped into bringing healing. It connects the listener to a place beyond the physical world that requires the listener to "do… space." The space exists within the human imagination, yet "Every word is in time, on time, at all times". This directly connects with the Afrofuturist conception of past and present, while Afrofuturism is turned towards the future it exists in the present, defined by the connection between past and present. It is in the cosmic funk that oppressed people can find solace, meditation, and focus on alternative futures.

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Chromophobia: *Kill Lies All*
art vandalism across the contemporary art world

February 28, 1974, Tony Shafrazi spray-paints in red letters the words 'Kill Lies All' on *Guernica*. (Fig. 2) 2003, *Guernica* is covered behind a blue curtain as Colin Powell prepares his UN address. 1986, Gerard Jan van Bladeren slashes *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III*. 1987, Daniel Goldreyer murders *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III. (Fig. 1)* Bladeren and Shafrazi would both be classified as vandals, while Goldreyer is classified as an art conservator and the UN as a peacekeeper. All four classifications are wrong. Instead, these actions should be understood through the concept that art itself living. Thus, these individuals ought to be understood not simply as vandals, but as interactors with a fluid alive body, that of the painting.

Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* speaks to the way non-western peoples, specifically "Tribal Cultures" (Anzaldúa 68) interact with art. In *The Path of the Red and Black Ink*, Anzaldúa applies a direct critique of Western-European art culture's objectification of art; its sacrifice of art. Western art aesthetics view art as inert, an object to be secured and viewed by the upper classes. Indigenous tribal treats art as alive and in turn belonging to the commons, it is of the people. This methodology of engaging with art provides a far more egalitarian way of art observation in comparison with Western methods. To embrace fluid art dynamics is to reject Western conceptions of art as static, making art vandalism unfitting to describe these four events.

The term Vandal is derived from the name of a fifth-century East Germanic tribe, a rather marked ethnocultural association. More importantly, art vandalism is perhaps cited as one of the oldest forms of vandalism. *In Art Vandalism, or How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Art Attacks*, writing for Burnaway Magazine Katherine Concepcion traces different historical examples of art vandalism, drawing a common link between the

majority of them: politics. Each action functions as a kind of aesthetic attack against whatever established ideal the work exudes. These attacks can even strengthen or add value to works, such as Cai Yuan and Jian Jun Xi's performance art piece on Tracy Emin's My Bed, an art piece that modeled a disheveled bed. Yuan and Xi bounced on the bed comically interacting with the art. (Fig. 3) Following their performance, the bed had to be restored, the irony being that Yuan and Xi had already created a perfect messy bed. Ironically, in restoring the bed to its previous state, it became neat and ordered. In attempting to conform to Western art aesthetics by holding the bed in stasis, the work loses its foundational concept.

February 28, 1974, Tony Shafrazi, artist, and art dealer for the likes of Basquiat and Warhol, adapts a line from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* and does the unthinkable. Shafrazi challenges the aesthetic rules of MoMa. He described his actions as being an act of protest against the Vietnam War and how *Guernica* had been robbed of its political relevance and potential. Picasso had only ever loaned the painting to MoMA, intending for it to return to Spain following the end of the Franco regime. Guernica was practically stolen. In 1974, amidst the mass protests of the Vietnam War, President Nixon pardoned the only US soldier on trial for the My Lai massacre, in which US soldiers killed and raped 500 Vietnamese men, women, and children. Shafrazi sought to revive the painting, to free it from its confinement within the museum, an imprisonment that had destroyed its anti-war symbolism. He wanted to breathe new life into the painting by drawing attention to it. Shafrazi saw Guernica as a readymade, much like many of Marcel Duchamp's works, upon which he could create new meaning. Following his spray painting, Shafrazi dropped his can and waited for security to detain him. While on trial he was asked if he would do it again, to which he replied no "Because it had been done." The red spray paint was easily removed, but despite this Shafrazi was characterized as a vandal. However, vandalism generally is defined as a malicious act of property

destruction, an unsatisfactory label for Shafrazi's actions. His act was in no way malicious, it was defined in opposition to a malicious and brutal war. Furthermore, defining and viewing art as property, as a static object to be protected and guarded falls directly in line with western conceptions of art. What Shafrazi did was interact and interface with a living fluid body, not the defacing of a still object. He would go on to bring graffiti into the fold of the art world.

2003, Colin Powell lies to the UN against the backdrop of an innocuous blue curtain, an inoffensive, unprovocative, and a rather drab piece of cloth designed to obfuscate critical thinking. Behind that blue curtain hung a print of Guernica, deliberately concealed to create a palatable backdrop that would allow Powell to sell the Iraq War. The full extent of Powell's speech is beyond the scope of this paper; however, its gravity and impact are tremendous. At that moment *Guernica* was given enormous power, it was feared. Accidentally, it was restored and revitalized similarly to Shafrazi's spray painting. *Guernica* was once again relevant, its concealment openly televised and well known. The curtain was of course easily removed leaving no trace, similar to Shafrazi's work. However, this action was not labeled as vandalism, despite functioning in the same way, but containing malice. Fearing its symbolic weight, the UN concealed Guernica, an obvious malicious attempt to undermine its messaging and promote unjustifiable violence. Shafrazi and the UN are not vandals, but interactors with the fluid body that is Guernica. Their actions are complex, ideological, and emotionally charged. Shafrazi and the UN are the producers of artistic ready-mades, each containing a political and emotional statement, amidst a complex context.

1986, Gerard Jan van Bladeren, a psychiatric patient and ardent fan of magical realism, takes a knife to *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III. (Fig. 4) Bladeren*'s actions diverge from Shafrazi's in that they are associated with a reactionary and antisemitic assault on abstract art. Newman's works had long been targeted by antisemites, who felt

that Newman was part of a coordinated assault on Western culture via abstract art. The far-right has long upheld traditionalist notions of art, the Nazi party labeled Abstract art as degenerate and Jewish. Naturally, an ideology built upon preserving the privileged class gravitates towards classical art, with its emphasis on formal schooled qualities, rather than universal emotive ideas. Newman, of Jewish-Polish Origin, was a pioneer of color-field painting and in his series *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue* broke color down into its most essential components, color. Bladeren later stated "When I destroyed [*Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III.*] I was nature, reacting against vicious ideologies…" His actions emanate from a fascistic ideal of nature, one that fraudulently involves the will of nature against "vicious ideologies" that stem from a degenerate other. Bladeren murdered Newman's work, placing a message of reactionary antisemitism upon it.

1987, Daniel Goldreyer restores *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III*. He attempts to undo Bladeren's s assault on the work, attempts to undo what has been lost. Goldreyer utterly fails. Despite being given 400 million dollars, he cannot figure out the techniques behind Newman's work. Goldreyer instead decides to take house paint and a paint roller and break the fundamental rule of art restoration, to never put on something that can't be taken off. He murders the painting again, ensuring that Bladeren's actions can never and will never be undone.

Figure 1 Barnett Newman Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue III, 1967

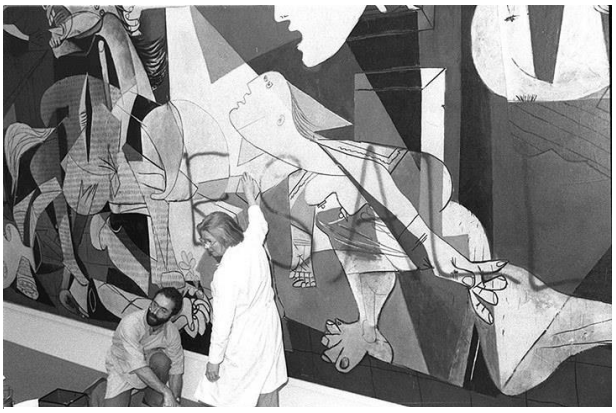

Figure 2. Tony Shafrazi Kill Lies All, 1974

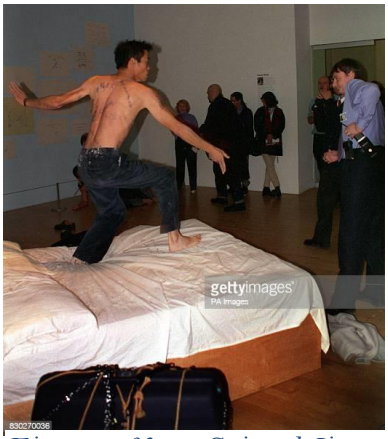

Figure 3. Yuan Cai and Jian Ju Xi bounce on My Bed, 1999

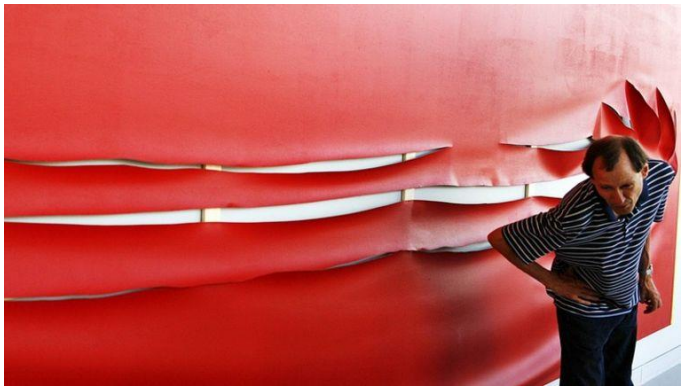

Figure 4. Gerard Jan van Bladeren slashes Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III. 1986

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How I learned to stop worrying and love Godzilla

"History shows again and again how nature points out the folly of man; Go, Go, Godzilla."

Blue Oyster Cult

Part 1: A defense of speculative fiction

Part 2: Monster movies and masculo-militaristic drive

Part 3: A specter haunts Tokyo

Part 4: killing what the bomb cannot

A Defense of Speculative Fiction

Fredrich Jameson writing in *The Political Unconscious* develops a thesis on media analysis. Jameson argues for a distinction between "empirical texts" — the very works of fiction under discussion, such as specific films or novels — and the "master narrative" underlying them. Individual "empirical" texts ought to be utilized to construct "master narratives of the political unconscious." The literary theorist must "detect and to reveal . . . the outlines of some deeper and vaster narrative movement" which corresponds to the broader social structures from which the "empirical text" derives its meaning. Whatever the artist's intent in producing such a text, there is underlying it a social knowledge and perspective on the artist's social context. Thus, *all* texts are inherently political, and contain at least some degree of social critique. We must dispel the false notion of "pure entertainment," as even the simplest works contain within them a master narrative. The contemporary distaste for such art stems from two sources, one legitimate and one illegitimate: legitimately we may detest the simplicity with which didactic productions communicate their message to audiences, on the other hand, it is illegitimate to argue that texts ought not to attempt to *say anything* at all. Cries from internet right

wing "art critics" detest what they see as the injection of master narrative into bodies of work. Yet the fundamental fallacy at play is that regardless of the forms of entertainment they either love or hate both contain the master narrative. The so-called theme-park rides of modern movies as described by auteur directors like Scorsese are an impossibility, it is possible to extract meaning and the master narrative from any body of work.

Having established the inherent capacity of works to reveal the political unconscious at the heart of the works construction, we must now categorize Godzilla within the broader category of speculative fiction. Speculative fiction (SF) acts a broad category for genre-based fiction, mainly including both fantasy and science fiction. SF emerged out of a desire to separate realist fiction from more fantastical works. Often SF is seen as more pulp-y, distinct from the high fiction of academia. Within certain circles genre is often dismissed as belong to the invalid category of "pure entertainment." SF however does contain an inherent potential for perspective on social context, however this is not always fully realized. SF in particular exposes the clearest "master narrative." We can only derive a fictional world from the rearrangement of elements of our own, and thus creating SF involves extracting the elements from the Real and projecting them outwards in a new form. When done correctly, this results in a subtle shifting of our perspective on *our own world*, rather than a mere clever production of a new one. SF based revolutionary movements like Afrofuturism propel their subjects forward into new spaces of shared imagination. Speculative fiction can allow marginalized bodies to reclaim their collective futures. Contemporary Marxist author China Mieville argues that SF contains a unique power. This weight lies, once again, outside itself as it is a consequence of the mediation of our everyday lives by numerous fantasies. "The very economic system upon which our societies are predicated, capitalism, is grounded in the mysterious process by which human labor and nature are combined to produce *commodities*. These commodities seem to be simple things for use, until we realize that the system is predicated upon a

concealed, insubstantial value rather than their actual use, the kind of thing that makes a bushel of wheat and a Blu-Ray of equivalent value. As a consequence of the labor put into the commodity and its relation to other commodities, it takes on another kind of value that determines the way in which the global economy functions. This is what makes bizarre situations like the 2008-09 global financial crisis possible, whereas even imagining this happening from the perspective of people in the distant past seems to be an exercise in SF itself. "Our political economy is thus based on *speculation*, and SF can be utilized as a tool to explore capital. Human society is distinctly governed by specific fantasies, fixed binary gender, the invisible hand of the market, biological race, notions of authentic self, commodity, etc. These sustaining fantasies can be challenged with the creation of new fictions which deconstruct the master narrative. "The act of *deliberately imagining a fantastic scenario* contains within it the inherent capacity to shed light on the *actual fantasies* which govern our lives. Thus, for England in 1897, H.G. Wells imagined that Martians could engage in the same kind of colonial assault on London as the British Empire itself had launched on much of the globe, which is simply to say that we never would have had an alien invasion sub-genre without the social practice of colonialism. "[1]

Monster movies and masculo-militaristic drive

Godzilla (1954) emerged out of the burgeoning genre of the monster movie. Its most notable predecessors were *King Kong* (1933), *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* (1953). However, Godzilla is distinct from these American Monster movies, which focuses on what is basically a hyper-masculine large animal in the contemporary setting, usually unleashed by some act of hubris on the part of humanity pushing into realms which it was meant to remain separate from. Generally, the same primal masculinity of the monster is used by the masculine protagonist to slay it. Kong is shot off the Empire State Building by the most modern of weaponry (airplanes) and the Rhedosaurus shot with a bazooka

and then killed with a radioactive isotope similar to its own radioactivity. Jase Short, writing for Red Wedge, traces the development of the American monster narrative as an overt response to the nuclear paranoia of the Cold War. These films gave catharsis to the paranoid, a conclusion to the constant threat of nuclear annihilation. The vastness of this new world of global wars, could be projected onto the image something more immediately understandable, and *killable* than the social reality of the Cold War. Ironically the socio-cultural response to an immediate crisis rooted in militarism is to pursue fictions in which militarism and weapons of war act are the only form of human salvation.

Japanese Kaiju films emerge out of a different cultural context. Japan experienced the cultural change and tensions that underpinned both capitalism and the Cold War in an incredibly condensed form. Up until the 1850's Japan had maintained a self-imposed isolation from the rest of the world, avoiding the worse end of colonialism that would root itself in "Indochina." During the Meji Restoration, Japan's elite classes began a revolutionary project to shift Japan towards an industrial capitalist superpower. Farmers were compelled to move to urban areas and pursue industry and wage-work. Japanese society and culture shifted dramatically to become more like Western powers. Much like Lenin's seminal work on imperialism, the rapid development of capitalism created an imperial power. This unstable socio-economic dynamic was held together by the cultural cult around the Emperor of Japan, however following Japan's defeat in WW2 this stabilizer fell, the fiction surrounding the God-King collapsed. The extreme bombing campaign which did lead to the use of H-bombs eroded any notions of divinity. Japan was rapidly thrust into late-stage capitalism, occupied by America and disarmed. Post-war Japan saw the deflation of Japanese militarism. However, around the time Godzilla was created, the US facilitated the creation of the Japanese Self-Defense Force in order to redeploy troops in Korea and use Japan as a staging ground in the Korean War. Japan

once again had a standing military, and with it came new questions and a new wave of militarism.

A Specter Haunts Japan

Often *Godzilla* is interpreted in two overly simplistic ways; One: Godzilla represents natures response to human hubris, that the creation of nuclear weapons has disturbed the natural order and Godzilla represents some sort of divine punishment; Two: Godzilla is a metaphor for the United States and its nuclear attack on Japan. Each interpretation is overly simplistic and simply boring. The first definition falls in line with the American popular imagination of the monster movie, a convention that Godzilla breaks and does not belong to. This is of course most likely a result of the American release cut of the movie, one that denuclearizes the movie and removes the troublesome bits in which America's nuclear tests are at least in some way responsible for Godzilla's rampage. Godzilla is clearly not just about a giant monster. Often Godzilla is interpreted as America, a rather lackluster interpretation that relies too heavily on the existance of sequel movies in which Godzilla becomes protector of Japan. As far as Godzilla (1954) is concerned Godzilla is not America. Godzilla only acts narratively to facilitate catastrophe. Yes, Godzilla emerges baptized by the fire of an H-bomb, yet Godzilla is not the bomb, Godzilla is not America. Godzilla is not nature's wrath. If Godzilla is the bomb then what is the bomb doing within the narrative, why do the films subjects interact with Godzilla and the bomb as separate entities to be compared? Godzilla cannot be a metaphor for these concepts as they already exist within the film. Instead, America, nuclear weapons, and Godzilla exist within a broader subject: the newfound social and technological modernity. These are all metonyms for the catastrophe and constitutive violence of modernity under capitalism. Industrial Capitalist society as such organizes every aspect of life around the mass exploitation of labor and intensifying production. This ordering brings about an inherent potential for catastrophe, interconnected systems

that if disrupted would have devastating effects: a pandemic interrupts the food chain, subprime mortgages collapse the economy, and so on and so on. The distinction between a natural disaster and a manmade one is forever blurred under this method of organizing. "Modernity itself constitutes a kind of second nature, its cataclysms having the scale of natural disasters, devastating ecological consequences, and, perhaps most terribly, having been naturalized … so that they seem inevitable facts of life rather than the results of historical processes of collective decision-making, guided by and serving the interests of the powerful according to the logic of capital accumulation. Mediated technocatastrophy is the new natural disaster." [2] Capitalism contains the endless repetition of the technocatastrophy. Make no mistake, *Godzilla* is more of a disaster movie than monster movie, yet it is not a natural disaster. To accept the seductive argument that Godzilla represents natures wrath obfuscates the real forces at work, it is the bourgeoisie-produced narrative of natural disaster, under such a narrative things like market mechanisms, derailments, oil spills, and more have all become functions of nature, unknowable and abstracted. It is thus wholly reductive to settle on describing Godzilla as a force of nature. Rather, Godzilla is the ever-present catastrophe within capitalist organizing. Godzilla is king of modernity.

In order to prove that Godzilla's attack is a form of this systemic technocatastrophe, I will follow Godzilla's assault on Japan, which coincidentally traces the political economy as laid out by Marx from top to bottom, traveling from the base of material production towards sites of ideological and political power.

Godzilla's assault begins in the rural peripheries of Tokyo in a small village whose fishing industry is semi-industrial. The film opens with fisherman aboard a small commercial fishing boat whose boat is suddenly destroyed. These sailors represent the very base of political economy: the proletariat. Their labor is embodied in Japan's largest

export, commercial fishing. Godzilla cripples the roots of the Japanese economy, then moving towards industrial sites. In Godzilla's final attack he attacks media buildings and most notably the Diet government building. Godzilla's movements upwards along the chain of political economy mirror the way in which many disasters begin: with labor.

The design elements behind Godzilla contains numerous aspects of Japan's new modernity. Godzilla is of course highly radioactive, he fits in with a world built around the atom. Godzilla's roar is metallic and industrial. The aesthetic design choices behind Godzilla reflect key elements of Japan.

Godzilla's violence is often mediated by the militaristic response of the JSDF. From the very start the response to Godzilla is militarized securitization, much like the US response to many catastrophes, especially interruptions to labor and primary production.

As a brief aside, take for instance the US response to Hurricane Katrina. As the JDSF was modeled after US police and military apparatus, it is useful to analyze how realistic the depictions of securitized responses to catastrophe. Katrina saw the widespread deployment of the US national guard, which in part was based on an alleged lawlessness because of the disaster. Armed guards were posted around shelters and relief centers. Despite such efforts, "there were reports of people pushing the elderly to the ground and taking their water when relief did arrive in locations along the Gulf Coast", suggesting that the role of the security forces had less to do with protection of the vulnerable and instead focused on protecting government assets. Often Armed gaurds were used to turn away non-residents affected by the hurricane. The presence of military force was a form of control. This meta-narrative is associated with elite-panic and desire to protect capital. "This focus on security not only distracted from the response to the

disaster; it often made it worse: delaying search and rescue, limiting the options for shipment and distribution of relief goods; tying up human resources that could have been used in other ways. While this was perhaps most noticeable at the federal level, local governments also assigned armed guards to shelters and shopping areas and, as we have seen, took matters into their own (armed) hands, hijacking relief goods. "Ironically many of the very agencies who created the narrative of lawlessness engaged in this lawless hijacking of relief goods. Across many of Godzilla's scenes we can see that the bulk of JSDF force is concentrated towards killing Godzilla. It is only after the barrier Tokyo constructs fails, that individual squad cars are allowed to begin rescuing civilians. While the evacuation is facilitated by a few soldiers the bulk response is a military intervention to secure the interests of capital. Godzilla is fought on bridges, near warehouses, corporate skyscrapers, and the Diet government building all while Tokyo's civilian centers burn, eerily like both the US firebombing campaign and the imbalance of state resource allotment to lower income areas more affected by the failure of levees during Katrina. [3] The military focuses more reasources on protecting the assets of the elite upper strata of Japanese society than on protecting the poor. The families of the sailors lost at sea are promised the full force of the Japanese coast guard and yet only receive two small boats and a handful of sailors to help. In fact, the rural fisherman spends more time searching. Eventually a helicopter arrives but by then Godzilla strikes: FEMA arrives but the levees have already broke.

A good deal of the film showcases the newest machines of war in the arsenal of the JSDF. Tanks are shot from below their turrets filling the screen. In isolation this could be seen as simple military-porn, a triumphant reminder of Japan's militaristic return. It isnt however, these machines of war which once "changed" the battlefields of war are thrown aside by Godzilla. In a single fell stroke Godzilla deflates militarism and reveals truth.

Militarism can never resolve the technocatastrophe. The last act of militarism within the movie occurs when scientist Dr. Seriwaza devises a way to kill Godzilla, a bomb that literally destroys oxygen by liquefying it. This device based on weaponizing a fundamental aspect of life is itself a natural escalation of nuclear weapons. *Godzilla* gives us a further stage in weapons proliferation, a glimpse into yet another iteration of the system. Seriwaza, upon witnessing the horror he has unleashed kills himself and destroys his notes, which facilitates both the romantic subplot of the film and the "saving" of Japan. The film makes a deliberate call back to the Japanese Kamakazi pilots, with Seriwaza wearing an eyepatch to cover an old war wound. Seriwazas sacrifice is what he sees an attempt to circumvent arms proliferation to avoid "a-bombs against a-bombs, and h-bombs against h-bombs." Seriwaza deep dives into Godzillas resting place and activates the bomb, killing both. His actions destroy Japan's oceans, the very site of Godzilla's first attack. This sacrifice is absolutely futile and plays into a global system that creates catastrophe after catastrophe calling on the common person to commit the ultimate sacrifice. *We must die so they can live.* The film ends with a direct address from Yamane, a professor of paleontology who throughout the film laments the militaries choice to enrage and kill Godzilla. He mourns Godzilla not just because Godzilla could be the last of a species alive during the Jurassic period but because Godzilla's natural resistance to radiation has the potential to benefit millions of people who were and will be the victims of radiation. In a world with constant nuclear testing there is no guarantee that there won't be another catastrophe. Furthermore, the activation of the oxygen bomb may awaken a far worse catastrophe. There is nothing good about Godzilla's death. To end Godzilla is to make barren the oceans, to end life itself. There is no heroic narrative sacrifice that can allow us to escape our modern technocatastrophic condition.

Killing what the bomb cannot

The above analysis is satisfactory and thorough and yet *Godzilla* provides more and more. Many things like a deep-rooted analysis of the mass-production of Japanese victimhood narratives are worth considering yet fall beyond the scope of this already bloated paper. However, in spite of the multitude of horrors committed by Japan during ww2, the mass bombing campaign and nuclear bombs are particular cruelties, which entrenched themselves in the Japanese popular imagination.

More interestingly however is our relationship towards the bomb and Godzilla. Its abillity to resist radiation and immunity to the bomb, could create tangible good it could redeem us and undue decades of damage. As such, Godzilla is the only thing that the bomb cannot kill, and in the end our system of organizing necessitates that we must securitize and ultimately kill Godzilla. We must wage a holy and just war in the middle east so that it never happens again.

Unlike its sequel the ending offers no relief, there will be no triumphant military victory. *Godzilla* gives us murder and loss. We are a damned people locked within an ever-proliferating techno-catastrophe.

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Arden Campbell

The Rest Cure as Portrayed in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" follows a woman's descent into madness after her husband refuses to acknowledge the severity of postpartum depression and its effects. Gilman also offers a critique on S. Weir Mitchell's "Rest Cure," and how it horrifically perpetuates harmful stereotypes and harms more than it helps. "The Yellow Wallpaper" displays the disgusting irony of a "cure" that does the exact opposite of what it promises.

Gilman's story details the very real struggles of women in the 1800s and is made all the more powerful by the knowledge that much of the story is based off Gilman's own struggles with mental health- especially in a world where women were not allowed to openly seek help in times of mental struggle. Gilman draws particular attention to Mitchell 's "Rest Cure," which was a "catch-all diagnosis for the host of nonpsychotic emotional disorders that were not understood and not responsive to medical therapies" (Martin). The Rest Cure was implemented by people who did not understand (or *want* to understand) why women suffered from afflictions like post-partum depression. "The Yellow Wallpaper" details one such individual. John, though he claims to love his wife, refuses to acknowledge her pain. Gilman writes that John, "does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no *reason* to suffer and that satisfies him" (Gilman, 3). The Rest Cure was merely an instrument used to keep women from the workplace and to encourage a "placid" state of contentment. The Rest Cure was not a cure, but simply a means to a particularly patriarchal end. The Rest Cure and its inadequacies become even more apparent when one also considers the West Cure, which was also created by Mitchell. This method was used to treat men who were struggling with mental health- be it anxiety, depression, etc. The West Cure consisted of men being "encouraged to engage in vigorous

physical activity out West, and to write about the experience" (Stiles). So, women were encouraged to remain in their "proper" sphere, forced into isolation, electrotherapy, and limited physical activity, while men were encouraged to go outside and be active. The Rest Cure was not a cure, merely an instrument to oppress women and to keep them where men decided they belonged. Gilman spoke openly about her time in which she attempted to follow Mitchell's orders, and she described how she "came so near the borderline of utter mental ruin that [she] could see over." The irony and hypocrisy need no explanation. The harmful stereotypes that these so-called "cures" have, unfortunately, contributed to the lasting sexism and inequality between men and women that is still seen today.

Gilman, through her story "The Yellow Wallpaper," sought to call out men like S. Weir Mitchell who falsely claimed to be able to "cure" mental anguish that women suffered, and instead details how their arrogance only made mental health struggles for women worse. These harmful ideas can be traced back to the 300s BCE, when Aristotle wrote that "A living creature consists in the first place of mind and body, and of these two, one is by nature the ruler and the other the subject" (*Pol*. 1.1254a). He claimed that women were, by nature, inferior due to their "weaker" biology and were thus unfit to partake in matters beyond those of the home. Aristotle claimed that women's biology made them inferior, that they were "deformed men." Even then, medicine was used to shackle women to their homely spheres, never able to escape. Mitchell did the same thing thousands of years later, through almost the same means. These old sins cast long shadows, and Gilman sought to shine some light onto them. She fought against these sexist injustices the only way that she could: her writing. "The Yellow Wallpaper" does exactly what it was intended- shines a light on the cruelties that women had to endure. And, as Gilman wrote, "It was not intended to drive people crazy, but to save people from being crazy, and it worked."

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Ariel Dean

An Analysis *of The Bar at the Folies-Bergere*

The Bar at the Folies-Bergere by Edouard Manet is one of his most well-known works (Fig.1). It stands out from his other great works in part because of its puzzling story. This painting forces the viewer to ask questions and not just passively view and admire itself. While this painting is simply impressive all-around, the most intriguing and thought-provoking aspect of the work is Manet's usage of the direct view and the view in the mirror to tell the same story from two perspectives—that of the man to the far right in the image and that of the painted reality of the barmaid. By doing this, he properly draws attention to all the emotion of the story and makes a statement on the objectification and commodification of women.

To properly appreciate the significance and beauty of this painting, one must first look to Manet himself and his position in the art world. Born into a wealthy family, Edouard Manet was not by any means the average artist of his time. After joining and failing the navy early on, he moved to Paris to begin his life as an artist. Manet began as an artist later than his peers in life, and even early on he stood out because his subject matter was notably different. The primary difference was that he depicted women as the primary subject matter of his work. This difference only increased as he became an established artist and as his paintings became well known. His art would later symbolize dramatic changes in European art. Manet's paintings are significant as they do not fit snugly into the realms of realism or impressionism, but rather they signify a transition between those movements. His works had great impacts on European art, as he often portrayed regular working people. Before this, the art world had been dominated by scenes of larger-than-life figures doing great things. Manet's works reflect a sense of celebration of the experience and life of the plebeian as he portrayed it at the same scale and with the same care as great historical figures had been portrayed. It was partially because of this that Manet's art was controversial at the time it was first created. His work also upset many people because of his untraditional portrayal of women. His paintings of women were different from others of the time in many ways, he often showed women directly facing the viewer. This is visible in works such as *The Railway*, where the subject of the painting is seemingly making eye contact with the viewer (Fig. 2). This was an uncomfortable

experience for viewers of the time as it broke down the barrier between the painting and reality. Manet's paintings of naked women was controversial in the art community with his. Now, naked people were not something new to European art at the time, but what made his works controversial is that he depicted, once again, *normal* women, not goddesses, not biblical figures, but real, working, living women. This appears maybe most famously in his works *Le Bain* and *Olympia* (Fig. 3 and 4 respectively). In both of these works, Manet depicts everyday women who are confident in their exposure and position. *Olympia* was an especially upsetting work to the public as it clearly and proudly portrays a sex worker as the subject. As Manet got older and his health sharply declined in the late 1870s and into the early 1880s, he continued to create beautiful paintings, one of which is the very focus of this essay: *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere*. This painting is considered by some as his last great work, seeing as he died about a year after finishing it.

A good way to begin analyzing this complex painting is to figure out the basic setting. This painting portrays a barmaid standing behind her bar before a packed and bustling room of people. One can see that on the bar is a colorful selection of drinks. As labeled in the title, this is the Folies-Bergere music hall. The Folies-Bergere was one of the most popular places for music and entertainment in Paris at the time. Manet and his friends were among the many enjoyers of the beautiful theater. In the specific scene of the painting, the audience is watching a trapeze performance, as indicated by the legs dangling down in the top left corner. It is important to also notice that all of the background that the viewer can see is the reflection on a mirror behind the barmaid. Featured in this reflection is a man in the top right corner appearing to be conversing with the barmaid. It is unclear exactly what is happening in the conversation. However, it is important to also know that, at this time, the Folies-Bergere was known to be frequented by sex workers doing business and the barmaids had side jobs in sex work. With this context, it is apparent that the barmaid in this painting is also a sex worker, with the man in the corner being someone possibly seeking out her services. This fact, along with the lack of clarity concerning her interaction with the man in the corner made this painting no different from others of Manet as it was controversial and upsetting to the public. This busy and confusing scene leaves much work for the viewer to interpret

it all, and a key part of doing just that is to look at the direct view and compare it to what is seen in the mirror.

The direct view in this painting is representative of what the man in the corner sees. One can tell this because the way he is positioned in the mirror would suggest that he is directly in front of the barmaid, as the direct view shows. His perspective is solely focused on this woman. She is made up of smaller, more specific, and less visible brushstrokes. Behind her, background scene is made up of larger and more visible brushstrokes that create loose individual images of people. These brushstrokes give the illusion of movement and chaos. Conversely, the more specific brushstrokes that make up the barmaid give her a sense of stillness or being stuck in time. This effect shows how the man is completely focused on her, despite the numerous distractions in the background. To move away from the comparison with the background, this man sees a pretty woman placed amidst rather colorful and enticing selection of drinks. Before him, this woman starts to blend in with the items for sale. The way that Manet outlines the curves of her body matches the way he outlines the bottles that surround her. The flower on her further connects her to the selection on the bar as they mimic the flowers in the vase. The red corsage held in her cleavage also imitates the red triangular logo of the Bass pale ale to either side of her. From his view, her person and services are on sale just as the drinks are. In fact, she is nothing more than a cheap, off-brand replica of her commodity counterparts. But, unlike the drinks, the heavy marble counter separates her from the man, putting her just out of reach. This separation makes her more alluring in his eyes. She is even leaning into the bar with her hands, as if trying to get closer to the conversation. From the man's perspective, he believes that she wants to talk to him, and that she is trying to overcome the seperation between them. His perspective reveals the objectifying nature of her outfit as well, with the contrast between the deep black coat and the almost transparent, white lace drawing attention to her body. The coat specifically accentuates the slimming of her waist down from her wide chest and hips. The lace frames her chest area. It gives her a sense of daintiness like that of a doll or toy, making it seem as though this barmaid is on display. She has no stains or marks on her body or clothes, making it seem like she has not even been working, she is just there for him and what *he* wants, as if she does not have a job to do. Probably the most

troubling part of this man's perspective of her is her face. She has a sunken, almost teary look in her eyes, revealing the utter exhaustion and sadness she may feel. This little showing of emotion is the most human part of her appearance to this man. It is troubling as the man is looking so directly at the obvious sadness of this woman, yet he continues his transaction with her. Her little bit of humanity peeking through the objectified view of her is not enough to resonate with the man. To him, she is still just a commodity for his consumption.

Now this perspective of the man placed directly before the viewer is in direct contrast with the scene in the mirror. Thereby, juxtaposing the “reality” this man has imagined with the actuality of his surroundings. Since the background is actually only visible in the mirror, it is once again important to look at the background for context. The great hustle and bustle shown by those rushed brushstrokes places the interaction in a very small part of the bar’s evening service. Between the movement of the huge crowd and the distraction of the trapeze act, this little interaction between the man and the barmaid is insignificant. This is further indicated by the looseness of the brushstrokes defining the interaction as seen in the mirror. This allows it to blend in more with the background. Another possibly harsh truth revealed by this mirror view is that the man with the barmaid has lookalikes all throughout the dense crowd. In fact, there seems to be an almost exact replica of this man sitting next to the woman on the balcony with the yellow gloves. Farther back, one can see a smattering of top hats throughout the crowd, drawing a connection to the man in the mirror's biggest defining characteristic. This repetition of his image all through the theater indicates that this man is not special in the slightest, and that his interaction with the barmaid is not unique. The poor woman has probably already had to interact with people just like him earlier in the night and will continue to have to serve many more. While he gets the front and center perspective of the painting, this man is nothing special to the barmaid, though her image in his mind is quite the opposite. Moving from the man to the barmaid herself, there are changes to her figure and position as shown in the direct view. In the mirror, her coat appears to have more smudges and it is not outlined as clearly. This indicates that she is, in fact, working and not just there to serve this one man as his perspective would indicate. Additionally, she appears to be bigger in the mirror, no longer presenting the idealized female form but the actual female form. One can also tell that her

idealized body in the direct view is just the male gaze of the man, as Manet does not usually portray women in that way. Even the nude subject of *Olympia* and *Le Bain* is depicted women more realistically, with slightly more body fat and without oversexualized features. Returning to the bar, in the mirror the barmaid appears to have messier hair, once again showing that she is a real woman with a real body. Her position in the mirror is also slightly different from the direct view. Her bent arms make it seem like she almost seems to be leaning away from the man, using the bar to push herself away . In the mirror, the bar also seems to disappear, taking with it the barrier between them. Both details indicate that the barmaid is uncomfortable with this man. She is forced to be closer to him so that she can do her job and what she needs to do to support herself, but she is trying to desperately and subtly give herself space. This detail is accentuated in Manet's sketch of this very same painting as the bar is gone completely and the barmaid seems to be putting proper distance between herself and this man.

In conclusion, Manet's *The Bar at the Folies-Bergere* tells an intricate story of two perspectives within a single scene. His genius usage of the mirror to depict reality almost as a shadow of this one man's perspective forces the viewer to think deeply and struggle with the true meaning behind this interaction. On the one hand there is a man seeking out pleasures in the form of alcohol and sexual services, and on the other there is a tired, sad, and uncomfortable woman simply trying to get by. The setting of this meaningful interaction in a busy theater enhances the impact of the story as just a small part of daily life. It is because of this that *The Bar at the Folies-Bergere* is such a beautiful and moving work of art.

Figure 2. Edouard Manet, *The Bar at the Folies-Bergere*, 1882

Figure 2. Edouard Manet, *The Railway*, 1873.

Figure 3. Edouard Manet, *Le Bain*, 1863.

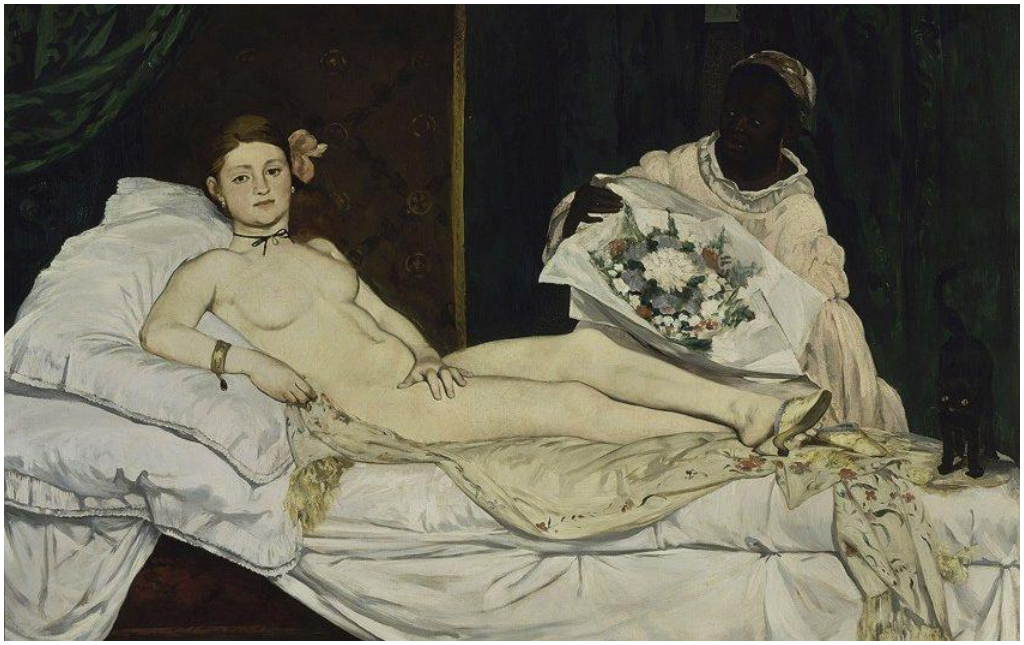

Figure 4. Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863

Figure 5. Edouard Manet, *Study for "Bar at the Folies-Bergere"*, 1882.

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Ariel Dean

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS AND POWER DYNAMICS IN "THE YELLOW WALLPAPER," HOUSE ON MANGO STREET, AND "WORLD OF WAKANDA"

One major way that varying peoples differ from each other is in the metrics by which they assess, measure, and value certain aspects of their culture. This can be beautifully seen in "And Some More" in *The House on Mango Street* with conversation about Inuit classification of snow. In this section Esperanza talks about how "the [Inuit] got thirty different names for snow", and then she goes on to say how her friend disagrees, saying "there are [only] two kinds… the clean kind the dirty kind" (Cisneros 35). While this is a very small part of the story as a whole, it is a perfect example of the way different cultures classify different things that hold significance to them as a group of people. With this example, even though the snow that falls is the same wherever it is in the world, different people and cultures around the world have different ways of viewing it. To continue this example, and to apply the argument to the topic of this essay, people with power (white, rich, male, etc. people) decide that *their* way of classifying types of snow is the only correct way, and that all other ways are not worth understanding. The stories of *Black Panther: World of Wakanda*, "The Yellow Wallpaper", and *The House on Mango Street* all share the fact that they feature differences in this sort of classification or evaluation between groups of people. In these stories, one can clearly see how groups in power get to decide which ways of measuring or classifying things are valuable and 'right', and groups without power or representation are left to deal with the negative consequences of that.

Patterned and classified power can be seen in Roxane Gay's *Black Panther: World of Wakanda* with men and women. Though Wakanda is said to be a land of equality between genders and classes, there is still violence within its bounds. The most prominent case in this book is with Chief Omarion Diya and the women and girls he keeps with him in the village Kagara. Towards the end of the book, it is revealed that the Chief has been raping these women and girls, and little has been done about it. Supposedly, the men who do try to do something get "banished from the village" by the Diya (Gay). The first response given to the woman revealing this horrible problem is for those women being raped to "protect themselves". This response is given by another woman who is part of a very powerful army, and instead of saying that they are going to do something about this with the power they have, they put the pressure on the victims of this atrocious crime to fix the issue themselves. This response reveals the influence of men being the group in power and getting to define what is normal. In this case, rape is something that is not explicitly defined as an acceptable thing to do, but the fact that the response is for the victim to do something shows that at the very least, men have defined it as something normal enough to not put a stop to systematically. The fact that a woman is the one who gives this unhelpful advice just shows how deeply engrained the normalcy of rape is in the society- that a person who is in the group that suffers from this crime in the highest amounts is in a certain way, enabling rape to happen. With most other crimes, the response to resolve them focuses on those who actually commit the crime, not on the victims of the crime. With circumstances socially accepted as simple misfortune, it is up to the victim of such misfortune to fix it themselves, though it is still regarded as unfortunate. In Wakanda, rape is apparently regarded as a misfortune as the onus is on the victim to fix it. It is clear that men are the group in power here that have set this standard for how bad rape is as most of the leaders themselves are men and in this case, the perpetrators of this crime are men (the

chief and his guards) and the victims are exclusively women. Because women are the primary victims, they are the powerless group in this case.

Now to apply the same approach to Charlotte Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" with John's treatment of his wife. In this story, a woman named Jane is taken to a house by and with her husband John who is a physician seeking to treat her for what the reader can assume is post-partum depression. Part of this treatment he does is locking Jane in a room and taking away her writing, something she loves to do. Throughout the story, Jane tries to tell John that she is feeling worse, and her condition is not improving. She also starts to see a woman behind the wallpaper in the hideous room she is kept in, and eventually tries to free that woman by tearing down all the wallpaper she can reach. Because John is a man and a physician, he is in power in this situation, and from of that, Jane is not in power. John's position of power allows him to define what he thinks is normal for Jane to be going through, and act accordingly, despite the fact that Jane is telling him that he is making her worse. He gets to act as though his perception of what is happening is the truth, and therefore his reactions to it are obviously without flaws. Some of the symptoms of what today is recognized as post-partum depression include "a virtual reversal of the feminine traits of the period" (Taylor 24). At this time, women were expected by their husbands and by the greater society to be ladylike, meaning they were expected not to talk much or properly express their feelings, to be nice to people, and to behave with decorum. However, some of the traits of post-partum depression that showed a "reversal of… feminine traits" are "incessant talking, … a general meanness towards caretakers, and obscenity in language and sometimes behavior" (24). Jane experienced many of these things in the story, yet John's treatment for this was to make her conform more to her womanly duties, meaning he put her on bed rest and would not let her write. This treatment put her more into a sort of trap which is already one that is unreasonable and sexist, but on

top of the common symptoms of the depression she experiences, it puts her in a position where she really cannot express herself and do what she feels she must do to get better. Because of his position of power and the belief that stems from such power that the treatment he is doing is right and normal, he feels that he can ignore the blatant proof that his treatment is not working in the form of his wife telling him and her visibly getting worse.

Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* is a wonderful example of this facet of relationships between the empowered and the powerless as it covers it with multiple levels. Esperanza, the character around which the story is centered, is a girl of Mexican descent who is a part of a low-income family. Because of her status as woman, non-white, and not wealthy, she experiences the compounded effect of all of these invalidating standards held by empowered groups (men, white people, and wealthy people). This means that not only does she face inequality on the basis of gender, race, and class individually, but also in the combination of those factors (i.e. wealthy men and white men not just men, white people, and wealthy people). Because of the inequality she faces on multiple fronts, Esperanza certainly fits into the realm of otherness. Typically, "otherness…indicates something that is 'not of the dominant mode,'" (Marek 174). In the context of this paper, otherness can be defined as the experience of not fitting into the metrics defined by group(s) in power. Esperanza is an other in this way as she does not fit into the expectations held by white people, wealthy people, or men.

Throughout the story and even in the introduction to the story itself, Cisneros provides examples of men having power and establishing a societal expectation for what is normal and valuable. For starters, in the introduction Cisneros writes about all aspects of her writing from the start of her career to a beautiful description of her exact style of writing. In this section, she describes a moment in her life when she was invited to a

writers' event, and she was the only woman, and one of two people of color there. She goes on to write about the differences between her work and the rest of the writers' works- that hers is only "four pages long and was bound together on a kitchen table with a stapler and a spoon" (Cisneros xx). This observation leads her to question her own writing, thinking that their books are "real books" and asking herself if "she really [is] a writer or [if] she is only pretending to be a writer?" (xx). The fact that the group is predominantly white men shows that they are the empowered group here, and that they have set the unofficial yet functional standard that the profession of writing is one for people like themselves. This is further seen in the fact that a female writer of color such as Cisneros starts to doubt her own ability. These men have also set the standard that writing must be a certain way. It must be lengthy and professionally done, an expectation that is clearly inaccessible to most and completely arbitrary. The fact that these expectations are inaccessible in many ways also shows that they are created by wealthy people. In what can possibly be assumed to be a response to and rebellion against this unfair standard set by wealthy men, Cisneros also writes about her style of writing being "simple and readable as possible" (xvii). She also describes her style as one that "[makes] each sentence serve *her*", a feature that, once again, stands as a conscious rebellion agaisnt a profession that has so far been defined in a way that exclusively serves wealthy white men (xvii).

There are also clear examples of this dynamic that have more to do with class. The first instance of this in the story is when Esperanza is talking about perceptions of her home. She describes the embarrassment she felt when a nun who worked at her school walked by her home and said, "you live *there*?" to Esperanza, indicating a sort of distaste or disapproval of Esperanza's living conditions (5). This interaction makes her feel awful as she says, "it made [her] feel like nothing" (5). She goes on to indicate her own sense of disapproval in her own home, saying that when she gets older, she wants "a real house",

making her current home seem fake or not enough. This is clearly a case where there has been a standard set by wealthy people for what a *true* home is, when what really makes a home true is defined by the people that live in it. In this case, wealthy people have decided that a "real" home is one that is perfectly clean and new and not one that has been personalized by the owners. Just like with the author's experience with writing, this standard makes Esperanza question herself and her own experiences. This section entitled "The House on Mango Street" starts off with Esperanza showing her pride for that house as she clearly states that the house belongs to her family, and they do not have to share it with anyone (as they did in previous living situations). The fact that an interaction with this nun suddenly takes away any sense of pride or joy she had in her house shows the way this standard and sense of value defined by wealthy people is not actually an objective distinction, though it is made out to be that way. If it truly was objective, Esperanza would not have been happy with her home in the first place. Later in the book, Esperanza is describing a local junk store frequented by her and her community. She explains that when her and her friends go to the store, the owner (an "old man") does not "turn the lights on unless [they have] money to buy things with" (19). Because of this, the kids are forced to search for things "in the dark" (19). Though this experience itself is not really an example of an expectation defined by groups in power, it is certainly a metaphor for it. Because these kids appear to him to not meet his standards of wealth (having enough money to purchase something), he is not allowing them to peruse the store under normal, expected conditions (proper lighting).

Lastly, in the section titled "Those Who Don't", Esperanza presents the relationship between the white, wealthy folks of the area and her community. She says that these privileged people try to avoid her neighborhood because "they think [the community] is dangerous" and they almost think of the people in the community as animals, at risk to

"attack them" (28). This small passage reveals how the wealthy whites of the area get to decide what makes another human "dangerous", and those deciding factors are low income and non-whiteness. However, in this section, Esperanza provides just the right information to prove this assumption wrong. She goes into how the very people within the community "aren't afraid" because they truly know their neighbors. (28). Everyone's quirks in this group are known to each other, but unfairly perceived as "dangerous" to those outside the community. She goes on to say, "All brown all around, we are safe", showing that these people around her represent quite the opposite than they do to the wealthy white folks (28). Esperanza then turns the narrative back around, acknowledging that when she and her friends and family are around those "of another color", *they* are the ones who get nervous. While this other race she mentions could really be anyone, it is possible she is meaning specifically white people. In this case, this mention of how the fear is on both sides really shows that while all people may make assumptions about others based on differences in lifestyles, it is really only groups in power that get to act on those assumptions and make it a functional reality for everyone around them. Even though the wealthy whites are scared of the low-income people of color, and the people of color are scared of the white people, it is only the white people with money that get to label the other as hostile or "dangerous" (28). Their combination of wealth and racial privilege allows them to classify others as unsafe simply because they live different lives.

As seen in each of these stories, oppressed groups and peoples are forced to live in a world defined by a very small group of the most privileged people. In the case of *Black Panther: World of Wakanda,* women have to live in a world where violent, gendered crimes like rape are somewhat normal as defined by men in the community. With "The Yellow Wallpaper", Jane is forced to live and heal under a sense of normalcy defined by her husband John, who does not and will not try to actually understand her situation.

Lastly, Esperanza in *The House on Mango Street* and the author of the book itself must live lives structured by those most different from them: rich, white men. For their standards, Esperanza's house is not right, and her community is not safe, so she feels the need to change despite her not feeling the same way about her situation. Cisneros has to battle a constant disapproval from other white writers of her work because it does not necessarily meet the unreasonable and meaningless standards they have decided are right, yet her writing is beautiful and intelligent just as it is. The women in all these stories face lives that are defined by wealthy, white men, simply because they are the group in power and from that power, they decide which way of navigating life is right and which ways are not.

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Margaret Schedler

The Woe of Housewives, the Cold War, and Mass Surveillance in Shirly Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*

(CW: Suicide)

Shirly Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House,* published in 1959, was the first of its kind. Jackson published her book on the precipice of the Women's Liberation Movement when women began to actively reject the cookie-cutter lifestyle that the world wars created. Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* personifies the discrimination that Jackson's generation of women felt while trapped in their roles of homemakers by mimicking the stress of Cold War era mass surveillance. The House in the novel is haunted with the spirits of women who felt isolated in the home, lost children, and were rejected by society when they didn't match expectations. The House welcomes in women who do not fill their roles and traps them until they can learn to live as wives and homemakers under the pressure of constant third-party vigilance. *The Haunting of Hill House*'s plot, however, shows that no woman, "can continue for long to exist sanely under conditions of absolute reality" (Jackson 1). The House is the deciding factor and the ultimate power in *The Haunting of Hill House,* as it seeks the perfect woman.

The foundation for *The Haunting of Hill House* was the mass hysteria surrounding the Cold War and Russia. The US government used propaganda to encourage young and predominantly white people to get married, buy a house in the suburbs, and have numerous children. The American Public Broadcasting Service writes, "embedded in the propaganda of the time was the idea that the nuclear family was what made Americans superior to the Communists" (PBS). The Cold War established a culture of suspicion among the government and populace by fueling the average American's fear for the unknown: Russia. Mass surveillance and fear framed the nuclear family's subconscious. In Richard Pascal's essay, "Walking Alone Together: Family Monsters in *The Haunting of Hill House*," he

claims, “’whatever walks there, walks alone’ (Jackson 3). In conformity with Gothic narrative convention, the "whatever" appears to be unidentifiable, even with regard to whether or not it is a single entity or a plurality - or somehow both” (Pascal 465). Pascal’s insight mimics uncertainty that American households struggled with during the 1950s as they waited for a Russian nuclear bomb.

For this to be the environment that Shirly Jackson emerged from to publish *The Haunting of Hill House* speaks to the book’s underlying foundation of fear and stress. The pressure to follow propaganda pushed many women to the women’s liberation movements of the 1960s that relinquished the bonds of imposed motherhood, baby-making, and domestic duties. When women tried to leave the home to join the workforce, employment institutions rejected them and blocked them from entering. The physical rejections, psychological isolation felt by housewives forced to stay home, and the deep-rooted fear for an unseen threat sculpts the plot of *The Haunting of Hill House* and sets it up as the most realistic of horror stories.

Like most contemporary ghost stories, *The Haunting of Hill House* shrouds the danger that threatens the House’s visitors: Eleanor, Theodora, Luke, and Dr. Montague. The uncertainty of the threat is acknowledged by Eleanor in the first few pages when she says, “The house was vile. She shivered and thought, the words doming freely into her mind, Hill House is vile, it is diseased; get away from here at once” (Jackson 29). Eleanor’s initial fear begins when she faces Hill House for the first time and notices that, “the face of Hill House seemed awake, with a watchfulness from the blank windows and a touch of glee in the eyebrow of a cornice” (Jackson 30). The prospect of the House and its structure as a large family home reflects the institution of marriage. It represents the organization of the household and their relationships with one another, but it also implies an invasion of privacy in a place that should be inherently private.

The House makes it clear from the beginning that it will supervise whoever lives inside it. It becomes a dominant force in the power-hierarchy of the novel. The characters will live for the House and the image that the large family home represents. The House, "seemed somehow to have formed itself…under the hands of its builders" (Jackson 30). Before Eleanor has even stepped into the House, the House has made it clear that it expects to watch her and judge her. The outside façade of the building is impressive when it represents the perfect American family, more sophisticated than the perfect Russian family, but the inside will reveal the reality of a family dynamic during the 1950s. Hill House acts as the American propaganda machine that ran 1950s Cold War culture. The threat of surveillance and expectation of perfection, in order to beat the Russians in the culture war, sets Hill House's inhabitants up for failure.

When Eleanor enters the home, her first interaction is with the odd housekeeper and married woman, Mrs. Dudley. Mrs. Dudley proves to be an important manifestation of Hill House's expectations for women. She cares for the house in the family's absence and looks after guests when they come to stay. She is a good homemaker who serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner on schedule everyday and, "she walks without making a sound" (Jackson 40). She repeats herself in a strange robotic tone that reveals nothing about her to her guests. To outsiders, she is everything that she needs to be and nothing more. Even behind closed doors, she remains ingenuine because it is not the guests that she fears, it is the watchful eyes of the house. In a house that, later revealed by Dr. Montague, disposes of women who do not fit its housewife model, Mrs. Dudley has miraculously survived. Jackson implies here that Mrs. Dudley is the key to survival for the women who come to stay at Hill House.

If readers are to assume that Mrs. Dudley is the model for survival by the House, then the other female guests can be compared to determine their survival. Eleanor and

Theodora are unmarried women who display homosexual characteristics which Jackson hides behind innocuous language, “Theodora… plunged blindly, wantonly, into a violent quarrel with the friend with whom she shared an apartment” (Jackson 6). Already, Eleanor and Theodora are not like Mrs. Dudley, who fades into the background of every scene. They wear bright colors like red and yellow and draw attention to themselves. They run, “downstairs, moving with color and light against the dark woodwork…Mrs. Dudley watched them in silence” (Jackson 43). Eleanor and Theodora are ostracized from the beginning. When they go outside to explore and prop the front door open, they come back to find the door firmly closed again. Hill House rejects Eleanor and Theodora with a physical barrier, deciding that the women will not live up to their intended roles like Mrs. Dudley.

The first morning in the House presents a false sense of security to its guests but Eleanor still notices how, “the room came clearly alive around her; she was in the blue room at Hill House,” (Jackson 87). The House watches them as the guests wake up and employs the use of its doors to manipulate their direction for the day. The doors serve as physical blockades, sometimes to keep Eleanor and Theodora in, and sometimes to keep them out. The doors are left open by the men of the house but as Eleanor and Theodora try to join them for breakfast, they find them all closed and impossible to navigate. Doctor Montague finds them saying, “you will never believe this now, of course…but three minutes ago these doors were wide open… we watched them swing shut just before you called” (Jackson 90). In this scene, the doors want to keep Eleanor and Theodora from finding certain rooms by keeping them out and disorienting them while inside the common areas of the House.

When the women find the kitchen, Eleanor remarks, “our good Mrs. Dudley likes doors doesn’t she?... I wonder, actually, just what Mrs. Dudley is in the habit of meeting in

her kitchen so that she wants to make sure that she'll find a way out no matter which direction she runs" (Jackson 104). Here, Jackson illustrates the kitchen of Hill House as the functioning heart of the House with its numerous connecting doors, leading in and out. The kitchen for Mrs. Dudley, as pointed out by Eleanor, is a place where she can find her way in and out easily. It is the only room in the house that connects everything else like the heart organ and its veins and arteries. The House has set it up in this way where the women of the House function within the heart, it leads them to believe that their freedom depends on the kitchen. Although the kitchen allows multiple paths of exit, like the cardiovascular system, the paths always lead back to the heart.

Mrs. Dudley survives under the vigilance of the House because she stays inside her realm, the kitchen. Her schedule is run by the kitchen and her responsibility to make food for the family, clear the dishes, and begin again. Furthermore, Doctor Montague and Luke never find themselves inside the kitchen of Hill House. The doors surrounding the kitchen, while they may open, are there to keep women in. The House encourages the women to find the kitchen and remain there because they feel disorientated when they are not. The kitchen isolates them into a small, monitored place where their roles are clearly illustrated and efficiently enforced as Mrs. Dudley shows. The odd housekeeper fades so well into the background of the House that Eleanor says, "she probably watches every move we make, anyway; its probably part of what she agreed to" (Jackson 43). Mrs. Dudley becomes an extension of the House and its manifestation.

The Cold War's pressure for couples to become pregnant is another aspect of *The Haunting of Hill House* that Jackson stresses. The image of a happy, full family was essential to the survival of the U.S.A against Russia and so it becomes a necessity for survival in Hill House. The guests find the old nursery in the House and discover that it is boarded up. Doctor Montague wonders aloud to no one in particular, "I wonder who slept

in the nursery… Do you suppose that they shut it up, once the children were gone" (Jackson 111). This moment by Jackson is supposed to leave readers in a bind of anxiety and sorrow; a feeling that is like a mother losing a child or suspecting a loss. The totally shut-up nursery represents a rejection of motherhood and an abandonment of the possibility of motherhood entirely. The guests of Hill House notice the heavy feeling of neglect in the doorway of the nursery and Eleanor thinks, "even Mrs. Dudley's diligent care might not bring her across that cold barrier" (Jackson 111). The events that led to the shut-up nursery is never disclosed, like the House doesn't even wish to acknowledge it but it still knows as Luke points out, "over the nursery doorway, two grinning heads were set," and the doctor adds, "everything is worse…if you think something is looking at you" (Jackson 111-112).

The abandoned nursery makes Theodora uncomfortable to the point that she doesn't wish to be left alone in the room. The heads above the doorway are, "captured forever in distorted laughter," like they are mocking the loss (Jackson 111). The absence of children seems to be the House's core source of anger and resentment for the women of the House. The House is disappointed and that is scarier than the spirits that Jackson suggests still reside on the property. The Cold War of the 1950s witnessed a baby boom in the US when families had a desire, "for normalcy after 16 years of depression and war," and other historians have argued that the baby boom, "was a part of a Cold War campaign to fight communism" (HISTORY). The expectation for baring children causes even more stress when it comes from the US government. Failing to meet the request of the government and patriotism was a mark of failure for women during the 1950s. So, like the nursery in Hill House, historian Elizabeth Garner Masarik says in her podcast "Miscarriage in Twentieth Century America, "miscarriage lives in this hushed, sad silence…" (Masarik).

The House consumes the women of Hill House and locks them away into the home. The expectations for housewives are inescapable for Jackson's characters and for the women of her novel, they are trapped inside the home forever. The constant suppression and surveillance inside the house drives women to suicide and spares few. Doctor Montague tells the guests on the first night that the first wife to live in Hill House died before passing the front gate. The second wife died soon after by falling down the stairs. The third wife died of consumption and Mr. Hill died before returning to the house. The two daughters left behind grew up with a governess. The first daughter died of pneumonia later on in her life and her maid committed suicide. Her sister lived in constant turmoil and finally lost possession of Hill House.

Those the House cannot kill; it punishes with mental turmoil. By killing these women, the House collects housewives that will not change, mature, or grow to be self-aware. They will be watched until the end of time to ensure that they do not divert from purpose and duty.

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Savitri Sasse

Analysis of Suzanne Valadon's *The Blue Room*

Suzanne Valadon was a rebellious painter who never confined herself to the boundaries of traditional art. She changed the way women were portrayed in art, leaning away from the male gaze. Valadon's most famous paintings were painted during the 20th century, a time of change for women. During this time period, there was resistance to traditional norms. For instance, women started cutting their hair short, wearing what they wanted and smoking. This shift is seen in Valadon's paintings, especially *The Blue Room* which is one of her most recognizable works (Fig. 1). Valadon resisted traditional portrayals of women, moving away from sexualization, and focusing more on the realistic depiction of women in everyday life.

Valadon grew up in Montmartre, a quarter of Paris, to an unmarried mother. Unlike her female counterparts, like Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, she was not born into wealth. This allowed her to develop the confidence to paint different, more challenging subjects. Due to her lack of wealth, she could not afford art lessons as other artists in her time could. Therefore, she turned to modeling at the age of fifteen to get close to artists and to observe their techniques. She modeled for many of the most famous Impressionists like Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Henri de Toulouse- Lautrec. Although her lack of wealth put her at a disadvantage, it also put her in a position to watch famous artists at work; therefore, becoming both a muse and a painter as a result. She quickly became one of the most well-documented and popular French artists. Therefore, she has become an inspiration for many female artists. She was encouraged by Edgar Degas who was the first person to purchase drawings from her. Thanks to him, she was introduced to art collectors like Paul Durand- Ruel and Ambroise Vollard. This encouragement helped her start her

career in art. Her drawings were admitted into the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, making her the first woman painter to ever have work accepted.

Valadon was not confined to a specific style of painting, however, her style most reflects Symbolist and Post-Impressionism art. Post-Impressionist art dealt with vivid colors, prominent brushstrokes, and painting from everyday life. These are all characteristics of Valadon's paintings. Her paintings feature rich and bold colors, loose brushwork, and firm black lines outlining her figures. The most prominent subjects in her paintings were female nudes and self-portraits which did not conform to the trends and aspects of academic art during that time. Unlike typical female nudes painted by men, these nudes were depictions of working-class women. She painted women engaging in everyday activities. She wanted to move away from the sexualized depictions of women and move toward the realistic depiction of unidealized women. She defied the traditional ideals of femininity and portrayed women as muscular straying away from the stereotypes of women during that time. Not only did she paint other nude women, but also painted herself nude. The combination of the self-portrait and the nude was revolutionary during that time. Other female painters were not displaying themselves in this way. Later in her career, she displayed her aging body, with sagging skin and wrinkles. Her painting style and subjects used changed the art world for the better.

Her most notable work is *The Blue Room* or *La chambre bleue*. This was painted in 1923 during the time of the roaring '20s. There were significant changes for women in the 1920s. Two major changes were the passage of the 19th amendment which allowed women to vote and the increasing number of women joining the workforce. In addition, women started to create pushback regarding fashion and social norms. For example, they wore shorter skirts, had bobbed hair, and started smoking. This shift is seen in *The Blue Room*. The woman in this painting is a working-class woman wearing casual clothes. She is

smoking with books beside her presumably reading which were typical activities for men. She uses this painting to show her view on society's changing social norms.

The Blue Room was radical for Valadon's time. Valadon portrays a curvy woman lounging on her bed. Her bed and her surroundings are unkempt and casual, directly contributing to the overall mood of this work. The woman is wearing loungewear, green striped pants along with a pink camisole, and bare feet. She is almost lost in thought with a cigarette dangling in her mouth. She is relaxing with her hair tied up, preparing to read the books lying beside her. This is truly a depiction of a woman engaging in everyday activities, reflecting Valadon's style and intentions. The women's pose is reminiscent of classical Renaissance nudes. This is particularly why this painting is so significant. The same pose can be seen in Titian's *Venus with an Organist and Cupid* (Fig. 2). Their arms are resting in the same position while lying across a somewhat messy bed. The backgrounds are both complicated but do not take away from the actual subject. However, there is an absence of a man sitting beside her suggesting the fact that Valadon did not want to sexualize women in any way like Titian was doing. Titian's work idealizes the female body to attract the male gaze. Valadon "didn't adhere to the delicate femininity that was expected of the time. They were contemporary women with modern clothes and hairstyle, as well as body hair—a far cry from the timeless nudes so prevalent in art history" (Palumbo). She used her paintings to respond to paintings like *Venus with an Organist and Cupid*. Her painting, *The Nude on the Sofa* is another example of a painting that does not depict a female as an object of desire (Fig. 3). She once again depicts a contemporary woman lying down on a patterned sofa with short hair, lost in thought. The subject this time is nude, but the meaning and object of this painting are the same as in *The Blue Room*. She uses her same distinctive style in this painting. There is a thick black line around the woman helping separate the woman from the busy background. There are

unblended strokes of paint in both paintings which are typical in most of her works. She uses blues and purples to represent shadows. Not only did Valadon paint nude women she also painted nude men which was an uncommon and daring feat at that time. In her 1914 work *Casting the Net*, she depicts three nude men standing on rocks casting a net, hence the title (Fig. 4). She presents them as a figure of desire, posing them in a way to show off their features. Her distinct firm black lines around her subjects help enhance the men's features. It allows the viewer to see the men's muscles. Valadon reversed the social norms and painted men in a way male artists would paint women. Valadon did not conform to the traditional subject of art, focusing more on the realistic depiction of women. Her style was revolutionary, bringing her to fame.

Suzanne Valadon was the best-documented French artist of the twentieth century. Her lack of wealth and art lessons did not stop her from becoming a well-known artist. She was not influenced by academic art and was able to freely express herself in her paintings. She was not confined to one style and painted challenging subjects, unlike her other female contemporaries. Her job as a muse allowed her to observe the techniques of some of the most famous artists. Artists like Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec encouraged her art career, helping her become the first woman to be in the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts. Her primary focus in her paintings was the female form. Her most famous work is *The Blue Room*. This not only touched on the changing social and fashion norms during the twentieth century but also moved away from the sexualization of women in artwork. She even painted male nudes, to reverse the social norms and paint men as a subject of desire. Unlike any other artists, she painted herself nude in which she showed the effects of aging. Valadon was vulnerable in that aspect and ultimately changed the way women were depicted. Suzanne Valadon has been an inspiration for other female artists and changed the art world for the better.

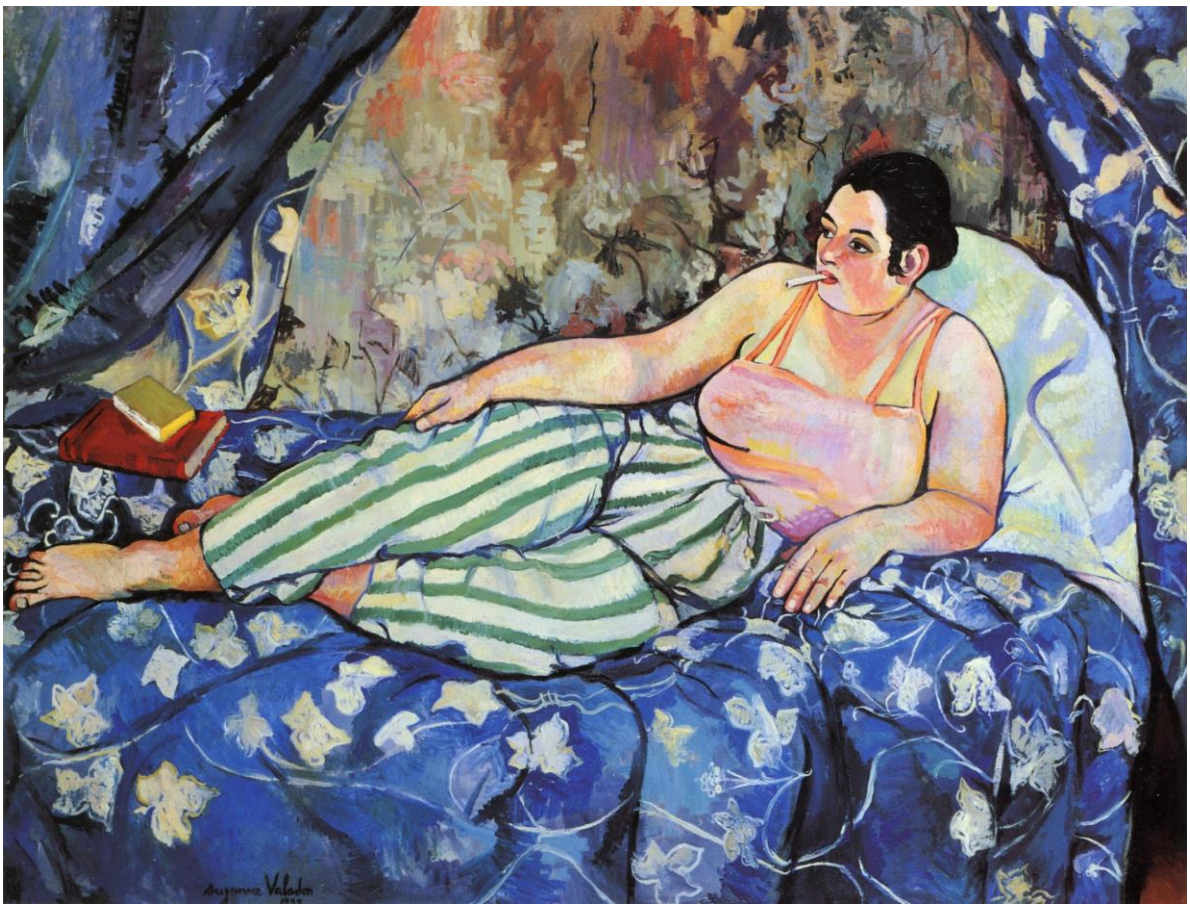

Figure 1, Suzanne Valadon, *The Blue Room (La chambre bleue)*, 1923.

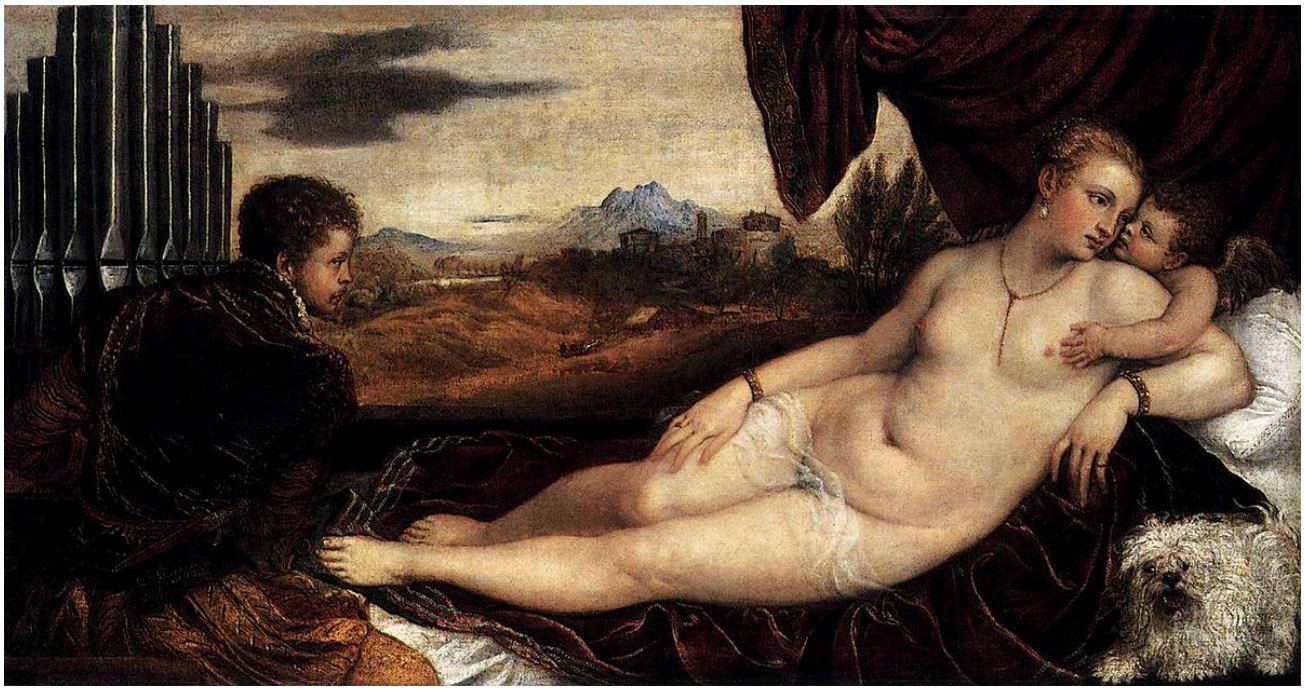

Figure 2, Titian, *Venus and Cupid with an Organist*, ca. 1555.

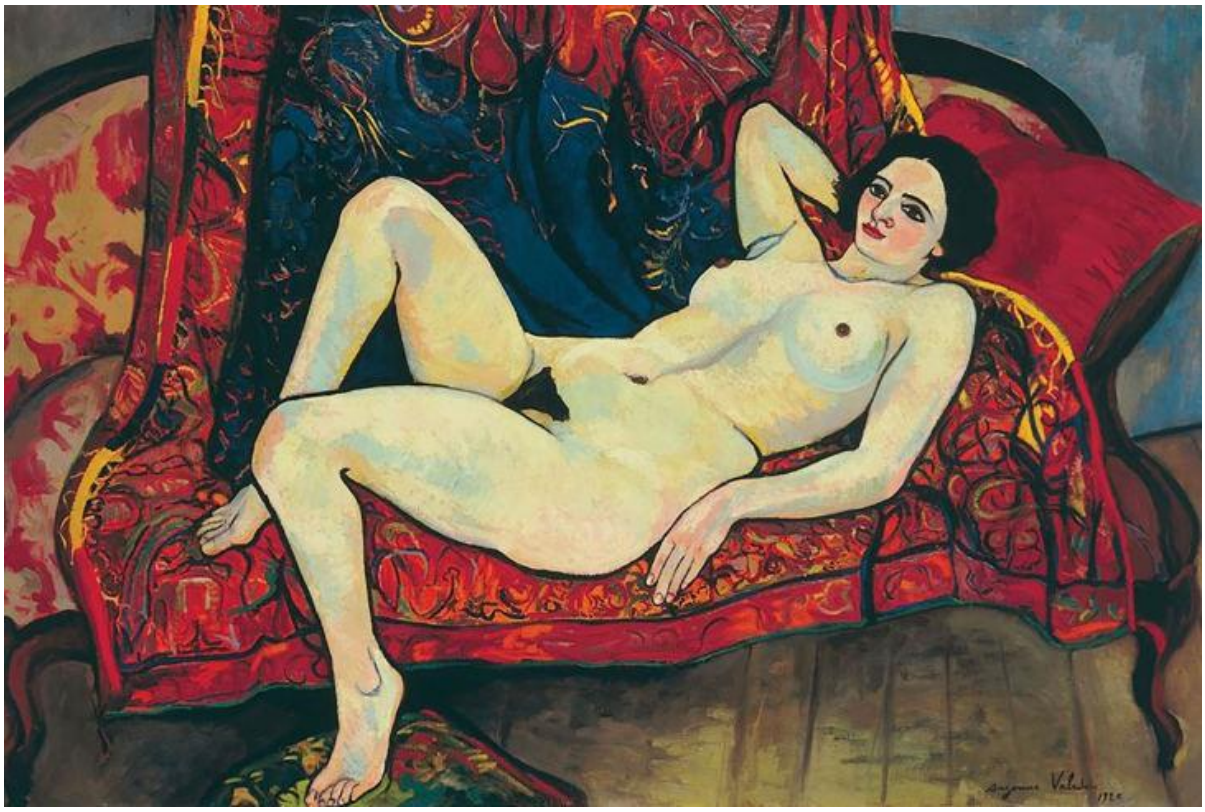

Figure 3, Suzanne Valadon, Nude on the Sofa, 1920.

Figure 4, Suzanne Valadon, Casting the Net, 1914.

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Stella Linde

Two Versus Four: Animalization and Dehumanization in Toni Morrison's Beloved

Toni Morrison highlights the degrading yet normalized institution of slavery in the United States during the 1870's by planting the reader in the life of a family who has been torn apart and traumatized leading to inhumane and animalistic actions. Morrison dedicates this novel to those who had to experience the Middle Passage and suffer the horrific treatment and living conditions that white US citizens put them in. The morals of slavery can be blatantly summarized as the dehumanization and objectification of African Americans. As a result, those who were enslaved began to question their worth and if there was any truth in slavery's morals, thus leaving them no choice but to act with animalistic behaviors. Morrison takes on the institution of slavery and all its evils in a novel that spans multiple generations. She emphasizes the impact of dehumanization through the characters at Sweet Home, juxtaposing Mr. Garner's and schoolteacher's brands of slavery and highlighting the moral complexities of Sethe's infanticide, arguing that slavery as an institution denies people's humanity and forces them into a subhuman, animal state.

Although Morrison described Sweet Home as a beautiful place, what went on there was traumatizing. Those who survived and escaped the Sweet Home plantation, such as Paul D and Sethe, were forever tormented by horrendous memories where they were treated like animals. Plantations, such as Sweet Home, are a prime example of how African Americans were dehumanized. When Sethe sees Paul D's bit in his mouth, it reminds her of the children, women and men she had to watch have a bit installed in their mouths. Sethe claimed, "People I saw as a child, who'd had the bit always looked wild after that" (84). Bits are used on horses to allow the rider to have more control over them, thus when slaves are given bits it implies that horses and slaves have the same worth. Not only was the freedom of African Americans swiped from them but even basic human functions such

as spitting was taken. Sethe believed that Paul D wanted to be asked about the bit and "how the need to spit is so deep you cry for it" (84), however bringing the topic up is questioned as the thought of a bit on a human is beyond immoral. In addition to the white slave owners who viewed African Americans as animals, after a while the slaves began to compare themselves to animals too. While Paul D was at Sweet Home he spent his time comparing his liberties to Mister, a rooster. He claimed, "Mister was allowed to be and stay what he was. But I wasn't allowed to be and stay what I was. Even if you cooked him you'd be cooking a rooster named Mister. But wasn't no way I'd ever be Paul D again, living or dead" (86). Comparing a being to a rooster is shallow and heartbreaking, but to also name the rooster who serves no significance to his life beyond comparison purposes goes to show that he respects Mister more than himself. The hate for Sweet Home was so strong that Sethe would have done anything to never go back. Even when the schoolteacher found her in the woods, she says, "I wasn't going back there. I don't care who found who. Any life not that one. I went to jail instead" and was so committed that she was willing to take her newborn Denver with her to jail (50). Morrison cleverly emphasizes the dehumanization of African Americans who were enslaved not only through the physical hardships they were put through, but also the mental ones that were forced upon them as they were constantly being compared to animals.

Morrison juxtaposes Mr. Garner's "good" slavery and the schoolteachers "bad" slavery to emphasize that while Mr. Garner gave his slaves more freedom, they were never free because the general idea of owning another person cuts off so much of their freedom in the first place. Mr. Garner even once said "but if you a man yourself, you'll want your n*****s to be men too" in response to the school teacher while they argued about the treatment or worth of those enslaved (12). Mr. Garner contradicts himself by using a slur while talking about how he wants to make men out of his slaves. He makes the

claim that he wanted his slaves to be men and strong because it represented him well while the school teacher disagreed because he did not want his slaves to believe they had the same worth as a white man. Regardless of the living conditions of the slaves, both of them benefited the slave owner. Mr. Garner did not allow them freedom because he had good morals, instead he was doing it because it made him look good. Although Mr. Garner allowed them to be literate, own guns, and let the men choose their wives, when Sethe and Mrs. Garner were alone in the kitchen; she brought up marriage just to be belittled. Mrs. Garner "put down her cooking spoon. Laughing a little, she touched Sethe on the head, saying 'You are one sweet child.' And then no more," thus invalidating Sethe's dream of having a real wedding and not just mating in the corn fields, like an animal (31). Once Mr. Garner passed away, the school teacher and his nephew took over with a whole new level of dehumanization. Compared to Mr. Garner, Paul D claimed that the "schoolteacher changed me. I was something else and that something was less than a chicken sitting in the sun on a tub" (86). Not only did the schoolteacher make Paul D feel inadequate to a rooster, but Sixo who is characterized as a tough person was torn apart by the questions the schoolteacher asks and writes about in his book. The schoolteacher was doing experimental research and logging it down in his journal, making those enslaved at Sweet Home feel as if they were outsiders and different from white people, stripping them of their humanity. Morrison includes a lot of character dialect when schoolteacher is brought up to make the reader look at him from the point of the slaves, who experience his torture versus a narator reminiscing on it. In a conversation between Paul D and Sethe she put emphasis on the fact that the nephews stole her milk as she skipped over Paul D's questions about them beating her while she was pregnant and using cowhide on her. In response she replied, "And they took my milk!" which goes to show how invalidated Sethe felt when they stole her milk as it traumatized her more than getting beat while impregnanted (20).

Although there are dramatic differences in the ways Mr. Garner and the schoolteacher treated slaves, Morrison stresses that owning slaves in general is traumatizing and dehumanizing to one as there are animalistic aspects of simply owning another being.

The peak comparison between humanistic and animalistic actions in Morrison's novel is when Sethe kills her children as a form of protection. The way children were talked about in general was detached as if there was no emotion connected to the subject. Although Sethe tried killing her two sons, Howard and Buglar, who ended up running away and successfully killing her baby girl Beloved, it was all out of good intentions and fear. The institution of slavery traumatized Sethe so much that she refused to let her children endure what she had gone through. Out of love for her children, she sacrificed her sanity and killed Beloved. The brutal infanticide was about as dehumanizing and animalistic as it gets, thus reinforcing slavery's morals that claim African Americans acted like wild animals., Yet Sethe's intentions were protective, which is a humanistic trait as mothers tend to protect their daughters at all costs. However, if it was not for slavery and the torture Sethe was put through, she would not have acted with such vial behaviors. Morrison emphasizes throughout the novel that even love was dangerous for those who were enslaved. Paul D even went so far as to say to Sethe that her "love is too thick," as if a mother should not love her children just in case they were taken into slavery (193). The narrator backs this up claiming that "nobody stopped playing checkers just because the pieces included her children" (28). In addition, Morrison takes the animalistic idea further as the characters are aware that their actions are not the most civilized. Sethe claimed, "It ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that"(194). Sethe refused to listen to anyone who told her what she did was wrong and worse than slavery. In response Sethe speaks on her infanticide with no shame as she strongly believed she accomplished her goal, preventing

any of her children being trapped in slavery. Yet again, Paul D pushes against Sethe's justification by affirming she has two feet, not four which is his way of saying that he even thought Sethe's infanticide was animalistic. Morrison highlights the chain reaction of slavery where the tortment influenced animalistic behaviors which then justified the institution of slavery as a whole through inhumane actions such as Sethe's infanticide.

Toni Morrison captured the intense, traumatizing, inhumane treatment of enslaved African Americans that left them mentally fragile and torn to pieces by shifting the reader's focus to the slaves behaviors and forcing one to question what would make them do such a thing. From the beginning of Beloved, taking place at Sweet Home, Morrison expresses how slavery, no matter the owners, is detrimental to one's mind. Whether it was Paul D comparing himself to a rooster or the school teacher's nephews pinning Sethe down and stealing her breast milk from her, it made them believe they were less than human, thus causing them to act with animalistic manners. Towards the end of the book the narrator claims that "this is not a story to pass on" (324). because of the topic's brutal nature. However, that is exactly why Morrison passes on such a story that highlights the struggles African Americans went through which rejected their humanity and placed them into an alienated category.

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Michael Schmalz

Voices of Heritage and Discord: Unveiling the Complexities of Identity in Derek Walcott's "A Far Cry from Africa"

'Divided to the vein'

As a product of the interwoven and fluctuating culture of the British colony of Saint Lucia, Derek Walcott explores and promotes his English, African, and Dutch heritage through his poetry. Bereft of a distinctive identity, Walcott employs his art to epistemologically reflect on his English and Caribbean lineage, revealing the contiguously discrepant, yet eventually analogous qualities within them. These qualities are communicated through the Mau Mau uprising from 1952 to 1960, during which the Kikuyu tribe utilized guerilla tactics to fight against harsh British colonial rule. In *"A Far Cry from Africa,"* set against the backdrop of this violent uprising, Walcott delineates two paths that underscore the ethical and peremptory sides of history, prompting a deep inquiry and delving into his attachments and struggles with identity. Unable to discern nationalism amidst the perpetual, senseless violence that pervades the colonial landscape, Walcott finds himself "divided to the vein" (Walcott line 27). Subsequently, Walcott becomes ensnared in a state of retreating worldliness and deeper into a pit of disorientation within which he is unable to "face such slaughter" and not able to "turn from Africa and live" (32-33). This division is congealed as the central struggle throughout the poem, allowing it to become a nuanced exploration of the complexities of post-colonial identity and the moral ambiguity of violent struggles for independence.

Man and Nature

The first-person perspective of Walcott is fluid, adopting an ambiguous sense that maintains a capacity to change throughout the poem. Without reading into the poem at all,

the title, *"A Far Cry from Africa,"* offers a neo-colonial recognition, echoing his struggles and speaking to how Africans can feel detached from African identity following years of forced assimilation. Throughout the poem, Walcott, using naturalistic comparisons, presents the central struggle of the poem by comparing the disturbance of colonization in traditional African life to "a wind ruffling the tawny pelt" (1). Throughout the poem, Walcott continues to use aspects of nature to contrast and evoke the violence in Kenya as well as to present readers with a more realistic and graphic representation. By imagining Kikuyu as "quick as flies / Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt," Walcott draws a moral condemnation of their tactics while also implementing the term 'veldt,' a word from Afrikaans that conducts a tenuous collation between both acts of violence (2-3). In the second stanza, Walcott ironically incorporates the term "civilization" while describing a hunt "of ibises," which are white-legged animals, "by beaters" to acknowledge the scathing subsistence of barbarity and aggression within our modern, enlightened societies (11-12). Walcott furthers this through historical narratives, mentioning graphic acts of the "white child hacked in the bed" committed by "savages, expendable as Jews" (9-10). Walcott ends this quote with a question mark, leaving himself just as perplexed as when he began the poem. Furthermore, this inquiry expresses Walcott's internal strife with this equivalence point of arbitrary violence, within which he questions the perception of individuals as inherently violent. The climax of this comparison between humans and nature becomes exemplified through Walcott's repetition of the word 'beast' and the ensuing abutment between "wars [that] / Dance to the tightened carcass of a drum" and "white peace contracted by the dead" (18-21). The natural succumbence of humans to primal violence is, suggested by Walcott, an inevitable phenomenon that demands external critique, as it promotes a futile endeavor akin to how "the gorilla wrestles with the superman" (25).

A Splintered Structure

The aimless structure of Walcott's poem appears as an inadvertence, following no rhyme scheme and a tangled form and meter. Walcott's initial stanza offers an ABAB rhyme scheme yet abruptly breaks on the fifth line, creating a disjointed and fragmentary feel to the poem that mirrors Walcott's divided loyalties. Each stanza progressively increases in length and maintains a blurry structure, displaying Walcott's psychological process and advancement that outs itself as a form of rebellious encroachment in the poetic sphere. Coalesced with Walcott's broken identity, this structure reflects the dissension between French Creole or West Indian dialects and the standardized metrical form of English poetry. Comparably, it helps denote Walcott's physically bearing ties to Africa's suffering grappling with his love of the English language that has allowed him to express himself. The organic, free feel of Walcott's poetry is aided by his incessant use of enjambment that furthers the themes of violence and urgency in "*A Far Cry from Africa"*. As mentioned before, the pronounced use of rhetorical form in the opening and concluding stanzas of Walcott's poem not only overtly underscores his own unresolved struggle with his heritage but also actively engages and challenges the readers to contemplate their own sense of identity and belonging in the context of colonialism and post-colonialism.

Unraveling the Veil of Mortality:
A Probing Analysis of Transience and Epiphany in James Joyce's "The Dead"

James Joyce's short story, *"The Dead"*, is a quintessential example of modernist literature that captures the introspective turmoil of its protagonist, Gabriel Conroy, as he attends a dinner party with his wife, Gretta. In *"The Dead"*, James Joyce employs the dribble of snow to connote the interplay between the supposed generational transmigration in Dublin and the paralytic self-consciousness of Gabriel, both of which are steeped in nostalgia. This intricate, progressive human realization amidst the bleak and frigid setting is epitomized by a series of stark contraventions and profound paradigmatic transformations that effectively alter Gabriel's notion of life. Consequently, Joyce highlights the tension between tradition and modernity in early 20th-century Ireland while exploring the complexities of human emotions and self-awareness.

As a progressive metaphor, the use of snow is initially presented as a particularly quaint, yet frivolous element that sets the mood for the rest of the story. However, readers are hastily confronted with an obscure foreshadowing as Gabriel approaches the party, his overcoat adorned with "a light fringe of snow" despite "scraping the snow from his goloshes" (Joyce 1249). The snow is an ingrained aspect of human nature, connecting the flawed essence of human nature and the unique, random qualities that constitute a snowflake. Joyce portrays Gabriel's covetous attempt to escape his human nature through this meteorological lens, further evidenced by his awkward social interactions with Lily and Miss Ivors. These interactions denote Gabriel's lingering with nostalgic, historic tendencies of a rigid gender hierarchy, which he attempts to uphold through a domineering and superior authority over female guests, often leaving them uneasy. Gabriel's supercilious complex is overtly demonstrated as Gabriel "liked nothing better than to find himself at the head of a well-laden table," giving a speech that he felt was "above the heads

of his hearers" (1250 & 1261). The spurious manner of Gabriel serves to conceal any weakness, denigrating others while maintaining his privileged social class. In his speech, Gabriel extols the virtues of hospitality in Ireland, boasting its international exclusivity and calling on the guests to "cherish in our hearts the memory of those dead and gone great ones" (1265). He contrasts the present generation with the models of the past, lamenting the present's lack of continuance with similar ideals. Gabriel effectively navigates a liminal space between life and death, where he must supplant his notion of life with that of famous idols. Gabriel's fixation on the past and his elevation of historical icons to an idealized status reveal a form of escapism, a way to usurp the sense of stagnancy and disillusionment that pervades his daily life with a sense of reverence.

A salient aspect of snow is its physical transience, how it thaws to give way to an obscure interior, often challenging previously individualistic characteristics. In the context of *"The Dead,"* the snow that covers Gabriel is emblematic of his initial emotional detachment and sense of social isolation, which symbolically dissipates under the gradual acclimation into the warm and lively atmosphere of the party. Correspondingly, as Gabriel continues to explore himself both socially and independently, he gradually sheds his previously lauded insularity and expands his perspective, cultivating a broader and more receptive mindset. This modulation is exemplified when, shortly after his initial glib speech of memory, Gabriel urges others to "not linger on the past" (1265). Later, when Gabriel shares a story about his grandfather's horse and how he would inexplicably "walk around the statue" like "he was back again in the mill," he inadvertently divulges and acknowledges his similarly paralyzed, incessant state of life (1268).

Furthermore, as Gabriel "tapped the cold pane of the window," he experiences a sudden yearning "to walk out alone" in search of a more meaningful pursuit, essentially forsaking his former haughty and urbane demeanor to find some purpose, smothered under

the fresh snow (1258). Comparably, as Gabriel walks back with Gretta to their hotel after the party, he is clenched with a desire to "forget the years of their dull existence together and remember only their moments of ecstasy" (1271). The snow's physical presence surrounding him appears to emotionally unmask him, sparking covetousness for a state of emotional transparency or something more profound and transcendent than the mundane and banal existence that has plagued him. When Gretta later reveals the reason for her distance towards him, recounting the story of Michael Furey, a boy who sang to her on a cold night and ultimately died because of it, Gabriel is forced to confront the fragility of life and the fleeting nature of love which counteracts his previously 'controlling' interactions. As Gabriel grapples with the disquieting realization that his feelings for Gretta pale in comparison to Michael, snow continues to fall outside, exacerbating and locking Gabriel into a paralyzed, psychological quandary, where he is impelled to recognize his powerlessness over Gretta's choices, the indiscrimination of death, and the subsequent notion that merely existing does not equate to truly living and that some who have passed on may have lived more fully than those who remain. Amongst Gabriel's epiphany of the contiguities between life and death is a realization of his "wayward and flickering existence," spurring the abandonment of previous narcissistic pulses and the adoption of a more altruistic version of love, characterized by percipience, impartiality, and a willingness to embark on a "journey westward" (1276) towards what Homer Obed Brown describes as a "death of egoism" (Brown 99).

Conclusively, James Joyce utilizes the symbolic power of snow as a multifaceted metaphor that operates as a magnifying glass, offering readers an intricate glimpse into the complex psychological landscape of Gabriel. Through this lens, Gabriel's internal struggle with his innate humanity and his unrelenting longing for moral ascension are acutely portrayed, demonstrating Joyce's skillful ability to explore the complexities of the human

psyche. The progressive epiphany of Gabriel throughout *"The Dead"* is an essential reminder for readers to examine their past constantly, how it affects them presently, and to consider the complexities of human emotions and relationships.

Fragmented Echoes of Modernity
The Historical Undercurrents in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land"

T.S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" is a complex and multilayered work that defies straightforward interpretation, featuring a fragmented narrative structure, a dizzying array of literary allusions and references, and a range of voices and perspectives. Void-less, grasping rubble that resembles once-greatly erected halls, T.S. Eliot scours the inarticulation which endures in the experiences of 'The Lost Generation' that subsequently arrive in London after the First World War. Embedded within the landscape of urban alienation is a reluctance to change, rooted in a weary and decaying cultural framework whose fragments form the very fabric of this new generation. The only viable solution suggested by Eliot to the societal malaise and disillusionment is personal evaluation.

Eliot situates the poem in five stages, each a progression of the latter that thoroughly calculates the extensive effects and real repercussions of WW1. The Burial of the Dead, Eliot's first stage, enters readers into a paradoxical nature, exclaiming that "April," a traditional symbol of rebirth and renewal in nature, "is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing / Memory and desire, stirring / Dull roots with spring rain" (Eliot lines 1-4). To Eliot and many others during this time, April reintroduces painful memories, recognizing that blossoms no longer hold a place in a world dominated by the bleak 'dead land' and wishing the 'dull roots' would remain concealed. Later, the speaker hauntingly inquires how "death had undone so many" as they gaze at a crowd, discerning immovable inertia, an industrialized and disillusioned society shattered by the war, left questioning the ideals of the Enlightenment and the fundamental values of Western civilization. (63). Exploring the devastating effects of war, Eliot elicits historical ramifications, particularly the scourge of post-traumatic stress disorder, as illustrated in a scenario where the speaker encountered a fellow soldier and, in a desperate

attempt to connect, “stopped him, crying: Stetson! / You who were with me in the ships at Mylae” (69-70). Despite their shared experiences, the soldiers are unable to bridge the chasm of trauma that plagues them, highlighting the profound psychological toll of war.

The second, third, and fourth stages of Eliot's “The Waste Land” serve as a transitional interlude between the initial devastation of war and the buoyant future, delving deeper into the initial themes of societal decay and the drowning out of cultural norms. “A Game of Chess” centers primarily on the erosion of masculinity and the breakdown of interpersonal relationships and communication within society. As two women engage in a heated argument about their respective marriages, the bartender interjects with an innocuous announcement of "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME," serving as a dual-purpose prompt for the women to depart while simultaneously functioning as a symbolic catalyst for personal awakening and self-expression, elements conspicuously vacant in the climate of the Lost Generation. (141). The bartender's descent from the scene, punctuated with a polite "good night" to the "sweet ladies," alludes to the tragic figure of Ophelia from Shakespeare's Hamlet, evoking a sense of a timeless, yet futile, struggle for identity and meaning in a society that lacks room for such pursuits (172). "The Fire Sermon" delves into the themes of sexuality and desire, presenting a fragmented and disjointed series of images that reflect the emotional emptiness and alienation prevalent in modern relationships. Drawing from Buddhist philosophy, Eliot utilizes the concept of the "fire sermon" to emphasize the fleeting and unsatisfying nature of all human experiences. Conversely, "Death by Water" presents a brief and ambiguous contemplation on the inevitability of death and the power of the natural world, symbolizing the futility of human endeavors in the face of mortality. The interplay of the five stages culminates in a striking and poignant representation of the disintegration of society and the existential turmoil that followed the catastrophic upheavals of World War I.

In a world characterized by "a heap of broken images" and "a dead tree giving no shelter," hope is nonexistent (22-23). All constantly seek release from this wasteland, yet the solution remains eluded. However, Eliot introduces a triangular notion, "DA," through the symbolic thunder, which offers a means of escape from the despair of the wasteland (401). The thunder initiates his message:

> *Datta*: what have we given?
> The awful daring of a moment's surrender
> Which an age of prudence can never retract
> By this, and this only, we have existed
> Which is not to be found in our obituaries
> Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
> Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
> In our empty rooms (402-410)

The concept of "Datta" espouses the idea that the act of giving should extend beyond the transitory and superficial exchanges of modern society. Eliot emphasizes the necessity of bestowing something of lasting value, free from the fleeting and ephemeral nature of everyday encounters. A life of prudence and calculated caution yields little lasting significance, thereby urging individuals to contemplate the mark they leave on the world. Through this thunderous proclamation, intangible experiences remain superior over the accumulation of material possessions. The thunder continues:

> *Dayadhvam*: I have heard the key
> Turn in the door once and turn once only
> We think of the key, each in his prison
> Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
> Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours
> Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus (412-417)

The concept conveyed by Dayadhvam is one of empathy, suggesting that individuals are often confined by their self-imposed limitations, and continuously reinforced by our persistent fixation on the notion of a key as a means of escape. However, true liberation can only be achieved through a deep understanding and connection with one another rather than the mere acquisition of material objects or individualistic pursuits. The thunder serves as a prophetic call to action, urging individuals to break free from their barriers and engage

in a more profound sense of social connections, thereby transcending the limitations of the modern world. The thunder concludes:

> *Damyata*: The boat responded
> Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
> The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
> Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
> To controlling hands (419-423)

In advocating for surrender, Damyata urges us to relinquish our perceived control over our lives and trust in the guidance of external forces. This trust calls for a sense of resignation and acceptance of fate, allowing us to be led on a path that we may not have chosen. Such surrender may seem counterintuitive, but it ultimately liberates us from the limitations of our individualistic mentality and opens the possibility of a greater collective consciousness. Only through this extraneous navigation can we be led to freedom and fulfillment. As the thunderous message of Eliot's triptych reverberates through the wasteland, the poem's themes of disillusionment, decay, and despair become susceptible to reconstruction. With his final utterance of "Shantih shantih shantih," Eliot beseeches a higher spiritual plane that dissipates the deleterious encounters of the physical world (434). The poem concludes with a call to the rediscovery of the path of faith and asceticism in order to triumph over division and estrangement. By emphasizing the importance of inner transformation and the pursuit of spiritual fulfillment, Eliot suggests that redemption and healing are still possible, even in a world that seems irreparably mangled.

Conclusively, T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is a masterful and intricate work of poetry that delves deeply into the modern world’s societal, cultural, and psychological dislocation. Through its chronological structure and variance of literary allusions and references, the poem evokes the disillusionment and despair of a generation traumatized by the devastation of World War I. Despite the destruction and chaos of the wasteland, Eliot

introduces his notion of “Da” as a means of escape from despair. Ultimately, Eliot calls for introspection and personal transformation as a means of confronting disillusionment.

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Nivedha Goli

Original Oratory: Burnt Fries

As school gets out at 3:30pm my friends and I are preparing for the journey of a lifetime. We have to hike up and down treacherous mountain hills and slopes for thirty painful minutes for a glorious treasure. As we finish our trek and prepare to relish in our reward, we sometimes question why we walk 30 minutes every other week for fries, but you have to understand these fries are like nothing else. They have the perfect golden-brown sheen; you don't even need ketchup for it to taste good and while you take your last bite you don't even remember the struggle of the journey. But if I am being completely honest the fries weren't always that good. Because the fries used to be really really burnt and thankfully after a numerous amount of complaints, they finally fixed their fryer. The journey of these fries reminds me of activism oddly enough. Because with activism some young activists always get the burnt pieces no matter the fryer they use while others get to enjoy the perfect golden-brown ones without even having to experience the pain of the journey.

First, we're going to look at why our fryer is malfunctioning and producing a whole lot of bad fries for a whole lot of activists.

Then we're going to see what the implications are of people only ever getting burnt fries and

Finally, we are going to look at some solutions for fixing our fryer of activism and I promise you by the end of this speech you will all get your very own composition of fries.

Youth activism is when people around my age or even younger take action for social justice or change. By telling the youth, the future, that they can create an impact

helps people from younger generations. It helps youth, like me, understand that our actions have value and can possibly change the world. We, as a society, need to highlight youth activism even more because it encourages children to take a stand for what they believe is right. So, WE, the youth, are the future of activism!

But there has been something I have been wondering for quite a while, what is included in the future of activism, who is included in that we statement? Is the girl, who was raised right outside of New Mexico, who fights for a minority community a part of this we? What about the young boy with heart palpitations due to pollution who fights for young leaders, is he a part of this we? Well, that depends, are the people I just mentioned white or not. Personally, I find it quite weird how some people still try to separate white people from the rest of the world. And this mindset continues to appear throughout my life and even in activism. Though in activism it appears in the form of exclusion.

Exclusion in activism not only creates limited possibilities for activists but also blocks the possibility of a new world where we can all thrive and feel a sense of belonging. Exclusion forces us to ignore what's going on with the Indian Health Service. According to the American Bar association, "The Indian Health service, an organization within the U.S. department of Health and Human services has been consistently underfunded by Congress even though it provided care to over 2.2 million native Americans. Congress's action is forcing health care providers to limit services offered" (Smith, Native Americans: A Crisis in Health Equity). Although activists of color have been excluded throughout all of history, recent advances in communication have only made it worse.

In the media young white activists are being put at the front of social justice movements, while youth of color are being cast aside. When this happens youth of color are being suppressed and aspects of intersectionality are lost. Intersectionality is like a Venn diagram. It is understanding how aspects of a person's identity, like race, class, and

gender, work together to create various forms of discrimination and privilege. When the power of youth of color's voices in the media is diminished, the idea they are fighting for doesn't get spread and their perspective gets lost. Perspective in activism is essential, because it grants understanding, and fights against bias and misinformation.

Let's look at one example where Vanessa Nakate, a Ugandan youth climate activist was cropped out of a photo from a joint press conference and her name wasn't even on the list of participants for this conference. Nakate said, "[she] felt like she wasn't even there because of this incident and that climate activists of color are erased, and that there were other activists who had messaged her saying that similar things had happened to them, but they didn't have the courage to say anything" (Evelyn, *'like I wasn't there': Climate activist Vanessa Nakate on being erased from a movement*). Even if it was an "accidental photo crop" when an accident like that happens hundreds of times it's bound to have its effects, because people don't know who Vanessa Nakate is and who other activists of color are because of these events.

People of color are usually the foundation for most activism, yet they get no credit and somehow what they were originally fighting for gets transformed into a movement where white people are centered and their needs are put first. Now in the U.S. it is no surprise that this happens, as we are a nation that was founded on the basis of white supremacy, and that still shows in the activism that occurs in this country. Because how many indigenous youth activists can you name?

Now let's clearly state the implications of continuing to head down the wrong path. Throughout the world young white people have become the face and future of activism as we know it and in the present day the media only adds on to this. White activists are usually not the first ones to be affected by problems they become the face of. Take Greta Thunberg who I am sure you all know, the left knows Greta, the right knows Greta,

everybody knows Greta. She has quickly become the face of climate activism, yet she is not a part of the communities that are the first ones impacted by climate change. Greta fights alongside activists of color, like Autumn Petelier, who are a part of the groups that are the first affected, yet the media shines more light on her rather than giving these young activists of color a bigger platform. Environmental racism refers to the disproportionate number of environmental hazards found in minority neighborhoods primarily populated by people of color and these people are disproportionately affected by environmental policies. Working on environmental racism is a huge part of climate reform but if the world can't even bother to do something as simple as listening to young voices of color, we as a society may never be able to fix the problems we have caused. But as I was saying I'm sure all of you know who Greta Thunberg is even if you aren't well versed in climate reform, but here are activists you may not have even heard of Rose Whipple, Martese Johnson, and even Jules turner, each of these activist imagine something different for the world but one thing that unites them is that they as youth of color don't get enough of a platform in a world where people listen to white activists first.

Activism is meant to improve our world but if there are inherent issues, and limitations, within the premise of activism, then those contradictions need to be understood and worked on. So, in a world where our society is filled with the beauty of diversity, if those who we know fight for political and social change are not diverse then that creates an issue of a lack of representation, perspective, and actual change. Representation teaches us who can and who cannot change the world. When we see white activists, we internalize that those are the makers of change, and the internalization is not only a form of self-hatred but also prevents actual movement. For example, invisible, non-represented, groups create invisible solutions. Vanessa Nakate, the same girl I mentioned earlier furthers this by saying, "Every activist who speaks out is telling a story about their community, but if they

are ignored, the world will not know what's happening, and what solutions are working" (Evelyn, *'like I wasn't there': Climate activist Vanessa Nakate on being erased from a movement*). With a lack of representation comes a lack of empowerment. And that makes perfect sense to me since most of my friends are too afraid to stand up for what they believe in because they don't know anyone that looks like them that does. Proper representation must exist for activism to help everyone. So, what's the solution to fixing this issue in activism?

FRIES, F. R. I. E. S., I mean I did promise them to you at the beginning of this speech – Fries are a 5-part solution: First F we need to be okay with failing, because the path to making activism truly equal isn't straightforward and we will make mistakes along the way. R we need to remember past activists of color, so we can learn how they fought for what they believed in, we need to remember activists like Bayard Rustin who was an LGBTQ and civil rights advocate. Now I, we need to inspire young activists of color to create a future where everyone stands up for what they believe in. E we need to educate not only ourselves but others about issues like what's going on with the Indian Health Service. And finally, S we need to not be salty because even though salty fries sound good salty humans do not, we need to not get annoyed just because we are finally sharing the spotlight. So far, the call to do and act has relied on those who we know are available. But right now, we need to detach from our normal sources of activism and become aware of our biases for the future of activism to benefit everyone.

But if nothing changes, and this is where the future of activism is heading, I don't *want* to be a part of it even if I am never given the opportunity to be.

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Meghana Hiremagalore

Colonization and *A Small Place*

In this essay, through consideration of Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*, I will be explaining the two major forms that colonization takes, *economic* and *ideological*, and why they must be carefully considered for effective decolonization to happen. In brief, economic colonization is a form of colonization that aims to assert dominance over the economic industries and infrastructures. The goal of all colonization, ultimately, is plunder. Economic colonization describes what systems are built to accomplish that goal. Ideological colonization attacks the customs and traditions of the indigenous people living on that particular land and forcing them all to conform to the "Western" culture, in this context. Decolonization, therefore, is the slow process of the destruction of both forms of colonization; it involves taking back the customs and traditions that have been stolen and breaking down of large infrastructural companies used to force workers to work for minimum wage under poor conditions.

When considering the best way to go about decolonization, it's very important to consider the impact colonization itself has had on the people. In many of the case studies we've seen so far, the decolonization process was partially successful or left incomplete, leaving certain countries in great economic divide even today. There are, ultimately, two parts to decolonization: the freedom struggle, and the post-independence stage. The freedom struggle

is the stage where the main conflict is with the colonizer, and how the enslaved can free themselves from their clutches. The post-independence stage is when the newly independent country's leaders decide where to go from that point; this consists of what reforms to make, what freedom means for their people, and what laws they construct to maintain that.

The Small Place explores the case of Antigua. The author, Jamaica Kincaid, sets the scene- an image of how the country looks, years after its independence. From the very beginning, Kincaid establishes the types of colonization that occurred there and the reason behind them. In addition to the plantation economy, Antigua was converted into a large tourist attraction, intended for foreigners from "the west." Infrastructures that the foreigners would have liked and appreciated were given more development, while public infrastructure like sanitation and health suffered from neglect. Therefore, when painting the picture of the city, Kincaid describes how it would look like to a tourist, a foreigner: beautiful, something to be admired. The tourist admires the crystal-clear fresh water and the lush greenery, completely unknowing of the cost at which that was achieved: poorly developed sanitation systems, flawed drainage pipe ways, less than satisfactory doctors stocked up in the hospitals, and the broken library.

To explore this further, I will consider how Kincaid describes ongoing forms of economic and ideological colonization in Antigua.

First, economic colonization: consider, for instance, the sanitation system, which is a poorly developed drainage system that result in excrement-wet waste and dry waste alike- ending up in the large water bodies; the very same ones that the tourists call "beautiful." The food from Antigua, moreover, isn't locally sourced. It's imported from Miami. Before it even reaches Miami, no one knows where it comes from. Kincaid points out that it probably comes from a place not much better than Antigua. This indicates the state of poverty the country is in, which is characterized by a lack of development in the food and agriculture industry. Many Antiguans, moreover, own expensive cars, but not nearly as expensive houses. Kincaid says this is because getting a loan for a car is much easier than getting a loan for a house. She lays particular emphasis on the fact that the two major car companies are owned by the government. So, even now, the government controls the economy; makes it so that people are forced to invest in things like cars, while sacrificing money for a good home. All of these examples are results of incomplete decolonization -- i.e., a poor reconstruction of the economy. They indicate that the economic state of the country is still largely favored and manipulated by the people in the government, and development in the right industries (like food and sanitation) has not been sufficient.

Not only is Antigua still a major tourist attraction, it's also economically divided, which stems from the culture of colonization. A large mansion in town is owned by a wealthy merchant family-white people- that came to Antigua less than 20 years prior. And yet, they still own a large portion of the country. Not

only that, but they regularly lend money to the government, effectively contributing to and, therefore, controlling a large portion of the economy. What's more is that a member of this family is an Antiguan ambassador to Syria. I wonder how they got that position? Another mansion is owned by a woman called Evita, who is the girlfriend of a high government official. Instead of pouring the money into public industry, it's given to her instead, providing her with a large house, even giving her a say in cabinet meetings. Again, the economic system favors the members of the government, dominated by white people. These British officials also appoint elites among the locals to execute and propagate their interests. The elites they appoint become corrupted by the manipulative nature of colonization, drawn in, I suppose, by the temptation of feeling superior to their own people, gifted with better living conditions (more land) and power, even if they are minions to the colonizers and resented by the majority of the Antiguans.

Even socially, the people are segregated. They segregate themselves, understandably so. Even though the constitution allowed white people to stay in the country, if they were not problematic, Kincaid argues that the Antiguans don't ever approach or appreciate tourists. This is because the tourists are there on a vacation, while the Antiguans can't leave. It's also because of the structure of the economy that favors development of certain sectors over others. All the government buildings, for instance, are developed properly, the hotels the tourists stay in are better developed than even the sanitation and food industries, and so forth.

Kincaid also describes ongoing forms of ideological colonization in Antigua. She remembers a time, for instance, somewhere at the precipice of the decolonization period, where the streets possessed English names, for example, Hawkins Street, Drake Street. There was one called the East Street which was paved with mahogany trees. It led to the Government House where the Governor lived, the Governor who was standing in for the Queen- another colonizer. It was surrounded by high white walls, that remained white and high, free of vandalization. From this, it can be inferred that these buildings were fiercely protected, or people never dared to destroy them. On the High Street, where colonial government took place, Antiguans could go cash checks, read a book, post a letter, or appeal to court. Although they had this, it seemed like they were invited in just so they could see how superior the whites were to them, how their infrastructure was much more developed than basic needs for the public. This is economic, ultimately, but it communicates an ideological message.

The library, moreover, from which Antiguans received their sources of information and education, was under the control of the colonizers. The British erased Antiguan history and glorified their own. The local library, which had once been so rich and intensely decorated with all kinds of books, now lays waste. Its only hope for development is funding from the Mill Reef Club, which is a white people-dominated club; very exclusive and very rich. However, they have a colonizer mindset and will only donate money if the library could go back to “old Antigua,” meaning erasure of Antiguan history and glorification of

"western" history and culture. They would basically endorse cultural colonization for a second time. And, even then, they were forbidden to bad-mouth it. They couldn't speak a word of insult to anyone. The government took control of what they could or couldn't say. By criminalizing this, they spread the message that they were God, superior on such a high level. They could be punished for going against "God".

This kind of deep-rooted economic colonization and insufficient decolonization process resulted in social barriers that are prevalent in present day. When the tourist comes to the town, they don't exchange cultures with the locals. They stay in hotels meant for people like them, enjoy beaches meant for people like them (white people, foreigners) and meet only with people like them. Kincaid describes the tourists as ordinary- they have no culture to offer. They are only there "to gaze at this and taste that." Behind closed doors, the Antiguans are mocking them for their weird eating habits, how they stick out like a sore thumb in a place like this, but all of that stems from bitterness. Because while the tourist can go back home, this *is* their home. They cannot leave because of their poverty. Again, there's the economic discrepancy that's pushing social barriers between people. This is a system that's meant to cater to the gaze of white people, foreigners from the West, abandoning the needs of the native inhabitants. This kind of social barrier is the cruelty from colonization resulting in a mindset that's projected into everyday society in the present- one that is bitter and envious. The two groups aren't able to coexist in peace, which was the aim of letting the white people stay in Antigua, because

there was still so much economic inequality and the vision of social superiority and inferiority.

The colonizers didn't stop at selective development and slavery of Antiguans people though. They continued to erase the culture of the Antiguans itself, replacing each aspect with English culture. In the libraries, Antiguan history was distorted and erased, while English history was glorified. Not only did they favor British history, but they also provided mutated accounts of it; not even in its raw form. Children were taught names of British rulers in school. Queen Victoria's birthday was a holiday for them. The way the British spoke of Queen Victoria painted Britain and the British people in a good light, like they were kind and beautiful human beings, not the cruel, selfish colonizers the Antiguans were forced to see every day. The way they treated the Antiguans (black people) was so foreign to the locals that they originally thought of the English as animals, a little misbehaving, small-minded. They didn't realize there was a term for how the English people inspected the black people for smells and dirt so they wouldn't "offend the doctor" or the way little girls were told "to not behave like monkeys" in schools that had just started accepting education for women. They didn't realize the extent to which the colonizers would go to control the people, because they didn't understand the grounds at which they were being controlled on, at first. Even amongst the Antiguans, the British colonizers picked the elites to meet with a Princess of England. Kincaid describes her visits as made out to look as if she were "God Himself". To have such a high value of someone, and project that onto an entire

country- that's influential. They made the places she walked in beautiful, the beaches she visited were cleaned up to look brand new, and only the best of the best Antiguans got to meet with her. Putting all of this out and making her visits such a big deal influenced the upbringing of the author, who says she got introduced to the world "through England". Her generation grew up with English influence.

Combined with the intense economic colonization, this heavy influence of the English people still has a major presence in present Antigua. Because of the poor decolonization process and underdevelopment of the library, the youth seem uneducated, equipped with a weird hybrid of Antiguan and British influence. Kincaid says that they had a carnival where they would sing pop songs about slavery- ones she described as "hideous". Not only do they have an extensive knowledge of North America, a result of western influence, but Kincaid says that they are "unable to answer in a straightforward way, and in their native tongue of English." The fact that they've lost touch with their native tongue was mentioned twice.

Then, there's the library. Kincaid looks back on it, recalling how often she'd visit and take out the books she wanted. She described it as having "the smell of the sea" (Kincaid,42). Now that's all gone, only a flicker of what the library used to be remains. The only hope for reparations comes from funding from the Mill Reef Club, which is an extremely exclusive white people-dominated club. They are all for going back to the "Old Antigua" where

Antiguan culture was erased, and British history was glorified. So, the funding relies heavily on the Mill Reef Club, showing the economic dependency at present on the white oppressors. The Mill Reef Club chooses to not sponsor development of the library, effectively shutting down a source for quality education for Antiguans. They would endorse cultural colonization for a second time.

A similar kind of cultural colonization was practiced in South Africa. The colonizers wanted the South African youth to write all their exams in Africans which wasn't the native language, nor a language that the natives understood too well. The colonizers likely knew of this fact and suggested it so the youth would fail their exams, thereby keeping another generation of children tied down by illiteracy and leaving them vulnerable to the faux power of the imperial system. In 1976, the youth protested. They decided to walk out of their school and carry out a march. It was supposed to be a peaceful protest that came to be known as the Soweto uprising. However, as the youth continued to defy the orders of the police and refused to leave, the police got frustrated- and soon got physical. They started open firing on the unarmed students. They snatched many of them and subjected them to torture. This uprising resulted in a lot of casualties. They forced the students into a desperate position. Their parents and teachers had simply given up, because of how intensely oppressive the system was, so the youth were forced to fend for themselves. The police saw the opportunity, they hurt innocent children, who

were carrying out *a non-violent* protest, in their haste to protect the racist ideals they used to shield themselves from people they feared.

Another example I'd like to explore is Columbus' letter to the ruler of Spain, where he observed the behavior, characteristics, and culture of the Native Americans and the land they lived on and constructed an economically and culturally convincing argument to get the funding he needed from the monarch. In this letter, he talks about how the Indians were distrusting of his men at first but eventually came around and showered them with gifts. They also traded with them, though Columbus says they "bartered like idiots". After insulting the people from whom he got these resources (like spices, cotton etc.), he moves on to criticize their culture. He describes them as having no God, even though it's clear they do, but the God is just not his God. He talks about a group of those Indians who are more ferocious than any of the other inhabitants. While he admires their fighting skill, he wastes no time in saying that he doesn't think any more of them than he does of the other Indians, because they have long hair "like women" and "don't employ themselves in labor suitable to their own sex". So, he fails to acknowledge that they have their own customs and roles in their crafted society. In fact, he decides that their customs are wrong and therefore, they deserve to being looked down upon. This entire letter is coded with the Doctrine of Discovery approach and the Settler Colonial approach. He hints that most of the Indians looked up to them, eyes shining, like they're divine entities, insinuating that they wouldn't be hard to gain power over. He also talks about the rich resources on the island to

further convince the monarch of Spain that these islands are worth fighting for. He, however, ignores the fact that there are people already living on that land, he never once acknowledges that they were here first. In fact, he keeps saying that "his men found" certain resources or certain groups of people. It's like they've newly discovered them, like that is the first time anyone has ever set foot on the islands, even though people already lived there. This entire letter hints at how they would be able to colonize the area, control the inhabitants, and get the profits they want.

Now that sufficient examples of colonization itself have been provided, let's look at why that's so important to consider when trying to carry out an effective decolonization process. To do that, I'm going to take the example of South Africa once again. I do not believe that South Africa had a successful decolonization process as there is still a significant level of economic inequality prevalent in the society. International intervention prevented them from fully conducting land reforms, but I do believe they took a good step in the right direction. A major portion of the country's economy depended on foreign investments i.e., trade. The revolutionaries recognized that, to get the slavers to leave and let the South African people finally be heard, they had to crush the economy by getting major empires to disinvest from South Africa completely. They decided to do that through boycotting. They used their consumer power to boycott all traded goods withing South Africa as well as international goods like Pepsi and energy firms. This caused a huge drop in the national income, as trade was a major part of the economy. This drastic change forced the

Apartheid government to finally leave and propose negotiation. It was definitely a step in the right direction because they gained their independence, they got a voice.

This is why it's important to consider just how important of a role the people play in the economy, and the extent at which the colonizers manipulate it. It's important to understand how a common enemy could unite the people, and how cultural and economic colonization provide the perfect base for that.

Johnny Stumpff

Historical Narratives of America's Founding

Think back to the first few times you got into an argument with your friend or sibling as a child. For example, you might have claimed that you have been nothing but nice to your sibling, while your sibling may claim that you called them something hurtful. When I was younger, I often found myself in disputes like these, with an adult as the ultimate judge. After a few minutes of harsh words and hurt feelings, the argument almost always devolved into two competing interpretations of the basic facts of what occurred. Looking back, I now sympathize with the adult mediators of such debates. How could they possibly settle the argument when they've been presented with two conflicting interpretations of a single event? We may be tempted to think that one child may be telling the truth while the other is lying, but in most cases, both are telling their own version of the truth.

Such a dispute is analogous to the archetypal struggle of historians: behind an event lies a nearly infinite amounts of interpretations of a single seemingly objective event. For this reason, when studying, analyzing, and telling history, we must exercise unique caution compared to other academic disciplines. While fields that rely on the scientific method such as biology, chemistry, and physics may try to claim objectivity, scholars of history worth their salt must acknowledge the subjectivity inherent to the study of history. The importance of recognizing the variations in historical narratives is increasingly evident when considering traditional history education in the United States. Many American teachings of history privilege the perspectives of certain groups over others, especially those of dominant groups in American society. In her award-winning 2014 book *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz acknowledges this discrepancy and seeks to ameliorate the disproportionate popularity of European

perspectives. She does this by elucidating the experiences of Indigenous peoples during the genocidal process of European colonization. To clearly communicate and contrast different historical perspectives, Dunbar-Ortiz compartmentalizes narratives of European colonialism in the Americas into three separate categories.

Firstly, Dunbar-Ortiz writes about the "Doctrine of Discovery," one of the most Eurocentric historical narratives describing European colonization. This narrative frames colonization as a beneficial event wherein colonists are simply protagonists fulfilling their destiny as servants of God. This system of thought portrays pre-colonial America as a wasteland, devoid of complex society or culture. Therefore, colonists such as Christopher Columbus justified their violent actions by framing them as corrective procedures that insert "positive changes" such as Christianity, gender binaries, and various hierarchies into the "less civilized" Indigenous societies. Indeed, many Calvinist colonists interpreted their successful conquest of Indigenous peoples as a sign from God that they were "predestined" and therefore justified in expanding their empire across the North American continent. American schools often perpetuate this perspective by literally painting a history of colonists simply riding their carts and horses across vast empty plains in order to create a "New World" from "nothing." While the Doctrine of Discovery does provide some valuable insight into the mindsets of the colonists, it blatantly ignores the established, complex, advanced, and flourishing Indigenous societies that colonists annihilated.

Secondly, since the Doctrine of Discovery had some obvious biases toward European perspectives, many historians instead opted to adopt a "Multicultural Perspective" that frames colonization as an ostensibly neutral encounter between Europeans and Indigenous peoples. During the propagation of this perspective, we see a shift from the word "discovery" to describe Columbus' landing in the Americas to a new, more fashionable "encounter." Traces of this school of thought can be found in traditional

American conceptions of Thanksgiving where Puritan colonists and Indigenous tribes were able to simply coexist and maintained a neutral relationship. This narrative still falls short to tell a complete history because it ignores the fact that colonization was not neutral – European colonists went on the offensive to violently subjugate Indigenous peoples in a manner that was unique from normal international relations, or even normal methods of warfare. While many countries go to war over territorial disputes, political differences, or perceptions of a threat, this instance of conquest distinguishes itself by its goal: the complete and utter annihilation of a group of people.

Thirdly, Dunbar-Ortiz amplifies some of the most ignored perspectives in the history of colonization: Indigenous perspectives. This narrative, named "Settler Colonialism," portrays colonialism as an inherently violent event where Indigenous peoples were forced to fight for their survival as a people (rather than as individuals). While other perspectives such as the Doctrine of Discovery have the capability to tell the stories of forced conversion and dependency on the state, they fail to account for the true horror inflicted upon Indigenous peoples over the past few centuries. Since colonialism is an inherently violent and genocidal event, proponents of this school of thought claim that it follows that we should prioritize the stories from the perspective of the people who suffered the violence. The stories encompassed by this historical narrative have often been excluded from mainstream conceptions of history for a few reasons. Firstly, the realization of Indigenous suffering puts existing institutions, which were built on colonial violence, in jeopardy. For this reason, various institutions have incentives to suppress evocations of Indigenous perspectives. Secondly, many historical records of violence against Indigenous people were destroyed in the process of the widespread destruction associated with European colonization. Overall, the Settler Colonial narrative provides valuable insight into the lives that suffered in the process of America's founding.

Utilizing each of these three narratives can enable us to attain a more complete understanding of historical events. Specifically, the spread of disease by European colonists in the Americas has been framed vastly different by each historical narrative. Alongside settlement came the death of approximately ninety percent of the Indigenous population in the Americas, with much of this staggering number resulting from the spread of disease. As told in the Doctrine of Discovery, this spread of disease was not intentional at all, but simply an unfortunately inevitable event. Proponents of this theory have argued that, since Europeans tended to live in more "advanced" and dense cities, their immune systems were more resilient and resistant to common pathogens. This argument clearly takes the blame away from the colonists and instead attributes it to the alleged "weakness" or "uncivilized nature" of Indigenous inhabitants. Historians telling the Multicultural Perspective may adopt a similar mindset, claiming that the spread of disease was an accidental occurrence resulting from the simple encounter between Indigenous peoples and European colonists. The Settler Colonial perspective stands out from these previous two perspectives in its clear blame of the colonists for the spread of disease. Rather than framing plague as a terrible accident, proponents of this perspective use various empirical examples to support the idea that settlers used biological warfare to eradicate Indigenous populations. Since many of the settlers in North America were previous participants in the Irish colonization effort, many colonists likely carried ideas of difference with them as they sailed to the Americas, resulting in the deliberate infection and death of millions of Indigenous peoples.

In conclusion, historical narratives differ for many reasons. Since there are multiple sides to every conflict and historical event, it would be negligent to acknowledge only a single perspective. Additionally, the writers of history often have incentives to prioritize the perspectives of certain social groups, and many historians in the past have selectively

chosen particular narratives of history to tell (such as the Multicultural Perspective) in order to quell dissent and appease a populace with a rosy, sugarcoated telling of historical events. The history of the founding of the United States of America contains the perspectives of many different groups, most notably the European colonists and Indigenous peoples. As previously mentioned, some of the most popular perspectives in American society focus on the heritage and needs of European landowners. For this reason, Dunbar-Ortiz highlights a less frequently mentioned history: the painful struggle of Indigenous peoples as they were forced to defend their land, culture, and posterity. It is important that students, scholars, and the general population understand a variety of different historical narratives so that they can deconstruct hierarchies and limit forms of violence that could be avoided. Every political action we take is guided by our subjective interpretation of history, so it is our duty to ensure we attain a well-rounded, accurate, and fair understanding of historical events.

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History of Sarin: A Brief Look at the History of Chemical Warfare

Intrinsically intertwined with humanity's continuous march of progress is the increasingly gruesome demands of modern warfare. As competing empires and/or military organizations vie for dominance on the battlefield, they often abandon their humanity in pursuit of a more potent and effective weapon to eradicate their enemies. Of the weapons created for this goal, chemical weapons are some of the most notorious. For nearly all of modern history, humans have been fascinated with the murderous potential of chemical weapons, even before the world fully understood the chemical structures and properties underlying them. Erin Blakemore, a journalist for History.com, furthers, "From poisoned arrows to deadly gases, chemicals have been deployed in warfare since Roman times." (Blakemore). Since the reign of the Roman empire, dangerous chemicals have retained their appeal, evolving into game-changing components of great-power war, terrorism, and assassination. One notable example of a chemical weapon that has changed the course of human history and warfare is the organophosphate nerve agent sarin (also known as sarin gas, GB, C4H10FO2P, or isopropyl methylphosphonofluoridate).

First developed as a pesticide by the German chemical and pharmaceutical company I.G. Farben in 1938, sarin epitomizes the inherent risk behind technological innovation; even seemingly innocent inventions can be coopted to become the deadliest weapons when put in the wrong hands. Gerhard Schrader, the primary German scientist to have discovered this substance, found that his mixture of phosphorus and cyanide was far too toxic to be used in German farms as a pesticide, but I.G. Farben decided to inform the German military about his discovery. Since sarin was discovered just one year before World War II, this nerve gas, whose name is an acronym of the last names of its founders, immediately gained the attention of the German military, who demanded its immediate mass production. Despite this, the story of sarin's early discovery ends unexpectedly with the German military actually refraining from any deployment of this neurotoxin on the battlefield. There are multiple theories that attempt to explain Hitler's choice to refrain from using sarin on the battlefield. Some historians argue that it may come from his traumatic experiences of mustard gas in World War I, but, given Hitler's merciless and horrific usage of Zyklon B in concentration camps, it is more likely that he refrained from using sarin to avoid the possibility of The Allies using it against his troops in retaliation.

The fact that sarin was feared by even history's most ruthless individuals, such as Adolf Hitler, can be explained by its chemistry. Sarin is completely tasteless, odorless, and highly volatile, which means that it evaporates very easily. Just a few drops of sarin, transmitted through absorption on the skin or inhalation, is

enough to kill a human in minutes. This is because sarin interferes with the body's transmission of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that is critical to muscle movement. Whenever the brain sends a message to move or contract a muscle, the axon terminals of neurons release acetylcholine into the synapse (the gap between the axon terminal of one neuron and the dendrite of another) to be received by receptors on the dendrites of another neuron. After acetylcholine has been transmitted and the message has been sent to contract one's muscles, the acetylcholine must be removed so that the excitation of the receiving neuron can be stopped. In order to get rid of this acetylcholine, an enzyme called acetylcholinesterase uses hydrolysis to break it down into acetic acid and choline, which gets recycled to produce more acetylcholine later. This is where sarin comes in: at the molecular level, sarin binds to the acetylcholinesterase molecule, which makes it so that acetylcholine can no longer be hydrolyzed. Anne Helmenstine, an expert with a Ph.D in biomedical sciences explains, "Sarin forms a covalent bond with the serine residue at the active site on the cholinesterase molecule, making it unable to bind to acetylcholine" (Helmenstine). This process of forcing acetylcholinesterase molecules into an irreversible state of biological inactivity is detrimental to the human body. Without acetylcholinesterase, the body is not able to 'clean up' the acetylcholine being transmitted between neurons, which forces the muscles into a perpetual state of contraction. While this process will affect most of the muscles in the body of someone exposed to sarin, the deadliest implications come from the dysfunctionality of the lungs. When acetylcholine persists and acetylcholinesterase is not able to clean it up, the lungs will be unable to contract and relax in a way that is necessary to support breathing, thus subjecting sarin's victims to death from asphyxiation.

Sarin has substantially affected the course of history by claiming the lives of thousands of people and playing a major role in military and terrorist activities across the globe. The first notable case study in regard to sarin's military deployment is the war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s. Iraqi troops attacked Iranian border towns with a wide variety of chemical weapons including mustard gas and several nerve agents including tabun and sarin. One key factor to keep in mind is that, although international conventions such as the Geneva Protocol theoretically banned the usage of these weapons, the United States supported Iraq in the usage of chemical weapons against Iranian civilians. One of the most tragic instances of nerve agent use in this war was the Halabja chemical attack, an assault that killed more than 3000 civilians who attempted to seek shelter. Another significant example of sarin's use was seen just a decade ago in the 2013 chemical attack on Ghouta in the Syrian civil war. Ameenah Sawwan, a survivor of this horrific event, describes the horror afflicted onto the victims of sarin: "They were spasming violently, foaming at the mouth,

and their eyes were rolling back. There was a man hosing them down with water but they looked like they were close to death" (Sawwan). This attack, sponsored by the Assad-led Syrian regime, claimed the lives of 1127 people. Even more, terrorist organizations such as Aum Shinrikyo in Japan have infamously released sarin gas into Tokyo subways that ended up killing a dozen people and injuring thousands in 1995. The recency of all these attacks demonstrates how the threat of sarin gas and other nerve agents still looms over the entire globe, with militaries and terrorist organizations showing high levels of interest in them. Although more and more prohibitions against the use of chemical weapons have been signed, such as the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction which has 165 signatories, the examples from the 2013 attacks in the Syrian civil war demonstrate how the demands of war often nullify adherence to these treaties.

In conclusion, chemicals not only hold the potential to benefit people's daily lives in the form of food, cures for diseases, and building materials, but they can also result in tragedy for people caught in the midst of war. The fact that sarin merely originated as a proposal to increase crop yields demonstrates how technological innovation is inseparable from the perpetual advancement of modern warfare. Additionally, although many people downplay the importance of interactions at the molecular level, sarin demonstrates how an interaction between two types of molecules can bring an end to a human life extremely quickly. Hearing long, esoteric-sounding words such as "acetylcholine," "acetylcholinesterase," and "organophosphate" may appear boring at first, but understanding the role that these substances play in sustaining (or endangering) the human body is truly a matter of life and death for many people. From the battlefields of southwest Asia to the subway stations of Japan, sarin has made history by distinguishing itself as one of the most destructive and deadly chemicals the world has ever known.

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Maddie Winslett

Women in Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece is one of the most notable civilizations in history due to their impressive religions, sculptures, plays, and ways of life. However, in spite of all these successes, ancient Greece was still incredibly flawed. Men in the society were able to achieve almost anything; they could educate themselves and even have roles in government.[2] Women in ancient Greece, however, were not able to gain a lot of power in this society, and they were treated as "objects" in real life. While they were not considered important in real life, they were portrayed as powerful leaders in literature and mythologies. Women had a substantial impact on art and religion in ancient Greece, but due to the social structure, they were still limited in power.

Women's impact on art was shown through the clear feminism in several Greek plays, including *Helen*. When the play begins, Helen seems to discover how much everyone despises and resents her for her role in the Trojan War.[3] However, the observers of the play are aware of Helen's actual story and know that she has done nothing wrong. This is important because the story follows a plot that is biased towards Helen's perspective which normally does not happen even in modern stories. While the characters do not treat Helen well at first, the audience is always aware of Helen's innocence, and they recognize that the play uses these instances of misogyny to call out society. By making the audience understand that Helen should not be treated as an object, it helps them recognize the sexist mistakes they make in real life, and thus, it is truly a play about feminism.

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[2] Katz, Marilyn A. "Sappho and Her Sisters: Women in Ancient Greece", 514.
[3] Euripides. "Helen"

Because of this lesson in the play, not only does the audience hopefully change, but so do the characters. As stated earlier, Helen is not treated well in the beginning. She states, "…and my name is but a sound without reality beside the streams or Simois…"[4] This proves that Helen is not considered a real person at this point. Instead, she is "a sound without reality" and essentially meaningless. However, the other characters start to realize that Helen did not do anything wrong, and they even respect her. Towards the end of the play, Menelaus (Helen's husband) discovers that she is innocent, and instead of questioning it, he immediately believes Helen's story.[5] In addition to this, Helen creates an escape plan for her and Menelaus, and he agrees to it without question.[6] This is incredibly important because it shows respect for women and understanding that they are capable too. Also, by having this character arc for Menelaus, the playwright has created a story with a very feminist message; women are not respected as much as they should be, and this is clearly a problem in Greece that needs to change.

A lot of "female empowerment" in Ancient Greece is also shown through the portrayal of two Greek goddesses: Athena and Artemis. To start, Athena is the goddess of wisdom, war, and crafts; because of this, she is shown as both a respectful and incredibly smart deity.[7] This is important because it highlights that women can be just as smart as men (or even more), and by having an extremely powerful goddess be relatable (through household chores), she is more likely to become an inspiring role model for women and girls. Because someone female is portrayed as incredibly smart and capable, it shows that there was at least some respect for women in the terms of mythology. This is relevant because in modern day, women are still oppressed and are sometimes believed to have less intelligence than men. This portrayal of a very famous goddess instead shows absolute

[4] Euripides. "Helen"
[5] Euripides. "Helen"
[6] Euripides. "Helen"
[7] Cartwright, Mark. "Athena"

respect for a gender that has not been taken seriously for thousands of years. Athena is not the only powerful goddess though. Artemis is the goddess of hunting, wild nature, and chastity.[8] What this means is that not only is Artemis an incredibly strong goddess who can hunt, explore, and fend for herself, but she literally was shown to not need a man in her life to still succeed. When she was a very young child, Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* states that she said, "Pray give me eternal virginity; as many names as my brother Apollo; a bow and arrow like this…and, lastly, any city you care to choose for me, but one will be enough, because I intend to live on mountains most of the time."[9] Artemis always knew that she preferred to stay in the woods and hunt than to be tied down by a husband. This is extremely important because it shows that she had a *choice* which, ironically, most women do not even have today. By having a goddess have these qualities, it helped girls recognize that they had a right to choose what they want to do in their lives; this is a major topic in female empowerment, and it shows that women did have an impact on religion, but people can also argue that religion had a substantial impact on women.

While women did appear to have power in these stories, myths, and art pieces, in reality, women did not have much power when it came to social structure or politics. In Marilyn A. Katz's journal article, *Sappho and Her Sisters*, she writes, "women played no significant role in public life".[10] Not only were they not significant in public, but women were excluded from government roles as well. Politically, ancient Greece was primarily a democracy; this means that more people in society get a say in the decisions that the civilization makes, and more people actually vote on different topics.[11] However, these "people" that have a say in this society all happen to be men who are most likely rich.[12]

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[8] Cartwright, Mark. "Artemis"
[9] Cartwright, Mark. "Artemis"
[10] Katz, Marilyn A. "Sappho and Her Sisters: Women in Ancient Greece", 514.
[11] Cartwright, Mark. "Ancient Greek Government"
[12] Cartwright, Mark. "Ancient Greek Government"

Because of this, women did not have much say in how they were treated, and they were thus treated like objects. Instead of having a public life, women were very focused on household life and family.[13] In family life, there was a significant presence of patriarchal dominance. It was sort of like Confucianism's filial piety; the son respected his father, the father respected his father, and so on. However, the mother was excluded from this, and it was most likely because she was considered lesser than the men of the family. This whole topic brings up the idea of *oikos*, which is how a society works in a household.[14] In this system, women were never directly given power. This is completely different to the mythology and stories of this time because while women and goddesses had lots of power over what they do, women in real life were not treated as equals and were instead looked down on as if they were property. Unlike Artemis, women did not have a say in if they got married or not, and they also could not choose their husband.[15] This also shows that women did not have an impact on social structure because their own lives were planned out for them by someone else.

Women were also not involved in the economics of this society either. Instead, men took over this process by dealing with trade. Trade was a necessary part in Greek culture. It not only helped them discover new things and make a profit, but it also helped them spread their own culture.[16] The Greeks would use merchant ships to travel to different countries and trade their goods, such as wine, olives, and tools, and they used ships because it was a civilization surrounded by water.[17] The Greeks adapted to this and actually became quite skilled at sailing and trading.[18] Aside from seas and rivers, there are also a lot of mountains

[13] Katz, Marilyn A. "Sappho and Her Sisters: Women in Ancient Greece", 517.
[14] Katz, Marilyn A. "Sappho and Her Sisters: Women in Ancient Greece", 517.
[15] Katz, Marilyn A. "Sappho and Her Sisters: Women in Ancient Greece", 518.
[16] Cartwright, Mark. "Trade in Ancient Greece"
[17] Cartwright, Mark. "Trade in Ancient Greece"
[18] Cartwright, Mark. "Ancient Greece"

in Greece, which means there is not much room for agriculture.[19] Instead, the men would sail away and trade to other countries. This is yet another example of women not being treated equally in ancient Greece. By giving only men the opportunity to get goods and supplies, it makes people believe that these men has more power. This would keep women out of power for so much longer simply because they were not allowed to do anything, and they had no control over their lives.

In conclusion, women were not treated well in ancient Greece. They were not even allowed to make the simplest choices like whether they wanted to marry or not. Instead, men would choose for them, keeping women out of power. However, in art like plays, men respected a woman's idea, and the audience was even on her side the entire time. In religion, two of the most powerful deities happen to be female. One of these goddesses is seen as a role model to young girls due to her being relatable yet also wise. The other shows that women do have power in their lives, whether they believe it or not. With these thoughts in mind, the women of Ancient Greece were probably strong, confident people, but because they never got a chance to show their strength, they were left to take care of a household. While men took away Greek women's chance at power away from them, they still had a significant impact on art and religion due to the immense female empowerment displayed in these stories.

[19] Cartwright, Mark. "Ancient Greece"

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