Re:Search

The Undergraduate Literary Criticism Journal at the University of Illinois

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Re:Search, the Undergraduate Literary Criticism Journal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*! The question that dogged this journal in its beginning phases was whether or not there would be enough undergraduate student interest to undertake a project of this magnitude. As I began to share my thoughts of starting a journal for literary criticism with my peers, it soon became apparent that there certainly was no scarcity of interest. On the contrary, I quickly discovered that many other students had shared the same thoughts and desires for establishing a community like *Re:Search*: where undergraduate students can submit their work to be published and also participate in the nitty-gritty publication process of an academic journal. While the final product is certainly an accomplishment in its own right, I see the greater feat of the journal as fostering a culture of collaboration amongst the undergraduate student body, faculty, and university departments across campus with the intent of encouraging undergraduate research.

This project would not have been possible without the generous support, professional guidance, and enthusiasm of our Faculty Advisor, Lori Humphrey Newcomb. A special thanks goes to Michael Chan for assuming leadership of the journal during the Fall 2013 semester when things seemed precarious. Your work ethic and dedication has sustained this journal throughout the past year. The expertise and positive energy of our Graduate Advisor, Wendy Truran, proved invaluable during the copy editing process. The constant support of Michael Rothberg, Head of the English Department, and his appearances at various events for the journal has kept us motivated to produce a journal of the best quality. The services of University Librarians Harriett Green and Merinda Hensley, in developing the online platform, have been indispensable to actualizing this project. A warm thanks goes to Adrienne Pickett-Johnson for her initial support in the earliest stages of this endeavor. The English Advising Office – Angela Smith, Anna Ivy, and Jovaughn Barnard – has also played an important role in reaching out to the undergraduate student body.

This issue of the journal features eight articles, peer-reviewed and revised under faculty mentorship. Keeping in accordance with the fundamental vision of the journal as an interdisciplinary forum, these articles offer incisive analyses of texts along with a variety of other mediums. In addition, these students build upon the work of other scholars—including the published work of Illinois faculty: they not only engage with them, but join them in the important critical conversations of our time.

It is extraordinary to think that this journal, which only a year-and-a-half ago existed as a vague ambition in my head, has, with the collective energy of both peers and professionals alike, materialized into what it is today. I look forward to the ways in which the journal will continue to grow and draw upon the foundations it has established this year. It is with great pleasure that I introduce the first publication of *Re:Search, the Undergraduate Literary Criticism Journal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

Nick Millman
Editor in Chief

AIMS & SCOPE

Re:Search: The Undergraduate Literary Criticism Journal at the University of Illinois is an undergraduate-produced, peer-reviewed online journal that is designed to annually publish works exclusively authored by undergraduate students. It seeks to create a venue for undergraduate students to showcase and publish literary criticism within a greater academic discourse while nurturing a collaborative community between faculty, administration, and undergraduate students.

Students of any field may submit to *Re:Search* as long as their submissions are in accordance with our vision of the journal as a site of critical analysis. We encourage undergraduate students to submit literary, media, or cultural criticism—including revisions of papers written previously for a class, current or completed honors theses, or even projects that students conceive outside of the classroom. Accepted submissions should provide innovative critical analyses of a text, film, or other medium of work. We welcome analyses of texts from any period or language, provided that modern English translation is provided for any material quoted within the submission. While theory is not the journal's primary subject matter, we encourage submissions that refer to, reflect on, and engage with theory to provide richer and more nuanced analyses. Our anticipated audience includes university students, instructors, administration, alumni, and prospective students.

Re:Search is unique among other undergraduate academic journals of its type because it supports students throughout the research and publication process by working closely with: the University of Illinois English Department, the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), the English Student Council (ESC), and the University Library. In particular, we offer a faculty mentorship, whereby students work side-by-side with a faculty advisor throughout the writing process. The OUR and ESC offers opportunities to share work-in-progress, and the Library provides a fully-indexed platform for completed articles. This journal fosters collaboration between faculty, administration, and undergraduate students, and we hope for this to be a collective project amongst us all.

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Re:Search

Indecent Proposals: A Historical Reading of Sexual Politics in *Mad Men*

Mary Baker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

ABSTRACT

Mad Men (AMC 2007—), a critically acclaimed television series set in the midst of the prosperous New York advertising industry during the early to mid-1960s, often explores the psychological, romantic, and work-related implications of conflicting identities. This project focuses on how *Mad Men* constructs the workplace and sexual identities of two of its secondary characters, Sal Salvatore, the Italian-American and closeted homosexual Art Director of *Mad Men*'s fictional advertising agency, and Joan Harris, a white, heterosexual woman who heads the agency's secretarial pool for most of the series. Both Sal and Joan experience workplace sexual propositioning from important clients during the series, but the outcomes of their individual situations are vastly different. This article compares Sal and Joan's situations in order to explore how *Mad Men* considers and values male homosexuality and active female sexuality in the context of both 1960s and contemporary social mores.

KEYWORDS

historical representation, *Mad Men*, sexual politics, sexual propositioning, television fiction

Approximately seven years have passed since *Mad Men* (AMC 2007-) joined the ranks of television shows contributing to the critically dubbed second coming of TV's Golden Age. Predominant critical opinion cites *The Sopranos* (HBO 1999-2007) as the fundamental source of TV's cultural renaissance, but indicates shows like *The Wire* (HBO 2002-2008), *30 Rock* (NBC 2006-2013), *Breaking Bad* (AMC 2008-2013), *The Walking Dead* (AMC 2010-), *Homeland* (Showtime 2011-), and *Mad Men* as evidence of television's current status as the medium of quality today: "We are living in good TV times. No longer is it easy to insult television as the 'idiot box.' With more channels and more choices, there are also more creative voices being heard" (Leopald 2013). *Mad Men* holds a pivotal role among contemporary television's critical darlings because its success marked a significant merging of premium television and basic cable. *Mad Men* created and cemented AMC's standing as a major player among quality television outlets like HBO and Showtime, and its success led the way for more serial television shows like *Breaking Bad* and *Downton Abbey* to air on basic television networks.

Coincidentally, *Mad Men*'s fictional universe recollects the mid-1950s and early 1960s, an era that ushered in TV's first Golden Age with critically acclaimed series like *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) and live dramatic anthologies like *Kraft Television Theatre* (1947-1958). Given *Mad Men*'s rampant popularity, it seems almost superfluous to recount the show's plot and historical framework. However, a brief refresher is necessary when analyzing any narrative.

Mad Men is an American period drama television series, created and produced by Matthew Weiner, set in 1960s New York. The series' seventh and final season will air in two parts in April 2014 and 2015. Much of *Mad Men*'s narrative follows the personal and professional lives of the "mad" men and women working at the fictional Madison Avenue advertising agency Sterling Cooper (which later grows to become Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce, and even later morphs into Sterling Cooper & Partners). The show also devotes plenty of screen-time to the spouses and families of the (often voluntarily) overworked and emotionally absent men and women of Madison Avenue. While the series is famous for its impeccable style—gorgeous period clothing, a contemporaneous soundtrack, meticulously

orchestrated sets, et cetera—*Mad Men*'s glamorous mise-en-scene is not all the show has to offer its twenty-first century viewers. Peeling back *Mad Men*'s surface style reveals how the show explores issues of sexuality and gender, especially when the public and private lives of Sterling Cooper's employees collide.

At its core, *Mad Men* is a series about conflicting identities. The most obvious manifestation of this theme is the series' protagonist, Don Draper. Through flashbacks, we discover that the counterpart to Don's public persona of successful and suave advertising man is Dick Whitman, the illegitimate son of an alcoholic father and young prostitute. Viewers learn that while serving in the Korean War, Dick secretly steals the identity of Lieutenant Donald Draper, whose body is rendered unrecognizable in a fatal accident. Dick—now, Don—builds his life from the bottom-up after the war, utilizing his stolen identity to climb the corporate ladder toward the apex of the advertising world. The destructive effects of Don's stolen identity resonate throughout the series, even after his secret is exposed to his romantic partners and coworkers: "…negating his connection to the past and to family, Don lives an 'as if' life that lacks the scaffolding of the actual…Don loses Dick and thereby loses contact with his own humanity" (Slochower 385). However, trauma originating from conflicting identities is certainly not limited to Don's character. *Mad Men* recurrently emphasizes the troubling consequences of merging work lives and sex lives through workplace sexual propositionings.

While the character Don Draper has garnered a great deal of critical attention, this project focuses on two of *Mad Men*'s supporting characters, Salvatore "Sal" Romano and Joan Harris. Although these characters may not have much in common at first glance—Sal is a closeted homosexual Italian-American man working as Sterling Cooper's Art Director and Joan is a white heterosexual woman who heads the office's secretarial pool for a greater part of the series— both experience workplace sexual propositioning from important clients. *Mad Men* explores Sal and Joan's conflicting identities through workplace propositioning. Comparing how Don reacts to their individual situations reveals how *Mad Men* imagines 1960s sexual politics.

In "Wee Small Hours" (3.09), Salvatore "Sal" Romano refuses a sexual advance from Lee Garner, Jr., one of the top executives of Lucky Strike, a cigarette company that comprises the majority of Sterling Cooper's business. Lee, obviously inebriated after a "long wet lunch" (3.09), aggressively propositions Sal inside a film editing room at Sterling Cooper while the two examine film footage for a new Lucky Strike commercial. Shocked and frightened, Sal refuses to engage in sexual activity at work with a male client, saying, "There's been a misunderstanding" (3.09). In an effort to save face, Lee tells Sal, "I got it. You're at work. That's too bad" (3.09), but the knowledge that this situation is far from over is apparent when Sal violently throws film reels against a wall as soon as Lee exits the room. An offended and angry Lee telephones Harry Crane, who heads Sterling Cooper's television department, and demands Sal's immediate dismissal, saying, "I have a bit of a problem. It's that Salvatore…He's no good; I'd like him gone. I can't work with him" (3.09). Because Harry believes Lee was acting drunk and irrationally, he fails to act on Lee's demand. The following day, Lee storms out of the agency's offices as soon as he sees Sal, indicating that his business will be taken elsewhere if Sal remains employed at Sterling Cooper.

In "The Other Woman" (5.11), Pete Campbell and Ken Cosgrove, two account executives at Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce (SCDP), treat Herb Rennet, a potential client and the dealer manager for the luxury car manufacturer Jaguar, to an expensive dinner in the hopes of securing his vote for SCDP to handle Jaguar's advertising. During the dinner, Herb bluntly expresses his sexual attraction for the Director of Agency Operations, Joan Harris, saying, "I would sure like the opportunity to get to know her better" (5.11) and "I like that redhead. And I think she and I would both welcome the opportunity to spend the night together" (5.11). While the SCDP account executives politely tell Herb to ask Joan on a date if he wishes, Herb insinuates that if he is not assured a sexual encounter with Joan, he will revoke his support of SCDP's bid to handle Jaguar's advertising. After an awkward discussion, the partners of SCDP—excluding Don—vote to present Joan with an offer that she sleep with Herb for monetary compensation. Over the course of this episode, Joan grapples with the professional advantages and disadvantages of tolerating a sexual tryst

in exchange for a partnership yielding a 5% stake in the company, the deal that Joan brings to Pete after personal deliberation and a conversation with SCDP's financial officer.
In an essay called "The Homosexual and the Single Girl," Alexander Doty examines depictions of homosexuality in *Mad Men*, arguing that its homosexual characters are introduced into the show's plot solely to further the growth of straight characters like Don or Don's female protégé, Peggy Olson. Writing well before Mad Men's fifth season, Doty provides premonitory observations about how the series creates links between homosexual men and single career women. During "Wee Small Hours," Sal, attempting to validate his actions in the film editing room, asks Don, "I guess I was just supposed to do whatever he wanted? What if it was some girl?" ("Wee Small Hours," 3.09) Doty argues that Don's response, "That would depend upon what kind of girl it was and what I knew about her" ("Wee Small Hours," 3.09), implies "…when push comes to shove, homosexual men and single women can be lumped together under the sign of a despised sexuality that should, however, be at the disposal of patriarchal capitalism and the powerful men within it" (291). Doty argues that through Don and Sal's dialogue, the series conflates sexually active single women with homosexual men.

On the surface, Joan's situation in "The Other Woman" is consistent with Doty's analysis—both Sal and Joan appear to be assets of Sterling Cooper because of their individual sex appeals, and both face encouragement from certain coworkers to use their sexualities for the benefit of "patriarchal capitalism" (Doty 291). Although Sal and Joan's situations may appear to be aligned, a closer analysis reveals that their individual situations differ significantly. A comparison of Don's reactions to Sal and Joan's complex situations in "Wee Small Hours" (3.09) and "The Other Woman" (5.11) suggests that Mad Men makes clear distinctions between how Don—and perhaps the series itself—considers and values male homosexuality and active female heterosexuality in the context of both 1960s and contemporary social mores.

Mad Men employs "tropes that 1960s mainstream America associated with homosexuals" (Doty 281) to construct its homosexual characters, especially Sal, one of the early series' most prominent secondary characters. Sal's position as artistic director for

Sterling Cooper alludes to the "1960s cultural cliché of an interest in art and literature as the sign of a queer man" (282). Furthermore, multiple characters make comments about Sal's close relationship with his mother, mirroring the mainstream assumption in the 1960s that "Mothers who overindulged their sons turned them into… 'perverts.' Sons bred in such homes, according to psychologists and psychoanalysts, would find it difficult to form 'normal' relationships with women" (May 96). Sal also marries a woman named Kitty, which viewers understand as Sal's way of entering a "loveless marriage" (Coontz 33) to prevent suspicion of his homosexuality, a tactic prevalent among homosexual men and women during mid-twentieth century America.

Sal's conspicuousness as an Italian-American man working among dozens of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant men and women at Sterling Cooper is established in *Mad Men*'s pilot episode, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," even before Sal has an onscreen moment. When an account man enters Don's office and asks, "Have we ever hired any Jews?" Don replies, "We've got an Italian, Salvatore, my art director" (1.01). This dialogue establishes Sal, a dark-skinned Italian-American, as undoubtedly different not only in terms of his sexuality, but also in terms of his ethnicity. In *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America*, Jennifer Guglielmo explains that early to mid-twentieth century Italian immigrants to America "quickly learned that to be white meant having the ability to avoid many forms of violence and humiliation" (3). Despite Sal's ability to acquire a professional reputation and gain access to agency social circles, his Italian-American identity does not go overlooked by his coworkers. His ethnicity is constantly alluded to throughout the series' first three seasons, even by Sal himself. For example, when a coworker asks Sal if he has a girlfriend, Sal responds, "Come on, I'm Italian!" ("Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," 1.01). Doty explains, "Sal uses his being Italian as an excuse for not having a girlfriend—which of course, might be understood as indicating a hypersexual libido, but with our knowledge of Sal, can also be understood as indicating his homosexuality through the sign of foreignness" (281). Doty's reading is especially important given *Mad Men*'s frequent connection between homosexuality and foreignness, which reflects the mainstream practice of distancing homosexuality from American identity during the 1960s.

One of the clearest examples of this connection occurs in "The Jet Set" (2.11), which Rodney Taveria cites in "California and Irony in Mad Men" as an "episode in which knowledge of the closet freely circulates in the offices of Sterling Cooper" (285). In this episode, Kurt Smith, a German designer hired by Sterling Cooper to help the agency appeal to a younger audience, matter-of-factly reveals his homosexuality, "I make love with the men, not the women," ("The Jet Set," 2.11) when someone makes a comment about how he has a crush on Peggy. Employees of Sterling Cooper contain homosexuality by associating it with foreignness, saying, "He's from Europe. It's different there" ("The Jet Set," 2.11) and "I knew queers existed, I just don't want to work with them" ("The Jet Set," 2.11). These reactions embody everything Sal fears as an Italian-American homosexual man and illustrate how *Mad Men* imagines the unjust, yet pervasive, attitudes toward racial and sexual difference during the 1960s.

Contemporary viewers can easily glean information about Sal's homosexuality from as early as the show's pilot episode. Sal's overly flippant remark to Sterling Cooper's head of research, "So we're supposed to believe that people are living one way and secretly thinking the exact opposite? That's ridiculous" ("Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," 1.01) is one of the many obvious disclosures in the show's narrative. However, Sal remains closeted to most characters in the series except for a few noteworthy instances. Though *Mad Men* constructs Sal as an amalgamation of certain 1960s stereotypes concerning homosexuality, the series surprisingly deviates from 1960s social mores in "Out of Town" (3.01), an episode in which Don unintentionally discovers Sal in a state of undress with a male bellhop at a hotel. Don's reaction toward Sal's homosexuality in this episode seems to challenge historical information on homosexuality in the workplace. In *The Lavender Scare*, David K. Johnson explores the national fear and oppression of homosexuality during the early Cold War, comparing the persecution and dismissal of alleged homosexual government workers during the "Lavender Scare" to the targeting of alleged communists in the federal government by Senator Joseph McCarthy during the Red Scare. Although the national memory of the Lavender Scare seems forgetful of these anti-gay purges compared to the "national limelight" (Johnson 5) granted to the Red Scare, Johnson

argues, “the lessening of publicity after 1950 is not a testament to the lack of antigay efforts but to their routinization and institutionalization in the bureaucracy of the national security state” (5). Beginning in 1950, the Lavender Scare represented an era of mainstream opinion in which government officials, journalists, and Americans citizens considered homosexuality a larger threat to national security than communism.

Don’s reaction to Sal’s homosexuality in “Out of Town” suggests that he possesses a relatively progressive attitude toward homosexuality—as long as it is kept a secret. Don tacitly relates his outlook to Sal in the form of an advertising tagline: “Limit your exposure” (“Out of Town,” 3.01). Cultural studies scholar Lee Wallace reads Don’s reactions in his essay “Fag Men: Mad Men, Homosexuality, and Televisual Style,” observing “…when homosexual recognition falls into Don’s domain it becomes a defining measure of the suavely straight man who couldn’t care less what a queer employee does in bed, just that he keep appearances intact” (215). Wallace also reads Don’s tagline as a historical perspective on the closet, arguing that “Limit your exposure” serves as advice and warning: “[the tagline] does double duty as tacit advice from one sexually experienced man to another as well as ensuring that the matter will never be directly addressed” (215). Although “Out of Town” provides contemporary audiences with hope that Don’s progressive attitude toward homosexuality will continue, his unhistorical attitude shifts dramatically as soon as Sterling Cooper’s financial wellbeing hinges on Sal instrumentalizing his sexuality for the good of the agency.

In “Wee Small Hours,” Sal attempts to explain his averse reaction to Lee’s advances in the film editing room; “He was drunk. And he cornered me in the editing room…And I backed him off, I told him I was married” (3.09). Unlike the understanding, and even forgiving, Don from “Out of Town,” Don’s facial expressions and tone in this situation are contemptuous, angry, and downright cruel. Don mockingly asks Sal, “But nothing happened? Because nothing could have happened because you’re married?” and later shakes his head in disgust saying with a sneer, “You people” (“Wee Small Hours,” 3.09). In this scene, it becomes clear that Don has no sympathy for Sal’s personal wellbeing when a $25 million account is involved and insinuates that, since Sal engages in homosexual

behaviors recreationally, he should be more than willing to use his sexuality as an asset for Sterling Cooper. Don's management of this situation suggests that he can overlook Sal's recreational homosexuality behind closed doors, but as soon as Sterling Cooper and a high-profile client are involved, Sal's lack of action—his inability to instrumentalize homosexuality for the benefit of the agency—is inexcusable and naïve.

It's notable that Don values the success of Sterling Cooper over Sal's personal sexual choices, because Don himself participates in a similar situation with one of the agency's female clients earlier in the series. However, unlike Sal, Don responds to the sexual desires of this client favorably and is able to leverage his sexuality for the good of Sterling Cooper. In "The New Girl," (2.05) Jimmy Barrett, a provocative comedian and spokesperson for Sterling Cooper's client Utz Potato Chips, insults the wife of Utz's owner, causing Utz to question whether they want Jimmy (and ultimately Sterling Cooper) to represent their company to the public. Don contacts Jimmy's wife and manager Bobbie Barrett, and then asserts his control over the situation through a sexual tryst. Bobbie attempts to use this affair to her advantage, saying "I had sex with you so now you do what I say," but Don responds, "No, *I* had sex with *you*, so you do what I say" ("The New Girl," 2.05). In the end, Don uses his sexuality to thrill Bobbie into doing Sterling Cooper's bidding. Through Don's sexual affair with Bobbie, *Mad Men* informs viewers that Don is not morally opposed to using his own sexuality to secure the well being of Sterling Cooper.

Don's belief that sexuality plays an important role in business transactions takes a dramatic turn as soon as the sexual player in the situation is a woman. While Don fires Sal without any moral qualms in "Wee Small Hours," his immediate reaction to the mere idea of approaching Joan with compensation for sleeping with Herb has a moral and sentimental undertone: "She has a husband in Vietnam and a baby at home!" ("The Other Woman," 5.11). Don disregards the ethical implications of Sal's situation with Lee Garner Jr., diminishing Sal's feelings and well-being in favor of ensuring the financial health of Sterling Cooper. However, he consistently frames Joan's situation morally, even though the promised outcome of Joan sleeping with Herb, the acquisition of a luxury car manufacturer

account, is as high, if not higher, a financial reward as the Lucky Strike account in Sal's situation.

If the series demonstrates that sexuality has an important role in business transactions, why does Don draw the line when it comes to Joan? Don's reactions to Joan's complex situation in "The Other Woman" suggest that he does not condone the active use of female sexuality as a tool or advantage within the male-dominated corporate world. However, *Mad Men* constructs Joan as a figure who utilizes her sexuality to the utmost in her professional career. Much like how *Mad Men* conceives Sal using 1960s tropes about homosexuality, the series constructs Joan as a "woman of her particular era, not yet engaged in the second-wave feminist movement but embracing the precursors of the sexual revolution" (Cox 1). Series creator Matthew Weiner has repeatedly attributed Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl*, a cheeky advice book for women published in 1962, as the major inspiration behind Joan's character. In Gurley Brown's words, *Sex and the Single Girl* "is not a study on how to get married but how to stay single—in superlative style" (11) and boldly proclaims "Sex is a powerful weapon for a single woman in getting what she wants from life" (70). During the first few seasons, Joan reaches the highest level possible as a secretary and appears to be proud of the integral organizational role she plays at Sterling Cooper. Her ongoing advice to newcomer Peggy Olson implies that Joan earned her venerated role through hard work, but also through careful manipulation of her image, persona, and sexuality. For example, after Peggy expresses dismay at being left out from after work outings, Joan bluntly tells her, "Stop dressing like a little girl" ("Maidenform," 2.6) and sure enough, after Peggy takes Joan's advice, her success and conventional attractiveness increase directly.

While *Mad Men*'s first few seasons portray Joan as content with her role at the agency, the series complicates the validity of how Joan uses her sexuality for professional leverage. While her curvaceous figure and manicured beauty captivate *Mad Men*'s characters and viewers alike, her visible sex appeal also prompts "constant sexual innuendo and outright harassment by male-coworkers," (Coontz, "Why 'Mad Men' Is TV's Most Feminist Show") like when a male co-worker tells Joan, "I'm not some young girl off the

bus. I don't need some madame from a Shanghai whorehouse to show me the ropes" ("The Summer Man," 4.08) after she confronts him about his negative attitude. The later seasons often display Joan's inability to advance professionally, despite her longstanding professional commitment to Sterling Cooper. For example, although Joan is promoted to Director of Agency Operations in season four, she notes that the job is little more than a title: "I was just made Director of Agency Operations. A title, no money of course. And if they poured champagne, it must have been while I was pushing the mailcart" ("Tomorrowland," 4.13). *Mad Men* constantly frames Joan's sexuality as a double-edged sword—on the one hand, she is comfortable using her sexuality to get what she wants, but on the other hand, what she wants is always out of reach because she is so sexually provocative.

Before analyzing Don's reaction to Joan's situation in "The Other Woman," it is important to recognize that Don's distaste for active female sexuality exists beyond Joan's circumstance in this episode. Given Don's notorious promiscuity throughout the series, *Mad Men* provides him with a compelling aversion to female sexuality under certain circumstances. *Mad Men* frequently demonstrates the widespread sexual double-standard imposed on women during the 1950s and 1960s through Don's interactions with his romantic partners and female coworkers: "What we now think of as 1950s sexual morality depended not so much on stricter sexual control as on intensification of the sexual double standard" (Coontz 39). For example, Don scorns and regulates public displays of the female body, especially when the female in question is his romantic partner. In "Maidenform," Don sternly chastises his first wife Betty for wearing a bikini around the house, saying, "Where are you going in that?...Do you want to be ogled? It's desperate" (2.06). Don sees her scantily clad body as an open invitation for anyone "a 15-year-old life guard...a bunch of tennis pros...all those loafing millionaires taking the summer off" ("Maidenform," 2.06) to observe and take pleasure in her body, a thought detestable to him as Betty's husband: "The double-standard male usually wants a girl to whom he is committed to be 'good'...women were the ones who suffered the stigma of violating the taboo" (May 122-123). Although Don is by no means committed to Betty throughout the

series, he nonetheless expects Betty to abide by unwritten rules of sexual inequality. Don's attitude toward Betty's sexuality reveals that as her husband, he controls Betty's sexuality—in his eyes, Betty has no right to be sexy outside the bedroom unless it's on his own terms.

Don also shows contempt for women who attempt to initiate a sexual relationship with him, demonstrating the general belief in the early 1960s that "…it was…considered 'normal' for men to be sexually aggressive" (Coontz 40). He displays disapproval when female characters approach him first for a sexual relationship, implying that men should initiate sex with women and not the other way around. For example, in the show's pilot, Peggy nervously attempts to flirt with Don (which she believes is part of her job description after a rigorous first day experiencing what contemporary viewers would call nonstop sexual harassment), but Don disapproves of her advance, saying, "Peggy, I'm your boss, not your boyfriend" ("Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," 1.01). This statement seems laughable when considering the entire series, since Don has had multiple relationships with future secretaries and even goes on to marry one of them. However, when Don engages in extramarital affairs, he more often than not initiates the relationships. Don's attitude reflects the widely expressed opinion during the 1950s and 1960s that the best way for a young woman "to snare a male" was through "allure": "…this catching and snaring was to be accomplished passively, with bait rather than a net…'pretend to let him catch you' was the rule" (May 119). As long as Don has control over how his affairs begin and play out, he remains content and encourages his partners to tantalize him.

Don's relationship with his second wife (and former secretary) Megan, a daytime soap opera actress, displays his distaste for female sexuality when it is used for professional advancement. In "To Have and To Hold," (6.04) Don belittles Megan after he sees her perform a love scene on set, even though Megan is simply acting and Don carries on an actual affair with a neighbor in the same episode. Don cruelly equates Megan's acting with prostitution, yelling, "You kiss people for money, you know who does that?" (6.04). Don views the active use of female sexuality in cases unrelated to his personal pleasure as a husband or lover as distasteful, vain, and verging on prostitution. These examples are useful when understanding Don's reaction to the offer initially presented to Joan, "a 10%

finders fee on the first year's commission…$50,000, a flattering amount" (5.11), because they imply that his disapproval may have less to do with his respect for Joan, and more to do with his attitude toward active female sexuality.

It makes sense that Don would have a complicated relationship with female sexuality given *Mad Men*'s hefty narrative investment in the psychological effects of past trauma on the present. Joyce Slochower theorizes that Don's traumatic past contributes to his participation in "stifling mores of his time…because Don's compulsive philandering mirrors the cultural stereotype, we don't immediately recognize the intrapsychic conflicts on which it's based…But we…learn that there's more here than meets the eye because we're given access to Don's interior life" (385). Flashbacks to Don's childhood reveal that his mother was a prostitute who died during childbirth and his stepmother and father frequently called him "a whore's child" ("The Hobo Code," 1.08) to instill him with a sense of shame and inadequacy. Furthermore, "The Crash" reveals that a prostitute molested Don during his early adolescence, and that this woman exposes his loss of virginity to his stepmother, who then beats him and call him "filthy" and "disgusting" (6.08).

Though *Mad Men*'s construction of Don's past adds an interesting psychological explanation for his disapproval of active female sexuality, in a larger sense, *Mad Men* also imagines Don participating in a set of "widely expressed values" (May 115) toward female sexuality during the 1950s and 1960s when he attempts to dissuade Joan from sleeping with Herb in "The Other Woman." While Don rationalizes with Sal, "Lucky Strike could shut off our lights," ("Wee Small Hours," 3.09) he compassionately tells Joan, "I wanted to tell you that it's not worth it. And if we don't get Jaguar, so what? Who wants to be in business with people like that?" ("The Other Woman," 5.11). *Mad Men* endows Don with sentimentality and a moral high ground in Joan's case because of his established contempt for active female sexuality, but in a larger sense his reactions to Joan's situation reflects the dominant ideology during the 1950s and 1960s that female sexuality is good in certain scenarios, like in marriage or when it is passively used to attract suitors, but immoral in other situations, like when it is used in service of a woman's career or ambition. As Elaine Tyler May notes, predominant opinion during the 1960s scorned the manipulation of

female sexuality: "those who used their sexuality for power or greed would destroy men, families, and even society" (63). While Don is certainly not against hiring or working with women—an obvious example is his protégé Peggy—his opinion that "it's not worth it" ("The Other Woman," 5.11) for SCDP to use sex as leverage in Joan's case suggests that active female sexuality should not have an important role in business strategy from a moral standpoint.

May cites Marilyn Monroe's films as perfect emblems of the dichotomy between "good" and "bad" types of female sexuality (63) and interestingly, *Mad Men* compares Joan to Monroe multiple times throughout the series. For example, when one account man proves his new advertising theory, "Jackie Kennedy. Marilyn Monroe. Every single woman is one of them" by pointing out various secretaries as being either "a Jackie" or "a Marilyn," he admits, "Well, Marilyn's really a Joan, not the other way around" ("Maidenform," 2.06). Additionally, in "Six Month Leave," Joan expresses her sense of loss when Marilyn Monroe dies: "She was so young…A lot of people felt like they knew her…This world destroyed her" (2.09). The Joan-Marilyn connection displays the extremely thin line between "good" and "bad" sexuality that Joan attempts to walk in her professional career.

Ultimately, Joan's decision to sleep with Herb was unaffected by Don's moral pleas because she had already gone through with it by the time Don spoke with her. By structuring the episode through a series of flashbacks, *Mad Men* encourages viewers to ask whether or not Joan would have completed her end of the bargain had she spoken with Don before she slept with Herb. Todd VanDerWerff skillfully reads this scene in an episode recap for The AV Club, "When Don goes to tell Joan not do it, she calls him one of the 'good ones'…because she knows how naïve he is and how little his goodness—if it exists—counts for anything…He does the right thing because it looks good" ("Mad Men: 'The Other Woman'"). Understanding how Joan's character derives from Sex and the Single Girl and taking into account her inability to advance past secretarial status throughout the series, viewers must know that Joan has little room to seriously consider Don's morality-soaked double-standards. Joan sees the partnership offer as a once in a lifetime opportunity to crash through Sterling Cooper's glass ceiling.

Television critics and Internet bloggers often disagree on how *Mad Men* prompts contemporary viewers to respond to its depiction of history, especially since episodes often include blatant sexism, racism, and homophobia in an effort to capture 1960s social mores. One faction of critics praises the show for its uncompromising depiction of history, including noted historian and family studies scholar Stephanie Coontz. Coontz took a survey of 200 women who personally experienced the era *Mad Men* recreates and found surprising results: "…Most of these women refused to watch *Mad Men*. Not because they found its portrayal of male-female relations unrealistic…It was precisely because *Mad Men* portrayed the sexism of that era so unflinchingly…that they could not bear to watch" (Coontz, "Why 'Mad Men' Is TV's Most Feminist Show"). On the other hand, some critics decry *Mad Men* as belonging to a "genre of Now We Know Better," in which, "criticism of the past is used to congratulate the present" (Greif 2008). Members of this latter camp see *Mad Men* as giving contemporary viewers a misplaced nostalgia for an era of unchecked sexism: "The message that many women…seem to have taken…is not relief or gratitude at what's changed…but something quite different: Those fashions are cool! God Don's hot! Are you a Joan or a Peggy?" (Engoron 2010) and a substantial amount of distance from 1960s oppression to feel comfortably detached and superior to unsavory aspects of the show: "We watch and know better about male chauvinism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, workplace harassment, housewives' depression, nutrition and smoking" (Greif 2008). Such positions assume a liberal narrative of progress occurring in both the series and in history itself—that because we, as viewers, are further along the chronological spectrum of history, we somehow know better about the issues of gender, race, and sexuality that *Mad Men* depicts, and because we know better such issues cease to exist with the passing of time.

Although time moves linearly in the series—the pilot episode begins in March 1960 and the final season is expected to take place in 1969—its linear narrative and stylized setting distract many viewers and critics from the idea that *Mad Men* may have as much to say about contemporary viewers as it does about the 1960s. As Katixa Agirre notes in a consideration of post-feminist awareness in *Mad Men*, "Time dislocation operates as a distancing device at times, but at others it is a witty reminder of our own vices" (167).

While the political and social rights of LGBT individuals and women have certainly advanced since the 1960s, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender continues to affect our contemporary lives.

One of the most widespread manifestations of contemporary sexual orientation and gender discrimination occurs in the workplace. As of March 2014, "it is legal to fire or refuse to hire someone based on his or her sexual orientation in 29 states. Those who are transgender can be fired or denied employment solely based on gender identity in 33 states" ("Employment Non-Discrimination Act"). The diegetic insertion of two Martin Luther King Jr. speeches in "Wee Small Hours" serves as a clever reminder that while Sal's dismissal was a product of the 1960s, workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation persists despite major advances in civil rights issues since the 1960s. Similarly, Joan's inability to gain equal footing with her male coworkers reflects 1960s social mores, but it may also address contemporary inequalities between men and women in the workplace. Disparities between women's and men's earnings for equal work, considerable overrepresentation of men in management positions, and limited professional choices for women are all factors affecting women in the workplace today. Furthermore, *Mad Men* creator Matthew Weiner has gone on record connecting Joan's situation in "The Other Woman" to contemporary challenges that women face in work environments: "This…was something that came up so many times…so while I love that people think that Joan wouldn't do that, all I can tell you is it really happened. A lot.…The fact that it was Joan is because there is a Joan in a lot of the agencies, and there still is" (Rose 2). The situations that Sal and Joan face in their work and personal lives have one foot in the past and another in the present. Although *Mad Men* may initially look like a time machine, careful consideration of its characters and narratives reveal that it may actually function more like a mirror.

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Re:Search

Between Misselthwaite Manor and The "Wild, Dreary" Moor: Children and Enclosures in *The Secret Garden*

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I focus on the distinct ways that child characters interpret, negotiate, and interact with space in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden.* Spatial analysis, rarely used in the field of children's literature, emerges as the focal point of my reading of *The Secret Garden.* Key spaces, such as the secret garden and Archibald Craven's manor, embed different meanings and experiences for the main character, Mary Lennox. I argue that her negotiation of these spaces ultimately strengthens her agency and addresses her liminal identity. In children's literature, the dichotomy between nature and culture is typically emphasized to associate the connection of child characters and bucolic settings. In Burnett's narrative, I reveal that the children are similarly alienated from fully natural and civilized spaces. In fact, their moral and personal development does not result from full immersion in nature. Rather, spaces that have both natural and cultural elements allow characters like Mary to exert their own agency and experience personal growth. As the secret garden exists between the wild moor and English manor, its connection to both nature and culture construct the garden as a liminal space. Ironically, Mary is most intimately associated with the garden; I understand her liminal identity through the garden's spatiality.

KEYWORDS

children's literature, enclosures, liminality, *The Secret Garden*, space

"Two things cannot be in one place. Where you tend a rose, my lad, a thistle cannot grow."
—Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

CHILDHOOD AND PERCEPTIONS OF SPACE

As a beloved classic in the canon of children's literature, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* has been critically examined by scholars and bibliophiles alike since its 1911 debut. While many literary critics have analyzed the novel in terms of colonial influence and Mary's sexuality, I examine how children employ agency to negotiate space, specifically in the garden. In Burnett's narrative, each physical space encodes regeneration and death to the child characters. In particular, the garden operates as a key site of influence in Mary's personal development. Mediated through the division of nature and culture (and to an extent, between England and India), enclosed spaces become cyclically life giving and death inducing.

Although *The Secret Garden* does not directly factor into her analysis, Jenny Bavidge explores how children's literature, despite its traditionally bucolic settings, also describes and rationalizes urban spaces. In her 2006 article "Stories In Space", she argues for the study of "geography" in children's literature, as specific places and spaces shape readers' understandings of children (Bavidge). In children's literature, the way that space is constructed incompletely represents the child's experience. Rather, Bavidge claims this genre reflects the "powerful manifestation of the ways in which the world is interpreted and explained to children" (3). These spaces are not reflective of the world—they reveal how adults idealize the world of the child. In a sense, spatiality suggests nostalgia for child perceptions of nature in a way that accepts its distance. Bavidge claims that "children's literary criticism has not paid enough attention to questions of spatiality (particularly urban space) and has rarely attempted to theorize the nature of place and space in children's literature" (5). While I acknowledge Bavidge's precaution on how space is constructed by adult authors and explained to young readers, I contend that spatial symbolism in *The Secret Garden* uniquely enables the child characters—not to mention young readers- to interact with and exert agency through specific places. Recognizing the lack of spatial

analyses in theorizing children's literature, I analyze *The Secret Garden* for the different and distinct ways in which children and space interact.

In analyzing imperialist literature, Mary Goodwin champions the importance of spatiality in relation to the "moral climate" of texts. Focusing on both *The Secret Garden* and Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, Goodwin examines imperialist undertones through the characteristics of specific spaces. According to her essay, each space in *The Secret Garden* conveys a certain moral affect:

> The setting of *The Secret Garden* spans…worlds, each of which offers its own moral climate to mirror the meteorological and topographical environment: India, a fen of deadly vapours and punishing heat that causes physical, moral and spiritual lassitude; the bleak and desolate Misselthwaite Manor in the Yorkshire moors, whose inmates languish in a Gothic maze of dark lonely rooms; and the gardens and countryside beyond the manor, alive with secret power to breathe spirit back into dying matter. (Goodwin 2)

As Goodwin delineates, spaces construct emotional and moral perceptions of self. The foreboding house at first provides Mary with security; the Edenic garden frightens Mary before she becomes intrigued by its upkeep. Neither the English manor nor the landscape of India sufficiently nourishes the characters. In India, Mary is "forgotten" in the "perfectly still" bungalow (Burnett 8, 10); similarly, Mary laments how "lost and odd" she feels in the "gloomy" English mansion (22). Goodwin's presentation of the garden as rejuvenating has some support in the text, but rejuvenation does not fully account for Mary's complex agency in the garden. Mary is not only ostracized from the moor and manor, but the lure of the garden is in its otherness: like Mary herself, the "garden [is] secret and closed-up" (Evans 2). While the garden may contain "secret power", its enclosed spatiality remains just as problematic for Mary as the "frightfully hot" Indian climate and the "wild, dreary" English moors (Burnett 8, 21).

To apply a spatial lens to the novel, I read *The Secret Garden* for its "engage[ment] with the ways in which children make and experience space" (Bavidge 2). In children's

literature, the spectrum of natural and cultural spaces facilitates perceptions of childhood. The enclosures in *The Secret Garden* simultaneously prove problematic and nurturing for the liminal character, Mary Lennox. Each instance of compartmentalized space conveys a womb/tomb oscillation: the novel uses spatiality to alternately create domestic safety and connote death. Burnett's novel uniquely allows liminal children, like Mary Lennox and Colin Craven, to exercise agency and reconstruct their understanding of self through their navigation of space.

IMPLICATIONS OF GEOGRAPHIC SPATIALITY

Despite the geographic variance, Burnett consistently describes Indian and English wildlife as dangerous, while Mary's homes in both countries facilitate her alienation. The "frightfully hot" (Burnett 8) climate of India breeds exotic species like "scarlet hibiscus blossoms" and "rustling snakes" that clearly differ from the milder English weather. Even when Mary leaves India, her perception of nature is shaped by "cholera" causing her family to "die like flies" (9). While Indian skies were "hot and blazing", the "awful dreary gray" moor prompts Mary to conclude, "'I thought perhaps it always rained or looked dark in England'" (51). Notably, Mary first experiences nature in England through the "wide, bleak moor" that looked like "a wide expanse of black ocean" emitting a "wild, low, rushing sound" (Burnett 21). In both countries, Mary's experiences construct nature as inaccessible or frightening.

While Mary's interactions with nature connote danger, her experiences in domestic spaces result in alienation, rather than belonging. Even in the midst of exotic scenery, Mary's life in India predominantly remains within the bungalow. The "sickly, fretful child" (1) reappears in different scenes of society: the nursery, drinking wine in the dining room, and "waiting in the house... staring at the wall" (10). Compartmentalization defines Mary's life in India: her mother keeps her in a separate room, where "Mistress Mary" (35) receives attention and care exclusively from her Ayah. Her tumultuous relationship with her home in India reappears in her move to her uncle's mansion. Craven's house, with its compartmentalized spaces, is originally seen as a symbol of wealth, despite the obvious

sense of foreboding: “a house with a hundred rooms, nearly all shut up and with their doors locked” (18). Burnett employs elements of the gothic in the illusory and distant Archibald Craven and the hauntingly empty mansion, further hindering Mary from belonging to her home. Despite Mary’s lack of belonging, Burnett does acknowledge some forms of life within the enclosure. Exploring the “hundred rooms with closed doors” (46), Mary discovers a “comfortable nest” in a sofa cushion, containing “six baby mice” that “cuddled up asleep” near their mother. Even in this death-inducing house, the nest that hosted “seven mice who did not look lonely at all” proves that life can be produced and sustained in the enclosure (49). However, the house of a hundred rooms camouflages Colin in the opposite sense: his confinement in his nursery seems more like a grave. His sickness—and presence in general—is contained in a single room; his life, sickness, and the implications of the two only exist within those four walls. Not coincidently, the only picture of his deceased mother is also kept in the room in yet another enclosure of draperies. The compartmentalization of the rooms suffocates life and familial relations through the separation.

Whether in India or England, significantly polarized spaces import danger or alienation for their child occupants. Be it the compartmentalized manor or the chilling moors, extreme examples of both nature and civilization compromise the familial dynamic. In contrast, the tomb/womb dichotomy disappears when a balance between extremities is negotiated. While the compartmentalized Gothic manor produces chronically depressed Archibald and his career invalid son Colin, the Sowerby family, who “‘wouldn’t live away from th’ moor for anythin’” (24), exude healthiness and happiness. Whereas Mary’s contrariness must be cured over the course of the novel, Martha and the Sowerby clan remain the “good-natured Yorkshire” family throughout the narrative (26). The locale of these celebrated characters cannot be ignored: the “untrained Yorkshire rustic” family resides in a “moorland cottage with a swarm” of fourteen children (27). Though the Sowerbys intersect with the moor, their cottage, and the manor, Burnett refuses to relegate them to one fixed space. Martha works as a servant in the manor, while her siblings “‘tumble about on th’ moor an’ play there all day’” when they leave their “‘cottage fit for a

king'" (27, 58). As the Sowerbys occupy the liminal space between the mansion and the moor, their earnest characters reflect the optimal nature of their spatiality: Susan Sowerby is "sensible an' hard-workin' an' good-natured an' clean that no one could help likin' her" (Burnett 52). Jan Marsh claims that "old manor house(s)", such as Misselthwaite Manor, became less favored than "country cottages", much like the Sowerby's abode (171); the return to "plainness and simplicity" (171) evokes the tradition of the pastoral. Given that the "moral climate mirror[s] the meteorological and topographical environment" (Goodwin 2) in *The Secret Garden*, the Sowerbys' respectability denotes their idealized existence between the extreme of the moor and the manor.

ROMANTIC ORIGINS OF ORGANIZED SPACE AND GARDENING

To create the aesthetic of the garden, Burnett inherits a long history of child characters engaging with the pastoral: partially from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's proposal for "natural education out of doors to train children's bodies" and to teach "ownership through cultivation", gardens became celebrated throughout the 19th century in Europe (Goodwin 6). Burnett certainly employs the secret garden as a space of instruction, community, and engagement with nature for Mary and her comrades. In a broader domain than gardens, Wilkie claims that the "nurturing, pastoral qualities of Romanticism, emphasizing Bildungsroman characteristics of growth and change" (3) inspired the children's canon long before Burnett's novel. From as early as the prototypical children's picture book, "nostalgia for a fast-retreating idyll" (Bavidge 5) appeared as a central theme of pastoral children's literature. The Romantic tradition idealizes nature at the expense of urbanization: "children's literature implicitly constructs 'the child' and 'the city' as mutually incongruous or, even, incompatible entities" (2). In contrast, there is a "powerful cultural association of childhood with the rural and natural" (5). The dichotomy between civilization and nature has historically aligned the child with nature, often at the expense of urban spaces.

Inarguably, the most significant compartmentalized space in this book is the secret garden. The garden operates as a transitional space between the natural and cultural, physically located between the moor and the manor. The garden exemplifies the tension

between the symbolisms of womb/tomb. On one hand, the garden has been left nearly wild for many years (save the occasional pruning of Ben Weatherstaff), suggesting the potentially mortal danger that could occur. However, its operation as both "secret" and enclosed connotes domestic safety, as a nest. Commenting on the natural and social aspects of gardening, sociologists Mark Bhatti and Andrew Church assess gardens as "sites where human agency and social relations can have a considerable influence on the use and meaning of space which may have implications for how nature is known and interpreted" (5). Essentially, Burnett's garden is contingent on how characters like Mary Lennox exert agency over their own development, as well how people interact within the enclosure. While gardens are "key sites within English cultural landscape", literary critic Mandy Morris explains the contested interpretation of these "civilizing agents": "The garden, too, is an ambiguous symbol: The tensions it encompasses give *The Secret Garden* much of its fascination. It is both alfresco and enclosed. It is private, but it is also a place to meet strangers. The open air, the natural and vegetative, the wild" (3, 6). While gardens necessarily exist both in nature and civilization, the implications of such liminality complicate the role of these spaces. As theorized in the study of landscapes, liminality references the garden as an "in-between space" (Thomassen 21) between nature and culture; physically, the garden occupies the space between the moor and Misselthwaite Manor. Further, the garden's liminality includes "cultural and ritual passages" (24): Mary, not to mention Colin and his father, undergoes moral and physical improvement from her time in the garden. Milne articulates the tension surrounding the garden: "humans are in a perpetual struggle to control and adapt the natural world to their needs- to civilize it" (3). According to her interpretation, gardens represent the constant—yet impossible—task of civilizing nature while dissolving cultural boundaries. These spaces of exclusion attempt to "tame" and "reproduce" what Wilkie calls the "The Wild" in "fashionably natural gardens" (Wilkie 5; Morris 16). The ambiguity surrounding gardens represents the tomb and womb potential. When Lilias Craven suffered a severe injury in the garden, her subsequent death caused Archibald to lock the garden up for ten years. Thus, the clandestine enclosure imported associations of death and estrangement. Upon its reentrance ten years later, Mary

proclaims that "'it isn't a quite dead garden... Even if the roses are dead, there are other things alive" (Burnett 67). Thus, Mary articulates the garden's ability to cultivate life, even with the impending potential of death. Her sentiment reveals the synergy of the contradiction: due to the mortal potential of the garden, new life can be produced and sustained.

LIMINALITY IN MARY AND THE GARDEN

From the onset of the novel, when Mary "embarks...on a journey out of India to the English Yorkshire moors" (Morris 6), her identity is defined by a perpetual state of liminality. Not only does she float between two countries, but Mary's constant state of transitioning from family to family also marks her as liminal. From physical to social to familial, Mary can be classified as a liminal character because she does not belong to a single country, space, or family, but fluxes between spaces and people. Just like Mary, the garden represents a space in transition. While composed of shrubbery and wildlife, a garden directly results from cultural intrusion upon nature. Without human intervention, the garden would stay an uninterrupted natural space. Thus, the garden remains partly natural and exotic, while necessarily incorporating the influence of civilization. Further, the garden spatially exists between Misselthwaite Manor and the whistling moorland. Not only does the garden negotiate nature and culture, but it also represents communal space for all strata of English society. At the onset of the novel, Mary's isolation from her familial ties and uprooting from national identity tie her character to the neglected garden. Her gained interest in discovering the entrance to the flowery enclosure and cultivating a "piece of earth" (Burnett 95) demonstrate her heightened comfort in the space, in stark contrast to her alienation in Indian and English society. In fact, the garden becomes the central space to which Mary belongs; the close association between the two constructs her as liminal character, much as the garden remains a liminal space.

Ultimately, Mary establishes her identity by inhabiting perhaps the only space in which she feels comfortable: the secret garden. In fact, Morris argues that many facets of Mary's identity are "linked with the English walled garden" (1). The only place Mary seems

to actually belong is in this enclosure. However, that existence is unlike any other: she must keep it a secret; she alone controls the gatekeeping (she found the entrance and has the key); and she frolics in a place associated with her aunt's death. The garden allows Mary to exercise "spatial agency" that liberates her from the "deforming secularism and the 'civilizing' influences" of the manor to the "freedom the garden offers in its wild state" (Wilkie 7). In each space, Mary is foreign in comparison to her environment; India is exoticized while the manor remains cold and distant to her. Her solace becomes the secret garden, despite its ability to both sustain life and incur death. Before discovering the garden, Mary positively interacts with the outdoors in England and India. In England, she enjoyed the "delightful gusts of wind" (Burnett 61), while she "wander[ed]" and played in "little heaps of earth" in India (8). However, she does not undergo any significant physical or psychological change from her outdoor interactions until she is in the garden. In the space of the garden, Mary herself is transformed—she sheds her contrariness and becomes more likeable, prettier, and plumper.

Thus, Mary's interactions with the garden fuel the betterment of her character, in a space that refuses to be entirely in nature or civilization. Mary's likeness to the garden originates in the intentional and painful abandonment that could only be reconciled through human interaction:

> [Craven] abandons his son as well to the care of servants, much as Mary was shunned to one side in India. The garden's narrative—picturesque, fragile, feminine, dependent and hidden; erstwhile site of leisure, intimacy, romance, and tragedy—requires human intervention on a number of levels and by a number of participants to reach its optimal "conclusion." (Goodwin 107)

The contradictory nature of the garden reflects the "contrariness" of Mary Lennox. From ongoing neglect, their eventual revitalization necessitates the pruning of others: through Martha's advice and nagging, Mary eventually learns to trade her privileged Indian lifestyle

for comparatively more self-sufficiency in England. Mary's "growing up wild" presents her with the "choice of entering human society" or refusing civilization (Goodwin 12).

While Mary clearly remains distant from natural and cultural spaces in India and England alike, her "belonging" to the garden still induces a subtle irony. Even though she is finally able to "establish her place in the world", she "put[s] down roots" (Burnett 5) in a space that is liminal itself: the secret garden. Thus, her sense of belonging cannot be permanently tied to the moors or the mansion, nature or culture, nor England or India. The garden space mediates her transition from being a "rootless, neglected, and uncared for 'disagreeable-looking' girl" (Morris 6) to "growing stronger and fatter" with "a bit o'red in tha' cheeks" (Burnett 121). Ultimately, Mary negotiates her liminality by connecting to the ambiguous symbol of the garden.

FACETS OF MARY'S LIMINALITY

Given Mary's association with the secret garden, her liminality defines how she understands her own identity, interacts with other characters, and engages with distinct spaces. In many ways, the garden's liminality between natural and cultural space is reproduced through Mary's liminality between families and countries. Specifically, the deconstruction and reconstruction of social class complicate the imperialist narrative that Goodwin articulates: the wealthy Cravens submit to the natural knowledge of the humble Sowerby clan.

Within the first few pages of the narrative, Mary not only moves from one country to another, but also shifts from being a daughter to an orphan, through three sets of guardians. Her initial mark of being "the child alone…the child no one ever saw!" (Burnett 11) dissolves any lasting familial connection between Mary and her parents. Further, Mary constantly transitions between caretakers, from her parents in India to a clergyman's family in England to her Uncle Archibald at Misselthwaite Manor. While she remains vaguely in a family structure, Mary perceives her own distance from any relations: "she had been living in other people's houses and had had no Ayah…she had never seemed to belong to anyone

even when her father and mother had been alive" (15). Even within her own family, Mary's role deconstructed any chance of permanence or belonging.

Besides the familial distance, Mary also remains liminal in terms of national identity. In India, the "dark faces" (Burnett 7) of the natives clearly marked Mary as an Other. Her "little thin face, little thin body, thin light hair, and sour expression" (Burnett 7) convey her Englishness, in a country where all other inhabitants are Indian. While Mary is of English descent, her cultural experiences have all been located in India; even her reappearance in England defines her as a foreigner on her own soil. Although Mary nationally identifies as English, her perception of England reflects estrangement rather than belonging: "she felt so horribly lonely and far away from everything she understood and which understood her" (Burnett 45). Thus, Mary's background in India contests her English nationality; she does not identify with either England or India, but exists in a liminal space between the two as an Anglo-Indian.

Mary's existence between India and England, as well as her estrangement from the manor and the moor, situate her most aptly in the garden. Her identification with the garden has significant spatial implications. The garden exists between the moor, where the Sowerbys reside, and Misselthwaite Manor, home to the Craven clan. Thus, Mary's transience is reflected in the garden's physical liminality. Further, Mary's operation in the garden seems to condense class distinctions. Just as the manor clearly suggests upper-class wealth, the Sowerby's cottage connotes their rural, lower-class lifestyle. However, the interactions with the garden initially transcend, and sometimes even reserve, social order. Whereas the Cravens hold financial capital in their property, Dickon (not to mention his mother) emanates knowledge of the natural world. Even Dickon's ability to converse with animals conveys his superior position within the outdoors.

Superiority, through wealth and social status, seemingly depends on the occupied space. Even with Mary's wealth, she is marked as inferior or foreign when she refuses to dress herself with Martha and exudes ignorance about the natural world with Dickon. However, Mary's superiority seems to be slowly reaffirmed throughout the novel. While Burnett champions the Sowerbys as rustic, the Craven/Lennox clan ultimately reasserts the

superiority granted by their social status. While the outdoor knowledge of the Sowerbys is celebrated, their social status is eventually maintained; at the conclusion of the work, the upper class regains mastery at the expense of the lower class. In the imperialist tradition, the colonization dynamic between India and England clearly surfaces in Burnett's *The Secret Garden*. It functions in a somewhat atypical manner: an English girl, who grew up in India, returns to her homeland. In England, Mary finds that she does not seamlessly align with English culture; in fact, her English background is less significant to others than her more overt signs of "otherness". Just as imperialism functions on a large-scale geographic and historic sense, Mary's relationship with Colin and Dickon also operates in the colonial tradition. When Colin, representing aristocratic England, encounters Dickon, representing the natural world, they initially clash; Colin does not understand Dickon's oneness with nature, and Dickon recognizes that Colin's malady derives more from paranoia than disease. In similar trajectory to Mary's experience, Dickon's mastery of nature ultimately cannot elevate his social status. Rather, the culmination of the novel resituates each character in their original social class.

FROM LIMINALITY TO RAPTURE

In *The Secret Garden*, enclosed spaces situate characters in places that both breed new life and yield death. Through Mary Lennox, Burnett demonstrates how children negotiate both natural and cultural spaces. While extreme instances of culture and nature prove dangerous for the child, spaces that interweave natural and civilized elements become safe havens. In particular, the secret garden surfaces as the iconic space of life, death, and, as other readers note, rebirth. In its liminality, the pastoral tradition coincides with the burgeoning agency of Mary; the transitional space not only represents the blending of nature and culture, but reflects Mary's own flux between families and countries.

In the final scene of the novel, the "long forsaken" garden (Burnett 223) sheds its secretive barrier to host a reunion with the Sowerbys, Ben Weatherstaff, Mary, Colin, and Archibald Craven. Whereas the garden previously conjured associations of death (from Lilias's tragic accident), the reunion scene bursts with "glowing life", "splendid color", and

"joyous cries" (223). The exultations of rapture not only describe the temperament of Colin, but construct the garden as an "embowered temple of gold" (225). Through this scene, Burnett crystallizes her narrative of spatiality through the garden. Whereas other enclosures house the possibility of both life and death, the garden further revitalizes landscapes, characters, and the familial dynamic through rebirth. Its unique capability of rebirth resolves the womb/tomb dichotomy present throughout the narrative. Even in the final pages of the novel, Burnett conveys the powerful, albeit transient, nature of spaces. The garden, initially associated with death and secrecy, evolves to a communal space of rejuvenation. The progressive trajectory of the garden becomes superimposed on other facets of the story. For instance, Mary and Colin, initially forgotten and ornery, experience revitalization through their engagement with the garden. Thus, the notion of spatiality frames *The Secret Garden*. Not only does Burnett connect seemingly disparate perceptions of nature and culture through places, but she also examines the nature of childhood in relation to spaces. Through enclosures, children traverse the womb/tomb cycle as a means of negotiating the balance between life-giving and death-inducing spaces. Ultimately, Mary navigates her transition through cultivating the liminal space of the garden. Through reading the space in *The Secret Garden*, I focus on the agency of child characters and readers in negotiating the liminal facets of their own identities.

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Re:Search

Tensions Between Tradition and Innovation in *Kingdom Come* and *The Avengers*

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ABSTRACT

Our contemporary cultural climate is shaped in large part by superheroes and our interactions and thoughts on superheroes. Joss Whedon's 2012 film *The Avengers* is a great example of how one film about superheroes would become one of the highest grossing films of all time. *The Avengers* is a very clever film in how it deals with and balances the tensions of action spectacle and deeper self-conscious themes. In doing this, the film draws in popularity not only from action fans, but also from people who would otherwise not follow superheroes. However, addressing the tensions between commercial spectacle and deeper thematic elements is not new to superhero narratives. Mark Waid and Alex Ross's 1996 graphic novel *Kingdom Come* establishes the binary tensions between superheroes in terms of their commercial appeal, as seen in the materialistic superhero-centric restaurant Planet Krypton, and in terms of the consequentialist aspect of superheroes, evident in the human character Norman McCay. Through an understanding of both works, we can better understand each work and how superheroes have historically played a role – and continue to play a role – in our culture.

KEYWORDS

action, Alex Ross, *The Avengers*, comics, culture, Joss Whedon, *Kingdom Come*, Mark Waid, self-consciousness, spectacle, superheroes, Superman

When Joss Whedon's film *The Avengers* came out in the summer of 2012, *Rolling Stone* film critic Peter Travers started his review by stating simply: "Let me sprint right to the point: *The Avengers* has it all. And then some" (Travers). A mere glimpse into Samuel L. Jackson's Sergeant Nick Fury's one eye in *The Avengers*, the posthumous Oscar for Heath Ledger's Joker in *The Dark Knight*, or the slick tech mechanics of Robert Downey Jr.'s Tony Stark show the current cultural paradigm of superheroes. When considering *The Avengers* – the film soon to become one of the highest grossing films of all time – one cannot help but consider the extent of the film's popularity, which requires an investigation in its own right. Therefore, considering a film like *The Avengers* enables an investigation on the popularity of superheroes in general in contemporary culture.

The final paragraph of Travers's 2012 review of *The Avengers* proclaims arguably the most important binaries in the film. Travers writes:

> Whedon, a filmmaker who knows that even the roaringest action sequences won't resonate without audience investment in the characters. Whedon is not afraid to slow down to let feelings sink in. Fanboy heresy, perhaps, but the key to the film's supersmart, supercool triumph. In the final third, when Whedon lets it rip and turns the battle intensity up to 11, all your senses will be blown. (Travers)

This statement highlights the extremely well-balanced binaries that make *The Avengers* a truly awesome film experience. *The Avengers* achieves a mere perfect balance between commercial image/spectacle and deeper thematic elements, which play out as a sense of self-consciousness in the superhero characters themselves and as signs of deeper humanistic themes. Action-packed entertainment and comedy consume audiences that watch Scarlett Johansson's Black Widow disarm Russian terrorists with her arms tied to the back of a chair. But these scenes of action and comedy come right alongside the death of S.H.I.E.L.D. member Phil Coulson, whose Captain America "fanboyism" comes to the advantage of Sergeant Fury as he uses Coulson's Captain America trading cards as a prime motivator to keep the Avengers striving strong; super "humans" are motivated by the death of a human life, just as humans are motivated by the super qualities of superheroes. When

Fury tells the Avengers that he found vintage Captain America trading cards in Coulson's jacket pocket as a motivator for the superheroes, audiences see deeper, self-conscious, and more human thematic elements at work – it is not Captain America, the man that inspired Coulson's fanboyism, but Captain America's cultural image. This balance of action spectacle and deeper themes carries for the entire two-and-a-half hour film, and makes *The Avengers* a joyride of both near-flawless entertainment and deeper meaning.

The Avengers is an exemplar of the interplay between the commercial CGI spectacle and the self-conscious/humanist themes in superhero narratives. The tensions between these two types of devices brings forth an appreciation of continuity within the comic-book world that is delectable for the fanboy, as well as an appreciation of deeper themes that is important to the film critic and/or the non-comic reader. Yet these tensions are not limited to Whedon's *The Avengers*. Mark Waid and Alex Ross's 1996 superhero graphic novel *Kingdom Come* creates a world of similar tensions between spectacle/commercial appeal (sans CGI, of course) and deeper, humanistic and self-conscious themes. *Kingdom Come*'s thematic elements derive from the sense of tradition that has been embedded in superhero comics over time (similar to the fanboy's regard for continuity in *The Avengers*). While *The Avengers* successfully delineates this spectacle/insightful binary tension for 21st century moviegoers, *Kingdom Come* delineates this tension in graphic narrative form, keeps alive the sense of tradition that has permeated superhero comics for generations, and looks towards a future for superhero comics that will be both innovative and respectful of tradition – a future of superhero narratives that we now know, of course, through films like *The Avengers*. Audiences of superhero narratives can thus understand each piece through the other, and I aim to show how an understanding of *Kingdom Come* can elucidate a better understanding of *The Avengers*, and vice-versa. At least within the realm of popular culture, superheroes are very culturally relevant, and the box-office boom that was *The Avengers* highlights the cultural relevance of superheroes. With an understanding of *Kingdom Come*, we can better understand the cultural significance of superheroes exemplified by *The Avengers*, and a consideration of a

contemporary superhero narrative like *The Avengers* can better inform our understanding of a 1990s superhero novel like *Kingdom Come*.

Kingdom Come is set in the near future. The once-classic DC superheroes Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, and the ensemble Justice League have been shadowed by a proliferating amoral and destructive generation of younger "superheroes." The reckless tendencies of the new generation of superheroes, who are now called "metahumans" – a term that implicitly denies any "heroic" qualities – orient humanity towards impending doom. It is up to the classic and now aging DC superheroes to come out of retirement to chastise the younger generation of metahumans in the hope of preserving humanity or, in the novel's terms, "human achievement" (Waid and Ross 17), indicating the contemporary generation's absence of restraint and lack of consideration for humans. When the metahumans continue their reckless ways despite the Justice League's admonitions, the Justice League impound the delinquent metahumans in a gulag to temporarily halt the incessant destruction of humanity. The final judgment comes, however, in the cataclysmic war between the Justice League and the metahumans at the destroyed gulag. When a bomb dropped by the United Nations jeopardizes the fates of both the super-humans and humanity, Captain Marvel – the "world's mightiest mortal" and the perfect compromise between the human and super-human worlds – sacrifices himself to the incoming bombs (dropped by Dick Grayson), killing himself and countless metahumans and superheroes, to preserve humanity. World order is restored; Captain Marvel, whose cape is flown alongside the flags at the United Nations, is revered as a martyr for humanity; and superheroes no longer rule "above" humans, but live "among" them, "earning" human trust in the process (Waid and Ross 195). The story, despite its constant apocalyptic visions and explicit references to the *Book of Revelations*, ends on a happy note, and looks towards a future that can once again embrace the tradition of superheroes as "super" Samaritans and citizens.

In *How to Read Superhero Comics and Why*, Geoff Klock recognizes the tradition of the superhero comic delineated in *Kingdom Come*, and places the 1996 novel in chronological relation to 1987's *The Dark Night Returns* by Frank Miller and *Watchmen*

by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. Klock writes that these two pieces are "instances of a kind of literature" that he identifies "as the revisionary superhero narrative" (Klock 25). Klock defines the "revisionary superhero narrative" as the "birth of self-consciousness in the superhero narrative" and the "culmination of the silver age [of comics]" and that these two novels are the first instances in which the "superhero narrative becomes literature" (Klock 3). These two works serve as turning points within the medium of comics. *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen* transformed the traditional superhero narrative – that is, the popular American superhero comics of the "golden" and "silver" ages of comics that came before *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen* – into deeper, literary fiction by utilizing the medium's historical conventions to compose works in which the "building of tradition becomes anxiety" (Klock 3). Klock argues that *Kingdom Come* focuses on the contemporary state of the superhero comic (contemporary state for *Kingdom Come* being 1996) through an examination of the genre's tradition in conjunction with the fallout of non-traditional superhero comics spurred by Miller's and Moore's comics. Yet, realizing that *Kingdom Come* was written close to twenty years ago, I argue that today the novel can serve as a bridge for the tradition on which superhero comics were created, and what the future would hold for superhero narratives that we now know in the form of the 21st century superhero movie. Therefore, *Kingdom Come* is pertinent today in how we as a culture accept and confront a (possible) world of superheroes in terms of our desire for both spectacle/commercial entertainment and for deeper human sensitivity. *Kingdom Come* has the aesthetics of a full-packed action narrative – the novel arguably has the ultimate superhero-on-superhero battle in comics history – and yet, just like the deeper themes/meanings in Agent Coulson's death and the man-versus-monster self-conscious drama of Bruce Banner versus the Hulk in *The Avengers*, *Kingdom Come* draws readers in through its precision in creating and exploring deep and truly human themes. Its pertinence lies in respect for audiences' enjoyment of action and intellectual and affective stimulation.

The pertinence of *Kingdom Come* in terms of its relation to culture's interaction with superheroes is displayed through a set of binaries that are implicit to the world of the

novel. We enter a world of irony, in which superheroes exist, yet can still be considered a commercially successful fantasy (similar to Captain America's WWII commercial celebrity in 2011's film *Captain America: The First Avenger*). We are acquainted with the embodiment of the commercial and material side of the superhero comic in "Planet Krypton" – the superfluous superhero "wax-museum-with-a-pulse" restaurant. Conversely, we are also introduced to the human Norman McCay, who acts as the reader's guide and eyes in the story. McCay is the only non-superhero human that readers are introduced to, and he is the only one to have direct access to the inner conflict between the worlds of the traditional superheroes and the metahumans. McCay seems particularly detached from the commerciality (and possibly the American-oriented nationalism) that a place like Planet Krypton seems to embody, and is instead at the center of the consequential effects of superheroes in real life. While we experience the commoditization of superhero popularity in Planet Krypton, Norman McCay allows the reader to share in the veridical consequences of superheroes existing in real life, creating a polarization of humans' interactions with superheroes/metahumans in *Kingdom Come*.

Planet Krypton creates the commercial superhero fantasy experience for humans in *Kingdom Come*. While it may not have as much comedic spectacle as the Hulk sweeping the floor with Loki in *The Avengers*, the idea of mass commercial appeal is the same – humans are entertained by the spectacle, action-based and commercial appeal of superheroes. Viewers of films like *The Avengers* are invited to suspend their sense of real, tangible aesthetic and enter a vastly commercial digitalized superhero world. In Planet Krypton, people are invited to an entertaining eating experience: an indoor "wax park" of human restaurant staff sauntering around waiting tables and hosting, garbed in traditional superhero uniforms, with old cartoons blaring on large television screens and iconic comic-book covers as menu designs. Furthermore, when reading Clark Kent's (Superman) and Diana Prince's (Wonder Woman) exchange as customers of Planet Krypton at the end of the novel:

> SUPERMAN. You don't find any of this upsetting...
> WONDER WOMAN. It's not a church, Clark. It's a restaurant. Relax. (Waid and Ross 205)

Readers are hinted to that superheroes are becoming apotheosized figures through their commercial dominance. Being in Planet Krypton is also a chance to experience the aesthetic talent of illustrator Alex Ross. The art of *Kingdom Come* looks like American realism straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting – the characters and the world are depicted with physical verisimilitude. Yet when taken inside Planet Krypton, we are deluged with a contrast between the realistic art inherent to the world of the novel, and the 1930s/60s/70s cartoonishness of the memorabilia that coats the restaurant's walls and even the insides of menus (Waid and Ross 206). This contrast between traditional cartoonish superhero images and realistic, multi-dimensional illustrations – even within the same panel, such as page 207's realistic clinking of glasses, with a classic picture of a 1940s Captain Marvel on the glass — highlights Ross's ability as an illustrator, but also establishes an important way that humans interact with superheroes (through images built by tradition and the tradition of celebrity/commercial appeal). Even though a cynical Bruce Wayne refers to the interior of Planet Krypton as being "amidst all this tawdry bric-a-brac" (Waid and Ross 206), an experience such as visiting the Planet Krypton (as tacky as it might be) is not too different from experiencing superhero movies of the 21st century. With both, we humans are able to escape the confines of what we know as real and interact with a fantasy that is born from tradition and mass commercial appeal. In *Kingdom Come*, Planet Krypton is exemplar of superheroes' ability for commercialism and humans' source of escapism, and we see this paralleled today with films like *The Avengers*.

Whereas Planet Krypton addresses man's capacity for superhero commercial inundation, the character of Norman McCay brings to light an alternative way of seeing superheroes, which is based less in the iconographic spectacle of Planet Krypton and more on the consequential and self-conscious realities that take place when regarding superheroes. McCay is the voice and guide for the novel, and narrates early in the novel

the history of superheroes and the problem of metahumans. Consider McCay's narration at the novel's start, stretching from pages 17 to 24:

> [The Sandman] mocked their worth, these newcomers [the metahumans]… and spoke instead of legends gone. Of costumed champions who had, in his day, inspired human achievement… not belittled it… According to the word of God, the meek would someday inherit the earth… But God never accounted for the mighty [i.e., the superheroes or metahumans]… They [the metahumans] no longer fight for the right. They fight simply to fight, their only foes each other… I tell myself that this, too, shall pass…that humans still have a chance to reclaim a world rightfully theirs while it still exists.

McCay speaks of a superhero world where it is now not uncommon to see graphic fights between Batman and Superman (mastered in Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*), and where reckless conflicts between metahumans harm humans (such as the unreasonable cable car fight scene on pages 50 through 54). After McCay envisions presaging Armageddon, he is linked with DC's Hand of God character, Spectre. As a godly anchor, McCay is chosen to act as judge to punish the evil (the humans or the superheroes/metahumans) to prevent a forthcoming apocalypse. McCay serves a crucial role when examining *Kingdom Come*, for he acts as a consequential anchor for man and his relation to superheroes. McCay is less concerned by the material kitsch that superheroes have come to embody and is more focused on superheroes' consequences in the real world – how they come to affect our lives, the damage they can do, and the lives they can save. McCay brings a sense of self-consciousness to the superhero genre that we are not strangers to today. Consider some of Norman McCay's final lines to Superman and some of Superman's final lines at the end of *Kingdom Come*, respectively:

NORMAN. Listen to me, Clark. Of all the things you can do… all your powers… the greatest has always been your instinctive knowledge… of right and wrong. It was a gift of your own humanity. You never had to question your choices. In any situation… any crisis… you knew what to do. But the minute you made the Super more important than the Man… the day you decided to turn your back on Mankind… that completely cost you your instinct. That took your judgment away. (Waid and Ross 193)

SUPERMAN. As we [the Superheroes] saw ourselves. And we were both wrong. But I no longer care about the mistakes of yesterday. I care about coping with tomorrow… together. The problems we face still exist, we're not going to solve them for you [the humans]… we're going to solve them with you… not by ruling above you… but by living among you. We will no longer impose our power on humanity. We will earn your trust… in the hope that your world and our world could be one world once again. (Waid and Ross 195-196)

These two passages offer an instance of how McCay acts as a self-conscious lens on the purpose of superheroes and on the genre of superhero comics. Let us compare these lines with Sergeant Nick Fury's final lines to Agent Maria Hill at the end of *The Avengers*:

AGENT MARIA HILL. Sir, how does it work now? They've gone their separate ways, some pretty extremely far. We get into a situation like this again, what happens then?
NICK FURY. They'll come back.
AGENT MARIA HILL. Are you really sure about that?
NICK FURY. I am.
AGENT MARIA HILL. Why?
NICK FURY. Because we'll need them to.

When these lines from *Kingdom Come* and *The Avengers* are compared, it becomes clear that self-consciousness in the genre of superhero narratives is nothing old, or nothing new, depending on how you look at it. Norman McCay defines to Superman his signature quality that truly enables him to be a superhero. Similarly, Superman explicates to humans

(who readers may or may not want to see as contemporary superhero comics readers) how superheroes exist in relation to humans, and that he looks towards a better future, where man and superheroes will work with each other towards a common good. Sergeant Fury's discourse with Agent Hill openly predicts that the Avengers will be needed again because of mankind's need for them. These three passages state the self-awareness of superheroes within the superhero world/narrative. All three passages directly indicate how superheroes will exist with each other: for the characters of *Kingdom Come*, it is co-dependence and co-operation; for the people in *The Avengers*, it is man's inability to protect itself from evil/destruction. Sergeant Fury may even parallel McCay as the main human who has access and influence on superheroes. Sergeant Fury is the organizer and disciplinarian of the Avengers, and McCay is the arbiter on the fate of superheroes/metahumans. Both humans have direct access to superheroes, and through doing so, both see the consequentialist aspects of superheroes – morality, destruction, and elixirs for evil – and can serve as the tropes of self-consciousness and deeper themes for both narratives.

Planet Krypton and Norman McCay serve different functions for *Kingdom Come*, and express separate sentiments on the superhero narrative. While Planet Krypton embodies a tradition of superhero comics based on the hackneyed, fantastical, and material/commercial nature of the genre, the character of Norman McCay is a lens into the self-conscious, consequential, and moralistic themes behind superhero narratives. What *Kingdom Come* does with these tensions is nothing out of the ordinary and is still seen today in superhero narratives, most popularly, Joss Whedon's film *The Avengers*. However, *Kingdom Come* is set apart from narratives like *The Avengers* because when seen from a chronological standpoint, the novel responds to the state of other superhero comics at its time.

Isaac Cates, in "On the Literary Use of Superheroes; or, Batman and Superman Fistfight in Heaven," claims that *Kingdom Come*'s metahumans could have developed from the "frustration with the genre tics that writers of the Image generation [the 1990s] (Todd MacFarlane and Rob Liefeld, for example) absorbed from Moore and Miller in the 1980s," and therefore the novel is "an attempt to re-assert the pre-*Dark Knight* heroes of

Super Friends as forbears in a lineage of literary influence" (Cates 846-847). While Cates explicitly addresses the progeny and parental intervention involved with *Kingdom Comes*, whereas Klock does not, the novel's plot nonetheless confronts the issue of a new and challengingly ebullient generation of superhumans that can only be "controlled" through the intervention of tradition. For my purposes, I will consider Klock's argument with respect to the "revisionary superhero narrative" more than Cates's claims on the parental aspect of *Kingdom Come*; however, I greatly appreciate Cates's explicit mention of 1990s Image Comics serving as the "fallout" of *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight Returns* that *Kingdom Come* seems to address.

Readers of *Kingdom Come* get a feel for the "fallout" that *Kingdom Come* attempts to respond to in the character Magog. Magog, a non-traditional superhero, was responsible for the nuclear devastation of the Midwest, when a reckless battle led by him resulted in the superhero the Atom being split, with a resulting nuclear holocaust of the Midwest region. Magog recounts his story to Superman, enumerating that at one point Superman was the central figure in the world of superheroes. However, as times changed and violence became increasingly tolerable, Superman did not adapt to the times and instead maintained the tradition of superhero stature within the realm of law and order. When Magog recounts his killing of the arch-villain Joker to Superman, he sets forth the argument that superheroes in the new times require violence to go about their business, and how humans first accepted the violent responses to villains (humans being metaphorical of the comic readership in the post-Miller/Moore age). Magog tells Superman:

> Joker'd been deserving worse than 'cuffs for years. So I took it on myself to lay him down… I was a hero… You [Superman] were afraid… that I was the Man of Tomorrow. You were afraid of the future I represented… The world changed… but you wouldn't. So they [the humans] chose me. They chose the man who would kill over the man who wouldn't… and now they're dead. (Waid and Ross 97-100)

For Klock, Magog is representative of superhero morale after *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*, and the destruction of Kansas (the birthplace of the traditional superhero

comic being the childhood home of Superman) is allegorical of the state of the superhero comic in the post-Miller/Moore era. Whereas Miller and Moore revised the tradition of the superhero narrative to create works of literature, the superhero writers to come after sought only the violence and the "break with tradition" that Miller and Moore initiated and perfected. *Kingdom Come* hopes to mollify the drastic response to the revisionary superhero narrative by reminding readers and writers of comics in the post-Miller/Moore era of the tradition that enabled the revisionary superhero narrative to occur in the first place. Its futuristic setting and conflict become metaphors for the "infertile" superhero narrative. By the novel's end, Superman (an emblem for traditional superhero comics) tells the humans that in fact they are no different and that superheroes will live among humans, earning their trust. With this conclusion, *Kingdom Come* brings life back to Kansas and to the tradition the region was evocative of in order to generate a brighter future for the superhero narrative: a future that does not forget the tradition from whence it originated.

Geoff Klock's argument on *Kingdom Come* is derived from the influence of *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*. This shows the multiplicity of arguments around *Kingdom Come*. When the narrative is considered, one can pose an argument on the theological and Nietzschean aspects and themes of the novel: the idea of power and an examination of the split between humans and superhumans (who have been deified). However, when going beyond the ostensible narrative and its themes, and looking at the work from a more symbolic vantage point, one can argue that *Kingdom Come* is a comment and critique on the new superhero narrative that uses the future of traditional superheroes as the vessel for expressing its message. Yet even within the novel's realm of being a critique on comics, there are several arguments as to how this is achieved. When first considering the novel as a critique, I only saw it in relation to the commercial growth of the corporate superhero comic starting in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s: the 1980s-90s Batman franchise, action figures, lunch boxes, pajamas, animated series, etc. I argue that *Kingdom Come* responds to the commoditized state of superhero comics: what was once a story has now become a product and an icon without much depth – the

superhero image becomes an iconographic vessel of making money and ignoring the deeper themes that make superhero narratives like *Kingdom Come* and *The Avengers* so clever and enjoyable. Furthermore, superhero comics – which were once based in tradition – became more based in banal violence during the "Image generation," as Cates would claim. *Kingdom Come* is the need to purge the new amoral superheroes (the contemporary corporate management of superhero comics, as well as the "reckless" comic artists who are not based in tradition) from the genre, to make room for creativity, originality, character-building, and actual stories in the superhero genre. Geoff Klock makes a similar case that *Kingdom Come* is a critique on contemporary superhero comics, yet he holds a different argument. Instead, Klock uses the term "revisionary superhero narrative" to indicate the type of superhero narrative that came about with the publications of *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*. Klock sets up the argument that both pieces were turning points in the medium of comics, and because their influence was so great and their substance was so hard to top, the superhero narrative "after these works had no direction" (96). *Kingdom Come*, for Klock, is superhero comics' means of reestablishing its sense of direction – within the narrative – by firmly cementing the role that traditional superheroes played in even allowing the birth of the revisionary superhero narrative to take place, and to move "the revisionary superhero narrative forward to the new age" (Klock 97). Even though Klock's argument narrows the novel's critique to the precise chronological moments of the publications of Miller's and Moore's novels and the superhero comics to come after, *Kingdom Come* remains a vital critique on comics that addresses issues such as over-commoditization and needless violence as "narrative."

Geoff Klock's critique on *Kingdom Come* relies on the publication of *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight Returns* to be compelling and original. However, regarding and critiquing the novel is not limited to a reliance on these two preceding novels. Rather, *Kingdom Come*, having been published close to twenty years ago, is now the tradition as opposed to a narrative responding to tradition. With a contemporary film like *The Avengers*, audiences are invited to engage in grand and stunning displays of action spectacle and self-conscious thematic elements, which in many ways parallel the superhero action

and the deeper themes in *Kingdom* Come. The final fight scenes in both narratives, for example, are suspenseful and catastrophic – or as Travers wrote, "brings the battle intensity up to 11" – and emphasize the importance and mass cultural appeal to action and destructive spectacle in superhero narratives. Similarly, Agent Coulson's death and Bruce Banner's classic line regarding his secret to becoming the Hulk ("That's my secret, Captain; I'm always angry") show the more genuine and self-conscious themes that allows *The Avengers* to find and supremely actualize a balance between commercial spectacle and deeper meaning. With respect to *Kingdom Come*, readers see this same tension between commercialism and insightful meaning in the forms of Planet Krypton and Norman McCay, respectively. While the two narratives are sixteen years apart, these tensions are still salient in both pieces and enable the reciprocity of understanding for the two works – they each reciprocate a better understanding of the other. Through understanding the salience of these tensions in *Kingdom Come*, we as a 21st century audience can appreciate the self-conscious wit inherent to superhero narratives like *The Avengers*. Similarly, by understanding these same tensions in *The Avengers*, we realize that deeper and self-conscious themes in superhero narratives is nothing old, and we realize that works like *Kingdom Come* are now tradition; works like this are the work that inspires the mass cultural enjoyment of the smart and action-packed superhero narratives of today. As we are now in an age where narratives hit the big screen that we would never have imagined to hit the big screen, we can see that it was a tradition and history of comics that inspired *Kingdom Come*; and now it is works like *Kingdom Come*, with its balance of commercial appeal and deeper meaning, that serve as tradition, as models for the superhero narratives of the future, narratives that can now hit the big screen and can still awe-inspire audiences with a successful balance of these two tensions. From this, it is safe to argue the reality of the moral of *Kingdom Come*: tradition inspires the future.

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Re:Search

The Social Worker, the Consumer, and the Prostitute: Escape from Domestic Ideology in the Victorian and Neo-Victorian Novel

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ABSTRACT

I have found that Victorian domestic ideology, as defined by literary scholar Catherine Hall, is often subverted by female characters within novels from the Victorian era. Specifically, I have examined feminine mobility as exemplified by Margaret Hale, of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, and the female consumers of Émile Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise*. These fictional women and the ways in which they interact with their urban surroundings appear to be at odds with Sugar, the protagonist of Michel Faber's 2002 Neo-Victorian novel, *The Crimson Petal and the White*. I have categorized these female characters into three archetypes: the social worker, the consumer, and the prostitute: each contains a way in which the woman can penetrate the public sphere. This work consults critical dialogues in the areas of gender and class in the Victorian era, as well as scholarly work investigating the implications of adaptation in the era of postmodernism in order to explore the consequences of gendered space in each novel. Through this examination, I develop the argument that while the women in these Victorian and neo-Victorian novels appear solely to prove the porosity of the barrier between public and private, I hold that they actually sustain a vital ideal of the bourgeoisie: constant aspirations toward upward mobility. With this argument, I hope to broaden the original historical discussion with a perspective founded in the intersections between class and gender.

KEYWORDS

capitalism, gender, neo-Victorian fiction, space, Victorian fiction

In Victorian novels such as Émile Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, the effects of masculine urban space on the actions of the female characters is apparent. Additionally, the notion of domestic ideology, or the essentialist idea that a woman's place is in the home, pervades these novels, as well as most literature in this genre. However, the assumption that there is a hard and fast line between the private and public spheres deserves deeper exploration. In the novels discussed, the main female characters represent fantasies of feminine mobility in Victorian England. While it may seem that they are bound by domestic ideology, they actually subvert it by using traditionally feminine activities to penetrate the public sphere. Additionally, the method of ideological subversion changes in synchrony with the movement from Victorian works to the 2002 neo-Victorian novel *The Crimson Petal and the White*, by Michel Faber; where the original Victorian works follow the movements of the respectable bourgeois woman into the public sphere, *Crimson Petal* instead follows the journey of a prostitute from the streets into the homes of the elite. These examples of escape clauses in domestic ideology and how they allow women to move freely in public spaces will be studied in three archetypes: the social worker, the consumer, and the prostitute.

For the sake of clarity, I concur with the definition of domestic ideology developed by Catherine Hall in her essay "The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology," from her 1992 book *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*. Hall posits in this essay that the image of women as domestic beings was brought about by the rise of capitalism. Hall states that the class definition of the bourgeoisie was "built not only at the level of the political and the economic…but also at the level of culture and ideology" (75). She cites examples of this feminized standard, including the "angel in the house," referring to the ideal woman created in Coventry Patmore's poem of the same name. Hall argues that central to "those new ideas was an emphasis of women as domestic beings, as primarily wives and mothers" (75). I concur that the formation of domestic ideology within this context is deeply rooted in the class anxiety experienced by the new bourgeoisie. I will also conflate the terms "domestic ideology" and "separate spheres," as they represented the same ideas during this era.

THE SOCIAL WORKER

The first archetype through which a female character subverts domestic ideology in order to move freely through public space is by acting as a caretaker, or social worker. This archetype is exemplified through Elizabeth Gaskell's character Margaret Hale, from the 1855 novel *North and South*. Margaret, a respected bourgeois woman, moves through the streets and workhouses of Milton through her actions as a social worker. She acts as social worker by seeking better working conditions in the factories, as well as attempting to protect her Mr. Thornton, a mill owner to which she is unconsciously attracted. The existence of characters such as this in the Victorian canon proves the porosity of the previously held strictures of domestic ideology. For example, Margaret Hale attempts to protect her love interest, Mr. Thornton, by shielding him from the worker's strike occurring below the railing on which they stand. This position of guardianship is one deeply entrenched within descriptions and illustrations of the feminine ideal. In John Ruskin's 1865 essay *Of Queen's Gardens*, the author assigns to women the trait of comfort, in that a woman can keep home "always round her." Similarly, women are described as "enduringly, incorruptibly good" and "wise", with "passionate gentleness" and "modesty of service" (Ruskin n.p.). Ruskin seems to be drawing upon classic representations of a noblewoman; additionally, this Ruskinian ideal encompasses the necessary attributes of a social worker. This classic hearkening draws an unconscious parallel between his contemporary social workers, the epitome of women of "service," and the noblewomen of centuries past.

While the role of caretaker seems limiting in regards to the spaces it allows women to move through, it actually opens up access to the less favorable neighborhoods. Margaret is often seen at Mr. Thornton's factories, acting under the guise of protecting its workers from occupational hazards and dangerous working conditions. During a climactic scene in *North and South*, Margaret steps between Mr. Thornton and the rioting crowds, attempting to assert her ubiquitous feminine righteousness to still the crowds and stop the strike. She refuses to leave Mr. Thornton, though "if she had thought her sex would be a protection,—, if with shrinking eyes she had turned away from the terrible anger of these

men, in any hope that ere she looked again they would have paused and reflected, and slunk away, and vanished, she was wrong" (Gaskell 177). She is struck by a rock thrown by the rioters, and faints. This failure of her feminine charm to bring reason and composure to angry men is interesting in regards to her surroundings. Unlike the other novels, Margaret is living within an industrial town, with arguably fewer class and gender preconceptions than the urban settings of the other novels. The feminine archetype of caretaker, then, holds less power outside of the world of the urban center than it does within. This failure of domestic ideology to save a woman from bodily harm supports the idea that domestic ideology itself cannot extend as far as many critics have given it credit for. The movements of this woman through public space are punished corporally, proving that her feminine charms are not enough to sway rough male workers.

In an article about the differences between housekeeping and social obligations as relating to Victorian women, Pamela Corpron Parker outlines the difference between what gentleman Henry Lennox calls "ladies' business" (42) and "woman's work" (247). That is, the difference between Ruskinian fantasies of order and comfort and the woman's work of social rescue. Margaret often visits the home of Bessy Higgins, a young woman whose lungs have been ruined due to factory work. Margaret's interventions in the Higgins household, while philanthropic in nature, are sometimes less than sentimental due to their overtones of condescension (Parker 328). However, Margaret's actions at the mill strike feel less like condescension and more like impulsiveness and romantic dramatization.

Margaret's actions, both at the mill and in the Higgins home, seem to both subvert and uphold the sentiment of domestic ideology. In order to dissect this complex issue, it may be valuable to introduce some background knowledge in regards to the scholarly dialogue surrounding domestic ideology. Domestic ideology, as discussed here, emerged as a distinct entity during the Industrial Revolution, congruent to the sentiments expressed by Mary Wollstonecraft and others like her. According to Randi Warne:

> The 19th century was marked not only by the 'science/religion' debate occasioned by Darwinian thought and its consequences, but also by two corresponding social developments, the demarcation of human community into 'public' and 'private' spheres with the rise of the industrial state, and the ideological gendering of those arenas in the prescriptive doctrine of 'separate spheres.' (255)

The industrial nature of the public sphere insures its masculinity; it was created by middle class men—though lower class women did work there—just as the domestic sphere was a place for a woman to thrive. This is another indication that the question of class in regards to urban female mobility should not be ignored.

Much of the prevalent literature discussing domestic ideology in Victorian novels has relied on and perpetuated historical biases and projection of the present upon the past. This blurs the actualities of the position of women in society. John Ruskin described the ideal woman in terms of the home: "wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her" (n.p.). Elizabeth Langland claims not only that women are bound to the home by domestic ideology, but also that they propagate that same dogma by their treatment of their daughters and female servants (291). She counters the previously held critical view of "women as victims passively suffering under patriarchal social structures; it equally subverts the idea that they were heroines supporting unproblematic values in dealing with issues of gender and class" (291). She also explains that etiquette manuals written for women were used to "consolidate a public image within the middle classes… they helped construct an identity for a group that might otherwise seem bound together only by Carlyle's 'cash nexus'" (293). While it is true that for the most part, middle class women were in charge of making their household as welcoming and pleasing as possible, I contend that the women were neither victims nor heroines; they were simply a part of a tumultuous middle class, affected by the rise of capitalism and the changes imposed upon class structure during this period. Margaret Hale exemplifies this bourgeois anxiety; during her public forays, she often worries about the image she presents to the world, especially in regards to her class.

Amanda Vickery succinctly summed up the use of domestic ideology as an archetypal structuring of middle class women's place in Victorian society. She states that the "foundation of the separate spheres framework was established through a particular reading of didactic and complaint literature, ensuring primary research was rarely designed to test the reliability or significance of this sort of evidence" (385). However, her argument does not question the validity of domestic ideology, but rather its formation and the discourse surrounding its study. Many scholars seem to conflate the establishment of the separate spheres phenomenon with the industrialization of England: "change in the history of middle-class women rests on a tale of female marginalization resulting from early modern capitalism" in most literature (401). Rather than presenting domestic ideology as an inevitable result of the introduction of exploitative capitalism in England, I believe that it is more productive to examine the consequences of capitalism upon the middle class, which experienced great turmoil during this time.

While it seems that capitalism itself prevented bourgeois women from working outside of the home, it is actually possible that these bourgeois women seem to have inflicted this restriction upon themselves, possibly due to the anxiety of being associated with a lower class. Since this barrier between the domestic sphere and the city streets is self-created, it can be more easily breached. This is especially true of penetrative methods considered traditionally feminine, such as shopping and charity work. The anxiety of being confused with a lower class woman is diminished while engaging in these behaviors, as lower class women were not given to such activities. This view gives more agency to the middle class woman as an individual. While there were certainly outside forces acting upon these women, creating anxieties and structures of propriety to adhere to, these women were also self-aware beings, wishing to create a solid middle class identity for themselves and their families.

Margaret's delicate class position, combined with the visibility created during her scene at the riot, creates through her actions a Victorian representation of Lady Godiva. Legend has it that Lady Godiva "rode through the streets not only unarmed but naked" (Mermin 16) for the good of her poor constituents. This overexposure creates vulnerability

not only in regards to Lady Godiva's bodily safety, but also to her sense of propriety and reputation. Placing Margaret in dialogue with this myth brings forth similarities between their public performances. Margaret feels shame after her exploit: "I, who hate scenes—I, who have despised people for showing emotion—who have thought them wanting in self-control—I went down and must needs throw myself into the melee, like a romantic fool!" She worries about how low she has fallen due to her defense of a man "as if he were a helpless child" (Gaskell 186). This exposure of woman as social worker—or caretaker—is a double-edged sword, then, and founders in uncouth towns such as Milton. Her shame is not at the response of the crowds, nor even at her failure to tame the riot, but at her own actions, which fall far out of line with what was acceptable of women in public at that time. I believe that her response to her own actions shows the influences of class anxiety on women moving through public space.

THE CONSUMER

Margaret Hale also exercises her freedom to explore public space through the pretext of purchasing items to improve her new home. While out on her own in the streets of Milton, Margaret sees the city crowds for the first time. Her response is not one of alarm, but of wonder. She assumes the role of the spectator, carefree, yet still interacting with the townspeople, who would "comment on her dress, even touch her shawl or gown to ascertain the exact material" (Gaskell 72). There is a reliance upon the "womanly sympathy" that can unite two women in their "love of dress" (72), which allows Margaret to continue on her way without fear of disgrace. This shared love of fabrics and fashion stands at odds with Nord's readings of the public space; perhaps, it seems, there is a difference between the fashionable streets of London and those of industrial towns to the North.

The love of fashion creates a distinct sensuality allocated to the shopping space, especially in Émile Zola's 1883 novel, *The Ladies' Paradise*. *The Ladies' Paradise* is set in Paris, a city often placed in dialogue with London. The differences in culture between London and Paris—namely, a looser set of morals and a lessened reliance on class position—allow for a specific type of sensual freedom for women, especially within the

Parisian department store. Descriptions of fabrics are sumptuous within the department store, with "satiny Peking fabrics as soft as the skin of a Chinese virgin" (Zola 252). Several descriptions are repeated throughout the novel, maintaining the feminine ambiance within the store. According to Elizabeth Carlson, stores and shopping centers were "understood to be a safe feminine space, where bourgeois women were encouraged to go without chaperones" (125). Both Margaret Hale and a barrage of Émile Zola's female characters flock to department stores in search of entertainment and fashion. The decidedly feminine atmosphere of the shopping center reduces the anxieties of solitary public appearance, allowing women to travel without chaperones.

In Walter Benjamin's 1935 essay "Paris: the capital of the nineteenth century," he relates the position of *flâneur* to that of the bourgeois consumer. The very idea of the *flâneur* is decidedly important in this world of chaperone-less perusing, shopping, and sensual consumption. *Flânerie* refers to "the practice of strolling idly in urban centers" (Shaheen 923). Shaheen goes on to explain that though the *flâneur* was generally considered a male figure, women were capable of such pastimes, as well. The *flâneur* was also a major performer of the male public gaze. Deborah Parsons asserts that the female *flâneur*, or *flâneuse*, gazes not upon men, but instead whose "gendered gaze became a key element of consumer address" (420). Benjamin considered consumption the ultimate goal of the *flâneur*, calling the department store "the *flâneur's* final coup" (Benjamin 85). This relationship between *flânerie* and consumption allows us to look at the uninhibited gaze of the shoppers in *The Ladies' Paradise* from an established critical standpoint.

According to Deborah Nord, the Victorian city can be thought of as a theater, "a society that regarded the metropolis as a stage on which to perform and witness its own civility, grandeur, and ebullience" (20). This theater attracted unwanted attention, creating necessary spectators out of all who wandered those urban streets. This evokes fear of the "male gaze", that voyeuristic act implying objectification and lust toward the viewed (Mulvey 442). The role of spectatorship forced upon the pedestrian lends a threatening air to urban space. This threatening atmosphere falls away within the doors of the department store, which was a space deliberately feminized so that a woman can safely lay her licentious gaze

upon the newest gloves, garters, and dresses. The very act of quoting prices of lace is enough to "arouse desires," working the consuming women into enough of a frenzy until the women begin "buying lace by the handful" (Zola 75). The safety of the department store is insured by its very conception and creation. Benjamin stated that the "crowd was the veil from behind which the familiar city as phantasmagoria beckoned to the *flâneur*. In it, the city was now landscape, now a room. And both of these went into the construction of the department store, which made use of *flânerie* itself in order to sell goods" (84). The decentralization inherent in crowds is what creates safety, as well as allure, drawing in the gaze through the carefully crafted veil.

Within the department store *Au Bonheur des Dames*, a woman may safely experience unabashed lust for consumption. This is perfectly exemplified by Mignot and Madame Desforges during the first sale at Octave Mouret's department store. Mignot and another salesman who works in the glove department are said to have a rivalry over pretending to flirt with the ladies who come in to buy gloves. Mignot has already sold Madame Desforges "a dozen pairs of kid gloves," as he woos her by leaning forward with "his pretty baby face, rolling his R's like a true Parisian, his voice full of tender inflections" (100). The two are surrounded by "flat, bright pink boxes." The overtones of genitalia present within the boxes adds to the sexual imagery of commerce within the department store. Mignot slides gloves on and off Madame Desforges' hands with a "long, practiced and sustained caress." The description of the smell of the gloves is somewhat carnal: "that animal smell with a touch of sweetened musk" (101). The sensuality of the buying process is unmistakable here; the department store encourages women to find their inner sexual beings within the building, and to let those beings run free. While still technically within a public space, women are allowed to express unchecked desire without the risk of being seen as improper or common due to their capitalistic diversions.

This sensuality of buying seems to more heavily influence female members of the middle class. While "mass retailing gave way to stores expressly directed at a lower-class clientele, the principal firms like the Bon Marché remained middle class institutions. The bourgeoisie more so than the working classes were the beneficiaries of the revolution in

marketing before the First World War" (Miller 165). In *The Ladies' Paradise*, Octave Mouret often thinks of ways to entice middle class women to spend all of their husband's money; his "sole passion was the conquest of Woman" (Zola 234). This admission has a double meaning, as he can conquer women through sex and through their husband's money. He manipulates every aspect of the store to tempt women to buy: "His tactics were to intoxicate her with amorous attentions, to trade on her desires, and to exploit her excitement" (234). One woman who is not in charge of the purse strings in the family, Madame de Boves, is so moved by Mouret's designs that she shoplifts from *Au Bon Marché.* Mouret's friend De Vallognosc reprimands him that he "shouldn't tempt poor, defenseless women like that" (265). The implication, however, is clear: women have less self control than men, and though losing control and buying more than one can afford is good, too much liberation is bad and should be shamed. The motivations for this extravagant spending are exemplary of the middle class obsession with status; these women want to dress themselves, their families, and their homes in the trendiest fashions in order to maintain (and possibly improve) their reputation.

THE PROSTITUTE

The Crimson Petal and the White complicates the historical argument established in regards to the Victorian novels. Through its position as a neo-Victorian novel, published in 2002, *Crimson Petal* both critiques the Victorian era and projects our contemporary views onto it. *Crimson Petal* can be looked at in contrast to the other novels not only because of its stance as a neo-Victorian novel, but also its position as a novel in which the narrator is a woman who is herself a prostitute. As a prostitute, Sugar is therefore supposedly free of the anxiety of being accused of impropriety. However, her status as fallen woman is different than most. She was raised in a brothel, and therefore never had anywhere farther to "fall." This difference becomes interesting in the scope of her rise from the streets into the home of William Rackham. While we have previously explored women of rank and reputation penetrating the public sphere through philanthropy and consumption, here we see Sugar rising from the proverbial gutters through what might be

simultaneously the most (degradingly) feminine and unladylike act: prostitution. She is entering a space not meant for women of her rank and profession, the middle class. While *The Crimson Petal and the White* seems to stand at odds with the Victorian novels studied, it actually upholds the bourgeois ideal of independent upward mobility, an undercurrent running through each work.

The stark distinction between public and private space is addressed clearly in *The Crimson Petal and the White*. Sugar often sits outside of the home of William Rackham, her customer, lover, and benefactor. The home is guarded by tall metal gates, within which live Rackham's wife, Agnes, and his daughter. Sugar infiltrates the safeguarded home through the guise of a governess. She is, however, still engaging in a sexual relationship with Rackham, which smoothes the transition considerably through the commerce of sexual transaction. However, her permeation is never completed. Clara, a maid at the Rackham house, suspects Sugar of her true history: "From the moment the woman set foot in the house, Clara could smell it on her: the stink of badness. This self-styled governess, with her highly suspect walk and her slut's mouth— where on earth did Rackham find her? The Rescue Society, maybe. One of Emmeline Fox's 'success stories'" (590). It seems that though Sugar can change her clothing and her demeanor, her inner sinfulness will never fully leave her. Cheesman, the Rackhams' driver, knows Sugar's true identity, and the circumstances surrounding her new role as governess; "to him, she'll always be William's whore, never Sophie's governess" (543). There is a sense of essentialism present in this novel. While a woman can change her appearance, she can never change what she is inside.

In placing *The Crimson Petal and the White* in dialogue with the Victorian novels, the Rescue Society quickly becomes is an interesting concept. Mrs. Fox, another example of the social worker archetype, "rescues" prostitutes from the streets and helps them find respectable work. This work seems damning in regards to reputation, since Mrs. Fox must interact with fallen women in the slums of London. During a discussion regarding Mrs. Fox's occupation, Bodley, a friend of William Rackham, ponders, "Can a woman who works with prostitutes be virtuous?" His friend Ashwell replies, "Surely the prime requisite,

hmm?" These men do not think less of Mrs. Fox due to her interactions with prostitutes. Rather, they consider her work, and call her "God's deputy in a bonnet" (152). Interestingly enough, the reader is never allowed to be present during Mrs. Fox's outings with the Rescue Society; the only mention of this work occurs during the discussions of others. Learning about Mrs. Fox's work through the frame of gossip seems to act as a distancing mechanism, as well as an agent to build interest in the interactions between Mrs. Fox and the prostitutes. This work also upholds the mammon of upward mobility; Mrs. Fox's Society represents the fantasy of pulling fallen women out of the lowest echelons, allowing them to become respectable, responsible, and productive members of the working class.

Sugar's movements in public, much like those of Mrs. Fox, are both liberated and self-contained; she moves freely through both her own low-class neighborhood and the nicer areas of London through her practiced bourgeois mannerisms. One scene involves Sugar watching William Rackham's family from the street directly outside of his gates; she follows William and Agnes as they go to dinner parties, a silent shadow keeping watch. She "walks the peripheries for a long as she can bear, growing colder and colder" (Faber 372). This image of Sugar as a dark shadow stands at odds with Agnes' name for her, "the woman in white," (311) and allows us to look at the implications of the light and dark imagery surrounding her. Sugar is a woman without morals, who curses God and sleeps with men for money. This combines with her *flâneuse*-like habit of wandering and gazing and places her firmly into the realm of shadows; she cannot be a creature of the light due to her immorality. However, Agnes, an angel in the house if there ever was one, sees Sugar at a distance, standing on the other side of the Rackham house's gates, and thinks that she is her guardian angel (311). Why would a woman who so firmly upholds all that is right and good and feminine in Victorian London want a whore as a guardian angel? Perhaps it is Agnes' furtive desire to escape, to ascend above the trappings of her marriage, home, and dependence upon her husband that causes her to place Sugar's ethereal, solitary figure in high esteem.

INTERSECTIONS OF CLASS, SPACE, AND GENDER

These three archetypes of female mobility stand alone as proof of the porosity of domestic ideology; however, the usefulness of these examples increases tenfold when we examine how the historic milieu of these novels may affect the mechanisms of mobility occurring within. The main limiting factor placed upon female mobility in urban spaces, such as London, is the preservation of propriety and reputation, especially among women of the bourgeoisie. This is due to the inherent instability of their class position, since this position was newly created by capitalist progression. Movements within public spaces such as London and Paris can be explored using Michel Foucault's theory of the Panopticon. Within a crowd, the urban spectator remains "anonymous and invisible, always an observing eye whose own presence is suppressed" (Nord 25). But while this seems to place the spectator in the central vantage point, and therefore possessing the power of inspection and analysis, Foucault himself stated that the Panopticon instead abolishes "a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect" (201). Each member of the crowd is simultaneously isolated and blurred, allowing one to view the city as a whole as a muted image. This idea of the panoramic view of the spectator can be applied to the *flâneur*. The *flâneur* may walk in public spaces, gazing upon the scene while simultaneously distancing himself from the people. While Susan Buck-Morss understood that the prostitute might be seen as the female equivalent of the *flâneur*, one may also see the *flâneuse* as a female shopper. Both the prostitute and the female consumer are able to gaze lustfully at the items they desire (be they textiles or the money in men's pockets). *Flânerie*, then, is one underlying force that allows feminine mobility through public space in these novels.

Certainly the women consumers in *The Ladies' Paradise* are lustful; however, this freedom to express lust might be equally or more available to the women of Paris through the historically open stance on sexuality in France. According to Sharon Marcus' *Apartment Stories*, which surveys the connections between space and society in Paris and London, Paris was more open sexually due, in part, to the construction of its homes. The image of Paris concurrent with the Victorian era is one of a city "of permeable apartment

buildings" (Marcus 3). This permeability creates a cohesive view of the urban space itself as the interior, rather than exterior. Perhaps this lack of a true, private interiority is the cause for the looser parameters regarding the repercussions of women's actions upon their reputations.

Nancy Armstrong's work *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* takes a Foucauldian stance on the position of the female character in the Victorian novel. She posits that "sexuality is a cultural construct," "written representations of the self allowed the modern individual to become and economic and psychological reality," and, most importantly, that "the modern individual was first and foremost a woman" (22). Using Foucault's view of discourse as power, it is not hard to see her argument; the strong focus on women and propriety in Victorian novels unintentionally places them at the center of the novelistic dialogue. However, her argument that fiction is used both "as the document and as the agency of cultural history" (23) stands at odds with the reading of Foucault's views on ideology, according to May (274). This work is vital to uncovering the use of women as a tool of discourse within novels, the echoes of which can be seen throughout the canon. Women are shown at home and in public, always restrained by propriety and societal expectation. In *The Ladies' Paradise*, a war of reputation occurs between the girls in two departments; one "spoke of their neighbours with the shocked air of respectable girls" regarding their transgressions, "and facts proved that they were right… Clara was taunted with her troop of lovers, even Marguerite had, so to say, had her child thrown in her face, whilst Madame Frederic was accused of all sorts of concealed passions" (122). One department store worker is fired for kissing a boy, proving the strictness of reputational defense. This is true of our two Victorian novels; however, the neo-Victorian position of Faber's novel complicates this interpretation.

The temporal differences between the two Victorian novels and *The Crimson Petal and the White* contribute to the differences in the navigation of space. In contrasting neo-Victorian writing with that of the Victorian period, it is relevant to examine the lens with which we are viewing and representing the past. One glaring historical bias present in *The Crimson Petal and the White* is that "the retrospective sexual liberation of the nineteenth

century becomes disturbingly infused with preferred ignorance—or deliberate denial—of our own culture's complicity in free market systems that enable continuing sexual exploitation and oppression" (Kohlke 2-3). This sexualization of the past seems to be a projection of unconscious present-day anxieties into historical fiction. As Kohlke sums up, "Coming to 'know' the secret sex-lives of the Victorians may thus become a means of 'un-knowing' our own" (3). While I agree with this reading, I would like to add that we may also project our own emotions regarding public and private spaces onto the past. Postmodern views of public space highlight the need to detach oneself from one's surroundings (Drzewiecka and Nakayama 21). This disorientation can clearly be seen, even from the opening lines, in *Crimson Petal*: "Watch your step. Keep your wits about you; you will need them. This city I am bringing you to is vast and intricate, and you have not been here before" (Faber 3). Fredric Jameson's critique of postmodernist representations of history merges perfectly with this progression of thought; it is problematic to approach history with "the random cannibalization of all the styles of the past" without impetus to find out what actually happened in that past (Jameson 18). *The Crimson Petal and the White's* position within the neo-Victorian genre must be analyzed in order to fully understand the development of the prostitute archetype within this frame. Postmodern adaptations of Victorian literature are inherently different from the original works, and should be treated as such.

The question of genre remains in contest, at least between the two original Victorian novels. *The Ladies' Paradise* features the subtitle "A Realistic Novel," whereas Gaskell's *North and South* is often categorized as an Industrial novel in the romantic vein. Life is idealized and made dramatic in Gaskell's Milton; the tale is driven by the plot, and it occasionally borders upon the ridiculous. On the other hand, *The Ladies' Paradise* is focused on character development, with plot taking a lesser role. This is important due to the differences in motivation to permeate the membrane separating public and private space. Margaret's motivation to protect the Higgins family and Mr. Thornton is supposedly due to her innate feminine goodness; however, this is clearly an idealized version of woman as social worker. By contrast, the women featured in *The Ladies' Paradise* act out of greed

and desire; while they are performing feminine actions, their motivations place them at odds with traditional feminine attitudes.

Throughout academic study of Victorian literature, domestic ideology and the limiting effects of gendered urban space have been conflated and taken for granted. Through deconstructing the fantasies of feminine mobility present in *The Ladies' Paradise*, *North and South*, and *The Crimson Petal and the White*, one can pinpoint exactly how various nuances of culture affected the ability to move within public space. By placing the loci of each example within the bounds of the three archetypes (social worker, consumer, and prostitute), it is easy to see the porosity of the boundaries between gendered public and private spaces. Similarly, by studying the three novels at odds with each other from a critical perspective, one may easily find the influences of time and culture upon the writing of these novels. While it may appear that *Crimson Petal* stands at odds with the two Victorian novels in both motivation of feminine mobility and historical influence, all three uphold one ultimate capitalist principle: upward mobility. The postmodern obsession with self-sufficiency is clearly instantiated in Sugar's constant struggle to rise beyond the slums and brothels, and is in complete agreement with the bourgeois ideals shown in the Victorian novels. Through studying the three novels contextually and in comparison with each other, the struggle of the bourgeois mentality to reconcile the need for upward mobility with the desire for morality and propriety becomes apparent. No matter the historical frame, it appears that the novel continues to exemplify the omnipresent power of capitalism. While female characters can escape the domestic private sphere, they cannot escape their predilection toward bourgeois ideals.

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Re:Search

Censorship's Distortion of Narrative and Marital Relationships in Japanese War Period Fiction

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to challenge the notion that most Japanese writers only wrote nationalist fiction during the Pacific War with America. I analyzed two short stories published shortly after the start of the Pacific War, "December 8th" by Dazai Osamu and "A Wife's Letters," by Uno Chiyo[i], with Gérard Genette's theory of narratology and voice as a frame. I establish that censorship perverts the traditional relationship between narrator and narratee, intradiegetic or extradiegetic, within the story and without the story. In each story, a housewife takes the role of author, one of her diary and the other of letters to her husband. Both of these cases should be examples of natural thoughts, uncensored, particularly a diary. However, both stories have censors, within and without the story. The presence of the censor changes how the story is told, and even the diegetic relationships within the story. The necessity of being over patriotic to appease censors causes a lack of connection between the husband and wife of "December 8th," in how they express their emotions. And in "A Wife's Letters," the war and censorship cause physical and emotional separation between husband and wife. In conclusion, these authors appease censors with nationalist prose, yet subvert censorship through author characters, thus revealing not only their true feelings about the war, but also on the effects of censorship on relationships and writing.

KEYWORDS

censorship, Dazai, Japanese literature, narrator and narratee, sentiment, separation, Uno, writing

What is the relationship between author and reader? It is not a simple distinction between the person who wrote the book and the person who reads the book, at least in the case of fiction. In between, there is at least one narrator, if not more, and there may possibly be at least one narratee in the way, as well as an implied reader. These narrators and narratees are intermediaries between the author and the reader through which the story is filtered. In his book *Narrative Discourse*, Gérard Genette writes about narrative voice and the relationship between both intradiegetic and extradiegetic narrators and narratees, with intradiegetic being a narrator and narratee within the story, and extradiegetic being those outside of the written story. In the simplest terms, a traditionally narrated story has relatively few levels of narration because the physical reader is the implied reader. However, an epistolary novel, for example, would have both readers and writers, and thus more narrative distance between the reader and the text. Likewise, diary fiction would have no intended audience, as it is written for one's self, and thus there would arguably be no narrative layers between the reader and the text. However, there is still the possibility for another layer between the reader—a censor. In this paper, I will question the role of the censor, and war censorship in particular, in two stories published in Japan during the Pacific War with America at three levels: censorship of the author, of the narrator (extradiegetic), and within the story (intradiegetic). Censorship distorts the traditional relationship between narrator and narratee in diary fiction and epistolary fiction, and furthermore, this distortion affects the intradiegetic, personal character relationships as well as the extradiegetic narrative relationships

Both of the stories "December 8th" and "A Wife's Letters," discuss the war but ultimately focus on the relationship between a woman and her husband, revealing the effects of censorship even in private forms such as letters and diaries. "December 8th," by Osamu Dazai, and "A Wife's Letters," by Chiyo Uno, both published in Japan in 1942. Both of these stories are written from a housewife's point of view, and both in a private form of writing: The wife of Dazai's story in a diary, and the wife of Uno's story in letters.[ii] "December 8th," by Dazai Osamu is the story of a housewife's reaction to Pacific War with America, which started with the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941. The

narrative is written as a diary, and the housewife writer wants to leave a record of the kind of day she had when the war started. "A Wife's Letters," by Uno Chiyo is a collection of letters by a wife to her husband on the front.

Thus, in "December 8th," there is no implied reader because it is a diary. In "A Wife's Letters," the intended reader is her dear husband on the front. It is valuable to read these works together because they both make the war very personal. "December 8th" translates the national experience of starting the war with America into the daily life of a housewife, and the letters of "A Wife's Letters" brings the battlefront home. Furthermore, in both of these stories there are not only extradiegetic censors, those outside the universe of the story, but censors within the story as well. Through focusing on the human relationships and the role of writing, both stories reflect what happens when a censor comes between the writer and the reader, and also how the censor affects the relationship between husband and wife.

Due to the government censorship enforced upon writers during the Pacific War, the traditionally held view is that literature of the period is not worth reading. However, I believe that the writers still found a way to artfully subvert censorship and tell a good story. Censorship in Japan did not start in 1941; Japan had been fighting a war in China since 1931, and there was censorship before then. But censorship tightened in 1937, and furthered even more in 1941. There are three factors that affect a work being published: The first is the kind of censorship, whether it is positive or negative. Writers were forced to both avoid criticizing the war (negative) and to celebrate the war (positive). It was important to comply with both positive and negative censorship if a writer wanted to be published, as Donald Keene writes in his treatise on war period Japanese literature (69). The second factor is the editing of a text, meaning that a work could be edited in part, with certain words, sentences, or even scenes deleted or completely banned. The third factor is who is enforcing the censorship, whether it is the government or the writer. The government and government censors could edit the work as previously mentioned, they could have a writer arrested to prevent them from writing, punish them for what they wrote, or they could send a writer to the front to write praise of the war effort. As a result, writers would censor

themselves in preparation for censorship, being careful of every word they wrote. If they expressed anything that could be read as resistance literature, the work would, at the very least, be edited or banned, and the writer could be arrested. By anti-war sentiments, or resistance literature, I mean anything against the emperor, the military, or the war itself, because any thoughts against war would ultimately be interpreted as criticism of the emperor as well. However, writers could not simply stop writing, for "they were under compulsion to express their feelings publicly in writing" (67). Therefore, they "had no choice but to compose works that demonstrated their patriotism and encouraged fellow Japanese to fight even harder" (68). Thus, much of the literature written during the war is largely unread because it is judged as too nationalistic. This view of war literature, however, rests on the questionable assumption that writers silently complied with censorship without using their creative talents to subvert government expectations. Jonathan Abel writes more positively of war literature in his book *Redacted.* He writes that Japanese writers "wrote not only through censorship but also about censorship, archiving its violence for contemporary readers and for historical memory" (3). Thus there were more possibilities than simply conforming and writing war praise, including writing through genre fiction. A writer could appease censors and yet still express their true feelings about the war even through censorship.

Based on postwar statements, Dazai and Uno's opinions of the war seem to be ambivalent, rather than clearly black and white, which creates the possibility of reading between the lines. During the war, Dazai published patriotic fiction that Donald Keene claims is now not worth reading. However, after the war, Dazai said, "During the war I thought that if, under the circumstances, Japan won the war, it would no longer be the land of the gods but of the devil. But I declared my confidence in a Japanese victory. I was on Japan's side" (1050). Further, Keene writes of Dazai's "December 8th," "This story has been cited by some critics to prove that Dazai acquiesced before the trend of the times, but by others has been included in collections of 'resistance literature'" (1050). For example, the housewife narrator praises the war, yet criticizes her husband's patriotism. Neither did Uno Chiyo seem to be an avid supporter of the war. Rebecca Copeland writes, "Uno, however,

denies having any interest in propaganda or in the war [...] Uno was not interested in the political battles that raged outside her world of passion" (58). And so in her story, we find a woman who focuses more on missing her husband and her daily life than praising the war. It seems that for both writers, they cared for the nation, if not the war. Uno was dedicated to helping women during the war, and although it may have been against his will, Dazai did write much during the war that pleased censors and survived the period. There can be no remaining fiction that openly opposed the war, so any of those thoughts would have been written creatively in order to deceive the censors. Thus, in scrutinizing the vocabulary and character relationships of their stories, although their thoughts on the war may be unclear, they reveal the negative influence of censorship upon readers, writers, and relationships.

Within these stories, there are three levels of censorship that affect the narrative: censorship of the actual text, of the narrator and her story, and within the story. Although Gérard Genette does not discuss censorship, he dissects various aspects of voice; from the narrating instance, to the time of narration, to role of the narrator, and more.[iii] He discusses the levels of narrative, the most common being first and second degree narratives. The act of writing a story is the first level, and the action within the story is second level (228). So in these stories, the housewife of "December 8th" is writing her story in the first degree of narration, but the events of the day are in the second degree. Likewise, the writing of the letters in "A Wife's Letters" happens in the first degree, but the content of her letters occurs in the second degree. Although both women are extradiegetic narrators, Genette argues that they do not necessarily view themselves as author-narrators: "A novel in the form of a diary does not in principle aim at any public or any reader, and it is the same with an epistolary novel, whether it include a single letter writer or several [...] the fictive authors of these diaries or [letters] obviously did not look on themselves as 'authors'" (Genette 230). However, in addition to the physical text of these stories being subject to censorship, the extradiegetic narrators are sensitive to censors, as is inherent in the form of "A Wife's Letters," because mail sent to soldiers would have been intercepted and edited, and the narrator of "December 8th" is conscious of her husband as a critic, even though it is a private diary. Although these texts are in personal forms of writing, these

narrators are forced to be conscious of themselves as writers because of the censor. The writers cannot freely express their thoughts and must keep the censor in mind. The censor, whether it be an outside censor or the writer themselves, therefore becomes both a reader and a writer standing between the narrator and the narratee, manipulating the text that comes between. The writer must be careful of every word written and every thought expressed, and the text cannot be an unconscious text, as Genette argues is the norm for epistolary and diary fiction.

As a result, the entire story becomes a narrative situation in which the act of writing has a role to play within the story, and the nature of censorship is revealed within the story as the characters deal with intradiegetic censorship. The wife of "December 8th" begins her diary entry "I must write my diary with special care today" (Dazai 660). She is not a casual diary writer, for she is consciously constructing the text, nor is she writing for her own personal sake, so that she may remember what happened on that day, but for the historical record: "I've got to leave some sort of record of how a housewife in an impoverished household spent the day: December 8, 1941" (660). Although it is a diary, she writes with a purpose and an audience in mind, and so the diary is transformed from a private text into a public one. She understands that the day the war starts with America is important, and that her position has a housewife grants her a unique perspective on the war. She recognizes that she has a duty in preserving a record. And so she must censor her work for a future audience, because she must faithfully represent history. And in "A Wife's Letters," writing is the only means of communication between husband and wife. She sends him many letters, three in his first week gone. In her letters, she frequently cannot find the right words to say to him: "Really, how can I explain myself?" (Uno 780). She receives one postcard from him, but after that, she has no communication from him. She receives a package without a message, and it devastates her. She searches through newspapers, searching for any sign of him or where he might be. It is only through the act of writing that she can connect to her husband. However, the censor stands between her and her husband, and not only must she edit her own thoughts, but the ones that come from her husband are

limited. The censor then becomes a barrier between not only the extradiegetic narrator and the reader, but between the characters of the story as well.

In Dazai Osamu's "December 8th," the narrator is conscious of censorship not only due to the public nature of her task, but also because her husband is also censored. The writer of the diary means for her journal to be used as a historical record sometime in history, even if it is one hundred years from now: "In a hundred years when they're doing a grand celebration for the 2700th anniversary of the founding of our nation, maybe this diary of mine will be discovered in a corner of a storehouse somewhere, and they'll know that this is what a Japanese housewife was doing on this special day a hundred years ago, and it will serve as a little historical reference" (Dazai 660). As a result, she cannot write freely as a woman might in her diary, for she must represent the nation well. Consequently, she censors herself, for she does not want to be judged later for what she has written now. And so her audience is a censor for whom she must be careful of what she writes. However, she does mean to write faithfully, and so in regards to the future audience the work is not censored so much in content as in style. Her husband is the second censor, for he is also a writer. "My husband always criticizes my writing," she says," whether it's a letter or my diary or anything else" (660). So although this is a diary and thus should be a private form without an intended reader, she knows that he will probably read it, and she must be conscious of how he will read and criticize her work. He takes the position as editor not simply because he is a writer, but because he too is being censored and edited as a professional writer. Perhaps as a stand-in for Dazai himself, he must praise the war effort, or at least not speak against the war. As mentioned above, writers could not stop writing, and therefore had to write works that praised the nation and avoided critique. This comes out in the husband's speech, over patriotic and strange. There may be a difference between the level of privacy in the work of each writer, the husband and the wife, but censorship still affects both of their writing. They must consciously write in a way that would be approved of, whether by the government or the intended, or even unintended, reader.

It follows, then, that both the wife and her husband express patriotic thoughts, and yet, there is a difference between what they say and how they express it due to the nature of

the different kinds of censorship imposed upon each. The wife is writing a journal, and so although she is concerned for how her husband will critique the work—and how the future reader will perceive it—this is different from her husband, who is worried about his public persona as writer. As a result, her writing is more muted, while his is exaggerated, if not strange. Throughout the piece, the wife shows her support of the war, including casual statements that could come straight out of propaganda. She exclaims, "Oh, how I'd like to really talk to someone about the war—well, we really did it, it's finally got going, stuff like that" (Dazai 663). Her response to the "Imperial edict declaring war" is that she runs home crying to tell her husband. And when more news reports come in about attacks on American bases, she trembles because she "wanted to give thanks for everyone" (665). She is in support of the war effort, and enthusiastically so. She cheers on the soldiers fighting at war, praising "dear, beautiful Japanese soil," threatening American soldiers not to touch foot on "our sacred soil" (663). She calls Japanese soldiers "pure" and American soldiers "cruel" and "beastly." She appropriately uses terms according to propaganda. She evens says "If you dare even set foot on our sacred soil, your feet will rot off, for sure" (663). She uses strong language, but this was the common language used in propaganda, and therefore would be expected of her. Her husband's patriotism, however, is a bit too enthusiastic. Once the war is announced, they both rejoice, yet her husband again says something strange: "Where is the western Pacific? San Francisco, huh?" (Dazai 662). His question may not sound strange to an American reader, but for an ultra-nationalistic Japanese person, Japan is the land of the rising sun, and the easternmost country. To be placed West of America is disrespectful, and so the most patriotic Japanese would have placed Japan as East and not West in relation to America. So the wife takes the opportunity to critique not only his thoughts, but his character as well. She expresses her doubt of his intelligence because of his lack of geographical knowledge. However, his misunderstanding is rooted in his patriotism. He says, "They call Japan 'the land of the rising sun,' and it's also called 'the Orient.'...Don't you think that there's some way to have Japan east and America west?" (662). He clearly understands where things are, but he believes in the principle that Japan is the origin of all things, and thus places on the map should be labeled

accordingly. She declares that his "patriotism somehow goes to the extremes," and that she is disgusted by him, ashamed of him (662). She demonstrates that she, too, is patriotic, but here she makes it clear that there is a proper way and an improper way to express it. She is sensibly writing things down, "right and proper," but he is sentimental, too sentimental, and this is all due to the different kinds of censorship they both face.

The present censorship compels the husband to be over emotional, or sentimental, which he, in turn, attempts to force on his wife, but she wants to write properly, and so she does not comply with his extreme standards. Although both the husband and the wife are writers, the intent of their writings and the emotions they express are very different. She writes, "But then, I must try not to be too stiff about it [...] He says that all I do is make it serious, and it impresses people as being dull and slow. There's no 'sentiment' in it at all, and the sentences are not at all beautiful, he says" (Dazai 660). The word used for sentiment is not a native Japanese word, but the English word sentiment transliterated into Japanese. So his idea of emotional writing is not a native, Japanese idea, but borrowed from another language. She, too, has some kind of emotions: "Maybe it's because my emotions are too deep" (660). The word she uses for emotion is a native Japanese word, reflecting that her feelings are more natural. She writes, "It's not that my soul is so serious but that I'm just stiff and awkward and never have been able to be innocent and lighthearted and easy with people" (660). She is unable to truly express herself either in front of people or in writing because she has too many desires. However, her husband writes easily, as that is his profession. He is paid to write fiction—"sentimental" fiction. She does not have a high regard for her husband. She refers to his conversations as "stupid and silly" (660). She declares that his "patriotism somehow goes to the extremes," and that she is disgusted by him, ashamed of him (662). They both write with emotion, and they are both serious about what they do, but the strong presence of the censor in the life of her husband marks a difference in the use of emotions.

Therefore, the husband's patriotic sentiments are not even to be trusted because he is not writing naturally, but expressing thoughts forced upon him by censorship, and so his wife perceives him as a liar. She asks him, "Do you think Japan really will be OK?" and he

replies, “We’re all right—don’t you think that’s why they did it? We’re sure to win” (Dazai 663). She comments, “The things my husband says are always lies and utterly beside the point, but anyway, this time at least, I deeply wanted to believe absolutely his serious words” (663). The word used here for serious is not the same as what she used in the beginning, meaning “diligent or dedicated,” but rather “formal or stiff.” His lies are not personal, but constructed. She wants to believe his formal lies but she cannot. She doubts whether Japan will be okay, and her husband’s convictions that Japan will win the war do not console her. She outright declares that his confidence in Japan’s victory is unreliable. It turns out that her husband is useless. She declares that she could survive independently without him: “I might end up having to put Sonoko on my back and evacuate to the countryside. And that would mean that my husband would probably stay behind alone, taking care of the house. But he’s so incapable of doing anything that I feel quite depressed” (Dazai 665). He has been an irresponsible national citizen because he has not prepared for the war, and he has not even gone off to war because he is a “lazy” novelist, remaining at home. She even goes so far as to compare him to a neighborhood husband, who is “truly a hard worker, and the difference between [them] is like between day and night” (665). In this, Dazai may be ridiculing himself and other writers. He is a writer who does not fight in the war, who writes “formal” lies, and in stories expresses extreme patriotism for the sake of publication.

The thoughts and responsibilities of the husband and the wife are so contrary that it causes a separation between them, both from each other and between their activities. A husband should be reliable and provide for the household, but that role is left to the housewife. His over-patriotism, his lies, and his laziness are all due to his profession as a writer. However, his career is impeded by the need to cater to the demands of censors. As a result, he is not a very good writer, and he is so patriotic he disturbs his wife. His behavior is strange, and she does not understand what he says or does. In the end, when she comes across him on the road in the night, he tells her, “Now I have faith, and so the night road is just like full daylight to me” (Dazai 667). But what does that even mean? It is unclear whether he means that he has faith in the nation, or something else. As a result of the

changes censorship has forced in his thinking, the reader is unable to tell his true thoughts, and whether he is genuinely ultra-nationalistic. His responsibility to represent the nation well in writing alters the relationship between husband and wife, inhibiting them from cooperating as they are supposed to.

The narrator of "December 8th" is conscious of herself as a writer not only because of the public nature of her text, but also because of her husband's position as a critic of her writing, and thus a private text is complicated by unexpected censorship. Similarly, the narrator of Uno Chiyo's "A Wife's Letters" is conscious of herself as a writer because letters sent to soldiers during the war would have been censored during the war. The difference between the texts is that "A Wife's Letters" is an epistolary novel, and so there is a very clear implied reader, as opposed to a diary that does not have a directly intended reader. The wife of this story is writing to her husband, yet she cannot deny the censor who stands between her and the receiver of her letters, and thus the censor becomes a secondary intended reader. Letters to and from soldiers would have been censored in the war, meaning that parts of the letter could have been edited, or letters intercepted and removed. As a result, the housewife must strictly write only positive things about the war; otherwise her husband might not receive her letters. Likewise, she may not even acknowledge the censor, as the narrator of "December 8th" acknowledges her husband and future readers. However, the story only consists of her letters, and only one response is mentioned. Otherwise, it seems that he sends her no mail. The reader and the wife are thus unaware of both where he is and what he is thinking. The wife never complains about censors, but only implores him to reply and send a signal. This touching story about a woman missing her husband thus stands as an example of the effects of the larger phenomenon of censorship upon the relationship between husband and wife.

The narrator of "A Wife's Letters" writes so emotionally and seemingly naturally that she disarms the censors, thus allowing for leniency to express her true feelings. She expresses that she is in support of her husband going to war, and that she is proud of having a soldier for a husband. She speaks of sending her husband "with magnificent resolve to a distant battlefield on behalf of our great nation" (Uno 779). In fact, she

describes the feeling of watching her husband join the other soldiers as "a rush of joy" (780). And in a later letter, she declares, "My husband, among all those many who have gone to war, was with the force that marched triumphantly on Singapore. The thought made me tremble with pride. How fortunate I am—tending your absence with pride—much more so than an ordinary woman" (791). She takes pride in having sent a husband to war, in particular that he was part of the advance on Singapore. And at the end of the story, in the last letter, she joins other people in celebrating the fall of Singapore. She demonstrates that she is a good housewife, taking care of the house while he is gone, and that she is a good neighbor and Japanese citizen by cheering other men as they go to war, such as her neighbor's son (789). By demonstrating her patriotic nature, she is free to express herself emotionally, for although she does write the expected nationalistic praise, there is an overwhelming sense of sorrow and loss. Every mention of her joy or excitement for the war is enclosed in passages of isolation. When she is with the crowds either sending off soldiers or celebrating a victory, she feels alone and disconnected. She only glorifies the war as far as is necessary in order to be accepted. The amount of time spent on writing about how she misses her husband exceeds the amount spent on praising the war. There is a rift between the woman and her husband that is caused not only by the war, but also by the censors that limit the written communication between the two. The husband is meant to be a narratee who stands between the narrator and reader, but his response is entirely absent, further disrupting the relationship between reader and writer.

The focus of the story however, is not on the war, but on the letters, and so just as in "December 8th," she establishes her joy for the nation, including her support of her husband, through her writing. She writes, "When it finally dawned on me that I would not be able to see you one last time, I was so overwhelmed [...] what had come over me? And here I had only minutes earlier been feeling such elation for this husband of mine whom I was sending off"(Uno 779). She does not understand her own feelings; she does not even know how to explain her feelings. She cannot even think straight; her mind is numb.[iv] At the end of her last letter she writes, "You my darling, you my husband, your heart as our bond, please behold the emotions of a woman such as myself" (797). The emphasis of these letters is not

to praise the war, or to discuss the war, but only to express herself. It seems that she feels joy when she sends off her husband, but she is not sure if that is the way one should feel when she sends off her husband, and even that feeling is okay. When she returns home, her "carefree joy began to fade into a vague apprehension" (781). She writes as a way to try to understand her feelings. She repeatedly tells her husband that she does not understand her feelings, or that she does not know how to express her feelings. And although she calls them silly and womanish and even says, "Really, who can blame women like us for our petty feelings?" (791). She dialogues her feelings in respect to her position as both a woman and letter writer, especially because this kind of emotion would be expected of her by the censors and helps to enforce her concern for the nation.

However, her love for her husband as a soldier is not as important as her love for him as her husband, which is most strongly connected to the act of writing. Her love for her husband is the most important emotion connected with the act of writing. When she discusses the war, it is only in the context of her husband, his uniform, looking for references of him, and where he is on the warfront. Otherwise, it is mentioned when she is seeing off other soldiers, or at the end when she is celebrating the fall of Singapore. While the wife of "December 8th" is disgusted with her husband, the wife of "A Wife's Letters" is in love with her husband. She does not write to her husband simply to tell him what happened in her day. The first three letters recount parting from him. It is not that it is a long story that requires multiple letters, because she writes the whole story in the first letter. Rather, her memory lingers on the day she parted from her husband for the first three letters. And in the fourth letter, she writes that ten days have passed since he left (Uno 787). That means she writes three letters in about one week, focusing on their separation. She does write about other things, but she cannot let it go. She is heart-broken and distraught after he has left. After he leaves, she tries tracking his journey: "At first I followed your progress diligently, charting your different destinations on a map. But how could I continue this vigilance indefinitely?" She loses track, but when she receives his postcard from Taiwan, she feels "impatient and forlorn" (787). She immediately has a desire to see him. She reads newspapers looking for pictures of her husband, but even if she cannot find a picture of him,

she imagines him in the scenes she does find (790). She has a need to be read and responded to. She ends the story, "From your distant land, please see me as I am" (797). It is only through writing that he may see her, but she does not know if he sees her. But she receives no response from him, and so there is a lack of connection. Thus, her act of writing to her husband in order to enforce their connection goes unrewarded.

Now far apart, writing is the only thing that can act as a bridge between him, however, censorship prevents such a union from taking place. After losing track of his progress in the newspaper, another form of writing, she is "impatient and forlorn" (Uno 787). The word translated as "forlorn" is *tayorinai*, which literally means "without anyone to rely on; unreliable," but could also mean "without a message" (alc.co.jp). In other words, not having any communication with him is what causes her state of restlessness. So when she finally receives a postcard from him, she is ecstatic. "It made me want more," she says (787). She has a message, *tayori*, written by his own hand, which she reiterates. "Gazing at the postcard," she feels like she is "in a dream" (787). She imagines him, where he is, and what she is doing. Seeing his writing and his message lead to visualizations of him, and she can feel that they are connected. So when she receives a package of his clothes, and there is no message, she does not accept it. She searches for a message, *tayori*, but there is none, and she cannot understand why. These things are as they are when he left her, coming to her as they were when he sent them, but there is no message. Because there is no message she cannot visualize him, she cannot connect with him. She buries her face in his clothes, yet even his clothes do not smell like him, despite the fact that they should. His soldier's uniform bears no resemblance to the man who wore them. She cannot even depend on the sense of smell to connect her to her husband. So instead, she accepts the clothes as a substitute for her absent husband.

As a result of the censorship that stands between letter writer and reader, not only are the wife and her husband separated, but there is also a rupture in identity in both of them. The emphasis of the story is her separation from her husband. She repeatedly mentions their parting, contrasting that with times when they are together. She emphasizes how the crowds separate her from her husband, and she only barely sees him before he

disappears: "Somehow, I was pushed to the back of the swelling crowd [...] I could just manage to glimpse your face as the car pulled away" (Uno 784). But then he is gone, and she is overwhelmed. She repeatedly mentions his figure disappearing from sight. The motif of vision becomes important throughout the rest of the work as a representation of her connection to the husband. She desires to be together with him, which is why she is constantly imagining him on the front and looking for photos of him, of his figure. Even if she cannot find picture of him, she imagines that he is there in other pictures or films of soldiers. However, she does not find one photograph. This physical separation causes an emotional separation tied to their changing identities. He tells her, "You must not think of me as your husband. Rather, you must think of me as a soldier, just a man with no particular name" (786). As a result of the war, her husband is no longer her husband, but a soldier. She says that she feels an "inexpressible loss" watching him go, but she is not sure why she feels that way. Then she realizes, "it must be because, because you were no longer just the man I love, the man who belongs to one woman—to me. No. You were now that man—a man traveling to a distant land for the sake of his country, charged with a mission" (780). He is not identified in terms of his relationship with her, but only to his country. It is a form of permanent separation. As a result, she, too, experiences some identity confusion. After he has left, she feeds the birds at Kannon temple, and prays to Kannon. She writes, "When, I wondered, had I become a normal woman—the kind of woman who on her way home stops by the temple to pray to Kannon-sama and then feed the pigeons?" (Uno 783). Neither she nor her husband are who they were, they are no longer defined by their relationship to each other. She is a woman, and he is a soldier. The war and censorship have ultimately changed both their relationship and their identities, which affects their letter exchanges.

The fault with the war is that it separates her from her husband, and it is through writing that she can express her pain at being separated. At the end of the story, the husband and wife are not reunited, as they should be in a good romance. They are disconnected, and they may never be reunited. He is still at war, and she is stuck at home. At the very end, even amidst the celebration of the fall of Singapore, she admonishes her

husband, "You my darling, you my husband, you heart as our bond, please behold the emotions of a woman such as myself [...] From your distant land, please see me as I am" (Uno 797). Will they ever be reunited? It is left open-ended. Still, in the end, it is clear that rather than being actively anti-war or political, the wife, and therefore Uno, is simply unconcerned about the war. She loves her husband, and celebrates him as a soldier in the battle. Regardless of whether he is dead or alive, she expresses her love for him. And yet he is silent. She receives no message from him. Why? It is unclear, because we are limited by what she knows. Could his letters have been censored? We cannot know. We only read her letters, and as a result, we too are separated from the reader's response. We can only feel the emptiness of a lack of messages.

What these two stories share is that the war creates a separation between husband and wife, augmented by the presence of censorship in their lives. By writing in personal forms, letters and diaries, the war is made very personal, and the reader is brought right into the narrator's daily struggle. In "December 8th," there is no implied reader because it is a diary. In "A Wife's Letters," the intended reader is her dear husband on the front. In both cases, the reader is exposed to very private information and thoughts. And yet, in both cases, these thoughts have to be censored. As demonstrated, the wife of "December 8th" is filtering her thoughts because she is considering the possibility of her diary being used as a public record. As such, she must represent her station properly, without any sort of anti-patriotic thought. In "A Wife's Letters," her letters would have been censored, and so she must censor her true feelings as well. In both cases, the war causes a separation. In "December 8th," the anxiety of the husband concerning censorship causes him to say strange things that his wife can neither depend upon nor believe. Her husband is thus made unreliable, and she is forced to be an independent woman, rather than a wife supporting her husband. In "A Wife's Letters," the physical separation from her husband causes a change in identity in both of them. She no longer knows herself, and she is ashamed to even express herself because she is expected to be fully supporting her husband. The censor stands in as an unnatural intradiegetic narratee. The censor is not supposed to be there, interrupting the flow of natural thought, either in a diary, or in a

letter. And yet the censor asserts his presence and further augments the divide between the reader and writer, woman and husband, but between any two human beings aiming to communicate in a society that aims to control thought.

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[i] I use the Japanese name order, family name and then personal name.

[ii] Neither protagonist has a personal name used in the story, so I will simply refer to them as the wife of "December 8th" or the wife of "A Wife's Letters."

[iii] Genette does talk about censorship, but only in that paralepsis is a form of censorship as the narrator leaves out information, but he is specifically talking about techniques of representing time, and not governmental censorship.
[iv] Both "overwhelmed" in the quoted passage and "numb" are translated from the phrase ぼうとする.

Re:Search

The Regenerate: The Paradoxes of Nostalgia and Empire in the *Doctor Who* Series

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the role of nostalgia for the Eleventh Doctor (Seasons 5-7) in the longest running BBC sci-fi TV series *Doctor Who*. Memory plays a paradoxical role as both that which plagues and exalts the nameless protagonist. As the Doctor travails the universe in search of a home he eradicated long ago, he remembers both his self-induced trauma and the hope he now provides as a hero independent of time and space. A walking paradox of creation and destruction, the Doctor epitomizes modern Britain's identity conflicts with its colonial and empirical past. *Doctor Who* unpacks the shame of Empire while it also glorifies a thoroughly imperial personality as a near divine exception. He, like the nation, struggles with the guilt and prestige of his past. Neither can completely separate from the overwhelming influence of nostalgia. The source of the Doctor's greatest tragedies and greatest aspirations coincide in memory. His nostalgia for his imagined homeland perpetuates his undying guilt for laying it to ruin. However, it is the nostalgia others have for him which spares him from the brink of erasure. Juxtaposing work on nostalgic memory by Frederic Jameson and Svetlana Boym against Michael Rothberg's theory of multidirectional memory, the Doctor work as a paragon of memory's role in identity formation. Memory acts as the most accessible form of time travel, though not the most reliable. As what the Doctor chooses to remember reveals how the mind restructures events in ever evolving identities, memory seems more storyteller than camera.

KEYWORDS

anti-hero, *Doctor Who*, domesticity, empire, memory, national identity, nostalgia, trauma narrative

FORGOTTEN HERO

Since the debut of the science fiction series *Doctor Who* in the early 1960s, the BBC program both perpetuates and challenges ties to British national identity. As viewers follow the Doctor, an eccentric figure who explores time and space in his teleporting police telephone box, the long-running series hints at an analogy which fluctuates between post-imperial Britain and manorial lords. For the series to survive, new Doctors unleash from the bodies of old ones in a renewal process of "regeneration." For the Eleventh Doctor (Matt Smith), the series allegorizes the paradoxical relationship of British lordship and the freedom to choose a new identity apart from the fallen British Empire. Eleven teeters across a thin line between morality and memory. During the Time War, the Doctor committed massive genocide, terminating his entire home planet of Gallifrey along with the enemy population of Daleks. In his willingness to protect a moral ideal, he sacrifices his own people along with the enemy. His nostalgia for the world before his choice and the trauma he experiences afterward both trap him in a vicious memory loop.

In the episode "The Pandorica Opens," the Doctor must reconcile the cracks in the universe created by his constant travelling. Lured into the prison believed to house the most dangerous, feared warrior in the Universe, the Doctor and his companion Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) wait with bated breath underneath Stonehenge. As he trails his fingers along the grooves or symbols of the cubic, stone Pandorica, Eleven gives a telling speech about the prison's captive. He begins: "There was a goblin, or a trickster or a warrior. A nameless, terrible thing, soaked in the blood of a billion galaxies. The most feared being in all the cosmos. Nothing could stop it or hold it or reason with it. One day it would just drop out of the sky and tear down your world" ("The Pandorica Opens"). Unbeknownst to Eleven, an alliance of his enemies from every reach of the universe forces him into the confines of the empty prison. While the Doctor travels with the intent to fight evil, he tears entire worlds down in the process. Each crack actually acts as a portal across time and space, causing massive chaos in its midst. Eleven leaves these on his crusades to save choice individuals. Like a warrior, he possesses a drive that propels him towards action. However, this dichotomy forces the Doctor to choose a winning side. Despite his noble and lofty

causes, the carnage he leaves behind instills terror alongside wonder. In this particular instance, the alliance collaborates in self-interest to prevent further damage from memories of the Doctor. They no longer want to remember him or fall prey to his destructive memory habits. Better to forget him, burying him deep below the surface of consciousness.

When men play God, they decide their own genesis and revelations. The Doctor experiences such a liberty to compose entirely new identities. Heroes are neither born nor made, but formed through their retelling. The Doctor's constant retelling of himself and his own adventures inevitably leads to a host of alternative endings. Such constant shifting and editing of a person also transforms the nameless protagonist of *Doctor Who*, recreating his visceral reality once a body turns threadbare. At the end of every Doctor, the beginning of a new Doctor emerges as another chapter in a never-ending story.

While he starts over, the Doctor inevitably hurts people. His authority bares rifts and torn seams. In Eleven's premiere episode, he causes a young Amelia Pond to wait for him twelve years when he promises to be gone for only five minutes. A Time Lord capable of manipulating time and space, he possesses even greater agency to change his storyline. One story ends and another begins, though the moral, the remnant of the Doctor's character, remains inherently the same. While the Doctor may come and go as he pleases, he insists on protecting universal tolerance and freedom to live. In the many chapters of the Doctor's life, he submits to a rebel fight for humanity and civil rights, often against institutionalized and corrupt powers at play. However, his noble aims emit from a questionable past. The Doctor must always make a choice. By his logic, in order to secure a future of the universe, he collapses both sides of the conflict. Though many viewers and characters hold the Doctor in high regard as an individual who can do no wrong, his choices betray a subtle bias towards British tradition. Britain entered World War II as an Empire but ends fragmented and decolonized. Met with mixed amounts of reluctance from its Dominions, Britain dissolves as a seemingly strong Empire upon war's end due to pledges of independence and a tarnished image of prestige ("The British Empire in World War Two"). While Winston Churchill adamantly viewed the British Empire as fighting for a more democratic society, many colonies interpreted the war as hypocrisy. An imperial

figure, the Doctor also proclaims to fight for the good of all beings. Looking back towards Empire, the series mulls over a problematic nostalgia of the past.

Infected with a longing for his lost homeland, the Doctor embodies both the perpetual foreigner and the forever homesick. Nostalgia returns him to a utopic past he imagines within the present. In "Nostalgia for the Present," Frederic Jameson finds that the imagined space creates a drive for the safety in the domestic and the home. The Doctor merely wants to go home. However, the Doctor's last memory of his home, Gallifrey, coincides with the planet's fall at his hands. As he imagines home, he also returns to shock. Called the "reverse shock" in Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory*, violence echoes repeated acts of trauma on a different population. As described in Svetlana Boym's analytical novel *The Future of Nostalgia*, the medically diagnosed "nostalgic was a manic of longing" where his disease relates everything back to past memories (4). Embanked with sheer homesickness, the Doctor looks for home through his many travel companions. Because he realizes his safe haven no longer exists, the Doctor needs to find solace through other people. Rather than instill a sense of contentment, companions compound the Doctor's nostalgia. They too contract nostalgia and develop an astute sense of irrevocable homesickness while accompanying the Doctor through the universe. Nostalgia ensures a return, whether to guilt or to newfound hope. Regardless, it is a return to the home or familiar. For the Doctor, that either means a return to the home he destroyed or the home he seeks to make among his companions.

Because imagined space also plays as fantasy, nostalgia blinds both the Doctor and his admirers from facing the rifts in his complex character. In "The Wedding of River Song," the Doctor's confidante, River Song (Alex Kingston), freezes time along a fixed point to prevent killing the Doctor. Mentally conditioned by Madame Kovarian and the Silence to murder the Doctor, River instead falls in love with him and breaks from her training. She, alongside Amy and Rory, refuses to let the Doctor die. When he wants to come to terms with death, she instead drains her weapons and replies, "Fixed points can be rewritten." River refuses to murder the Doctor because of her personal relationship with him and nostalgia about their marriage. Her decision forces time not just to stop, but, as

the Doctor says, "it's [time is] disintegrating. It will spread and spread and all of reality will simply fall apart" ("The Wedding of River Song"). In order to preserve the idea of the Doctor, the Doctor's friends will destroy time in the name of loving him. Memory of his loyalty to them creates a romantic yet generally destructive bond. As a means of saving the Doctor, his friends risk losing the entire universe.

The Eleventh Doctor wants to forget the horrors and traumas of his past lives. In a telling moment locked in with two previous versions of himself, he confesses he forgot the number of children who died on Gallifrey the night he ended the Time War. During the majority of episodes heralding in Eleven, the Doctor appears lighthearted and eager to approach dangerous situations. He holds none of the military exactness of Nine nor the altruistic guilt of Ten. Perhaps he just hides these qualities better under a veil of eccentricity. As Eleven reluctantly reveals the travesties of his past self, he also speaks about his character.

The Doctor has chosen to become a refugee without a family, nation, or government. He chooses to relinquish these things in the hope of the universe's greater survival, but the move also solidifies his own hero status. Where would Superman be if Krypton were not destroyed? The universe only needs one time-travelling Doctor, not a world of them. Even when Ten and Eleven prevent the War Doctor (John Hurt) from genocide, the planet must still be frozen in a pocket universe. Thus, the population can never move forward or backwards, never existing in true time or space. Gallifrey's memory forever exists on the cusp of destruction but never meets it head on again. The Doctor, too, operates on this logic. He locks his past away behind the borders of nostalgia, despite the freedom his time travel promises.

The Time War operates as the necessary evil incorporated into complex decisions aimed for the greater good. Its memory latches into the Doctor like a perpetually open wound, a moment he forever regrets yet compels him to always save those he can in the future. As the War Doctor debates with the Moment, a weapon of mass destruction with a sentient interface, to end the Time War, she devises a consequence for his decision. Though he wishes not to survive the war, she says, "Then that's your punishment. If you do

this – if you kill them all – then that's the consequence. You live. Gallifrey, you're going to burn it. And all those Daleks with it. But all those children too" ("The Day of the Doctor"). His condemnation, instead of a sentence to death, is a life sentence. With his numerous regenerations, the Doctor pays penance for his decision by his commitment to regret. Though forgetting creates a brief respite by freezing time, memory returns him to a fixed point of failure.

Due to a sense of multidimensional memory, the Doctor re-traumatizes himself with the past. As Michael Rothberg argues, memory interacts with different points along a time stream, never entirely isolated or laid to rest at certain key moments (5). However, within the boundaries of the show, the current of memory still flows around fixed points in time that even the Doctor cannot manipulate. Certain aspects of his past remain questionable and often horrific. The collective memory of the Doctor as a fierce warrior and ally must also coincide with the image of the Doctor as a renegade mass murderer. His heroism and superiority fail to guarantee justice.

While the show deliberates the guilt of empire, it simultaneously extols the imperial personality as an exception. Through the lens of *Doctor Who*, the Doctor is nearly divine. When the Doctor destroys the nation, he erases a part of his past yet also permanently cements a moment of trauma he must return to. The fall of Gallifrey never eliminates an entire people or a collective consciousness. It transforms collective memory into the eradicable loss of personal memory. Multidimensional memory serves to haunt him, as the trauma continues to resurface through traces of Gallifrey. The Doctor, though he aims to diminish evil, can never erase the dark choice he made in his own past. That formidable side of him integrates with the lighthearted Doctor who appears in moments of crisis as well. Both the best and worst of history, the Doctor serves as a symbol of national identity. As with the British Empire during World War II, no good came without its fair share of complications and dissent. A projection of hope onto the future, the Doctor also bears in mind the regret and peril of the past.

The Doctor neither escapes the guilt of his decision nor his position as a Time Lord. He seeks out those in danger, particularly women, and finds means by which he can

rescue them. In the history of the show, the Doctor's travelling companions nearly always submit to the trope of a screaming woman. For Eleven, his companions develop more of their own ferocity and independence, yet still depend on the Doctor. In the case of Amelia Pond, she is called the girl who waited, compromising both her sanity and future marriage for his sake. Eleven first crash-lands in Amy's backyard, still recuperating from his latest regeneration. He discovers the first crack in the universe near her bedroom wall. After twelve years of waiting for her "raggedy man," Amy accompanies Eleven as a travelling companion in the TARDIS ("The Big Bang"). With her fiancé Rory Williams in tow, the duo holds their own alongside the Doctor, often sacrificing their own safety for his.

Other companions reinforce the desire of the Doctor to protect others while they themselves upend this assumption. River Song, the Doctor's wife, lives in an opposing time stream where her future exists in the Doctor's past. Though powerful, River exists to eliminate the Doctor as part of the Silence, an order bent on his imminent destruction. Well versed in time and space theory, she proves a formidable counterpart to the Doctor, sharing many of his Time Lord characteristics. Clara Oswald, the anomaly, exists to save him. A babysitter when the Doctor first encounters her, Clara downloads a massive amount of computer data from the Great Intelligence, a recurrent threat to freedom of life on earth. Later, the show reveals Clara as the girl who saves the Doctor, an ever-present force scattered across time to protect him. She sacrifices herself for his sake at Trensalore. Despite the companions' respective strong personalities, much of their lives revolve around the Doctor's choices and lifestyle. Like a British lord, the Doctor gives off a traditional sense of chivalry embedded within his decisions. He represents a keen sense of honor and dignity which one associates, albeit subtly, as part and parcel of Britishness.

In terms of national identity, this both perpetuates and enhances what it means to be expressly British amongst, quite literally, aliens. While the show produces mostly white protagonists with a few exceptions, the abundance of aliens within the show provide opportunities for alternate perspectives to develop, incorporating different races and genders into conversation. While new writers readily incorporate minority characters into the show, the episodes distinctly lack in other minority diversity. While

underrepresentation of minorities in Western media remains the standard, the Eleventh Doctor in new *Who* incorporates an underlying tolerance and respect to all individuals with whom he talks. However, many of those written alongside the Doctor act merely as foils to him, mere plot devices without their own well-formed stories. The British colonial past of visiting and traversing, as Matt Jones in "Aliens of London: (Re)reading National Identity in *Doctor Who*" realizes, continues through the Doctor's visits. According to Jones, the series analyzes Britain by "deconstructing and destabilizing the very fabric of British history itself," playing with time to find a collective vision of national identity (86). A representative of a bygone era analogous to the British Empire, the Doctor contacts and often changes those planets he visits. He seldom leaves any world or people without meddling about with his sonic screwdriver. By passing judgment and often making choices for people groups, the Doctor places qualitative calls onto people groups. While viewed positively, these choices still reveal discrimination.

The Doctor exists on the borders and in-betweens, never in a single dimension. The same may be gleaned from his biases. While he earnestly promises individualistic freedom from oppression, he also subtly operates on the skeleton of the archaic British ruling class. He travels as a walking paradox, standing both for the empire he loved and destroyed but also for the future he can possibly save. Traumatized by the past yet holding in high regards with nostalgia, the Doctor never keeps anything he loves. His loved ones nearly always disappear or suffer due to his adventures, never remaining by his side. They exist in memory and, eventually, unreachable moments in time. While the Doctor aims for virtue, he must do so in the shadow of a nostalgic past he destroys for the sake of a collective future. He sacrifices what he loves the most to ensure the continuation of multidimensional memory. Trauma, however, causes the Doctor to transport back towards this moment in time as motivation behind his virtue. Vice both conceals and propels his just acts. The Doctor's worst act overshadows his best, his last regenerations an attempt to rewrite amidst the dust.

LOSS AND ABSENCE

Memory lapses across the sands of time in waves, the rejoinder that returns everything we left behind to forget. For those who committed heinous acts, memory serves only to haunt and repeat in a self-deprecating spiral. Though the Doctor's decision to eliminate both Gallifrey and the Daleks occurs only once, he must relive the moment forever in memory. In the episode "The Pandorica Opens," the Doctor encourages Amelia as she experiences some revival from severe memory loss. He says, "Nothing is ever forgotten, not completely. And if something can be remembered, it can come back." For the Doctor, this comfort instead acts as a curse, constantly evoking memories of his home destroyed by his own choice. As an allegory of Great Britain, the Doctor struggles with his painful past marked by his dark decision coupled with his unending nostalgia to return home. Though he struggles to reinvent himself and rebuild, he returns time and time again to the shoreline of his broken empire. Like the fragmented British Empire, national identity struggles to form amidst the rubble of an expansive kingdom. Nostalgia becomes his trauma, plaguing him with an imagined yet unattainable refuge.

When the British Empire dissolved, guilt and nostalgia for the past surfaced in imagining a new national identity. *Doctor Who* encapsulates Britain's polarized struggle to recreate itself despite the shadow of its expansive, colonial past. A narrative echoing with both trauma and nostalgia, the Doctor suffers from a sense of loss he battles through saving those in danger. However, this fallacy in appointing one's self as sovereign perpetuates the Doctor's original trauma. By appointing himself as an arbiter within the universe, the Doctor enacts his Time Lordship as an absolute power. *Doctor Who* unpacks the shame of Empire while it also glorifies a thoroughly imperial personality as a near divine exception. The show conscientiously displays the Doctor's shortcomings, yet he alone stands to maintain the universe's continuation. Fueled by the nostalgia towards a nonexistent home, the Doctor operates as a paradox. A self-determined hero bent on fighting those forces that only destroy, he must also fight his own destructive nature. Both time travel and introspection enhance the complexities of the Doctor as a guilt-ridden image of imperialism merging with postcolonial ideals.

While nostalgia stabs the Doctor with longings for a home he collapsed, nostalgia for his own past regenerations as a hero glosses over such trauma. The Doctor compensates for past destruction through reminding himself of his own good deeds. The Eleventh Doctor especially, known as "the one who forgets," exudes an upbeat enthusiasm which betrays the guilt of his past ("The Day of the Doctor"). Thus, the Doctor's past accomplishments refract against his destructive choice. As Michael Rothberg says, "[M]aking the past present opens the doors of memory to intersecting pasts and undefined futures. Memory is thus structurally multidirectional, but each articulation of the past processes that multidirectionality differently" (35-6). The past operates to both shame and glorify the Doctor as an emblem of empire. In one reflection, he epitomizes the lone hero raging against impossible odds yet who always makes the right choice. From another angle, the Doctor's past rages with ruthless violence imparted towards his numerous enemies. In "The Pandorica Opens," the Doctor prevents numerous attacks by reminding his enemies who he once was and still is. He shouts at the gathered alliance, "I don't have anything to lose. So if you're sitting up there in your silly little spaceship with all your silly little guns and you've got any plans on taking the Pandorica tonight, just remember who's standing in your way! Remember!" ("The Pandorica Opens"). When enemies from all parts of the universe gather to the Pandorica, the Doctor protects it by merely asserting his ego and his reputation. He relies on the guise of memory to terrorize his enemies, facilitating a sense of prestige to surround his name and ensure his future as someone with a great deal of worth. The past operates to redefine the future in manifold ways. The Doctor's trauma surfaces as motivation to save, while his prestige and power intimidate future challengers. As in "Nostalgia for the Present," his loneliness as a Time Lord can be interpreted as a sort of privileged privacy, "walling other people out, protection against crowds and other bodies" in a "misery" that "will not be alien" because it is his own (Jameson 286). He draws on his aloneness as a strength, for only isolated can he declare allegiance to nothing and no one. The Doctor claims a position above the ties and collectivity of relationships, but also against the collective attack of the Alliance. While he promotes individualism and independence, he symbolizes a desire for privatization against the looming crowds.

Interpreted as arrogance, even the Doctor's trauma equipped to attack his enemies reveals his shortcomings.

As a science fiction simulacrum of British national identity, *Doctor Who* operates on a sense of all-powerful prestige that resonates with Empire. However, with the debilitating and humbling experiences of World War II, this reputation ultimately deteriorates into a figment of the past. In its wake, the nation experiences a postcolonial awakening and awareness that must come to terms with colonial atrocities. Like "a kind of distorted form of cognitive mapping, an unconscious and figurative projection of some more 'realistic' account of our situation," *Doctor Who* creates space to reflect on these aftershocks of Empire building (Jameson 283). Lurking behind his bravado, the Doctor hides his profound shame about Gallifrey. His defeat at the pinnacle of his power mirrors Britain's role in World War II. While Britain, as part of the Allies, eventually shares in the victory of World War II, it is at an immense cost. Great Britain, in order to finance the war, dissolves the Empire as a superpower, allowing the United States to take her place. While Britain wins on a global scale, the Empire falls as a result. In "The Day of the Doctor," Eleven looks toward the painting of *Gallifrey Falls* and admits:

> I've had many faces, many lives. But I don't admit to all of them. There's one life I've tried very hard to forget. He was the Doctor who fought in the Time War and that was the day he did it. The day I did it. The day he killed them all. The last day of the Time War. The war to end all wars. Between my people and the Daleks. And in that battle there was a man with more blood on his hands than any other. A man who would commit a crime that would silence the universe. And that man was me. ("The Day of the Doctor")

An image of post-colonial Britain, the Doctor admits the blood of his past as something he longs to forget. Britain's role in World War II relied heavily on colonial involvement and manpower on several continents. As the Doctor confesses, "he killed them all" in "the war to end all wars," so the British Empire sacrificed countless colonial lives during the last World War. India alone sent two and a half million men to fight alongside the Allied

Powers ("Colonies, Colonials and World War Two"). Colonies in Africa and the Pacific also provided valuable funds and military bases to increase British prestige during wartime. Once more, this covers Britain with "blood" due to the overwhelming debt incurred by manhandling its colonies. While the Doctor confesses he destroys the planet outright, the British Empire self-destructs and fragments due to protests for independence. Without colonies in Africa or like India, Britain could no longer claim global dominance, thereby relinquishing the Empire's hold on her "planet." Gallifrey, then, represents both the destruction of the old Empire and the plot device that gives birth to the imperial figure of the Doctor.

The Doctor participates in a confusion of symbols that overlap modernity with memories of the past as a means to critique both. A warrior suffering from the throes of memory, the Doctor destroys all that which he felt loyal towards. Boym describes how "[t]he outburst of nostalgia both enforced and challenged the emerging conception of patriotism and national spirit" (5). The soldiers, whom she describes, felt so compelled to fight for their country they were willing to die for it. In the case of the Doctor, he presents an extreme opposition to nostalgia's link with patriotism. Though the Doctor loves the nation of Time Lords, he willingly sacrifices them due to his hatred of the Daleks. To prevent further destruction, he ensures the death of his own people to prevent them from ever resurfacing. His punishment, as determined by The Moment, is to live on while everyone else dies and his planet burns. As Rothberg states, "The dead are not traumatized, they are dead; trauma implies some 'other' mode of living on" (90). While the Doctor lives on, he inhabits the shadow of the past during his time travel. Though he survives as the hero to future generations, he must bear the immense burden of choosing to destroy his loved ones in a moment of crisis. Each altruistic act looms under his one terrible decision. However, this moment of memory predetermines how the Doctor sacrifices on behalf of those he chooses to save. Though traumatic, it propels him towards highly motivated good deeds. While viewers may feel sympathy towards the Doctor, his pain again mirrors that of the fallen British Empire. While "perpetrators of extreme violence can suffer from trauma," their stress "makes them no less guilty of their crimes

and does not entail claims to victimization or even demands on our sympathy" (Rothberg 90). By some means, the Doctor bears resemblance to this image of colonialism burdened by shame. A Time Lord who possesses sole rights to govern and travel in time, he knowingly weighs out a mass murder before enacting it. A calculated decision debated with the Moment's interface, the genocide unveils the Doctor's own thoroughly measured choices. Though the Doctor's shame comes from a valid place, it fails to excuse the depravity of his crime. Though he means to spare the universe of further bloodshed, he achieves this end goal by slaughtering two entire species; one of them his own.

Such a critique on trauma and memory reveals a postcolonial spin surrounding the Doctor. While an imperial system may center on the decisions of a sovereign, Britain currently operates as a constitutional monarchy in which power remains divided. Just as the Doctor must reinvent himself, so Matt Jones notices the UK "once had to forge itself a new identity, disassociating itself from the colonialism and exploitation that had been the hallmark of its historical reputation, a past it also sought to suppress" (97). As an emblem of both the Empire and Britain's future, the Doctor appears as a damaged, emotionally wrought figure unable to come to terms with his past. He emerges as both perpetrator and victim, unable to escape his own trauma. While the Doctor is a murderer, he also lives as the lone survivor of his own genocide. Though a hero to the universe at large, he exists as a walking impossibility. An artifact of a world gone, the Doctor creates himself as both a ruin and a relic. Rothberg reimagines history through pursuing "the power of anachronism, which brings together that which is supposed to be kept apart" (136). The Doctor erases and rewrites the world as a transcendent figure above time. He meets prominent figures of the past and often disrupts them to ensure their survival or safety. By crashing into others' lives, regardless of time or place, the Doctor seeks to make familiar that "which is supposed to be" strange (Rothberg 136). So rises the Doctor, the impossible self-made anachronism.

Doctor Who puts a British-centered twist at every avenue of change within the show. While noting the colonialism found in writer Caryl Phillip's fiction, Michael Rothberg also emphasizes how multidirectional memory proceeds in light of cultural possession. He constructs the "[m]ultidirectional exchange" as "beyond the forms of

cultural ownership that motivate competitive struggles over the past" (Rothberg 158). In "The Big Bang" Doctor Who episode, tension increases between the fluid moments in time and the Doctor as a figure who must exist and be remembered. Because the Doctor remains within the Pandorica, the universe and reality collapses. As he explains, "When the TARDIS blew up, it caused a total event collapses. A time explosion" which "blasted every atom in every moment of the universe" except inside the Pandorica. The Doctor causes the end of the universe but also proposes a new beginning. In the midst of askew timelines and the last dregs of existence, he promises to "reboot the universe" ("The Big Bang"). In order to reverse the damage he imparts onto the remaining universe, the Doctor must sacrifice himself. "The box contains a memory of the universe" which the Doctor launches into the heart of the TARDIS's explosion. The universe begins and ends on the imprints of memory. As the restoration field occurs simultaneously throughout this infinite moment, he hopes time will restart itself. The Doctor believes each person will return to the place he or she is supposed to be. However, in order to do so, he must destroy the present world and create a new one based on its memories. At the heart of the explosion, he has very little hope for survival unless others remember him.

While Rothberg argues multidirectional memory exists above cultural ownership, the Doctor presents an incident where the two memories coincide. Representative of British national identity, the Doctor drags himself into the heart of the problem. The Pandorica was a prison meant to house the most dangerous being, the Doctor. Due to his imprisonment, the universe ends because the enemy alliance wants to forget him. The universe cannot exist with or without the Doctor. His memory, at least, must prevail over the changing times. Though he consistently travels time to help people, his reputation solidifies his enemy status with the Alliance. However, because of the Doctor's existence within the Pandorica, he survives intact at the end of the Universe. The Pandorica imprisons, but also preserves, the Doctor as the last hope for survival. In regards to the idea of Britain, the British Empire passes on, but also enables, its people with a tradition of conquering and assumed power. This memory of prestige prevails throughout those who conceive or associate with British national identity, thus also preserving a sense of the

colonial. The Doctor successfully reboots the universe by imprisoning himself within the Pandorica walls and launching himself into the end – the TARDIS explosion. He quite literally becomes the center of the universe and its beginning. An egocentric interpretation of history, a Time Lord returns the universe to a peaceful state where an alliance could not. Individualism and the decisions of one overwhelm the popular opinion of the Alliance. The Doctor saves the universe, but at the expense of himself.

As the Doctor's timeline unwinds and people begin forgetting him, he ultimately returns due to Amy Pond's extraordinary memory. While most of her relatives interpret her memory of her imaginary friend the Doctor as medical, her mother in particular mentioning "the psychiatrists we sent her to," Amy's nostalgia veers away from the medical as "a romance of the past" (Boym 11). The show encourages imagination and nostalgia, as Amy's memory eventually brings the Doctor back. While romantic and impossible, this is exactly who the Doctor professes to be. Thus, only fantastical thinking and a ridiculous imagination of the past can bring him back from the void of nonexistence. Nostalgia enhances memory with colorful, though often fabricated, details of a life once lived. Rather than condemn this glorification of the past, *Doctor Who* encourages rereading of the past as paramount to the future. Without Amy's impossible memories envisioning this raggedy man in a blue box, she could not have rewritten the Doctor into his present existence. To save the universe from multidirectional cracks in time, the Doctor must eliminate every trace of himself. To drag the Doctor from unraveling at the brink of death, Amy must remember despite a collective universal amnesia.

Though the Doctor realizes he must erase himself from memory to ensure the universe's safety, he pins his remaining hope on the whims of Amy Pond, whom he dubs "the girl who waited" ("The Big Bang"). What does waiting mean but clinging to the imprints and memories of someone once lost? It is the last hope of those already past or civilizations laid in ruin. Since her first encounter with the Doctor, Pond endeavors to preserve his footprints on her life, whatever the sacrifice on her part. When Amelia Pond weeps at her wedding, she does so due to her memory of the Doctor. Boym defines "modern nostalgia" as "mourning for the impossibility of mythical return" or an "absolute,

a home" (10). The Doctor, though he can never return home and embodies nostalgia unanswered, is saved through another's fond memories of him. Because he provides feelings of safety as a new friend with ancient ties, Amy Pond resolves her own feelings of nostalgia. She cries, "I remember! I remember! I brought the others back, I can bring you home, too" ("The Big Bang"). The Doctor can only live on through memory. When his loved ones choose to remember him, it confirms his purpose and meaning in life. Though plagued by his own nostalgia, the Doctor also pins his hopes on the nostalgia of his imaginative companion. The memories of his former home ghost through his mind ceaselessly, but it is also the memories of his loved ones that call him back to the living, which call him home.

Memory both perpetuates and alleviates pain, almost the logic behind the Doctor's morality. He is a refugee borne out of his own torment, a lonely wanderer due to his own decisions. The Doctor's genocide forces him into the slavery of nostalgia, as his idealized homeland perpetuates his guilt and fatigues him to no end. He constantly persecutes himself with a utopic picture of what his world once looked like. On his constant travels, no place can be home because the Doctor cannot live with himself. Such "paradoxical comprehension" thus involves "breaking up phenomena and recomposing the fragments in the form of constellations"(Rothberg 53). Like his numerous regenerations, the Doctor is a whole made up of parts. A raggedy patchwork man made not just from different physical parts, but the collective memories and consciousness of characters, he is but a figment of memory and dust.

Like the British Empire, he dissolved before reconstructing into an entirely new entity built on the ruins of the old. The Doctor, an analogy to the British ideal, resides between the new and ancient, a post-colonial push for independence, yet a domineering, lordly figure. A walking paradox, the Doctor is a nation of contradictions, which signify post-empirical Britian's own unresolved questions of identity. The Doctor embodies this gap between destruction and resurrection, the frame of a nation built on the dregs of collective memory. Rather than progression, national identity is a recurrent conversation

with the past to tease out a future. As Britain rewrites its own narrative, the Doctor is also a story come to life after retelling.

Memory, like storytelling, adapts based on what we want to remember. It is the best story one tells about the self. Any modern neuroscientist or psychologist says that memory is a dynamic, active thing. It is not a mere recording on a faithful DVR. Memory lives on in mutability, editing itself and expanding on imagined, fantastic details. As memory changes, it not only mirrors but also constantly influences how we see ourselves and our histories. The Doctor tells himself a new story every time he travels or regenerates. He can change all the mechanics, the syntax, and even edit out some of his mistakes, but the plot remains. He is a warrior with the potential to heal – a war doctor. An enigma full of contradictions, he both destroys and heals the universe. National identity too morphs, returning to and re-editing points in the past to fit current interpretations. Memory, then, lapses and relapses across time to remind one of the lost. It is a way to find and return home when all else seems forgotten. Though the Doctor remembers destroying his home he can only reach through nostalgia, it is through Amelia Pond's nostalgia of him that he can return to the living. Home is not where the heart is, but where memory thrives.

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Re:Search

Tragic Race in *The Prince of Darkness*: Southworth's Call for Social Change

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ABSTRACT

This essay analyzes popular nineteenth century female novelist E.D.E.N. Southworth's 1890 novel *Hickory Hall or The Outcast: A Romance of the Blue Ridge*, which is also referred to as *The Prince of Darkness*, in terms of race and class relations. As a contemporary of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Southworth attempts to navigate the racial and political tensions of her pre-Civil War era society in her serialized novel. This essay employs close readings of character descriptions, interactions, and instances of moral insanity, to examine Southworth's antislavery perspective. It will also demonstrate the political engagement of an important author whom many wrongfully perceived as simplistic and frivolous because of the serialized medium of her narratives. This essay will formulate the argument that Southworth advocates for necessary social change and, through the tragic consequences of the antiquated racial relations exhibited by her characters, cautions her readers against the inevitable decline of society should the status quo remain unexamined. The research conducted here draws upon the primary source of the novel as well as scholarly articles by Dale Bauer, Julia Deane Freeman, Eric Lott, and Vicki Martin to support its claims.

KEYWORDS

antislavery, class, nineteenth century, *Prince of Darkness*, race, serialized novel, Southworth

Written in 1861, E.D.E.N. Southworth's twentieth work, entitled *Hickory Hall; or The Outcast: A Romance of the Blue Ridge*, which was also printed under the title *The Prince of Darkness,* comes fairly early in her extensive career, which spanned from1844 to 1899. Scholar Vicki L. Martin notes the important proto-abolitionist work done by E.D.E.N Southworth's serialized writings in her early publications, alongside more famous works like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Southworth "began serializing short fiction in the [publication] *National Era* in the first year of its existence (1847) and had serialized…*Hickory Hall* in the abolitionist newspaper before the serial appearance of Harriet Beecher Stowe's first novel." Martin laments that though Stowe's work became "the most famous antislavery novel ever written… Southworth's [novels] are mostly unread, especially as they appear in the context of the pages of *Era*" (1-2). Martin discusses Southworth's long tradition of antislavery writings in asserting that Southworth "did not write proslavery fiction for the *Era,* as some have claimed; instead, drawing on materials that appeared in the *Era* and similar periodicals of the time, she began, with her first novel, introducing antislavery arguments into her fiction." According to Martin, recent critics of Southworth have a tendency to "largely ignore the antislavery nature of Southworth's *Era* novels and write them off as being overly sensational or sentimental, as having no social or political merit, and even as being proslavery." Martin also denotes that while modern critics devalue the politicized message of Southworth's novels, many readers of Southworth's time did perceive the antislavery message in her works (Martin, 1-2). Further analysis reveals that Southworth's novels do in fact make great strides in trying to unravel the racial issues faced by her society.

The Prince of Darkness features a frame narrative of a woman journeying to stay with her friend, Mrs. Fairfield, in Virginia. While approaching the Fairfield home, the women pass a dilapidated, though still stately, old house with an air of mystery, which prompts the narrator to theorize about all of the horrors that must have occurred in the house, despite Mrs. Fairfield's assertion that the "murdered home" (3) belongs to a respectable and wealthy family, the Wallravens. Later that evening, Mrs. Fairfield and her husband are called away by the urgent summons of Mr. Wallraven, leaving the narrator

with a letter containing Mr. Fairfield's account of his introduction to young Wolfgang Wallraven and his subsequent interactions with the family. In summary, Fairfield becomes fascinated by Wolfgang and strives to befriend him, despite Wallraven's aloof nature. Eventually he succeeds, and he arranges for Wallraven to make the acquaintance of his sister. The two fall in love and arrange to marry. Wallraven presses for the nuptials to occur in France, while his bride, Regina, presses for the ceremony to take place at the ancestral Wallraven home. Before the two can be granted a happy ending, however, Southworth reveals to the audience that Wallraven Sr. married his mother's slave girl, and that all of the Wallraven children have been passing as white despite the quadroon blood they received from their enslaved mother. They are legally considered to be the property of Wallraven Sr., having inherited their mother's status. This revelation, imparted by an old, black hag, Old Nell, claiming to be the sister of old Wallraven's wife, and reminiscent of the Jane Eyre-esque madwoman in the attic who escapes captivity to taunt her new niece, drives Regina to insanity. Upon Old Nell's disclosure of Wolfgang's polluted bloodline, Regina murders Wolfgang Wallraven in a fit of rage before deteriorating into an animalistic state of foaming at the mouth and screaming incoherently. He accepts his fate in repentance, and with his dying breath, declares that she is not to blame.

Southworth's narrative depicts a complex racial and social stratum and challenges the concept of the time of black inferiority as an excuse for whites to exert mastery over them. Through her characterization, her alignment strategies for manipulating reader sympathies, the ambiguity of victimhood, and the demonstration of misplaced guilt, Southworth points to a cultural malady afflicting the South during the pre-Civil War period. Though Southworth does not assign a particular time when setting the story, the reader can understand it as her reaction to the racial politics of her society. While Martin advocates Southworth's historical importance as an antislavery novelist, Dale Bauer further supports Southworth's agenda of social reform in her article "Why Read E.D.E.N Southworth?" in the assertion of Southworth's "characteristic way, insanity or mania, as a way to challenge American norms" (1). Southworth uses race as a plot device to derail the otherwise marital bliss of Regina and Wallraven, but this story also offers a cautionary tale both for those

hoping to pass and for those who might have unwittingly been duped and contaminated by a deceptive spouse.

Though distinctions are made between a servant and a "colored" servant (16) (both unnamed) in the plot, these details are written off as a product of the Deep South culture surrounding the Civil War. Southworth chooses to place her novel in this particular setting to draw attention to the tenuous race relations in which this culture was deeply invested. Southworth is reacting to the call for change in racial and social relations in the pre-Civil War era, which she perpetuates through this story. Often, Regina Fairfield's brother praises her fair, blonde, pale beauty, but in a romance when outer colors are used to describe inner traits (i.e. white demonstrates purity, black denotes evil, and red passion, etc.), these praises are hardly unexpected or extreme. Most often, colors implying race are employed as a foil between the two women of interest to the narrator: his sister and Constantina Wallraven, his friend's sister. Though at the time, they seem to simply differentiate the women, statements such as, "by comparing these two young girls, Constantina and Regina, both so perfectly beautiful, yet so opposite in their forms, features, and complexion; yes, and style—though both were of the queenly order. Constantina's was a natural dignity, Regina's a conventional stateliness," become much more important in context with the revelation at the end of the letter (Southworth 163). While Regina's goodness is reaffirmed by her fairness, the descriptions of Constantina's regal darkness do not hint at a tainted nature until the end. Southworth complicates the basic dichotomies of white as good and black as bad when she allows Constantina to be depicted as Regina's equal in loveliness.

Southworth allows Fairfield to repeat moments such as this in which he praises both women on equal footing. "Again, I was struck by the contrast presented by these two young women—the blonde and the brunette—both so dazzling, beautiful, yet so unlike. One, clear, bright, morning sunshine—the other, resplendent starlight" (172). Perhaps the reason for Fairfield's repetition is that Constantina's beauty tempts the narrator, who stands to fall victim to the same deception of racial passing as his sister without the intervention of those who know the truth. Southworth employs Constantina's beauty as an alignment strategy, not only between her and the narrator, but also her and the audience. Her treachery in

passing, for Southworth is all the more striking when revealed; if an observant and educated man such as Fairfield fails to comprehend her nature immediately, what chance does anyone else stand at retaining their own purity? Just like Fairfield, readers might feel upset with themselves for failing to pick up on Southworth's color coding and thinking one step ahead of Fairfield. Conversely, Southworth begs the question of whether or not Constantina can truly merit less than Regina if she is her equal in every way in terms of beauty and carriage. Although it may seem that Southworth questions the need for a racial history in determining the quality of people in comparisons between Regina and Constantina, she definitively takes a stance that this behavior of concealing one's genealogy is deplorable in Wallraven's vindication of Regina's actions.

Opposite the regal beauty and demure comportment of Regina and Constantina, Southworth gives us the character of the hag, Old Nell, who reveals the secret of the Wallravens to Regina and sets the final tragic moments in motion. By allowing Fairfield to refer to her as "the hag" with a "demon grin," Southworth guides the reader to understand Nell not as a human being, but as a supernatural social force that exists largely within the unconscious of the characters (187). Fairfield attempts to rationalize his experience with the hag, demonstrating her function as a nightmare: "My mind sometimes naturally connected the midnight apparition of Wolfgang and the malign hag to the bed-chamber with the terrible secret of the family; and at other times I entertained a rational doubt as to whether the dread apparition were a dream or a reality" (119). The hag can be understood in terms of Eric Lott's concept of a racial unconscious, or "a structured formation, combining through and feeling, tone and impulse, and at the very edge of semantic availability, whose symptoms and anxieties make it just legible," (23) since she appears in moments when white characters are at risk of acting upon their dangerous attraction for characters who pass.

The initial manifestation of the hag occurs after Wolfgang converses with Fairfield about Constantina. Wolfgang asks Fairfield's opinion of Constantina and Fairfield replies that he believes her to be the most beautiful woman in the world, equal to Cleopatra. Wolfgang becomes offended since he perceives Fairfield's remark as a jest, despite

Fairfield's assurances of his sincerity. Fairfield has opened himself to the risk of desiring a woman who can never be his social or racial equal; he risks committing the same social transgression as Mr. Wallraven, though we are yet unaware of Wallraven's plight. Shortly after this conversation, Fairfield falls asleep admiring the beauty of Constantia, Wolfgang Wallraven's mother, in her portrait. He awakes to see flames flickering over the portrait, giving the woman depicted the appearance of sobbing from great suffering. Fairfield first sees the hag in his dreams alongside the image of the sobbing Constantia, "with her moved another being — a perfect spectre, that might have been the consort of Death on the Pale Horse — an old, decrepit, livid hag, with a malign countenance and gibbering laugh, whose look chilled and whose touch froze my blood with horror" (111). He awakes to find that the hag is real and present in his bedroom; Wolfgang Wallraven is grappling physically with the hag to constrain her. Fairfield notes that in this moment of struggle, Wallraven resembles Typhon, the largest and deadliest of the Greek monsters, a half-viper, half-dragon beast who attempted to bring down Zeus, and succeeded in tearing out Zeus's sinews before being imprisoned below Mount Etna (Graves). Wallraven acts as a bestial danger to the ruling authority. He tries to restrain the hag and, in the process, to keep the racial unconscious hidden. The figure of the hag intervenes on the romances of both Fairfield and Regina to prevent a continuation of the social abomination of racial mixing.

Old Nell appears once more to the Fairfields, on the eve of Regina's wedding to Wolfgang Wallraven. Regina ignores Constantina's advice to bolt her bedroom door out of laziness, and as a result, Old Nell sneaks in with the intent to "kiss [her] pretty niece" and to deliver a warning (187). Southworth depicts Old Nell as monstrous in order to scandalize her white audience, who are invited to recognize that members of their own class and race who pretend to be of pristine bloodlines might be concealing their own monstrous past, and thus subject to a similar figure of the racial unconscious. Regina describes Old Nell to Fairfield as "the most diabolical-looking old hag that ever my nightmare created stooping over me, gazing into my opened eyes with a grin of malignity that seemed to freeze all the blood in my veins" (186). Old Nell truly is a manifestation of Regina's nightmare, a physical representation of the cruelty that white society has inflicted

upon blacks through slavery. Old Nell has been transformed from a human woman into a monster to embody how white society represents their social hierarchies.

Old Nell's scrutiny repulses Regina, who has become vulnerable to Old Nell's physical threat as well as her psychic influence. Her gaze communicates to Regina the loathing that lies bubbling under the social surface tension and also indicates the ease with which white power can be confused. Regina describes the incident in facing Old Nell as "the most loathsome specimen of humanity I had ever seen, as she stood there some seconds, examining us with the same leer of insult and malignity. There she stood, chuckling with a fiendish grin at the very loathing she excited—repaying the extreme of disgust with the extreme of hatred" (186). Old Nell inverts the hierarchy of authority over Regina by assuming a position of dominance and moral judgment over her social superior. She warns Regina: "You are very fair and very proud! But pride goeth before a fall, and a haughty temper before destruction," which demonstrates the fragility of the social order and the erroneous mentality of the white position of security within society (188). Her warning also indicates the ease with which white power can be confused. In her work chronicling the serialization of Southworth, Martin comments that Southworth identifies pride as "the parent sin of slavery," which reinforces the conception of Regina's pride in her racial superiority as a mortal sin that has contributed to a host of social evils imparted against blacks and will lead to the downfall of white society if left unchecked (14). In this moment, Southworth uses Old Nell to speak to the shifting relations between whites and blacks in the South before the onset of the Civil War. Old Nell's taunting must be extended to Southworth's readers, she warns, lest they fall victim to the same sense of vulnerability and instability when the blacks escape their bonds to seize power and wreak havoc on their white masters, as Old Nell has done as a manifestation of the racial unconscious.

Mr. Wallraven exhibits this mentality of white superiority, which Southworth undermines as flawed and fundamentally false throughout the novel. Though he has married a black woman and attempted to elevate her socially, he clings to the notion that the whiteness of their children masks any of the undesirable black qualities they possess. Though their

bloodline is less than pure, Mr. Wallraven is quick to reassure Fairfield that his descendants have not been tainted by the unfavorable characteristics that Nell exhibits, "You asked me the cause of Nell's malignity, and expressed astonishment at the idea of her relationship to Constance. She is, really, no blood-relation to Constance or my children" (202). Wallraven continues to offer a logical explanation for her monstrous appearance and her motive for revealing the family's secret: "She was the step daughter of Constance's father, and hence the claim to relationship, hence her presumption to a high degree of notice and favor, even while her extreme deformity and her disgusting habits and vices, made her very presence in the meanest capacity insufferable; and hence her envy, hatred, and demonic malignity"(202). Though Southworth allows Mr. Wallraven to distance his family from the impurity of Old Nell, Southworth employs Old Nell's character in a larger allegorical role which renders her integral to understanding the tension resulting from the race/class disparity in the novel. The problem of Old Nell still exists, though she is brushed out of the spotlight of attention. Old Nell fulfills her role as a plot device and promptly disappears from the story. While we receive epilogues detailing the lives of the rest of the characters, we do not receive one for her. This fluidity emphasizes her function as the embodiment of the racial unconscious, which can muster a manifestation only for a moment before being suppressed. The mindset of the white reader is focused in self-absorption, caring more for a simple conclusion of the fates of the white characters than for a solution to the racial problems that exist within society. The problem of Old Nell still exists, though she is brushed out of the spotlight of attention. Perhaps Southworth dismisses her to keep readers aware that this threat constantly lies just out of our attention, and that society cannot be so neatly wrapped up. To provide Nell with a satisfying ending through conformity would undo her position of power, and to punish her for her actions would undo her social work by reestablishing and reinforcing the existing status quo. Southworth, in fact, fulfills the same role as Old Nell in her crafting of the plot of this story. She reveals to white audiences the flawed nature of race relations within their society, but her disruption of the reader's confidence at the dominance of white society flares up only for a moment. Rather than propose a new direction for society by indicating a way to

negotiate race relations, Southworth allows the social turbulence to neatly conclude in the deaths of both Wallraven and Regina. With the removal of all of the offending parties from society, Old Nell's political allegory falls short in order to pacify Southworth's readers.

While Old Nell is more effective as a plot device than a political allegory, Southworth employs Regina as a second allegorical figure. Upon her realization of the truth, Regina descends into a "mad majesty," actualizing her regal name to project the personality of a monarch threatened by treason (191). She sheds her previous identity, claiming that "already one of the ladies of our bedchamber—our beloved Regina Fairfield—lies dead before us" (190). Since she lacks a specific identity, Regina can be understood as an allegorical figure for the state of white society. After Regina's descent into madness, Southworth employs this transformed persona to recall images of monarchy and white social authority. Southworth depicts Regina with royal imagery; even her name — Latin for queen – is used in many nations' royal titles. She adopts the royal "we" in her speech, extends her right hand "in a gesture of high command," and arranges her dressing gown around her "as though it were the ermine purple" (191). This power is undermined, however, with the image of the "fallen glory" that is Regina's unbound hair, which invokes a sense of disorder and impropriety in her appearance that translates to the state of white authority in society that cannot maintain itself. The phrase "fallen glory" also connotes an imperial tone, as if the power and glory of Regina's authority lies in the past and has been overtaken by a new authority, understood here as an authority invested in racial mixing. Regina proclaims Wolfgang a traitor, and when he approaches her, she seizes an "antique dagger that lay [on the table as an article of rare *vertu*" (191). While "an article of *vertu*" can be understood simply as an artful adornment, Southworth's choice of words is not coincidental, and doubles for the English word: virtue. The ideas of French philosophers Voltaire and Francois de la Rochefoucauld can be applied to add depth to Southworth's verbal duality. Voltaire proposed that *"La vertu s'avilit à se justifier,"* which translates to "Virtue debases in justifying itself" ("Voltaire"). By wielding this dagger as an enforcement of justice onto a traitor to the white social authority, Regina reveals how the concept of justice has become debased and convoluted within white aristocratic society. Southworth

makes a comment here that Regina's justice is anything but just in this moment, which reinforces her anti-slavery message. François de la Rochefoucauld also writes on the subject of virtue in his *Reflections*: "*Nos vertus ne sont, le plus souvent, que de vices déguisés*" which translates to "our virtues are most often only vices in disguise" (*Réflexions*). While Regina believes herself to be enacting justice upon Wolfgang with the dagger, she succeeds only in enacting her own vices of vanity and pride. Just as Old Nell cautioned Regina, her pride led to her downfall. Southworth extends this adage to caution white society in the pre-Civil War era that the desire for, and pride in belonging to a class comprised by racial purity must be understood as a vice rather than a virtue, a weakness rather than a strength, and that society must be open to restructuring in order to avoid the chaotic and violent fate faced by Regina.

Mr. Wallraven acts as an example of this restructuring when he dared to rupture polite social customs and marry his mother's slave. As a result, however, his children are branded and disbarred from their aristocratic rights, defined and marginalized by their mother's position rather than becoming liberated through their father's standing. Through Wallraven's progressive though unsuccessful attempt to deviate from flawed social norms, Southworth generates sympathy for his plight—condemning society for failing to accept his actions instead of condemning him for his social divergence. Wallraven recounts the disastrous affair to Fairfield:

> She was a quadroon girl, brought up at my mother's knee; a simple, gentle child, whose life of chamber seclusion had kept her unspotted from the world…she had been taught in her childhood almost to worship her 'young master'—the mother's spoiled and wilful boy—the idol of the household. She learned in girlhood to love him with all the bind and passionate devotion of her race. I had the power of life and death over her—yea, of eternal life and death—for her life hung upon my love—her integrity upon my honor. The alternative for her was a ruined frame, a broken heart, and the grave; or the marriage ring and benediction. The alternative for me was sin without infamy or infamy without sin—or so it seemed to me in my passionate youth. I chose the latter. I loved her, I married her,

> and lost caste, I and my children forever! The whole community recoiled in loathing from us. The minister who united us was ungowned and degraded from his pulpit. Our marriage was declared illegal, and my mother, to oblige me to break the connection, made a will, just before her death, by which she left me Constance and her children upon condition only of my never freeing them. Upon my attempting to break this condition, they were to become the property of a distant relative. (196-7)

Wallraven recognizes his transgression and attempts to atone for his actions morally by sacrificing his own reputation in order that his wife should not be condemned by society for her association with him. He reveals to Fairfield the toll his actions have taken upon him and his descendants: "If I have sinned against the conventional usages of the society in which I was born and lived, my whole life has been one long and terrible expiation" (203). Society rejects any attempt for the Wallravens to recover their honor and instead condemns them to a liminal identity and marks them as marginal characters. Wallraven submits himself to our moral judgment in recounting his relationship with his mother's slave. He invites us to see his abuse of power in taking advantage of a disadvantaged girl who had been raised to fulfill his every desire, and further subjected to his amorous intents by the preexisting condition of her race's passionate nature. Whereas this assertion of her natural weakness could be used as an argument against Wallraven's natural superior position according to racial hierarchies in this era, Wallraven condemns himself further for entrapping her in his deviance and inability to deprive himself of inappropriate erotic desires. Rather than cast her aside, as was acceptable in this time for someone of his status, his guilt and morality cause him personally to require redemption for them both by sacrificing his own caste for her honor. While this pre-Civil War era society would have viewed his sacrifice of honor as the real sin rather than his illicit romance with a slave that was technically his property to use as he wished, Southworth twists this concept of morality to condemn him for his predatory actions against a helpless girl and his covetous inability to deny himself from acting upon inappropriate feelings. In attempting to break social traditions and appease his conscience, Wallraven inflicted injury upon the lives of several

people, including the misery and shame in which his children must live. Wallraven openly accepts responsibility for the fate of his family; however this does not promise him forgiveness. Even though he does all in his power to right the situation and suffers perpetual guilt, readers from any time period will not be reluctant to shame him for his actions. Rather, his son – Wolfgang Wallraven -- emerges as a sympathetic character who has been victimized by a cruel and morally skewed society.

Before Wolfgang Wallraven even appears in the plot, Southworth paints him as a sympathetic figure. The closing lines of Barry Cornwall's poem, which Southworth uses as the epigraph in the chapter in which Wolfgang is introduced, reads, "He is shadowed by his dream / But 'twill pass away" (Cornwall 42). Wolfgang Wallraven seems completely to internalize the sins of his father, and the son incorporates this socially-ascribed guilt into his identity, which keeps him from achieving his dream of fully participating in white society. As a boy, Wallraven seems fully to comprehend himself as a social abomination and restricts his participation in society by self-imposed isolation. Though he is able to pass racially for a white aristocrat, he shrouds his pain through aristocratic airs to which he would be entitled if not for the transgression of his father. By distancing himself from other characters, Wolfgang's sympathetic nature strongly encourages both readers of Southworth's time and contemporary readers to become more attached to him since they recognize that his self-inflicted castigation is undeserved and incorrect. We understand that these are not his sins to bear, though he internalizes them from his own sense of moral propriety. Unwilling to perpetuate his father's sins by aligning himself with his peers through feigned equality, he fears society's total dismissal based on his racial impurity, and instead choose to occupy a position of social liminality. Despite his best intentions to extricate himself from a society that spurns his existence, Southworth demonstrates how, as in many cases in history, white males enact a responsibility to interfere in the affairs of those who they deem disadvantaged. Fairfield's fascination with Wallraven's self-imposed liminality disallows Wallraven to rest in his safe solitary alienation. Though Fairfield perceives his actions as a rescue mission to open the reclusive Wallraven to popular society, he damns his friend to an extraordinarily unhappy fate and deprives him of any

chance at happiness or belonging. Southworth repeats the pattern of white males being attracted to slaves of mixed blood in this relationship, though the reader cannot perceive this cycle until the revelation of Mr. Wallraven's transgressions in the conclusion of the novel. While the other boys mistake Wolfgang Wallraven's existential shame for pride, Fairfield claims to possess a singular ability to improve Wolfgang in his supposed insight into his character:

> I do not know what was the power that attracted me so strongly, so inevitably, so fatally to Wolfgang Wallraven: whether it was magnetism, sorcery, or destiny—or whether it was the gloom and mystery of his manner and appearance. Certain it is that there was a glamor in his dark and locked-up countenance and in the smoldering fierceness of his hollow eyes that irresistibly drew me on to my fate. He did not seek my acquaintance—he sought the society of no one. On the contrary, he withdrew himself into solitude—into surliness. This was unusual in a schoolboy, and it made him very unpopular. To me, however, his sullen reserve and surly manner had more interest, more fascination, than the openest and blandest demonstrations of social affection from any of the other boys could have. There was evidently something behind and under it. He was not at all outside. (42-3)

Southworth repeats the same language of misplaced passion used in Mr. Wallraven's confession in Fairfield's recounting of his magnetic desire for Wolfgang's approval and friendship:

> My attraction to, my affection for that strange boy was rising almost to the height of a passion. Never did a lover desire the affections of his sweetheart more than I did the friendship and confidence of my queer outlandish classmate. Never did a lover scheme interviews with his mistress more adroitly than I planned opportunities of conversing with Wolfgang, without seeming to obtrude myself upon him. (48)

Southworth illustrates that the real social danger is not that marginalized individuals deceive others about their racial identities. Instead, the true peril stems from the colonial white

assertion of their own moral and intellectual superiority, which they believe allows them the right or the responsibility to interfere in the affairs of other supposedly inferior races. One could understand Southworth's depiction of Fairfield's undue fascination with and desire to re-socialize Wallraven as an advocate that white society lacks the foundation for the supremacy it asserts and as a call for a more independent black society, free from the impositions of whites who cannot fully comprehend or appreciate black society.

Upon Wolfgang Wallraven's realization that his hopes for a covert interracial marriage have been denied when he was so near to their successful realization, Wallraven experiences turbulent emotions that actualize in physical violence upon Old Nell, who rendered his future untenable. Fairfield accounts how Wallraven attacks Old Nell after she reveals the truth of his bloodline: "Rage, grief, and despair stormed in his face. With the bound of an unchained demon he sprang upon the hag, and with his hands round her throat, bore her down to the floor, placed his knee upon her chest, and nearly strangled her before I could prevent him" (191). Even in this moment of monstrosity, Wallraven retains the reader's sympathies. Though he is dehumanized by intense emotions, he transcends the threat to his morality by submitting to the hopelessness of the situation. Immediately after this display of violence, Fairfield softens his presentation of Wallraven: "Rising, he spurned the beldame with his foot, turned toward us. His typhoon of anger had subsided; despair, sorrow, tenderness, were all to be seen now as he approached Regina" (191-2). When Wallraven finally refuses to allow society to further limit him from his aspirations, white society cruelly punishes him. Southworth depicts Wallraven as a martyr, dying for his sins against an unjust society. She stresses that the real tragedy is not Wallraven's death, but instead his intense repression that eliminates Wallraven's options for a social existence. White racial pride refuses to allow him happiness through social integration through marriage because of his tainted nature. However, white society also refuses to leave him in a prolonged position of his self-imposed liminal isolation, which is demonstrated by Fairfield's childhood ambition to break him from his withdrawn nature. He welcomes death as the only liberty still allowed to him by white society because of his tainted blood. Embodying a new form of the "deployment of the tragic mulatta" (Martin 9).

Wolfgang Wallraven must constantly be degraded by his father's sins without hope of escape or completing sufficient penance for redemption in the eyes of society to alleviate his suffering.

It is surprising that there are not more reviews of E.D.E.N. Southworth's works available today given her high level of popularity while she was writing. Her works clearly had a large effect on the popular culture of the time; however, it seems that few people expended the effort to critique her novels for the periodicals of the time. In order to avoid a reading of *Prince of Darkness* tainted by modern social constructions of race and gender, I seek to demonstrate how the books were received in addition to the reactions they engendered in order to determine whether Southworth's writings conformed to social ideologies of the time or whether she was revolutionary in the relationships she constructed. In 1861, Julia Deane Freeman catalogues female authors of this era in her book *Women of the South Distinguished in Literature*. Though she largely discusses Southworth from a biographical standpoint, Freeman does offer some criticism of her works that allow for one to glimpse a limited perspective on Southworth's reception. Freeman states, "Voluminous as her writings are, embracing a wide personal and emotional range, we are told that she has never yet drawn upon her imagination for the basis of a single character. To this fact may be attributed her power of portraiture" (228). From this assertion, one can gather that her readership regarded her characters as true and accurate, and thus the possibility of a passing gentleman of repute or an old, mad slave aunt hiding in the attic are extraordinarily real to at least some in this era. Indeed, one is led to believe that these characters are based in truth, and thus reflect the social ideologies of the time.

Freeman continues to praise Southworth's writing, but does cast a negative image on her characters: "In bringing veritable men and women from the extremes of her observation, and allowing them full scope for self-assertion, [Southworth] has laid her stories open to the charge of unnaturalness" (228). This reference to "unnaturalness" challenges the idea that her characters are all pure representations of the true state of the nineteenth century South. It seems as if Freeman qualifies her original statement of authenticity by expressing that Southworth's encourages her characters into a state of full

"self-assertion," which implies a certain sense of creative license in fulfilling an archetype. Freeman returns to praising Southworth in a confirmation of her accuracy towards the end of the section: "She excels in her delineation of negro character, and her descriptions of southern life and scenery are, some of them, inimitable" (229). According to this statement, Southworth alone possesses the ability to capture and represent the Southern negro spirit of the time. It is slightly confusing that Freeman even chooses to include Southworth as an example of a distinguished southern woman, considering that Southworth fought for the Union in the Civil War. While many southerners would perceive this allegiance as a betrayal and invalidate Southworth's depictions of black characters by instilling them with certain favorable characteristics or liberties, Freeman chooses to ignore these tendencies in favor of her accuracy.

Freeman further confuses the strict delineation between Southern and Northern mindsets in her evaluation of Southworth's portrayal of her antagonists. Freeman states, "even the 'villain of the plot' does his devoir with an unmalicious, deprecating grace, that excites in us only a desire to win him from his evil way, and make a taking little saint of him" (236). In a novel such as *Prince of Darkness,* this trend is particularly evident if one chooses to read the ending in a way that vindicates Wallraven for his social crime. Wallraven forgives his mad bride of her crime of passion and places all of the blame on himself for attempting to deceive such a pure beauty with his last dying breaths. He does not blame society for his unjust position and misguided morality that necessitated his passing. In a contemporary sense, we do not feel that his deception requires an explanation or justifies his murder at the hand of his enraged bride, and are more eager to ascribe the culpability to a morally corrupt society with incorrect perceptions of racial equality. It seems that according to Freeman, Southworth constructs her villains in a way that indicates the larger sin lies with society than within them. One could guess from Freeman's piece that the nineteenth century society had more sympathy for Wallraven than for his insane bride who had been corrupted by his hidden blackness, and would be more willing to damn her in support of this wronged man than to support her vigilante social justice.

The antislavery work done by Southworth's novels is most evident when Dale Bauer's concept of "moral insanity" from her article "Why Read E.D.E.N Southworth?" is applied. Bauer expresses that Southworth discusses moral insanity, particularly mania, "in order to expand it from some individual complaint into a national pandemic. Southworth's 'moral insanities'—a chronic impairment of one's ethical register—suggest how trapped her characters are in their confrontation over legal and moral issues" (2). Bauer discusses Southworth's use of moral insanity as an instrument of discussing moral duty:

> Unlike mental insanity, moral insanities could be eventually dismissed once moral duty prevailed. Such moral responsibilities point to the rituals in U.S. culture that needed to be changed—from women's legal roles to national laws, like the immorality of death penalties. The idea of 'moral insanity'—whether about maternal power, racial justice, or legal rights—repeats in Southworth, over and over, to remind us why moral values exceed intellectual depth. (18-19)

The use of moral insanity through mania in her plot most likely resonated with her readers more easily than her use of complex political allegory and the racial unconscious. If the reader feels challenged by inconsistencies within their alignment to characters of varying racial backgrounds, the instances of moral insanities help to suggest social perspective and secure the reader's sympathies. It is because of these moments of moral insanity that Southworth's writing can be interpreted as a vehicle for social change.

Bauer's theory is most applicable to the characters of Regina and Old Nell. Bauer suggests that for Southworth "mania often brings with it overestimation of one's social worth, or uncontrollable desires" (7). Bauer's claim recalls Old Nell's admonishment of Regina's pride and her warning of her downfall, which occurs due to an "overestimation" of her own social superiority. Regina must be subject to mania because of her inability to sacrifice her erroneously elevated position within the racial hierarchy and to accept Wolfgang with compassion for his torment over his social repression, and instead condemning him for his father's sins. Bauer also indicates that "'moral insanity' occurs, for Southworth, as a result of failed or skewed judgment" (4). Southworth indicates Regina's

"mad majesty" as an incarnation of this moral insanity rooted in poor judgment (191). While on the surface, one might perceive this failed judgment as Regina's inability to foresee Wolfgang's deception in passing. However, by aligning the readers' sympathies with Wolfgang at the moment of his death, Southworth indicates that Regina's entire understanding of racial hierarchies as a basis for justifying the murder to be the real occurrence of failed judgment. By inflicting Regina with moral insanity, Southworth comments on the "skewed" condition of the South's racial construction.

Bauer suggests that Southworth used moral insanities as a way to indicate necessary social change and explore possible resolutions of complex social problems:

> Re-inscribing the value of moral order and familial duty resolves almost all of Southworth's manias, especially about domestic commitment and national values. While mania disrupts family relations, it also shows their reconfiguration in order to ascertain the nature of citizenship in the U.S. The moral capability of the brain—the inner self, or the soul—must be saved. (3)

While the resolution of these insanities in *Prince of Darkness* seems to offer a clear and simple morality, Southworth inscribes the resolutions as a reflection of the social complexity. In her moral mania, Regina murders Wolfgang as an attempt to rid society of his contamination and restore the order racial hierarchy. However, Wolfgang's death proves to be a greater tragedy than a triumph since his crime stemmed not from maliciousness but from desperation caused by wrongful oppression, and the normal order of society cannot in good conscience return to its original state. Regina's false justice and flawed morality regarding race has permanently damaged the status quo. Thus, Regina cannot overcome her moral insanity to become sane again. Southworth can find no other way to rectify the social rift than through Regina's death.

When comparing instances of moral insanity and moral duty in Southworth's writing, Bauer notes the trend that "These repetitions of 'moral insanity' as personal codifications of a national affliction keep fueling Southworth's plots" (16). Bauer explains

that Southworth preferred to repeat moral insanities in her narratives because "they enabled her to experiment with the narrative means for overcoming them" (16). Southworth often contrasted "unruly passion" and "cherished duty," the virtue she found most important, though Bauer notes that, "In almost every case, the hero or heroine chooses a lover to feel for, even when that love is different enough from the American norm to cause anxiety or disaster" (16). Southworth does not allow Regina to follow this pattern, however, and this deviance from her prescribed formula would most likely have caught the attention of avid readers of her serial works. For Regina, the choice between her duty to her position of social and racial superiority and duty to her lover is clear. She chooses to enforce this racial norm of condemning passing, though it is the affirmation of the norm, rather than its dismissal in favor of compassion, that is troubling for readers.

Bauer also asserts that in Southworth's novels, "mental illness—whether it means becoming an incarnate fiend…— suggests a range of possible identities affected by cultural change" (5). This claim recalls Southworth's description of mad Old Nell with her "fiendish grin" (186). While Old Nell could be considered morally insane instead of mentally ill because of her association with and the social and racial breach committed by Wallraven Sr., her delusions as to her exact relationship to Wallraven's wife give the reader an impression of mental instability. Old Nell is indeed an identity "affected by cultural change," since she only appears in the plot at moments when Wallraven's racial transgression comes to light. One can divine from Southworth's story that if society does not embrace cultural change and lessen racial repression, figures like Old Nell stand to become more common. This assumption is supported by Southworth's failure to offer plot resolution for Old Nell, instead allowing her to slip back into the social unconscious. Regina, too, exhibits mania that develops from temporary moral insanity to permanent mental illness when her actions cannot return order to society. Southworth suggests that if society does not change, many more people will find themselves violently impaired like Regina when they cannot reconcile their morality to the changing status quo. Even the figure of Wolfgang Wallraven risks the possibility of becoming reality, (though he sacrifices himself before he can become insane) when members of this society face "the necessary

juggling of identity to fix the gap between private desire and public duty" (18). Through the characterization and the intersection of two families, the Wallravens and the Fairfields, Southworth points to broader social consequences that she foresees as resulting from the oppressive racial hierarchy in the pre-Civil War South.

Bauer claims that "justice for Southworth results from resolving the mania and passion as dangers to U.S. culture" (17). The conclusion of *Prince of Darkness* demonstrates Southworth's discomfort with the status quo of her current society and her call for change, since the justice enacted by Regina is hollow. Even Regina's death cannot erase the impact of the events on this society, since the story will continue to be told, as it has been to the frame narrator. Southworth's flat ending demonstrates a deviation from her usual pattern of resolving mania, since removing the cause of the social problem does not negate the effect of the racial danger. Society cannot simply return to the way things have always been, but must make changes to prevent further tragedies stemming from racial repression.

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Re:Search

Stay Close to Me: Performing Paternal Masculinity in Videogames

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines discourses of violent protective masculine behavior in the videogames *Heavy Rain*, *The Walking Dead*, and *The Last of Us* within the context of active player performance. These three popular and critically acclaimed games allow the player to perform the role of a father whose actions as a paternal figure most often manifest as violence in the name of love and protection. Interrogating this identity of fatherhood as distinct from other kinds of violent masculinity often seen in videogames, this essay finds evidence of a crisis of paternal masculinity resulting from the dissonance between traditional paternalistic values and modern postcolonial understandings that paternalism is problematic, and more for the sake of masculine self-affirmation than the well-being of the child. *Heavy Rain* encourages the player's performance of a relatively straightforward violent masculinity for the sake of protecting one's child. *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us* nearly avoid the problematic nature of paternalism by setting the action in apocalyptic settings where violence can be envisioned as a necessity, but ultimately anxieties of the place of paternalism in modern society leak through in the games' judgment of the necessity and morality of the player's violent performance. Pulling from performance studies, this essay considers how the player's performative experience in these games is integral to their discourses on paternal masculinity.

KEYWORDS

fatherhood, game studies, *Heavy Rain*, heroic protection discourse, *The Last of Us*, masculinity, paternalism, paternal masculinity, performance, videogames, violence, *The Walking Dead*

"How far will you go to save someone you love?"

—Quantic Dream, *Heavy Rain*

This is the tagline for the 2010 videogame *Heavy Rain*. It's a crucial part of the game's marketing scheme, and it's asked in the game itself. You play Ethan Mars, a father whose son is kidnapped by a serial killer. The game asks you to prove your love. By the discourse of the game, you prove your paternal love with the masculine activity often seen in videogames: violence.

The predominance of violent, hypermasculine wish-fulfillment fantasies in videogames is a given. Scholar or layman, gamer or not, the first image many people visualize when they hear "videogame" is a generic war or crime game that revels in letting the player use and prove their power through (often homicidal) violence. As with most forms of violence, the murder and mayhem performed by the player of these games is identifiably masculine. Derek A. Burrill in *Die Tryin'* includes videogames' hyperviolent masculine behavior as a key part of what he calls a "boyhood" masculinity in the medium. These games of boyhood masculinity serve as wish-fulfillment fantasies where the player proves his manhood through violence without repercussions (80). In these games, hyperviolence against others is the mode of performance.

The concept of *player performance* is what sets the medium apart from other narrative forms. The active inclusion of the player within the experience of playing a game is a fundamental factor for scholars and critics to include in game studies, but the community is still struggling to identify the ideal tools to analyze this aspect of gaming. I believe invaluable tools for analyzing the player experience can be adapted from another academic area: performance studies. Referring to the particular ways in which videogames require input and interaction from their audience, Alexander Galloway describes videogames as an "action-based medium," saying that when considered in their most essential parts, "games are actions" (2-3). Richard Schechner, considered the father of performance studies, defines performance in the same way: "Performances are actions" (1). I envision videogames as a heavily performative medium where the player performs the

role of a character. Likewise, feminist scholars have been examining gender roles as performative since Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* in 1990; since its publication, it has become common to see gender identities as constructions of many performances rather than fixed essential characteristics. The inherent performativity of gender makes the performative medium of videogames a potentially fruitful site for exploring contemporary notions of gender. Activating that potential is the breadth of identifiably masculine content in the medium, almost always performed through violent action. To highlight the performative experience of playing these games (and following the example of several videogame scholars, including Burrill), I employ the second-person point of view to describe the player's actions in the game. By referring to the player's actions with the second-person "you" and the character's other actions with the third-person "he," the distinction between performative and non-performative moments in the game is made clear.

In order to understand how player-performed violence is celebrated in videogames, I turn to our society's pervasive "heroic protection discourse," a term recently coined by sociologists Caroline Dryden, Kathy Doherty, and Paula Nicolson. "Heroic protection discourse" serves to "normalise a form of masculine identity that combines physical strength and aggression with the motivation to use physical force in the service of protecting others" (194). In typical discourses of heroism, violence and protection are two sides of the same coin. For example, the notion that a cowboy commits violence against Indians in order to protect his family erases ethical concerns over his violent deeds, opening the door to their glorification. By placing violence in the context of protection, narratives serve to conceptualize violence as productive rather than destructive.

In the cases of hyperviolent boyhood masculinity in videogames described by Burrill, the primary focus is on violence, and the notion of protection is often an afterthought. The player proves his manhood by displaying his power, and is not particularly concerned with responsibilities to protect. But Burrill published *Die Tryin'* in 2008. Since then, a new kind of masculinity in games has emerged that contextualizes the

player's violent actions with discourses of protection. I call this identity of protective videogame manhood "paternal masculinity."

The paternal masculinity in recent videogames is quite literal. An article on *Wired* online by Andrew Groen, "Dawn of the Dad: Fathers are the New Videogame Superhero" (2012), declares this a growing trend. He describes the traditional masculine videogame hero thus: "A broad-shouldered, brick-fisted, angry-looking space marine thunders across the battlefield, bullets screaming from his machine gun as he stares down his monstrous, fascist foes without fear or pity." This hyperviolent depiction of videogame characters could have come straight out of Burrill's description of boyhood masculinity in *Die Tryin'*. To Groen, recent games starring fathers are a dramatic departure from this generic formula. Indeed, the masculinity depicted in these games is less focused on murderous rampage as a means of proving one's strength, and more as a means of proving one's love. Paternal masculinity treats heroic protection discourse religiously, framing violence as a necessity to protect one's family. Fatherhood, constantly performed and proved by subjects in the context of their relationships with children, is a distinct identity that requires its own analysis.

Paternal masculinity is, of course, related to paternalism, a key concept in postcolonial theory. While heroic protection discourse pervades our culture, painting violent protective behavior as a positive force, postcolonialism has revealed the ways in which paternalism (and thus paternal masculinity) is morally problematic, as paternal figures often repress the very people they aim to protect. A colonizing power is painted as a protector who must defend the colonized, but the colonizer is actually the one who benefits, both through material exploitation and a self-affirming status as a positive force. Likewise, we can see that paternal masculinity is more for the sake of the paternal figure's self-affirmation than for the sake of the child-figure, giving men a way to define themselves as crucial to society.

As postcolonial critique has entered the general consciousness of society, the glorification of paternal power has become more difficult to swallow. I argue that it is this dissonance between traditional paternalistic values and knowledge of paternalism as

problematic that characterizes "masculinity in crisis," a concept that has emerged to explain the questionable place of masculine energies and values in modern society. When men feel the need to prove their identity through violence but are aware of the moral questionability of that paternal behavior, their sense of self is placed in peril.

This essay, then, explores paternal masculinity and its state of crisis by examining specific videogames where the player takes on the role of a father. My primary examples will be Quantic Dream's *Heavy Rain*, Telltale Games's *The Walking Dead*, and Naughty Dog's *The Last of Us*. All three games wrestle with the player and main character's need to prove his love in the violent manner glorified by heroic protection discourse. In order to serve as paternal wish-fulfillment fantasies, these games' narratives work to avoid direct confrontation with the morally problematic nature of paternalism. In *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us*, this is accomplished by setting the narrative at the site of the apocalypse, where modernity crumbles and these men's violent behavior to protect their children can be valorized. But anxieties of the place of paternal masculinity leak through these apocalyptic narratives, suggesting that while players wish to escape to a world where traditionally celebrated visions of ideal masculinity can be enjoyed, they cannot avoid questioning the value of paternal violence.

HEAVY RAIN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR IDEAL PATERNAL MASCULINITY

Heavy Rain is the first released of these father-games and the most representative and unapologetic example of the paternal masculinity performed within them, so I will begin my analysis there. Before reaching the need for violent manhood-proving that I introduced at the start of this essay, *Heavy Rain* opens in an idyllic suburban home. You play Ethan, an architect, husband, and father. You learn the controls of the game as you guide Ethan through his morning routine and play with his sons Jason and Shaun in the backyard. When you are able to do something, a command appears on the screen in the image of a button on the controller or a direction to move the right-side control stick, such as pressing "X" repeatedly to lift Jason and Shaun with Ethan's "big muscles," as his sons

shout in joy (Quantic Dream). In time-sensitive situations, you must press several buttons in sequence, such as when you lead Ethan through a playful sword-fighting match with Jason, pressing the correct buttons to attack or parry. Through the performance of these physical actions, Ethan's life is framed as a vision of ideal fatherhood.

But then you come to the Mall sequence. Ethan's wife asks him to watch Jason while she tries shoes on Shaun. He is placed in a traditional masculine fatherly role – the watcher, the protector. And at this role, he fails. Jason wanders off, and you must lead Ethan around the Mall, trying to find him, being prompted to press "X" to shout "Jason!" When you finally find him outside the mall across the street, Jason crosses in front of an oncoming car. Ethan attempts to jump and save Jason, but it is to no avail. The idyllic, sunny life of the game's start ends with Jason's death, and all because you and Ethan failed at performing as a protective father.

From this moment on, the game takes place in a more urban environment, gloomy and rainy. Two years after Jason's death, divorced Ethan picks Shaun up from school. The depressing atmosphere is everywhere, in Ethan and Shaun's voices and animations and in the rainy environment. You drive home to Ethan's apartment, tasked with leading Shaun through his evening routine, keeping to the schedule on a chalkboard in the kitchen. You must feed Shaun a snack, help him with his homework, make him dinner, and make sure he gets to bed on time. Since you are theoretically new to the game's controls and the new environment, sticking exactly to the schedule is challenging, and it is very likely that you will "fail" at this task. Send Shaun to bed a bit early to be safe, and he will shout that he hates you and run up to his room. Send him to bed too late, and he will perform poorly in school in the morning and get in trouble. Even if you manage to take care of Shaun in the best ways possible, Ethan's family life is a far cry from how it was before: Shaun asks Ethan why he looks so sad all the time, and is answered "I just need some time," even though it has already been two years since Jason's death.

Figure A: *Heavy Rain*: In the first game sequence after Jason's death, Ethan drives Shaun to his apartment. Image found on publisher's official website.

And even if you manage to perform well as a father in the next sequence at the park (earning some relieving laughs and smiles from Shaun), Shaun says, "Sometimes I wish everything could just be the way it was before" (Quantic Dream). No matter how well you perform at these mundane actions of fatherhood, you fail to bring happiness back to the family and reclaim Ethan's identity as a good father.

The traditional masculine values touted by heroic protection discourse become the keys to redeeming Ethan as a father and a man. While Shaun rides on the carousel at the park, Ethan has a blackout, regaining consciousness hours later far from the park. You run back to the park, and just as in the mall sequence with Jason, all you can do is run around and shout "Shaun!" until you find Shaun's abandoned backpack, and Ethan collapses sobbing in the street. Shaun has been kidnapped by a serial killer known as the Origami Killer. It is here that *Heavy Rain* poses the question: "How far will you go to save someone you love?" (Quantic Dream). Ethan finds this message in a box he receives from the killer, along with instructions on five "trials" he must pass to prove his love and save Shaun. The killer's trials give Ethan a chance to prove his fatherhood in the traditional style of masculinity: the majority of the trials revolve around player-performed violence, either against others or against Ethan himself.

It is important to note that for some time, Ethan and the rest of the world believe that he is suffering from multiple personalities, and that he himself is the origami killer. He confesses: "I think my other self is testing me, testing my love for Shaun. He wants to know if I love my son enough to save him" (Quantic Dream). While it turns out Ethan is not the killer, this belief serves as a plot device for Ethan's need to save Shaun himself: the police and society at large believe him guilty, so they will hinder his efforts to save Shaun if he asks for help. This also suggests that Ethan's mission is about his own desire to prove his love, not about the selfless desire to have his son be safe. Even he believes he is capable of putting his own son in danger just to prove he can save him.

Ethan's readiness to perform violence is showcased in the trials, particularly in the third trial, where he is asked to cut off a finger from his hand on camera. After combing the room for instruments to use (options include pliers, a hatchet, and a saw), you must perform the correct button maneuvers to remove Ethan's pinky finger. You walk Ethan through the whole process, from lifting and cutting/chopping with the instrument to calming him down and regulating his breathing. His nervousness and anxiety are presented as physical obstacles to overcome on the way to his manhood-proving self-mutilation, and the pain he undergoes out of the love for his son is displayed prominently by the game's camerawork. Across the first three trials, Ethan gets so battered and hurt that your ability to control him is compromised. His animations and voice acting show off his limping and grunting, and before long you find Ethan moving more slowly and erratically as his cracked ribs, electrocuted flesh, and maimed hand become incredibly apparent. Ethan proves his love by fighting past physical barriers and enacting self-violence. In the fifth trial, this commitment to perform violence against himself is brought to its obvious conclusion: the ultimate sacrifice. Ethan is presented with a bottle of supposed poison and told that he will die in one hour if he drinks it, just enough time to save Shaun. The message is quite clear: if you endure physical pain and give up your life to save your child, you are a good father.

The fourth trial, however, steps away from self-sacrifice and highlights the masculine behavior seen so often in videogames: homicide with a gun. Ethan is given an address and is asked to murder someone he has never met before. When you arrive, you learn that the

man is a father himself, as he shows you a picture of his two daughters and pleads for his life. In order to succeed at this trial to prove his manhood and love for his son, Ethan must commit murder against another father, tossing aside morality and social responsibility. Heroic protection discourse is fully at work within the narrative, encouraging you to perform violence against both Ethan and others in order to prove Ethan's paternal masculinity.

Whether or not you succeed in saving Shaun is determined by your performance in these trials. If you fail to save him, you are punished with one of the game's three tragic endings. These endings vary due to decisions and other successful or failed performances by the player, but in all of them Ethan failed to save Shaun, and in all three he commits suicide. The tragic ending with Madison (a potential love interest) is the most explicit about Ethan's failure as a father. The two of them are standing before Shaun's grave. Madison attempts to cheer him up, telling him they'll move far away, he'll get a new job as an architect and they'll start a family together. But because of his failures as a father, he can't accept that. He says, "How can I forget that my two sons died because of me? I loved them more than anything in the world. But I couldn't protect them" (Quantic Dream). He pulls out a gun and shoots himself in front of Shaun's grave. Ethan's identity as a father who is capable of protecting his children trumps his identity as an architect or a romantic partner. He sees life as pointless because he failed to succeed as a paternal figure.

If you and Ethan do succeed as a father, proving capable of performing violence against Ethan and others in order to save Shaun, you are rewarded with a happy ending. In order to achieve the most positive ending where the ideal family life is restored, Ethan needs to save Shaun himself. That ideal ending features Ethan showing Shaun into a nice apartment. Shaun takes his hand and says, "It doesn't matter where we live, as long as we're together." Ethan responds, "I will never let anyone or anything separate us again" (Quantic Dream). Ethan's happy denouement fades out with Ethan and Shaun chasing each other around the apartment, laughing joyfully. In the case of both failure and success, the game sets you up to perform a vision of fatherhood where love is proven through violence and

sacrifice. Ultimately, the role of the protector is everything, and paternal masculinity is the bridge to an idyllic family life.

CELEBRATING PATERNALISM AT THE APOCALYPSE

While *Heavy Rain* skirted around the moral issues of paternalism by presenting the rest of society as a hindrance rather than a tool to save his son, other father-oriented games take this a step further. They escape the question of paternal masculinity in modern society by dismantling society itself, plunging the world into the apocalypse. In both *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us*, a zombie-like infection tears apart the foundations of society, establishing a setting where traditional paternal masculinity can emerge as a necessity.

In April 2012, Telltale Games released the first of five episodes of *The Walking Dead*. Like Robert Kirkman's comic book series of the same name, *The Walking Dead* is set at the site of a zombie apocalypse. As is often the case with videogame adaptations, it departs from its source material, following different characters and an original plot. In *The Walking Dead*, the end of the world is a fresh start for the main character, where the violent protective behavior that was condemned in civilized society is now celebrated.

In *The Walking Dead*, you play Lee Everett, an African-American ex-history professor in Georgia who begins the game about to serve a life sentence in prison for killing a man who was sleeping with his wife. Handcuffed in the backseat of a police car, you are immobilized and confined, capable of only looking around the car and out the window and responding to the officer's questions about your guilt. When a figure walks into the road, the officer turns to avoid it, crashing in the process. You crawl out of the police car to freedom, unlocking and removing your handcuffs before killing the zombie-infected police officer in self-defense. Lee's ability to perform violence had ruined his life in the regular world, but that same degree of violence saves his life at the apocalypse. Soon, you find Clementine, an eight-year-old girl who needs your protection. Her babysitter was killed by "walkers" while her parents have been on vacation, and she has taken refuge in her treehouse. You, as Lee, become her guardian for the rest of the game, performing violence to keep her safe.

The Walking Dead is considered part of the "Graphic Adventure" genre, characterized by its mode of performance. You point and click on objects in the environment to interact with them. During violent confrontations, the mode of performance is similar to *Heavy Rain:* you must react quickly, clicking on your opponent at the right time or pressing the right key or button quickly enough. Arguably, the primary mode of performance in *The Walking Dead* is the dialogue system. Very frequently in the game, Lee engages in conversation with one or more characters. You are prompted to choose nearly everything Lee says, typically receiving four options that all present Lee in a different light. The dialogue system lends itself to understanding through J. L. Austin's speech-act theory detailed in *How to Do Things With Words*, which highlights the performative nature of language. Your dialogue choices are typically not descriptive, but performative. Lee, as a man and the guardian of Clementine, is given many opportunities to speak and be heard. By performing many speech-acts throughout the game, you help define who Lee Everett is, painting a picture of Lee as the ideal father figure.

Within this dialogue system, Lee's background of violence comes to the fore, and the usefulness of his violent action is made explicit. Carla, a survivor who joins your group, recognizes Lee from the news. Confronting him about the truth, she says, "Maybe you're a murderer, but I don't really care. That's a skill that might come in handy" (Telltale Games). The apocalypse enhances the effect of heroic protection discourse beyond its potentiality in an organized society.

The game specifically reinforces this imperative of using violent action to protect Clementine, participating in the same violent protective discourse as *Heavy Rain.* In the drug store in the game's first episode, Clementine is attacked by a walker. Here, the player is capable of failing to save Clementine without getting a "Game Over" screen, as Carla succeeds in saving her. As with Ethan with saving his son, it is important for Lee to save Clementine, not just for her to be safe by another person's actions. Succeed, and you are notified by text, "Clementine will remember you protected her." Fail, and you are told, "Clementine will remember you didn't save her," and speaking with her later, she seems

emotionally hurt (Telltale Games). In order for you and Lee to make for a good father, you must be capable of protecting Clementine.

The Last of Us makes this need to perform protective violence as a father even more apparent. Released in 2013, *The Last of Us* centers on the relationship between adult Joel and teenager Ellie and their attempts to survive together in a world overrun by a zombie-like infection. While you occasionally play as Ellie, you predominantly control Joel throughout the game. The goal is for Joel to deliver Ellie to the Fireflies, an organization that may be able to study her immunity to the apocalyptic infection and create a vaccine for the rest of the survivors.

Inarguably, the primary mode of performance in *The Last of Us* is violence. You spend some time exploring abandoned areas looking for supplies and moving obstacles in your environment to progress through an area, but violent confrontation is the main thing you perform, usually with guns. There are cut-scenes of the game where Joel and Ellie's relationship as father-figure and daughter-figure blossoms, but you are only watching here, not performing. When you participate, you as Joel are constantly performing violence to protect Ellie.

Protecting Ellie from violence with your own violence is placed firmly in the game's mechanics, as is protecting Clementine in *The Walking Dead*. As in most games, you receive a "Game Over" screen if you fail in a violent confrontation and the main character (Lee or Joel) dies. If this happens, you restart from the most recent checkpoint. In these games, there is an additional lose/reset condition: if the daughter-figure (Clementine or Ellie) dies. The games constantly put the life of the daughter-figure on the line, and your story as the paternal figure is defined specifically by your ability to protect her. In *The Walking Dead*, this manifests as many specifically scripted moments where Clementine is attacked by a zombie, bandit, or other dangerous entity, and you as the player need to press the right buttons in the right sequence to save her. In *The Last of Us*, Ellie is capable of being attacked and killed in any fight sequence, as enemies will rush to kill her if you fail to defend her.

**Figure B: *The Last of Us*: Joel protects Ellie.
Image found on publisher's official website.**

If Clementine or Ellie is killed, you are presented with a graphic representation of agonizing screams and painful death. In both situations, paternal masculinity is all about protecting the daughter. The paternal figure must succeed at performing violent behavior to protect his daughter for the story to continue.

PATERNALISM AS UNSUSTAINABLE AND MORALLY PROBLEMATIC

It may seem that the heroic protection discourse touted by these games is absolute. But in *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us*, clear anxieties arise about the sustainability and morality of the violent action that characterizes paternal masculinity. Despite the fact that these games set their narratives at the apocalypse, they cannot fully escape the problematic nature of paternalism that has been identified by postcolonial theory. In both games, your performance of violent protective behavior escalates and climaxes at the end of the game – but both games encourage you to question your violent actions and, by proxy, the place of paternal masculinity in the world.

In order to understand how a game can have you perform violent behavior but also critique that behavior, we must revisit a common question in narrative: is the representation of behavior necessarily approval of that behavior? In film and other passive narrative mediums, the audience is said to "identify" with the main character. This identification may

lead the audience to approve of that character's behavior – this place of identification is the reason violence performed by an antagonist in a film will rarely be as railed against by the media as much as violence performed by a protagonist. The fact that the *protagonist* performs the violence is what makes it seem glorified. Yet identification with a character does not *necessarily* mean that the audience is expected to approve of that behavior. There are many instances where the protagonist of a narrative's actions are specifically called into question or portrayed in a negative light. But when it comes to a performative medium like videogames, the question needs to be revisited. When the action or behavior is actually done by the audience, is the audience's experience different? The degree to which the public reacts with such negativity to player-performed violence in videogames implies that the public certainly thinks so. The player is not just watching this action performed, but performing the action his or herself.

But even the degree to which the player tends to get behind the actions performed by him or her and the main character has its limits. The game *Spec Ops: The Line* (2012) makes this incredibly explicit, as it forces you to commit violence in order to continue the story, and then by the end of the game directly condemns the violence you have performed. While not quite as extreme as *The Line's* condemnation of player behavior, *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us* also present violent paternal behavior as a necessity, but eventually push the player to question whether or not they have done the right thing.

The games do this in part by questioning the sustainability and necessity of paternally masculine violent behavior. In *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us*, Lee and Joel aim to be the sole protectors of their daughter-figures, sheltering Clementine and Ellie from learning to protect themselves. Joel is stubbornly opposed to Ellie's fighting, despite her clear capability to defend herself throughout the game. The fact that both men are hesitant to let their daughter-figures learn to fight reveals the self-perpetuating nature of paternalism. Obviously, both Clementine and Ellie would be better off if they had the tools to defend themselves in case of danger. But this self-sufficiency on the part of the men's wards would put their status as protectors in peril. Ultimately, they can't escape from the

fact that the girls need to defend themselves. When Clementine is put in extreme danger because she's defenseless and other characters articulate the importance of self-defense, Lee agrees to show her how to shoot a gun. After Ellie repeatedly shows her value by defending herself and Joel, he slowly relents from his scolding of her actions.

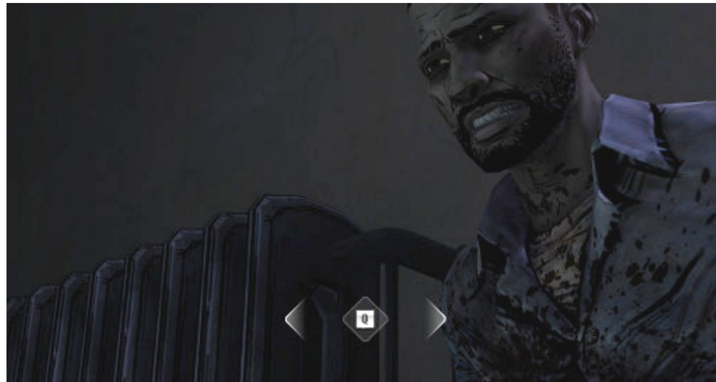
The unsustainability of paternal protection is emphasized in both games by showcasing the fragility of the male body. The place of the man as the only one capable of enacting protective violence is only possible if the man is always there to be the protector. In *The Last of Us*, after Joel has started to realize he shouldn't shelter Ellie from her ability to defend herself, he falls from the second floor of a building and is impaled on a pipe. In the following sequence, you play an injured Joel, walking around and defending yourself and Ellie with increasing difficulty, until you eventually collapse. For the first time in the game, you now control Ellie, who proves herself capable of bringing Joel to safety. For some time, she takes on the traditionally paternal role: she defends Joel from danger and provides for him, hunting for food and acquiring antibiotics to save him.

Ellie's self-sufficiency is emphasized shortly afterwards, after she is taken by a group of bandits. With the antibiotics Ellie gave him, Joel has recovered enough to move, so you regain control of Joel on his mission to save the "Damsel in Distress." The trope of the damsel in videogames is detailed by media critic Anita Sarkeesian in her video series *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games*, where she aptly points out that female characters are often used as props, put in danger so that the player-controlled male character can prove his manhood by saving her. *The Last of Us* certainly has you perform this manhood-test by pushing the limits of your injured body to reach and save Ellie, but the game ultimately reveals the excess of this masculine performance: by the time Joel reaches Ellie, she (controlled by you) kills her attacker herself.

In *The Walking Dead* the fragility of the male body is revealed when Lee is bitten and infected. Like Joel and Ethan, Lee must save the child in distress. Clementine has been kidnapped, and he must push the limits of his body in order to save her. Ultimately, you succeed, and near the end of the game you fight through a sea of zombies to reach Clementine, and with her help, kill her attacker. But in one of the game's final chapters

titled “Stay Close to Me,” while trying to lead Clementine back through the thousands of zombies, Lee passes out. Clementine pulls him to safety into an abandoned store, and Lee reveals that he’s been bitten. His time is running out. In the final sequence of the game, Lee’s body has weakened to the point that he can’t move; he regresses to his immobile state at the game’s start. You use the game’s usual means of pushing Lee’s body to perform feats of strength (as illustrated in Figure C), but for the first time, it is impossible to succeed.

Figure C: *The Walking Dead*: You are prompted to press “Q” repeatedly for Lee to stand up, but the infection has left his body too weak. Image taken by author as a screenshot in-game.



The fragility of Lee’s body has left him incapable of performing as the violent protector. Instead, you talk Clementine through the process of dealing with a zombie in the next room, as your final moment of accepting that you can no longer serve as her protective paternal figure. Inevitably, she has to take care of herself.

The Walking Dead and *The Last of Us* also reveal the ways in which violent paternal masculinity is morally problematic. In each game, you as the player controlling the father-figure enact violence in the name of protecting your child-figure, and by the game’s end you are encouraged to question the morality of this activity. In *The Walking Dead* this is most often presented in the context of decisions that you as the player make, where the lives of other characters are in your hands. Often, characters will challenge the morality of your actions no matter what decision you make. But the actions that are most criticized are

the ones where you choose the more violent option. The most representative example of this is when you must decide the fate of Ben, a teenager who is considered dead weight by much of the group, but who Clementine sees as a friend. After learning that Ben (with good intentions) lied to the group in a way that caused many people to die, most of the group turns against him. As there is only so much room in the boat that the group intends to take, Kenny – another father – votes that the group leaves him behind. Soon after the discussion, the group is in danger, and Lee ends up catching Ben as he falls from a ledge with walkers all below him. Knowing the group is against him, Ben asks you to let him fall. You are given a short amount of time to make a decision. Since there is only so much room on the boat and Ben's presence could rip the group apart, the most obvious option for the violent protector of Clementine is to let him fall. If this is your decision, Clementine asks Lee why he did it, and can hardly look at him in disappointment. Clearly the player's actions are not always celebrated. Here, decision-making moments involving violence are used specifically to make the player question his actions. Unlike *Heavy Rain*, *The Walking Dead* presents not only an anxiety about being able to physically protect one's child, but also puts that in dialogue with the morality of the actions that one performs in the name of protection.

This pushback against violent protective behavior comes to a head at the game's climax, when you confront Clementine's kidnapper. The conversation is procedurally generated. The kidnapper acts as an audience and critic of your performance of masculinity throughout the game, challenging not just your physical ability to take care of Clementine, but also the morality of your violent actions. For example, if you decided to let Ben die, or if you let a woman be killed slowly by walkers rather than putting her out of her misery in order to buy more time to gather supplies to take care of Clementine, the kidnapper points out the villainy of these actions. When confronted, you can choose to defend or admit fault in your performance, but regardless the man is relentless in his criticism, saying: "I know how to be a dad, you know. She wouldn't be exposed to what she has been with you" (Telltale Games).

The moment of moral questioning in *The Last of Us* also occurs at the game's climax. You as Joel have finally managed to bring Ellie to the Fireflies. In a cut scene, Joel speaks with Marlene, a mother-figure for Ellie and leader of the Fireflies, who appeared earlier in the game. She reveals that the surgery to reverse-engineer a vaccine will end Ellie's life. Marlene wishes there was another option, but makes the decision that needs to be made in order to save the world. Joel, however – without any decision made from the player – decides that since Ellie is the only thing he cares about in the world, he needs to save her, even though it will condemn all of humanity. At the end of the cut scene, Marlene leaves a guard to lead Joel out of the Firefly base. Joel kills the guard and decides he will stop at nothing to keep Ellie. You must go through the entire building, killing all of the Firefly members as you get closer and closer to the operating room. The humanity of your victims is clearly emphasized; one of the men shouts in horror that you killed his friend, giving a name to these people you are shooting. You arrive at the operating room, and the doctor implores you to stop. But the game gives you no choice but to shoot and kill him in order to continue with the narrative. Soon after this, Marlene confronts Joel again, trying to convince him to stop. She says, "It's what she'd want… and you know it" (Naughty Dog). Joel doesn't have an argument to face this assertion. He says nothing, shoots Marlene, and walks out, condemning the world for his own selfish need to have Ellie in his life.

The moment of killing the doctor – something the player needs to perform in order to finish the game – is when you are quite likely to question the actions you have performed. Joel is performing the same paternal masculinity made possible by heroic protection discourse as Ethan in *Heavy Rain*. He puts his identity as a father before his responsibility to the human race, despite his knowledge that Ellie would likely sacrifice herself for the sake of the world.

Both *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us* give you the opportunity to perform paternal masculinity, proving your love for your daughter-figure and your manhood through violence. Yet, the tradition of paternalism being celebrated through heroic protection discourse is no longer as structurally sound as it once appeared. The games express a degree of postcolonial understanding that the place of the paternal figure as a

hero is fraught with difficulty. In the end, you are encouraged to question the morality of your need to cling to a paternal identity.

In the cycle of videogames including *Heavy Rain, The Walking Dead,* and *The Last of Us*, the player's performance of violence to protect a child takes center stage. At certain times, especially in *Heavy Rain*, these actions are celebrated. The games set up a situation where violence is the only means to perform one's identity as a father. But when dealing with masculinity, we cannot always escape its state of crisis due to the problematic nature of paternalism.

The medium of videogames is frequently derided as escapist due to the player's ability to perform the role of their fantasies, but in *The Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us*, we see the very games that provide the stage for this violent performance throwing the player's actions into question. At what point do these moments of pushback illuminate the danger of violent masculine behavior for the average player? Clearly, this analysis of the player experience of paternal masculinity in games is not exhaustive. But by examining this medium as a stage for performance, we come closer to understanding the relationship between the players' actions and the messages they take when they walk away from the screen.

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