Penumbra

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF
CRITICAL AND CREATIVE INQUIRY

Issue 4, Fall 2017

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Penumbra: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Critical and Creative Inquiry

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Penumbra is the official, refereed, scholarly journal of Union Institute & University's Ph.D. Program in Interdisciplinary Studies. The journal is published at regular intervals and dedicated to challenging traditional academic and creative disciplinary boundaries in the context of social change.

Penumbra's purpose is to promote theoretically informed engagements with concrete issues and problems. The journal publishes socially engaged, innovative, creative and critical scholarship with a focus on ethical and political issues in the humanities, public policy, and leadership. Penumbra is a peer-edited and peer-reviewed journal committed to spanning the divide between scholarly and creative production, and to fostering work from graduate students, junior scholars and emerging artists, in addition to more established critical and creative voices.

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Penumbra invites scholarship of all kinds, creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and visual works that address any aspect of the journal's mission and scope. We seek submissions from graduate students, junior scholars, and emerging artists, in addition to more established critical and creative voices. All submissions undergo double-blind peer review. We do not accept previously published work. Simultaneous submissions are acceptable, but the editors should be notified immediately upon a work's acceptance for publication elsewhere.

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Author name(s), email(s), and brief bio(s) should be included in the Author Comment box on the submission page. The author name(s) should not appear anywhere on the manuscript in compliance with our double-blind peer-review process.

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IN THIS ISSUE

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Editor's Note

Interdisciplinary encompasses several concepts, chief among them progression. At times, progression comprises radical change. The idea of equality for all men, regardless of class, was certainly a radical idea when Rousseau published the *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundation of Inequality*. He believed in waking up to a better world, one featuring revised versions of nationalism, freedom, and brotherhood. However, that's just the word that hints at Rousseau's cultural blindness: brotherhood. Instead of rally for the rights of everyone, he focuses on what he knows to be true, the rights of men. Other modes of research countered his claims. Specifically, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* calls out the hypocrisy in Rousseau's arguments for egalitarianism. For if forward motion is truly the epicenter of progression, marching off without half of the human race is no way forward at all. Likewise, in the academic world and beyond, the unification of all modes of research and creative expression through interdisciplinary approaches is intrinsic to greater understanding. This issue of Penumbra proudly highlights gender issues in an effort to be the other voice reaching for reason, much like Wollstonecraft.

Another part of interdisciplinary may be defined in a collectivist sense. Self and interdependence are outlined in Gish Jen's *Tiger Writing*. She relies heavily on stories about her father (and his family and cultures) to inform readers about herself, as reflected through others. Understanding and practicing interdisciplinary research is quite similar to Jen's description of interdependence, which leads to instances of "in between". According to Silko as quoted by Delores Bernal, "in this universe there is no absolute good or absolute bad; there are many balances and harmonies that ebb and flow." The ability to remain in flux, while also reaching back to a constant, is strength-building, and integral to the interdisciplinary approach.

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This issue of Penumbra includes four critical articles, two essays, one short story, and various poems. The work comes to us from scholars in academe and out, established and emerging writers and artist in the U.S. and abroad, individuals using traditional and experimental styles to explore the power of critical and creative expression as it relates to the interdisciplinary approach.

In her essay, "'So . . . who are you now?': Performing Women in Stage Beauty's English Restoration", Tico Tenorio examines gender and performance through the lens of Judith Butler, contextualized through an analysis of the 2004 film, *Stage Beauty*. Similarly, Misti Chamberlain's "They Aren't in the History Books: Women Artists in History" focuses on gender, specifically on the omission of women's contributions to art history books, as she seeks to highlight certain women artists. "Welcome Home Sisters! : A Personal and Political Education", another gender-critical piece by Kris Hege, is an academic and personal reflection on the radical feminist education--the pedagogy, curriculum, and community--of the 40th Michigan Womyn's Music Festival that took place in August 2015. In one more expansion on gender from a different perspective, Nancy Pratt offers her essay, "The Truth Women Tell: Arthritis, Heartache, and a Mercedes", to show unity and individualism of the woman's experience at an age when art, media and society often completely ignore women of a "certain age".

Brandon Marlon's poem collection includes four pieces focused on narrative, compelling imagery, human desire, and satire. Another poem by Nancy Semotiuk, "Faculty Colloquium at the Country Club", examines privilege through the lens of race and social justice. Sharon Lin's "Swiftly" is a story chronicling a young woman preparing for the holiday season, but doubts begin to creep in when she rediscovers a memory from her childhood.

In keeping with memory and experience, Allison Budaj offers her creative essay, "Confessions of a Study Abroad Coordinator", detailing her journey to becoming a Study Abroad Coordinator and the various obstacles she encountered while leading her first group abroad. Next comes a critical essay from Janis Chandler, who discusses history and gentrification in "Faubourg Tremé: Cultural and Societal Progress in a Neighborhood Faced with Gentrification." The last critical piece to round off the issue underscores philosophy and relationship evaluated via a literary lens: in "Friendship in *Frankenstein*:

An Artistotelian-Thomistic Analysis" by Greta Enriquez. While all of the criticism and fiction appearing in this issue were approved for publication following a double-blind review, "Only Time Can Tell" is a solicited mixed-media piece that scholar and Artist Misti Chamberlain graciously shared for the cover of this issue. We found the image to be stunning. Coupled with Chamberlain's critical article, "They Aren't in the History Books: Women Artists in History", a practical application of expanded perspectives is highlighted on a greater scale.

Adding greater perspectives is the mission of this journal, and should be the mission of progression. Varied perspectives fuels ideas and expands knowledge. Furthermore, Delores Bernal believes that a mixed sense of "epistemology exposes human relationships and experiences […also enabling others…] to become agents of knowledge who participate in intellectual discourse that links experience, research, community, and social change." Where some view formlessness, the contributors and editors of this journal see fluidity. With fluidity comes innovation, in the form of new research and creative endeavors.

— MARIANNA BONCEK
and JONINA STUMP

"So . . . who are you now?": Performing Women in *Stage Beauty*'s English Restoration

The 2004 film, *Stage Beauty*, set during the English Restoration, focuses on a male actor, Ned Kynaston, who specializes in portraying female roles and who receives much professional and personal validation for his performances. In the film, as in real life, King Charles II lifts the ban on women acting on the stage. Throughout the film, we see that Kynaston's personal identity is tied to his professional identity. He is a man who performs women—both on and off the stage. Restoration diarist Samuel Pepys described the real Ned Kynaston, upon whom the character is based, as "the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life" (qtd. in Haggerty 311). Because his identity is inextricably linked to his profession as a male actor of female roles, when women are allowed to take over the performance of those female stage characters, Ned suffers a crisis. If he is not the "loveliest lady" anymore, then who is he? Some viewers have an impulse to focus on whether Ned is gay, straight, or bisexual, or on analyzing whether the film ultimately promotes a conservative heteronormative agenda. While some of these discussions are certainly worthy of consideration, they seem to detract from how the film explores the process of constructing and deconstructing the performance of gender. For me, the question isn't whether Ned's sexual preferences change or whether the film fails to fulfill its promise to represent other sexualities, and thereby cause "gender trouble." I see the film as offering Ned's journey as a visual narrative illustrating the deconstruction of his character's gender, one that has been constructed through what Judith Butler describes as "a stylized repetition of acts" (Chapter IV). Judith Butler says that:

> Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts . . . which are internally discontinuous . . . [so that] the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. (191)

Some viewers have criticized *Stage Beauty*, arguing that though "the film might be seen as Butlerian in its queering of gender roles and sexual identities" (Berensmeyer 18), the conclusion ultimately reinforces a heteronormative view of gender. Ingo Berensmeyer writes that the film is "highly conventional" and:

> highly conservative, since Kynaston's reintegration into human society, his re-introduction to the stage as a performer of male parts, and his 're-discovery' of his sexual identity as a man are only permitted to occur at the price of sacrificing his freely ranging bisexuality and submitting to a normative heterosexual regime. (18-19)

Though there are certainly reasons to be suspicious of the film's tendency to adhere to some Hollywood conventions, I believe that efforts to evaluate Ned's journey must take into account the fact that his beliefs and his social audience's beliefs are far removed from our own. The film's setting and the historical time period on which it is based can be viewed as a reversal of the heterosexual framework that informs Butler's world and work. Despite the differences between the world of the film and ours, I believe an application of Butler's theory of gender as performance can still yield great insight into the construction and deconstruction of Ned's identity.

Stage Beauty was adapted for the screen by playwright, Jeffrey Hatcher, who took his original play's title, *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, from the remarks of John Downes who wrote in 1660 that the real Kynaston "Made a *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, performing his Parts so well . . . being Parts greatly moving Compassion and Pity; that it has since been Disputable among the Judicious, whether any woman that succeeded him so Sensibly touch'd the audience as he" (qtd. in Haggerty 313). Though *Stage Beauty* is unapologetically fictional, its main characters are all based on real historical figures that lived during England's Restoration. The protagonist, Ned Kynaston, was in reality one of the last male actors to specialize in portraying female characters on the English stage. Hatcher suggests that the lack of available information about the historical Ned Kynaston was an advantage in conceiving the story:

> Actually, the fact that there are only bare facts is, I think, a great advantage. Because if we knew too much about the guy, then that would probably frustrate some of my dramatic license. I mean, he blazed bright as an actor and as a star for a couple of years. Then he was gone and back to playing supporting roles, so he doesn't get the theatre history treatment that a lot of more famous actors [receive] . . . I found that the information that was available was just enough, just tantalizing enough, to give me the bare bones and then I was able to build around it. (qtd. Murray)

And indeed, the film begins with Ned at the top of his field, a star dedicated to his craft and adored by his audiences. The dramatic question for Hatcher and in our film is: When King Charles II lifts the ban on women appearing on theater stages what happened to the careers of these famous male actors who specialize in portraying women? The film offers one possible scenario to answer that question. In order to explore the question, Hatcher creates a fictional character, Maria, Ned's dresser, whom he combines with Margaret Hughes, believed to have been the first female actor to legally appear on the English stage. Charles II's most well-known mistress, actress and folk hero Nell Gwynn, plays a pivotal role in the film, while real life Restoration rakes, George Villiers, the second Duke of Buckingham, and Sir Charles Sedley, a dramatist and patron of the arts, play minor roles. Rounding out the main characters are actor and theater manager, Thomas Betterton, and Samuel Pepys, whose diaries serve as the most important primary sources for this time period.

Cursory research of the time period will reveal that Hatcher mined Pepys' diaries for many details about the real historical figures and time period. Ironically, the inclusion of authentic details has led some viewers to criticize its historical inaccuracies. Glaring differences between the historical record and the story should signal the viewer that despite its reliance on real figures and events, the movie isn't meant to be seen as a historically accurate chronicle. For example, Gwynn would've been about 10 years old in 1660 when women were allowed on the stage and in reality, was already an established actress before she became Charles II's mistress. As was the case with other boys that portrayed female characters, the real Ned Kynaston was probably around 17 years old, and not a 30-something-year old man like actor Billy Crudup who plays him. In the film, Charles II not only gives women permission to act on the stage, but then also goes on to ban men from playing the female roles, a fabricated event. In focusing on these historical inaccuracies and anachronisms, some viewers have found cause to criticize some of the larger themes of the film, especially with regard to its treatment of gender issues. But *Stage Beauty* is a nesting

box of time periods and genres. It is a 2004 film adapted from a 1999 play, about the theater world in 1660, where performances of Shakespeare's 1603 play Othello feature heavily. Every one of these time periods and genres is viewed through the refracting lenses of the others, and as such, it would be difficult to trace definitively where history, theater, film, and the modern world begin and end. One critic's comments remind us that a film about a historical time period will always be filtered through the lens of our modern world when she says that the film's director, Richard Eyre, "captures the mood of late 17th century London, or at least what we want to believe that mood was like, with his colorfully dappled mix of characters" (Zacharek). Even though the historical distance and multiple genres can create obstacles for the modern film to explore gender and identity, I believe that they also offer opportunities. If the film creates a version of "what we want to believe that mood was like," understanding the time period and its revolutionary shift in popular views of women and men on the stage may still provide insight into the filmmakers' representation of Ned and the forces at work in his world.

We know that for centuries the Church's attitude toward the theater was characterized by ambivalence. Though it was not averse to didactic theatrical pageants, it was also suspicious of the theater because audiences might be negatively influenced by the innate hypocrisy of the dramatic arts (Maus 606). According to Katherine Eisaman Maus, clerical anxiety about the theater was directly related to distrust of female sexuality:

> In the middle ages and the Renaissance, antitheatricalists and antifeminists strike exactly the same notes again and again, so that suspicion of the theater and suspicion of female sexuality can be considered two manifestations of the same anxiety. . . The Renaissance antitheatricalists are profoundly suspicious of the necessarily insincere quality of all play-acting. They refuse to regard the theatrical pretense in the light of an innocent fiction, because they do not recognize fictions as innocent. (603-604)

Katarzyna Bronk's essay, "The Act(who)ress–The Female Monster of the Seventeenth-Century English Stage," explains that this dual distrust of the "play-acting" of the theater and what was believed to be women's inherently deceptive nature made it unthinkable for women to be allowed on the stage:

> The reasons female bodies were excluded from theatrical endeavour since the medieval times were mostly religious in nature. Paradoxically, the anti-female discourse of the early Church explained the necessity of such occlusion with the argument that women are dissimulators—that is deceptive actors—

> in real life, and allowing them to display this to the bigger public was potentially dangerous. . . . The words of any woman due to her biblical, sinful ancestry, were dissimulating, aimed at seduction and enticement to sin: hence the scriptural message which was to be delivered from the medieval stage was never to be as effective as when uttered by the representatives of the reasonable, ontologically higher being, that is the man. A woman on stage would serve as a bodily conduit of sin, ready to contaminate the God-fearing audience. (2)

If the theological argument were insufficient, it was also thought to be antithetical to "proper womanly behavior" to display her body in public spaces, the realm of prostitutes and other fallen women:

> A proper woman was to be confined to the four walls of households or convents to practise the virtues of humility, meekness, silence, chastity and unconditional obedience to the masculine protector. . . Men, the more reasonable and more talented of the sexes, took over not only the right to create the perfect woman in actuality—by fashioning her according to precepts of appropriate femininity—but also the privilege to signify femininity in theatrical representations. (Bronk 2-3)

Medieval and Renaissance actors learned "how to act out femininity, not how to be a woman," based on male conceptions of what women ought to be (Bronk 3). During the reign of King Charles I (1600-1649), the prohibition on women actors was tested when a French theater company that included women performed in London:

> Theatregoers were at once fascinated and horrified at the sight of women performing on stage. The Puritans were outraged at such an affront to their religious sensibilities. The conservatives were aghast at the intrusion of a foreign idea so contrary to established tradition. Although there were those who saw no wrong in such an idea, for the majority it was too soon—comtemporary [sic] reports tell of their being booed and "pippin-pelted" from the stage and the whole company hastily retreated back to France. (Gillan)

This attitude toward women and the theater continued until Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660. He reopened the theaters that the Puritan-led government had closed for 18 years in an effort to crack down on the types of excesses and frivolities that were associated with the monarchy. When the theaters reopened, theater companies continued the centuries-old practice of employing boy actors to play the female roles. Though the boy-actors of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries aimed at more verisimilitude in playing the women's roles than they had in earlier years, "in theatre gender behaviour was still 'ritualised and codified'" (Bronk 3). *Stage Beauty* takes great pains to

depict Ned Kynaston's acting style as highly stylized and artificial, based on years of theatrical training on how to act a woman, a compliant, submissive, and feminine woman.

In the first scene of the film, Ned is on the stage portraying Desdemona who is being murdered by Othello. Making no attempt at offering a lifelike impersonation of women, Ned performs Desdemona as the picture of submissive femininity. Elizabeth Gruber, who analyzes the film's stage versions of Othello, says: "When the actor playing Othello raises the pillow to smother him, Ned displays an exaggerated non-resistance. His Desdemona does not so much surrender to death as welcome it" (230). Director Richard Eyre, a former director of the UK's National Theater, explains that though Ned's acting style was created for the film, it was inspired by illustrations of stage movements from the sixteenth century:

I dug up a book I'd read about 25 years ago—Elizabethan Acting by BL Joseph—which argued that it is folly to imagine that Shakespeare's actors were much less concerned with truthfulness of feeling than the actors of our day. However, they showed their feeling in an extroverted and demonstrative way. Their acting displayed a poetry of movement, made up of gestures and physical attitudes in which ideally, as Hamlet advised, the action was suited to the word. These actions are illustrated in Joseph's book by 16th-century drawings of a repertoire of hand movements then in use on the stage—not an acting manual but drawn from observation. We borrowed many of the gestures to concoct a syntax of acting that could be read by candlelight: graphic, very stylized, mannered, elegant, out front. ("A World Like Any" par. 4)

Modern audiences accustomed to a more naturalistic style of acting might feel distanced from this stylized, elegant, and obviously artificial acting style. However, when Ned finishes the scene he receives a standing ovation from his audience, and with a graceful hand gesture motions politely for the audience to allow the play to continue. Despite the ovation, Ned complains about performance directly afterwards: "Something eludes me. A gesture, a tone. You know what, Tommy? I'm dying too soon" (*Stage Beauty*). Later in the film, when Maria asks him why he never plays men, Ned admits that he's enamored with the beauty of women:

> Men aren't beautiful. What they do isn't beautiful either. Women do everything beautifully, especially when they die. Men feel far too much. Feeling ruins the effect. Feeling makes it ugly. Perhaps that's why I could never pull off the death scene. I . . . could never feel it . . . in a way that . . . wouldn't mar the . . . I couldn't let the beauty die. Without beauty, there's nothing. Who could love that? (*Stage Beauty*)

His acting style and attitude clearly reflect the distorted view of women that characterized theater representations of his and previous eras, of "real" women as feminine, beautiful, and submissive.

Shortly after Charles II reopens the English theaters, he also lifts the ban on women on the stage. As a result, Ned's dresser, Maria, who has secretly been nursing a desire to perform, is allowed to audition for a role. Ned is horrified at the thought that an untrained woman's performance could compare with his own. In an argument with Maria, Ned refers to his childhood training to illustrate why he is more qualified than she is to play the female roles:

> Ned: Please. Just a question, as you are quite obviously going to audition today. Do you know the Five Positions of Feminine Subjugation?
> Maria: What?
> Ned: The Five Positions of Feminine Subjugation? No? Or perhaps you're more acquainted with the Pose of Tragic Acceptance? Or the Demeanour of Awe and Terror?
> Maria: Mr. Kynaston . . .
> Ned: The Supplicant's Clasp? Or the Attitude of Prostrate . . . Funny, you've seen me perform them a thousand times.
> Maria: (Stamps her foot.) Mr. Kynaston!
> Ned: Now, there's a feminine gesture. You seem to have managed the Stamp of Girlish Petulance.
> Maria: I just wanted to act. I just wanted to do what you do.
> Ned: But, madam, I have worked half of my life to do what I do. When I trained, I was not permitted to wear a woman's dress for three years. I was not permitted to wear a wig for four, not until I had proved that I had eliminated every masculine gesture, every masculine intonation from my very being. What teacher did you have? What cellar was your home?
> Maria: I had no teacher, nor such a classroom. But then, I had less need of training. (*Stage Beauty*)

The scene underscores a number of important themes in the play. In the first place, it illustrates again that Ned's acting style, indeed, his performance of women is based on the ritualized and highly stylized training that had been a staple for female impersonators on the stage. Each of the "positions" he names suggests simplistic and reductive conceptions of female behavior. It is no coincidence that Ned focuses on female subjugation in particular, as his performance of Desdemona demonstrates that in his view, ideally, women remain passive. The scene also illustrates that Ned's formative years, his source for the "stylized repetition of acts" that formed his conceptions of stage gender, were drilled into him by a tutor—his substitute family—rehearsed until

he conformed to the expectations of his social audience, not just on the stage but in life. Butler's discussion of the family's role in the "punishment and reward" system is instructive here. She relies on the comparison to an actor's rehearsal of a script:

I don't mean to minimize the effect of certain gender norms which originate within the family and are enforced through certain familial modes of punishment and reward . . . they are rarely, if ever, radically original. The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again. ("Performative Acts")

In the case of Ned, as we'll see, the performance of gender on the stage and off the stage are conflated, in large part because in his life the two are hardly distinguishable. His tutor rewarded feminine behavior and punished masculine behavior until he could reproduce it not just for the stage, but also as a representation of his being. Interestingly, the "reward" was permission to don feminine garb, and implicitly, the promise of approval and maybe even love. In another scene, Ned recalls with fondness the tutor who raised and trained him:

> This pillow was given to me by my old tutor who found me in the gutter. He gave me a home. He gave us all a home, pretty boys like me. He taught us to read. He taught us Shakespeare, all the tricks and turns and . . . He gave this to me the first time I played Desdemona. "And remember," he'd say, "the part doesn't belong to an actor. An actor belongs to a part. Never forget. You're a man in woman's form." Or was it the other way round? (*Stage Beauty*)

His confusion recollecting his tutor's words demonstrate that he's become unable to disentangle his real-life identity from his stage life.

As much as the clerics and anti-theatricalists had been resistant to seeing women on the stage, Ned's confusion about where his gender performance begins and ends highlights another societal anxiety—the feminizing effect of men portraying female characters might have on both the actors and their audiences. The film's fictionalized Charles II also alludes to this anxiety when Ned implores him to allow him to continue playing the women's roles. Charles replies to Ned: "Balance the scales, Kynaston, give the girls a chance. Besides . . . it's a sop to the Church. Priests always preach about boys playing women. They say it leads to effeminacy and sodomy. Well, they'd know, they're priests" (*Stage Beauty*). In reality, by the end of the Renaissance the practice of using boy/men-actors in the women's roles was losing its appeal,

especially as it was suspected of nurturing homosexuality, not just among the boy actors, but also in their male audiences:

> Their blurring of gender roles evoked anxiety among those who believed in a clear separation of sexes. Moralists and anti-theatricalists, with William Prynne and his *Histriomastix* (1633) in the vanguard, began to insist on adulteration of such performers' gender, and, as they thought, the actors' inevitable homosexuality. The moralists of the stage pointed to the simultaneous corruption of the audience, particularly its male part, by homoerotic impersonations. (Bronk 3)

Though some might argue that a causal relationship between performing women and homosexuality is fallacious, historical records hint that the real Kynaston had sexual relations with other men even though he also did eventually marry (Haggerty 315). What's more important is the larger picture of society that is depicted in the film. Restoration society, in particular the upper classes and the theater world, did not necessarily adhere to a binary view of gender. In King Charles II's court, sexual polymorphism was "boasted of as an accomplishment" (Selenick 289), so that Kynaston's behavior, in real life or in the film, would hardly be considered an aberration or a source of "gender trouble." According to George E. Haggerty, author of "'The Queen was not shav'd yet': Edward Kynaston and the Regendering of the Restoration Stage," Kynaston's "willingness to enjoy sexual intimacy with other actors is a matter of tradition . . . like various freewheeling libertines and other licentious types, including actors, no amount of same-sex dalliance seems capable of labeling anyone definitively with a sexual identity" (315). In one scene, two aristocratic female fans ask Ned to accompany them on a ride through the park and request that he remain dressed as a woman. Sir Charles Sedley happens upon the group and mistakes them for prostitutes. Insulted, the two women leave in a huff. Sedley gropes Ned and discovers what Ned calls his "guardian at the gates." Undeterred, Sedley says to Ned, "I'm in the market for a mistress. A male one might be just the thing" (*Stage Beauty*). Gruber says the scene "underscores the artifice or orchestration of femininity. That is, the film presents gender as a fluid set of signs rather than a fixed system anchored by immutable biological difference" (231). In the world of the film, as in the Restoration, gender is not fixed to biology, nor is Ned's performance as a woman, on stage or off, treated as taboo by his immediate social world.

Hatcher chooses to include several scenes that demonstrate the actor's sexual polymorphism. Early in the film, George Villiers surprises Kynaston in a bed on the stage. From the exchange, one can surmise that the two men have had previous sexual encounters. As he

puts a long blond wig on Ned, Villiers says, “Put this on, will you? I like to see a golden flow as I die in you.” Ned replies, “Would you ask your lady whores to wear a wig to bed?” to which Villiers says, “If it made them more a woman” (*Stage Beauty*). The connection between Ned’s stage performance as a woman and his desirability to Villiers is underscored by another scene later in the film. When Ned has been displaced by female actors and is unemployed, he approaches Villiers coquettishly in a bathhouse, this time clothed as a man. Villiers informs Ned that he’s getting married and Ned inquires about their sex life:

> Ned: What’s she like in bed? What’s she like . . . to kiss? Does she wear a golden flow as you die in her? Or don’t you know?
> Villiers: I don’t want you! Not as you are now. I . . . when I did spend time with you, I . . . always thought of you as a woman. When we were in bed, it was always in a bed on stage. I’d think, “Here I am, in a play . . . inside Desdemona.” Cleopatra, poor Ophelia . . . You’re none of them now. I don’t know who you are. I doubt you do. (*Stage Beauty*)

First Ned’s tutor, then Villiers and Sedley, provide positive reinforcement for Ned’s feminine gender performance. Villiers’ attitude also clearly demonstrates that he’s more interested in a fiction than in Ned himself.

Hatcher resists attempts to define or label Kynaston’s sexuality and instead, focuses on Ned’s willingness to perform whatever role will bring him the adoration he craves:

> So much of the time these days people want to pigeonhole and say homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, what have you. . .. The fact that he has sex with men and with women, I suppose simply by the definition of the act makes him bisexual. . . Whomever will worship him. Whomever will give him the time of day, frankly, he’ll be whatever that person needs him to be. And if it’s the women in the coach or if it’s the Duke or someone else, that’s where he goes. (*Stage Beauty*)

When the new “actresses” take Ned’s place at the theater, Ned loses his adoring audience and finds himself unable to make the transition to playing male roles on the stage. A debased and inebriated Ned is relegated to singing in drag on a makeshift stage in a tavern where the audiences may be of a lower class, but supply him with the attention he requires.

As Ned’s fortunes decline, Maria’s rise, and soon she finds herself star. Bronk writes that in reality, “When the first actresses appeared, moralists were disconcerted but not shocked” (4). It was actually initially hoped by some that “the presence of women on the stage would eliminate the obscene and corrupt aspects of the English drama, and

encourage the adoption of purer standards for theatrical spectacle" (Maus 597). In fact, theater companies employing female actors were given patents with the express condition that "no . . . play shall be acted . . . containing any passages offensive to piety or good manners" (Maus 598). The implied threat was never carried out and Restoration dramas, in part because of the presence of real women on the stage became even more sexually explicit and subversive than in previous years. While one might believe that allowing women to act reflected a liberalizing effect in society for women, ironically, the outcome was quite different. As the title of Bronk's essay implies, actresses would soon come to be associated with prostitutes. Not surprisingly, male actors still outnumbered the women and were paid better. Evidence also suggests that during the second half of the seventeenth century women were losing opportunities for participation in public life and that men made headways into traditionally female occupations such as "brewing, textile manufacture, dressing, and midwifery" (Maus 600). *Stage Beauty* chooses not to focus on these elements of the historical predicament of the first actresses, though the lack of training that Ned bemoans is reflected in the historical accounts for much the same reason that Ned points out—it was not believed that actresses could not possibly know how to portray female characters properly. Bronk writes about the paradox inherent in Restoration attitudes toward women on the stage:

> The idea of female performers seemed natural because, after all, "the notion of women as natural performers, by nature hypocrites", "false at the level of the profound heart" was common knowledge. Anti-feminist discourse popularized the idea that "[a]cting is role-playing, role-playing is lying, lying is a woman's game". Women were, after all, an inherently theatrical and duplicitous sex with temperaments prone to change and inconstancy. By nature, by definition even, they were "a lying sign" so the stage was, indeed, their natural habitat. However, they still needed proper education to perform what Ferris terms "man's imagined women" on the stages . . . female performers needed schooling from men . . . Educating actresses on proper, that is man-designed femininity, necessitated various means and ways. (4)

Despite Maria's observation that she doesn't need tutoring on how to perform a woman, Ned's view is clearly indicative of the times. She could not possibly be a proper woman on the stage without instruction from a man. Before the film ends, Ned does end up tutoring Maria. Critics have complained not only of the misogynistic overtones in this turn of events, but also because the previously sexually ambiguous Ned becomes the "man" to take on the task. Though the criticisms are certainly valid, to change the story would be to ask the filmmakers to

shirk from portraying this world accurately so that our own beliefs might be reflected. And though we might question whether Ned or others like him can teach a woman how to be feminine, it is not far-fetched to see that a seasoned and well-trained actor might have some wisdom to impart to a novice.

The film doesn't fit neatly into classic dramatic categories of tragedy and comedy, but at this point, Ned fulfills the role of tragic hero quite nicely. He has fallen from his perch at the top of his field. He fails to convincingly portray a male character, fails to convince the king to reverse his order banning men from performing the women's parts, and fails to rekindle his relationship with Villiers. Ned's tragic flaw is classical—by insulting women actors, his own hubris led him to alienate Nell Gwynn who has the king's ear. But his hubris masks a deeper flaw. His social audience had determined Ned's identity, an identity that is tied directly to his profession. When he loses that profession, he loses his identity. Exhibiting confusion throughout the film, when Villiers suggests that Ned doesn't know who he is, he has no reply. His lack of self-awareness and his deeply rooted confusion about his identity come to a head in a pivotal scene between Ned and Maria. The two end up in a bed together—not on the stage—in a small cabin in a bucolic setting where she's taken him to dry out. Maria asks him what men do with men:

Ned: Well, it depends.
Maria: On?
Ned: On who's the man and who's the woman.
Maria: But I said men with men.
Ned: Yes, yes, I know, but with, er . . . men and women, there's a man and there's a woman, and my experience has been that it's the same with men and men.
Maria: Were you the man or the woman?
Ned: (in falsetto) I was the woman.
Maria: That means?
Ned: Right. Er, it . . . um, in the saddle.
(Cut to scene: Maria sits atop Ned who is lying face down in the bed.)
Maria: So am I the man now or the woman?
Ned: You're the man.
Maria: And you're the woman?
Ned: Yes.
Maria: There isn't much to do.
Ned: Not with what we're given.
(Cut to scene: Ned lies on top of Maria who is face down in the bed.)

Maria: So, who am I now?
Ned: Er, you're the man . . . Er, you're the woman!
Maria: (laughs) And you're?
Ned: I'm the man. Or so I assume. Seldom get up here. Quite a view.
Maria: But I'm . . . I'm the man-woman?
Ned: Yes. You're the man-woman?
(Cut to scene: Ned lies atop Maria who is lying face up in the bed.)
Maria: And what am I now?
Ned: I . . . You're the woman.
Maria: Still?
Ned: Yes. (Maria puts one leg around his back and slowly turns him until he's lying with his back on the bed and she is above him.)
Maria: And now what am I? (She kisses him.)
Ned: The woman.
Maria: (Kissing.) And now?
Ned: The woman.
Maria: And you are?
Ned: The man. (The scene becomes more passionate and looks like it will turn to sex.) Tell me something.
Maria: Anything!
Ned: How do you die?
Maria: What?
Ned: As Desdemona. How do you die? (Maria stops kissing him and leaves the bed.) Oh, no, I'm sorry . . . I wanted . . .
Maria: Your old tutor did you a great disservice, Mr. Kynaston. He taught you how to speak and swoon and toss your head, but he never taught you to suffer like a woman or love like a woman. He trapped a man in woman's form and left you there to die! I always hated you as Desdemona. You never fought! You just died beautifully! No . . . no woman would, would, die like that, no matter how much she loved him! A woman would fight! (*Stage Beauty*)

The scene encapsulates multiple themes that have been interwoven throughout the film. For one, in Ned's instructions on what men do together, his confusion about who the man is and who the woman is echo his earlier confusion when he recalls his tutor's instructions about performing women on the stage. For Ned, sex with men is just another performance. The scene also indicates that in a moment of possible emotional intimacy, he is still self-absorbed and preoccupied with performing women. Throughout the film, Maria has struggled to find herself as an actor, basically imitating Ned's performances in her own.

When she goes on stage, she is a woman playing a man who is playing a woman. And yet in this moment, she has her own epiphany underscoring Ned's lack of self-awareness or understanding of what it means to perform a woman. His whole identity has been tied to the performance of the "stylized repetition of acts" that were part and parcel of his formative years. Stripped of his professional identity, this interaction with Maria forces Ned to see that his performance of gender has been based on theatrical conventions that were in turn based on masculine fantasies and misconceptions of femininity.

At the end of the film, Ned and Maria are forced to play Othello and Desdemona together. In contrast to the highly stylized and artificial acting style we've seen earlier in the play, the film attributes to them a naturalistic (and anachronistic) style of acting—the not so subtle point being that they're each finally playing an "authentic" man and woman. Ned abandons the earlier artifice of his performances and plays an intimidating Othello. Instead of imitating Ned dying beautifully, Maria's Desdemona puts up a valiant fight. The shock value for their theater audience, and for film viewers, of seeing Desdemona fight while Othello smothers her provides a true contrast to the versions we've seen earlier. Ned and Maria take their bows to thunderous applause. The two exhilarated actors meet privately backstage where Ned remarks that he finally got the death scene right. They kiss, first passionately then tenderly. Maria says to him, "So . . . who are you now?" Ned smiles and replies, "I don't know. I don't know" (*Stage Beauty*).

I understand why some critics felt let down by the film. It appears that for Ned to recover from the loss of his profession he must abandon his "freely ranging bisexuality," learn how to perform masculinity, and choose a heterosexual relationship. Berensmeyer acknowledges the appeal the film might have for "Butlerians and Shakespeareans" before expressing his disappointment in its conclusion:

> Theatrical performances, with their scripted patterns of enabling constraint and their highly artificial and artful codes of production and reception, mirror and expose the constraining and equally non-natural codes of social and cultural performativity outside the theater. But one might also register some concern about the glibness and superficial ease with which *Stage Beauty* handles these negotiations of gender and power . . . by defusing the fascinating and challenging ambiguities of its protagonist in a conventional "Hollywood ending" and in a "historicising" aesthetics of spectacle that conforms to the visual standards of contemporary mainstream cinema as much as it corresponds to conventional moral standards of heteronormative sexuality. (26)

Yes—*Stage Beauty* is a Hollywood movie and as such, adheres to some of its conventions. But I can't completely agree with Berensmeyer for two reasons: the social and cultural codes in the Restoration world of the film are not necessarily analogous to our own and I believe the conclusion is ambiguous. Judith Butler says that "gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo" ("Performative Acts" 520), but the taboos of this world, in both the world of the film and for the real historical Restoration actors, are different from ours. For Ned to perform women off the stage was not taboo.

Ultimately, I don't see the conclusion as a traditional Hollywood ending because we don't actually learn what happens to our protagonists. We don't know whether they will end up together and we don't know what direction Ned will go. And yet, I find the conclusion hopeful. Ned's smile and his admission of uncertainty suggest both growing self-awareness and possibility. These traits strike me as consistent with what Butler says about subversive performances:

> Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds. ("Performing Gender" 531)

Ned's admission that he doesn't know who he is seems to signal a break from the past and from those continuous acts that had previously formed the basis of his gender performance. Perhaps some would see my analysis of the film as reflecting a misreading of Butler, because I am not interpreting "gender trouble" as necessarily subversive of a heterosexual framework. Instead, I am interpreting a performance as subversive when it resists the pressures responsible for the societal framework, but also, when one develops an awareness of one's place within it. Ultimately, I see more power in the admission of ignorance than in the declaration of certainty, whatever certainty that may be.

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ALLISON BUDAJ CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Confessions of a Study Abroad Coordinator

What was going through his mind as the water rose above his head? Was he thinking about his mother back home? Was he hoping someone would look over to see him struggling? Surely someone had to notice how he was grasping for the rocks, or heard his calls for help as he coughed up the water filling his lungs. Someone had to come save this boy who just moments before was wading in the calm waters of the river. Earlier this day, he had been safe and enjoying life. The country of Belize had to be a drastic change from his life back home. The rich green landscape surrounding the serene and tranquil river created a scene out of paradise. It was probably not on the minds of the group one of them would not be returning home from this remarkable journey abroad. Unfortunately, this trip would be his last. With his foot caught in something on the river bed, he drowned while the chaperones and other travelers looked the other way.

This story was not mine to tell, but it has haunted my mind since I heard about it last year. A teenage boy drowned in a river while visiting the country of Belize for a school-sponsored study abroad trip. He was 14 years old. Stories such as this are why people think I am crazy for doing what I do. As a Study Abroad Coordinator, I take on a tremendous level of accountability. I understand how my job sounds glamorous; we take students abroad for unforgettable adventures and explore ancient ruins, street markets, and engage with locals in language which is not our mother tongue. Sure, that's all grand. After taking on this position, I have traveled abroad more times in the last three years than many people have in their lifetime.

However, one mistake can cost a life and it keeps me up at night. We do not accept anyone under the age of 18 and think of these individuals as functioning adults. Unfortunately, this does not excuse us from our duties. Ever move we make has to be accounted for and every head counted, twice. We do not leave for our next destination without our travelers repeating back to us our itinerary. No one goes off alone or even in twos. Three is the minimum for a group. Cell phones must be on your person at all times so that we can be in reach at any moment. And last, but not least, make smart decisions. These are the rules, but they are not foolproof.

When I accepted my position as a Humanities Instructor at Chattahoochee Technical College four years ago, I did not know how deeply involved I would become in the Study Abroad Program. Honestly, I had no idea such a program even existed since this was a technical college since it was not one of the more prestigious four-year universities like my alma mater, the neighboring Kennesaw State University. I was just happy to have accepted a position where I would be allowed to express my creativity and engage with people who were interested in what I had to say (despite the fact they were students and kind of required to listen to my lectures). My last position in communication was not nearly as prestigious in my opinion. I felt I was no more important than a piece of production equipment that was used when it was needed and disregarded after it served its purpose.

Not too long after the start of my second semester of teaching, I was approached by two of my colleagues asking for my help. One, Fred, teaches both English and Spanish and occupies the office across the hall from mine. The other, Sonia, teaches both Human Communication and Public Speaking and rotates between two of our eight campuses spread across the northeast region of Georgia. They wanted to know if I would be willing to give up an assignment in my Humanities courses traveling students could complete for an upcoming trip to Spain for a 7-day study abroad program. After providing me with the details of the journey, and about the history of this small but growing program, I was happy to accept. Unbeknownst to me at the time, this agreement would be the start of my journey with this program and deeply involve my life in international education.

On top of providing an assignment, I made frequent announcements in my courses and spoke with any student who would listen in order to recruit more travelers. I even recruited one bright-eyed girl, Ariel, while I was ordering coffee at Starbucks. With the mention of Spain in our conversation, her eyes widened with excitement. I gave her my name so she could take my course, thus making her eligible to travel as part of the program. My colleagues were impressed when they

heard how she learned about the program during one of the information sessions. In fact, they were so impressed, it was proposed that I would be accompanying them abroad but only if they could get the numbers needed. As spring semester 2014 slowly approached, the number of travelers steadily increased. If any more students enrolled for their trip, I was next in line to join as a chaperone. Crossing my fingers, I hoped I would be going to Spain.

However, when the time for departure came, I was not going anywhere. Despite the number of travelers quadrupling in just one year, there were not enough to justify my travel with the group. After receiving the news and watching as the students left for the airport on the Thursday before the start of Spring Break, I thought I had missed my chance at something great. That is until we returned to work following the break. Apparently, one of the students, Courtney, had been kicked off the departure flight because she had verbally assaulted one of the flight attendants, a federal offense. As the only Spanish-speaking instructor, Fred had to stay with Courtney while Sonia returned home with the travelers. Luckily, Fred negotiated her release and they were rebooked onto a flight for the United States the next day. Because of the late departure, they did not return home for three days after the rest of the group who left Madrid on-time as scheduled.

While this incident occurred at the tail end of the trip, it was the last in a long series of problems for the Spain group. Before they departed, Courtney decided to disclose she was diagnosed as bipolar, had been self-medicating with the use of marijuana, and was quitting cold turkey for this upcoming trip. This disclosure should have been enough to cancel her travel but unfortunately, they did not have the paperwork to legally support her removal. This disclose started a domino effect of trouble for the travelers. After arriving in Spain, the students were happy, smiling, and enjoying their experience in Spain. Then, disaster struck. The troubled student alleged her roommate, Annalise, stole money from her belongings in the hotel room. Since the theft could not be proven, there was nothing more my colleagues could do to help Courtney.

Later that day, while riding the metro through Madrid, Courtney became heated while watching Annalise converse with Fred and verbally assaulted her. Apparently, she felt Fred and Sonia were favoring Annalise during the alleged theft. This assault escalated to an accusation by Courtney that Annalise was romantically involved with Fred. The awkward claims were put to rest quickly, and the group fell silent as they waited for the train to pull away from a recent stop. Then, as the doors started to close, the troubled student backed off the train. Without hesitation, Sonia leaped out of the train to catch her just as the doors shut

and the train sped off leaving the two of them alone on the platform with no idea where the rest of the group were destined to depart the train.

Admittedly, while Courtney was a royal pain, she was not the only one. Accompanying Courtney was Lacy, her sister, who apparently had a strong aversion to seafood. While she made mention of this distaste, she neglected to mention she could not even be around the smell of seafood. This may seem like a small nuisance compared to an extreme headache her sister caused while abroad. However, knowing traditional Spanish cuisine, they tend to eat a hefty amount of seafood and therefore for the duration of their trip, they had to avoid any place with seafood. The sister also had a severe case of irritable bowel syndrome which made frequent bathroom stops a must.

Another student, Stacy, gave my colleagues the shock of a lifetime when they arrived for their tour of the Royal Palace in Madrid. After being informed about the mandatory security screening before entering the Palace by the Tour Director, this student proceeded to extract a hunting knife the length of one's forearm from her bag and asked where she should secure it. Well, not only were Fred and Sonia embarrassed such an incident occurred, but weapons such as this are illegal in Spain. After explaining the situation to the Tour Director, he agreed to remain on the bus to protect the precious knife while the group headed off for the tour. While Stacy meant no ill will by carrying the object with her, it made for an unforgettable story. (By the way, the hunting knife was given to her by her boyfriend for protection).

After the sickening fish smells, frequently bathroom breaks, accusations, knives, extreme fatigue, and ejection from an international flight, this is where I come into the mix. I was asked to come on board as a partner so Fred and Sonia could have one more person to help. And yes, I was fully aware of the events which transpired. Despite all the negativity, I wanted the opportunity as I never had the chance to study abroad while I was in college. If anything, missing out on chance to study abroad was the biggest regret from my undergraduate studies and soon became part of my mission as a Coordinator. I did not want students to miss out on such a wonderful chance to explore their world. After accepting the position, with no pay increase and no reimbursement for my travel expenses, I became part of a new and intense world.

For the third trip which took place in May of 2015, I was elected to be the Group Leader in charge of our 10-day program starting in London, England and leaving from Rome, Italy. Within a few short months, we had twelve travelers (five of which I recruited myself) and before we knew it, we were meeting at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport for our overnight flight to Heathrow. At this point, no one disclosed any bipolar disorder or use of any illegal drugs. Yet, I

could not breathe any signs of relief just yet. As the time for check-in approached, we were still missing one student. Without much time to spare, we decided to check-in for our flight while one of my team called her cell. Apparently, a family member passed away just days ago, and our distraught student was not certain if she was going to accompany us during this time of grief. Fortunately, at the urging of her family, she rushed to the airport with moments to spare before boarding.

Upon landing in London, a different student, Heather, experienced an allergic reaction to something on the plane which caused her face to be puffed up for days. Then, in Paris, one of our three male students, Roger, misplaced his pants in the hotel. Apparently, he was under the impression he had tossed them out of his hotel window in his sleep. Upon further investigation, we were informed his roommate, Daniel, made a joke perhaps they had accidently been tossed out while our student was sleepwalking. The worst part, for me at least, was not the joke but was believed. Luckily, the pants were found safely stashed under some other clothes in their room. Now, Roger also had an issue with money. Though we instructed our travelers to budget about $30 to $50 a day while we were abroad, he budgeted $50 for the entire trip. Nearing the point of starvation because of his lack of funds, my colleague and I were doing our best to offer him food and money whenever we could. It was later in Florence when Roger learned how to use an ATM for the first time. Score one point for life experience.

This same day in Florence, Hillary collapsed from exhaustion while we were on a walking tour. We agreed to play zones when it came to the walking tour, so I was in the front, Fred in the middle and Sonia bringing up the rear. I received a call on my cell from Sonia alerting me to the situation and instructed Fred to stay with the group before taking off running through the streets of Florence trying to find them. Sitting on the steps outside the Uffizi, I tried speaking with the student to identify the cause of her sudden illness. She described feeling nauseated, sensitivity to light, and smells. I said it sounded like a migraine to which she replied, “I hope I’m not pregnant.” Oh boy.

After the Tour Director, Patti, arrived at the scene, she carted Sonia, the collapsed student, and Roger, her boyfriend, off to our hotel. I turned to retrace my steps and catch up with the rest my group still on our city tour. To think, so much already happened on my first journey abroad as a Study Abroad Coordinator and Group Leader. From the illnesses to the lack of sleep, misplaced pants to the mysterious package on our metro ride in Paris, and then getting lost in the Louvre before catching the overnight train to Milan without air conditioning and in a cart so small we thought we were in a prison (or worse, a coffin), I was ready to pack my bags and return home. As I darted through the

crowded streets full of shoppers, locals, and tour groups such as ours, I had a startling thought: *We still have Assisi and Rome to go*.

Upcountry

Inland wayfarers halt at a ramshackle bivouac
off the beaten track by the vermeil light
of sunup for last-minute victuals
as they ready to surmount hurdles,
their eyes aloft toward the summit distant
and neutral to their quest, at best.

They espy just ahead amid cacti
the bleached bones of carcasses
picked clean by vulturous scavengers,
beneficiaries of time and chance.

Smoke from breakfast fires spirals
afar into the plain, masking chaparral
and startling patterned rattlers
from hidden dens onto the warmth
of earth cracked and peeling.

Equipped to ascend, the living know
well how impartial wilderness remains
toward civilization's refugees
who place themselves at the mercy
of forces amoral and untamed;
yet life ever seeks other life,
undaunted by the pitfalls and perils
nested amid nature wild and awaiting.

Marlon

Tropics

Ships furrow the waters out at sea
while civilization's refugees
anneal on the beach,
their pestering cares a world away.

By the quay a lone stevedore ignores
heat and thirst, dragging hawsers
along the towpath to moor crafts
gently yet securely, his funicular expertise
accrued over many seasons in austral regions.

Below the surface, migrating turtles pause
to munch on seagrass meadows
rich in essential nutrients
while lemon sharks chase rays
through the mangrove's red roots
growing in tidal shores and deluged
twice daily with saltwater.

Aloft the torrid orb parches
equally, the clime's merciless overlord
punishing by its very presence,
conferring both favor and wrath,
defiantly resisting twilight till
the decisor nightfall settles the struggle.

The Great Synagogue of Constanta

Amid the forsaken sanctuary grows a tree
green and lanky, tilting with the wind
ever since the roof partially collapsed.
Standing sentinel is the yellow fleurette
Star of David overseeing the amassed debris
below, a congeries of chipped cement,
smashed stained glass, plaster, and wood beams,
ruins overgrown with shrubs, carpeted with dirt.
Arched colonnades uplifted by blue pillars
attest to the Moorish Revival design
of a halidom once admired by Ashkenazim
from near and far keen on the sublime;
now only mean dogs frequent the detritus,
foraging for kosher remnants of another sort.
Where now there lies a rubble heap
once stood a palace aglow with worship;
where filth now strews the floor
once stood congregants before the upraised scroll,
devotees enthroning on their praise the Most High.
The building is the body but the assembly
is the soul; bereft of its sacred entrails,
the desacralized shell succumbs to the elements,
a bittersweet vestige verging on demise,
its hallowed scenes enshrined in memory.

Marlon

Statesman's Memorial

The deceased, inert in the flag-draped coffin atop a bier
overhears the laudation from a choir of admirers
come from near and far to pay final respects
in a solemn assembly of mourners.

Outpourings of grief, gratitude, and melody mingle
under the vast canopy shading from desert sun
ministers, dignitaries, and grandees
keen to preview what their own funerals might resemble.

The honor guard stands now at attention, now at ease,
as protocol officers direct proceedings,
rabbis mutter prayers, and the cantor's voice
chaperones the soul heavenward unto angels.

Harmonious diapason cedes to sober monody
as attendees rise and watch uniformed pallbearers
shoulder mortal remains and escort them to their
resting place to be inhumed and covered with sand.

None speaks ill of the dead; at such an hour,
elision serves as dignified handmaiden of grace.
Only merits and service are mentioned;
only good intentions are recollected.

Let us warmly praise, and bless, and forgive
and ever bear witness to the good;
may our eyes espy virtues
and our mouths pronounce appreciation.

MISTI CHAMBERLAIN CRITICISM

They Aren't in the History Books: Women Artists in History

There is something missing in the histories of art. "What is that?" you ask. "Women artists," will be my reply. While thumbing through older editions of art history books, it appears that art history was made, built, and sculpted primarily by men.

So many beautiful pieces of art have been made by women, and yet, they seem to have been forgotten in the world of art history. The National Museum of Women in the Arts stated that it was not until the 1980s that women artists were starting to be recognized in these history books, and even then, only twenty-seven were depicted (NMWA). It is sad to see that these talented artists were eliminated from art history simply because of their gender.

"It's simply not done!"

"You cannot be a professional artist!"

In the nineteenth century women as artists were just as frowned upon as women in other forms of employment. Females were expected to follow the very specific rules that were set forth for their gender, and professional art was not on the list of acceptable careers. Per the National Museum of Women in the Arts,

For most of the period, art education and professional recognition for women remained separate and unequal to that of their male peers. In late 18th-century France, the prestigious Académie des Beaux Arts

limited female membership to four; the Royal Academy of Arts in England had only two female founding members (NMWA).

Instead of backing down, women fought back. In this paper, I want to discuss three women artists from the nineteenth century that challenged oppression and became successful artists. Each of them is unique in their study of art and in their background. I will discuss Mary Cassatt, who studied under the French Impressionists and put her name on the Impressionist movement both in France and the United States. Next, Edmonia Lewis, who despite adversity, became well known in the art world. She was the first woman of African-American and Native American descent to have achieved international fame and recognition as a sculptor. Finally, I will introduce Olive Rush, who grew up a Quaker and was inspired by genres of art ranging around the globe.

Mary Cassatt

Mary Stevenson-Cassatt, born May 22, 1844, in Pennsylvania was an American printmaker and painter (Mary Cassatt Org.). Her father was a stockbroker, her mother the daughter of a banker (Art Story/Cassatt). Like many women of her time, her family protested her will to become an artist. But Cassatt pushed on. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia when she was only fifteen and continued her studies through the years of the American Civil War. The website about Mary Cassatt states that, "…20% of the students [in the school] were female. Though most were not bent on making a career of art…Cassatt…was determined to become a professional artist" (Mary Cassatt Org.). Who could blame her? Art was a career that carried prestige and the ability to publicly express one's creativity.

She left the school in America where she believed she was not receiving a proper education and followed her family to France where she studied under expert artists and copied the styles and pieces of the masters. One of her acquaintances and teachers was Edgar Degas, an Impressionist painter.

The Impressionist style of painting was already considered rebellious; brought forth by painters with a new eye for style. They saw and expressed light in new ways adding softer shapes in natural colors, blended with views of average people were not what the administrators of the French Salons wanted to depict. They wanted strong details and formal studio settings. Instead of the intricate elements that other artists produced, Impressionist paintings were softer, vibrant, with an unfinished quality about them. In turn, they were faulted for this unfinished quality. In a struggle against the French government's control of art in the salons, the Impressionist painters fought for recognition and

popularity. They painted ‘en plain air’ (on site) and were castaways in the French shows (Viktoria).

As the unique style began to grow in popularity, Mary Cassatt could officially state she had joined their ranks (Weinberg). Cassatt was not only the first woman, but the first American to paint in the softer style; through the instruction of the Impressionist painters, Cassatt’s talents grew (Weinberg). Art Story, an organization devoted to art history states:

Cassatt's work combined the light color palette and loose brushwork of Impressionism with compositions influenced by Japanese art as well as by European Old Masters, and she worked in a variety of media throughout her career. This versatility helped to establish her professional success at a time when very few women were regarded as serious artists (Art Story/Cassatt).

She worked primarily with people, using her family as models. Her interests would turn to mother and child portraiture which would set her apart from others, in the sense that her paintings are full of virtue, love, and the bond between mother and child. Her soft paintings depicting the brilliant innocence of childhood and the tenderness of motherly devotion would become her biggest accomplishment.

Figure 1: The Boating Party, Mary Cassatt (NGA).

“The Boating Party” was made during what is believed to be Cassatt’s finest period of work. It depicts a woman and a child in a boat,

with a boatman paddling on a lake. The painting, created in 1894, shows Cassatt's unique styles combining both Impressionism and the influence of the Japanese prints she was known to enjoy (NGA). The offset composition, muted details, and close point of view are evidence of these unique qualities.

Figure 2: Little Girl in a Blue Armchair, Mary Cassatt (NGA).

The second painting, "Little Girl in a Blue Armchair" was finished in 1878. This painting, one of my personal favorites of Cassatt's, depicts a little girl relaxing restlessly in a blue armchair while her little puppy sits nearby. Viewing this painting made me giggle a bit, because the little girl looks more bored than anything, like she just wants to go outside and climb a tree. Cassatt's ability and nerve to paint a child being none other than a child was a new phenomenon for the world of art. Thus, the piece was rejected by the Paris Exposition Universelle, the city's third World's Fair (Puchko). At the time, portraiture was a formal occasion, with children, in pristine attire, sitting in a pose that portrayed them as more like dolls than children. Cassatt had no children of her own, but did have plenty of family to keep her inspired. When her family and their children would visit, she'd paint them.

In the biography about her later life Art Story.org described her work as such:

> …by the 1880s, Cassatt was particularly well known for her sensitive depictions of mothers and children. These works, like all her portrayals of women, may have achieved such popular success for a specific reason: they filled a societal need to idealize women's

> domestic roles at a time when many women were, in fact, beginning to take an interest in voting rights, dress reform, higher education, and social equality…she shared and admired progressive attitude of Bertha Honore Palmer, a businesswoman and philanthropist who invited Cassatt to paint a mural for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and who felt that 'women should be someone and not something,' (Art Story/Cassatt)

Failing eyesight by the year 1900 would limit Cassatt's work, eventually forcing her to stop painting. Her love for art continued, and she inspired the sale of many pieces of Impressionist art to friends of hers who visited France. The Metropolitan Museum has reason to thank Cassatt in her influence as "Cassatt was…instrumental in shaping the Havemeyer collection, most of which is now in the Metropolitan Museum," (Weinberg).

She would retire to her country home in France, living with her sister, Lydia. Her death in the summer of 1926 left many grieving, but her memory and work still lives on.

Mary Edmonia Lewis

"There is nothing so beautiful as the free forest. To catch a fish when you are hungry, cut the boughs of a tree, make a fire to roast it, and eat it in the open air, is the greatest of all luxuries. I would not stay a week pent up in cities, if it were not for my passion for art." — Edmonia Lewis, quoted in "Letter From L. Maria Child," National Anti-Slavery Standard, 27 Feb. 1864, (qtd. In SAAM).

Here I have begun to introduce Edmonia Lewis. Lewis was a sculptor, and although born in the United States, she worked in Rome. Her true birth year is unknown, but it is said that she claimed to have been born in 1844 near Albany, New York. Her father was African-American and her mother a Native American of the Chippewa tribe. Lewis lost her parents at the tender age of five (SAAM).

She grew up with the tribe, learning their customs and arts until she was twelve. It was then that her brother, Samuel, a gold miner, sent the money for Lewis to attend schools in New York and eventually Oberlin College in Ohio. It was in Ohio that she changed her childhood name 'Wildfire' to Mary Edmonia Lewis. Life at the school was not easy for her, and she was accused of poisoning two fellow classmates and theft, crimes she did not commit. Lewis was asked to leave the school, never graduating (SAAM).

Lewis traveled to Boston where she met portrait sculptor Edward Brackett and began to train under him. Although she had limited education in sculpting, Lewis began making small medallion portraits of

well-known abolitionists such as John Brown and Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. It was with the sales of these small medallion portraitures that she could travel to Europe to continue her career (SAAM). In an article on New York history is the following information, “the early nineteenth century was a difficult time to be an American sculptor. There were no professional art schools, no specialized carvers, few quality materials, and only a few practicing sculptors in America. The pilgrimage to Rome was a necessity for those who aspired to be sculptors. If a woman wished to pursue sculpting, she (also) confronted additional obstacles” (Weber).

Lewis would have to face these obstacles and overcome them. If working with clay and marble was considered undignified because it required physical effort and pants, she was up for the challenge. If working as a sculptor required the study of human anatomy, Lewis would do it, even if it meant studying nude models. A blog written about Lewis by a New York Historical Society recites a quote from Lewis regarding her need to travel to Rome for her work, “…I was practically driven to Rome...in order to obtain the opportunities for art culture, and to find a social atmosphere where I was not constantly reminded of my color…” (Weber). Thus, she adopted Rome as her home.

Not much more is known of her younger years and life with the tribe. Her school years were rather short lived, her time in Boston temporary. It was in Rome that her artistic talents expanded, and she began building a name for herself in the world of neo-classical sculpture. She was small of stature, standing only four feet tall, but insisted that she carve the marble herself, never relying on hired assistants. She felt strongly art should be completed by the artist (Rivo and Weber).

She gained commissions for busts of prominent people like Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant or poets and authors like Anna Quincy Waterston. In her free time, Lewis would return to her history and create marble renderings of Native Americans and African Americans. This was her way of fighting against the oppressions of her people and showing the nation that the treatment of these people was unjust. The Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard states, “Lewis rendered unique treatments of African American and American Indian themes and figures. Her first large scale marble sculpture “The Freed Woman and Her Child” (1866), was the first by an African American sculptor to depict this subject” (Rivo). The location of this sculpture is unknown, but its cultural significance was undeniable.

Figure 3: "Forever Free", Edmonia Lewis (Lewis)

Another of Lewis' sculptures that has told a story is entitled, "Forever Free" (1867), taking its name from a line in the Emancipation Proclamation, "All persons held as slaves shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free" (Rivo). This sculpture depicts a man and woman casting off the shackles of enslavement. This piece, according the Hutchins Center, "evokes the well-known abolitionist emblem engraved by Patrick Henry Reason…" (Rivo). A piece which depicted an African American woman on bended knee, stripped to the waist, her head tilted toward the sky, and her clasped hands raised revealing heavy chains attached to her wrists. This piece is heart wrenching. However, looking back to the piece by Edmonia Lewis there is a similar pose in the woman, she is on bended knee and replicates the same gesture. The Hutchins Center tells us that her piece shows the woman unchained, fully clothed, full of dignity and grace that was denied to African Americans by slavery (Rivo).

This was one of Lewis' signature pieces, but her fight for equality did not end there. She did many pieces with depicting both African Americans and Native Americans that showed strong women overcoming injustice. "I have a strong sympathy for all women who have struggled and suffered," she once told a journalist (Rivo). Lewis fought for humanity through her work. It was her way of showing the world the injustices that were being imposed on her people and others in similar situations. Through her art, her story remains. Today, protest art

is strong in showing the world the injustices being brought down upon people. Perhaps Edmonia Lewis was ahead of her time in depicting the world's wrongs through pieces that have been handed down through history.

Edmonia Lewis worked until into the 1880s when the neoclassical style began losing its popularity to be replaced by modern art. There is not much documentation as to whether Lewis remained in Rome or returned home as commissions for her work began to dwindle. It is assumed that she remained in Rome until her death in 1911.

Olive Rush

A muralist, illustrator, and advocate for Native American Art Education, Olive Rush was born in June of 1873 in Indiana. As a Quaker, artistic pursuits were considered unnecessary vanities, however, Rush was encouraged by her parents. An article done by the Pasatiempo, an art publication, on Olive Rush's legacy tells us that she was artistically talented beginning at a young age (Abatemarco). Her parents' generation was affected more by early prohibitions or leanings of Quakers who felt some aspects of the arts did not appropriately accompany their spiritual beliefs. Her parents both had artistic leanings, but never really expressed them significantly because of the strong feelings of their Quaker upbringings" (Abatemarco). Having the support of her parents, Rush's talent grew as did her love of the west and folklore after having been told endless stories about the west from her father who had traveled in his younger years. The open spaces and Native American civilizations fascinated Rush (Siegel).

She left home, and began her art studies at Earlham College, a school associated with the Corcoran Gallery of Art and at the Art Students League, before becoming an illustrator in New York in 1895. Rush's work was published in magazine such as St. Nicholas, Woman's Home Companion, and Good Housekeeping (Siegal). Eventually, she expanded her study to Europe, studying under American Impressionist Richard Miller. While visiting galleries in Europe, she saw works by many women artists. Included among these works were murals painted by Mary Cassatt and other female artists such as New York sisters Lydia Field Emmet and Rosina Emmet Sherwood (Abatemarco). Some of the creations she saw while traveling in Europe would inspire her styles later.

She often visited New Mexico in the early years of the 20th century, securing a solo show in 1914 at the Museum of New Mexico's Palace of the Governors. It was here that Rush developed a love for painting murals and frescoes. Indiana Magazine of History states:

> …it unusual for women artists to receive commissions to paint large murals, but the artists (as those mentioned above in Europe, for example) …painted real women engaged in useful fields of work—a bold rejection of the conventional, flat allegorical images of women most often created by male artists. (Siegal)

Like Cassatt, Rush stepped outside the conventions of women in art and developed her own style. One of her paintings, 'Evening Flowers,' a portrait of a little girl sitting on the ground, was included in the Fall 1915 benefit for women's suffrage at the Macbeth Gallery in New York," (Siegal). While painting her wall pieces and frescoes, Rush included and encouraged help from the local Native Americans.

Falling in love with New Mexico, she made it her permanent home by 1920. She was forty-seven, and her life as an artist was still going strong. Due to the popularity of her frescoes and murals, Rush was asked to teach students at the Santa Fe Indian School. Rush accepted and assisted the students in creating a fresco on the walls of their dining area. Her words regarding the experience were nearly as artistic as her creations, "My part was merely to effect a correlation of the designs suggested. I felt like a musical conductor who goes to an orchestra of highly trained musicians," she stated (Siegal). Rush continued her work with the students, and in 1933, she and her students had created a series of murals for Century of Progress exposition in Chicago. Her love of teaching and the Native American traditions helped her when she wanted to establish The Studio at the Santa Fe Indian School, a program that would train hundreds of Native American artists in the years to come. As art historian Wanda M. Corn has argued, such visual images of contemporary women "stretched the boundaries of the imaginable for their young female viewers," (Siegal). Rush was becoming a role model for up and coming female artists. With her encouragement the younger generation would eventually gain the confidence they needed to become professional artists themselves (Siegal).

Olive Rush never gave up her Quaker beliefs, nor did she relinquish her generous nature that she'd been taught as a child. She volunteered during WWII, sending clothing to the needy, and advocating for peace. In May of 1947, her heartfelt efforts helped her to acquire an honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts, presented by Earlham College, where her life in art had begun. In her acceptance speech, Rush stated, "The message of Art is to turn the mind from the special, the fragmentary, the personal to the universal…" (Siegal). Rush's words would continue to inspire her and her students until her death in 1966. She was a loving, caring, and strong woman who stood for what she believed in. Her art had its own daring flare about it, while still portraying the peaceful Quaker ideals that she had grown up with. Through her work and her

loving demeanor, Rush's reputation as a considerate woman would grow, and it's with her words I close, "You must learn your own best way of living and creating. You are an individual in art as in life" (Raphael).

Conclusion

Each of these artists were unique and fought for equality in what was once considered a "man's world." These women have given their hearts and souls for their work. They have fought for their families, friends, and future generations. In my studies of art history and as an artist myself, I can only hope that I can help tell their stories, forever giving them their rightful place in the history books.

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NANCY PRATT CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Metaphor Arthritis and a Mercedes

The thing about arthritis pain and the pain from loving you is how easily I manage both with impermanent remedies rather than admit each is a way of life demanding a change in my own habits. Instead of eating this cake that will surely inflame my joints and cause shooting spikes, I could choose to walk off the pain instead. Wait for the surge of endorphins to release into my bloodstream returning a semblance of balance and clear-headedness to my physical self. I wonder if I can walk you off too.

A thick piece of cake sits in front of me as a silent waitress pours steaming coffee into a cup I'm massaging like it's Aladdin's lamp in disguise. My thumbs have plagued me with arthritic achiness since the year I turned forty. At first, I was convinced the mainly nuisance, here-again-gone-again discomfort was a byproduct of a too tight grip on the elliptical machine at the gym. Pain that comes on quietly like arthritis does—in a gentle, ebb and flow—building slowly, reliably—can sometimes be misidentified. But I was never as good at reading signals as I was at ignoring the obvious. Absently I seek relief from the now faithful pain wherever I find a heated surface.

I'm at the coffee shop on the shaded corner of our street seeking relief from more than just arthritis pain. As I jab my fork into the layered confection I know the calming lethargy from flowing glucose will shortly displace emotional turmoil with a haze of sweetened wellbeing. Who needs valium or alcohol with such baked goodness? Besides, I can still legally operate a motorized vehicle under the influence of carb-overload, and a recent side-effect of our union sits on the street just

outside the coffee shop window: a candy-red, $60,000 symbol of a decomposing relationship.

I think a Mercedes is like eating rich buttercream frosting by the spoonful right out of the bowl. Delicious sure, but far more fat and sugar than anyone needs. A carotid artery with heated seats, driver assist and satellite radio. After discovering you and my arthritis were on the opposite ends of the faithfulness spectrum, a car-buying binge seemed every bit as reasonable as ingesting a towering piece of layered calories; a bright, sporty placebo against the dark, thick pain weighing me down and signaling the death knell of our future.

I love the Mercedes, and I hate you. But even as I think it I know I'm lying to myself. I hate the Mercedes too. You imagined me as someone who drove a high-end vehicle because you imagined that was the kind of woman who best reflected your own value. I knew that too. It was why I resisted buying the car until today. Buying it now is me rubbing salt into my own open wound. A post-middle-aged version of emotional cutting. Something to make me feel outrage, or indignation, or fury. Anything besides stupidity and confusion. I long to be the woman who burns your clothes, breaks your favorite golf clubs, confronts you screaming in public and then drives that Mercedes straight out of town, or right over you.

I'm pushing the cake around the plate more than eating it, smashing the fork into the frosting watching the brown fluff push up through the prongs. The October sun is fading into pinkish hued clouds deepening the car's candied red to a claret. I think I am somewhere between who I am and who I am no more tethered to the present only by the throbbing pain in my thumbs that lets me know not everything has changed. Even if we have changed. Even if I am now a woman who drives a decadent new Mercedes and philosophizes about chocolate cake alone in a coffee shop. I press the backside of my thumbs against the cup again, but it's tepid now and provides no relief.

SHARON LIN FICTION

Swiftly

Ten seconds. Teresa could imagine the kernels, each golden pearl sitting amidst the wax-covered interior of the paper bag, each awaiting the seconds before they would burst with the fullness of their regal white clouds, emerging from the rigid casings into which they had been trapped for the entirety of their existence. She thought about the heat, about how the gradually growing sensation tickled their skins like they did her own.

Buzz! Teresa quickly opened the microwave and reached her hand up to grab at the handle, gingerly removed the scalding hot bag. Carefully tearing the corner, she spilled the golden morsels into a colorful plastic bowl. The kernels steamed and shook with the heat and the sudden intensity of their release, and as Teresa caught a whiff of the buttery scent that emanated from their presence, she felt a sudden longing sensation.

Grabbing the bowl, she walked out of the kitchen, fully knowing where she wanted to go, and yet still unable to bring herself to consciously make the decision to travel to the room. As she took brisk steps down the hall, she marveled at her body's ability to simply obey her command. It took almost no thought to move her legs forward, to compel them to action from rest, and to note their final placing in perfect linear motion, sweeping against gravity and back towards the ground. It was a fascinating study to consider, how she was simply able to dance with her feet even as she didn't think about the actions themselves.

She had once been a dancer. It seemed like a while ago, but she recalled the colorful dresses, the flowing fans, the props, and the lights always shining too bright on her face, too hot for her skin. She could

recall the long hours of practice, bruises across her limbs, and the constant voices, always angry, reminding her of why she wasn't good enough or why she couldn't look like the other girls in her troupe. It wasn't always the best environment growing up, but she could certainly appreciate the beauty of fluid motion so much more given her past experience working within the art form. It seemed a natural extension of what she already knew simply applied to a more domestic setting.

Along the way, she picked up her phone and noticed a notification appear on the screen. Before she could even read what it said, she swiped it away. No need for that sort of nonsense at this time. Instead, she continued along to the living room. Her television was off, so she figured it was as good a time as any to watch some old tapes her parents had kept around the house. She set the bowl of popcorn down on the side of the couch and riffled through the DVDs along the stack – all of them labeled in the same messy script her father had. She wondered what they meant – most of them were written in a language she could not recognize, but she figured they had to be listed by age if not chronologically.

Selecting one that seemed appropriate for the moment, she sat herself down on the velvet green couch in the middle of her living room and placed her popcorn on top of her lap, pressing on the remote to start the tape. It flashed with the blurred screen of the production company before switching to the colorful scenery of the first movement of the performance. The corner of Teresa's mouth turned up in a small smile, and she brought her legs up onto the couch as the dancers began to stream out to the melody of the violas.

The sudden nostalgia was almost surprising, but Teresa admittedly had not reflected on this notion for quite some time. It was thoroughly against her intentions to conjure back the memories of her childhood. Despite how much she had loved the art, the beauty, and the simple majesty of the movement she could perform, dance eroded from a passion into her parent's desires and dreams. She loathed herself for thinking this way, but each time she thought about her father's demands, how he constantly forced her to practice for hours simply because she couldn't pass her adjudication, how she hated how they had to pay for lessons when dance would never become a conscious part of her future anyway, how they seemed so intent on manipulating her success, she could only remember the dreadful day when she finally pushed them out of her life.

The notification popped up on her phone once again. She thought about it for a second, about the last time she had called home. She first moved away in high school, choosing to live with her grandparents in the city near home just to stay away from the pain. Then in college, once

again, she moved hundreds of miles away. Even when her dormmate would welcome back her mother or father during the holidays, Teresa could only remember the long hours spent in the library, or with her friends, never the smiles of her parents.

She reached her hand into the bowl that she now had nestled between her legs and was pleased to find that it had cooled to a more comfortable temperature. The feeling of the popcorn gently chaffing her hand reminded her of the first time she had helped to string popcorn with her father. There was simply so much going on nowadays that it didn't make sense to celebrate as much as she once had, but the holidays were always a grand time to let go of worries.

The phone rang again, this time chiming the song of the Sugar Plum Fairies as it buzzed about on the size of the couch. Teresa sighed and looked at the caller's name, recognizing her father's face in the icon that popped up. She swiftly swiped to the left, ignoring the call and finally placing her phone on silent. As she tossed it aside, hearing it land with a thud on the carpeted ground of her living room, she faced her eyes towards the screen of the television. The children were now lining up in a circular fashion, curtsying on both sides as they followed one another into the next formation of the movement.

As she peered at her clock, drowsiness overcame her senses. The music from the television faded away, replaced with the sensations of movement - her limbs dancing in the stillness of the stage, the bright lights overhead. As Teresa danced, she heard her parent's voices surround her. They praised her, and she saw herself growing, larger and larger, but as she did the voices grew harsher and harsher, until she tumbled away and the stage disappeared. The moments started to blur together, and Teresa saw only herself, lost in time, a bodiless mind floating above the world.

She envied and loathed this version of herself, and wondered whether she would ever be able to return to the world she knew. Even so, as she continued along, floating throughout the vast expanse, she felt alone and vulnerable. She saw the faces of the people she knew float along and yet there was nothing she could do but watch as they disappeared behind her. Finally, the faces of her parents appeared, but as she started forward to greet them, they too dissolved into the darkness. A buzzing filled her ears, and as she covered them to block away the noise, the vast darkness disappeared.

Teresa opened her eyes, her mind still hazy from the dream. The buzzing continued, and she momentarily realized that her doorbell had been rung. Without a second thought, she jumped up from the couch and strode towards the door, opening it to see the face of her father staring back at her. Her voice caught in her throat.

“Merry Christmas, Tree!” her father said, almost hesitantly, as he burst through the door with an armful of bags, her mother trailing closely behind. “We didn’t hear from you - we thought you weren’t home for a while.”

“Merry Christmas, Daddy,” she said softly before stepping aside to embrace him.

“Welcome Home Sisters!”: A Personal and Political Education

For Rebecca in Barter on the occasion of our 1st Michigan Womyn’s Music festival. by Caroline (and Monika) from Montreal, Canada August 16, 1987

Before Michigan
I’d never seen
a womon with one breast
I’d never seen
womyn walking nude
hand in hand
very simple
but I’d never seen it
Before Michigan
I’d never seen
thirty Amazon mud wrestlers
or womyn
whose breasts
held worlds of their own
womyn
creating crafts
for womyn only:
purple velvet
silver labyris
clitoris in pearl
I’d never
walked alone in the woods
unafraid
of rape
never
before Michigan
I’d never seen
so many stomachs, thighs,
breasts, buttocks,
so many colored
pubic hairs
made public
with ease

Lesbians,
I’d never seen
so many Lesbians
I’d never had the chance
to love so openly
to stand pressed to my lover
outside our tent
orgasms still coursing through us
flute or bongos in the background
womyn stiring, womyn moving,
womyn loving
like us
near by
Before Michigan
I knew diversity
could be respected
amongst womyn
but I’d never
lived the reality
like this…..
womyn of colors, white womyn,
sober support, over forties,
DART, young womyn
interpretation by voice or hand
I’d never seen
children growing
with the education I missed
Before Michigan
I’d never seen
a womon with one breast.

[1] From *Voices From The Land* http://www.michfestmatters.com/

The above poem was written for a breast cancer survivor as trade for a velvet treasure bag at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival barter market. Every August since 1976 women from around the country and around the world have gathered in rural Michigan for the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (Michigan). More than ten years ago, when I first learned of this annual gathering in celebration of lesbian feminist culture, I knew that I wanted to attend Michigan. As a lesbian feminist who loves music and nature, six days deep in the woods surrounded by other lesbian feminists and some of my favorite musicians, comics, and spoken-word artists seemed like a little piece of heaven on earth. For ten long years I heard the distant drumbeat of my tribe but there was always some reason I couldn't go; I didn't have the money, I didn't have the vacation time from work, I didn't have anyone to go with, I was at residency for graduate school, I was afraid of the reaction from my activist communities due to controversy over trans inclusion at the festival . When I learned that 2015 would be the 40th and last Michigan I knew I had to make the pilgrimage despite my fears. I couldn't let this, my last opportunity, slip away.

I had no idea at the time that Michigan would prove to be more than a camping trip, more than a simple music festival, more than a series of workshops, but a full-fledged educational experience. It may be unusual to think of a music festival as a school, but in his essay "Movements making knowledge: a new wave of inspiration for sociology?" Laurence Cox (2014) writes, "Much of the knowledge now treated as unproblematically academic, including some of its highest status products, has roots in the efforts of popular movements to contest the status quo" (p. 957). I was already steeped in feminist theory and knew quite a bit about the lesbian feminist culture responsible for shepherding in birth and abortion rights, the equal rights amendment, rape-crisis centers, and women's shelters, basically the culture celebrated at Michigan. With that background, I certainly didn't expect to leave Michigan with a whole new perspective on both my role as a feminist activist and my personal identity as a "fat butch dyke". I didn't expect Michigan to be as much or even more about education than it was about entertainment. Even today I struggle to articulate both my actual experiences of the festival and the depth of meaning this six-day excursion in the Michigan woods has had on my life.

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[1] I will not devote space in this essay for this twenty-year controversy. For more information, see:

- Official festival statements: http://michfest.com/community-statements/
- Myths and truths about Michigan: http://www.michfestmatters.com/myths-and-truths-about-the-michigan-womyns-music-festival/
- History of camp trans: http://eminism.org/michigan/faq-protest.html

When I think of education in the most technical sense there are three words that come to mind—curriculum, pedagogy, and community. Michigan was not only a space for women to live, even briefly, outside the confines of capitalist heteropatriarchy, but it also held space for lesbian feminists to share their culture and language. The curriculum at Michigan was vast and varied; from singing circles to writing workshops, from anti-racism dialogues to herbal medicine demonstrations there was something for everyone. Michigan was a model of "how kindness might produce pedagogical relationships that sow the seeds of possibility for the transformation of … lives" and was an answer to the questions "how might we imagine a feminism that uses kindness as a pedagogical strategy? And what might feminist kindness in the classroom do to the lives, bodies, experiences, and identities that inhabit these spaces" (Magnet, Mason, & Trevenen, 2014, p. 1). Finally, a safe and supportive community was at the heart of everything that transpired on the festival land.

After two days of driving the 900 miles across Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan my partner Dena and I arrived at "The Line". Thousands of women were lined up for over 8 miles in RV's, SUVs, trucks, minivans, and compact cars. Some with nothing but a backpack, some with automobiles overflowing with gear. As I lowered my window I began to hear the the refrain, "Welcome home sisters!" What started out feeling kitschy, soon gathered meaning and started to feel real. On the line women of all shapes and sizes and colors, all smiling and waving, greeted us as if we were family. In her entry in Voices From The Land (2016) festival attendee Artemis writes, "My partner walks The Line with the girls and explains, quite plainly, that everyone they see here is female. That one with the beard? Female. That one with the tie and coat? Female. Those two women over there, with the kid just learning to walk? That is a family. Us, here together? We are a family too." This was the first lesson I began to learn even before entering the gates, I was part of a global tribe of women, of feminists and lesbians. I had a culture and a community, and here I had found a whole new family. For the next 8 hours, as afternoon turned to dusk and dusk turned to evening, we started to get to know this new family while we slowly made our way to the festival gate.

My partner and I finally entered the gates at 9pm as darkness was beginning to settle over the festival grounds. Some of the festival crew suggested we might want to park and spend the night in our car, but having just spent two days in my compact Mazda3 the last thing I wanted to do was spend another minute in its too small confines. Little did we know that we still had hours to get through orientation, pick out our work shifts, load and unload our gear, and figure out how to set up

camp in the pitch-black darkness of the rural Michigan woods. You must understand that the land where this festival was built is almost entirely untouched forest; there were no designated campsites pre-cleared of forest debris. Somehow we picked a spot and hung our meager lantern on a branch. I briefly regretted getting the two-room Taj Mahal of tents as we struggled to untangle impossibly long tent poles and what seemed like miles of incomprehensible nylon in almost complete darkness. It was after 1:00 AM when we finally—gratefully, despite the cold temperatures and a leaking air mattress—settled into our first night of much needed rest.

The first morning on the land brought a wave of lessons. Professor Bonnie Morris (1999) describes some of the sensations felt by first-time attendees in her book Eden Built By Eves where she writes, “Forget structure and hierarchy for a moment, the first shock for festival virgins is the plethora of breasts. This is women-only space, folks— which means the freedom and safety to go without a shirt in the soft summer air. It means for many a woman the first day of being at home in her body and the first sensation of sun on her bare back since babyhood. There is no need to cover up here; there is no need for shame" (p. 67). I was immediately in awe of women of every age, size, color, and gender presentation all seeming comfortable and safe in their own skin, clothed and unclothed. It didn’t matter if a topless woman was 350 or 120 pounds, we still looked each other in the eye as we passed, no sneers, no cat calls, no judgments. Even though I felt the heavy burden of a lifetime of female socialization and body shame lifting slightly the hardest part of the second day for me was the showers!

Michigan didn’t have any indoor facilities. There were several shower areas like the one pictured below. They were simply ten shower heads, five on each side of a wooden structure with one curtained shower on the back, referred to as the “shy shower.”

Figure 4:https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/07/fe/48/07fe488822751a8e4274937a886cb889.jpg

After such a long day on the line and setting up camp the night before, I was in dire need of cleansing. As I stood in line waiting for a free spot I got more and more nervous about being so vulnerably naked in front of so many other women. When the first shower opened, I froze. I couldn't do it. My partner took that first open shower. When the next opened I still couldn't do it. I waited for the shy shower. As I cleaned off the dust and sweat of the day before I vowed to myself that I was going to somehow overcome this paralyzing fear built on body shame. This became my personal goal for the week; I would walk the land naked at least once before I had to leave it behind.

For the week 6,609 women came together as a family, cooking together, cleaning together, loving together, playing together, showering together, and even fighting together. In short, collectively doing all the things needed to make any home or community a functional place. Safety was the number one priority and collective actions of this makeshift family ensured everyone's basic needs were met. A kitchen staffed with a mix of festival worker crew and many attendee volunteers cooked hot vegetarian meals three times a day over wood fired cooking pits kept burning overnight for the entire festival. DART, the Disabled Access Resource Team, provided a special centralized camping area, shuttle services around the festival grounds for people with mobility issues, wheelchair accessible showers, and ASL interpreter services at all shows and requested workshops. The Oasis was a place to find any kind of emotional or addiction support. Basic health services for all attendees could be found at The Womb. Outside of the official festival services, women helped each other whenever a need was seen.

I was thrilled to live in a land where "feminist" was not a dirty word, where capitalist heteropatriarchy was not the predominant belief system, and where it was safe to be anyone I wanted to be. A friend of mine recently wrote a Facebook post about some of her Michigan experiences and the loss we share at the closing of the festival:

Michfest, above all else, was a place for womyn to heal from patriarchal trauma and abuse. Approximately 80% of womyn at Michfest were lesbians or bisexual, and many were also differently abled, womyn of color, sexual abuse survivors, butch and gender non-conforming womyn who experienced a lot of discrimination, Deaf or hard-of-hearing, economically disadvantaged, closeted for safety, and/or in recovery. Michfest was our one safe place, maybe the only 650 acres on Earth where womyn were free. That is why all the vitriol against Michfest is such a punch to the gut. Trans activists paint us as a "hate group," when in fact we are a hateD group, trying to heal. Michfest was, for so many womyn who had survived girlhood, a place of healing from spending our whole lives dealing (to various degrees) with misogyny,

abuse, and oppression in patriarchy. There were multiple, daily Sacred Singing Circles, recovery meetings, healing workshops, sweat lodges for abuse survivors, and so on and so forth...and these healing circles and rituals were frickin' intense. I will never forget the intensity of both the joy, of womyn and girls dancing naked and giddy and free in a circle of sisters, and the pain, the unbelievable pain that surged out of womyn in the form of screams, moans, gagging, tears, gasps, fists pounding the dirt. That literal, physical purging of pain and oppression was often what it took in order to begin healing. It may have been the only place in the world where that purging and healing was possible at that level and with that level of safety…. We had *no time or energy* to put towards oppressing trans people, as trans activists claim, because all our time and energy was required for healing ourselves and each other. AND WE WERE NOT DONE (Gabrielle, 2016).

Never, before Michigan, would I have thought it possible for a big butch woman to parade in a tutu. Never, before Michigan, would I have thought it possible for 30 nude women of color to march in the center of town chanting, "Naked and safe is beautiful." Never, before Michigan, have I seen girlhood in all its diversity so genuinely celebrated. From archery and hatchet throwing to hula hoops and stilt-walking, dressed in bowties or fairy wings, at Michigan girlhood mattered.

Throughout the week I had a lot to learn from this community of women. Before I could keep my personal promise of walking the land naked I had to learn some hard lessons about me as a fat woman, as a feminist, and as a butch dyke, as well as lessons about the safety and compassion of a community built on a foundation of radical feminist idealism. Fortunately, the loving community of Michigan was just the first aspect of its educational potential. In retrospect I see that there was also an astounding curriculum that was delivered through a powerful pedagogical model that encouraged active participation through its emphasis on kindness, compassion, and safety.

An unspoken but clear commitment to kindness toward each other and the planet at the heart of Michigan made it a place where curiosity and accountable relationships were formed even where there were strongly divergent positions. In 1991 a transwoman, Nancy Buckholder, was asked to leave the festival which sparked a 24-year controversy over trans inclusion and the festival intention as a place of celebration of women and girls who were born female. Despite the festival organizers' repeated denunciation of the 1991 incident as a mistake, as well as the simple fact that transwomen were always present at the festival, many queer activists have targeted Michigan as well as performers and attendees with boycotts and even extreme threats of violence (see https://terfisaslur.com for examples). Although I had read all about the

controversy from outside the festival, I was very curious to see how the topic of trans inclusion was discussed within festival. I was surprised to see that, not only was the topic of trans inclusion discussed but, even in its very last year, several workshops in different formats were dedicated to facilitating the challenging conversations around the controversial topic. I chose to attend two Allies in Understanding workshops and one Imagining an Inclusive Festival workshop.

Early in the first workshop we discussed the practice of radical listening. Radical listening is the startlingly simple idea of listening closely to whoever is speaking instead of thinking about what you want to say next. It seems simple, but it turns out to be more difficult in practice than one would expect. After practicing radical listening and modeling communication techniques that allowed for expression of controversial and even upsetting differences of opinion, the workshop leaders asked everyone to line up along a spectrum depending on how they felt about the idea of trans inclusion in the festival. The line was then folded in half and we were partnered with our ideological opposite in the spectrum and asked to share our feelings and radically listen to the feelings of our partner. I talked about being in what I termed the "Michigan closet," not feeling safe in my community because I planned to attend the festival and how that was such a shame because so much of the hatred was based on misinformation. The woman I shared this with reflected similar feelings and together we wondered how we could tell the story of Michigan in a way that could be heard by these people we care about but who don't understand the intention of the festival. Obviously, I was not on an extreme end of the spectrum and the woman I was partnered with in this exercise was open to a creative dialogue. I don't know that anyone's views were significantly changed because of the exercise, but after the workshop one woman who had a more extreme position on the topic said that she thought the respectful conversations that she had over the two days allowed for a deeper level of understanding, if not harmony, than could ever be achieved in the flame wars of social media.

Another example of understanding across difference came from my partner Dena who is a Jewish Palestine solidarity activist. She met several Zionist women at the "Jews Choosing Justice Despite our Fears" workshop for Jewish-identified women. Although the conversation they had was difficult and uncomfortable, she later told me that the experience allowed women from opposite ends of a heated spectrum to hear each other in ways that had not previously been possible. Later in the day we sat with one woman from the workshop who told her "I can hear it coming from you here in this space." Unlike anywhere else in my experience, within Michigan people from opposite ends of extremely

emotionally charged issues came together to talk through and learn from each other with respect. The feminist ethos of radical listening, unconditional love, and deep mutual respect built into the Michigan foundations and maintained even when we vehemently disagreed, created a space where discussion could occur between different modes of knowing, ultimately creating new knowledge and better understanding.

In a recent Feminist Teacher article, "Feminism, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Kindness" Shoshana Magnet, Corinne Lysandra Mason, and Kathryn Trevenen (2014), describe "curiosity [as] an emotion necessary to learning and discovery, one that thrives more easily in an environment where students feel safe to try out different ideas and to dialogue with one another. In this way, a pedagogical commitment to kindness also helps to foster curiosity, an essential feature of education" (p. 8). They go on to describe a pedagogical method they call "thinking with" where "kindness is understood as a pedagogical strategy to rearrange our engagements with texts and each other, so that 'thinking with' rather than 'speaking to' or 'arguing with' is central to the classroom objectives" (p. 11). In retrospect, I can see that the pedagogy of Michigan was exactly what these teachers were experimenting with in their classrooms, a feminist pedagogy of kindness. At the time of the Allies in Understanding workshop I thought it was crazy and perhaps even a little bit dangerous to “fold the line” and open discussion between the most ideologically opposite participants in the workshop, but now I see that the underlying pedagogy of kindness supported that dialogue in a way where curiosity and the possibility of deeper understanding resulted in conversations that were more geared toward thinking with rather than speaking to or arguing with each other.

The Michigan curriculum incorporated countless subjects that are not available in traditional mainstream educational settings, or even in most social or activist spaces. Some of the topics covered included radical acceptance, feminist history, lesbian culture, and sexual and gender identity. As much as Michigan was a place for affirmative learning, it was also a place for unlearning racism, classism, ageism, ableism, and body shame. This is a radical learning. In her dissertation, Reconstructing Gender, Personal Narrative, and Performance At The Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival (2011) Lisa Higgins describes Michigan as a place “where women strive to revise regressive models of community and unlearn the negative ‘–isms’ that permeate the larger patriarchal culture. … At Festival, this large gathering of women creates intersections from a range of races, classes, communities, and backgrounds where even this feminist institution is questioned, targeted, and criticized by its own participants" (p. 36). In academia we learn

about joining the academic conversation which sometimes means questioning the foundations and separations of disciplines. Similarly, Michigan provided a safe place to not only celebrate lesbian feminist culture, but to seriously question, debate, and expand the beliefs at the heart of that culture. Michigan could serve as a model for education that asks important questions like: What are valid ways of knowing? Whose knowledge is valuable? Whose voices are being left out? How do we communicate across difference?

In their essay, “The Woman-Identified Woman,” Radicalesbians (1970) wrote:

> To the extent that she cannot expel the heavy socialization that goes with being female, she can never truly find peace with herself. … Those of us who work that through find ourselves on the other side of a tortuous journey through a night that may have been decades long. The perspective gained from that journey, the liberation of self, the inner peace, the real love of self and of all women, is something to be shared with all women - because we are all women. (p. 1)

The radical feminist values at the core of Michigan made it a place where women could, even briefly, expel the heavy socialization that goes with being female to do the work, individually and collectively, of getting through to the other side of this tortuous journey. The legacy of Michigan is the perspective, liberation, inner peace, and love gained by all of us who have lived and loved and learned on that sacred land and in that truly feminist educational tradition. Michigan will be remembered as a community where the lives and culture of women, regardless of race, ability, size, gender expression, age, religion, or sexual orientation were validated and celebrated. Michigan was a model for education that incorporated a curriculum built according to the needs and desires of all who came through the gates rather than the interests of capitalist heteropatriarchy. Michigan was a place where a pedagogy of kindness made possible true curiosity and radical understanding even where disagreements seemed insurmountable.

With this I am brought full circle to the poem included as a preamble to this essay "Before Michigan / I knew diversity / could be respected /amongst womyn / but I’d never / lived the reality / like this… / I’d never seen / children growing / with the education I missed." I am profoundly grateful to have experienced a taste of the education, community, curriculum, and pedagogy found at Michigan. Though I regret all the years I missed, I hope to share the fundamental lessons of radical acceptance and feminist empowerment far beyond the gates of Michigan and into the wider world where those lessons are so tragically needed.

As women filed out of closing ceremonies on the final night of the final Michigan I still hadn't kept my promise to myself. I had managed to take a few showers outside of the "shy shower" under the cover of darkness, never looking up, and with my towel close at hand for a quick cover-up for the return to the tent. I had one last chance. Had I learned any of the lessons of Michigan? Had I let go of any of the emotional baggage from a lifetime of oppression and female socialization? Had I learned to trust? It was time to find out!

Elizabeth Ritzman's *Voices From The Land* entry echoes my own sentiments about that last shower and living in the safety and shelter of womyn's land, she writes, "I remember finding the courage to go shower in the moonlight, and how I never wanted to leave. That safe feeling sheltered by the trees, pebbles beneath my feet, the giggling girls in the trees, that moon, womyns bodies of all sorts wet and glistening, murmuring to each other in the night. This is what it must be like to live in a world created and defined by women. The night is an intimate friend, no longer a threat to be managed." I stepped out from under the water and walked, cleaner and lighter, for the first time on that sacred land wearing nothing but moonlight. This final lesson I learned at Michigan was both the most challenging and the most personally and politically rewarding. Body shame is ubiquitous in our culture and has played a particularly destructive role in my life as a fat butch dyke. It took a whole week, the cover of darkness, and the courage, compassion, and radical acceptance of over 6,600 women in sacred community to loosen the bonds of body shame in myself. The bonds are still there today, but for a brief moment, I was able to see what the world might be like without them, and it was phenomenal!

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Faculty Colloquium at the Country Club

I take my seat and look over the sunlight room.
Fourteen tables draped with white
privilege. Four speakers: two white men,
one black man, one woman.
Each scrupulously earnest,
as they circle the wild dogs and boars
of critical race theory, social construction,
white privilege, power and prejudice, oppression.

I glance around the room.
Eurocentric Christian whiteness.
Doctrine of Discovery whiteness.
The faculty and administrators
are mostly men, white men. Two black men.
Few women. Most, like me, white.
No black women, one Latino woman, one Asian woman.
Gay? Trans? Bisexual? No one knows.

It makes me want to spell out words with pills:
headache tablets, antidepressants,
whatever I can gather: *try harder* and *inclusion*,
and most of all *What The F--*.

These hours are a calendar of loss.
I drift away to where I'm sprawled on the grass
reading poetry, then walking in the rain,
floating on water, dancing barefoot
on the beach, drinking coffee in Paris.
I wonder if it's true that blue eyes are a genetic mutation,
that all people with blue eyes can be traced back to one man.

I see the man leaning in to see if I am listening,

hear the woman *uhm-hmming* the speaker's points.
It is an undertow that sucks me back into myself.
I return to sift through words, searching
for something to nourish me.
Their words are bruised like ripe fruit,
handled too much, the juices running.
Soaked in the blood-dyed skin of young black men,
I find: *Signifier: dark skin; Signified: criminal*

My sons are young men, but they are not black.
They do not walk the streets shadowed by death
They still have fire in their souls.
I don't have enough words
to both rage and weep.

Faubourg Tremé: Cultural and Societal Progress in a Neighborhood Faced with Gentrification

Introduction

In New Orleans the word for neighborhood is Faubourg. This, like so many other things in New Orleans, speaks to one of the many inherent differences between this city and others. Faubourg Tremé was established in 1842 by free people of color. It is not only the oldest black neighborhood in the United States, but the birthplace of jazz, home to cultural museums, and to Louis Armstrong Park which houses Congo Square – a place where slaves used to meet on Sundays during their one day "off." For the past two centuries, many of the residents of Tremé have made significant contributions to cultural, social, and political movements. For much of that time, it was a neighborhood where generations of families resided, and parents passed their houses on to their children and their children's children, relatives lived side by side, down the street, or 'round the corner from each other. Celebrations, births, and deaths were neighborhood gatherings because they were, after all, family.

Now, Tremé is one of the common destinations of horse and carriage, bicycle, walking, and Segway tours. There are not many days that go by in which I do not hear the methodical sound of a horse drawn buggy going by my house and the words "Tremé is the oldest black neighborhood in the US, founded by freed slaves…" It is a comforting sound tinged with sadness because so many of those families, families whose ancestors fought to buy their freedom and homes they could call

their own, are gone. In the scant year I resided there, at least three of the families that welcomed me to the neighborhood have left and the historical interiors of their homes torn apart and discarded to make way for those with money. As a result of this shift, despite the tremendous contributions the neighborhood has made in terms of progress and rebounding from Hurricane Katrina, the residents of this community are now facing the impact of gentrification. In this essay, I intend to discuss the history of Tremé's contributions to the community-at-large, political movements, and progress, as well as what the neighborhood is doing to meet the societal implications of gentrification in their outreach to new members of the neighborhood; utilizing community events, narrative, general conversation, and discussing how gentrification may impede or advance progress. As a result of my inquiries, I believe, with time, it is possible for many of these issues to be resolved if the community members of New Orleans come together with mutual respect, cultural understanding, and a willingness to listen without marginalization.

New Orleans has a great deal to offer. Almost everywhere you go you can find someone playing music somewhere; the food is said to be world renowned; people greeting you on the street is customary; and there are parades for just about everything. Yet, post-Katrina New Orleans, crime is on the rise, housing costs are up, lots of neighborhoods are food deserts, healthcare services (especially Planned Parenthood) are limited, education is steadily declining, the cost of utilities in the city is rising, and marginalization is increasing. As a result of many of these changes, most of the people who perform the service industry jobs in New Orleans are being forced to live outside of the city they work in. While these are developments common to many US American cities, one might question why any of this makes New Orleans and Tremé different from any other community facing gentrification? What was Tremé before gentrification and why are these changes worthy of discussion? When I originally began my research on Tremé I looked at the changes the neighborhood was facing and was disheartened by what I was seeing, but had yet to make the connection of the impact of Hurricane Katrina in relation to the gentrification of Tremé. It was upon discovering how much former members of the neighborhood had contributed to politics and social movements, such as, fighting the Separate Car Act and buying church pews for slaves, that I began to try and figure out what Tremé had truly been and what it was becoming. In the article "New Orleans' Treme neighborhood turns 200" by Claude Johnson and Stacey Plainance, Toni Rice, spokeswoman for a neighborhood group, said "All things sacred to New Orleans bubbled up from that neighborhood, because Treme had such a mixture of people

and cultures…It wasn't just slaves. It wasn't all white or all black. It was German, Spanish, Haitian, Italian" (1).

A History of Tremé and Contributions to Civil Rights

Claude Tremé was a model hat maker and real estate agent. He came from France and settled in New Orleans in 1783. He married Julie Moreau and as laws of the time allowed when women married, he "inherited the land from his wife's family, began to subdivide and sell off plots of land in the late 1700s. New Orleans, unlike other Southern cities at the time, was populated by free people of color, who quickly moved into the neighborhood…" (Jervis 1). The interesting thing about this is that while these freed slaves were buying property in Tremé, New Orleans was a port that slaves passed through on their way to being bought and sold. These freed slaves mingled with slaves on a daily basis. The freed slaves purchased their goods from the enslaved in Congo Square in Tremé on Sundays and worshipped with them as well, most likely strengthening the enslaved populations desire and resolve to free themselves:

> Tremé soon became a bastion of French-speaking, mixed-race plasterers, bricklayers, cigar makers, sculptors, writers and intellectuals…Tremé residents in 1845 published *Les Cenelles*, widely considered the first anthology of black poetry in the USA and the Tribune, one of the first black daily newspapers in the country. (Jervis 1-2)

In the early years of Tremé, African-American residents worked together to form a community and build a solid foundation. They even purchased a church in the 1800s. Naming it St. Augustine Catholic Church, they established the oldest African-American Catholic parish in the United States.

Originally, the land and the building were purchased by Jeanine Marie Aliquot, a Frenchwoman, who turned it into a Catholic elementary school for free girls of color. Eventually, the school was sold to the Ursulines Sisters (nuns) who then sold it to the Carmelite Sisters in 1840 and it merged into a school for black and white girls. When they relocated, free people of color requested permission to build a church. The one condition attached to the $10,000 sale was that the church be named after St. Angela Merci. For some reason this did not occur and the church was named St. Augustine. One of the interesting stories attached to this bit of history is that, being a mixed neighborhood, black families began buying pews for their families, when this occurred:

> white people in the area started a campaign to buy more pews than the colored folks. Thus, The War of the Pews began and was

> ultimately won by the free people of color who bought three pews to every one purchased by the whites. In an unprecedented social, political and religious move, the colored members also bought all the pews of both side aisles. They gave those pews to the slaves as their exclusive place of worship, a first in the history of slavery in the United States. (Staff 2)

It was another historical event in which blacks pushed forward to fight for rights. It is at this point that I, again, consider progress. Banneker wrote his letter to Jefferson in 1791. One of the things he wrote was:

> Father hath given being to us all; and that he hath not only made us all of one flesh, but that he hath also, without partiality, afforded us all the same sensations and endowed us all with the same facilities; and that however variable we may be in society or religion, however diversified in situation or color, we are all of the same family, and stand in the same relation to him. Sir, if these are sentiments of which you are fully persuaded, I hope you cannot but acknowledge, that it is the indispensable duty of those, who maintain for themselves the human rights of nature, and who possess the obligations of Christianity, to extend their power and influence to the relief of every part of the human race, from whatever burden or oppression they may unjustly labor under… (1)

Yet, some fifty years later, some of the same battles and requests for equality were still being fought and the need to be understood and accepted still remained. So, in this instance, freed slaves in Tremé took the reins into their own hands and found the financial means to gain their own power. While I am still in awe at the success of their endeavor, I believe it was their collective effort that wrought a societal change allowing them to move forward in other endeavors of equality and progress (Staff).

Kant wrote, “Enlightenment is the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority…This minority is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another” (1). I do not believe that the people of Tremé lived in a “self-incurred minority,” but instead, an inflicted state of otherness. What I find so inspiring about what the people of Tremé accomplished during that time was their courage and fortitude. Perhaps because their history was so dark, their perception of their otherness, tinged with the fact that many of them may not have had our western mindset (based on where they came from), allowed them to have a requisite “resolution and courage” that comes from having been in such a place of oppression that you either fight or you die; emotionally or sometimes physically. My analysis may be somewhat

dramatic, but I believe great adversity enables us to do things we might not normally do.

After the Civil War, Louisiana faced reconstruction. Having had a relatively liberal antebellum period the "Radical Reconstruction in Louisiana was an intense, occasionally violent, contest between those who favored Radical Reconstruction policies and those who fought for white supremacy as the philosophy that would guide public policy in Louisiana" (Museum). The inception of these new laws, instituted "to control the behavior and actions of former slaves in the 'free' postwar society, Louisiana and other southern states enacted Black Codes, modeled on restrictions in force under slavery" (Museum), increased the marginalization of African-Americans.

In 1890, Louisiana passed a law which segregated public facilities (Gehman). This law included the Separate Car Act said to provide separate but equal seating on streetcars for whites and African-Americans. Homer Plessy, a resident of Tremé and shoemaker, was born "of mixed racial heritage. His family could pass for white and were considered 'free people of color.' Plessy thought of himself as 1/8 black since his great-grandmother was from Africa" (Britannica). In 1887, Plessy took up social activism and "served as vice president of the Justice, Protective, Educational and Social Club to reform New Orleans' public education system" (Britannica). In 1892, Plessy, with the aid of the *Comité des Citoyens* or Citizen's Committee, contested the law by purchasing a first-class ticket and sitting in the "whites only" section, stated his race, and refused to move. He was eventually removed from the train and arrested. "The Citizen's Committee shunned violence, rather becoming active in the courts by initiating a series of legal cases to enforce civil rights guaranteed by Congress in the 1870s but often denied locally" (Gehman). The organization's nonviolent mantra could be said to be the precursor for the nonviolent behavior deployed by the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Working with Plessy, a black man who could pass for white, gave them just the platform they needed to take their case to the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court decided against the case him 1896 ruling "that states had the right to maintain separate but equal public facilities for blacks and for whites [which]…ushered in a spate of Jim Crow laws throughout the South…" (Gehman 94). However, despite the loss, this case had far reaching implications for the Civil Rights Movement when the NAACP incorporated components from this case during "1954 in the historic and controversial Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*" (Spring 102), overturning the separate but equal ruling (Britannica).

Bellamy wrote, in his work of fiction, *Looking Backward*, “The other fact is yet more curious, consisting in a singular hallucination which those on the top of the coach generally shared, that they were not exactly like their brothers and sisters who pulled at the rope, but of finer clay, in some way belonging to a higher order of beings…” (6). One might infer that fiction has no place here. I believe, in this instance, it does. It is the context behind those words which should be considered. New Orleans was a melting pot with Tremé as an unusual community of people. “The ability to acquire, purchase and own real property during an era when America was still immersed in slavery was remarkable and only in New Orleans did this occur with any regularity or consistency” (New Orleans). But residents took it beyond owning a piece of land and fought to move beyond othering, upholding the principle of equality and taking, into their own hands, the course of their lives. Yet, in my opinion, history can be cyclical and in the years beyond slavery Tremé would face changes which would alter aspects of a once vibrant neighborhood and a group of people who fought for what they believed in.

Times Change

In the 1960s, Interstate I-110 was constructed, running straight through the center of Tremé effectively cutting one half of the neighborhood from the other. I reside in Tremé and it was not until I had to locate a business in another section of the neighborhood that I realized there even was another part. It was during that walk that I began to understand why Tremé has the reputation for not being the best place to live. Crossing the interstate and walking into the other side of Tremé is, for me, like entering a different world. The side of Tremé that I live in is a diverse neighborhood a few short blocks away from the French Quarter surrounded by shops, parks, and museums. In thinking about this, I realized that the people I see on those neighborhood tours on a regular basis, will likely never see the other side of Tremé. To me, the other side of the neighborhood is not the safest place to wander. It, like so many other places here, still have not recovered from Hurricane Katrina. Many of the houses in that part of the neighborhood are boarded up, have fallen into total ruin, or need a tremendous amount of repair. Here, I did not see the diversity I am so used to and the feeling of poverty is palpable. I left the area with a heavy heart and the realization that I have a privilege here I had yet to recognize before my exploration.

In conjunction with the separation that the interstate highway imposed, the people of Tremé also faced the impact of the drug and crime epidemics that occurred in the 1980s. This, I believe, is when the neighborhood lost the sense of community it once had. It became an

unsafe place to be for those who resided there along with anyone else. I have been told that white people avoided the area because a visit was sure to result in robbery or worse. The many that resided there and did not partake in crime remained not only because they lived in homes that had been in their families for generations, but because many of them did not have the means to leave and/or were determined to hold on to the bit of community they might have once had. According to Jervis, it was not until Hurricane Katrina that many of the people who lived in the area left either of their own accord or were forced to leave because of the circumstances surrounding the storm. (Jervis)

Hurricane Katrina Brings Change

In the early morning of August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. The storm had a category three rating and the winds reached upwards of 140 miles per hour. As devastating as the hurricane was, it was not the storm that did the most damage in New Orleans, it was the levee breaches. New Orleans is below sea level, some areas more than others, but when those particular levees broke, the area sustained damage and destruction that still impacts the city almost 11 years later, and, I believe, will continue to do so.

Some people left before the storm. Those who remained either lost their lives, were stranded in the Superdome, trapped on rooftops, or wherever else they could find shelter until they were evacuated or died. The conditions were beyond deplorable. When the evacuations did begin, there were thousands of people who never returned because they either did not want to or, could not. Many of those who did come back in the weeks and months that followed returned to homes that were uninhabitable. Rebuilding was slow and, according to a local tour guide, the areas that seemed to receive the most funding were the French Quarter and surrounding areas that were frequented by tourists and which had sustained comparatively little damage. Other areas, such as the Lower 9th Ward, still have entire sections which have not been repaired (H. Staff).

People came from all over the world to assist in the rebuilding. They came with the best of intentions. Some, so moved by what they saw and experienced, remained. Yet, I have heard people who discuss seeing “bunches of white people” with New York, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, etc., license plates who were riding through some of the neighborhoods looking for abandoned property they could buy on the cheap. There is no way to know for sure if this was actually what people were doing, but the upsurge in the sale of houses would seem to indicate a modicum of legitimacy.

During all that transpired in the aftermath of Katrina as well as the number of people who had to leave the area and did not return, there are many who seem to have forgotten that the situation in which the people of New Orleans found themselves and the onslaught of gentrification is not just due to the hurricane itself. There is a portion of this turmoil that was man-made when the levees were breached. I believe that if Louisiana had only Hurricane Katrina to contend with, things would have progressed differently. New Orleans would have probably undergone a time-period of recovery and the damage from the storm would have been repaired. Many of those who left for the duration of the storm would have returned and the city would have gone back to being "A place like no other."

Yet, that is not what transpired. Many transplants came and stayed, many came and conquered, but in the process those who had made New Orleans and Tremé what it once was were gone, along with their culture. In her article, "Gentrification's Ground Zero", Megan French-Marcelin wrote:

> Long before the floodwaters had receded, any chance of progressive reconstruction—rebuilding as a restorative public works program aimed at meaningful redistribution—was stamped out by policy wonks and TV commentators, liberal city council members, feisty NGOs, speculative real-estate developers, and boutique hotel owners." (2)

What was left, seems to have become a shell, changing with the influx of transplants and their money.

Gentrification and Tremé

As mentioned earlier, the part of Tremé in which I reside is quite close to the French Quarter. It is a bustling area with plenty to do and see, even if you have been here for a while. It is a trendy little area with a coffee shop, a community center, and a jazz and cultural museum. My neighbors are friendly and chat with each other from time to time, but some of that "neighborhood feel," generated by people sitting out on their stoops watching people come and go is waning. In the short seven months that I have been here the faces of my neighbors are beginning to change with some regularity, there is less diversity, and many more transplants (including myself). When a property goes on the market, it can sell in a matter of days and is immediately gutted so that any vestiges of its past are gone and bright cottage colors reminiscent of the gingerbread houses on Martha's Vineyard adorn the outside, instead of some of the deep rich colors I generally see.

There are some families that are holding on, but there is wariness in their eyes and when there has been discussion about the changes

within the neighborhood, I have heard the old residents say “We don’t know these people!” There does not seem to be a connection between the old residents and the new. Long term residents are used to family and even when they do sell their property, many times it is to a family member because “keeping it in the family” is very important here. Of those who have sold outside their family, it has been because of great financial need. Oftentimes, when a home was sold to someone who was not a family member, they witnessed that it was promptly put back on the market and sold to a transplant for almost double the price. This practice has left the neighborhood struggling to retain some semblance of community in what looks to be a losing battle.

To bridge this gap, community organizations such as the Backstreet Cultural Museum and members of Jazz in the Park are working together. In 2015, the first Tremé Festival was held to bring members of the community and surrounding areas together. There was song and dance, and they opened up St. Augustine Church and provided tours for many of the newcomers in the neighborhood so they could really learn about the history of Tremé. It was a gathering to get people on committees and share backgrounds. Jazz in the Park is held on Thursdays and is a family-oriented event with music, a farmers’ market, and activities for children. There are always people on hand to discuss ways in which those who attend can become active in the community with one of the main goals being the discussion of the history and culture of the area.

Where Has Our Culture Gone?

As previously written, Tremé is a place that was filled with a distinct culture which is now eroding. With the transplants come lofty ideals that in some ways make a mockery of old traditions by putting a subtle twist on them. French-Marcelin, who is a twentieth-century historian of urban policy and planning, wrote:

> In the years after Hurricane Katrina, cultural commodification has been extended to the business of rebuilding and preserving the city’s unique customs. Transplant communities, exemplified most conspicuously by Solange Knowles (Beyoncé’s younger sister), have effectively taken up the mantle of a grassroots cultural reclamation: renovating historic shotguns, opening stores with local wares, and engaging the tradition of second lines for private events. (4)

These events, these trends of usurpation, are not particular to Tremé or to New Orleans in the way they are being presented and they are not being met with open arms.

One of the things that I see happening as a result of gentrification and cultural change is that many of the long-term are closing ranks to preserve whatever they can of their culture. When I moved here it was pointed out to me that much of what transpires among the locals is handled by word of mouth. I found this out because there were a number of times that I was searching for something and could only find the most cursory bits of information. When I finally asked someone why I was told "That's just how it's done here." Transplants, such as myself, are accustomed to finding out about what is going on by using the internet. It is just the way we think things work. Here, if a local is looking for an apartment, she is relying on word of mouth and those she knows. If something is being sold, it is not advertised in the paper or online, it is offered by word of mouth. It is the transplants who want it online, at their fingertips, and do not have the time to ask around. For employment, you have to know someone who knows someone. "Who are your people? Are they here? How long have they been here? How long have you been here? I knew you didn't come from here" While I initially found this somewhat surprising I have come to realize that it is one of the ways local people are trying to maintain what little control they still have over their neighborhood.

While the local people try to keep things "in house," the transplants are coming to either work in the new University Medical Center or they are entrepreneurs who arrive with wads of cash and a view of success which includes being a busy, productive member of society and a "hurry up and wait' mentality. Someone recently told me that visiting somewhere is far different than living there and they were, of course, right. Some of the newcomers have a difficult time taking that philosophy into account. When you are on vacation, you have a different perspective than when you live in a place. You may not mind the wait, that people are moving slowly, that there is music in most of the places you go, that people are trying to hustle you for a couple of dollars, that the homeless approach you not only for money, but for your leftovers. When you live there, many of the same things you did not mind before becoming an issue. Second lines (brass band parades) are not viewed with the same fondness when those same parades are going past your house "making all that *noise*." You do not have time to leisurely wait while the cashier catches up with someone while you are waiting in line and you get sick of people "hustling" you because they are trying to make, in your estimation, a "fast buck." After all, good money was paid for the piece of property you own, and you do not need to get to know your neighbors other than making sure they keep up the property.

Ultimately, there is a clash between the old and the new, north and south. For example, a story in *The Times-Picayune* recounted that on:

Monday, at about 8 p.m., nearly 20 police cars swarmed to a Treme corner, breaking up a memorial procession and taking away two well-known neighborhood musicians in handcuffs. The brothers…were in a group of two dozen musicians playing a spontaneous parade for tuba player Kerwin James, who died last week of complications from a stroke he had suffered after Hurricane Katrina. The confrontation spurred cries in the neighborhood about the over-reaction and disproportionate enforcement by police, who often turned a blind eye to the traditional memorial ceremonies. Still others say the incident is a sign of greater attack on the cultural history of the old city neighborhood by well-heeled newcomers attracted to Treme by the very history they seem to threaten (Reckdahl 1).

Funerals here are often followed by second lines because, in contrast to the somber traditional funerals many are used to, traditionally it is a time of celebration here. I have seen many second lines after a funeral here because there is a funeral home near my residence. I have even seen a coffin taken from a hearse, carried on to the family member's porch, and actually danced on before proceeding to the funeral home. It is nothing new here. Sometimes the procession may be comprised of a hundred people, but people, heretofore, were respectful. Cars caught in the procession would wait, there would be no honking. It was accepted as something that just was, something that needed to be done to honor the dead. There are times now when others do not see it that way, they see it as an encroachment and no longer care to accept or understand the culture or tradition.

This was the case when the brothers were arrested during the second line procession. Now, there is no spontaneity on this side of Tremé. You must procure a permit. "They want to live in Treme, but they want it for their ways of living. 'Curry said.' For newly arrived neighbors, Curry sometimes serves as a cultural interpreter. But to those neighbors dismayed by the noise or the crowds that come along with those brands, Curry is stern. "I say, 'You found us doing this—this is our way" (Reckdahl 2). No matter, the newcomers win: cross that interstate and you must have a permit or face arrest if an irate neighbor calls the police. To them, this is not a necessity and like many other traditions viewed as something "other," it should be wiped out. To me, it becomes a cultural genocide; a dismantling of a culture that is foreign to the newcomers. Yet, if the housing and rental costs continue to rise and more of my long-standing neighbors are forced out of the area it may become a moot point.

Climbing Rents and Home Prices.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina there were quite a few public housing units dispersed throughout the community, now, those units are gone. "In the months that followed, many of the city's poorest families got even more bad news: The public housing units they called home would be knocked down, even if undamaged by the storm…The goal was to deconcentrate poverty and give lower-income residents a better place to live" (Fessler 2). There were many people who were not pleased with this because most would be lumped into one area away from their known neighborhoods. The new units were built anyway. As Fessler underscores, "At the time of Katrina, more than 5,000 families lived in public housing; today [2015], there are only 1,900. Other poor families have relocated to places like Houston and Atlanta or moved elsewhere within New Orleans" (Fessler 2). Many of the residents who reside in these aesthetically appealing units state that while the units are nice, safer, and offer some amenities their former units did not (pools and up-to-date kitchens). It is also adjacent to Walmart. "It's hard to explain," 'Jennings says.' "There's something missing, and you miss it every day. You miss your neighbors for one. Like we used to sit on the steps and conversate with our neighbors, and it's not like that anymore" (Fessler 4-5). There are also new rules that prohibit or restrict gardens, parties, etc. In some ways, looking at it from the outside it is hard not to find the idea of greater safety and less drugs a better scenario, but my culture is different. When you've lost your sense of community after having lost so much already, I can understand why some people would not like it.

Out of curiosity I visited one of the new apartment complexes that have gone up in the area. A two bedroom begins at $2,400 and goes up to $2,650. The penthouse rents for $6,500 per month. It has some nice amenities, plenty of restaurants, and an upscale grocery store right next to it. While I thought it was a very nice place, I could not help but think about what a person would have to make to live there, and the woman who was assisting me was quick to provide the answer. A person must make approximately $90.000 per year for a two bedroom. The local minimum wage here is $7.50 cents per hour, most people make approximately $8 to $10 per hour! "Before Katrina it was possible for people to find housing they could afford, and that's become virtually impossible for people finding housing in the city" (Woodward 2). The information on the apartment complex helps to explain why. In fact, rents have gone up by over 81 percent since Hurricane Katrina and housing costs have gone up by 46 percent.

Sayre states that "The average house sold for $339,743 in New Orleans in the first half of this year, which amounted to an average of $166 per square foot – up from $114 per square foot just before the storm and $151 per square foot last year. That's up 46 percent since

2005, or an average yearly gain of about 4.6 percent" (2). Couple this with the fact that many of the new homeowners are evicting tenants or raising rents after buying units and making repairs or moving them out to use units as Airbnb and you have even more displaced people. Many of those making lower wages and are forced to live on the outer edges of town, facing, in many instances, an unreliable transit system to get them to and from work if they do not have a car.

Starbucks and Consequences

Another common thing that is lost in the process of gentrification is the local store. For the most part, the French Quarter is made up of locally owned shops and restaurants. In a tourist environment people expect that. They want to stroll down the streets popping in and out of one cutesy place after another. I think many of us like these types of shop when we are on vacation. Yet, this is changing. The French Quarter and Magazine Street (a more upscale shopping area) have also become home to stores like Starbucks and Whole Foods. There is even a Trader Joe's. Some may consider this a step in the right direction; some locals do not. The interesting thing is that many locals, in a display of civic pride and cultural deference, do not just give up and say, "I can get a better deal at this chain store." It is a matter of principle and homage to their culture. So, many of the locals remain true to their community stores. There are a variety of reasons for this, which are inclusive of the fact one or more family members own or work in these stores, they live in a food desert and that corner grocery is sometimes the only place they can get to on a regular basis 'to make groceries," and they want to keep it local because "their people been going there for years" and they are not going to give their money to some stranger even if they have to pay a bit more sometimes! The motto is "Keep it local."

Let me be clear, it is not the case that local people do not ever frequent stores like Starbucks or Whole Foods. But most of the time, it is seen as a matter of loyalty and duty to go to the local coffee shop, Rouses grocery store, the local hardware store. Why? Because each dollar spent outside of a community store puts it one step closer to closing. It is also a way for locals to express their disapproval of the gentrification taking place and they are fighting to keep more places like Trader Joes out! Yet, there are plenty of transplants who do not understand this, and they want convenience over local loyalty, and will pay more to get it.

Conclusion

Overall**,** there is a difference between making a place your home versus making a place your own. Some may not see it that way.

However, I believe that when you decide to relocate to a different state and arrive with the idea that you "own" not only your dwelling, but the city or town in general, that "they" should adapt their ideological beliefs to yours, not yours to theirs, you may be missing something in the translation. Unfortunately, this seems to be part of the process with western assumptions about how things should be done: take no prisoners, ask no questions later because you do not need to.

Some people may think that this is progress. I would have to disagree because with the supposed benefit of gentrification has come further marginalization of a group of people that were already oppressed. In fact, considering some of the tenets of intersectionality, Tremé is a perfect example of why this concept cannot be examined separately. It is a community where oppression is an everyday occurrence that hides behind no false pretenses, but is instead displayed with intolerance of difference and disdain.

Am I part of the problem or will I be part of the solution? Will the education that I am pursuing provide me with more of the tools I will need to be effective in any way here? I believe it will, but in order to do so I must be vigilant in my exploration, what I hold to memory, what I learn, what I impart from what I learn, and how I use it.

In "Souls of White Folk" Du Bois wrote:

> But when the black man begins to dispute the white man's title to certain bequests of the Fathers in wage and position, authority and training; and when his attitude toward charity is sullen anger rather than humble jollity; when he insists on human right to swagger and swear and waste – then the spell is suddenly broken and the philanthropist is ready to believe that Negroes are impudent… (24)

In a conversation with a recent transplant, I got a hint of this sentiment when the person said, "I don't understand why they don't like us! I mean, after all, we're making things better for them. We're cleaning up the neighborhood and making it safer. They should be thanking us. They should be grateful!" I still have no idea how I should have responded to this. In fact, I was so stunned that while I know I did reply along the lines of inquiry, asking why people should be thankful for the cleanup of a neighborhood they have been displaced from, I could not find the words to express the measure of my disbelief. I also knew that was one more facet in the notion of paternalistic guidance that western assumptions bring with it; the sense that the marginalized should not only be accepting of the so-called hand being offered to them, but should welcome and learn from it by 'seeing' the benefits of the hand being offered. Very rarely does it seem to be seen as oppression, but instead, as the missive "We are bringing you the light!"

What are the detrimental consequences of patriarchal views like that? By the same token, what are the detrimental consequences of simply closing ranks and shutting yourself off? In order for something positive to come out of gentrification, in order for there to be progress people must work together. Since there seem to be two sides to the community, what may be necessary is a collaborative effort versus a community effort. If the two groups remain separate and not collective, in fact, if a collaborative effort does not occur and remains community based, moving beyond Tremé and into the city-at-large, continuing to divide and conquer other neighborhoods, then I believe the heart and soul of New Orleans will be gone. However, if the two groups can find common ground and work together to create a mutual dialogue there just may be the chance to move with common purpose toward collective progress.

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GRETA ENRIQUEZ **CRITICISM**

Friendship in *Frankenstein*: An Artistotelian-Thomistic Analysis

True friendship, as defined by both Aristotle and Aquinas, calls for not only a whole person development, but also a whole community development. Whole person development refers to the development of individual abilities and attributes that increase virtue or character (goodness), while whole community development refers to the development of environmental and social attributes of community that make room for and inspire the development of the whole person. Within the story of *Frankenstein*, each of the main characters, Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Monster, as well as the lesser characters of Henry Clerval, Alphonse Frankenstein, and Elizabeth Lavenza, highlights aspects of friendship within the larger pursuit of personal goals. The character's personal goals influence and are influenced by their friendships within the story. My primary claim in this essay is to explicate each character's significant friendships within the context of true friendship, and show how, as each character pursued a single value, such as intellect, love, revenge, and the like, their development as whole persons (and by extension, their contribution to and development of their communities) was greatly hindered.

Introduction

The story of *Frankenstein* is a multilayered tale encompassing multiple themes and ideas. Commentary on the story has stressed many of these themes, including: race relations, education, scientific and

medical progress, gender roles and relations, psychological and psychiatric understanding of personality development, attachment, and mental illness. Each of these themes can be said to emphasize specific aspects of whole person and/or whole community development. For example, on the theme of racial discourse, Anne Mellor discusses the descriptive characteristics of the Monster as being obviously Asiatic, non-Caucasian giant, at once implying the early 19th Century fears of the Orient and the implications of association with the nations of the East, whether political, religious, artistic, commercial, etc., might have upon the Europeans (2). Allan Lloyd Smith goes even further, stating, "Shelley chose not to give her scientist the arguably more straightforward route of reanimation of a dead human body: her choice of an assemblage of various human and animal parts introduces the issues attached to cross-racial and even cross-species reproduction and thus engages with the anthropological and biological discourses" of the time (211).

Overlapping with the commentary on race is the commentary on medical and social responsibility to those considered in need of guidance (Marcus 199). Such a paternalistic position changes the protector as much as it changes the protected: *Frankenstein* comes to share "the monstrosity of the creature's condition- his solitude, his singularity, his being utterly outcast, his exile from human and communal forms of life" (199). Marcus goes on to say, "Irresponsible medicine is a mythological playing-out of the fantasy of technological omnipotence, is medicine without the awareness of the Other as a coequal self-consciousness" (199). Questions of difference, such as what they are and how we engage each other because of and despite these differences, are as much a part of our understanding of progress, technology, medicine, and politics, as they are part of our worldview.

Gender and Sexuality

Gender and sexuality enter the general discussion, not only in relation to the Romantic/Gothic novel, but also concerning the role they play in our understanding of progress, technology, medicine, and politics. Vanessa Dickerson makes the argument that women within Shelley's novel are little more than ghosts: "narcissistic males like Walton and Victor tend to be scientists, the doers, the literalizers who dominate the story, the selfless, ethereal and unscientific women in the novel are practically transparent if not invisible" (79-80). They are props in the homoeroticism of the male characters (Dickerson 80; Daffron 417).

Concerning male-male relationships, intimacy, and sexuality, Shelley advances a sensitive, though subsumed, understanding of

masculinity (Daffron 417). The intensity of Victor's and Henry's relationship, a true friendship as discussed below, is overshadowed by Victor's insipient homophobia. Victor responds voyeuristically to his monstrous creation, built from the parts of men whose features he found beautiful, relating the Monster's coming to life in what amounts to a physical description of orgasm, "it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs" (Shelley 22). Victor is horrified by this attraction to the Monster, spending the night dreaming of Elizabeth, his boyhood love. Embracing and kissing her in his dream, Victor witnesses the woman he loved innocently transformed into the corpse of his mother, while the Monster lived and breathed in the next room (23). Victor spends much of the novel evading the line between the sanctioned male friendships of his age and desiring intimacy with another male figure (Daffron 424), represented in the continual tension, feverish hallucinations, and saboteur behaviors toward himself and the Monster.

According to Daffron, Shelley's presentations of gender inequality and homophobia are part of a larger critique of misogyny. The Monster asks for a female like himself, "with whom [he] can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for [his] being" (Shelley 70). Victor consents to the Monster's request, but only after repeated threats to the lives of Victor's friends and family, and with the promise that the Monster and his companion will remain far from civilization (72). Despite the verbal contract, Victor and the Monster remain at odds, and eventually Victor destroys the female companion he was nearly close to finishing (82). The destruction of the companion leads to the Monster fulfilling his threat of killing Elizabeth (97). The use of women as objects, between Victor and the Monster, even between the narrator and the reader in the person of Margaret Saville to whom Walton relates the tale, in Shelley's restrained critique of the destabilizing force Victorian-era relational paradigms, ultimately perpetuates "a claustrophobic, homophobic space of only men" (Daffron 426).

The way society turns to other-ing, be it by race, gender, social class, societal role, impacts relationships. However, a review of the literature, a brief sampling of which was discussed above, seems to lack a foundational, metaphysical appeal to a metatheoretical approach that would tie all these insights together. There is such a theory, longstanding in its tradition, that does provide such a connection: the Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding of human flourishing as represented through their explication of friendship.

On Friendship

While predating modern, psychological, anthropological, and sociological understandings of human interaction, there is an ancient

philosophical theory, updated in the Middle Ages, that provides a metaphysical foundation for human interaction as a kind of flourishing between individuals, what is commonly called friendship. This theory begins with Aristotle and continues through the work of Thomas Aquinas. In reference to *Frankenstein* in particular, this theory of friendship sheds light on the relationships of the major characters, the Romantic critique of the Enlightenment (especially the notion of progress), and enables us to form a deeper understanding. The purpose of this paper is to bring forth this theory of friendship in relation to the major characters of the novel, illustrating where they have embodied or failed to embody the aspects of human flourishing that comprise friendship. In so doing, I hope to provide an Aristotelian-Thomistic critique of the Enlightenment that is in line with Shelley's Romantic critique, as represented by the sorrow, disconnection, and despair each of the characters exhibits. Even the lesser characters, such as Henry Clerval, Alphonse Frankenstein, and Elizabeth Lavenza, exhibit this critique of modernity. I will first outline the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of friendship, limiting the analysis to the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle and the *Summa Theologica* by Thomas Aquinas. Then, I will discuss the three major figures- Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Monster- as well as the minor figures with whom they interact- Henry Clerval, Alphonse Frankenstein, and Elizabeth Lavenza- as each of them relates to the main aspects of friendship and its importance to human flourishing.

Aristotle

Aristotle, as expounded in *Nicomachean Ethics*, presents a theory of human flourishing that has multiple components. Human flourishing, or as it is commonly translated "excellence," has two aspects, one that refers to what is innate within us (virtue) and one that refers to what we learn from interaction with our fellow creatures (skill) (1103^{a}). Neither the one nor the other is able to develop the individual completely, but rather they work in tandem, showing an astute understanding of the interpersonal factors that contribute to human flourishing. In fact, neither virtue nor skill can develop without being exercised, skill requiring education and tutelage, virtue requiring situations in which the character trait can be exercised. Aristotle goes onto outline his theory of human flourishing over the course of several lectures, and in Book VIII ties this theory to the interpersonal relationships associated with friendship. He builds his understanding of friendship on the same predicates as that of his theory of human flourishing, pointing toward the holistic and integrated understanding of interpersonal interactions and their necessity to human flourishing, "without friends no one would choose to live,

though he had all other goods" (VIII.1). Friendship, according to Aristotle, holds groups together, allows individuals to not only seek after justice, but to exercise the virtues completely (VIII.1).

There are three kinds or levels of friendship, each corresponding to a different level of human flourishing: utility, pleasure (hedonia), and virtue (eudaimonia). Each level of friendship corresponds to how we love (VIII.3). Friendship of utility corresponds to utilitarian love: we form the friendship based on what each of the individuals in the friendship gain from the relationship (VIII.3). Friendship of pleasure (hedonic friendship) corresponds to hedonic love: we form the friendship based on emotion, feelings of pleasure, and the arousal of "other hopes of something good to come" (VIII.3). Friendship of virtue (perfect or true friendship, eudaimonic friendship) corresponds to perfect love: we form friendships based on the development of virtue, the choosing of the good for the other because it is the good for the other and no other reason (VIII.3). Eudaimonic friendship, because it is based on virtue, also contains within it friendship of utility and hedonia, just as perfect love contains within it utilitarian love and hedonic love (VIII.3).

Each level of friendship builds on the other, resulting in true friendship only when all three levels are present. Friendship of utility, which seeks relationship with others for the good the individual receives from it, is deficient for human flourishing because it does not provide the individual with a way to develop skill, virtue, feel pleasure- only to satisfy need. Hedonic friendship builds on the notion of utility, and adds the emotions, feelings of pleasure, that arise from the satisfaction of need and from the joy we get from the other. However, hedonic friendship is also deficient, as hedonic friendship does not require the individuals involved to develop character traits that create excellence, nor does it foster the good for the other in the relationship. Eudaimonic friendship is perfect friendship, because not only does it contain the aspects of utilitarian and hedonic friendships (it satisfies needs and has emotional involvement), but also encourages the development of skill and virtue, and seeks the good of the other for the sake of the other. Moreover, true friendship is built on love: "for love may be felt just as much towards lifeless things, but mutual love involves choice and choice springs from a state of character; and men wish well to those whom they love, for their sake, not as a result of feeling but as a result of a state of character. And in loving a friend men love what is good for themselves; for the good man in becoming a friend becomes a good to his friend. Each, then, both loves what is good for himself, and makes an equal return in goodwill and in pleasantness; for friendship is said to be equality, and both of these are found most in the friendship of the good." (VIII, 5).

True friendship, then, according to Aristotle, does several things to increase human flourishing. For the individual, utility, hedonia, and eudaimonia intermingle for the development of virtue, the creation of excellence of character that is shown through skill and habit, as well as need satisfaction and pleasure feeling. In true or perfect friendship, utility, hedonia, and eudaimonia find their outlet in human connection. This is an important component in Aristotle's theory. No one individual is isolated or disconnected from the society in which he or she lives. As a result, for an individual to truly achieve excellence of character that is the hallmark of eudaimonia, the individual must establish friendships that reflect and foster the excellence of character after which he or she is striving.

He also addresses the kinds of relationships that mirror these levels of friendship, showing how each can also have the character of true friendship, despite inequalities that may be inherent in the power structure of the relationship. For example, individuals of "sour and elderly people" can engage in friendship when they find individuals of similar temperament or can "bear goodwill to each other" (VIII.6). This type of friendship falls either into the utility level or the hedonia level, depending on the motivation for the friendship. However, such individuals are not excluded from perfect friendship, it is only more difficult for them to achieve it. For individuals who have authority over others, they often chose individuals for friendships that help them achieve some characteristic important to their station (VIII.6). This pertains to familial relationships, such as that of father and son, as well as political relationships, such as that of ruler and ruled. These relationships typify friendships that mirror all three types of friendships, but due to their nature are unlikely to produce perfect friendship. This does not mean that it is impossible, however, but that the nature of the relationship changes when perfect friendship is achieved between these individuals. As Aristotle puts it, "It is by their likeness to the friendship of virtue that they seem to be friendships (for one of them involves pleasure and the other utility, and these characteristics belong to the friendship of virtue as well); while it is because the friendship of virtue is proof against slander and permanent, while these quickly change (besides differing from the former in many other respects), that they appear not to be friendships; i.e. it is because of their unlikeness to the friendship of virtue" (VIII.6).

Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas builds on Aristotle's basic outline of friendship in the *Summa Theologica*, stating "Friendship cannot exist except towards rational creatures, who are capable of returning love, and

communicating one with another in the various works of life, and who may fare well or ill, according to the changes of fortune and happiness; even as to them is benevolence properly speaking exercised" (I.20.2.r3). Friendship, then, requires recognition of the other as being capable of returning the same choice, the choice for the good of the other. In Aquinas's concept of rational creatures, he is drawing on the metaphysical precepts of Christianity. Rational creatures in this view can include humans, angels, and any creature to whom God has granted reason. While the specifics of his hierarchical understanding of creation is beyond the scope of this paper, the requirement of rationality places a proviso upon friendship that is implied by Aristotle: we cannot have friendship with creatures that do not have reason. Communication between the individuals engaged in the friendship is also a necessary component, again implied by Aristotle and made explicit here. In order to foster the good of the other, communication is the method in which we make this known.

Friendship unites friend to friend in love, stemming from the desire for good that is appropriate to the nature of the individual who loves (I.60.3). Utility and pleasure are aspects of friendship, but do not comprise the whole or fullness of the love and good which are at the core of true friendship (I-II.4.7). This is a direct mirror of Aristotle's levels of friendships. Utility and pleasure are part of the fullness of friendship; they are present in true friendship because true friendship satisfies the wholeness of human flourishing. Where they exist without seeking the good for the other, they are merely functions of parts of ourselves, for Aquinas, like Aristotle, considers human creatures as comprising higher and lower aspects: utility and pleasure satisfy the lower parts, but not the fullness of the rational creature.

Progress toward beatitude or happiness, while not attainable in this life according to Aquinas, is begun in the friendships that we establish with each other; friends enable us to further develop virtues that are necessary for such happiness (I-II.5.5). Moreover, friendships of utility or pleasure only hinder the flourishing of true friendship. "When friendship is based on usefulness or pleasure, a man does indeed wish his friend some good: and in this respect the character of friendship is preserved. But since he refers this good further to his own pleasure or use, the result is that friendship of the useful or pleasant, in so far as it is connected with love of concupiscence, loses the character to true friendship" (I-II.26.4.r3). In other words, every relationship is a kind of friendship, but there is a hierarchy to the relationships in regards to individual and group character development (or growth of virtue).

The reasons that utility and pleasure are incomplete is that they are selfish. They reflect the pursuit of the good back onto the pursuer and

not the good for the sake of the other in the relationship: “Friendship based on convenience or pleasure is friendship inasmuch as we want our friend’s good; but because this is subordinated to our own profit or pleasure such friendship is subordinated to love of desire and falls short of true friendship” (Aquinas 205). This is an important explication of Aristotle’s theory. By categorizing friendships of utility and pleasure as selfish when they exist on their own shows, from the point of view of perfect friendship, where they lack in the development of virtue and goodness, where they lack love. True human flourishing is not a quality that exists in an individual rational creature, but rather through the interaction and interconnection of rational creatures. True friendship, then, also requires this interaction and interconnection, as friendship is one of the processes through which human flourishing occurs.

Analysis of the Novel

Within the story of *Frankenstein*, we are constantly reminded of the need for friends, the desire for the kind of interaction and connection that comes through the seeking of human flourishing. The three main characters- Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Monster- each express desire for this kind of relationship, but each fails in different ways. The interactions with the minor characters- Alphonse Frankenstein, Henry Clerval, and Elizabeth Lavenza- also highlight where each of the characters is deficient in their pursuit of true friendship, why each of them winds up frustrated and alone: Walton returning to the bosom of his family, Frankenstein dead, and the Monster into the arctic. The way in which the story is told, as well as the progression of the events within the layered narrative, provide the critique of the Enlightenment that is at the core of Shelley’s Romanticism. The Aristotelian-Thomistic analysis of friendship provided above is in line with the Romantic critique, and in many ways, provides a foundation for the more modern analysis.

Robert Walton

Robert Walton, as the narrator and one of the three main characters of the novel, is the first to broach the desire for friendship that is at the heart of human flourishing. In the opening letters to his sister, Walton writes, “I desire the company of a man who could sympathise with me; whose eyes would reply to mine…. I bitterly feel the want of a friend” (Shelley 4). At first, the desire for friendship that he puts forth is that of hedonic friendship. Sympathy is an emotional response to seeing in another a state or event with which we personally identify. However, Walton goes onto expound his desire further, stating that the friend he desires would be “gentle yet courageous, possessed of cultivated as well

as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans" (4). Such a friend would help Walton to be a better person, develop patience, and ground him in the realities of the moment, "who would have sense enough not to despise [him] as a romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavor to regulate [his] mind" (4). One can extrapolate from these statements that Walton is desirous of more than mere hedonic friendship. The phrasing of this desire is self-reflective, hinting at true friendship but without the other-reflective qualities that would mark his desire as one for true friendship. As the story progresses, the reader is granted insight into Walton's retelling of both Victor Frankenstein's and the Monster's desires. The reader is shown Walton's deepened understanding of the role of friendship, as he develops sympathy for the other, and reorders his life goals in such a way as to return to his family and begin a different kind of life. He recognizes the horror his sister must have felt reading his narrative (155). When discussing the final moments he has with Frankenstein, he states, "My thoughts, and every feeling of my soul, have been drunk up by the interest of my guest, which this tale, and his own elevated and gentle manners, have created. I wish to soothe him" (156). He goes as far as to try to help Frankenstein desire to live, "Behold, on these desert seas I have found such a one; but, I fear, I have gained him only to know his value, and lose him. I would reconcile him to life, but he repulses the idea" (157). These sentiments show Walton's deep desire for true friendship, and the understanding that he has been operating on the hedonic level the whole time. He sought a friend as a way for him to feel pleasure in others, and came to realize, over the course of Frankenstein's tale, that he also wanted to show the same considerations for the other; his self-reflective desire for companionship changed to other-reflective.

After this change, he realizes his own deficiencies of virtue, even as he realizes his growth in eudaimonia, "The brave fellows, whom I have persuaded to be my companions, look towards me for aid; but I have none to bestow. There is something terribly appalling in our situation, yet my courage and hopes do not desert me. Yet it is terrible to reflect that the lives of all these men are endangered through me. If we are lost, my mad schemes are the cause" (158). Such a recognition of his responsibility toward the lives of those under his command, which shows the type of friendship that mirrors true friendship, in the form of one having authority over others. And yet he is clear, his hope and courage are with him. Hope and courage are virtues, the balance between extremes of human characteristics on which excellence is habituated (Aristotle II.7). So, Walton's relationship with Frankenstein, while beginning as hedonic friendship, changes over the course of the

narrative, taking on the characteristics of true friendship, as evidenced by his attention to the needs of his crew.

Understandably, Walton's full story is not revealed, but only so much as to frame Frankenstein's narrative. The bookends of Walton's letters to his sister provide the reader with the setting and context in which Frankenstein relates his own scientific pursuits, interpersonal relationships, and mysterious creation of the Monster, as well as the Monster's tale, retold through Frankenstein's narrative. In those few missives, the major points of Frankenstein's narrative are foreshadowed: the desire for scientific knowledge and renown, the pursuit and development of single attributes and abilities in lieu of the whole person, and the resulting poor interpersonal relationships that arise when one becomes single-minded. Even the desolate reaches of the North where the boat becomes lodged in ice shows the single-mindedness of the main characters- the downfall of their journey, and why they have failed to find the friendships they all seek (Shelley 7, 8). Moreover, the desolation of the North, and the abandonment of Walton's initial plans for great scientific discovery in favor of returning to his family also foreshadows the Monster's ultimate despair, a result of the choices and interactions with others that prohibited from achieving the kinds of friendship he desired.

Walton describes Frankenstein in the following way: "I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart" (11). When Frankenstein recovers his strength, and can engage in conversation with Walton, he furthers the development of the search for friendship, both in his relationship with Walton and in the narrative he relates, a large portion of it dealing with his relationships with Elizabeth and with Clerval. Before he begins the story of the Monster's creation, he establishes what behaviors toward the other are appropriate or, more accurately, inappropriate, behaviors that instantiate and grow the concomitant virtues which form true friendship. To Walton, Frankenstein says, "You seek for knowledge and wisdom as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been" (13). This statement to Walton is the intentional or attitudinal disposition necessary for the foundation of friendship, desiring the cultivation of virtue in the other and the avoidance of disaster or ill-fortune. This disposition is not the only aspect necessary for true friendship, and Frankenstein's narrative shows what more is necessary through what his relationships lack.

Victor Frankenstein

Frankenstein's relationships with Henry Clerval, his father Alphonse, Elizabeth Lavenza and the Monster, continue the exposition of friendship within the novel, as well as show how the advancement of any one aspect of human culture, without all the other aspects, can impact the development of true friendship. Henry Clerval is "boy of singular talent and fancy," who enjoyed risk-taking, was chivalrous, with a keen imagination (19). He was kind and tender, which enhanced his adventuresome spirit (20). All of these traits attracted Frankenstein, drawing him to Clerval as a companion and confidant. Yet, as he became more and more involved in his work, Frankenstein stopped fostering the relationship between him and Clerval. The memories of their companionship and balance took on a quality that resembles friendship of utility.

While Frankenstein continued to delve more and more into his pursuit to create life, he ignored the development of his other virtues, becoming withdrawn and obsessive (32-34). In his own words, "a human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquility" (34); Frankenstein lost this balance when he ignored the mutuality that Clerval's friendship helped to foster within him. It was the restoration of Clerval to Frankenstein (despite the creation of the Monster and the tremendous mental disturbance that obsession caused), that calmed his spirit and brought him back to his senses (37). Frankenstein was able to feel joy and cast aside his sorrows and misfortunes only when his friendship with Clerval was intact (37).

When the Monster murdered Clerval, Frankenstein turned his attentions to the pursuit of the Monster, subsuming all relationships under his need for revenge. Frankenstein acknowledges that Clerval is a victim of his (Frankenstein's) own pursuit of science, stating "that Clerval, my friend and dearest companion, had fallen victim to me and the Monster of my creation" (135). Frankenstein's pursuit of revenge of the Monster clouded his responsibilities to himself and to the development of his science- if he had been cultivating true friendship with Clerval, that friendship would have been a check on his obsessions, as he would have been more able to cultivate temperance and the other virtues that go along with the pursuit of the good, of which true friendship is a part.

Frankenstein's relationship with Elizabeth is a bit more complicated, highlighting friendships that not only involve the three levels of friendship, but also the different types or capacities of friendship, such as between siblings and lovers. Frankenstein describes his relationship with Elizabeth in the following way: "Elizabeth Lavenza became the inmate of my parents' house- my more than sister- the

beautiful and adored companion of all my occupations and my pleasures" (17). He "looked upon Elizabeth as mine- mine to protect, love, and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me- my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only" (18). His description of his relationship with Elizabeth shows that his understanding of friendship is varied and encompasses all three levels of friendship to different degrees. First, it is marked by friendship of utility, as he considers Elizabeth, to some extent, to be his possession, something that satisfies a need for him. Second, it is marked by hedonic friendship, as Frankenstein gains pleasure from their relationship. Third, by stating that Elizabeth was his "to protect, love, and cherish," Frankenstein shows that there are also elements of true friendship in his relationship with her. Love and protection, and to a certain extent cherishment, are elements that involve the good of the other, for the good of the other.

On Elizabeth's part, the reader gains little about her perception of the relationship. I think this is for two reasons. First, the reader only learns about Elizabeth's disposition through Frankenstein's narrative, and that limits access to her thoughts and disposition. However, there are two letters from Elizabeth to Frankenstein that give some insight into her disposition toward him. In the first letter, Elizabeth writes to Victor as he is recovering from the shock of having created the Monster. She expresses worry for his condition: "You are forbidden to write- to hold a pen; yet one word from you, dear Victor, is necessary to calm our apprehensions" (40). She has hope for his welfare, saying "I eagerly hope that you will confirm this intelligence soon in your own handwriting" (40). She relates to him the happenings of their family, giving Victor information regarding his siblings, father, and household servants; she even indulges to relate some of the gossip of Geneva. These sorts of communiques show that she includes him in her daily interactions with others, despite his distance and lack of reciprocal communication with her. She notes, "I have written myself into better spirits, dear cousin; by my anxiety returns upon me as I conclude. Write, dearest Victor- one line- one word will be a blessing to us" (42). So, there are elements of hedonic friendship here; in writing to Victor, she is giving herself pleasure, pulling herself out of the worry she feels. Moreover, an element of utilitarian friendship remains, as she has the need for her anxiety to be lessened, and asks Victor to satisfy that need for her. This does not exclude the elements of true friendship that are also present- she is genuinely concerned for Victor's well-being for his own sake. In the second letter, Elizabeth relates the heartache she has

felt for Victor over the course of his trial, and the desire she has for his well-being, “My poor cousin, how much you must have suffered! ... This winter has been passed most miserably, tortured as I have been by anxious suspense; yet I hope to see peace in your countenance, and find that your heart is not totally void of comfort and tranquility” (137-8). This shows the depths of true friendship, acknowledgement of Victor’s suffering and a desire that he find peace. Further, she highlights aspects of the multiple kinds of friendships they share- that of childhood playmates, siblings, lovers, potential spouses- all of which are intertwined between the levels of friendship they share.

According to the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory presented here, the relationship between Victor and Elizabeth is a complicated one. It has the layers of friendship due to the different layers of relationship they have with one another, as siblings and lovers. It has the levels of friendship- utility, hedonism, and eudaimonia- that mark true friendship, but each of these levels is salient at different times and for different reasons. Given the presentation of the novel itself, this changing saliency presents a new facet of the critique that Shelley makes, which can be inferred from the Aristotelian-Thomistic model. Specifically, friendship, in all its forms, changes over time and according to the needs of the individuals involved in the particular relationship. This causes varied levels of friendship to become more salient than other levels of the friendship at various times. This does not necessarily mean that the individuals engaged in a true friendship do not maintain the true friendship over time, but rather that the development of the individuals involved requires diverse needs, skills, and virtues to be satisfied and/or flourish in order to ensure the overall development of the individuals. Although the novel does not address this directly, it is a clear critique made given the constantly changing interpersonal relationships, as represented in the brief outline of Victor and Elizabeth’s relationship.

Victor’s relationship with his father, Alphonse, also highlights the varying degrees of friendship, although more subtly than his relationship with Clerval and Elizabeth. We know most about Victor’s father from the indulgence and sternness with which he was treated during his studies, from a letter received by Victor from Alphonse after Victor’s recovery from the creation of the Monster, and his presence alongside Victor during and after his trial for Clerval’s murder. “My parents,” Victor tells us, “were possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence. We felt that they were not the tyrants to rule our lot according to their caprice, but the agents and creators of all the many delights which we enjoyed” (19). Alphonse embodies, to an extent, the friendship of parent and child, as Aristotle remarks:

> Each party, then, neither gets the same from the other, nor ought to seek it; but when children render to parents what they ought to render to those who brought them into the world, and parents render what they should to their children, the friendship of such persons will be abiding and excellent. In all friendships implying inequality the love also should be proportional, i.e. the better should be more loved than he loves, and so should the more useful, and similarly in each of the other cases; for when the love is in proportion to the merit of the parties, then in a sense arises equality, which is certainly held to be characteristic of friendship. (VIII.7)

However, there is an incident which Victor relates that caused Victor some amount of heartache, namely, when Victor begins to study Cornelius Agrippa, and his father ridicules him. Victor feels this failure of kindness and intellectual rigor on the part of his father very deeply, and it impacts their relationship for many years. He hypothesizes, "If, instead of this remark, my father had taken pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded, and that a modern system of science had been introduced, which possessed much greater powers that the ancient…" (Shelley 20-1). In other words, his father was more concerned with his own sense of pleasure or need (it is Alphonse's knowledge that Alphonse wishes to exemplify or merely to satisfy his own disgust with his son's choice of study), rather than with the development of his son's intellect. In this way, Alphonse failed in his fatherly duties, as well as in the cultivation of the friendship he has with his son.

When Victor was in Ingolstadt, recovering from his terror of having created the Monster, with Clerval by his side, he receives from Clerval a letter from Alphonse. This letter contains several bits of information, some which highlights the friendship of father and son which Aristotle mentions. Alphonse looks to commiserate with his son, "You have probably waited impatiently for a letter…" (46). However, the letter is to relate what has happened to Victor's younger brother- he was killed by the Monster (47). While the nature of the letter is one of tragedy, even if the tragedy is caused by Victor's Monster, there are certain points which mark this as one exemplifying Aristotle's theory, as well as showing where Alphonse's fatherly friendship is also deficient. For example, he has no desire to "inflict pain on [his] long-absent son" but also needs to make him aware of the tragedy that has befallen the family, namely the murder of William, Victor's little brother (46). Conversely, Alphonse is unable to console Elizabeth, and asks Victor to come and take care of her, "you alone can console Elizabeth," as well as the whole family, "return and be our comforter," a sentiment that pulls at

Victor's emotionality, and in some ways, is founded more in utility and hedonism than in true friendship (47). However, Alphonse addresses his son as "friend," and entreats him to be with them through their mourning.

Further in Frankenstein's narrative, Victor relates that his father joined him during the murder trial, making an appearance at Victor's jail cell under the appellation of "friend" (132). During the exchange between Victor and Alphonse that follows, however, their relationship is primarily rooted in the father and son dichotomy, and they try to fulfill the duties and obligations as the circumstance requires. Victor relates, "My father calmed me with reassurances of their welfare, and endeavored, by dwelling on these subjects so interesting to my heart, to raise my desponding spirits" (133). Alphonse validates Victor's reasons for travelling, acknowledging the heartache his son must be feeling at the murder of his friend, and is for Victor "like that of my good angel" (133). These are the marks of friendship that are proportional and appropriate for a father to a son, even seeking to ensure his son's future happiness in marriage to Elizabeth (Aristotle VIII.7; Shelley 140). Victor was suicidal during this time, wrapped in the depression and grief of the murder of Clerval, and in this sense, fails to return the proportional and appropriate behaviors of a son to a father (Shelley 134).

Victor's failings in the many friendships he relates over the course of his narrative is due in large part to his single-mindedness, first in relation to his studies, then in his relation to the consequences of having created the Monster. This single-mindedness overwhelms his ability to form and carry out the types of relationships and levels of friendships that human flourishing requires. It is this single-mindedness that becomes his downfall, although he recognizes this as he is dying, exhorting Walton as only a true friend can, "Seek happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed" (162). His last act is to be the true friend of Walton.

The Monster

The Monster's narrative about friendship alternately embodies true friendship, friendship of utility and friendship of pleasure. The progression of his story is an analogue of the distinct kinds of friendship Aristotle and Aquinas outline. When he first awakes to his condition, before the notions of betterment or revenge (a kind of personal advantage notion of progress, if you will) consume him, he is filled with wonder and curiosity at his environment, and seeks the companionship of others to share this wonder and curiosity with (71-72). However,

given his grotesqueness and overall lack of knowledge concerning human interactions (no language, custom, or familial resemblance), he is quickly set upon by the humans he tries to interact with (74). Eventually, he comes into an interesting relationship with the blind farmer and his children, learns language and routine behaviors, comes to understand trade-offs and heartache, and is exposed to the intricate dynamics of human behavior (Chapter XII).

Something happens within the Monster's formation, however, that he no longer seeks connection with humans, but becomes obsessed with finding a companion of his own kind. I think the reason for this is two-fold. On the one hand, he is responding to what he is taught from the humans, that he is something to be feared due to his construction and general difference. On the other hand, he sees that he is different, and true friendship is built on connection and development with one who is substantially like oneself, sharing the same species as it were. The combination of experience and existence that overlap in his narrative seem to spur the Monster into a direction of personal progress over and above his development as a good person (whether he be human or not).

In order to create an environment in which he can seek true friendship, the Monster asks Frankenstein to build him a companion that is like him in every way, with the added benefit of potential romantic connection, as well: "You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of sympathies necessary for my being" (104). At first, the Monster is living in accord with virtue and goodness in his asking Frankenstein, but it quickly devolves to coercion and revenge. I think this is partly due to the two-fold influence on the Monster's development already discussed. However, I think it is due more to the fact that the Monster became obsessed with creating his own community, since he had been ostracized from humans. Creating one's own community is not a bad thing; in fact, it is necessary to flourishing to have a supportive community in which one is involved. It is when the establishment of such a community is the only focus where true friendship becomes perverted- there is no longer the dual focus on personal and group development, a prerequisite for the flourishing of goodness.

Conclusion

The relationship between Victor and the Monster is the antithesis of the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of friendship presented here. Victor fails in his creator/fatherly duties to the creature, running in fear from the grotesqueness of his creation, and then seeking to destroy his creation without recognition of the Monster's independence and individual moral standing. Conversely, the Monster goes through his

own process, beginning from a place of virtue and eudaimonia and devolving into a murderous destroyer of others' happiness. As the Monster himself states, "When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now, that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned to bitter and loathing despair" (164). His failure to flourish is due in part to the treatment he received from others, as well as from his own lack of self-development and focus on revenge against Victor: "For while I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. They were forever ardent and craving; still I desired love and fellowship, and I was spurned" (165).

Single-mindedness and lack of whole person development remain throughout the novel the downfall of friendship in its full form for each of the major characters. As a critique of the Enlightenment, *Frankenstein* stands strong against the notion of any one form of progress, personal or group, in which all the virtues and needs of human flourishing are not also developed. The Aristotelian-Thomistic model of friendship helps to shed light on why notions of scientific and single-subject development is detrimental to human flourishing. As an aid to understanding the horror of the novel, what is truly the tragedy of the characters, true friendship as a mark of human flourishing is a key component. While there has been a great deal of research into the themes of the novel, friendship has been little researched. What I have presented here is a rudimentary look into this concept as it relates to the story and as a critique of modernity. Future work should involve a more in-depth analysis of the interpersonal relationships, and would benefit from a closer examination of the Romantic period, its correlation to pre-Enlightenment classical influences on understanding of interpersonal relationships, and a deconstruction of the layered telling of the novel.

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