THE
BOOTHE
PRIZE
ESSAYS
2001
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Foreword

The Boothe Prizes recognize and reward outstanding expository and argumentative writing of first-year students in the Programs in Writing and Rhetoric and Introduction to the Humanities. Made possible by the generosity of the late D. Power Boothe, Jr., his wife Catie, and their son Barry, the Prizes are awarded at a celebratory ceremony each spring in honor of the preceding spring, autumn, and winter student winners and their instructors.

This year, for the first time, these essays are being published as a collection as one further way to celebrate the excellence and vitality of the writing done in first-year classes at Stanford. The essays that follow indicate the range and reach of many first-year writers; they are often remarkable in their analytic power as well as personal engagement with a topic or text. In addition, they reveal the varying kinds of research opportunities available to beginning Stanford students and represent the kind of work students are able to do in a short period of time, usually on a fairly unfamiliar topic, all the while managing the difficult work of all their other courses. We take special pleasure, then, in honoring these achievements.

Our special thanks go to the Boothe family for their support in producing this publication. We also thank the Writing and Rhetoric Committee who planned, edited, and produced The Boothe Prize Essays 2001: Ann Watters, Daniel Contreras, Jenn Fishman, Nina Leacock, Lowell Lipton, and Marjorie Ford, as well as the instructors who helped to select the twelve essays printed here: Claude Reichard, Marvin Diogenes, Evelyn Alsultany, John Tinker, and Corinne Arraez for the Program in Writing and Rhetoric and Orrin Robinson, Helen Brooks, Cheri Ross, and Valerie Ross for Introduction to the Humanities. Above all, our thanks go to the many first-year writers whose essays were nominated for a Boothe Prize and, especially, to the twelve students and instructors whose exemplary work now takes its place in the intellectual life of Stanford’s first-year programs.

John Bravman
Vice Provost for
Undergraduate Education

Andrea A. Lunsford
Professor of English
Director, Program in Writing and Rhetoric
Introduction to Program in Writing and Rhetoric Essays

First-year writing is one of Stanford’s oldest traditions and was the first requirement put in place by the University. Newly conceived this year as the Program in Writing and Rhetoric (PWR), our first-year courses provide a setting for student writers to focus their intellectual energies on the art and craft of composition, in a small seminar-style class with the meticulous and consistent guidance of an experienced writing instructor. The challenges of first-year writing are many: understanding a writer’s stance, developing a supportable thesis, discovering, developing, and deploying cogent proofs, making appropriate organizational and stylistic choices, and writing for a range of audiences. Further, the courses provide students in-depth practice in research-based writing, including the effective use of print and non-print sources, primary and secondary sources, and data based on fieldwork.

As the Directors of this Program, we have had the pleasure of reading all the essays nominated for the Boothe prizes, and we have been impressed over and over again by how well these beginning University students have met the challenges of first-year writing. We value the intellectual curiosity, freshness of thought and expression, and engagement with the ideas of others represented in the essays published here, and we offer our heartiest congratulations to these writers as well as to their instructors.

Andrea A. Lunsford, Director, PWR
Marvin Diogenes, Associate Director, PWR
Introduction by Alexandra Lang, Instructor

Ryan's essay, “Keeping us Grounded: A Reexamination of Newtonian Gravity,” was written as a research project for my PWR course on academic writing and research. Students were asked to choose a topic which was feasible for an academic quarter project, provided the opportunity for original scholarship, and insured the student's engagement throughout the research and writing process. Indeed, Ryan's work achieved these goals and so much more. When Ryan first approached me with his topic, I had two main concerns. The first was the scope. Could a topic of this magnitude be tackled in only 10 pages? My second concern were the broader issues of audience, tone and authorial voice. Could this topic be written for a lay audience without over-simplification? Throughout the quarter, Ryan and I engaged in many conversations on how to modulate and negotiate these issues in order to produce a work that was both engaging and provocative. I was particularly impressed with Ryan's ability to coin metaphors that distilled the complex scientific issues of his project in a compelling prose voice. Ryan achieved this aim by examining varieties of source material from the children's scientific series, Eyewitness, to interviews with leaders in the field, to experiment archives. This research coupled with his clear and cogent writing (and rewriting) produced a truly excellent piece of research and writing.

Gravity is a rebel, a nonconformist. She is everywhere in our universe, but her defying spirit is what makes her stand out amongst the other fundamental forces of nature, electromagnetism and the strong and weak nuclear force. Despite her attitude problems, gravity’s attractiveness entices physicists to crave an understanding of her insubordinate character. Throughout the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first, scientists have unsuccessfully tried to find the link between gravity and the other fundamental forces. Two reasons that physicists have not succeeded is because they have been led astray by the preconceived notion that gravity is a force that magically “pulls” masses together and the incorrect observation that the universe is expanding at a constant rate. Physicists should concentrate on the physical properties of space and its effects on gravitation and the motion of cosmic bodies. Despite maintaining a stubborn façade, gravity knows that she is simply an effect caused by different forces acting on two sides of an object created by particles in space, and in order for us to get her to confess to this, we must examine her true properties.

In elementary school, students are taught that “One day Sir Isaac Newton was sitting under an apple tree, and he saw an apple fall” (White 9), and with this event, the Newtonian theory of gravity was born. From an early age children learn that the Earth pulled the apple toward its center, causing it to fall. Observation even supports
this concept, but what really is a “pull” force? Understanding a push force is a simple
as shoving the person sitting next to you, but how does an object pull another? When
you want to open your car door, you pull up on the handle, but if you look at your
actions more closely, you will see that what you actually do is push on the handle
from the other side (Gelman). A horse, as it pulls a cart behind it, is actually pushing
the ground with its hooves and the ground pushes back at it, which helps the horse
and the cart move forward (Lafferty 30). The force observed from a “pull” is simply
a push, and this fact holds in all cases: opening a door, climbing up a ladder, or lifting
up an object. The same must be said for the Newtonian view of a gravitational “pull”
on any object of mass. The pull force is merely the consequence of the push force.
Therefore, the only way the Earth can be pulling an apple toward its surface is if it is
pushing it from the other side.

It is difficult to imagine the Earth having any effect at all on the far side (the side
of the apple that is not facing the earth) of the apple, but in order for the apple to move
toward the surface of the Earth, a force must be pushing on it. Instead of creating a
greater force on the other side of the apple, the Earth could simply create an absence
of force in the path between itself and the apple, perhaps by blocking a force that
otherwise would have prevented the apple from falling (Gelman).1 Then if the apple
were subjected to any other force from another object, it would be propelled toward
the Earth.

This mysterious force could be caused by minuscule particles flying in space
pushing on the far side of the apple. Not just the apple, but also all masses in space
lie in the path of these elements. Space could be bombarding all masses with these
tiny particles, which would create this force (Gelman). For example, look at the Earth
and the moon. Both of them could be the victims of a vicious attack from space
particles. Even as you read this essay, space could be assailing Earth, and all objects
in our universe, with tiny particles that push on all objects from all directions. The
Earth however, would block some of these particles from hitting the side of the moon
that is facing Earth.2 Because none of the particles from this direction are pushing
against the moon, the moon feels no force on one side. This absence of force on the
moon would allow the particles on the other side of the moon to push it toward the
Earth, unopposed. However, because the moon is already moving with a velocity
tangential to the Earth, this force keeps the moon in a circular orbit around the Earth,
and prevents it from flying off into space (Michelson interview).

In the same respect, the moon is pulling on the Earth. This effect is not as strong
as the Earth’s effect on the moon, because the moon is less massive than the Earth,
and therefore, it blocks fewer particles. Because fewer particles are blocked, there is
a smaller difference between the forces on both sides of the Earth. However, there is
enough of a difference to account for the moon’s “gravitational” effect on the tides of
the Earth. The oceans that are closest to the moon will feel a greater pull than those
on the far side, thus creating waves and tides that we observe in our oceans (Lafferty
33).

Proximity also plays a role as these particles from space can bend back around
an object.3 After the Earth blocks the particles (creating the pressure difference that
attracts the moon), they begin to curve back around the Earth. If the distance between
the Earth and the moon were great enough, the particles would curl back around all
the way. This event would fill up the space between the Earth and the moon with particles, and both objects would feel the force of the particles on all sides of them, abolishing any difference of force that once existed. Therefore, the closer together two objects are, the less curling of the particles around the objects will occur, and the there will be a greater difference of force.

Even Newton, when he wrote his equation for gravitation, observed the effect that distance had on force. This concept indicates why his law of gravity is called a square law: gravity is inversely proportional to the square of the distance (Hawking 9). As objects move further apart (because they were pushed by some other force), the gravitational force between them gets weaker and weaker. Many physicists believe that all masses in our universe have been getting farther and farther apart from a force caused by the Big Bang, which is theorized to have occurred billions of years ago (Gunderson 382).

“In 1929, Edwin Hubble made the landmark observation that wherever you look, distant galaxies are moving rapidly away from us. In other words, the universe is expanding” (Hawking 8). Once Hubble realized that the universe was expanding, physicists began formulating the Big Bang theory. Because all matter is getting farther apart, billions of years ago, all the objects in the universe must have been condensed into a very dense mass. This dense mass was very unstable, only lasting for a fraction of a millisecond, and with an explosion more powerful than a billion atomic bombs, the universe was created (Funk & Wagnalls 4:242). This explosion is the force behind the velocity of all mass in our universe causing its expansion.

Since the universe is expanding in all directions, the difference of forces on all masses is becoming weaker, as particles will be able to impact the masses from all sides, according to the previously mentioned curl theory. This conjecture would mean that once everything gets a certain distance apart, no object will feel a difference of forces (only equal forces from all sides), and will continue to go off in a direction at a constant velocity. An apt example is a billiard ball. First the ball is at rest; no forces are acting on it. Suppose you apply a force to one ball by striking it with a pool cue. This action creates a difference of forces (there is no force acting on the other side of the ball to oppose the motion of the cue) that sends the ball flying. After this initial force, no additional forces will act on the ball, if we assume that there is no friction. If the billiard table is infinitely long, the ball will roll on forever at a constant velocity, as all mass in space should, since there is no friction or any other force in empty space to slow it down (Gunderson 380).

However, according to Newton’s theory of gravity, immediately following the Big Bang, the force of gravity, stemming from the masses of objects, should begin to slow down the expansion of the universe. In fact, many scientists believe that we exist in a closed universe, which means that billions of years in the future, the force of gravity will overwhelm the force from the Big Bang, and it will “pull” the universe back together into a tiny, very dense ball, and then the process of the Big Bang will repeat itself all over again (Gunderson 385). To illustrate this point, imagine that you are at the bottom of an infinitely tall hill holding a bowling ball. You then roll the bowling ball (by applying a force to it) as hard as you can up the hill. At first the ball will roll up the hill due to the difference of forces (the force from you rolling the ball opposed by, say, a small amount of friction). Yet, as soon as the ball begins to climb
the hill, it will be slowing down from gravity, “pulling” it back toward the ground. Eventually gravity will take over your original rolling force, and the ball will come back to you, in accordance with the closed universe theory. This outcome means that the expansion of the universe should be slowing down, because of gravity’s mysterious “pull” that two masses feel toward each other, which would bring the universe back together, at the bottom of the hill. However, neither of these theories can hold in a universe that is expanding at an accelerating rate.

Recent observations have shown that the universe is in fact expanding at an accelerating rate (Glanz D2). These observations are groundbreaking in the realm of physics (Michelson interview). As Newton showed in the seventeenth century with his second law of motion, force equals mass multiplied by acceleration (Lafferty 30). This equation means that a constant force must be acting on all the objects in space, and that the Newtonian conception of gravity is definitely not slowing them down. The question is: what is the force creating this acceleration? The answer can once again be found with particles. As stated earlier, particles from space could be theoretically bombarding all massive objects. These impacts could then create a force that would accelerate all objects in the cosmos, and thus increase the rate of expansion of the universe (30). Once again, imagine yourself standing at a hill, but this time, you are at its peak, bowling ball still in hand. You then proceed to give the bowling ball a push (representing the force of the Big Bang), and gravity, now caused by a bombardment of particles instead of the Newtonian “pull,” continually pushes the ball down the hill causing the bowling ball to accelerate.

However, in order to do so, particles must be hitting the objects only on one side. If particles hit both sides of the object, then all the forces would cancel each other out, and there would be no acceleration. In order to get around this dilemma, there must be particles coming from only one direction of space, from the direction in which other matter is found. The direction in which no particles are hitting the object is the direction of expansion, which can be considered the edge of space. No particles exist past the objects that are at the edge of our expanding universe, therefore no particles could collide with the object on that side, and once again the difference of forces causes the mass to accelerate (Gelman). However, in order for this conception to hold, we must reside in a finite universe in which no particles exist past the edge of expansion.

Many physicists have made the assertion that our universe is not infinite, because if it were, every line of sight out in to space would end on a star (Hawking 6). If every line of sight ended on a star then our entire universe would be as bright as the surface of the sun. Often, an analogy with a forest is drawn in explaining the finiteness of our universe. If you were standing in the middle of an infinite forest, no matter what direction you looked, you would see part of a tree. In fact all you would see is trees. You could never see out of the forest (Michelson interview). However, because the universe is dark, it cannot be infinitely filled with stars. Therefore, our universe is finite, and there is no matter outside the edge of expansion of the universe. This assertion means that past this edge there is nothing that could supply any resistance or friction to the expansion process. This condition provides a great opportunity for particles to collide with mass at this edge, pushing objects out further into space without any opposition, thereby expanding our universe.
But what are these bizarre particles that create the difference of forces, making us observe a fictitious gravitational “pull” and expanding our universe at an accelerating rate? In pursuit of answers, we once again turn to the Big Bang. Since the Big Bang occurred billions of years ago, a leftover radiation at approximately three degrees Kelvin has been emanating throughout the universe in every direction (Hawking 108). Arno Penzias and Robert W. Wilson accidentally discovered this radiation in 1965 (Funk & Wagnalls 4:242). This radiation could be the source of these particles that cause the difference in forces, except that it is decreasing as the universe expands, and it would need to be increasing to provide the necessary force to accelerate our universe (Hawking 108). The radiation left over from the Big Bang could, however, provide enough free neutron to build a slowly growing chain reaction of nuclear fission that happens within all matter. Nuclear fission occurs when a free neutron collides with a large unstable nucleus (Challoner 50). This nucleus then splits into two smaller nuclei while giving off more free neutrons and energy (Challoner 51). These free neutrons could be the particles that bombard all objects in space every second. However, neutrons are quite large compared to other elementary particles such as the electron.

A more likely particle than the neutron responsible for the difference in forces, which we observe as gravity, is the neutrino (Gelman). Neutrinos are tiny particles that were created during the Big Bang and are given off whenever a neutron decays into a proton and an electron; they traverse the cosmos in every direction until they collide into a mass (Gunderson 386). Because all stars produce neutrinos and the universe does not contain any stars or any matter past the edge of expansion, these particles are prime candidates as the producers of the force that would continually push the universe to expand at an accelerating rate. However, there would need to be an abundance of neutrinos in our universe to have such an impact, and in fact, there are. “Neutrinos are approximately a billion times more prevalent throughout the universe than common particles that make up atoms” (Gunderson 386). If Newton’s theory of gravity was correct, then the mass of the neutrinos alone would be sufficient enough to turn the expansion back around causing the universe to contract under the neutrino’s “matter-pulling” gravity (Gunderson 387).

Despite gravity’s slyness in preserving her mysterious nature for centuries under the guise of massive objects simply “pulling” themselves toward each other, we have discovered that a difference of forces is really what pushes one mass toward another. In a universe that is expanding at an accelerating rate, the role of neutrinos bombarding all the matter in the universe becomes increasingly important. All over the world, bigger and better particle accelerators are being built, which will help us obtain a greater comprehension of the neutrino, and redefine gravity. Gravity’s rebelliousness may delay her inevitable link to the other fundamental forces, but we have begun to see through her façade. When we experimentally observe her true nature and the full effect of neutrinos, she will then become our ally into this next century. Without the Newtonian conception of gravity pulling us down to Earth, and with the true principle of gravity as our guide, we will be able to discover numerous underlying truths of our universe that are simply awaiting our comprehension.
Appendix #1
Mass Blocking Particles in Space

Figure A: The green arrows represent particles coming from one side of the Earth. The Earth blocks many of the particles from reaching the moon, as displayed by the red arrows. In this picture the Earth would be pushed toward the moon. (http://www.gravity.ontheinter.net)

Figure B: The particles are now coming from the other direction, blocked by the moon, creating a difference of forces that pushes the moon toward the Earth. The actual situation in space would be superimposed image of Figures A and B. (http://www.gravity.ontheinter.net)
Appendix #2

Curl Effect

Figure 3: The blue arrows moving from the left to the right represent particles bombarding the Earth. Just past the Earth, particles curl around to fill in the gap caused by the blockage of particles from the Earth, represented by the black arrows. In space, there would be particles striking Earth from all directions, not just one as represented here.

Appendix #3

The Edge of Our Universe

Figure 4: The blue particles are once again bombarding the mass. The black line represents the edge of our universe. Note that nothing exists beyond the edge of the universe and the particles are only pushing the mass on one side, providing the force which accelerates the expansion process.
Notes

1 This absence of force can be thought of as a pressure difference. For example, if a diver deep under water were to swim up suddenly toward the surface, the pressure from the water would be reduced quickly. However, because his internal pressure cannot adjust for such a rapid change, there is a pressure difference. This causes a force to act against, say his eardrums. This outward force from a pressure difference is what causes one’s ears to pop while swimming up quickly to a surface from underwater.

2 See Appendix 1.

3 See Appendix 2.

4 For more information regarding the Big Bang, read Stephen Hawking’s *A Brief History of Time*.

5 Because the universe is expanding, all matter is getting farther and farther apart. This means that if all objects reach a great enough distance apart, the particles bombarding the matter would be able to curve around the matter and push it from all sides.

6 No matter how hard you hit the ball, you could never equate the force from the Big Bang, but this action is an accurate enough portrayal of the effects of the Big Bang.

7 See the first paragraph on page three.

8 See Appendix 3.

9 While performing experiments at Bell Laboratories, Penzias and Wilson tried to find a better way to transmit telephone signals by eliminating as much background noise as possible. To do this, they pointed an electromagnetic wave receiver at the sky, so they could eliminate all radiation emanating from the Earth. However, no matter what they did, they could not get rid of a small amount of microwaves coming from space. It was then they discovered they background radiation left over from the Big Bang. More precise experiments have verified their data. They received the Nobel Prize for physics in 1978 (Michelson interview).

10 This process, in which a neutron decays into a proton, an electron, and a neutrino, is called beta decay. For more information about beta decay, consult *The Handy Physics Answer Book*, by P. Erik Gunderson.

Works Cited


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“The end of futebol-arte?”
The Effects of Globalization on Brazilian Soccer and the “Brazilian Dilemma”
by Luis Adaime

Introduction by Tim Yu, Instructor

Luis’s essay was written as a research project for my PWR course on popular culture. Students were asked to explore some particular cultural phenomenon and to do research into its social causes and effects. Many students pursued topics that reflected their own personal interests, but no essay was as effective as Luis’s at integrating personal experience and research.

What impresses me most about Luis’s essay is its remarkable ambition and range. He proposes to use soccer as a lens through which to read Brazilian culture since the 1950s, drawing on historical, sociological, and popular sources—and he largely succeeds in his task. Using the opposition of tradition and modernity that he sees evident throughout Brazilian culture, Luis describes the evolution of Brazilian soccer, from its rise as a national sport to its crises of the 1970s. The entire analysis is driven by a simple, and personally grounded, question: Why has Brazilian soccer lost the cultural power that it seemed to have for Luis’s father’s generation? Luis provides a rather surprising answer: the “crisis” may be more perceived than real, and the pressures of globalization may have actually strengthened Brazilian soccer. And Luis even offers a concrete, and rather unexpected, proposal for resolving this crisis. Luis’s essay is that rare exercise in cultural criticism that should be required reading for the participants in the culture that it studies.

Introduction

Roberto Baggio kicks the ball and misses the goal by more than a yard. He drops to his knees in tears and vexation. It is the end of the 1994 US World Cup. Brazil beats Italy in a penalty shoot out to become the only four-time soccer champion in history. I start screaming and jumping all around the living room. I immediately look around for my father, my fellow soccer buddy, to share my enthusiasm and hug him and cry with him. But much to my surprise, my father just sits on the couch with a half-hearted smile on his face, looking at me with a hint of pity in his eyes. After a while, I sit down and, very confused, I ask my dad why he looks so awkwardly sad during such a special moment. Staring at the television, which displays all the players and coaches jumping all around and vibrantly celebrating, my father says: “It’s just that they don’t play the soccer I used to watch.”

After six years, I finally understand my father’s reaction. Like many Brazilians of his generation, my dad feels an extreme sense of nostalgia for the “football of
before,” the so-called “futebol-arte.” My father’s generation watched Pele score three goals in the amazing victory of 5-2 against Sweden in the 1958 final. It also watched Garrincha dribble through five Norwegian opponents and score an epic goal in a 1962 World Cup qualifier. The Brazilian “baby-boomer” generation had Brazilian soccer at its height; it was the climax of a style that was praised all over the world. Soccer became indeed the sole source of national identity. It proved to Brazilians that they were a truly special people and that there was no reason for them to worship the economic development of Europe and the United States. The soccer played in Brazil showed that its peculiar racial mixture and its Afro-Iberian roots could be a source of pride. In fact, these cultural roots allowed players to have more flexibility and improvisation in their style, making it unique and incredibly effective against the rigidity of the white European players.

And yet this style came to be less effective after the 1970 World Cup. Clubs abroad started to emphasize collective results rather than individualism and to value victories over the beauty of the game. Coaches started to develop complex programs of physical fitness so that players became more uniform in terms of their ability. This style of soccer, called “futebol-força” (football-strength), risked putting the Brazilian style in jeopardy. After the weak campaigns of the national squad in 1974 and 1978, coaches from all over the country started to evaluate the need for artistry in soccer. More and more frequently academics claimed that Brazil should adapt to the new world tendency so that the national team would obtain better results abroad and keep its world hegemony. Nationalistic scholars opposed this argument by saying that such a change would make Brazilian soccer lose its traditional traits and thus cease to be such a key factor in the definition of being Brazilian.

This debate reflects a fundamental characteristic of Brazilian society, what academics call the “Brazilian dilemma.” The dilemma refers to the eternal conflict in Brazil between “modernity” and “tradition.” The first is associated with Western (more specifically American) values, egalitarian laws, capitalism and globalizazation. The second refers to Afro-Iberian characteristics, the unspoken social hierarchy in Brazil and semi-feudal social-economic relationships. Thus, adhering to “futebol-força” would claim loyalty to modernity, while recovering “futebol-arte” would reestablish soccer as a defender of “Brazilianess” and tradition.

The debate has become more frequent and heated with the globalization of sport. This movement has introduced live coverage of soccer matches in Brazil and increased the power of the media in the country. Live coverage has reduced public attendance at games, which drives scholars to claim that globalization is ruining soccer’s influence on Brazilian national identity. Globalization has also forced clubs to go through a hard transition from paternalistic (traditional) institutions to profit-driven (modern) companies. With the transition, players have been sold to foreign clubs more often and coaches have had to impose the tactics of “futebol-força” on their teams to make profit for the clubs. Many scholars argue that this transition has damaged the identification between players and fans, thus decreasing the role of soccer in the formation of national identity in Brazil.

In my paper I will claim that the effects of globalization on the Brazilian media have not been as damaging as scholars claim. I will show that the media have actually popularized soccer even more. With globalization and live coverage of matches, it is
nowadays much easier for the nation to suffer and celebrate in unison when the national squad plays, thus building national identity. Indeed, a much more damaging effect of globalization is the loss of our identification with the players, which is caused by the transition of clubs into “modern” companies. Yet, soccer clubs in Brazil have not yet been fully transformed into the profit-driven enterprises needed in a globalized setting because they are stuck in the Brazilian dilemma. These clubs are run by amateur directors who believe in tradition and who want to save the paternalistic advantages they get from the hierarchical society they run. The half-hearted drives to modernize the clubs drive them into debt and force them to sell their players to foreign clubs.

Here lies the origin of the loss of identification with the players, who go abroad and seem to be mercenaries to the Brazilian fans. I will finish my argument by claiming that the futebol-arte will reappear full-fledged once the dilemma is solved in the clubs. That is to say, once clubs commit to becoming “modern” enterprises, the contradiction in the clubs will cease, and players will be able to remain in Brazil. My father and the defenders of “futebol-arte” will no longer see the modernization of clubs as a detrimental effect of globalization as soon as they can watch good players on the field displaying “the true Brazilian soccer.”

_Futebol-arte and the suspension of the Brazilian dilemma_

Older generations of Brazilians miss the times when Pele played because soccer suspended the conflict in the old paradigm in Brazilian society of the “modern” and the “traditional.” This paradigm refers to the central paradox of Brazilian society, namely the fact that it is an egalitarian entity that coexists with a paternalistic, hierarchical one. As da Matta argues:

_Brazil lives a paradoxical situation: in a society heavily oriented toward the universal and the cordial, we find emphasis on the particular, the hierarchical, and the conflictive. And we find this under particular conditions: a general rule prohibits the use of the ritual expression, but an equally general practice fosters its use._

This unspoken ritual expression comes from the elite’s need to assert its authority after the advent of the abolition of slavery. This event eliminated the institutions that the elite had to differentiate itself from the populace. Since Brazilians never obeyed laws as strictly as Americans, they never created a legal system for discrimination like the Jim Crow laws. They had to rely on this parallel system of ritual expression to assert authority and place people “where they belong.”

Da Matta explains that when members of the Brazilian elite encounter a situation in which their social status is not recognized (such as getting a ticket for illegal parking), they respond with the phrase: “do you know who you’re talking to?!” They immediately associate themselves with an important public figure or reveal that they are themselves influential somehow. The authority or challenger of their position is then faced with the prospect of losing his job and decides not to challenge the “important figure.” Thus Brazilians can get around the universal laws and get ahead of the masses, who cannot claim kinship to the elite and end up being enslaved in the paternalistic society. To da Matta this is the core of the Brazilian dilemma:
universalizing laws that are supposed to correct inequalities end up helping to legitimize and perpetuate them. According to the sociologist, “this chronic clash between well-established public laws and the unwritten and occult importance of persons and relationships unmasks the paradox of the application of universal rules, for after the use of the ritual expression, universal laws tend to be regarded with mistrust, if not with suspicion.” The masses in Brazil know that the laws do not apply to the influential characters of public life and that tradition. That is to say, the Brazilian masses are aware that the use of the ritualistic expression coexists with the egalitarian laws and prevents them from being used.

The “football of before” (futebol de antes) legitimized this system and suspended the clash between modernity and tradition. When my father followed soccer as a teenager, there were no discussions of whether the Brazilian style of playing should become more European (that is, “modern”) because soccer legitimized the unspoken laws of being Brazilian — it legitimized tradition. “Tradition” here refers to the unique Brazilian way of playing soccer. Our way of running soccer and running our society in a parallel hierarchy rather than in a strict, cold egalitarian scheme (modern society) allowed us to play a soccer that was warm, mulatto and essentially Latin American, hence traditional and not modern. As sociologist Freyre put it:

We have just defined a Brazilian style of soccer, and this style is yet another expression of our “mulatto-ness,” which is quick in assimilating, dominating and smoothening in dance, curves or music the European or North-American techniques that are too angular to our taste: be them from sports or from architecture. Our “mulatto-ness” — psychologically, to be Brazilian is to be mulatto — is an enemy of the Apollonian formalism since it is quintessentially Dionysian.

Freyre here uses Apollonian and Dionysian to refer to the same paradigm of the Brazilian dilemma. Apollo, the Greek god of prophecy and poetry, is associated with values of the elite, and Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility, with values of the masses. According to the scholar, it was our “Brazilianess,” namely our peculiar features as a people, that prevented our style of soccer from being “angular” and “modern” (thus Apollonian) and made it “natural” and mulatto (thus Dionysian). As we shall see, it was the Dionysian aspect of soccer that emphasized its “Brazilianess” and made the masses accept it as a builder of national identity.

**Futebol-arte as a defender of Brazilian traditional values**

Soccer defended values of Brazil that could not be easily explained in words, like “Brazilianess.” Thus, it defended values that are as shady, undefined and typically Brazilian as da Matta’s unspoken ritual of expression. “Futebol-arte” defines Brazilian values well because it balances both sides of the paradigm, although having its specific talent stem from the side of tradition.

Soccer in Brazil did not start off as beautiful and artful as it was in the 1950s and 60s with Pele and Garrincha. According to scholar Lopes, the “football” played by the elite in the beginning of the century had a style that was extremely similar to the one from Europe: rigid tactics, emphasis on results rather than estheticism. This is the style of soccer that later came to be known after our losses in the 1970s as
“futebol-força.” That is, in the beginning of the century, soccer was Apollonian and a part of “modernity.” It changed once clerks who worked at the elite clubs in Brazil brought the sport to the suburbs where they lived. Since these clerks did not have the means to hire referees or to contact their wealthier bosses at the clubs, they improvised the game rules as best as they could. From this improvisation came the more natural Brazilian style of playing that does not obey the complicated European schemes of playing.

Sociologist John Humphrey argues that the Brazilian style of playing relates to the country’s tradition because it borrows heavily from our unique ethnic diversity. Brazil is much more diverse than other Latin American nations because it has significant Black and Asian populations. Even though diversity in Brazil is not as rich as it is in the United States, it promotes less segregation. As we have seen in our discussion of the dilemma, there were never any laws in Brazil to promote the separation of races. The unspoken rituals of expression could be broken when needed and thus it was easier for members of the Brazilian white elite to marry members of the black and mulatto populous is constant and enhanced interaction between races has created a society that hardly ever has any racial conflicts and that maximizes the sharing of cultural values.

From this incredible mixture comes what Brazilians refer to as “ginga,” a unique way that Brazilians move their bodies that borrows heavily from Black, Latin, Native and Portuguese cultures. It gives Brazilian soccer its unique Dionysian aspect and draws it closer to popular values. The “ginga” is used not only in dance, giving samba a particularly peculiar and sensuous movement, but also in soccer and even in everyday life. For example, Brazilians say that to get away from trouble with trickery and artfulness is to do so with “ginga.” In soccer, “ginga” is highly responsible for the way Brazilians can dribble through opponents so easily. By leaning their bodies in a very specific way, they fool the defendants in to thinking they are going to one side, and actually end up putting the ball between their legs or passing by the other side. The trick is very typical of our country’s style of playing and very few foreigners can do it with such artistry and cunning.

By giving Brazilians a special talent in soccer, the “ginga” has not only helped the masses to have an important tool in the formation of their own identity and to accept their “mulattoness” as a positive factor, it has also helped Brazilians to defeat their sense of inferiority. This feeling is highly connected to the dialectics between modernity and tradition in the Brazilian dilemma, as Brazilians cannot decide whether to hold on to their native culture and hail it or to adapt to world culture. Brazilians constantly mock their own backwardness and refer to anything produced abroad or related to foreign values as better. One could clearly observe this sense of inferiority from watching the headlines of local newspapers during the economic crisis in January 1999. This economic crisis plunged the value of the real (the local currency) against the value of the dollar and crashed stock markets all over the world. Instead of being upset by their own turn of events, Brazilians were actually excited with the influence that our economy had on other nations. It was common to watch news anchors giving the news with enthusiasm and an ironic smile on their faces.

This sense of inferiority (which stems from the dilemma) is also present in the way we relate to soccer. Although we are considered by many to be the best soccer
players in the world, we still constantly refer to European teams with awe. Fernando Calazans, a sports columnist for the Brazilian newspaper O Globo, calls it “a colonized complex which prevents coaches and journalists in Brazil from forming their own opinion without knowing the European one first.” This sense of inferiority, which comes from colonial times, is deeply rooted in Brazilian culture and was simply downplayed with the success of the national team in the 60s.

It was the “ginga” that made players become the defenders of “Brazilianess” abroad and that turned the identification with the players into a powerful tool for the identification of Brazilians with tradition (i.e. Brazilian values). When Garrincha played against Europeans, Brazilians no longer felt that their own culture was inferior and that there was a need to modernize, that is, to assimilate foreign values. As Humphrey puts it:

For many people in Brazil there was no better sight than a six-foot, blond, superbly-coached and tactically-trained European defender on a rigid calorie-controlled diet being made to look like a fool by the devastating artistry of an undernourished, anarchic black winger with two twisted legs who could never have made past the medical exam in Europe.

At that time, we were the ones who possessed a special gift for soccer, and not the Europeans like many Brazilians think nowadays. Soccer was literally the only way that we had to affirm our greatness over other nations. Therefore, players like Garrincha became much more important in the formation of national identity. Garrincha had twisted legs and had been rejected by many soccer clubs in Rio before making it to the national squad. The lower classes of Brazilian society fully identified with him and the whole nation shared the joy of his victories.

“Modern” values of soccer in Brazil before “futebol-força”

Soccer also has had to have some aspects of “modernity” and of the egalitarian scheme in order to be accepted by the masses. The sport was only successful as a tool for the formation of national identity because it had elements from both sides of the dilemma. The masses would not have accepted soccer as the true Brazilian sport if it were not as democratic and egalitarian as it is. Throughout this century, soccer in Brazil had the great feat of joining tradition and modern values into a symbiotic and harmonious relationship that made Brazilians forget that there ever was a dilemma in their society.

As we have seen, an important part of “modernity” in the Brazilian dilemma is the establishment of egalitarian laws. These laws give democratic societies such as Brazil the feeling that all citizens are equal to institutions such as the State. Having the whole nation share emotions, like having them experience a trauma or a victory together, can enhance such egalitarian sentiment. Sociologist Simoni Guedes argues that soccer is an effective tool for the formation of national identity in Brazil because it forces us to share these emotions. Guedes argues that other sports have not built national identity in Brazil because they are forgotten in defeats: “if rigorously any sport can produce collective identification through victories, only soccer does it permanently, in victories and defeats.” When some athlete such as Gustavo Kuerten,
a successful Brazilian tennis player, wins an important tournament, the whole nation rejoices. Yet he is just as easily forgotten when he fails to win.

This particular sharing of emotions comes not only from our particular identification with soccer because of its role in enforcing tradition, but also from the fact that it is a collective sport. According to Lever, when a team such as Nigeria plays in the World Cup, it comes to represent a whole people and not just merely an athletic team. When they beat Bulgaria in the 1994 World Cup, newspapers across the world said that “the Nigerians had defeated the Bulgarians,” or that “David had beat Goliath,” but never that “the Nigeria soccer squad had defeated Bulgaria’s.” There is a significant difference between calling Nigeria’s team “the Nigerians” and calling them “the Nigerian squad.” Thus, in international competitions such as the World Cup these teams transcend their identity to become their nation and defend their honor against the powerful nations of the world. This transformation would not be as dramatic if the world’s most popular sport was individualistic like in tennis. Victories in this realm are always attributed to a single person instead and not to a nation necessarily. There is a great difference between calling such a victory “the Brazilian’s” and calling it “the Brazilians’.” Such a feat is shared by the whole nation, reinforcing the commonality between Brazilians and the egalitarian system of modernity.

Because the tradition is so strong in soccer and makes Brazilians identify with it so much, the effects of modernity from soccer are also enhanced. Defeats of the national squad in Brazil are compared to the death of presidents and revolutions. According to one retired Brazilian worker commenting on the death of President Tancredo Neves in 1985: “I only felt defeated this way twice: in ‘50 and in Getulio’s death. No, better yet, three times: also in the revolution of 64.” The revolution of 1964 was one of the darkest moments of Brazilian history, when the army took over the government in a coup and established a military dictatorship. Guedes’ witness compares this moment of traumatic loss to our defeat in the 1950 World Cup final in Rio, where 200,000 Brazilians watched the Uruguayan team defeat their national squad at the newly built Maracana stadium. Getulio Vargas and Tancredo were the most popular presidents ever to rule in Brazil and their deaths caused national traumas of the magnitude of John Kennedy’s assassination if not larger. To compare such national pain with the loss of a national title may seem absurd, but shows how important soccer is for Brazilians to affirm their national identity. Sharing the disappointment at the loss of a World Cup leads Brazilians to celebrate soccer all the time and places it on a pedestal where it cannot be touched by other sports such as basketball or tennis.

Soccer also leads to this intense sharing of emotions because it is a sport. Several scholars argue that it is not uncommon in modern societies for sports to be a source of national identity, promoting democratic and egalitarian values. According to sociologist Janet Lever, sport provides unity to diverse communities by giving them a common ground where the laws are continuous and immutable. People of different backgrounds can disagree on politics, economics and hundreds of other fields, but the rules of a sport will always be the same. So when a Jewish squad meets with a Palestinian one on the field to play soccer, they will be on equal grounds from the beginning. The best one will win (if the referee is impartial, of course) and the result
will not be contested. The soccer field becomes a leveler of social and economic disparities between the teams. It does not matter whether the American player has a better health care system or is paid ten times as much as Brazilian players; once he is on the field, he is on equal ground with his opponent. This equality is vital for the establishment of modernity in the Brazilian dilemma.

Sport also builds “a sense of togetherness,” vital for societies that are trying to become unified. This is the same sense and sharing of emotions discussed by Guedes. When running on the fields or watching a game or performance, people of various backgrounds and beliefs become together for a brief period of time. The White businessman swears just as much as the Hispanic janitor when they are sitting side by side in the stands and are watching their team lose. These two fans could also discuss the results of the game in some other setting, such as a bus ride, as if they had known each other for years. Their common love for their team overcomes the socio-economic barriers between them and makes them share the same piece of popular culture.

Lever says that sports are one of the few institutions on Earth that can lead strangers to put aside their differences and actually enjoy sharing such deep emotions. In a country with as much social disparity as Brazil, this sort of common ground between the rich and the poor is extremely valuable. At soccer matches in Brazil, janitors and businessmen constantly hug each other at goals and complain together when their team is losing. This sharing of emotions creates the sense that fans are just part of a big family that follows soccer together.

Soccer has the advantage of enhancing all of these characteristics and has been thus the most effective of all sports in drawing diverse communities together and creating national identities. The sport, created in England in the middle of the nineteenth century, is extremely democratic, since it allows players of all physical attributes to play. One needs to be very tall to play professional basketball or volleyball and particularly built to play rugby or American football. There are hardly any skinny and tall linebackers in football, or any short and stocky defender in basketball. The beauty of soccer lies on this lack of physical requirements. Nearly anyone can play, fat or skinny, tall or short, it doesn’t really matter, as long as one can run and kick the ball. Romario, one of Brazil’s top soccer players and considered by many to be the best one in the world, is constantly over his ideal weight and measures 1.68m (5’4”). This trait of soccer is particularly important in developing countries such as Brazil, where the vast majority of the population is poor and frequently malnourished. This malnourishment prevents millions of Brazilians from having the height or the build necessary to play basketball or volleyball, yet they can be easily found kicking a ball around the poor neighborhoods of Rio.

Soccer is also very democratic because it requires very little equipment and few special garments to play. Many sports played in the States need complex paraphernalia. Ice hockey, for example requires an ice rink, special gear and body pads, a hockey stick, goals, which are all very expensive to obtain or keep. Basketball, which is the second most played sport in the world, requires players to have the income to buy sneakers, a special rubber ball (which cannot be improvised with any kind of ball, since it needs to bounce) and a court with a hoop. Compare these requirements for other sports with soccer: all one really needs is an open field or even just an empty part of a street and a ball to play. Goals can be easily improvised.
with shoes or boxes and a ball can be easily made at home with a couple of socks.

This aspect of improvisation in soccer has played a special role in its acceptance in Brazil and it has become a vital part of being a Brazilian. Poets have constantly praised the “bola de meia” (sock ball) and the pick up games all over the country. It shocks tourists visiting Brazil to see how often soccer is played all over the place. People play it at the beach, down the streets, at parking lots, at home, down apartment hallways and basically anywhere they can. If the sport required too much equipment, it would never become the most popular sport in such a developing nation where the poorest constantly have hardly anything to eat.

“Futebol-arte” borrows thus much from this sense of improvisation and from the particular traits of “Brazilianess” already discussed. In fact, it balances the democracy from “modernity” with the “Brazilianess” from “tradition” to create an institution that is based on the dilemma and is thus validated as truly Brazilian by the masses.

Futebol-força and the end of the balance between tradition and modernity

Soccer started to lose its prominence in the formation of national identity in Brazil with the defeats of our national squad in the 1970s. These defeats led Brazilians to believe that there was something wrong with “futebol-arte” and that their particular style of playing was outdated. A fierce debate between academics followed as they tried to decide whether Brazil should focus more on tradition or on modernity, that is, whether we should play “futebol-arte” or “futebol-força.” The debate is still going on nowadays in all of Brazil’s media and shows how soccer lost its role in keeping the balance between tradition and modernity under check. As I shall prove, it is this lack of balance in the Brazilian dilemma that has led to the loss of identification between players and fans, which is vital for the formation of national identity in the masses. There is too much emphasis on modernity and on “futebol-força” nowadays, which makes it hard for “futebol-arte” to be effective.

In the 1960s, teams from all over the world, especially Europe, started to emphasize physical fitness over individual talent in order to achieve better results. European coaches started to have practices in which players were required to run and swim instead of just playing soccer and improving their skill. Brazilian coach Joao Saldanha decided to resist the world trend and to call only talented players such as Pele and Garrincha for his team. Since all the other teams were already adapted to the new physical fitness program, they outran the Brazilian athletes and eliminated us from the 1966 World Cup. From then on, there were constant debates in the media relating the losses of the national team to its incapability to adapt to the soccer played elsewhere. One of the most influential sports columnists in Brazil, Jose Werneck, wrote at the time: “The national squad is outdated... the coach’s mistake is not to have a fixed scheme. The national squad is based solely on individualism, and not on the whole team. The players should be chosen based on the scheme, and not the other way around.” Modernity was introduced too quickly into Brazilian soccer and now academics and journalists began to doubt if “futebol-arte” had any merits at all.

Scholar Antonio Soares claims that with this loss in the World Cup of 1966, Brazilian coaches started to introduce this notion of “romantic taylorism” into Brazilian soccer. Taylorism is a theory from industrial management that “divides
labor in simple, short, repetitive steps,” in order to increase productivity. Soares here refers to “romantic taylorism” as the division of soccer practice into different stages according to the characteristics of each player. When introduced in the 1970s, such division tended to decrease the importance of improvisation in practices and in games. The players became mere machines that were supposed to be well prepared to perform their highly specific function on the field. They could no longer dribble through eight opponents and score with a bicycle kick. Such traits in a player were now seen with bad eyes. Coaches preferred instead that players simply and systematically pass the ball according to their rigid schemes and that they perform the functions assigned to them.

This process led to the same alienation of labor discussed by Marx in his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844:

Estranged labour turns man’s species being, both nature and his spiritual species property, into a being alien to him, into a means to his individual existence. It estranges man’s own body from him...his human being.

With the invention of “futebol-força,” players lost some of the motivation for playing, since their power of decision in the game was taken away from them, much in the same way as Marx says that the power of decision was taken from the workers. They could no longer decide whether to put the ball in between the legs of the opponent just for an artful trick, since coaches began to oppose such unnecessary display of skills. Industrialization of soccer has led to the same drive for results that occurs in an economic market. Much like skilled workers who were deprived from their ability to make decisions for themselves, players were stripped of their ability to play freely. The Brazilian game thus lost some of its attractiveness and its function as a tool to distinguish us from the rest of the soccer players. We were gradually becoming as mechanical as the stiff Europeans we always mock.

Another factor that enhances the loss of identification with our soccer players in the new “modernized” scheme is the lack of consistency in the administration of soccer clubs. Usually, amateur directors who think of their associations as family-run business rather than a company are in charge of these institutions. This traditional and typically Brazilian way of thinking contradicts the modernization of soccer, which requires them to turn their clubs into profit-driven companies in order to compete internationally. According to Helal, “on one side there is the traditional Brazilian culture of club politics and illicit exchange of favors. On the other there is the increasing demand for administrative professionalism.” The Brazilian scholar says that there is a lack of compatibility between the “taylorism” practiced by coaches, which entails a push towards commercialization and professionalization, and the nature of club politics, which prevents directors from doing what is best for the team. These directors are constantly hiring the wrong personnel, getting horrible deals for television rights and trading their stars just in order to make ends meet at the end of the month.

This amateurism of the directors is directly related to the unwillingness of Brazilians to let go of tradition for the sake of modernity. Here we have the Brazilian dilemma once again, which Soares describes in the specific case of soccer players as a battle between the accumulation of wealth (modernity) and the search for glory (tradition):
The material accumulation seems to obey the same logic. Before capitalism, accumulating wealth was faced as an undignified activity, like ambition and selfishness. During this period, the search of honor and glory was strongly marked on the medieval man, the chivalrous ethos. In the beginning of capitalism, however, the commercial relations and the economic interests were raised to the condition of necessary step for the development of society and the State. This second orientation had in the economic accumulation a strategy to withhold the warrior passions disseminated by the chivalrous ethos.30

In this sense, holding on to tradition means to be invested in the highest, sacred mission against the evils of capitalism. Since players now lost the shield they had in the times of balance in the dilemma, fans have started to perceive them as too "modern." Brazilians now see as mercenaries the several athletes who leave their clubs to go abroad for better financial compensation. The ones who stay behind to defend the colors of the national squad or even the local clubs are hailed as heroes and reminiscent of those who played in the times of “futebol-arte.” The fans are trying in effect to reestablish the balance in the dilemma by hailing the players associated with tradition. Brazilians are feeling badly the lack of epic heroes like Garrincha to defend their national squad against the evil, cold-hearted Europeans.

Another source of the current distance between fans and players is the lack of organization in soccer calendars. In the new globalized scheme, the amateur directors need to overplay their teams in order to make profit. This was not the case for my father’s generation: since clubs did not need to worry so much about financial gain, they were free to play better teams and to have fewer matches. This new lack of organization, allied with the increasing media coverage of live matches, leads to the emptying of stadiums and sharp decreases in public attendance. The average of spectators at Rio’s State championships dropped by more than 20,000 between 1980 and 1990.31 The quality of the games has also decreased substantially, since teams end up playing three or four times a week, without the much-needed two days of rest between matches. This overload of games tires the already machine-like players and keeps the fans from identifying with them even more. Not only are there no more soccer stars on the field, since the directors have to sell them to make money for the club, but there are also too many uninteresting games against small teams. It is not uncommon in the 1990s for important Brazilian teams such as Flamengo and Santos to have to go to Europe and play friendly matches for sheer financial gain.

These important Brazilian clubs also have to play against small teams because of the state federations. Brazil is divided into several soccer regions and dominions that together compose the state federations.32 The problem is that small teams have the same vote in these federations as the more powerful ones, which forces the directors to make concessions for the sake of having better calendars. It is constantly found in Brazil that amateur directors who work for big teams will receive bribes and sign advantageous private contracts with the presidents of small teams in order to have their players go to play in the countryside. Here we see another fruit of the current imbalance between modernity and tradition in Brazil, since this piece of Brazilian tradition prevents the clubs from becoming the companies that they have aspired to in the past couple of decades. If Brazilians are to retain their “futebol-arte,” they must
completely modernize and get rid of this piece of damaging tradition. Constant games against small teams drive fans away from soccer and keep them from going to the stadiums.

The Media: Villain or Hero?

One last institution that is constantly blamed for the currently empty stadiums in Brazil is the media and, more specifically, the television. Scholars such as Lever, Soares and Helal say that the beginning of live broadcasting of soccer matches in Brazil accelerated the alienation of soccer fans from the athletes. By staying at home, these fans were depriving Brazilian soccer from one of its most praised features: the chanting at the stadiums. Here again the Latin-American spirit and samba play a vital role: they lend the chants a unique liveliness that inspire the players and encourages citizens from all social strata to come and watch a game at the stadium. According to some critics, with the advent of live broadcasting, some of this lively partying between rich and poor alike would be lost. Soccer would lose some of its function as a social unifier in a country with sharp social contrasts. In fact, it would lose its egalitarian function in the “modern” side of the dilemma.

Luckily enough, this aspect of Brazilian soccer is not yet lost. The globalized media has, if anything, provided Brazilians with more opportunities to cheer for their national squad. What has happened in Brazil with the advent of live transmissions is similar to what has happened in Scotland, where the broadcasts have actually helped to form a sense of national identity. In trying to sell their live coverage of the Scottish League, TV channels have emphasized the particular traits of Scotland in their ads: Scottish football and its accompanying characteristics (according to BskyB) of flair, grit and passion (with, of course, obligatory bagpipes, tartanry and Scottish scenery included in the programme titles) become synonymous with aspects of the Scottish heritage industry, projecting a partial, simulated view of the country which emphasizes the important position that football has in defining a Scottish male identity.

The exact same artifice is constantly used in Brazil: before games, scenes of Rio with beautiful women dancing samba and Garrincha dribbling past five Norwegian opponents at the same time are transmitted to millions before games of the national squad, which creates a common ground of discussion for the whole Brazilian people, thus creating a common identity.

The broadcasters also play a vital role in this new function of the media. They reinforce the local national identity by becoming themselves stereotypical characters of the local culture. Guedes argues that the soccer commentators in Brazil are just as famous and important in Brazil as the soccer players themselves. She cites several examples of how these journalists noticeably change their accent and their colloquialisms in order to create a better sense of identification with the common, illiterate man in Brazil, and has Galvao Bueno as the best out of all of them. This journalist started his career as a news writer for a respected Brazilian newspaper, but once he switched into sports broadcasting he became all of a sudden a common man who “swears and leads the Brazilian public in the chanting and suffering.”

The live
matches have thus only transferred partially the chanting from the stadiums to the home, but it is still a vital part of Brazilian life. Indeed, when the national team plays, the streets become virtual stands where people from their houses shout and commemorate together. The broadcasters play the vital role in these new virtual stands of orchestrating the occasion and leading the public in the cheering. The important interaction between the classes at the stadium is not lost, since they can comment on the games at work or even in the streets. The media has not affected the Brazilian dilemma and has thus not changed the role it plays in the formation of national identity in Brazil.

**Conclusion**

In the last World Cup in France, journalists from all over the world kept repeating that three billion spectators were hooked on the first truly international event. They hailed the extent of globalization and the popularization of soccer, which allowed the most humble family in the Amazon to follow the games of the national squad. Still, what is the use of having the means to watch our national passion if it gradually disappears? Why should a humble Brazilian farmer who is malnourished follow Galvao Bueno’s comments on television if he can no longer identify with players like Garrincha? There is a lack of compatibility between the advent of live coverage and the development of Brazil’s domestic dilemma. Stuck between the chance to hold on to tradition and not be a mercenary and the chance to make millions, Brazilian directors and players have greatly decreased the power of soccer in the formation of national identity in Brazil.

The necessary step to be taken here is to modernize the clubs once and for all, so that there is no more inconsistency between the action of directors and their drive to turn clubs into real “modern” institutions. Contrary to what many may think, such a measure would save Brazil’s “futebol-arte” by keeping young talents at home and preventing them from going to play in Europe. By keeping talents in Brazil, the coaches’ and Brazilian self-esteem would rise and they would no longer need to copy the schemes and tactics from Europe. Having more confidence in the ability of their players, coaches would let them improvise more often and play the style of soccer that has made us famous. With the use of the extensive media coverage, such a move would make soccer even more of a powerful tool for the formation of national identity in Brazil and would prevent such an important part of our culture from vanishing. The young fans of the twentieth century would identify with the players more intensely and put on street carnivals that would rival the ones put on by my father’s generation. A new balance in the dilemma would be found and the crisis in Brazilian soccer would finally end.
2 Da Matta 141.
3 Da Matta 154.
4 Da Matta 146.
5 Da Matta 150.
6 Da Matta 170.
7 Gilberto Freyre, Sociologia (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1945) 432.
8 Freyre 87.
11 Humphrey 70.
13 Guedes 41.
15 Guedes 39.
16 Lever 1.
17 Lever 3.
18 Lever 10.
19 Lever 30.
20 Lever 26.
21 Ronaldo Helal, Passes e Impasses-Futebol e Cultura de Massa no Brasil (Petropolis: Editora Vozes, 1997) 19.
22 An example of this prise of the Brazilian game can be found in the works of Brazil’s most famous poets, such as Carlos Drummond de Andrade and Cecilia Meireles.
23 Antonio Jorge G. Soares, Futebol, Malandragem e Identidade (Vitoria: SPDC/UFES, 1994) 94.
24 Soares 106.
27 Soares 111.
28 Soares 111.
30 Guedes 45.
31 Guedes 46.
Napster: Champion of Free Exchange, Threat to Industry Conglomerates

by Noah Lichtenstein

Introduction by Daniel Contreras, Instructor

It is exciting and challenging to teach writing and rhetoric through popular culture: exciting because students have grown up in a media saturated culture, and this familiarity lets us concentrate on developing critical tools to make sense of mass culture; and challenging because it is this very familiarity that makes it all too easy to discard historical context in favor of publicity-driven critiques. Therefore, when Noah suggested Napster as his research topic, I was concerned that the essay would consist primarily of summarized newsclips and, since Napster is so important to many university students, I also worried that the essay would favor celebration over critique. I needn't have worried. I think Noah's essay is as stylistically strong as it is incisive: he describes technological developments in a fashion that even the most hardened technophobe can follow. He also offers a fresh perspective on a phenomenon that has received intense media coverage. This is a fine essay, and I hope to hear more from Noah in the future.

Living in a college dorm surrounded by nearly a hundred other students, one finds it practically impossible to escape the reaches of Napster, the controversial music-swapping service popular among college students nationwide. Whether through use of the program itself or through shirts and stickers sporting the Napster logo, the company has become a symbol of freedom and revolution for music-lovers everywhere. However, Napster's future remains unclear as the recording industry is attempting to shut down the service, claiming it detracts from industry revenues. In the meantime, the record companies have come under heavy fire from consumers and musicians alike, as the future of the entire music industry remains unclear. As the conflict escalates, it is becoming more and more apparent that the recording industry is fighting for its life as a wave of new technology, led by Napster, threatens to make the current system of "private" music conglomeration obsolete.

The largest of these threats — Napster — was launched in 1999 by eighteen-year-old music enthusiast, Shawn Fanning, with the intent of making music files easier to locate on the Internet. This small application, developed on his uncle's office computer in Redwood City, California, has made Internet history, and has sparked controversy throughout the technology world. With a base of over forty million users, Napster is by far the fastest-growing Internet application ever, with
America Online having taken an entire decade to reach twenty-five million members (Graham).

The Napster program is based on the relatively new technological concept of peer-to-peer file sharing. In a traditional Internet system, a company creates a massive database of information, from which all of its users download files directly. This method, however, is very uneconomical because of the costly nature of creating such a database, along with creating a wide enough bandwidth required to enable the transfer of such media (a process which costs corporations millions of dollars). Peer-to-peer file sharing solves this problem by pushing these costs directly onto the consumers. By having users store some portion of the files on their computer, and then individually paying for a faster bandwidth so they can process this information, the company offsets millions of dollars in needless fees by imposing a fractional cost on each user. In Napster’s case, Fanning basically created a server that lists each of the members’ names, along with the files they have available to share. Then, each member can download the selected song directly from any of the forty million other users (see figure 1). In addition, the user can search for media two ways: first, by searching through all the files another member has shared, and second, by typing in the desired filename and then downloading it from a list of users who have the specified file (Huffstutter).

Figure 1: Distinction between Standard and Shared Databases

This file-sharing concept has presented quite a problem for the recording industry because it enables the free distribution of songs without the consent of the copyright owners. As a result, the five major record labels, known collectively as the “Big Five” — Sony, Universal, Warner, EMI, and Bertelsmann (BMG) — banded together under the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) in a lawsuit against Napster. According to the RIAA’s preliminary injunction motion, Napster is guilty of copyright infringement because they, “with the knowledge on the infringing activity, (induced), (caused), or materially (contributed) to the infringing conduct of another” (Costello). While this is the technical terminology used in the courtroom, the RIAA more plainly accuses Napster of aiding its users in performing acts of piracy and theft. The RIAA claims that Napster is responsible for a decrease in record sales, and is hurting the artists that Napster users claim to support.

In addition to the RIAA’s lawsuit, several artists have individually taken legal action — most notably Dr. Dre and Metallica — citing the same examples of copyright infringement. Using similar phraseology, Dr. Dre’s suit claims, “Napster devised and distributes software whose sole purpose is to permit [the company] to profit by
abetting and encouraging the pirating of creative efforts of the world’s most admired and successful music artists” (Borland, “Raising”). While the RIAA is suing Napster directly, Dr. Dre and Metallica have taken a different approach, attacking individual users and universities that permit the use of file sharing technologies such as Napster.

According to Howard King, the attorney representing Dr. Dre and Metallica, the artists want their songs to be either removed from Napster, or at least banned from trading titles over the server. In a statement made by King shortly after Dr. Dre joined the legal battle in May, he was quoted as saying, “We didn’t want anyone to lose sight of the fact that all Metallica and Dr. Dre are asking is that the songs be deleted from the directory...” (Borland, “Dr. Dre”). However, since Napster is merely a go-between among its software users, this task is simply impossible. As Napster spokesman Dan Wool said in response to the request, “Napster doesn’t host or store files. The only action we have as a service provider is to block users” (“Dr. Dre”).

In reaction to this statement, Dr. Dre demanded that the courts shut down Napster and award damages of $100,000 per illegally copied work, which could total approximately $10 million. Meanwhile, Metallica attacked the server from a different angle, targeting three universities it claimed were responsible for their students’ illegal use of software (though no universities were named). However, as these lawsuits still remain unresolved, the music-swapping free-for-all continues for Napster users (“Dr. Dre”).

While the artists’ lawsuit is progressing slowly, Napster’s courtroom battle with the RIAA rages on. Ironically, both the RIAA and Napster are relying on the same Supreme Court decision to defend their arguments. This decision is that of the 1984 case of Sony vs. Universal, which resulted in the legalization of the Sony Betamax. The key to this case was the court’s decision that a technology must only be “merely...capable of substantial noninfringing uses” in order to be protected by law (Costello). In the legal battle at hand, Napster is trying to link the two cases, claiming that the service they provide is analogous to that of the Sony Betamax. The RIAA is making the claim that the two cases are not the same because while the Betamax is an “article of commerce,” Napster is simply a service-providing application. In addition, the RIAA claims, “There are no substantial noninfringing uses of Napster. Napster has not even proffered to the court a hypothetical, future capability that would be noninfringing” (Costello). In other words, it is the viewpoint of the RIAA that all actions performed on Napster, commercial or private, are to be considered infringements of copyright law.

In response, Napster has developed a multifaceted argument explaining the intricate connection between the two cases. First, the Napster team focuses on the fact that in the 1984 case, it was held that a technology must only be “merely...capable of substantial noninfringing uses” to be considered legal. And, according to Napster, the service they provide is capable of such uses, and should therefore be protected under law. Secondly, Napster CEO Hank Barry contests, “Just because it might also be used for uses that would be infringing, it doesn’t make any sense to snuff out that technology” (Costello). In fact, the Napster team could even link its service to other legal technologies that have the capability to infringe, such as the audiocassette. While the duplication of an audiocassette has the capability to infringe upon the RIAA’s copyright claims, it is by no means illegal to make a copy of one’s favorite
songs and distribute them to a friend. In fact, the Audio Home Recording Act of 1992 made sure of that, with Congress specifically authorizing the private, noncommercial sharing of audio media. While the RIAA complains that this “fair use should not apply to Napster because of the worldwide distribution to so many users,” the Napster team makes the point that its users “have an absolute right to make noncommercial copies on a one-to-one basis.” The law makes no reference to limitations based on size of the noncommercial distribution, and according to Napster, because the service provides one-on-one personalized sharing, and has this capability for “substantial noninfringing uses,” it cannot be held liable (Costello).

Though an official ruling is yet to be made, on October 31, 2000, Napster signed a deal with music conglomerate, Bertelsmann, the parent company of BMG music, and member of the “Big Five,” in response to these legal challenges. While the fine points of the merger haven’t been disclosed, Bertelsmann’s CEO, Thomas Middelhoff announced that BMG will loan Napster $50 million to transform the company from a 40 million user freebie-exchange into a membership-based server, offering some songs for free, but charging a fee of $4.95 per month for most songs. However, specifics aside, both Napster and BMG released statements to ease the concerns of current Napster members. A representative of BMG assured users, “This process where people take files, put them on their PC and share them, is going to continue,” while a Napster representative added, “there will always be a free promotional file-sharing element to Napster” (Mann).

In addition to the initial loan, BMG will likely make its entire catalogue available for paying Napster users — a catalogue that includes such popular artists as ‘N Sync, Christina Aguilera, Whitney Houston, and the Dave Matthews Band. Once Napster’s upgraded service is functional, BMG has agreed to withdraw from the RIAA’s lawsuit. The challenge now facing the Napster-BMG alliance is convincing the other four major labels to negotiate similar deals with the company. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the future of Napster will remain in the hands of the court system.

While the music world waits to see how the Napster/BMG alliance develops, the RIAA continues its attack. Though Napster repeatedly voices its support for artists and their rights, the RIAA apparently hears these statements with a deaf or cynical ear. In response to RIAA accusations, Barry made Napster’s point undoubtedly clear, saying, “There’s absolutely a deep respect for copyright within every person in the Napster community. The idea that Napster doesn’t respect copyright is just flat-out wrong” (Costello). In fact, every new member to the Napster community must sign a statement agreeing to respect copyright regulations prior to membership acceptance. In addition, Napster’s website, (www.napster.com), has a posted version of its copyright policy clarifying for the user what is and what is not considered legal use of copyrighted works. On the first page of the Napster Copyright Policy it is clearly stated: “Unauthorized copying, distribution, modification, public display, or public performance of copyrighted works is an infringement of the copyright holders’ rights” (“Napster”). While Napster has no control over what its users choose to do with the downloaded files, it is abundantly clear that they support copyright laws, and have no intention of inciting or supporting illegal distribution. Using the audiocassette example, an analogous case is made when a company such as Memorex sells blank audiocassettes. After distribution, Memorex has no control over whether
or not the buyer chooses to distribute the duplicated music. Yet, by no means would Memorex be liable if such an infraction occurred, and according to Napster’s argument, neither should they.

Another aspect of the Napster debate, legal issues aside, is the RIAA’s claim that Napster is cutting into the music industry’s record sales. The basis for this argument is founded primarily on a study performed by SoundScan, the record industry’s retail tracker. The nationwide study was conducted at more than 9,000 record stores near more than 3,000 college campuses, where Napster use has been determined most prevalent. According to the study, record sales in these areas have dropped 4 percent in the past two years, prompting the RIAA to start pointing fingers, and calling for an end to Napster’s blatant piracy (Borland, “Study”).

The flaw in the RIAA’s claim however, lies in their misinterpretation of the facts. While record sales did indeed decrease in these regions by 4 percent in the past two years, there are confounding variables that the RIAA failed to consider. First, the drop in college music store sales was more pronounced in 1998 than in 1999, a year before Napster was even developed. Secondly, the increased use of online music stores such as Amazon.com, as well as the increased use of rewriteable compact discs (CDR-Ws), was not factored into the study (Borland, “Study”). As Jupiter Communications (the worldwide authority on Internet commerce) analyst, Aram Sinnreich states, “An inherent flaw in the (RIAA’s) argument against Napster is that ...the RIAA did not clarify that the most attrition took place before Napster’s launch, and the analysis did not account for channel shift to online transactions that would have occurred independent of Napster’s existence” (“Jupiter”).

Aside from SoundScan’s university-oriented study, Napster’s Barry supported his cause in front of a Senate Judiciary Committee, by reading from an RIAA record sales survey. Contradictory to statements made by the RIAA, the survey showed that overall music sales were actually up 11 percent in 1999, not down. In addition, the same survey also showed that in the first quarter of 2000, music sales were up 8 percent over last year (Boycott). And finally, in response to the RIAA’s claims of Napster users not purchasing music, Jupiter’s study also found that Napster users are “45 percent more likely to have increased their overall music purchasing than nonusers are,” and after analyzing numerous variables, Jupiter “still found that Napster usage is one of the strongest determinants of increased music buying” (“Jupiter”).

While the RIAA has focused the bulk of its attack on Napster, in reality it is fighting against the entire peer-to-peer file-sharing concept. There are a number of file-swapping services (see figure 2), however, Napster is the largest of these applications and is having the most pronounced influence on the music industry, so the RIAA is simply dealing with the challenge currently in front of them.

Figure 2: Additional Peer-to-Peer Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scour Exchange</th>
<th>Aimster</th>
<th>Gnutella</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FreeNet</td>
<td>CuteMX</td>
<td>iMesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MojoNation</td>
<td>Hotline Connect</td>
<td>Zeropaid</td>
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Throughout contemporary technology circles, there is a consensus that the future
of the Internet rests on this peer-to-peer file-sharing model. In fact, even Intel, one of the largest technologically based companies in the world, is encouraging the development of the file-sharing approach exemplified by Napster. An Intel spokesman told reporters, “We think the underlying technology has a lot of potential. Napster would be (the equivalent) of the spreadsheet of the early days of the PC” (Vance). And in response to the RIAA’s lawsuit, Intel CEO Andy Grove said “I do not think that any strategy that is based on suppressing something that cannot be suppressed will work” (Vance). In addition, market analysts agree that even if Napster is eventually ordered to shut down, larger companies such as Intel will pick up right where Napster left off, posing a major threat for the old-guard media conglomerates. As e-commerce analyst Malcolm Maclachlan phrased it, “Intel wants to bring legitimacy to the peer-to-peer space. If (the recording industry) wants to pick a fight, they will be picking on a giant” (Vance).

Along with Intel, investment banking “giant” Morgan Stanley recently voiced its support of the Napster/Bertelsmann alliance. Though research reports on privately held companies such as both Napster and Bertelsmann are very uncommon, Morgan Stanley issued such a report on November 2, calling the alliance, “a crucial step for both the Internet and the music industry” (Morse). While legal battles still plague the company, reports such as the one issued by Morgan Stanley underscore Wall Street’s interest in Napster, realizing its potential to revolutionize both the Internet and the music industry.

Even with the tech world’s increasing interest in Napster, the entire legal debate boils down to the record industry’s realization that it is losing its foothold in the domination of the music market. With services such as Napster, more and more people are realizing that the music industry plays the role of middleman, and if file-sharing technology continues on its current course, record labels could eventually become obsolete. Potentially, artists could individually post their music on the Internet, making their money each time the album is downloaded, completely independent of record labels. As Jonathan Tankel, communications professor at Purdue University stated, “Ultimately, the big question from the industry’s perspective will be when the artists have total control and the ability to distribute their music and don’t need the record companies any more” (Costello). Under such a system, not only would musicians currently endorsed by major record labels get heard, but also individual artists who want the opportunity to distribute their music.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the record industry is providing the music world with as much of a disservice as it is a service. One such disservice is that record companies have the power to determine what music the public gets to hear. As one Stanford University Napster user explained in an interview by the Washington Post, sharing music “gives(s) people more freedom to choose what they listen to. It takes out the corporate influence” (Cha). Without file-sharing programs like Napster, many bands that the record labels don’t choose to support never get heard by the public. In fact, while the Big Five only released 2600 albums in all of 1999, Napster itself signed up 17,000 new artists in only four months (Boycott).

While in the courts and in the media the RIAA has attempted to villainize Napster as promoters of piracy and theft, the RIAA itself encountered some legal entanglements with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) this past May, with regard
to pricing policies. In its initial argument, the FTC charged, “all five companies (the Big Five) illegally modified their existing cooperative advertising programs to induce retailers into charging consumers higher prices for CDs” (FTC). While the music industry was busy pointing fingers at Napster for illegal practices, they were overcharging the consumers they claim Napster is taking away from them. According to Chairman Robert Pitofsky, “The FTC estimates that U.S. consumers may have paid as much as $480 million more than they should have for CDs and other music because of these policies over the last three years” (“Record”). It is for this reason that many Napster supporters feel that the complaints of decreasing sales by the RIAA are due to their own overpricing, and not music-endorsing services such as Napster.

Consumers and independent musicians aren’t the only proponents of Napster; several prominent artists such as Prince, the Offspring, Limp Bizkit, and Tim McGraw have publicly voiced their support for the service, to the dismay of their record labels. One of the first high-profile artistes to publicly take issue with the record industry is Prince, whose criticism stemmed from disputes with his former label, Warner Brothers, over his individual rights and creative freedom. Prince commented in an interview that Napster is an illustration of “the growing frustration over how much the record companies control what music people get to hear,” and that “Young people...need to be educated about how the record companies have exploited artists and abused their rights...” (Caney).

The band Offspring took a more casual approach to its support of Napster saying that they support the spread of mp3 music files and that they “happen to be of the school of thought that it is nice to have more, not less fans” (“Offspring”). Lead singer of Limp Bizkit, Fred Durst took his support of Napster one step further, announcing that the band would undertake in a tour of free concerts sponsored by software distributor. During a press conference, Durst commented, “We could care less about the older generation’s need to keep doing business as usual. We care more about what our fans want, and our fans want music on the Internet” (“Offspring”). In the case of Country singer Tim McGraw, Napster use was directly responsible for one of his songs reaching the top 50 on the Billboard country music charts. Though this song was unreleased, a fan taped a live performance of it, and uploaded it onto Napster for fans to download. Consequently, radio stations received the track and gave it airplay. Immediately, and unbeknownst to McGraw, the song took off and made chart history, and as a result of this demand, McGraw has chosen to include the previously unreleased song on his next album (Holland).

With more and more artists and businesses speaking out in favor of Napster, it appears that the technology of peer-to-peer file sharing is here to stay. Even if Napster is ultimately forced to shut down, the seed has been planted, and is already sprouting throughout the music world. Whether or not artists take the initiative to abandon the current system of record industry domination and publish work independently, the record labels are facing an uphill battle. The technology is in place, and now that consumers have had a taste of the future, it is unlikely they will ever go back.

It’s now 2:00 am back at the college dorm, and I hear my neighbor playing a live version of Van Morrison’s “Brown-Eyed Girl.” I rush back to my room, log on to Napster, and a few seconds later, I’m listening to it on my own stereo. As I lie back...
in bed listening to Van’s soothing voice, I contemplate the ease with which I acquired this new version of the classic tune. I have the entire universe of music available at the touch of a button or click of a mouse, and suddenly, the implications of such technological progress become apparent. With Van’s voice still floating through my room, I drift off to sleep smiling because, fortunately for music lovers such as myself, I know that the music revolution has begun.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is an Mp3?
   Answer: An Mp3 is basically a compressed version of the common digital music file (wav file). The goal of the Mp3 is to compress the number of bytes in a song without jeopardizing its sound quality. The rate at which a CD-quality song is converted to Mp3 is 10 to 14. Thus, a 32 megabyte song can be compressed to approximately 3 megabytes. This allows a song to be downloaded in a matter of minutes or seconds, as opposed to hours.

2. What is the Difference between Napster and other file-sharing servers such as Scour and CuteMX?
   Answer: The first difference between Napster and many other such servers is that Napster is only configured for Mp3 files. So only music is being transferred on Napster, whereas many of these other servers also transfer video files (mpeg, vid, or avi files) and various other types of media. In addition, Napster has over 40 million users whereas Scour, the second largest file-sharing server behind Napster, has only 7 million users. Using peer-to-peer technology, the more users, the larger the database of songs (see figure 1).

3. What actions, if any, does Napster take if one of its users violates copyright law?
   Answer: As stated in the Napster Copyright Policy, “Napster will terminate the accounts of users who are repeat infringers of the copyrights, or other intellectual property rights, of others.” In addition, Napster provides a form used to report specific cases of copyright infringement.

4. How does Napster make money?
   Answer: Currently, Napster does not make money, as it only provides a service. However, as a result of the new Napster-BMG alliance, Napster will begin making profit by charging its users a monthly membership fee. Whether or not this business model will prove profitable is yet to be determined, but the majority of revenues will go to record companies and its artists. Then, BMG takes its cut, and Napster gets whatever profit is left (if any).

5. What additional benefits will Napster members get as a result of paying a membership fee?
   Answer: First, Napster won’t be getting sued by BMG, thus increasing the likelihood
that the company will survive. In addition, BMG will likely make its entire music catalogue available for Napster members. This will ensure a wide selection of guaranteed virus-free, high-quality songs.

Author’s Note

The facts and technologies analyzed in this paper are accurate as of December 13, 2000. However, as is the trend with most modern technologies, by the time this paper is read, significant changes may have transpired. For this reason, I am including a brief list of websites (below) that you can visit to keep up to date with latest news on the Napster debate.

(http://www.napster.com)[Napster.com]
Napster’s official website. Along with the application itself, it provides the latest news involving the company.

(http://www.napstermania.com)[Napstermania.com]
A website dedicated to the support of Napster and the downfall of the RIAA. Somewhat radical, but provides links to news media that support the Napster case.

(http://www.riaa.com)[RIAA.com]
The official website of the RIAA. This site contains links to articles and official statements made with regard to the current Napster debate. Provides insight to their side of the argument.

(http://www.jup.com) [Jupiter.com]
Provides the most accurate and compelling statistics in connection with the Internet. If a new study comes out involving Napster, Jupiter will most likely be the first to publish the findings.

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The Boothe Prize Essays 2001


“Record Companies Settle FTC Charges of Restraining Competition in CD Music


Introduction by Marvina White, Instructor:

Katie Buchanan's creative intellect sparkles in "The Modern Nomad." This piece had its beginnings in Katie's casual reflections on her experiences as a "modern nomad," as she calls herself, moving with her family from city to city in the United States as part of her father's corporate career. Her assignment was to find a topic related to travel, the broad theme of the course. Such a theme fits neatly into the life of many first-year students, for whom the notion that travel, a relatively commonplace activity, is open to scholarly analysis usually comes as a surprise.

Through this kind of assignment, I hope students begin to experience themselves as bona-fide members of the community of scholars that is Stanford. As they engage in their research, we try to answer the question: How can a personal issue become a scholarly concern? In addition to teaching them to use library resources, I invite them to consult chairs of departments whose faculty and students may be conducting research pertinent to their own topics. Katie leapt at this suggestion and contacted Professor Ewart Thomas of the Department of Psychology. At his suggestion she designed a questionnaire and surveyed about a hundred Stanford students about their experiences with moving. This survey, along with other sources, became the basis of her argument in this wonderful essay, "The Modern Nomad."

We started out as nomadic.
It may be the most natural state for human beings.
-Craig O. McCaw, McCaw Cellular

"We have something to tell you, guys, something that is going to affect the whole family...We're moving! To California!" His cheery delivery does nothing to lessen the impact of his words. I sit unmoving, wondering what it means. I am nine years old.

Flash forward: I am sixteen; it is a cool, dark night in March. I sit with my family in silence, in a rented car outside the house in California that is no longer ours. The silence is somber. We have been gone five years now, and being here is a way of peering backward at an alternate version of myself. That is how I have come to view my moves. When I leave a place, the person that I was when I lived there dies and becomes a ghost. The ghost of me, someone I might have been if not for circumstance, grows as I do. I see the California ghost: she laughs with friends at Ben and Jerry's, drives to the beach on weekends, and campaigns for the young Democrats. I think of the Oklahoma self that lives now: she cheers at football games, drives two-lane country roads, and advocates conservatism. The contrast is unnerving, and this is why the silence is somber.
Flash forward again: I am eighteen; it is a sunny morning at Stanford University. It is my first day as a college student. Orientation begins and I feel at home amidst the tumult. "Where are you from?" they ask me time and time again. I realize that I have no answer.

In any given year, twenty percent of the United States population moves (Shumaker and Stokols 1). In 1994 alone, 42 million people, approximately 16.5 million households, changed residences (Dickson 1). The most mobile age bracket consists of twenty-five to thirty-five-year-olds; this sector of the population is also the most likely to have school-age children (Dickson 1). Translation: Americans are raising a generation of children who are essentially modern nomads. Not surprisingly then, the seemingly benign question, "Where are you from?" has become a problematic query that raises a whole set of issues concerning the conflicting loyalties associated with a "home." In retrospect, it appears sociologist Alvin Toffler was touched with prophetic powers when he wrote in 1970, "we are witnessing a historic decline in the significance of place to human life. We are building a new race of nomads, and few suspect how massive, widespread, and significant their migrations are" (qtd. in Shumaker and Stokols 3).

The days of creating a social network in kindergarten that will carry a child through twelfth grade are clearly on their way out (Keller and Decoteau 7). Twelve million children aged one to nineteen move annually (Pollari and Bullock 113). As reported in a 1997 article from The Boston Globe, a 1994 survey of the nation’s third-graders revealed that a startling 17% had attended three or more schools since first grade. This article documented the case of a student who had changed schools eleven times in his sixteen years. The writer dryly remarked that even a generation ago, his high rate of mobility would have branded him an outcast, but in today’s world, "he’s trading U-Haul stories with dozens of classmates" (Daley 27).

Relocating, then, has become a common phenomenon, but its effects on family and adolescent development remain only partially realized (Pollari and Bullock 113). This neglect is a glaring deficiency in light of the fact that family background—what economists generally define as "the economic and social status of the family in which one grew up, as measured by the income, occupation, marital status, and education of one or both parents, number of siblings, race, residential location and relocation"—often accounts for up to twenty to thirty percent of variation in an individual’s socioeconomic success as an adult (McMurrer and Sawhill 73). But beyond the economic connection, logic recognizes a psychological link. How does mobility factor into personality and relationships? Will the modern nomads perceive their loss of place as a void so great that they overcompensate by permanently anchoring their own families to one residence? Or will they embrace mobility as a form of freedom and perpetuate the trend?

As a modern nomad, when I made my first move as an individual, these questions came to the foreground; I left for college and what I discovered was that my experience—moving four times in eighteen years—was more of a societal norm than I ever suspected, leading me to believe that we are in fact in the process of creating a new American; someone neither Yankee nor Southern, someone who belongs everywhere and nowhere. Consequently, we must examine the forces that brought these individuals into being; we must set the context and define mobility.
To this end, I conducted a written survey of one hundred Stanford freshmen ranging in age from seventeen to nineteen. The questionnaire targeted several issues: the prevalence and motives of mobility, the social impact of mobility, an individual’s perception of moving with regard to maturity, and finally, the willingness of the sample population to move as adults. The survey focused entirely on the adolescent experience and did not account for gender or racial variations. With these limitations in mind, results from the survey in conjunction with other sources indicate that mobility arises from career-related impetus. The so-called modern nomad successfully overcomes displacement to embrace a new set of standards for interpersonal relations; thus unfettered with resistance to change, he perpetuates increasing mobility.

How common are potential modern nomads? Seventy-nine of one hundred survey respondents moved at least once with their families. (Moving is defined both in the survey and in government data as any change of residence.) On average, the sample population had moved 2.37 times; twenty-seven respondents moved only once, making it the most common statistic. Although twenty-one students had never moved before coming to college, nine students had moved four times, eleven students had moved five times, and one student had moved thirteen times! These figures appear to be representative of national trends: Pollari and Bullock’s more extensive study concluded that most families change locations once during the twenty years a child matures (113).

Why do they go? Of the myriad possible motivators, one emerges as the clear-cut leader: the providers of families, both men and women, move because whatever emotional attachments they have to one place are ultimately less important than their work. For years, military personnel have accepted moving as part of their job descriptions, and their credo seems to be catching. A new project-oriented mentality—a direct result of downsizing and corporate merger trends of the 1990s—encourages the nomadic lifestyle (Makimoto and Manners 197). The opening of China and the Soviet bloc after 1991 provided unlimited investment opportunities which, in turn, predicated a professional exodus, if not to the countries themselves, then to new corporate offices operating within this framework (66). The prevalent attitude: "If you want to be upwardly mobile professionally, you need to be a mobile professional" (27).

Mobility is no longer limited to the individual; today even businesses are putting less value on the traditional “home office” (57). In the 1990s, corporations discontinued city and state loyalties as seen through the relocation of the offices of Westinghouse, Gulf Oil, Banc One, PepsiCo, and J.C. Penney (“Get Used to Corporate Mobility” 12B). When combined with advances in transportation and telecommunications, moving became a more viable option for individuals and companies alike (Stokols and Shumaker 149).

As children and adolescents in the 1990s, the Stanford respondents were among the first to experience this fallout. Mostly the offspring of what Makimoto and Manners deem "The Mobile Professionals" (52), 63% indicated that a parent’s career was one of the causes for their moves; 29% designated it as the single cause. These figures dwarf those for other motives; only 9% of family moves resulted from a desire to change schools, and a mere 2% of moves resulted from family obligations (i.e.,
caring for an elderly grandparent, divorce, remarriage, death, or unforeseen circumstance). Unlike the urban poor and migrant agricultural workers who have led somewhat nomadic lifestyles throughout the twentieth century, modern nomads usually come from white-collar families. This is due to the fact that the advantaged class is most likely to move long distances. Because they are young, well traveled, and often hold high status jobs in large companies, the educated are usually the most willing to forge totally new lives in new locales (Shumaker and Stokols 9). Like all family possessions, the children of these professionals find themselves parceled and transplanted to new territory.

Psychologists began speculating about the mental impact of these transplants as early as the 1950s. One child psychologist, Donald Sullivan, noted the impact on his patients as follows: "One of the things which time and time again has shown itself to be quite disastrous in the history of patients was the social mobility of the parents which took the juvenile from one school to another at frequent intervals…other things being equal, it is a very good thing to stay in that group of juveniles throughout the period [of adolescence]…continuous upheavals…are apt to leave a very considerable handicap on all subsequent development" (Sullivan, qtd. in Inbar 45). Sullivan’s words reflect the beginning of the scientific community’s acknowledgment that moving has serious long-term effects. Developmental specialists associate moving with disruptive or adverse effects on how children socialize (Pollari and Bullock 115). One psychologist hypothesizes that a move is of the same emotional caliber as a death in the family, necessitating a period of mourning complete with hurt, sadness, anger, and aloof detachment (116). Moves change virtually every aspect of an individual’s life (Stokols and Shumaker 153), and the repercussions of these changes are far broader if the individual happens to be an adolescent (Inbar 8). Relationships to peers and to immediate family are both permanently colored by the relocation experience.

With regard to peer interaction, modern nomads generally become proficient in rapidly establishing large networks of shallow relationships. "The relationships encountered on the nomadic trail may be much less concentrated than those with one’s settled neighbors," Makimoto and Manners prophesize in Digital Nomad. Their book goes on to say that nomads feel more comfortable accepting help and advice from strangers; people are more likely to be open in short-term settings (200). As adults, modern nomads encounter little difficulty fitting in with peers and cultivating a large circle of friends. On the surface at least, many are social and outgoing, but this appearance may be misleading. In fact, mobile adolescents have a much higher incidence of high school dropout than their non-mobile peers (Daley H27). Additionally, modern nomads have a tendency to withdraw themselves from situations that imply intimacy. "You feel like you are all alone," a nineteen-year-old bemoans in Beth Daley’s “Moving Experiences” column (H27). Many modern nomads are either extremely cautious or simply unable to develop deep friendships and other long-term relationships. This tendency became evident in the Stanford survey. As one respondent who had moved six times put it, "I am better able to meet people, but more challenged in forming lasting connections." Trusting others, allowing themselves the luxury of emotional vulnerability, is nearly impossible because nomads tend to see every situation as temporary.
Consequently, modern nomads are less likely than their peers to have "best friends." In the Stanford survey, only 14% of the non-movers had no best friend, compared to 27% of those who had moved five times. Furthermore, movers who did have a best friend had known the best friend for a much shorter period of time than the respondents who had never moved at all. The survey did not compare the length of the friendships to the time since an individual’s last move, but it would be surprising if these time periods did not at least roughly correspond. For the modern nomad, having a so-called best friend for life entails consistent long-distance communication. And as we will see, not many go on to fulfill this commitment.

Despite the planes, phones, e-mail, and instant messenger that have led us to perceive physical distance as "relatively unimportant" (Makimoto and Manners 198), the sad fact is that moving often severs all ties to a place. Of the seventy-nine respondents who had moved, twenty-one kept in contact with ten or more of their old friends, and five corresponded with one to ten. Fifty-three of the seventy-nine, however—an overwhelming 67%—admitted they were no longer in touch with anyone from their previous home! As one respondent who had moved nine times in her eighteen years laments, "it’s always hard to make sure that I’m still keeping in touch with my friends from other places."

Similarly, return visits were practically non-existent: thirty percent of respondents who had moved never returned to their previous homes. Another twelve percent returned only once. These return visit statistics held true across the board, even for individuals who had moved five or six times. The fourteen exceptional cases—where respondents returned to a previous residence ten or more times—resulted only in instances where the individual and his immediate family had left a traditional "home" setting where the family name was well-established and extended family continued to live. Familial ties typically drew the nomads back at the holidays. In contrast, strictly job-related moves often precluded return visits. Why privilege one impermanent home over another? It is neither convenient nor economical. If modern nomads make moves permanent amputations as these statistics suggest, then what human bonds, if any, do they consider sacred? By examining the family dynamic of modern nomads we can begin to better comprehend their new standard for interpersonal relations.

Adults that relocate to advance their careers often escape some of the travails associated with moving. Unlike children, adults are not required to rebuild their entire social network when they move. While circles of immediate co-workers may change, the basic corporate, academic, or military framework, including many professional contacts, remains intact. Even dependent spouses have the benefit of a more stable sense of identity. To a child, however, the decision to move is often totally arbitrary, and the fact that parents, stressed by the logistics of moving, may become emotionally unavailable compounds the child’s confusion (Pollari and Bullock 115). This is especially disturbing since parents and siblings are often the only constant during the change. Although moving strains marital and parent-child relations (114), it often precipitates even stronger family bonds. The Army’s extensive 1999 study of highly mobile military families concluded that frequent transitions actually strengthen family units (Keller and Decoteau 8). By the same token, Makimoto and Manners predict that nomadism may precipitate a resurgence of
tribalism: "There seems to be a need in the human breast to belong to something, to identify with a group" (202). Clearly, the family is the group closest at hand. When asked whether or not they were close to their parents, an overwhelming majority of the Stanford freshmen surveyed—seventy-eight percent—answered "yes." A subsequent breakdown of the data into subsets based on the number of moves revealed a surprising, directly proportional relationship between this closeness and mobility. Of the twenty-two individuals who responded that they were not close to their parents, six of them had never moved. With every move, the number either held steady or dropped. Two individuals who had moved five times were not close to their parents, and only one individual out of the seven that had moved more than five times claimed this same emotional detachment. Of course the parent-child dynamic is infinitely complex, and it would be gross oversimplification to say that parents can become close to their children only if they move the family or that families that never move cannot foster this deep connection; however, mobility does seem to factor into the equation somewhere.

The mobility variable also convolutes perceptions of maturity: "Relocation can create many opportunities for the child to grow and mature" (Pollari and Bullock 120). In 1981 sociologists Newcomb, Huba, and Benitas conducted a survey of adolescent life events as related to mental health. Not surprisingly, they concluded that moves viewed negatively were often linked to significantly higher rates of depression, whereas moves remembered positively had no adverse effects on health (Stokols and Shumaker 152). Regardless of how many times they had moved, the majority of Stanford respondents reflect upon relocation as a "mixed blessing." Only one optimist saw her four moves as "totally positive experiences," compared to twenty-one students who classified them as "totally negative." When asked the loaded maturity question point blank (Are you more mature as a result of your moves?), responses varied. One respondent who had moved ten times in his eighteen years phrased it as follows: "Yes, I think I have wider and more varied experiences and find that I'm more independent because of my moves." "Moving forced me out of complacency and helped me reexamine myself," echoed another. Yet moving may counteract maturity for some; a respondent who had moved six times wrote, "I'm not sure if moving made me more mature. Moving allowed me to escape from many difficult situations without having to deal with them—I was a terror child." This data supports the assertion that "some children develop new skills and talents as a result of moving, while others associate a move with other life disruptions and lag behind contemporaries" (Pollari and Bullock 117).

So the question remains, will modern nomads thwart increasing mobility trends or will they perpetuate the cycle? Throughout history, various "experts" have debated the future of mobility in America. In 1850, the Superintendent of the Census predicted that mobility rates would drop off when the frontier was settled (Shumaker and Stokols 4), but movement defied expectation as people surged from rural areas to cities (7). In 1976, leading sociologists Long and Boertlien hypothesized that rising overall age and increased commitment to family would keep more people rooted in the 1980s and 1990s (6), but again the predicted decline failed to materialize. And if the Stanford respondents are any indication, mobility will continue!

Ninety-two of one hundred respondents are ready and willing to move as adults.
Three true nomads, having moved six, seven, and thirteen times, were among those unwilling to move. Although all of these detractors classified their moves as "mixed blessings" and not as "totally negative" experiences, their transient childhoods make them wary of subjecting their own families to more of the same. These nomads, however, are clearly in the minority. Shumaker and Stokols’ assertion that mobility engenders a class of "repeat movers" holds true for the Stanford study. Individuals who move once are more likely to move again. Since they "coped successfully with whatever life stressors were associated with that move, they in fact have a lower threshold for future relocations. Past movers would be more likely than non-movers to view relocation as a viable option" (Shumaker and Stokols 11).

The Stanford students’ number one reason to move: "Adventure, i.e. quest for new experiences." This response edged out "economic incentive i.e. higher paying job," forty-seven to thirty. "Personal reasons i.e. family obligations," lagged behind with only fifteen respondents. Though they are arguably swayed by the idealism of youth, respondents seem to be possessed by the wanderlust so long entangled with the American dream. Indeed, it appears that by adulthood the trauma of moving fades so completely that nomadism could possibly re-establish itself as the mainstream lifestyle that Makimoto and Manners envision.

The Stanford survey revealed many fascinating patterns and led to surprising conclusions; however, by no means should these results be taken as emblematic of the entire American population. As students at Stanford, a university renowned for its rigorous and highly selective admissions process, the sample population may have a stronger tendency than most young adults to accept the risks and challenges associated with relocation; many of the respondents (discounting the California locals) proved their willingness to move simply by coming to college. Other published studies and commentary on mobility, however, seem to substantiate the survey’s results, suggesting that at the very least, they merit further exploration.

In addition to research on mobility’s impact on interpersonal relationships, the topic engenders other significant questions. What impact will nomads have on society at large? Will the modern nomads see so many different points of view that they are unable to make any decisions as Iyer believes (25)? Or will they contribute to a decline in materialism and better human relations as Makimoto and Manners hope (196)? As Barbara Dickson noted, "whenever you move away from the familiar, you experience that anxiety of separation” rooted in the psyche since infancy (E1). Surely this built-in anxiety cannot be overcome in a single generation. And surely it behooves anyone interested in the human dynamic to watch carefully as modern nomads answer philosopher Simone Weil’s call to arms: “We must take the feeling of being at home into exile. We must be rooted in the absence of place" (qtd. in Iyer 1).

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Introduction by Wendy Goldberg, Instructor

In this reflective essay, which celebrates both Chicago’s rich architectural heritage and the recent innovation and expansion that have contributed to the vitality of its thriving downtown, Mandy brings into sharp focus the ongoing tension between conservationists and developers in her hometown. While carefully acknowledging the merits of both perspectives and wisely conceding that the city’s sustained prosperity demands continued growth, Mandy urges that Chicagoans not be complacent about threats to the architectural landmarks that have long been central to the city’s distinctive identity. In the main, she calls on the citizens of Chicago to mandate a genuinely active, resourceful, and far-sighted urban planning commission that will weigh competing demands in order to achieve an enlightened balance between growth and meaningful preservation. In the course of developing this thoroughly-researched proposal, Mandy provides selective details and illustrations that yield a lively, productive “tour” of the city’s architecture and architectural history. The city comes alive for us under her hand, and is accessible to a broad readership as well as the targeted Chicagoans. Mandy is also alert to the need to maintain the cohesion of her essay by integrating her rich range of sources while ensuring that hers remains the controlling voice throughout. Negotiating her way gracefully and sure-footedly through the streets of Chicago and the paths of her own argument, Mandy skillfully persuades us that an even-handed approach to the city’s “growing pains,” one that rejects radical solutions for a more moderate, inclusive stance, is not a “cop-out” but smart and judicious policy.
Only one city could prompt such a description: Chicago. Known for its diehard sports fans, its spirited St. Paddy’s day parade, and its fabulous deep-dish pizza, Chicago exudes character. Perhaps the city’s most salient feature is the very stuff that comprises it. So renowned are its skyscrapers and celebrated building style that an entire school of architecture is named for Chicago. Presently, however, the place that Frank Sinatra called “my kind of town” is beginning to lose sight of exactly what kind of town it truly is. Many of the buildings that give Chicago its distinctive personality are being torn down in order to make room for new growth. With battle lines being drawn between conservationists and developers, it is difficult to assess the merits and shortcomings of each perspective. Both preserving the classics and encouraging new creation are important, as it is the combination of these elements that gives Chicago its unique flavor. As Witold Rybczynski, a professor of urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of City Life, a book focusing on Chicago’s past, describes the dilemma: “Of all the cities we can think of... we associate Chicago with new things, with building new. Combining that with preservation is a difficult task, a tricky thing. It’s hard to find the middle ground in Chicago” (Rozhon). Yet finding a middle ground is essential if the city is to retain the original character that sets it apart from the rest. In order to maintain Chicago’s distinctive identity and its delicate balance between the old and the new, the city government must take the initiative to provide a comprehensive urban plan that not only directs growth, but calls for the preservation of landmarks and historic districts as well.

A city requires just two things to be truly great, says Fortune magazine: a beautifully designed downtown with a variety of shops, museums, and theaters, and a large population of people with money to spend. Fortune asserts that, judging by these criteria, in America “only New York, Chicago, and San Francisco can even claim to be great cities” (qtd. in Condit 271-2). Each of these three has its own distinct image in the fabric of America. New York, the giant metropolis on the cutting edge, is America’s gateway to Europe and the rest of the world. On the other side is the easy charm of San Francisco with its colorful, eccentric enclaves. Chicago, resting comfortably in the middle of the country, is a city for the working man. Nowhere is this more evident than in its architecture. David Garrard Lowe, author of Lost Chicago, describes Chicago’s as a public architecture that reflects the ideals of its time. “[The early Chicagoleans] sought reality, not fantasy, and the reality of America as seen from the heartland did not include the pavilions of princes or the castles of kings,” says Lowe (122).

This inclination toward unadorned functionalism began in the late nineteenth century with the aptly named Chicago School. The movement, led by Louis Sullivan, John Wellborn Root, and Daniel Burnham, is characterized by Sullivan’s adage, “Form follows function” (“Sullivan, Louis Henri”). Embodying this mantra are plain, sturdy buildings; decoration, if any, follows natural forms (see fig. 1-4). Burnham and Root’s Reliance Building epitomizes this vision: simple, yet
possessing a unique angular beauty (Lowe 123). The early skyscraper, the very symbol of the Chicago style, represents the triumph of function and utility over sentiment, America over Europe, and perhaps even the frontier over the civilization of the East Coast (Bluestone 105). These ideals of the original Chicago School were expanded upon by architects of the Second Chicago School. Frank Lloyd Wright’s legendary organic style and the famed glass and steel constructions of Mies Van der Rohe are often the first images that spring to mind when one thinks of Chicago. To Chicagoans themselves, however, the city is more than just a place to work or sightsee; it is a place to live. Between New York and San Francisco, the two extremes on either coast, Chicago is the familiar, steadfast and proud.

Yet the architecture that is the city’s defining attribute is being threatened by the increasing tendency toward development. The root of Chicago’s preservation problem lies in the enormous drive toward economic expansion and the potential in Chicago for such growth. The highly competitive market for land in the city means that properties sell for the highest price if the buildings on them can be obliterated, paving room for newer, larger, and more modern developments. Because of this preference on the part of potential buyers, the label “landmark” has become a sort of brand for property owners, as observed by Alan J. Shannon, of the Chicago Tribune. “In other cities, landmark status is sought after — in Chicago, it’s avoided at all costs,” he notes (qtd. in Dilibert 11). Even if the owner wishes to keep his property’s original structure, designation as a landmark is still undesirable as it limits the renovations that can be made to a building and thus decreases its value. The city’s municipal code (Ordinance 2-120-740) provides the following guidelines regarding construction on landmarks:

No permit for alteration, construction, reconstruction, erection, demolition, relocation, or other work, shall be issued to any applicant by any department of the City of Chicago without the written approval of [the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks] for any area, place, building, structure, work of art or other object for which the commission has made a preliminary recommendation for landmark status or which has been designated as a “Chicago Landmark”... (Chicago: Code of Ordinances).

Essentially, no building that has even been recommended for landmark status may be touched without the approval of the Commission, a restriction that considerably diminishes the appeal of the real estate. “We live in a world where the owners say, ‘If you judge my property a landmark you are taking money away from me.’ And in Chicago the process is stacked in favor of the economics,” says former city Planning Commissioner David Mosena (Kerch 2F).

The Berghoff buildings, which house the Berghoff Restaurant and its facilities, are a prime example of this attitude at work. The restaurant, a well-known feature of the Loop (the city’s central business district) for more than ninety-three years, is considered a landmark by many Chicagoans. But when the building was proposed for official designation in 1991, the City Council voted against it after considerable urging from the Berghoff family. Neil King, a real estate valuation expert who testified before the Landmark Preservation Committee, stated that “no developer is
going to buy this property once it’s designated” (Reardon 19). As further evidence of this taboo, the LaSalle National Bank told the Berghoffs that it would foreclose on a mortgage for more than $2.7 million if the Council named the Berghoff buildings landmarks (Reardon 19). The Berghoff conflict illustrates that the problem of overbearing development cannot be solved simply by assigning landmark status to historic buildings; it is an ongoing struggle between yesterday’s creations and today’s economic prosperity.

Nowhere is this clash more apparent than on North Michigan Avenue, Chicago’s “Magnificent Mile.” The historic buildings along this block are unquestionably some of the city’s finest works. So dramatic is their presence that the Commission on Chicago Landmarks described the scene thus: “The overall effect of the ensemble seems as if some of the best of Chicago architecture gathered along the lakefront and posed for a group photo” (qtd. in Rozhon). In addition, the Mile is undoubtedly one of Chicago’s most prosperous districts, with a massive volume of shoppers traveling there on a daily basis. It is this pull that has architectural preservationists worried. The small-scale, charming buildings envisioned by Arthur Rubloff, the prominent real estate developer who first conceived of the Magnificent Mile in the late 1940s, obviously could not accommodate these kinds of crowds. Numerous high-rises and large department stores, such as Borders, Nike City, and the new Watertower Place shopping center, were constructed to accommodate the masses that flocked to Michigan Avenue. These new, off-scale buildings all represent interruptions to the cohesion and unity envisioned by the original planners of the Magnificent Mile (see fig. 5,6). According to John W. Stamper, author of Chicago’s North Michigan Avenue, with the standard height for new buildings on the avenue currently at about sixty-five stories, the “pleasant shopping promenade” now appears to be more of a “canyon-like corridor” (215).

Many agree with Stamper, expressing the sentiment that the individual style of Michigan Avenue is being lost in the rush to capitalize on this popular locale. This dynamic is probably best exemplified by one simple fact. In the year 1995, the same year that the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois declared the section of Michigan Avenue from Oak Street to Roosevelt Road one of the state’s ten most endangered historic sites, the annual sales of the Magnificent Mile ran around $1 billion and were increasing at an annual rate of about five to seven percent (Stuenkel). Clearly, the property’s potential as part of a commercial hub is taking priority over its architectural and historic value. The future of this district rests on a precarious balance between Chicago’s responsibility for its own heritage and Chicagoans’ desire for economic gain. Stamper encapsulates this controversy in his book: “What made North Michigan Avenue such an attractive focus of activity in the 1920s is being incrementally destroyed in the interest of maximizing return on the investment” (215). This destruction has people such as Judith McBrien, a filmmaker interested in the story of the transformation of Michigan Avenue, worried about future demolition. “What we would lose,” she observes, “is another chapter in the story of what the avenue means to our sense of place, which is a sense of pride and identity for Chicagoans, not only to ourselves but to the world” (Stuenkel).

Perhaps the best single example of the conflict between preservation and
development in Chicago is the case of the McCarthy Building. Built in 1872, the McCarthy was designed by John M. Van Osdel, Chicago’s first professional architect. It is described by Paul Gapp, the Chicago Tribune’s former architecture critic, as “a rare and distinguished example of work by Van Osdel” and “a stunningly appealing relic from Chicago’s 19th century Renaissance era” (qtd. in Dilibert 4). The McCarthy was made a landmark in 1984, but it wasn’t long before developers recognized the potential of the property, situated on Block 37 of State Street, directly across from Marshall Field’s. With plans for a $300 million retail and office complex already outlined, developers made a $12.3 million dollar bid for the property. At this point, the developers were promising to preserve the McCarthy and integrate it into the complex, so the city readily agreed. However, a series of modifications over the next two years would completely transform their original plan. Quickly realizing that the old structure was useless to the project, developers made subsequent proposals to preserve just the façade, or even to move the entire McCarthy Building to another location. When these propositions didn’t work out, either, the developers began offering money to be used toward the preservation of other buildings in exchange for permission to demolish the McCarthy. Gapp admits that the city was caught in a difficult situation: if it protected the McCarthy, it would be impeding development in an important urban renewal area, and if it allowed demolition, Chicago’s landmark protection ordinance would be completely devalued. He nonetheless urged city officials to choose the “long view” and preserve the McCarthy (qtd. in Dilibert 4). However, the developers’ offer to buy and restore the Reliance Building, at a cost of between $7 million and $11 million, in addition to contributing $4 million to preservation efforts, would prevail. In September of 1987, the Chicago City Council voted to revoke the McCarthy’s landmark status.

As could be expected, this deal outraged many preservationists. Carol S. Wynant, the director of the Landmarks Preservation Council, charges the city with “trading a significant landmark for a wish and a promise.” She goes on to ask, “If the McCarthy can be traded for the Reliance, can we then trade the Reliance for the Rookery, the Rookery for the Board of Trade, the Board of Trade for the Water Tower...?” (qtd. in Dilibert 9). Ironically, Chicago’s rich architectural heritage is, in a way, working against itself. With so many significant buildings, preservation of one or another does not seem as critical as perhaps it should. According to Stanley Tigerman, the designer of forty Chicago buildings since the 1960s, the fact that Chicago boasts some forty-five Mies buildings, seventy-five Frank Lloyd Wright buildings, and numerous other buildings from the first and second Chicago Schools inspires a nonchalant attitude toward preservation (Rozhon). The public seems to justify the demolition of quality pieces of architecture by citing Chicago’s vast quantity of such works. The city’s Planning and Development Commissioner, Valerie Jarrett, even uses this reasoning to defend Chicago’s preservation record. She excuses the razing of Chicago’s Arts Club, noted for having the only known interior designed by Mies himself, and other buildings on Michigan Avenue, saying, “We are a city that is rich in our architectural heritage...; we do a yeoman’s job of preserving those buildings” (Hein, “Preservationists”). This rationale is careless; each building is an original creation and should be evaluated as one, not as a faceless member of
the group. Cheryl Kent, of Progressive Architecture magazine, emphasizes that Chicago’s landmark ordinance does not require that a building be the very best in order to win designation. The goal of the ordinance is encapsulated by Carol Wynant, who states, “The purpose of landmarking buildings is not to intrude on development or force ‘guilt money’ out of developers. It is to ensure that these treasures of history and art remain a part of our living character” (qtd. in Dilibert 9).

The razing of the McCarthy Building in 1987 exposes the problems inherent in Chicago’s landmark policy. But the real tragedy is that none of the plans for development of the property were ever carried out. Block 37 remains vacant to this day. This clearly demonstrates the city’s need for creative and vigilant urban planning. Yet some have questioned the importance of such planning, arguing that it stifles innovation and creative advances. Jack Guthman, a Chicago lawyer representing the Central Michigan Avenue Association, a group of property owners, condemns the possibility of landmark status for the South Michigan Avenue district: “What [those proposing designation are] saying is a clear indictment of today’s architecture — that we can’t improve on the past” (Mendell and Washburn 22). Proponents of this viewpoint, however, neglect one important fact. The city has an extensive history of urban planning, dating back to Burnham’s original Chicago Plan of 1909, which obviously posed no hindrance to the likes of Mies and Wright. In addition, just one look at the rapid and disorderly growth of North Michigan Avenue makes it clear that wholly unlimited development is not the answer.

Urban planning is absolutely essential in order to maintain the balance between the old and the new and, with this, the city’s architectural richness. There can be no denying the importance of its architecture to Chicago’s vitality. “The biggest perspective is to ask why people come to Chicago,” remarks Thomas Rossiter, president of McClier Corp., an architectural, engineering, construction, and financial services company. “One reason is the architectural heritage we have, so you can say we are hurting ourselves every time we tear a building down” (Kerch 1F). A study carried out in Philadelphia in 1980 demonstrates quantitatively the effect that aesthetics have on a city’s prosperity. A mere hundred additional tourists, lured to Philadelphia by its artistic attractions, afford the city $78,000 in taxes, $144,000 in increased bank deposits, $1.2 million in increased sales, and approximately 111 industry-related jobs (Christiansen). Although a bit dated, the numbers are still impressive. And when one considers how many visitors are drawn to Chicago by its beauty and architectural renown, they become staggering.

In light of all that is at stake, it follows that the city government would be highly concerned with upholding Chicago’s reputation as “one of the best.” Even more than this, however, it is becoming evident that the city’s participation is necessary for urban planning to be successful. The most important municipal duty in managing development is to ease the economic burdens that preservation entails. Some methods that have been suggested for this are property tax breaks for landmark owners and transferable development rights, which would give landmark owners bonuses for developing elsewhere. Overall, however, the city’s planning and landmarks commissions simply need to become more involved, working closely with developers throughout the entire design process. If both parties outline their needs,
restrictions, and priorities and then negotiate until mutually satisfied, a middle ground
can be reached. Of course, there are some demands on which the city should not
compromise, such as the significance of landmark status. But added cooperation on
other fronts could help to mitigate a few strict policies, thus achieving a practical,
productive balance.

The effectiveness of an earnest but open-minded approach to urban planning has
already been proven on numerous occasions in Chicago. Just a few success stories
can help inspire future efforts, as city planners discover what works and what does
not. Union Station is one project that worked to the satisfaction of both groups.
Developers U.S. Equities Realty Inc. and Amtrak proposed replacing the four floors
of outdated office space above the station with more practical high-rise towers. This
offer would still allow for the preservation of the Great Hall and other public spaces
within the station itself. “We are preserving the best of the historical landmark... and
at the same time creating an adaptive reuse that will bring back some of the old glory
of the station,” proclaimed Cheryl Stein, a vice-president with U.S. Equities Realty
Inc. (Kerch 2F). The city responded to this magnanimous offer in kind, upgrading
zoning on the site to permit additional office space and working with developers for
over a year to identify exactly which portions of the original structure needed to be
preserved. By 1990, the project was under way. Currently, the sight of Union
Station, revitalized and bustling, is proof of the sincere endeavors of developers and
city planners alike.

Under the leadership of Mayor Richard M. Daley, several more advances have
been made toward preserving Chicago’s architectural excellence. In 1998, the city
struck a deal that would not only save but revitalize the Reliance Building (see
Appendix A), one of the gems of the first Chicago School, described as “a diamond
in the rough-hewn Loop” (Dunlap 27). Although the city did invest more than $10
million in acquiring the building and beginning some renovations, these efforts were
more than rewarded when a private development team — consisting of the
McCaffery Interests, Mansur & Company, and the Granite Development Corporation
— agreed to take over the job, spending around $19 million itself. Another successful
arrangement was made regarding the Medinah Temple and its neighboring Tree
Studios, which are valued more for their historical significance than their
architectural merit. The temple “has no landmark designation, but is remembered
fondly by generations of Chicagoans as the place where they saw the annual Medinah
Shrine Circus,” reports Rich Hein, of the Chicago Tribune (“Medinah...”). These
memories are what prompted Mayor Daley to insist that the temple be preserved,
despite the indifference of the temple’s owners, who simply wanted to “liquidate their
assets,” regardless of the fate of the building (Rotenberk). This desire, coupled with
the developmental potential of the land, meant that $21 million of the city’s $63.5
million renovation plan went to the Shriners for their property. The deputy
commissioner of the city’s Planning Department, Alicia Mazur Berg, explained, “It
was critical that we came up with a solution that met the owner’s price, or all of the
Medinah Temple would be lost” (Rotenberk). The city prevailed: its expenditure
bought landmark status for the temple and expanded the landmark protection of the
Tree Studios, which had already been designated.
Most recently, Chicago’s attention has been directed once more toward Michigan Avenue, but, instead of the Magnificent Mile, this time the focus is the southern stretch between Randolph and Eleventh Streets. On March 7, 2001, Mayor Daley endorsed the designation of South Michigan Avenue as a historic landmark district (see fig. 7). More significantly, the city took this endeavor one step further by announcing that, rather than forcing the district to adhere to the standard landmark regulations, planning officials would work to create specialized guidelines for design and construction within the new district. It is the hope of the mayor that, among other things, this plan will ensure the preservation of buildings which may not qualify as architecturally significant on their own but that compliment other structures on the street and fit with the district’s overall scale and character (Mendell and Washburn 22). Even the residents of condominiums along Michigan Avenue have reported that they are enthused about living in a historic district (Kamin 22). According to Blair Kamin, the architecture critic for the Chicago Tribune, this unprecedented move represents “a giant step toward striking a better balance between preservation and development than landmark status alone would have done” (22).

Testimonies such as these to the merits of urban planning are scattered throughout the city. In the midst of the abandonment and demolition, buildings such as Union Station, the Reliance Building, and the Medinah Temple offer Chicago some hope for a future that is as architecturally rich as its past. The key to achieving this balance of preserving historic treasures and encouraging new development is to view the city not so much as a product, but as a process. The authors of Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis, Harold Mayer and Richard Wade, described the city thus: “Every generation put its hand on it and around it, leaving a mark if not a memorial” (464). The city is shaped and molded by all who pass through it, developers and preservationists alike. Each is essential to maintain the city’s cherished dynamic — enjoying memories of the past, delighting in the beauty of the present, and eagerly anticipating the creations of the future. Robert Bruegmann, author of The Architects and the City, defined the city as “the ultimate human artifact, our most complex and prodigious social creation, and the most tangible result of the actions over time of all its citizens” (443). Nowhere is this sentiment more relevant than in Chicago, with the city’s personality so closely tied to its physical structures. Although not every single building can be kept, comprehensive urban planning will ensure that the city’s character is preserved and that Chicagoans and visitors alike will be able to respond with a resounding “yes” to that famous question posed by the Blues Brothers: “Baby, don’t you wanna go back to that same old place, sweet home Chicago?” Daniel Burnham, the very father of the modern urban plan, offered these words of guidance to city planners in 1909. “Make no little plans... Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty” (Ontko). Wise counsel in 1909, still more so today.

Fig. 1. The Reliance Building, designed by Burnham and Root in 1895, from Chicago Landmarks, 15 Mar. 2001
http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Landmarks/index.html

Fig. 2. Burnham and Root’s Rookery Building, 1885, from Pat Sabin, The History and Architecture of Chicago, Illinois, 11 Feb. 2001
http://patsabin.com/illinois/.

Fig. 3. The Rookery’s famed spiral staircase, from Chicago Timeline: Rookery, Aug. 1997, 15 Mar. 2001

Fig. 4. Louis Sullivan’s Auditorium Building, completed in 1890, from Chicago Landmarks, 15 Mar. 2001
http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Landmarks/index.html.
Fig. 5. The John Hancock Building
towers above those near it on Michigan Avenue,
from Chicago Avenue Water Tower and
Pumping Station, 15 Mar. 2001

Fig. 6. The old Watertower
sharply contrasts with its more
modern surroundings, from Roger Harvey, Chicago Postcards,

Fig. 7. A view along South Michigan Avenue,
from Illinois Tourist Attraction Photos, 15 Mar. 2001
http://www.planetware.com/photos/PHUSIL.HTM.

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Sleeping Beauty on Exhibition

by Jacqueline Lew

Introduction by John Tinker, Instructor

In “Sleeping Beauty on Exhibition,” Jacqueline Lew draws on a variety of sources to establish rich historical and conceptual contexts for her feminist analysis of this tale. She incisively delineates the sexist qualities of classic versions of “Sleeping Beauty,” and she poses criteria for a successful feminist retelling of the story. Testing this theory with three twentieth-century tellings of the tale, she produces a finely crafted argument that is all the more compelling for her precise and elegant prose.

A monument to male chauvinism, the legend of “Sleeping Beauty,” most famously transcribed by the Brothers Grimm in early nineteenth-century Germany, reflects disturbing patriarchal values even in its embryonic forms. In an early seventeenth-century French version called “Sun, Moon and Talia,” the sleeping princess is not merely kissed but raped by her prince who temporarily abandons her; she wakes only after one of the twins she bears — while still asleep — begins sucking hungrily on her finger. Although the Brothers Grimm eliminated the earlier legend’s more graphic content from their “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty),” they intentionally preserved and even emphasized the sexist themes underlying the tale, particularly highlighting how beauty overshadows action, character and intellect. Because even now the Grimms’ version is not read critically as a text that represents a specific—archaic-time and place but as a timeless tale of universal truths, its chauvinistic themes and portrayal of women negatively affect contemporary female social development: with its aura of magic, “Sleeping Beauty” turns grown women into timid, uninspired girls. Therefore, to adequately address the problems posed by the Brothers Grimm’s version of “Sleeping Beauty,” modern feminist revisions of the tale should seek to expose the tale and the values it espouses as products of cultural context. Having done so, effective feminist retellings should then reject the tale’s inappropriate values both by showing the harmful effects of holding such values and by providing appropriate alternatives. As a feminist retelling of the tale, Anne Sexton’s poem “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)” does just this — it effectively allows the reader to imagine and grasp past as well as future possibilities of relationships between men, women and beauty.

However outdated and sexist their fairy tales’ ideologies may be today, the Brothers Grimms’ original intentions in compiling their famous Children’s and Household Tales — first published in 1812 — were far from malicious. While law students at the University of Marburg in the early 1800s, both Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, under the guidance of the famed law professor Friedrich Karl von Savigny, became interested in tracing the origin of law to its historical and cultural context, an interest that prompted their study of German literature and folklore (“Two Brothers
Named Grimm: A Reintroduction” 4). In their research of German folklore, the Grimms not only listened to the tales of storytellers and transcribed the stories by memory afterwards, but also transcribed many of their tales from existing written versions. In particular, the Grimms based their “(Briar Rose) Sleeping Beauty” on a seventeenth-century French version of the tale by Charles Perrault called “The Sleeping Beauty.” According to Jack Zipes, by publishing their findings, the Brothers Grimm “wanted to preserve, contain, and present to the German public what they felt were profound truths about the origins of civilization” (“Two Brothers Named Grimm” 72). In this way, the Grimms hoped to foster among German people a sense of pride in their folk tradition (“Two Brothers Named Grimm: A Reintroduction” 9). However, because many of the legends they gathered contained potentially offensive material, the Grimms were pressured by the conservative, Christian middle-class into essentially censoring much of the graphic and erotic content of the stories (“Two Brothers Named Grimm” 71). Despite having to edit their fairy tales for content as well as for style—in order to make the stories more descriptive and engaging—the Grimms “tried to retain what [they] considered the essential message of the tale” (“Two Brothers Named Grimm” 72), and “selected and revised those tales that would best express these truths [about the origin of civilization]” (“Two Brothers Named Grimm” 79). The truth that the Grimms seemed to have seized upon and tried to highlight in the legend of “Sleeping Beauty” was the role of women in their patriarchal society.

The alterations made to Charles Perrault’s “The Sleeping Beauty” suggest that the Brothers Grimm edited the tale to portray women in a chauvinistic way that adhered to cultural standards. Although the Grimms’ tale and most modern versions of “Sleeping Beauty” end with the awakening of the princess and her marriage to the prince, Perrault’s “The Sleeping Beauty” continues for a considerable length past the wedding. By eliminating the second half of the story in which Briar Rose is actually awake, the Grimms reduce the princess to a mere prop in their tale. Sleeping for the majority of the story, Briar Rose becomes a symbol of ultimate feminine passivity, a beautiful object with no emotion, desire or intellect. In Briar Rose’s comatose state, beauty becomes her main-and, in fact, only-asset. In all of their descriptions of Briar Rose, the Grimms never fail to mention her beauty — as a child, Briar Rose “was so beautiful that the King could not contain himself” (The Brothers Grimm 100); as a young woman, Briar Rose appears to the prince “so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her” (The Brothers Grimm 100). In using Briar Rose as a model for young girls and women, the socially conscious Brothers Grimm attempted to uphold the idea that beauty, rather than character, was a woman’s most valuable asset.

Additionally, in order to champion the ideal of feminine passivity, the Grimms denied Perrault’s princess an active identity by stealing her voice. In the Perrault version of “Sleeping Beauty,” the princess speaks a total of ten sentences throughout the tale that express her curiosity and self-confidence. Addressing the old woman with the spindle, Briar Rose says, “What are you doing, my good woman? [...] Oh! What fun! How do you do that? Let me try” (Perrault 17). Upon waking, Perrault’s princess is even described as more eloquent than the prince, whose “words were garbled” (Perrault 24) — as well as eagerly talkative — “they talked to each other for four hours and still had not said even half the things they wanted to say to each other”
Although Perrault’s Briar Rose is certainly not a paragon of female independence, she does address the old woman, the prince, and, in the second half of the story, the cook with more liveliness and self-awareness than the Grimms’ Briar Rose. In the Grimms’ version, the princess speaks two pithy sentences — “Good day, Granny […] What are you doing?” (The Brothers Grimm 101) — that noticeably lack Perrault’s princess’ curiosity, as well as any reference to herself. Grimm’s Briar Rose is only the picture of languid politeness. Furthermore, in the Grimms’ version, Briar Rose never speaks with the prince but merely “opened her eyes and looked lovingly at him” (The Brothers Grimm 104). In reducing the personal, inquisitive content of the princess’ speech, the Grimms further characterize the princess as a passive, vapid object.

By ending their version of “Sleeping Beauty” with Briar Rose’s awakening and immediate marriage, the Grimms both suggest to their audience that women are helpless without men and also construct a sexist model of female fulfillment. In the Grimms’ version, the kiss of a prince — a sign of his desire — saves Briar Rose from her comatose state, whereas in Perrault’s version, the princess wakes without the prince’s kiss. Although in the Grimms’ version the good fairy’s spell does not explicitly require the kiss of a prince to wake the princess, we nevertheless assume the necessity of the prince because the Grimms have portrayed her as so otherwise helpless. Presumably, Briar Rose’s “deep sleep lasting a hundred years” is a “soften[ing]” (The Brothers Grimm 101) of the evil fairy’s curse of death because it allows the fifteen-year old Briar Rose to eventually live a full life. In the Grimms’ version, Briar Rose’s “full” life, after her awakening and abrupt marriage to the prince, consists only of “liv[ing] happily ever till they died” (The Brothers Grimm 105). Thus, the Brothers Grimm suggest that a woman’s ultimate source of happiness lies not in what she does in her lifetime, but only in obtaining the desire of a man. In this way, the Brothers Grimm subtly impress upon their audience the unspoken but indispensable role of males in saving otherwise helpless women from their state of unfulfillment, thus harmonizing their tale with the values of their patriarchal society.

In attempting to uphold acceptable gender roles of the time, the Brothers Grimm also used their version of “Sleeping Beauty” to encourage feminine passivity and stigmatize female power. By portraying the passive Briar Rose as “so beautiful, modest […] and kind that everyone who saw her could not but love her” (The Brothers Grimm 101), the Grimms equate passivity with appropriate female behavior and rewarded it with love and approval. By contrast, the only truly assertive female in the Grimms’ tale is the bitter, evil, neglected thirteenth fairy who “wanted to revenge herself for not having been invited” (The Brothers Grimm 100). Almost ridiculously, the Grimms portray the wicked fairy as rude, “call[ing] out in a loud voice” (The Brothers Grimm 101) her curse, “without greeting anyone or even glancing at the company” (The Brothers Grimm 101). By linking neglect with a transgression of gender roles and social norms, the Grimms warn their female audience against breaking from acceptable roles in society. Although the other female fairies in the tale have some degree of power, ultimately, female power is only associated with superhuman status, suggesting that female authority does not belong in the everyday (Lieberman 197).

The threat now posed by “Sleeping Beauty” and fairy tales in general is not that
they contain chauvinistic values, but that contemporary women continue to accept and adopt the tales’ antiquated ideas. According to Jack Zipes, “the classic fairy tale has undergone a process of mythicization” (“Fairy Tales as Myth” 148). Zipes defines “myth” as a collection of ideas about society — the product of a specific culture and time period — whose contemporary inappropriateness has been overlooked (“Fairy Tales as Myth” 148). As a result of this process, “mythical” values become indistinguishable from “true,” suitable values. Therefore, the main problem with the “mythicized” fairy tale is that both the author and readers often do not place it within a specific historical or cultural context: indeed, with the simple phrase “once upon a time,” the tale transcends an identifiable time and place. For the Grimms’ “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)” in particular, neither the prince nor Briar Rose of the Grimms’ tale seem to notice the century between them, whereas Perrault’s prince notes that the princess is “dressed like his grandmother, because she was [...] one hundred years] out of fashion” (Perrault 24). Similarly, rather than realizing that the Grimms’ tales reflect eighteenth-century, conservative, patriarchal, middle-class, Christian values, modern day audiences, as Zipes puts it, “live and breathe the classical fairy tale as fresh, free air. We are led to believe that this air has not been contaminated and polluted by a social class that will not name itself, that wants us to continue to believe that all air is fresh and free” (“Fairy Tale as Myth” 150).

As a result, despite the centuries separating the Grimms’ world and the present day, the adoption of chauvinistic fairy-tale values through a process of observational learning still threatens contemporary female social development. According to Marcia Lieberman, fairy tales “serve to acculturate women to traditional social roles” (186) through certain storyline patterns that tell the audience what people of certain genders can and cannot accomplish (187). Through reading classic fairy tales that espouse chauvinistic values, children “learn behavioral and associational patterns, value systems, and how to predict the consequences of specific acts [...] according to sex” (Lieberman 187). Fairy tales ultimately provide guidelines for children’s behavior by serving as venues through which children receive vicarious reinforcement or punishment for the behaviors of the characters in the story (Vasta 40). In particular, by showing the manner in which Briar Rose achieves “happily ever after,” the Grimms’ tale teaches women to value physical beauty over personal character, to view women as helpless without men, to associate feminine passivity with acceptance, assertiveness with rejection, and happiness and fulfillment with being the object of masculine desire.

That women absorb the sexist values of “Sleeping Beauty” in turn shapes both their manner of self-evaluation as well as the nature of their aspirations. By adopting the Grimms’ tale’s belief that beauty is a woman’s primary asset in attaining fulfillment (i.e., the affections of a man), women may be led to evaluate themselves and other women solely on the basis of whether they are considered beautiful. Having learned to associate female power with both evil and neglect, women may also come to fear being assertive, as well as become suspicious of assertive women (Lieberman 188). According to Madonna Kolbenschlag, the “Sleeping Beauty” legend also shapes a woman’s idea of fulfillment by ultimately aiding in the construction of two distinct female personas—one, the “desirable object,” and two, the desire to “live for another,” as reflected by the feminine role of nurturer, rather than initiator or actor (12).
harmful result of adopting these personas is that a woman’s “maturity, spiritual growth and [...] sense of personal fulfillment are measured not by the young woman’s internalized experience, but by her approximation to possession of an exclusive One [man’s affections]” (Kolbenschlag 17).

Therefore, in order to most effectively address the harmful ramifications of the Grimms’ demeaning portrayal of women, a feminist retelling must remedy the tale’s two major problems: the problem of lost context, and the problem of sexist content. However, the task is difficult. As Zipes writes,

Newly written fairy tales, especially those that are innovative and radical, are unusual, exceptional, strange, and artificial because they do not conform to the patterns set by the classical tale. And, if they do conform and become familiar, we tend to forget them after a while, because the classic fairy tale suffices. (“Fairy Tale as Myth” 148)

Therefore, in order to even begin addressing the problems with Grimms’ “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty),” revisionist tales can neither merely ignore nor banally imitate the original, positing new values in place of the old. Rather, the most effective revisions should draw attention to the faults of the original. In order to do so sufficiently, the new tale should first “demythicize” (“Fairy Tale as Myth” 156) the old by exposing the tale and the values it espouses as products of cultural context. Having addressed the issue of context, the revision should then proceed to reject the legend’s inappropriate, chauvinistic content by showing the harmful effects of holding such archaic values, while providing new, appropriate alternative perspectives.

As a feminist retelling of the Grimms’ “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty),” Jane Yolen’s “Sleeping Ugly” manages only an inadequate parody of the original, attempting to teach contemporary values without sufficiently addressing the problems with the old values. Ultimately, Yolen’s retelling serves only to reverse two traditional aspects of the tale demeaning to women (“Sleeping Ugly: A New Moral For An Old Tale” 1). First, Yolen deconstructs the traditional privilege associated with beauty by stressing that character, rather than physical attractiveness, is a person’s most valuable asset. Rather than being rewarded for her beauty, in the end, the beautiful Princess Miserealla is punished with eternal sleep for being the “meanest, wickedest, and most worthless princess around” (Yolen 1). It is the unattractive but kind, selfless and compassionate Plain Jane who is rewarded with “happily ever after.” Second, Yolen’s tale changes the original’s chauvinistic concept of happily ever after (“Sleeping Ugly: A New Moral For An Old Tale” 1). Whereas in the Grimms’ version of “Sleeping Beauty” Briar Rose’s happily ever after consists merely of marriage, Plain Jane derives her ultimate happiness from being surrounded by friends and a loving family. Using humor, Yolen to some degree places the original tale in context — describing the sleep accidentally induced by the old fairy as continuing “through three and a half wars, one plague, six new kings, the invention of the sewing machine, and the discovery of a new continent” (Yolen 2). However, by combining traditional fairy tale elements (e.g., kingdoms, princesses and princes, fairies and magic) with contemporary language (e.g., the prince’s name is Jojo), “Sleeping Ugly” achieves a quality of timelessness that ironically hints of myth.

Ultimately, because Yolen attempts to revise the tale within its original framework, devoting the bulk of the story to promoting only two main themes, she
unwittingly preserves many of the original myths associated with the tale, including those regarding beauty, love and femininity. As in the classic “Sleeping Beauty,” Yolen’s “Sleeping Ugly” places too much emphasis on the relevance of beauty to character. Although Yolen attempts to deconstruct the association between good looks and good character, she only reverses the stereotype, to the detriment of attractive girls’ self-esteem. Furthermore, Yolen perpetuates stereotypical standards of beauty. Just because “her hair was short and turned down [and] her nose was long and turned up” (Yolen 1), Plain Jane is not considered a “great beauty” (Yolen 1). Yolen implies that only one kind of beauty exists: the blond-haired, blue-eyed, porcelain-skinned beauty. Furthermore, in Yolen’s tale, Prince Jojo only comes to “love” Plain Jane because the old fairy casts a spell. Yolen unintentionally implies that the likelihood of “ugly” girls being considered attractive is so low that they require the help of supernatural forces. In Yolen’s tale, superficial love at first sight is also legitimized — after being kissed, the groggy Plain Jane immediately wishes for the prince to love her, as if she has been waiting her entire life for a man — any man — to love her. What is remarkable is that even Perrault’s female protagonist spends more time getting to know her prince — talking with him for at least four hours — than does Yolen’s supposedly contemporary Plain Jane. Because she “need[s] a prince and a kiss” (Yolen 2) to end her sleep, Yolen’s female protagonist is similar to the Grimms’, meekly waiting to be rescued. Even in the end, it is Prince Jojo, a capable male, who “fixed the roof and the wall” (Yolen 2) of Plain Jane’s decrepit cottage. The problem with Yolen’s tale is that it is simply not daring enough. Because it attempts to retain the traditional fairy tale structure, it ends up preserving more chauvinistic messages than it deconstructs or replaces.

By taking political correctness to an extreme, James Finn Garner’s “Sleeping Persun of Better-Than-Average Attractiveness” demonstrates the futility of Yolen-like approaches to feminist revisions of fairy tales. Although Garner’s tale maintains the traditional fairy tale format, in which Yolen’s feminist tale fails to consistently provide contemporarily appropriate values, Garner intentionally leaves no sentence — or even word — politically incorrect. Not only are Garner’s “womyn” “intelligent, compassionate, and self-actualizing” (Garner 2), but Garner even goes so far as to describe the queen’s pregnancy with Rosamond (the sleeping persun of better-than-average attractiveness) by saying that “her body was colonized by the seed of the exploitative monarchy” (Garner 1). Garner’s feminist revision of “Sleeping Beauty” is so thorough that it becomes entirely — indeed, intentionally — ridiculous. Furthermore, to stress that revisionist tales assuming the traditional fairy tale structure can never entirely detach themselves from the inappropriate values associated with the originals, Garner parodies attempts to deal with the myth of beauty:

[W]hether [Rosamond] was also physically attractive is of no importance here and also depends on one’s standard of beauty. It also perpetuates the myth that all princesses are beautiful, and that their beauty gives them liberty over the fates of others. So, please, don’t even bring up the fact that she was quite a looker. (Garner 2)

In this way, Garner suggests that trying to change all of the antiquated values of the old version to contemporary values in a new version is futile — the new version is usually incomplete (as in Yolen’s “Sleeping Ugly”), or complete to the point of
trivializing the problems that women face. Instead of directly rejecting the values espoused by the Grimms’ “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty),” Garner rejects how revisions present alternative values in the original framework of fairy tales. Garner’s political correctness serves not so much as a serious alternative to the Grimms’ chauvinism, but as a humor-driven criticism of ineffective approaches to feminist revisions of “Sleeping Beauty.”

Unlike Yolen’s “Sleeping Ugly” and Garner’s parody, Sexton’s poem “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)” does not attempt to change the plot of the Grimms’ telling of the tale, but instead chooses to view the same story through the eyes of Briar Rose. By taking careful measures to preserve the story and by revealing how the events of the story affect Briar Rose, Sexton allows the reader to examine the impact of patriarchal notions of gender role — espoused by the Grimms’ fairy tales — on a woman’s psyche. Sexton begins her poem by introducing the Grimms’ tale as Briar Rose’s own story and experience. Where the Grimms’ denied Briar Rose a voice, Sexton restores it: long silenced by her role in the classic version of “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty),” Briar Rose is “learning to talk again” (line 15) in Sexton’s poem, “speaking with the gift of tongues” (line 6). In this way, Sexton draws attention to Briar Rose as a person striving to express her thoughts. Sexton then retells the Grimms’ story of “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)” with strikingly accurate adherence to detail, from Briar Rose’s christening, to the royal family’s shortage of flatware, to the thirteenth fairy’s curse, to Briar Rose’s deep sleep of a hundred years and awakening by the kiss of a prince for whom the briar hedges automatically part. To parallel the Grimms’ mention of how “The King and Queen, who had just come home and had stepped into the hall, went to sleep, and all their courtiers with them [...] the dogs in the yard [...] the flies on the wall [...] Yes, even the fire flickering on the hearth grew still and went to sleep” (102), Sexton writes: “The king and queen went to sleep/the courtiers, the flies on the wall. The fire in the hearth grew still/and the roast meat stopped crackling/ [...] and the dog became china” (lines 70-73, 75). Sexton then devotes the rest of the poem after Briar Rose’s awakening to exploring how Briar Rose’s mind has been warped by the events that have taken place: Briar Rose is now a paranoid insomniac who feels suffocated by her oppressed position in the story. Although Sexton adds unique elements to the story — such as her suggestion of Briar Rose’s incestuous relationship with the king — she retains the essential elements of the Grimms’ tale — particularly their conception of gender roles — to expose them as engendering horrifying results. Thus, whereas Yolen’s “Sleeping Ugly” denies the original tale’s harmful nature by merely hiding its inappropriate parts, Sexton’s poem lays the tale, in all its contemporary maliciousness, out in the open.

In contrast to Yolen’s “Sleeping Ugly,” Sexton’s version of “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)” successfully “demythicizes” the original by drawing attention to the context in which both her poem and the original tale were written. Unlike the Grimms’ version, Sexton fixes her poem very firmly in the time that she wrote it — namely, in the 1970s — by making references to contemporary products and expressions. According to Hill, Mark, Rosenbaum and Singer of George Washington University, Sexton’s persistent references to modern inventions and ideas — such as time machines, pocketbooks, straws, cigarettes, a cartoon Kaput!, Munch’s Scream, erasers, safety pins, Bab-o, tacks, cattle prods and Novacain — serve two purposes.
First, they suggest that the “Sleeping Beauty” tale deals with issues that are relevant today, such as the impact of socially determined gender roles on social development. Second, they remind the audience that every story reflects the cultural context in which it was written (“Anne Sexton’s Feminist Re-reading” 1). Sexton not only points out that her own telling of the tale reflects her personal bias and perspective — which Yolen’s tale significantly fails to do — but also, by emphasizing that the story took place in “times like those” (line 44), reminds us that the Grimms’ classic tale was constructed in a different time period with different values from our own. Ultimately, Sexton’s retelling of “Sleeping Beauty” undermines the authority of the Grimms’ tale. Realizing that the messages conveyed by the Grimms’ “Sleeping Beauty” are a product of a time that preceded the invention of the light-bulb, audiences can no longer absorb the Grimms’ chauvinistic messages without seriously questioning the relevance of such ancient values to their contemporary lives.

By taking Briar Rose’s point of view, Sexton retells “Sleeping Beauty” to reveal the damaging effects of the classic’s values on a woman’s psyche. Sexton does not so much try to change “Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)” as to expose the Grimms’ existing tale as a text with the potential to impact contemporary women’s self-conceptions. In fact, unlike Yolen’s retelling, Sexton’s entirely ignores superficial themes such as physical appearance and beauty and focuses exclusively on Briar Rose’s thoughts and feelings. More specifically, using powerful images of incest, imprisonment and insomnia, Sexton centers on Briar Rose’s reactions to being forced into a position of passivity and being ultimately objectified.

In her feminist interpretation of “Sleeping Beauty,” Sexton portrays Briar Rose as the victim of incest, raped by her father, in order to demonstrate how Briar Rose is emotionally damaged by her imposed role of passivity (“Anne Sexton’s Feminist Re-reading” 1). Apparently elaborating upon the Grimms’ description of how the child Briar Rose “was so beautiful that the King could not contain himself for joy” (The Brothers Grimm 1), Sexton describes Briar Rose’s relationship with her father using sexual overtones: “Papa/[...has] kisses for the back of [Briar Rose’s] neck” (lines 16, 18) and “bit[es] the hem of her gown/to keep her safe” (lines 55-56). Furthermore, just as the Grimms’ prince is infatuated with Briar Rose, Sexton’s Briar Rose suffers an obsession with her father that influences and ultimately overpowers her relationship with the prince: that Briar Rose wakes to the kiss of the prince “crying:/Daddy!  Daddy!” (line 96) may suggest that her relationship with her father has permanently damaged her ability to form any new relationships with men. Using Briar Rose’s rape as a powerful symbol of forced female passivity, Sexton draws a connection between the passivity of women in fairy tales with its ability to influence women’s relationships and emotional stability (“Anne Sexton’s Feminist Re-reading” 2).

Briar Rose’s father not only rapes her, but smothers her with overprotection that reinforces her role of passivity. Sexton shows that her father tries too hard “to keep her safe” (line 56) from the thirteenth fairy’s curse by babying her, “fasten[ing] the moon up/with a safety pin/to give her perpetual light” (lines 57-59). Briar Rose’s “father thick upon [her]/like some sleeping jellyfish” (lines 157-158) uses his position of sexual power to make Briar Rose dependent upon his presence which serves as a kind of night-light, and thereby forces Briar Rose into the role of a “little doll child”
(line 15), characterized by infantile helplessness and passivity. In this way, Sexton suggests that just as the oppressed Briar Rose becomes “stuck in the time machine/suddenly two years old sucking her thumb” (lines 7-8), women forced into roles of passivity face stunted social, emotional, and intellectual development. Thus, by showing the anguish experienced by the disoriented, terrified Briar Rose, Sexton both rejects the Grimms’ version’s valuation of the role of women as passive and emphasizes the need to value female freedom.

By likening Briar Rose’s passive role to imprisonment, Sexton’s version further explores how forcing women into passivity denies women freedom to explore and shape their individual lives and personalities. Unlike the Grimms’ Briar Rose, who is portrayed as being freed from her hundred-year sleep, Sexton’s Briar Rose merely passes from one prison into another. Although with the prince’s kiss Briar Rose appears to find freedom — “Presto! She’s out of prison!” (line 97) — Sexton questions whether she is truly free, saying “What voyage this, little girl?/This coming out of prison?/God help/this life after death?” (lines 160-162). Sexton also seems to question the Grimms’ portrayal of the prince as some sort of exalted magician with mysterious and wonderful powers over Briar Rose. In suggesting that, in fact, the prince has not been able to free Briar Rose, Sexton undermines the quality of male power over the fulfillment of women and implies that women must look elsewhere for liberation and contentment. Briar Rose realizes that she has merely passed from sleep-induced passivity to societal-induced passivity, and from one age of objectification (by her father, who considered her a “little doll child” (line 15)) to another, where she becomes a mere prize for the prince. Essentially, the objectified Briar Rose, “like a bowl of fruit” (line 148), is “forced backward...forced forward...passed hand to hand” (lines 145-147). Briar Rose seems to realize that as a result of being forced into a proscribed gender role that denies her individuality, she ultimately loses a sense of herself, saying “Each night I am nailed into place/and forget who I am” (lines 149-150). By juxtaposing the image of being nailed down with other religious imagery (“so they were held by the thorns/and thus were crucified” (lines 87-88), “the briers parted as if for Moses/and the prince found the tableau intact” (lines 92-93)), Sexton portrays Briar Rose as a martyr, almost Christ-like. Briar Rose becomes a reminder of a woman’s struggle both for recognition as a person independent of socially constructed roles, as well as against her traditional, Grimm-like classification as a passive, mindless object.

In Sexton’s version, Briar Rose’s frustration at her socially imposed passivity manifests itself in insomnia (“Anne Sexton’s Feminist Re-reading” 1) and further reflects Sexton’s rejection of the passive female roles reinforced by the Grimms’ tale. After being wakened by the prince, “Briar Rose/ was an insomniac” (lines 102-103) with a “fear of sleep” (line 101) who says that she “must not sleep/for while asleep I’m ninety,and think I’m dying” (lines 120-122). Unlike the Grimms’ Briar Rose and Yolen’s Plain Jane, Sexton’s Briar Rose recognizes that a significant passage of time has taken place since she first fell asleep and expresses the tension between the two time periods to which she seems to belong. Sexton’s Briar Rose seems aware of her status as a relic of century-old gender role conceptions and realizes that the archaic values that she represents should be “dying” or dead in her new time. In refusing to sleep and allow passivity to entirely overwhelm her, Briar Rose reacts in the only way
she can against her traditional role as a passive object, “still as a bar of iron” (line 126),
realizing — with the “bar of iron” (line 126) calling to mind images of prison — that
accepting her imprisoned role constitutes a living death. Still, she recognizes the
futility of her refusal to sleep — she avoids one prison of passivity only to be trapped
in another — and bitterly says “this trance girl/is yours to do with” (lines 130-131).
Furthermore, Briar Rose’s insomnia is not entirely driven by indignation, but also by
fear, which cripples the force of her “rebellious” statement. Thus, although in
Sexton’s version, Briar Rose turns out no more active or heroic, her obvious
frustration with her situation serves two purposes. First, her frustration reflects
Sexton’s own rejection of damaging gender role constructions, like those held in the
“Sleeping Beauty” tale. Second, Briar Rose’s expressed frustration calls attention to
the previously ignored thoughts and emotions of women in fairy tales; in itself,
Sexton’s focus on Briar Rose as a person rather than as a plot device serves as an
alternative to the Grimms’ valuation of traditional views of women.

As a feminist revision of “Sleeping Beauty,” Sexton’s poem surpasses Yolen’s
sincere but ineffectual “Sleeping Ugly” in addressing the damage of the classical tale’s
chauvinistic themes and portrayal of women. Although Yolen’s “Sleeping Ugly”
presents itself and its values as new, it has only added a fresh coat of paint to the
classic tale, and has even missed some spots. In fact, Yolen’s tale — and those like it,
which Garner’s version parodies — is ironically mythical. Essentially, by merely
updating the classic tale, Yolen’s tale ignores its own sordid ancestry and denies that
Briar Rose’s problems ever existed. Due to its chosen method of revision, “Sleeping
Ugly” renders itself impotent, unable to address the problems with the Grimms’
version. By contrast, Sexton’s poem presents the story faithfully, but reveals, under
contemporary lighting, that it is not nearly as attractive as we remembered in our
imaginations, and that it does not match the rest of the values that furnish our culture.
Though the tale may have been beautiful in its own time, we find, with Sexton’s
guidance, that in its deteriorating state, it should be encased in glass and displayed as
a museum relic, an artifact in an exhibition on the evolution of the feminist struggle.

APPENDIX 1

Yolen’s Sleeping Ugly [...] concerns the beautiful Princess Miserella, who is nasty and
mean. She gets lost in the woods, kicks a little old fairy, and demands that she help
her find her way out of the woods. Instead of helping her, however, the fairy takes her
to Plain Jane’s cottage where they are hospitably received. Impressed by Plain Jane’s
manners and good heart, the fairy grants her three wishes. Plain Jane must use two of
them to save Princess Miserella from the magic spells of the fairy, who punishes the
princess for her temper tantrums. The fairy accidentally puts the two young women
and herself to sleep for one hundred years when she wants to punish the princess a
third time. At the end of the 100 years, a poor but noble prince named Jojo, the
youngest son of a youngest son, finds them, and being a reader of fairy tales, he knows
that he can wake the princess with a kiss. Since he is out of practice, however, he
warms up by first kissing the fairy and Plain Jane, who then uses her third wish to hope
he will fall in love with her. Indeed, Jojo turns to kiss the princess but stops because she reminds him of his two cousins who are pretty on the outside but ugly within. So he proposes to Plain Jane. They marry, have three children, and use the sleeping princess either as a conversation piece or a clothes tree in their hallway. Moral of the story: ‘Let sleeping princesses lie, or lying princesses sleep, whichever seems wisest.’ (“Fairy Tale as Myth” 155)

APPENDIX 2

Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)
Anne Sexton

Consider a girl who keeps slipping off,
arms limp as old carrots,
into the hypnotist’s trance,
into a spirit world
speaking with the gift of tongues.
She is stuck in the time machine,
suddenly two years old sucking her thumb,
as inward as a snail,
learning to talk again.
She’s on a voyage.
She is swimming further and further back,
up like a salmon,
struggling into her mother’s pocketbook.
Little doll child,
come here to Papa.
Sit on my knee.
I have kisses for the back of your neck.
A penny for your thoughts, Princess.
I will hunt them like an emerald.
Come be my sneaky and I will give you a root.
That kind of voyage,
ranks as honeysuckle.
Once
a king had a christening
for his daughter Briar Rose
and because he had only twelve gold plates
he asked only twelve fairies
to the grand event.
The thirteenth fairy,
hers fingers as long and thin as straws,
hers eyes burnt by cigarettes,
hers uterus an empty teacup,
arrived with an evil gift. She made this prophecy:
The princess shall prick herself
on a spinning wheel in her fifteenth year
and then fall down dead.
Kaput!  
The court fell silent.
The king looked like Munch’s Scream.
Fairies’ prophecies,
in times like those,
held water.
However the twelfth fairy
had a certain kind of eraser
and thus she mitigated the curse
changing that death
into a hundred-year sleep.
The king ordered every spinning wheel
exterminated and exorcized.
Briar Rose grew to be a goddess
and each night the king
bit the hem of her gown
to keep her safe.
He fastened the moon up
with a safety pin
to give her perpetual light
He forced every male in the court
to scour his tongue with Bab-o
lest they poison the air she dwelt in.
Thus she dwelt in his odor
Rank as honeysuckle.
On her fifteenth birthday
she pricked her finger
on a charred spinning wheel
and the clocks stopped.
Yes indeed. She went to sleep.
The king and queen went to sleep,
the courtiers, the flies on the wall.
The fire in the hearth grew still
and the roast meat stopped crackling.
The trees turned into metal
and the dog became china.
They all lay in a trance,
each a catatonic
stuck in the time machine.
Even the frogs were zombies.
Only a bunch of briar roses grew
forming a great wall of tacks around the castle.

Many princes tried to get through the brambles for they had heard much of Briar Rose but they had not scoured their tongues so they were held by the thorns and thus were crucified.

In due time a hundred years passed and a prince got through.

The briars parted as if for Moses and the prince found the tableau intact.

He kissed Briar Rose and she woke up crying:

Daddy! Daddy!

Presto! She’s out of prison!

She married the prince and all went well except for the fear-the fear of sleep.

Briar Rose was an insomniac . . .

She could not nap or lie in sleep without the court chemist mixing her some knock-out drops and never in the prince’s presence.

If it is to come, she said, sleep must take me unawares while I am laughing or dancing so that I do not know that brutal place where I lie down with cattle prods, the hole in my cheek open.

Further, I must not dream for when I do I see the table set and a faltering crone at my place, her eyes burnt by cigarettes as she eats betrayal like a slice of meat.

I must not sleep for while asleep I’m ninety and think I’m dying.

Death rattles in my throat like a marble.

I wear tubes like earrings.

I lie as still as a bar of iron.
You can stick a needle
through my kneecap and I won’t flinch.
I’m all shot up with Novocain.
This trance girl
is yours to do with.
You could lay her in a grave,
an awful package,
and shovel dirt on her face
and she’d never call back: Hello there!
But if you kissed her on the mouth
her eyes would spring open
and she’d call out: Daddy! Daddy!
Presto!
She’s out of prison.
There was a theft.
That much I am told.
I was abandoned.
That much I know.
I was forced backward.
I was forced forward.
I was passed hand to hand
like a bowl of fruit.
Each night I am nailed into place
and I forget who I am.
Daddy?
That’s another kind of prison.
It’s not the prince at all,
but my father
drunkenly bent over my bed,
circling the abyss like a shark,
my father thick upon me
like some sleeping jellyfish.
What voyage this, little girl?
This coming out of prison?
God help-
this life after death?

Notes
1 For a summary of “Sleeping Ugly” by Jack Zipes, see Appendix 1.
2 For a copy of Sexton’s poem, see Appendix 2.

Works Cited


Additional Works Consulted


Winter 2000-2001 Jacqueline Lew, Honorable Mention
Essays from Introduction to the Humanities

As Director of the Introduction to the Humanities Program, but also as a professor in a humanistic field, and, not coincidentally, a reader of all of these papers, it is my great pleasure to congratulate the winners of the 2000-2001 Boothe prizes and the papers that came oh so close. I know that other readers, now made possible through this wonderful publication by the Program in Writing and Rhetoric, will agree that all of these papers, written by students at the beginning of their academic careers at Stanford, show not only great promise, but indeed already a significant level of achievement. The Faculty Senate has mandated that IHUM “enhance skills in analysis, reasoning, argumentation, and oral and written expression, thus helping to prepare students not only for more advanced work in the humanities, but also for work in other areas, such as the sciences, social sciences and engineering.” While it would be wrong to claim that the skills shown in these papers owe it all to IHUM, it’s nice to know that they are at least being fostered and promoted in the program, and, we fervently hope, enhanced.

Orrin Robinson
Director, Introduction to the Humanities
Montaigne’s Paradox:  
The Multiplicity and Unity of Virtue

by Andrei Pop

Introduction by Adrienne Defendi, Instructor

Andrei Pop’s essay, “Montaigne’s Paradox: The Multiplicity and Unity of Virtue,” explores the complexity of the concept of virtue in several of Montaigne’s essays. In his sophisticated and well-argued analysis, Pop demonstrates an intimate understanding of the concept of Montaigne’s “new, rationalistic virtue” in that ultimately it necessitates constant conflict in the examination of the self and others. Pop argues his ideas in a beautifully written essay that unfolds seamlessly from beginning to end, drawing upon close textual analysis as well as a breadth of knowledge in ancient, classical, and Renaissance notions of virtue. He also effectively makes brief, synthetic references to other texts read in the course to further distinguish Montaigne’s thinking from others discussed in seminar and lecture. In this engaging essay, Pop’s command of his ideas, the text in discussion, and his style and language demonstrate an outstanding talent and commitment to the expression and exploration of ideas in the Humanities.

This, reader, is an honest book.... Had my lot been cast among those peoples who are said still to live under the kindly liberty of nature’s primal laws, I should, I assure you, most gladly have painted myself complete and in all my nakedness.
(Introduction, Cohen, p.23)

So Montaigne introduces the reader to the treasure trove of intimate and universal intellectual dances that comprise his essays. Though there is no topic eccentric enough that Montaigne won’t tackle it, the essays are hardly without a unifying sensibility. Aside from an unsparing honesty, the fundamental thread that colors Montaigne’s perceptions and sometimes fuels his arguments is a complicated vision of that most elusive of ethical abstractions, virtue. Montaigne’s idea of virtue is often contradictory; under close scrutiny, it reveals itself to be a chimera built out of the disparate elements of medieval chivalry, Hellenic philosophy, and Renaissance rationalism. In spite of its motley origins, one cannot dismiss Montaigne’s concept of virtue as lacking in force or internal logic. The new virtue proposed by Montaigne abandons generalized rules of behavior and self-denial as a whole, opting instead for wisdom and moderation in pursuit of pleasure, coupled with an uncompromising awareness of one’s own faults anti limits. By marshalling the considerable resources of Greek classical thought and tying them to a newly developed Renaissance emphasis on rationalism and the inherent pureness of nature, Montaigne set out to sweep aside the outmoded, religious conceptions of virtue that he saw as a main cause
of evil and corruption. Though a beacon for progressive thinkers of his own time, Montaigne was not recklessly radical. He did not hesitate to retain elements of the medieval moral code, as long as they meshed harmoniously with the new virtue he was forging in the smithy of his essays.

To better see Montaigne’s moral innovations, it is necessary to first review all that is reactionary and medieval in his approach, not only to get it out of the way but to observe the important shift in context that allowed old prejudices to acquire new meanings. The most conspicuous (and to the 20th century mind, most puzzling) anachronism in Montaigne’s stance is his glorification of the military calling. It is perhaps revealing to know of Montaigne’s personal experience as a distinguished professional soldier, but he hardly attributes his preference to personal experience. In his description of the cannibals, he pays lip service to the horror of war (“this human disease,” “Of cannibals”, p.156), but goes on to ecstatically describe the primitives’ warfare as “wholly noble and generous” (“Of cannibals”, p.156). The deciding factor is that the superseding motive for battle is “glory” or “valor”, rather than selfish materialism. In a sense, Montaigne is writing against the spirit of his time — Machiavelli would have a hard time reconciling a personal sense of “valor” with the realities of power that a prince must keep in mind. Montaigne is not as much antiquated on this standpoint as a representative of a distinctly opposite trend in Renaissance thought: the rational glorification of the ethical, as opposed to the rational preference of the profitably unethical. Montaigne’s opinion on this matter, as in many, reveals classical roots. He quotes from ancient generals as reverently as from philosophers, and he is one of the few men of his time (or any time) who greatly admire both Julius Caesar and his killer Brutus. It might be argued that Montaigne valued Brutus’ scholarship and altruistic devotion to the Roman people, while in Caesar he saw tactical brilliance and martial discipline. But why should we make Montaigne seem inconsistent when there’s a better explanation? The truth is that he valued the same intrinsic quality in both men: valor, the conviction that what they were doing was right in an absolute sense, tempered by an awareness of the difficulty in acting out just designs. Unlike Dante, who consigns Brutus to hell, Montaigne is comfortable believing that two men so at odds that one kills another can both act under the influence of an equivalent, positive moral principle.

The Caesar situation brings up the other central issue in which Montaigne is basically conservative: his approach to literature, and ancients in particular. Though he decries an irrational reliance on “foreign and scholarly examples” (“Of experience”, p.828), he draws most of his profuse quotation from Roman Imperial poets and historians, and Greek Classical philosophers. This in itself is a modern Renaissance approach to the Western canon: Montaigne virtually ignores the late Empire and Christian writers (though he threatens to, he hardly quotes Macrobius at all), focusing on what he clearly considers the cream of human eloquence and sensibility. This insistence on the primacy of the ancients leads to such things as the amusing, but highly arguable comparison of Virgil and Ariosto (“Of books”, p.300).

Montaigne is adamant, but not slavish in his Classical bias; rather, he makes out of it one of his boldest syntheses, comparing the virtue and sanity of Platonic thought with the unspoiled nature of the Brazilian primitives. “I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato did not know of them” (“Of cannibals”, p.153). He goes on to eulogize the
complete lack of enmity and self-interest in Brazilian society as a state above even the ideals envisioned by Plato in his Republic and by the poets in their evocations of the Golden Age (“Of experience”, p.816). A cultural snob he is not: he goes on to compare the Brazilian tribe’s language to Greek, and the natives’ oral literature to the poetry of Anacreon. Montaigne’s admiration of the primitive peoples signals another daring appropriation of Classical convention: the assertion of nature as supreme over art (as a paraphrase of Plato, “Of cannibals”, p.153) is taken at face value. Montaigne sees in human beings left to nature’s devices the only true happiness and virtue, which have been debased “in adapting them to gratify our corrupted taste” (“Of cannibals, p.152), that is, by society. Elsewhere, in his review of Guicciardini (“Of books”, p.305), Montaigne practically equates virtue with “the way of reason.” This is not contradictory, even though Montaigne recognizes that the cannibals are “barbarians, in respect to the rules of reason...” (“On cannibals, p.156). He sees the cannibals as pure by lack of excessive cultural alienation from nature. Nature is enough to guide human beings in virtue, Montaigne is saying, but for those of us that have been irreparably distanced from Her, reason is the only path left to virtue. This is a far cry from the medieval missionary view that could only lament a non-European peoples’ fate as damned because of their ignorance of Christ. Montaigne is instead dismissive of Western interference, judging (accurately, it would turn out) that Europeans would be the corruption and final ruin of the primitive peoples. While basically orthodox in his Christian faith, Montaigne seems to think that innate virtue is sufficient grounds for salvation, whereas Europeans are mired by society (and religion is not at all evoked as a savior) in a rusted, confining moral system that leads them astray from happiness and civic harmony.

As revealing as his esteem of the Brazilians might be, it does not shed much light on Montaigne’s idea of virtue. The punch line, of course, is that the Brazilians are virtuous as a direct result of their barbarity. As Montaigne wittily implies in his conclusion (“All this is not too bad — but what’s the use? They don’t wear breeches.” “On cannibals, p.159), the cannibals’ virtue, being as it is natural, is incommunicable to us in our cultural corruption. Therefore, we must inspect the role of reason as the difficult but ultimately rewarding, and only, road to virtue.

Montaigne’s treatment of reason indicates an abrupt departure from classical norm, and reveals the man’s deep perception of his Renaissance milieu. Like Bacon, the father of scientific experimentation, Montaigne valued the products of inductive reasoning above those of pure deduction. Despite his conventional assertion that “experience is a weaker and less dignified means [than reason],” he goes on to remind the reader that “the truth is so great a thing that we must not disdain any medium that will lead to it” (“Of experience”, p.815). Later on in the same essay, he ridicules philosophy’s more impractical claims (the rules of Nature ...have no concern with such sublime knowledge”, p.822), preferring those that are “most solid, that is, most human” (“Of experience”, p.855). The message is clear: while he accepts the mechanism of deductive thought, he prizes most that wisdom which is directly applicable to human life, and which rests its assumptions on objective reality rather than abstract or ideal definitions (in this he is like Machiavelli).

What exactly is to be the purpose then of Montaigne’s new inductive method of gaining knowledge? How does it apply to his new virtue? And why is a new virtue
necessary at all, since even the traditional Christian ethical systems that Montaigne
distrusts (the Scholastics, the Neoplatonists) always used reason as an argument for
their supremacy? The answer to all three of these questions is a materialistic and
deterministic one: “Nature has committed herself to make nothing separate that was
not different” (“Of experience”, p.815). The variety of human experience, Montaigne
argues, is infinite, and makes a mockery not only out of any rigid legal code but out
of any fixed ethical code whatsoever. This argument is not only pagan but essentially
Epicurean in origin, as Montaigne readily admits, yet it does not violate Christianity
in any overt way — even if human behavior is not infinitely varied, there is such a
great number of different cases that each must be taken on an individual basis. Clearly
then, not only is a rigid judicial system obsolete, but also an external ethical system.
God may judge each of us, but since he does so on an individual basis, Montaigne
seems to say, it only makes sense that we regulate our behavior and cultivate our
virtue on an individual basis. Of course, Montaigne does not in any way address
divine judgment or absolute appraisal of any kind in “Of experience”, but it is
important to see that his individualized approach to virtue is not pruriently
materialistic or an assault on monotheism.

To leave off at this juncture, though, would be as uninstructive to the Western
reader as the example of the cannibals. Montaigne’s dilemma consists in reconciling
the individualization of wisdom and virtue with the generality usually required of
education. His solution is admirable: rather than passing vague pronouncements on
virtue that would only undercut his thesis of individuality, he endeavours to explain
the method he uses continually to make contact with his own moral sense. This
method calls to mind yet another time-honored medieval doctrine: the distrust of
man’s body and appetitive nature. Montaigne does not directly attack this tradition,
but instead stands it on his head. He is as distrustful of his mind as he is of his body,
and takes frequent opportunities to denigrate his judgment, intelligence, and memory
(despite the fact that many of his classical quotes are from memory!). The subtle, but
drastic, difference is that Montaigne is skeptical about both his physical nature and
his intellect, but he regards both as basically good, or at least neutral, as opposed to
the intellect warring against the tainted body. In his opinion that the human mind is
not inherently purer (untouched by original sin) than the human body, Montaigne is
not entirely original — Augustine had first proposed this view in De libero arbitrio
over a millenium earlier. It is significant though that this early Christian doctrine had
long since been discarded by the Scholastics, and was not particularly en vogue in the
man-glorifying Renaissance. Beyond this nod to early Christian tradition,
Montaigne’s acquittal of bodily passions from the once authoritarian shadow of
original sin is new. Montaigne ridicules the common prejudice that “nothing is
beneficial that is not painful” (“Of experience”, p.832), and the ascetic impulse in
general. He does not disapprove of true religious ascetics, whom he sees as awaiting
the pleasure and bounty of life eternal (“Of experience”, p.856), but he thinks it a
great foolishness to deny oneself pleasure and beauty out of a “suspicion of ease”. Then,
what is the role of virtue if not to deny the human being pleasure? Virtue is a
gatekeeper and filter, a judge of temperance, because “temperance is the moderator,
not the adversary, of pleasure” (“Of experience”, p.855). Temperance is an internal
guardian saint, able not only to pull the complete human being out of physical
depression caused by illness (p.842), but also to prevent the excess of pleasure from corrupting the psyche by enslaving it to habit (p.823).

From the discussion of moderation, the impression given might be that virtue in Montaigne is an easy quality to obtain and exercise. Nothing could be further from the truth. While virtue in Montaigne allows pleasure and luxury that an older-fashioned virtue may deny, the new, rationalistic virtue is far more difficult to live with and exercise because it demands a constant effort of judging self and others. Unlike a doctrinaire morality that strives to eradicate any conflict in a person’s mind over which choice is right, Montaigne sees conflict as the only true manifestation of virtue. It means more than “letting oneself, by a happy disposition, be led gently and peacefully in the footsteps of reason” (“Of cruelty”, p.300). Virtue consists not in doing what is right, and despising what is wrong, but in such things as employing reason to curb an urge for vengeance. “Virtue presupposes difficulty and contrast, and it cannot be exercised without opposition,” (“Of cruelty”, p.307). In a characteristic leap of brilliance, Montaigne goes on to explain why God is referred to by such adjectives as just and good but never virtuous: there is never any inner conflict in divine actions. Humans on the other hand have their malevolent impulses to deal with — the suppression of these may well be thought of as the “wartime” duty of virtue, just as the moderate administration of pleasure is virtue’s “peacetime” element. Needless to say, for Montaigne, peace is the preferable condition, but glory is won in war.

Not only does virtue call for a self-conflict, but the administration of virtue itself requires a continuous process of self-evaluation. Only by first knowing all of one’s attributes, the good along with the bad (“such infinite depth of variety”, p.823), can one form an honest sense of virtue appropriate to one’s self. In another example of his empirical bent, Montaigne heaps abuse on laws and religions that posit laws arbitrarily: “Nothing is more discreditable than to have assertion and proof precede knowledge and perception [Cicero]” (p. 823). Therefore, any moral structure an individual undertakes as his own must succeed and not precede self-knowledge. And since we are changing all the time, the process of self-knowledge and virtuosic updating must continue for the entire duration of our lives.

Of course, there is no guarantee that we will ever know ourselves well, or that the sense of virtue we develop based on our self-knowledge will lead to wisdom or happiness. Montaigne is too much the realist to claim otherwise. He himself frequently expresses doubts in his own judgment. But if there is one thing he claims to be absolutely sure of, it is that overarching ignorance types the human condition. “The recognition of ignorance is one of the fairest and surest testimonies of judgment that I find” (“Of books’, p.297). This ignorance may be sobering, but it should not be tragic. As long as we are aware of our eternal necessity to gain knowledge of ourselves and the world around us, and we face the challenges of experience bravely with our reason moderating our physical impulses, we may achieve the balance that Montaigne thought best:

I would not have the mind nailed down to [the body] nor wallowing at it, but attending to it; sitting at it, not lying down at it. (p.850)
A Labor of Learning: The Visions and Revisions of Lily Briscoe and Janie Crawford

by Evan Lamb

Introduction by Valerie Ross, Instructor

Evan came to Stanford as an already accomplished classics scholar and linguist. He has a passion for literature, poetry, and ideas, and a sophisticated critical eye for textual nuance, complex narrative structures, and symbolic resonance. Evan is an excellent writer whose eloquence and graceful crafting of analytical argument evidence a genuine pleasure in language and interpretation. Evan’s paper, “A Labor of Learning: The Visions and Revisions of Lily Briscoe and Janie Crawford,” was selected by Professor Diane Middlebrook as the most outstanding paper of her Spring Introduction to Humanities Seminar, “Literature of Transformation.” This paper insightfully traces the parallel structure of transcendence in Virginia Woolf’s To the Lighthouse and Zora Neale Hurston’s Their Eyes Were Watching God, through their female protagonists’ process of “re-visioning” the symbolic landscapes of their lives and identities. Evan’s sensitivity to issues of gender throughout his analysis, as well as his careful attention to the modernist principles with which both writers were experimenting, produces a close, demanding reading of both works. His argument demonstrates that Woolf and Hurston, like their protagonists, themselves transcend such issues as race, class, and power in their writing in order to create powerful feminist narratives celebrating a universal possibility for transformative artistic individuality.

It is quite possible to walk through life never having learned a thing; it is equally possible to treat life as the grandest, richest journey of them all, a divine opportunity to observe, experience, and conquer what may sometimes seem only a wasteland of senseless drudgery. Both To the Lighthouse, by Virginia Woolf, and Their Eyes Were Watching God, by Zora Neale Hurston, written only ten years apart, contain breathtaking examples of the latter philosophy: both Woolf’s Lily Briscoe and Hurston’s Janie Crawford observe, experience, theorize, and ultimately have transcendent, revelatory moments, albeit under vastly different circumstances. Indeed, the two characters are separated by education, race, class, continent and a host of other divides; even the novels’ structures differ dramatically. Nevertheless, they are united by gender, and it is this connection which allows for an especially fruitful comparison of two seemingly disparate societies. Both their feelings about men and about women reflect a uniquely feminine perspective, and in their final visions, although each quite different, they achieve the power and independence, the self-actualization, that they so long sought, and in so doing reject the ordinary roles that women are expected to fulfill in their respective societies. These visions, which are really the culmination of many years’ learning, are so splendid, empowering, and liberating, that examined in tandem they create an extraordinarily inspirational feminist manifesto.
Both characters’ observations of and interactions with the men in their lives are critical in forming their visions. Lily Briscoe thinks and ponders and ruminates throughout the two days for which Woolf allows us access to her mind, and what her mind reveals is an ongoing — across ten years, even — attempt to develop a framework by which to understand her world. As she puts it, “What does it mean then, what can it all mean?” (145). There is always room for mental ingenuity and theorizing, even to a humorous extent: “Whenever she [Lily] thought of his [Mr. Ramsay’s] work she always saw clearly before her a large kitchen table” (23). Lily’s attempts to classify the men of her experience, Mr. Ramsay, Charles Tansley, William Bankes, Augustus Carmichael, and Paul Rayley, reveal a woman searching to understand what role and variations of a role men play in early twentieth-century British society, and consequently what roles women are expected or allowed to take on to complement them. In a sense all men are variations on a theme, one that reaches a certain extreme in Mr. Ramsay and a quite different one in Mr. Carmichael. One of the first characterizations that Lily gives comes after an evaluation of Mr. Bankes: “You [Mr. Bankes] have greatness, she continued, but Mr. Ramsay has none of it. He is petty, selfish, vain, egotistical; he is spoilt; he is a tyrant; he wears Mrs. Ramsay to death; but he has what you (she addressed Mr. Bankes) have not; a fiery unworldliness; he knows nothing about trifles; he loves dogs and his children” (24). A few pages later we find her calling him “...the most sincere of men, the truest (here he was), the best; but, looking down, she thought, he is absorbed in himself, he is tyrannical, he is unjust” (46). Lily certainly respects Mr. Ramsay for his mental prowess, but his “fiery unworldliness,” however, is incompatible with a healthy family life, except that, as is noted so many times in the text, many men including Mr. Ramsay need a woman to give them strength. Mr. Ramsay is a child, dependent upon a woman’s attention to bolster his ego; as such, he is lacking in a way that a woman is not: “...she [Mrs. Ramsay] pitied men always as if they lack something — women never, as if they had something” (85). Ten years later, as Mr. Ramsay approaches Lily in need, she thinks: “That man... never gave; that man took. She, on the other hand, would be forced to give. Mrs. Ramsay had given” (149). As unhappy as it makes her to do so, Lily “gives” to Mr. Ramsay then, complimenting his boots, just as she does at the dinner party when Mr. Tansley, a more odious version of Mr. Ramsay younger and unmarried, who whispers “Women can’t paint, women can’t write...” (48) in her ear, requires similar bolstering: “...of course for the hundred and fiftieth time Lily Briscoe had to renounce the experiment — what happens if one is not nice to that young man there — and be nice” (92). Even if she capitulates in this instance, Lily clearly resists the social pressure, which Mrs. Ramsay in part exacts upon her, to fill a certain role and indeed, to marry, marrying men being all too similar to Mr. Ramsay or Mr. Tansley. This is not to claim, however, that Lily is unaffected by the notion of romantic love, for in Paul Rayley and even more in the relationship between the newly betrothed Rayley and Minta Doyle there is something very exciting: Lily finds herself enchanted by the idea of helping Rayley search for Minta’s missing brooch: “Lily wanted to protest violently and outrageously her desire to help him, envisaging how in the dawn on the beach she would be the one to pounce on the brooch half-hidden by some stone, and thus herself be included among the sailors and the adventurers” (102). At the same time, as she observes in Minta’s charm to Mr.
Ramsay the “degradation” (102) to which marriage leads, Lily resists: “It is so beautiful, so exciting, this love, that I tremble on the verge of it, and offer, quite out of my own habit, to look for a brooch on a beach; also it is the stupidest, the most barbaric of human passions...” (102). Her description of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay’s marriage is far from romantic: “So this is a marriage, Lily thought, a man and a woman looking at a girl throwing a ball” (72). The two most prominent bachelors in the book are Mr. Bankes and Mr. Carmichael, and they offer a tantalizing alternative to the Ramsays’ lifestyle. Lily’s impression of Mr. Bankes is just as two-sided as her description of marriage: on the one hand she thinks of him as severe, good, “impersonal,” “finer than Mr. Ramsay,” and a “generous, purehearted, heroic man” (24), whose loneliness intrigues her. He is far from perfect, however: “...simultaneously, she remembered how he had brought a valet all the way up here; objected to dogs on chairs; would prose for hours (until Mr. Ramsay slammed out of the room) about salt in vegetables and the iniquity of English cooks” (24). Mr. Bankes is quiet and pleasant but he is, as she notes again when remembering how he “deplored” (172) the sight of a hole in Minta’s stocking, too obsessed with the sorts of details that Mr. Ramsay overlooks. Mr. Carmichael is even more independent: the mysterious, impersonal, omnipresent poet whose poems, Lily presumes, say “very little about love” (195), “wanted very little of other people” (195). She does not know him very well, but is comforted by his presence, his refusal to cooperate with Mrs. Ramsay, and perhaps by his artistic nature. Thus Lily’s opinions of men are diverse and often contradictory; it is important to, note, however, that none of her notions of men persuades her to marry, both in spite of and because of her observation that “no woman could worship another woman in the way he [Mr. Bankes] worshipped; they could only seek shelter under the shade which Mr. Bankes extended over them both” (48). She understands that men play a dominant role in society, but she hopes desperately nonetheless to avoid such patriarchy, and succeeds.

Like Lily, Janie lives in a society where women are defined as dependent on or at least assumed to be lacking without men. Janie’s society, however, is markedly different: women lead precarious, rigidly structured lives; Lily, after all, can choose simply to observe, and, in the end, to remain independent. Janie, while ultimately also allowed that luxury, has no choice but to experience marriage, and is considered entirely subject to her husband’s will. Janie’s husbands, Logan Killicks, Joe Stark, and Tea Cake Woods, represent as kaleidoscopic a male spectrum as the men Lily observes. Of course, whereas To the Lighthouse takes place on two days separated by ten years, James saga comprises her entire life, told in flashback to her friend Pheoby; in the final chapter, we are suddenly lifted outside the frame again and Janie has her vision. Janie’s impression of men, therefore, depends less on passive observation and more on her experience. As soon as Janie matures sexually, she is forced into marriage with Logan, and her earlier, naïve comment, made during her sexual awakening under the pear tree, “So this was a marriage!” (11), seems unfortunately ridiculous. Her dream of marriage as erotic and passionate is mistaken, but as the narrator suggests, such a truth is part of becoming a woman: “Janie’s first dream was dead, so she became a woman” (25). The sentence is ambiguous — did she become a woman because her dream died or simply as a result of it — but nevertheless this first boring relationship is a rite of passage. Logan himself is nothing unordinary, and
this is Janie’s problem with him: he does not meet her rather quixotic expectations. Insofar as he meets the society’s expectations for the husband role, in that he expects her to obey without question and to be grateful for having saved her from whatever fate lay ahead for her unmarried, Logan is a good analogue for Mr. Ramsay, who, in his marriage, provides Lily with her basic understanding of what such a union is, in spite of his quirks. Lily rejects such a lifestyle, in spite of only having sampled it vicariously; Janie also rejects marriage to the extent that it consists of the mundane kind that Logan offers, but walks into a trap of a different sort when she runs away with Joe Starks. Joe, who promises to “make a wife outa you” (29), offers Janie a chance to reclaim the romantic dream that dissipated in her time spent with Logan. The position of mayor’s wife seems both prominent and enviable, but in his own way, Joe is demanding and oppressive, expecting her to want the life he builds for her without considering her opinions. Janie remains silent, must hide her hair, must work at the store: “She went through many silent rebellions over things like that. Such a waste of life and time. But Joe kept saying that she could do it if she wanted to and he wanted her to use her privileges. That was the rock she was battered against” (54). Eventually, when he beats her, she learns to separate her real self from the shell that everyone, including Joe, sees, and critically, realizes how foolish she has been in confusing Joe’s ambition and power with the sort of man she needs — one who respects and understands her. “It [something] was her image of Jody tumbled down and shattered. But looking at it she saw that it never was the flesh and blood figure of her dreams” (72). Joe lets Janie down, confirming her suspicion that marriage is always unhappy and oppressive, and that men are slave-masters to their wives; in the sense that he shares society’s belief that wives exist to serve their husbands, Joe is also similar to “ordinary” Mr. Ramsay, even if marriage is here seen in a much more negative light. In To the Lighthouse, we know from Mrs. Ramsay’s thoughts that even if she is at times unhappy in her role, she loves her husband and her marriage dearly. Janie does not experience similar happiness until Tea Cake’s arrival. Tea Cake treats her as an equal — note the similar balance of power in the Ramsays’ relationship, each of whom controls at different times — and is as such prepared to listen and understand Janie. Tea Cake is a very different sort of man, just as Mr. Bankes and even more Mr. Carmichael differ from Mr. Ramsay: “She [Janie] couldn’t make him look just like any other man to her” (106). Tea Cake is, like Mr. Bankes and Mr. Carmichael, intriguing; he offers a fresh perspective, refusing to treat Janie as others treat their wives. Marriage is partially redeemed — but even a relationship with Tea Cake is imperfect: he beats her at one point, and, of course, dies. The experience has nevertheless been worth it; as Janie explains to Pheoby, “Ah done been tuh de horizon and back and now Ah kin set heah in mah house and live by comparisons” (191). Janie’s experiences with men, just like Lily’s observations and reflections about them, have provided each with a taxonomy of man — as it affects woman — and thus a reference point that becomes crucial when, as we shall see, each forms her vision, her mission statement.

That mission statement depends just as much on the two characters’ impressions of the women in the novels: Lily yearns to understand Mrs. Ramsay and Janie is at least partially formed by Nanny. Their somewhat paradigmatic impressions lead both Lily and Janie to consider and ultimately to reject such lifestyles. Lily is fascinated
by Mrs. Ramsay; she adores her; she is confused by her. Much of her thoughts are an attempt to understand the woman: “What was the spirit in her, the essential thing, by which, had you found a crumpled glove in the corner of a sofa, you would have known it, from its twisted finger, hers indisputably?” (49). Mrs. Ramsay is beautiful, effortlessly graceful, a master at “giving” (149), infinitely capable of placating husband, children, and party guest alike. She is Immensely powerful, a rock of stability anchoring characters and events and memories, who makes the dinner party a success and who, Lily realizes, has glued so many such events together. Lily recalls a beach scene from ten years before: “...Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs. Ramsay saying, ‘Life stand still here’; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent ...In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing ...was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs. Ramsay said ...She owed it all to her” (161). Yet Lily does not fully understand the woman, even as she presses her head against Mrs. Ramsay’s knees, hoping to achieve knowledge through intimacy; nothing happens, but “she knew knowledge and wisdom were stored up in Mrs. Ramsay’s heart” (51). What is it that Lily cannot reconcile with her adoration of the woman? There is her insistence that everyone, especially young women, needed to marry: “What was this mania of hers for marriage?” (175). Lily is no exception — she is to marry Mr. Bankes, a ridiculous match. Marriage, in Mrs. Ramsay’s opinion, is necessary and desirable; women and men must interact in very particular ways for society to survive and flourish. Mrs. Ramsay’s own thoughts reveal this attitude:

> There is a code of behavior, she [Mrs. Ramsay] knew, whose seventh article (it may be) says that on occasions of this sort it behooves the woman, whatever her own occupation may be, to go to the help of the young man opposite so that he may expose and relieve the thigh bones, the ribs of his vanity, of his urgent desire to assert himself; as indeed it is their duty, she reflected, in her old maidenly fairness, to help us, suppose the Tube were to burst into flames. (91)

How, on the one hand, is Mrs. Ramsay so powerful — “There was something frightening about her. She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end, Lily thought” (101) — and yet so complacent, so accepting of what an independent woman such as Lily sees as undesirable, namely marriage? Mrs. Ramsay, as much as she is the source of so much energy, is “weak with her husband. She let him make those scenes” (195). Perhaps more importantly, there is her continuous need to take action, a philosophy of living to which Lily, like Mr. Carmichael, cannot subscribe: “It was her instinct to go ...this, like all instincts, was a little distressing to people who did not share it; to Mr. Carmichael perhaps, to herself certainly. Some notion was in both of them about the ineffectiveness of action, the supremacy of thought” (196). It is as if Mrs. Ramsay is willing to make sacrifices that Lily finds herself unable to make in order to ensure peace and happiness, which, for Mrs. Ramsay, depend on marital success. Such differences mean that Lily, as much as she adores Mrs. Ramsay, pines her loss, and praises her “perfect goodness” (202), can not want to be her, even if at times marriage seems an attractive or at least a comforting option. Mrs. Ramsay represents a type of woman who Lily will never be, and rejecting the life she offers is a positive step for Lily: it is only after she has managed to understand Mrs. Ramsay to her satisfaction, to classify her, to place her, that Mrs. Ramsay reappears for her in
the drawing-room, so that Lily can complete her painting.

Janie must similarly understand the woman who has been most influential in her life, Nanny, before she is able to reject the path that Nanny offers and have her vision. Unlike Lily’s feelings for Mrs. Ramsay, Nanny is not in any way exalted by Janie. Janie rejects Nanny totally, realizing, after Joe dies, that any sympathy she may have felt was only a euphemistic veil covering her true feelings: “She hated her grandmother and had hidden it from herself all these years under a cloak of pity” (89). Nanny, of course, married Janie to Logan as soon as she had evidence of Janie’s sexual awakening, apparently an unforgivable act, in spite of Nanny’s claim that she is just hoping to see Janie in a stable marriage — in which, of course, she becomes more a slave than a wife — before she dies. Nanny is not interested in love, instead wanting only protection for Janie: “ ‘Tain’t Logan Killicks Ah wants you to have, baby, it’s protection” (15). Nanny herself is not the paradigm that so offends Janie, for she has lived an atypical life (one which explains, among other things, Janie’s biracialism); it is her dogged insistence on the role women must play if they are to survive that so offends Janie. Janie, unlike Lily, has no control, and the metaphor for her future as the horizon line becomes horribly grotesque under Nanny’s influence: “Here Nanny had taken the biggest thing God ever made, the horizon ...and pinched it in to such a little bit of a thing that she could tie it about her granddaughter’s neck tight enough to choke her” (89). Janie’s story is an epic of sorts: she sets out with highest of hopes, must endure numerous hardships — two disheartening marriages probably being the most painful — and finally finds the happiness she wants, but even so she is grateful for the education such experiences have given her. Nanny drags her down — she “loved to deal in scraps” (89) — and it is this oppression that teaches Janie to drop her idealized notion of love. Repulsed by the life of drudgery and domestic abuse (of various kinds), Janie can only conclude that Nanny is shortsighted, and just as inappropriate a model to imitate as all the other women who accept lives of servitude to their husbands. Janie is far more bitter than Lily, having been made to live through years of the sort of life that Nanny would consider a success, but she is nevertheless able to pinpoint quite clearly what first led her in such a direction — Nanny — and so, having understood and rejected the woman, having amassed years of experience, deliberately avoids such a paradigm. As she explains to Pheoby, “Ah done lived Grandma’s way, now Ah means tuh five mine” (114). Her marriage to Tea Cake will be different, marked by a new language: “...in the beginnin’ new thoughts had tuh be thought and new words said” (115). Janie puts Nanny in her place, just as Lily puts Mrs. Ramsay in hers, in spite of her exaltation of her. Both women observe, in Mrs. Ramsay and Nanny, the expected fate of the female sex in their respective societies, so that choosing not to accept such a fate is a bold and empowering move. Just like the men, the women in their lives have critically informed their own decisions, and in so doing shape their visions.

Both Lily’s and Janie’s visions come at the end of the respective texts, resulting in glorious finales. Throughout To the Lighthouse, lily yearns to shape her vision, which for her is not only to complete her painting but also to pin down her feelings, reflections, and ruminations about the people she knows — the Ramsays, most of all — for an instant. During the novel’s first day, she does not finish her painting, and it is only ten years later, having returned to the Hebrides, that she remembers the pattern
on the tablecloth that had inspired her: “When she had sat there last ten years ago
there had been a little sprig or leaf pattern on the table-cloth, which she had looked
at in a moment of revelation... She had never finished that picture. She would paint
that picture now. It had been knocking about in her mind all these years” (147). Her
understanding of the world remains clouded, her notion of how man and woman
operate veiled in mystery — until she focuses her mind, captures the essence of her
mind’s sight on canvas, and makes that final stroke. “... [S]he looked at her canvas; it
was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a
line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down
her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision” (209). In that one second, she
achieves the artistic glory and metaphysical understanding of a woman who has
conquered, who has succeeded, who has displaced the patriarchy even of other
modernists such as Joyce, who ends Ulysses with quite another “yes.” The supreme
confidence and glittering power of that final statement, “I have had my vision,” is so
much more than Lily’s painting or her physical sense of vision: it is Lily’s triumph at
finding her place as an artist, which justifies her independence from the world of men
and her understanding of it. No man evaluates the finished work; there is no Mr.
Bankes to question the purple triangle, as there was on that earlier day. Her vision
clears in that one instant, and she understands Mr. Carmichael, who is “surveying...
their final destiny” (208); she realizes that she has given to Mr. Ramsay —
“Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given
him at last” (208) — but is not completely sapped by it. Lily has even managed to
control her manifold impressions of Mrs. Ramsay to the point at which she can
successfully conjure up the late woman knitting in the drawing room: “There she sat”
(202). Lily’s aesthetic vision and the description of the process of artistic creation that
occupies so much of The Lighthouse, moreover, becomes an allegory for Woolf’s
own literary engendering, her glorious creation of what she must have known is a
brilliant novel. The final pages of To the Lighthouse are uplifting and transcendent:
Mrs. Ramsay is understood and honored, her memory preserved, the lighthouse is
reached, and, the crowning achievement, Lily has her vision; in its vagueness the term
is all encompassing.

Janie’s final moment, as she ascends the stairs for the night, is as transcendent
and as splendid as Lily’s. Janie’s social position has always been more precarious,
women only defined relative to men in the society of Their Eyes Were Watching God,
than Lily’s, who is allowed to remain independent. Consequently, while Lily’s vision
is more a mental triumph, a clearing of her mental vision to the point at which the
fabric of the social universe is transparent, Janie’s triumph is one of pronounced
independence and empowerment. In the last few pages of Hurston’s text, as the plot
steps away from the frame in which Janie reveals her life to Pheoby — literary
transmission from woman to woman — Janie understands that the horizon, which for
so long has been used to choke and oppress her, is now a positive force, a tantalizing
reminder of a future which is controlled by Janie: “Here was peace. She pulled in the
horizon like a great fish-net. Pulled it from around the waist of the world and draped
it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes!” (193). Janie is, of course, just
returning from nearly two years with a man who in his love and his fair treatment of
her has miraculously restored her giddy, naive love for life, idealism that, destroyed

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by Nanny, Logan, and Joe, seemed more and more a dream. Janie’s initial desire for a man, as she experiences her sexual awakening under the pear tree, is now replaced by the experiences of a woman who will never again be so quick to jump for a man or indeed, for any sudden opportunity. In spite of feeling that with Joe’s death a weight has been lifted from her, Janie is still lonely alone: “... at night she was there in the big house and sometimes it creaked and cried all night under the weight of lonesomeness” (89). Following Tea Cake’s death, however, Janie finds, as she walks upstairs, that all sense of staleness and loneliness have disappeared, along with the dark shadow of the past: “Her shadow behind fell back and headlong down the stairs. Now, in her room, the place tasted fresh again. The wind through the open windows had broomed out all the fetid feeling of absence and nothingness” (192). Janie is now whole alone, with her memory to remind her of how delightful life can be: “The kiss of his [Tea Cake’s] memory made pictures of love and light against the wall” (193). Her vision is like a great sigh of relief, the realization that she can rest now; that years of unhappiness, male domination, and strife are behind her. She could not have achieved this vision without having experienced life; as she explains to Pheoby: “...you got tuh go there tuh know there” (192). Like Lily’s vision, however, this sigh of relief, this setting down the brush after painting the final stroke, is not the end: “So much of life in its meshes!” Lily, having finally sorted her impressions out until satisfied, is now empowered to approach the future confidently. Janie, her confidence in life restored, can also stride actively into whatever beauties and mysteries her future experiences will harbor: “She called in her soul to come and see” (193). It is a final sentence both ambiguous and vague, just as full of possibility and as far-reaching as To the Lighthouse’s. Both texts finish with rare magnificence, triumphs not just as literary works but in heralding the successes of these two women, Lily and Janie, as they ponder and experience the world and in particular its social roles and horizons, understand it, rise above the stereotypes prepared for them by the men and women of their lives, and proclaim their empowerment.

It is important to remember that nearly all of the possible circumstances in the lives of these two women are different; it is even perhaps difficult to describe their “learning” or “visions” using the same words. Does Lily actually experience very much at all? Can Janie be said to have had a vision, even if whatever she has had is as glorious as Lily’s? In spite of the seemingly irreconcilable differences between the two characters and texts, Lily and Janie share womanhood, and it is this factor which leads them to remarkably similar conclusions, in spite of the different paths taken. Lily and Janie learn about men and about women, and having done so, they are ready to define themselves independently from men, instead of relative to them, as patriarchal societies have long forced women to do. They are united by the extraordinary experiences of self-revelation and affirmation. They have succeeded; they are worthy; they are at peace with the world — just as Woolf and Hurston could be having written these texts. What is especially pleasing and effective about making such a comparison is the discovery that such a bond of self-actualization can span the chasm of differences that may separate women, suggesting the intensely sought-after truth that such triumph is, for women, a universal possibility.
The Absent Self and The Broken Soul — Evoking the Lover’s Body in Lorca’s Poetry
by Marika Knowles

Introduction by Adrienne Janus, Instructor

As a freshman, Marika demonstrates a degree of intellectual engagement and enthusiasm that goes beyond such collegiate categorizations of status. In her writing, Marika shows a remarkable capacity to manage complexity with clarity, in a style that is both elegant and succinct. Her ideas, furthermore, are both original and insightful: she is not afraid to take risks, to work through and move beyond the material and framework she has been presented with. Marika directs her vibrant, inquisitive intellect most fruitfully towards examinations of visual imagery, whether in art, poetry, or prose, as her paper, “The Absent Self and the Broken Soul — Evoking the Lover’s Body in Lorca’s Poetry,” admirably demonstrates. In this paper, Marika investigates the ways in which Lorca’s poetry presents empty spaces in the poetic landscape as figurative correlates of an absence in the poetic self. She then embarks on an elegant analysis of how the poet attempts to animate these voids by projecting upon them the sensual forms of a lover’s body. As she moves from close readings of the images and structures of the poems to larger contextualisations of the poetry and the poet’s life, Marika shows how Lorca’s poetry must be appreciated in terms of a complex interaction between a poem’s sensual and conceptual aspects, and between the poem as aesthetic object and the historical or personal conditions to which it may refer.

In the reader’s aesthetic experience of Lorca’s poetry, the ultimate loneliness and fragmentation arises when Lorca ceases to create images evocative of emotions and absent objects, in other words, when Lorca resorts to the techniques of the surreal. In “Poet in New York,” Lorca creates a poetic persona significantly different from himself, at least as he represents himself in the letters he wrote to his parents at the time, touting his happiness. This poetic persona, whom I shall refer to as “the poet,” continually finds, in the landscape of New York, voids and empty spaces, images of absence that reflect similar voids in the poet’s own soul. To view the poet for a moment as a partial projection of Lorca’s own soul, these voids could refer to the destruction wreaked upon Lorca’s soul, immediately before he left Spain, by what he described as the “fire of love.” As Lorca’s poet struggles in the poems to animate, fill, and personify the void, the poet evokes, through poetic imagery, the spiritual, yet sensuous body of the lover, unfolding and filling the emptiness of the poet’s broken soul. The evocation of the lover’s body through poetic imagery and metaphor illustrates Lorca’s departure from the surrealist free association of objects in space in order to create what Lorca called “sharp profiles and visible mystery. Form and sensuality.”

The body that Lorca creates to animate the void, although sensual, is ultimately an emblem of spiritual, a-physical, Apollonian love. Lorca introduces the theme and
body of the Apollonian lover in one of his earlier poems on love: “Your Childhood in Menton.” Early in the poem, the poet addresses his lover: “What I gave you, Apollonian man, was the standard of love” (ln. 10). In this passage, the poet refers to his lover as an incarnation of Nietzsche’s Apollonian construction of love: a spiritual, intellectual and harmonious interaction of two kindred souls, as opposed to the rhapsodic physicality of Dionysian love. This standard, which the poet has given to his lover, presumably in the model of the poet’s own actions, would indicate a love divorced from the sensual interaction of the body, and based instead upon intellectual and emotional companionship. Yet as Lorca’s imagery demonstrates, the Apollonian relationship subsists along with an implicit suggestion of the sensual body, a suggestion and signification that fills the silences between lovers.

The Apollonian body that the poet evokes represents the perfect ideal of the human form, induced by the spiritual perfection of the soul permeating the physical body. Lorca creates this image through the poet’s evocation of antique, ancient statues of Apollo, sculptural models of the physical perfection that Apollo was believed to possess. The image of the poet’s “torso circumscribed by fire” (ln. 8), in conjunction with the mention of Apollo in the following line, creates an image of fragmented ancient sculpture, often reduced by wear and tear to the single torso. These sculptures, the most famous perhaps being The Apollo Belvedere, portray the perfected male physique caught in a moment of elegant relaxation. Yet the smooth, round, and cold quality of the marble used to sculpt these statues emphasizes the anti-sensuality, the anti-tactility of the bodies represented. The anti-tactile quality of the sculptural body emphasized that the poet’s evocation of the lover’s body was intended take a spiritual form, in which the mind of the poet caressed the spiritual contours of the lover’s body-contours represented physically in the material surface of the statue.

Through an image of fragmentation, an initial void or lack of body, Lorca expresses the growth and unfolding of the lover’s body. The torso, as a fragment and signifier of the entire human body, is singularly expressive, the possibilities of the chest and hips for contortion and the suggestion of movement — note the Belvedere torso — allowing a range of compelling expressions. In Lorca’s image, the reader imagines the urgency and the agony of the torso, stretching desperately away from the ring-of-fire that surrounds it. Unable to stretch either to the right or the left, the fire coming from both sides, the torso stretches upwards and downwards, attempting to attenuate its waist to the point of non-existence, and transferring the flesh of the waist to the gradually forming outer limbs of the body. Lorca repeats this image of the transferral of material, from the waist outwards, in the image later in the poem of “a waist of restless sand” (ln. 15). This image evokes the narrow point of an hourglass, through which the sand passes to the outer compartments of the glass. In both images, the reader finally visualizes a complete body emerging and unfolding from the fragmented torso, a body that in keeping with the original image of the sculptural torso, evokes the lithe and muscular physical perfection of ancient statues.

In “Your Childhood in Menton,” Lorca uses the image of the Apollonian body to fill the emptiness inspired by the poet’s loss of his lover’s soul. The poetic imagery implies that neither the poet nor the lover know where the soul can be found, and that the ownership of the soul is in itself ambiguous — the lover’s soul having been
“ripped from the emptied space of [the poet’s] veins” (ln. 30). In addition to the empty space of the poet’s veins, robbed of the soul of his lover, there exists the empty corners into which Lorca looks for his lover’s soul, as well as the absent body of the lover, who “has whittled [himself] to nothing” (ln. 11). Into this emptiness, Lorca projects the image of the Apollonian body: “with the sorrow of Apollo stopped in his tracks, the sorrow with which I shattered your mask” (ln. 19). The mask that the poet shatters refers to the “pure mask of another sign” (ln. 4), which the poet attributes to his lover. The mask, worn by the lover as a sign of his “shy loneliness in hotels” (ln 3), indicates the covering, or negating of the lover’s identity and of the sense of shame and emptiness that accompanies this identity. By shattering the lover’s mask with the image of Apollo, the poet injects the physical presence of the unfolding Apollonian body into the emptiness of the lover’s soul beneath the mask. For the poet, to animate the void of the lover’s soul with the Apollonian body is to fill the void in his own body, created when the soul of his lover was torn from his veins.

In “Little Viennese Waltz,” one of the final poems of the collection, Lorca creates a death for the soul of his poet after a final, ecstatic evocation of the sensuous body of the lover. In the poem, the poet travels through Vienna, focusing on the empty apartment, a space which through poetic imagery, becomes filled with the body and presence of the lover. Lorca describes the space of the apartment as the lover had once traveled through it: “down the melancholy hallway, in the iris’s darkened garret, in our bed that is the moon’s bed” (ln. 14). Implicit in the mode of description — the poet describes the objects in the order they would appear to the lover walking down the hall — is the lover’s presence. Yet the objects themselves evoke voids that long to be filled — the darkened room, the empty bed and hallway. This initial creation of the void is echoed in the poem by the melancholy tone of the refrains, one of which exclaims: “take this broken-waisted waltz” (ln. 19). The waist, the image that in “Menton” had evoked the body of the lover, recurs in this instance as a broken, fragment of itself. In a gesture that mirrors the poet’s offer of the Apollonian standard to his lover in “Menton,” the poet offers the broken-waist to his lover, indicating his hope that the found body of the lover will patch the poet’s similarly broken soul.

In the final stanza of the poem, Lorca imagines the fulfillment of the poet’s fragmented soul, as it joins the soul of the lover in the dancing of the little waltz. In each successive refrain, the poet has compelled his lover to “take” the waltz that the poet offers him. At the beginning of the final stanza, the poet finally writes that “in Vienna I will dance with you” (ln. 36). In the various refrains, the waltz had taken on the identity of the lover and poet’s shared and fragmented soul: the “waltz that dies in my arms,” and the “I will always love your” waltz, and particularly the “broken-waisted waltz” discussed above. As the poet joins his lover in the waltz, the fragmented soul is essentially healed, the broken-waist patched, and the Apollonian body unfolded. In the language of the second half of the stanza, however, Lorca intimates that the meeting between the lover and the poet is essentially bodiless: “I will leave . . . my soul in photographs and lilies, and in the dark wake of your footsteps” (ln. 41).

In the images of fragmentation at the end of the final stanza, Lorca suggests the death, or re-fragmentation of the Apollonian, sensuous soul created for the poet in the moment of the waltz with his lover. The poet leaves his lover, after their waltz, with
a photograph of his soul, an image that suggests the black, reflective surface of an
exposed negative and the ghostly outline of the poet’s profile. Scattered over the
photograph are the lilies, also representative of the poet’s soul, withering in the
emptiness of the apartment. The poet’s lover, in these images, also dematerializes,
represented by “the dark wake of [his] footsteps” (ln. 42), an image evocative of the
earlier passage, in which the implied body of the lover walks down the hallway. At
the end of the stanza, the poet states that he wishes “to leave violin and grave, the
ribbons of the waltz” (ln. 43). The death of the poet after such an ecstatic fulfillment
of the fragmented soul subverts the ideal of the Apollonian body. In place of the
physical consummation of love, the evocation of the sensuous spiritual body cannot
quite satisfy the souls of the lovers, which remain embedded as ghostly profiles in the
objects that they had touched. This ambiguity of fulfillment reappears in “Ode to
Walt Whitman.”

Lorca’s rejection of the Apollonian consummation of love indicates to a certain
extent his rejection of surrealism’s impulse to dissolve the disjunction between self
and world, and to interact freely in the world of objects. The construction of the
Apollonian other represents in the first place a departure from surrealist aesthetics, in
the evocation of the other through poetic association. Yet the idea of the Apollonian
self, aside from the means through which it is evoked, represents a surrealist effort
to fill and so to dissolve the gap between the self and the world. To refuse the
Apollonian body its power to animate emptiness, as Lorca does in the last stanza of
“Little Viennese Waltz,” is to acknowledge the inevitability of the division between
the self and the world outside the self. Although Lorca claims, in his lecture “A Poet
in New York,” that he writes from inside New York (a claim that fulfills the surrealist
ideal of the artist), in his power to evoke associative images, he clearly sees New York
from the outside in.

The material language of “Little Viennese Waltz” as well evokes the creation,
and then the retraction, of the swelling and animate presence of the lover’s body. The
refrains, each which begins with the cry of “Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay,” and ends with a line
whose rhythm follows the pattern of a waltz — “toma esta vals con la boca cerrada”
— swell in lyrical cadences, evocative of the presence of an animate, lyrical soul
within the poetry. Music and lyricism, in this context, animate the void implied in the
text of the refrains, which describes the broken-waist and the death of the little waltz.
Yet the fragmentary nature of the refrains — scattered amongst the stanzas, they
represent fragments of the entire, complete waltz — presents a dialectical image of
fragmentation, subversive of the swelling body implied in the rhythm of the lines.
This image is fulfilled in the dying rhythm of the final stanza, which trails off, in
passages that lean towards weighty final images, to the final, sinking image of the
“violin and grave, the ribbons of the waltz” (ln. 43). The sinking rhythm and imagery
of the final stanza dissolves the musical rhythm that had animated the voids of the
early verses, leaving the reader conscious of the empty, absent bodies that the poet
evotes in these final images.

In “Little Viennese Waltz” Lorca’s evocation of the body of the lover interrelates
with his idealization of childhood and the body that Christopher Maurer, in the
introduction to the collection, calls the “unengendered child.” Maurer argues that
Lorca “gives color and weight to the notion of annihilation itself,” through the
creation in the void of “the child within, the child born into adulthood” — the child that Lorca could not father, because of his homosexuality. “Little Viennese Waltz” effectively presents the poet’s blurring of the identity of child and lover, as the empty spaces, the attic and the room with four mirrors, are filled with children. In one ecstatic epiphany of love, the poet cries: “because I love you, I love you, my love, in the attic where the children play” (ln. 29). In this image specifically, the poet links the presence of children to the same space in which he invokes the presence of the lover. In this image as well, the children animate the empty spaces of the poet’s soul. This is image is especially relevant to Maurer’s statement that the unengendered child is born into adulthood. More specifically, I believe, the absent child is born into adulthood in the form of the lover — an equally elusive and childlike body whom the poet must care for: in “Menton,” the poet repeatedly states that he “must search” for his lover’s soul.

In “Ode to Walt Whitman,” Lorca gives a more explicit shape and form to the elusive and fragmentary body of the lover. Lorca’s opening description of Whitman reflects the model of the chaste Apollonian body that Lorca had hinted at in “Menton” and “Little Viennese Waltz.”

Not for a Moment Walt Whitman, lovely old man,
have I failed to see your beard full of butterflies,
nor your corduroy shoulders frayed by the moon,
nor your thighs as pure as Apollo’s

The reverence for Whitman’s age, as well as the image of the beard filled with butterflies, combine to present Whitman as a chaste philosopher. The presence of the beard — Marcus Aurelius, in order to present himself as a philosophical emperor, had a beard added to his equestrian statue in Rome — evokes ancient philosophers, and the butterflies in the beard evoke an enlightened concern with empiricism and naturalism. These antique and philosophical references invoke the presence of the Apollonian body, the classical form established by ancient philosophers. Lorca probably did not intend to make such specific references, and the tactile quality of the images themselves — the soft, woolly beard and the delicate, fluttering insects — inform the reader of a gentler, sensual body. Whitman’s soft, rounded body presents an implicit contrast to the tough bodies of the boys on the dock, “exposing their waists” (ln. 2) — an image suggestive of unrefined, unseen sensuality.

As Lorca continues his description of Whitman, in the second two lines of the passage quoted above, he progressively evokes a more sensuous, yet still pure body. The fragmented shoulder, like the waist in “Menton,” evokes the unfolding body of the lover: in this case, the body of Whitman. The corduroy cloth covering Whitman’s shoulder connotes an additional level of philosophical intellectualism: the corduroy blazers associated with the intellectuals and professors that Lorca must have met at Columbia. The image of the moon directly following the image of the shoulder, however, evokes the white, round and sculptural flesh of the shoulder rubbing against the jacket and “fraying” the corduroy. The juxtaposition of sensuous with chaste and intellectual images enforces the poet’s fantasy of the Apollonian body: the sensuous form that contains the purest soul. This imagery continues in the last line of the passage, as Lorca describes Whitman’s thighs, a sensual physical image, but immediately counters this sensuality with the reference to Apollonian purity: “thighs
as pure as Apollo’s.” Lorca’s choice of Whitman as his idol of the Apollonian body reflects the nature of that body as unapproachable, removed from the messiness of physical reality — by the time Lorca wrote this poem, Whitman was dead and physically unavailable.

The poet contrasts the search of the maricas for physical ecstasy with Whitman’s search for the Apollonian, spiritual body. In line 68, the poet addresses Whitman:

You looked for a nude like a river.
Bull and dream who would join wheel with seaweed,
Father of your agony, camellia of your death,
Who would groan in the blaze of your hidden equator.

Unlike the maricas, Whitman channels his passion into the search for the non-tactile, river-like body that will grant him spiritual, rather than physical consummation. The image of the river and running water, combined with the image of Whitman’s hidden equator, echoes the image of the “waist of restless sand” found in “Menton.” The hidden equator echoes another image from Menton, that of the “torso circumscribed by fire.” In both images, the effect of fire upon the fragmented torso is to create the image of the waist, indicating the interplay between passion, represented by fire, and the evocation of the sensuous, unfolding body. Yet the image of the “groan,” emitted by the lover at the moment of reaching Whitman’s hidden equator, evokes an element of physical sensuality that casts an ambiguous pall over Lorca’s attitude towards Whitman’s “chaste” body.

In his description of the maricas, Lorca uses Whitman’s body to animate the darkness created in the wake of the marica’s physical lust. The maricas, “emerging in bunches from the sewers . . . the faggots, Walt Whitman, point you out” (ln. 52). In this image, the chaste whiteness implied in Whitman’s’ body creates, through the implicit contrast with the polluted sensuality of the maricas’ bodies, the darkness and seething, animate void from which the maricas spring. For the poet, the maricas generate a sensuous, seductive, and fascinating darkness, “a trembling beneath the legs of chauffers” that echoes an image from “Little Viennese waltz,” in which the poet told the lover: “I will leave my mouth between your legs.” As discussed, this image from “Little Viennese Waltz,” emerged at the end of the poem, in a passage suggestive of the poet’s ultimate dissatisfaction with the solely spiritual evocation of the Apollonian body. The poet’s rhymed passages, one expressed in a moment of tenuous ecstasy, the other in a moment of contempt, when placed side by side, indicate the poet’s hidden desire to transgress the limits of the Apollonian body, to attain physical completeness in the body of another man.

At the end of the poem, the poet expresses his desire that while Whitman sleeps on the bank of the Hudson, his body “openhanded” and receptive towards the pole of the earth, the Apollonian self, the unengendered body, will be born in the body of a black child:

the powerful air from the deepest night
to blow away flowers and inscriptions from the arch where you sleep,
and a black child to inform the gold-craving whites
that the kingdom of grain has arrived

In this image, the night air blows away the signs of death-flowers and inscriptions — that litter Whitman’s sleeping place — the arch evocative of the transition from life
to death, as well as Heidegger’s concept of gelassenheit. In keeping with the life and death duality of the arch, as well as Heidegger’s concept of the give and take between opposite states of existence, as the arch sheds of its emblems of death, a child is born. Whitman’s Apollonian body, although existing in the poem as a suggestion of itself, like the poet’s soul in the photographs, gives forth in this image a physical, tactile body. Lorca’s connection of the physical body of the child to themes of social injustice — the child prophesizes to the whites the retribution of the blacks — indicates once again Lorca’s break from the surreal in the evocation of the absent body. The birth of the child indicates the birth of Lorca’s concern with and representation of the physical, exterior world, in which themes of social injustice are ever present.

It should be noted that Lorca, in his self-conscious creation and performance of the poetic persona of “Poet in New York,” a fictitious identity that he appropriated for himself in his lectures on the collection, attempted to animate an emptiness in his own, “real” identity. In lectures given around the country on the book, Lorca often told involved stories in which he related events discussed in the poems of the collection, events that probably never took place. Lorca’s performance of the poetic persona indicates the link between the real Lorca, writing cheerful letters home to his parents, and the meta-physical, poetic self evoked in the collection. As far as we can judge from biographers and primary sources, Lorca was deeply haunted, even in his happiest moments, by his homosexual identity. However, in the lecture that Lorca delivered across the country, entitled “A Poet in New York,” Lorca never once alludes to the homosexual identity implicitly revealed in the collection’s poetic imagery. Through the performance of the poetic persona, Lorca replicated the animation of the void he created in the collection itself, creating a chattering, animate body that filled the aching loneliness of a broken soul.
The Power of Naming for Malcolm X and Roquentin

by Zach Schauf

Introduction by Angela Jones, Instructor

Zach Schauf’s “The Power of Naming for Malcolm X and Roquentin” is a paradigmatic comparative essay. It combines two very different texts precisely enough to yield insights about each that could only have been produced through comparison. In the case of this paper — the final of three produced for the Fall IHUM course Conversions — the basis for bringing together the work of Sartre and Malcolm X is an exploration of the relationship of language and meaning. Zach shows us how essentialism and constructivism inform the conversion process in each text, and, in so doing, he addresses theoretical notions of conversion. Remarkably, one leaves Zach’s essay with a sense of how conversion motifs operate in Sartre and Malcolm X’s writing, but more importantly, one takes away a theory of conversion that extends beyond any one textual instance.

The experience of conversion in The Autobiography of Malcolm X seems to share precious little with Sartre’s Nausea. The Autobiography of Malcolm X depicts a powerful conversion that spurs Malcolm X towards militant Black Nationalism and the Nation of Islam, and a second spiritual conversion in which Malcolm embraces orthodox Islam. In Nausea, Roquentin experiences a conversion which alters his notions of the nature of reality itself. The conversional process profoundly changes the direction of both men’s lives, but the similarity of their experiences goes beyond this causal observation. While each man’s conversion contains too many complexities to condense into a simple statement of effect, they share a common motif: In each, the processes of naming, defining and categorizing are central to the conversion that each man experiences. Roquentin discovers that objects exist, and that a thing goes beyond its name and man’s classification of it. Malcolm gains power by naming the white man “a devil,” and refusing to accept the definitions of the white man. Each man’s conversion goes hand in hand with a paradigmatic shift in naming. Yet the connection between the works runs still deeper. During his Nation of Islam days, Malcolm X believes that each race has an essential nature, a notion that Roquentin abhors. But after his journey to Mecca, Malcolm X sees a vision of a world in which people are not defined by their race. By the end of Malcolm X’s life, his ideal of race relations parallels Roquentin’s view of the nature of reality.

The revelation that objects cannot be reduced to their names represents a crucial part of Roquentin’s change in perspective. The feeling of nausea that drives the novel forward grows out of his feeling that an object exists, and that this existence remains distinctly separate from the terms humans use to name or classify the thing. As Roquentin puts his hand on his seat in the trolley during the climatic conversion scene, he realizes that the object he sees, the object that exists, remains entirely distinct from the human classification of it as a seat: “I murmur: ‘It’s a seat,’ a little like an exorcism. But the word stays on my lips: it refuses to go and put itself on the thing... It could just as well be a dead donkey... Things are divorced from their names”
In this scene, Sartre makes a profound point about the way in which the human mind interprets reality. Our mind makes inferences, and it classifies according to appearances, function, and structure, but this orderly interpretation remains separate from reality itself. After imagining a scene of a seashore, Roquentin reflects upon his mind’s interpretation of the scene: “I was thinking of belonging, I was telling myself that the sea belonged to the class of green objects, or that the green was part of the quality of the sea.” After this experience of revelation, Roquentin concludes that the process of naming and classifying an object actually hides its existence, so that we can only see the real object when we stop classifying it as part of our scheme of reality.

Sartre portrays the perspectives of the historian and the humanist as diametrically opposed to his conception of the world, even during the period before Roquentin fully formulates his philosophy. In the humanism of the Self-Taught Man, Roquentin finds a school of thought which loves man according to categories, ideals, and essences: “you’re touched by the Youth of Man, the Love of Man and Woman, the Human Voice” (120). By seeing the world in this way, humanism exalts things which do not exist according to Roquentin’s philosophy. The Self-Taught Man does not love any person who exists, but only essences and categories of man. To Roquentin, none of it has any more reality than the ideal circle. Similarly, a historian tries to name, categorize, and explain a life in terms of a plot, encapsulating the essence of a person or an event. But since the world has no essences, the historian presents a distorted view of reality. Through his conversion, Roquentin escapes these conventions of naming and defining, and he finds a fuller understanding of reality.

Roquentin emphasizes that names have an incredible influence on man’s conception of reality, and this realization has value even for those who never experience the gut-wrenching nausea of Roquentin. Roquentin’s conversion occurs as he moves from a system of definitions and classifications to a euphoric moment when all essences disappear, and this single moment guides Roquentin through the rest of the novel. On a deeper level, Roquentin’s experience highlights the power of moving from one system of naming to another. In so doing, a person literally changes his or her experienced reality. For example, a person who organizes workers for better wages and working conditions can be called a union organizer by a sympathetic media, and a Communist by hostile groups. These two names conjure entirely different conceptions of the person in the human mind, and these conceptions shape entirely different reactions, based simply on a name. We can therefore extract two general principles from the experiences of Roquentin: The system of names and definitions to which a person subscribes effects the nature of the reality which he or she experiences. Second, the entire process of naming and defining objects inherently presents a distorted view of their reality.

Malcolm X also understands the power and importance of names, definitions, and categories, and shifts in his conception of these things parallel his two conversions. The biggest change in Malcolm X after his conversion to the Nation of Islam, and the change which he tried to instill in others through his speeches, was that the black man must stop allowing the white man to define the history, goals, and methods of the black man. When Reginald begins to convert Malcolm in prison, his most powerful statement involves definition and identity:
You don’t even know who you are... the white devil has hidden it from you, that you are a race of people of ancient civilizations, and riches in gold and kings. You don’t even know you your true family name, you wouldn’t recognize your true language if you heard it. You have been cut off by the devil white man from all true knowledge of your own kind. (186)

All of these statements express the need for the black man to define himself, rather than letting the white man define him. Even the fantastic “Yakob’s History,” proclaimed by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, represents an attempt to define the history of the black man in a way contrary to the “whitened” history of the text books. No longer is the American black man a “Negro,” lacking a common history or culture. Yakob’s History transforms the Negro into a member of the tribe of Shabazz, an ancient people whose roots go back sixty trillion years. So as the Malcolm and the Nation of Islam seek to redefine themselves, they take a new name for their people which expresses their new conception of themselves. Much of Malcolm’s diatribe against Christianity arises out of a belief that Christianity represents an attempt on the part of the white man to define and control even the black man’s spiritual beliefs. Christianity gives the black man a savior which looks like his oppressor, and teaches him a “pie in the sky” faith which keeps him subservient to the white man. We can see the religious teachings of the Nation of Islam as a whole as an attempt by African-Americans to define their spiritual life on their own terms. Roquentin’s revelation that names shape man’s image of the world relates closely to Malcolm X’s struggle. Even though much of Nausea represents an account of the importance of names and definitions, Malcolm X surpasses Sartre by highlighting the critical connection between names and power. As long as the black man allows the white man to define him, he relinquishes power to the white man. By retaking the realm of names and definitions, Malcolm seeks to recover the lost power of the black man.

The emphasis of the Nation of Islam on names also continues to the personal level, emphasizing the role of names as hallmarks of conversion. Upon entering the Nation of Islam, Malcolm disavows the name Little, given to him by some white slave master, in favor of X: “The Muslim’s ‘X’ symbolized the true African family name that he never could know... Mr. Muhammad taught that we would keep this ‘X’ until God Himself returned and gave us a Holy Name from His own mouth” (229). Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam made the process of taking back the institutions of naming and definition a crucial milestone of the Muslim conversional experience. When the Muslim stopped allow the white man to define him by accepting the name “X,” he became a full member of the Nation of Islam.

Not only did Malcolm redefine himself through his conversion, but he also sought to characterize the white man and the struggle of his race for himself. When Malcolm introduces the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he proclaims the part of Muhammad teaching which he finds most important: “I’m just going to tell you now his greatest greatness! He is the first, the only black leader to identify, to you and me, who is our enemy... Our enemy is the white man” (288). For years, even the most liberal whites had thought of themselves in a paternal role, helping to extract the African-Americans from a plight that the white liberals did not see themselves as party to creating. Many African-Americans, who Malcolm characterized as “brainwashed,” bought into the white man’s conception of himself. Malcolm X
challenged African-Americans to look at the white man for themselves, so that they could construct their own definitions. Malcolm X challenged the way in which white people defined themselves, and this revolutionary act represented Malcolm X’s biggest threat to the white establishment. Malcolm X attempted another blow to the white man by recasting the struggle of the African-Americans as a fight for human rights rather than merely civil rights. By using the term “civil rights,” the white press distinguishes their “advanced democracy” from China or Russia, who violated “human rights.” Malcolm X rejects this differentiation. Just as Roquentin sees his seat in an entirely different way when he calls “a dead donkey,” Malcolm X changes his life by calling the white man “enemy.”

Through Malcolm’s conversion to Islam he moves from one system of names and definitions to another, in an attempt to regain the power of language from his oppressors. But while this move remains an important step for Malcolm, during his Nation of Islam period he remains analogous to the pre-conversion Roquentin, or even the humanist Self-Taught Man. At this stage, both Malcolm X and the Self-Taught Man believe in man as defined by essences. Just as the Self-Taught Man sees the people of the world in terms of Youth, Maturity, or Love of Man and Woman, Malcolm X understands people only as members of a race. Even the way in which Malcolm X preaches speaks to his conception of the world. Rarely does he mention individuals, instead speaking of the “black man,” “the white man,” “the red man,” or “the Jew.” Malcolm’s conversional process of renaming involves assigning essences to racial groups, and according to this conception of race, the white man cannot help his actions, because he remains essentially evil.

Malcolm’s second conversion also takes place in this realm of definitions and names, and through this conversion, Malcolm gains a new vision of the world. Whereas the goal of the Malcolm of the Nation of Islam had been to create a separatist state for the superior and holy black race, the orthodox Muslim Malcolm sees a colorblind society as his ultimate goal. Malcolm envisions an America where a person was not defined by his race, but rather by his humanity, like the Muslim world he encountered during his pilgrimage: “I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color” (391). Malcolm now sees hope in the open-mindedness of the younger generation of whites, and he resolves to judge people only by their deeds, rather than by their words or their race. When a white man asks Malcolm if he will shake the hand of a white man, Malcolm responds, “I will shake the hand of any human, are you one?” This statement contains all the vitriol of the old Malcolm, but it also signals a willingness to judge each person individually. The orthodox Malcolm, who lives for only eleven months, understands Roquentin’s argument that thinking in terms of essences brings about a distorted and incomplete view of reality. This Malcolm forsakes racial essences. But at the same time, we can easily exaggerate the nature of Malcolm’s change during this second conversion. He does not appreciably tone down most of his rhetoric. He still calls for separatism, militancy, and Black Nationalism. Indeed, his new emphasis on the international nature of the African-American struggle makes him even more radical. But now he accepts that whites can work towards the same goal as him, even if whites cannot work with him. A colorblind world, without an essential nature for the white man or the black man, becomes his ideal.
While Malcolm X and Sartre’s Roquentin come from profoundly different worlds, the role of names and definitions in their conversional experiences reveals the power, which these seemingly mundane conventions have over the way we live and think. For both Malcolm X and Roquentin, shifts in their understanding of names and definitions signal a seminal change in their understanding of the world. When Malcolm X converts to the Nation of Islam, he strives to define himself and his race on his own terms, rather than relinquishing this power to the white man. But still Malcolm’s reliance on names and classification in terms of race as his primary way of interpreting the world limits his imagination. While few people can imagine the epistemological feeling of nausea experienced by Roquentin, Malcolm’s second conversion presents a more concrete analogue which highlights the universal aspects of Roquentin’s more abstract conversion. In order to gain a more full understanding of the world, both Roquentin and Malcolm must escape from the shackles which names produce. Just as one of the crucial moments in Roquentin’s conversion occurs as he realizes that “Things are not their names,” the most important revelation of Malcolm’s second conversion is that, “People are not their race.”
The Birth of the Political Conscience  
by Katherine Buchanan  

Introduction by Christopher Carlsmith, Instructor  

Katie Buchanan’s essay, “The Birth of the Political Conscience,” examines the concept of personal liberty in the work of John Locke and John Stuart Mill. Locke’s Second Treatise of Government and Mill’s On Liberty were two of the most important philosophical statements behind the steady expansion of individual rights and the creation of democratic societies. This beautifully-written essay combines a close reading of the primary texts with a firm grasp of the historical context to produce an impressive analysis of the concept of liberty in each author. Buchanan demonstrates that while Locke and Mill may share a common definition of the term, they disagree as to the origin of individual liberty. As Buchanan points out, although both men lived in England, the historical milieu in which they wrote was quite different. She goes on to compare and contrast the two authors on a number of points, including their views on punishment, property, and government intervention. The essay blends contemporary analogies, historical examples, and excerpts from the two texts to make a convincing argument about the development of liberty. Katie Buchanan’s command of ideas and sophisticated use of language demonstrate her superior ability in and dedication to the Humanities at Stanford University.

Just last March, Democrats and Republicans were busy hammering out a compromise over minimum wage. Democrats bemoaned the disparity between wages and worker productivity gains, while Republicans predicted devastating job losses if the proposed increase weren’t balanced by substantial tax cuts (Galvin 1). In the end, Congress passed a bill to increase the minimum wage by one dollar over the course of two years, as well as a measure to decrease the estate tax and boost contribution limits on 401K’s. Whether or not they realized it, the participants in this partisan debate were continuing the historical dialogue on liberty. This time, the estate tax reduction represented the view that government’s primary aim is protection of property, and the increase in minimum wage corresponded to the theory that government exists not merely to protect property, but to increase the quality of its citizens’ lives as well. In essence, we saw John Locke and John Stuart Mill going head to head on the Senate floor.

America acknowledges its philosophical debts to both Locke and Mill, and the integration of their respective opinions in modern legislation attests to the authors’ similarities. It would be oversimplification, however, to claim as one historian did, that “the classical argument for tolerance formulated by John Milton and John Locke” was simply “restated by John Stuart Mill” (Hamburger 91). Although Locke and Mill reached similar conclusions on the boundary between individual and societal rights, and both espoused tolerance and individualism, their methodology in justifying...
minimal government restrictions on personal liberty rested on very different philosophical bases. Locke traced liberty to its genesis in the State of Nature, man’s so called Natural Rights therein, and the Social Contract, whereas Mill abandoned these abstract historical arguments in favor of utilitarianism. Before hastily juxtaposing Mill’s theory with Locke’s, we must account for the particular historical circumstance that gave rise to each. Only then can we begin to contrast the theories and their subsequent applications.

With careful scrutiny, a Hegelian dialectic can be traced from Locke to Mill. When Locke penned his Second Treatise of Government ca. 1683, he wrote against the prevailing attitude that the distribution of goods should be subject to community controls. Largely a remnant of feudalism, this 16th and 17th century economic system allowed the monarch to set prices for the supposed “good of all” (Lougee, Locke and Enlightenment, 1/23/01). Laws of supply and demand were ignored, and special interests often corrupted market values (Lougee, Locke and Enlightenment, 1/23/01). Additionally, society held it unfair for persons to acquire more property than met their immediate needs. With his radical concept of property as a paramount right and the Labor Theory of Value, Locke presented the rough antithesis to these conventions. Citing the creation of money, Locke refuted the notion that property could be limited and thus established some of the groundwork for pure capitalism (Locke 29). The rising empiricism and Enlightenment that characterized the 17th c. enabled him intellectually; the political world had started to purge itself of religious overtones, and Locke emulated the minds of the Scientific Revolution. The Duke of Shaftesbury, Locke’s mentor, advocated laissez faire economics, and in time Locke came to share his view (Lougee, Locke and Enlightenment, 1/23/01). Locke’s analysis, then, was highly quantitative as compared to the subjectivity that characterized economics before the Enlightenment.

But evolution was far from complete. In fact, by the time Mill wrote On Liberty in 1859, the dialectic was primed for synthesis. Integrating some components of control with laissez faire, Mill’s economic system reflected 19th century Romanticism in its qualitative nature. The failure of the 1848 Frankfurt Convention’s liberal constitution indicated a growing dissatisfaction with the pure capitalism that Locke had articulated, and liberalism by its association with capitalism, had come to be viewed as a narrow, bourgeois value system. If liberalism wanted to survive, it needed to expand its support base by broadening its social agenda (Lougee, 1848 and the Crisis of Liberalism, 2/20/01). Individuals were discovering that total Enlightenment rationalism could be spiritually unsatisfying; Mill’s nervous breakdown in spite of his academic achievements, exemplifies this pitfall. Following his personal crisis, Mill turned to art and love in addition to logic, a concept reflected in his economic system. While Mill accepted economic laws as dry and unchallengable maxims, he also believed that the distribution of wealth could and should be manipulated by the community. This time, however, no single ruler would fix prices; balance depended on an active citizenry. Ethics and morality, but not necessarily religion, possessed the right to curb monopolies and impose a graduated income tax in order to secure the greatest good for the greatest number (Lougee, 1848 and the Crisis of Liberalism, 2/20/01). Mill added one corollary to this essentially Benthamite premise: the good was to be measured “both in point of quantity and...
quality” (Mill 150). Thus, Mill represents a special brand of utilitarianism, the philosophical premise that will take us to the crux of the underlying difference between his philosophy and Locke’s.

First, let us begin with the basic premise: did Locke and Mill share one definition of liberty? “Liberty,” wrote Locke, “is the power a man has to do or forbear doing any particular action according as its doing or forbearance has the actual preference in the mind, which is the same thing as to say, according as he himself wills it” (Locke qtd. in Yaffe 14). On this point, Mill practically paraphrases Locke: “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign” (13). But Mill delineates liberty further than Locke did. In addition to “liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects” and “liberty of tastes and pursuits,” Mill claims another dimension: “from this liberty of the individual, follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals” (Mill 15-16). Although Mill’s definition is more explicit and more thoroughly developed than Locke’s, it is still reasonable to assert that the three components Mill delineates are all actually embedded in Locke’s more succinct definition. Locke and Mill agree, then, on what liberty is, but disagree on liberty’s origin.

Locke fundamentally believed that “to understand political power right, and derive it from its original, we must consider, what state all men are naturally in and that is, a state of perfect freedom” (8). Further, “The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one” (9). Under these assumptions, all contemporary political rights can be traced to natural rights, and all municipal laws “are only so far right, as they are founded on the law of nature, by which they are to be regulated and interpreted” (12). Mill contemptuously dismissed this notion, stating in On Liberty, “It is proper to state that I forgo any advantage which could be derived to my argument from the idea of abstract right as a thing independent of utility. I regard utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions” (14). Critics attacked this clearly non-Lockean but rather hastily made comment, prompting Mill to defend it in his later work, Utilitarianism (1863). In that essay Mill summarized his philosophy as follows: “Utility or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness” (144). This utility — not a prehistoric state of nature — was “the directive rule of human conduct” (149). Furthermore, rights were based on “no other reason than general utility” (199). “That a feeling is bestowed on us by Nature, does not necessarily legitimize all its promptings,” Mill wrote, directly contradicting his predecessor (185). While Mill was ready to concede that men naturally love freedom, power, and excitement, and that all men possess some measure of dignity (147), he stopped short of suggesting that these facets of human nature were in any way cumulative. Locke’s reasoning rests on the premise that each successive generation of men builds on human nature, that man inherits a sort of collective consciousness concerning his natural rights and that “all men are naturally in that state...till by their own consents they make themselves members of some politic society” (14). Mill intimates that men are at least partially constructed by the societies into which they are born, and therefore cannot possibly make an objective decision as to whether or not to join that society. In turn, this leads Mill to reject the Social Contract, an essential part of Locke’s original argument.
Locke alleged that the state of nature often degenerated into the state of war, a state of perpetual danger and unease. Therefore, as recourse to justice, men put “themselves into society” and quit the state of nature (Locke 16); however, if anyone violated this primordial compact by attempting to exercise absolute power over the life, liberty, or property of another, he forfeited his own power and rights (Locke 111). Without this conception of the Social Contract, Locke could not have justified revolution. Yet, Mill faults Locke’s reasoning, denouncing the Social Contract as a “favorite contrivance,” a “fiction of a contract whereby at some unknown period all the members of society engaged to obey the laws and consented to be punished for any disobedience” (201). “Even if the consent were not a mere fiction,” Mill writes, “this maxim is not superior in authority to others which it is brought in to supercede. It is, on the contrary, an instructive specimen of the loose and irregular manner in which supposed principles of justice grow up” (202). Historical context best explains why Mill takes issue with Locke on this particular point; Locke wrote his Second Treatise of Government to vindicate a specific historical cause, namely, the exclusion of the Catholic James II from the English crown (Lougee, Locke and Enlightenment, 1/23/01). When Mill wrote nearly two centuries later, both the American and the French Revolutions had affirmed a people’s right to revolution, so in a sense this right had come to be regarded as self-evident, no longer warranting defense. Mill’s statements about societal obligations, so similar to Locke’s, obscure Mill’s exact argument against the Social Contract. Elsewhere in Utilitarianism he writes, “Though society is not founded on a contract and though no good purpose is answered by inventing a contract in order to deduce social obligations from it, everyone who receives the protection of society owes it a return for the benefit” (86). As we are about to discover, Mill and Locke ultimately concur on what some of these returns are.

Thus far, we have focused on the distinguishing characteristics of Locke and Mill, especially their philosophical bases for the origin of liberty. While these differences are authentic and compelling, it is important not to let them overshadow the fact that in practice Locke and Mill’s philosophies are strikingly similar. Therefore, our attention now shifts to the implications of theory. In the final analysis both Locke and Mill aimed at the same target: the best possible state of human existence. This is what Locke deemed “the good of mankind” (115), and what Mill described as “an existence exempt as far as possible from pain and as rich as possible in enjoyments” (150). Locke and Mill concluded that this fundamental goal of maximizing happiness/good could best be achieved indirectly, based on the adoption of certain principles like free agency, and without direct appeals to happiness. Both grasped the principle that direct appeals are self-defeating, insofar as men are fallible to their own biases. Locke noted this human fallibility on page 12 of his Second Treatise of Government: “It is unreasonable for men to be judges in their own cases, that self-love will make men partial to themselves and their friends,” just as Mill noted in On Liberty that men’s opinions, “are affected by all the multifarious causes which influence their wishes in regard to the conduct of others...their legitimate or illegitimate self-interest” (9). Therefore, Mill refers decisions to “social utility” as represented through government (203), an entity that Locke saw fit to “restrain the impartiality and violence of men” (Locke 12). The government’s right to intervene

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as arbiter between self-interested citizens is what Mill calls “civil or societal liberty.” While this is a vital check on individuals, both Locke and Mill take every measure to ensure that societal liberty never oversteps its bounds.

According to Locke, liberty under government consists of the “liberty to follow my own will in all things, where the rule prescribes not” (17). Moreover, as each man is bound to preserve his own life, he also ought to “preserve the rest of mankind” so long as doing so does not call his own preservation into competition (Locke 9). Mill shares exactly the same sentiments: “The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs” (16). And, like Locke, Mill believes that individuals ought to aid one another as much as possible; in fact, he asserts that one individual could legitimately be compelled to save another’s life in situations of immediate danger or to perform various other actions for the general good, such as testifying in a court of law (Mill 14). Since all men are entitled to free agency, it can only follow that no individual among them can attempt to interfere with how any other individual chooses to exercise his right. One individual may find another’s conduct offensive, in which case Mill says he can justifiably avoid the offending individual (89), but he still has no legitimate reason to curtail the offensive behavior. This is the common doctrine of tolerance that both Locke and Mill propagate.

When it comes to punishment, both Locke and Mill make it painstakingly evident that intervention is a last resort, to be used only when an individual oversteps his own liberty and violates someone else’s. “The sole end for which mankind are warranted individually or collectively in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection,” Mill wrote in On Liberty; his argument for self-defense recapitulates Locke’s in generally less explosive terminology (Mill 12). Locke’s strong theological stance, due more to historical context than anything else, manifests itself in phrases like “state of war” and “for the same reason he may kill a wolf or a lion” (15). Mill shies away from these unrefined terms as they are so closely allied with a brutish state of nature, and Mill would never have used a direct quote from the Bible (“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Locke 12)) to justify retribution. This is a minor stylistic difference between the authors, yet it constitutes some of the only textual evidence of how Locke and Mill’s different underlying philosophies affect applications of theory.

Taken on the whole, however, the punishment issue illuminates a strong link between Locke and Mill. Invading another’s right to life, liberty, health or property makes one “highly guilty of the greatest crime” (Locke 116), and is punishable by “moral reprobation and in grave cases, moral retribution and punishment” (Mill 90). Mill cites two distinct forms of punishment in On Liberty: legal penalty and unofficial public censorship (Mill 14). Likewise, Locke categorized punishment into two distinct parts, reparation and restraint. Reparation consists of the injured party’s right to seek compensation for any loss, and restraint refers to society’s right as a whole to make the offender “repent” of his misdeeds (Locke 10). A perfect one-to-one correlation does not exist between legal penalty and reparation or public censorship and restraint, but nevertheless, these categories indicate the similar systematic ways in which Locke and Mill approached punishment.

One final aspect related to government intervention merits exploration: enforced
equality, a kind of economic punishment, per se. In this case, Mill’s utilitarianism should in no way be confused with utopianism, for despite his convictions about the greatest good for the greatest number, Mill did not believe that total enforced equality was the end-all panacea leading to ultimate good. In fact, Mill anticipated stagnation if bad workmen received the same wages as good workmen (101). Mill’s justification of inequality draws its strongest arguments from none other than John Locke. Locke’s Labor Theory of Value, or the idea that all men possess the property of their person and that “whatever he hath mixed his labor with makes it his property” (Locke 19), underwrites Mill’s later proposition that “different persons should be allowed to lead different lives” (Mill 73). Furthermore, it provides the basis for Mill’s counter-argument to the allegation that allowing some men to supercede others in an overcrowded profession went against utilitarianism since the winners would benefit from others’ disappointment. “It is, by common admission better for the general interest of mankind that persons should pursue their objects undeterred by this sort of consequence,” Mill proclaimed, clearly orating from the platform that Locke had provided (Mill 109).

In Mill’s work we see the fusion of pure capitalism and social obligation, the birth of a political conscience. Mill realized that in writing about the struggle between liberty and authority, he was adding his voice to a discussion that could be traced “almost from the remotest ages” (Mill 3). John Locke, as one of the most articulate participants in the dialogue, impacted Mill who alludes to Locke’s early accomplishment of obtaining recognition of political rights and the right to revolution (Mill 4). But because Mill believed in the fluidity of ideas, he was not afraid to depart from Locke’s formidably established philosophical basis and raise his own voice. Overall, despite his utilitarian convictions, Mill retained the Lockean premises that suited him, such as the Labor Theory of Value, finally reaching similar conclusions about the proper balance between personal and societal liberty. Thus, his contribution helped shaped the dialogue on liberty, and as the contemporary minimum wage debate proves, both Mill’s and Locke’s voice continues to echo today. Our society may be a far cry from what either Locke or Mill envisioned, but this only goes to show that “ages are no more infallible than individuals...it is as certain that many opinions now general, will be rejected by future ages, as it is that many once general are rejected by the present” (Mill 23). In our quest for personal and governmental harmony, the conscience continues to assert itself, and we move, by trial and error towards perfection of positive liberty.

Works Cited


Through the Looking Glass: Voyeurism, Space, and Authority in Donne’s Love Poems and Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra

by Sarah Mangin

Introduction by Richard Cushman, Instructor

In her essay “Through the Looking Glass: Voyeurism, Space, and Authority in Donne’s Love Poems and Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra,” Sarah Mangin examines the ways in which Donne and Shakespeare position their characters in relation to the roles of voyeur and erotic object. Donne’s love poems, she finds, unfold through a male speaker who tightly controls the construction of a voyeuristic scene by manipulating distance and proximity, light and shade, even simultaneity and remoteness, to suit himself. In Antony and Cleopatra, on the other hand, she observes that Shakespeare portrays the Roman world as composed of males who are in fact themselves controlled by the attractive power of a Cleopatra and Egypt which they have created as eroticized objects, but which have gone beyond their control. As Sarah Mangin expresses it, we catch Rome in the act of peering at Egypt with “flushing desire,” as the stance of Roman self-control and self-domination begins to shatter.

The male persona in Donne’s lyrics, then, and the Romans in Shakespeare’s play reveal opposite postures as voyeuristic males. Donne’s lover exercises a strict rhetorical authority over the erotic object and performance, whose “staging” he dictates to accommodate his own desires and tastes. The Romans, on the other hand, reveal themselves in a much more ambiguous relation to the exercise of imaginative power. Even as they represent themselves as embodying republican self-discipline, self-control and rigorous self-construction, we see them as being transformed and transfigured by a fascination with an eroticized object no longer completely of their own creation and beyond their power to control.

Many of us are pleased that Sarah is thinking of majoring in English at Stanford.

Manet’s voyeuristic “Olympia” depicts a naked prostitute returning a matter-of-fact stare to the viewer of the painting. When the piece was originally presented at the Salon in 1865, two guards were hired to protect it from the horrified mobs. Others hailed “Olympia” as a masterpiece. No matter which side of the moral fence we stand upon, our tendency to gaze at a symbol of erotic possibility is an enduring and undeniable characteristic of the human makeup. It only follows, then, that the complications of voyeurism have entered into literature to confront both authors and their characters. For example, John Donne’s collection of love poems and William Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra each contain voyeuristic elements. But while both works are voyeuristic, the space between the object of erotic possibility and the
spectator is handled quite differently. Donne either deliberately creates space between himself and his lover, or collapses the space altogether so they become a single being. The Romans in *Antony and Cleopatra*, however, are caught blushing in their tentative reachings toward Egypt despite their public condemnation of exotic lust. These different treatments of the space between the spectator and the object determine where the authority lies in the literature: Donne’s conscious selection of either proximity or distance proves that he is in control, and contributes to his signature rhetoric of persuasion. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Romans’ superiority and their authority over the Egyptian way of life are completely undermined by Shakespeare’s emphasis on their indulgent glimpses of Egyptian femininity and passion, which shake the columns of Roman strength and virtues.

Donne develops his love as voyeuristic by emphasizing artistic visual composition and through the equation of spectatorship to sexual gratification. His writing parallels the genre of voyeuristic visual art by meticulously constructing the scene of intimacy with imagery of light and vision. In “The Good-Morrow,” he establishes his lover as the amalgamation of fantasy, spectatorship, and desire: “If any beauty I did see, Which desir’d, and got, t’was but a dream of thee.” He is completely taken by her beauty and breathlessly admires her with childlike awe. Sometimes Donne ostensibly complains of the sun as an annoying disturbance to their romance: “Busie old foole, unruly Sunne, Why dost thou thus, Through windowes, and through curtains call on us?” (“The Sunne Rising”). However, Donne is actually grateful for the sun’s entrance. The lovers are no longer cloaked in darkness and busied with passion, but the new light facilitates Donne’s appreciation of a more vibrant “painting” of the woman before him. Details such as light contribute to his artistic orchestration, so in truth, he is not so eager for the sunbeams to go away: “I could eclipse and cloud them with a single winke, But that I would not lose her sight so long.” But his enjoyment is not limited to aesthetic beauty. Voyeurism also involves actual sexual gratification, and the poem “A Fever” demonstrates this correlation: “Thy beauty, and all parts, which are thee, Are unchangeable firmament. Yet ‘twas of my minde, seising thee, Though it in thee cannot perserver. For I had rather owner bee Of thee one houre, than all else ever.” In these lines, Donne takes a mental snapshot of the woman’s figure, since visualization is an important source of sensual stimulation. Additionally, though, he fantasizes about owning and “seising” her just as the fever does. The notions of possession and sensuality are closely related — people often speak of sex in terms of “having” another person. Donne’s poems always suggest physical intimacy and sex, but rarely broadcast his thoughts during those moments; he is satisfied in the art of looking, and since he doesn’t require actual physical contact to constitute sensual pleasure, he empowers (and invites) his reader to be a co-witness of stimulating imagery.

As in Donne’s poems, voyeurism in *Antony and Cleopatra* makes erotica accessible to people not directly involved in the passionate relationship. In effect, the voyeurism of the Romans is often embodied in second (or third) — hand narratives of Cleopatra’s lustful beauty. This word-of-mouth representation thrusts the Nile Queen into the intersection of glorified myth, reality, and art, and thus confirms her status as the icon of ideal sexual fantasy. Indeed, a Roman’s description of lustful Egypt is always accompanied by an indulgent report of visual pomp, even hyperbole.
and embellishment. We can only imagine Enobarbus gawking: “The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne, Burned on the water... the oars were silver, Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke and made The water which they beat to follow faster, As amorous of their strokes” (2.2). The fact that the Egyptians are on water, like a stage for actors, suggests that they are designed to be admired, not touched. Yet the Romans’ visualization is equally stimulating as actual intimate contact. What is more, the indulgence of fantasy is available to anyone who wants it, not just the fortunate man Cleopatra selects as her partner. The Romans’ fascination with this type of visual erotica is evident in the way they linger on the details, even the steadfast Caesar: “I’ th’ marketplace on a tribunal silvered, Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold Were publicly enthroned...” (3.6). Enobarbus also derives satisfaction from speculating about Cleopatra’s sexuality:

“Under a compelling occasion let women die. It were pity to cast them away for nothing, though between them and a great cause they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this, dies instantly; I have seen her die twenty times upon a far poorer moment. I do think there is mettle in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying.” (1.2)

Because Enobarbus gratuitously sustains the kinky pun on “die” for an entire paragraph, we gather that he is fixated on the sexual description for the sake of his own vicarious experience rather than for constructive communication. Nor can Enobarbus resist objectifying the Queen of the Nile as something intended expressly for men’s pleasure: when Antony wonders if he would have saved trouble by never seeing her, Enobarbus replies, “O, sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work...” (1.2). She is a picture emblazoned on Enobarbus’ mind as well as the other Roman voyeurs. Moreover, the sight of Cleopatra is clearly arousing enough to warrant praise and multiple retellings. Like Donne’s love poems, voyeurism in Shakespeare’s play allows for multiple spectators, both Romans and readers.

Since voyeurism requires two elements, the observer and the object, their relationship depends very much on the space between the two. In Donne’s love poetry, the male speaker alternates between two positions: he either considers himself the same entity as his lover (the object), or he deliberately and figuratively distances himself from her. In the first case, he collapses the space between himself and his lover to create a new level of unity: “The Phoenix riddle hath more wit By us, we two being one, are it” (“The Canonization”). It is as though the couple transcends physical space, and therefore Donne amplifies the admiration of his lover. However, their roles as voyeur and object are not interchangeable even though the pair occupies the same space and their beings seem to have converged, as we see in “The Dampe”: “And my friends curiositie Will have me cut up to survay each part, When they shall finde your Picture in my heart....” He still possesses her “Picture” inside of him, a trophy symbolizing a voyeuristic relationship typified by unity and domination alike. Even though the voyeur and his object are no longer separated, the pleasurable beauty he observes is still his for the taking.

Other times, Donne decides to insert space between himself and the woman of his desire. Since all the poems are in first-person narrative, and oftentimes the lover
is understood to be in the immediate presence of Donne, he must make a concentrated
decision to expand their relative distance. Occasionally Donne tries to fashion the
“microcosm effect”: “For love, all love of other sights controules, And makes one
little room, an every where.” (“The Good-Morrow”). By transposing their love onto
a grander scale, their relationship is more universal than private. It enlarges the love
itself, but does not bring the lovers spatially closer to one another. He also creates
temporal distance: “Now thou hast lov’d me one whole day, To morrow when thou
leav’st, what wilt thou say?” (“Woman’s Constancy”). By discussing the future,
Donne evacuates the moment of the scene, and pushes himself away even though he
is actually in close proximity to the woman he beholds. Regardless of whether he is
near or far, Donne is absolutely sure of his orientation in relation to object of his
voyeurism.

The Romans, and particularly Antony, are much more ambiguous in their spatial
relationship to Egypt and Cleopatra. The diametrically opposed lifestyles of
Egyptians and Romans simultaneously pull the voyeurs in extreme directions. They
are obligated to remain detached from all the inferior, exotic lust that thrives in the
“slime” of Egypt, yet they cannot help but take a peek. Thus, while Egypt and Rome
are geographically, culturally, and sensually opposites, Romans are always tentatively
creeping towards the object of their admiration. Agrippa demonstrates this
frustrating, nebulous dichotomy: “Royal wench! She made great Caesar lay his
sword to bed; He plowed her, and she cropped” (2.2). On one hand, Agrippa succeeds
in dismissing Cleopatra as a manipulative harlot. Yet his crude language (“plowed”
and “cropped”) shows that he is not genuinely bothered by her sexual solicitations.
Rather, he delights in the perversely satisfying imagery, and therefore he dwells
somewhere in between Roman and Egyptian ideals. The liminal figure of Antony
also demonstrates the magnetism of Egyptian seduction. He reluctantly returns to
Rome when duty calls, and yet he cannot seem to make a direct journey: “Mark
Antony is every hour in Rome Expected. Since he went from Egypt ’tis A space for
farther travel” (2.1). Maecenas realizes that a clean break from Cleopatra is
imperative, and desperately calls for drastic self-control (“Now Antony must leave
her utterly” (2.2). Enobarbus knows that this solution is not so easy: “Never; he will
not: Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety: other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry where most she satisfies” (2.2).
Cleopatra’s beauty is literally captivating, and Antony is always adrift between the
object of his temptation and stately conduct. Furthermore, the conflicting views of
his countrypeople suggest he is never in control of which direction he tacks. The
Romans’ wavering suspension between detached and proximal voyeurism implies the
distribution of power in the play’s larger context.

The relationship between the voyeur and the distance to his object of desire
presents a commentary on the authority of the beholder. Because Donne deliberately
alternates between proximity and remoteness, he generates a position of control for
himself; essentially, he creates whatever view suits him. Donne realizes his
jurisdiction in the role of the voyeur, and within that role he can manipulate time and
space to create just the fantasy he desires. More importantly, his deliberate adjustment
of his proximity creates a stronger rhetorical position: flexible, convincing,
controlled. In “The Dreame” he petitions for the conversion of surreal fantasy to
realized physical pleasure: “Enter these armes, for since thou thoughtst it best, Not to
dream all my dreams, let’s act the rest” (“The Dreame”). Donne is rarely direct;
later in the poem, he tries to cajole his lover into remaining in bed with him: “But
rising makes me doubt, that now, Thou art not thou” (“The Dreame”). Moreover, the
shrewd poet frames his self-gratification in terms of his lover’s best interest. In “The
Flea” he is dealing with a woman who is reluctant to have sex with him: “Marke but
this flea, and marke in this, How little that which thou deny’st me is... And in this
flea... swells with one blood made of two, And this, alas, is more than wee would
doe” (“The Flea’”). His claim is that sex is even less offensive than their blood mixing
in a flea’s body. While it is a slightly ridiculous and witty metaphysical comparison,
Donne ultimately presents an inventive argument to legitimize sexual relations. Just
as he could assert his own voyeuristic stance and supremacy in the bedroom, Donne
also satisfies his need for intellectual amusement by crafting persuasive, clever
language. Despite the stative implications of voyeurism, Donne’s deliberate and
rhetorical style of language confirm that he is actively, if not aggressively, engaged in
his personal pursuit of desire.

Unlike Donne, the voyeurs in Antony and Cleopatra witness the evaporation of
their own authority over their erotica. The entire Roman presumption of authority
resides in the fact that Egyptian excess, sensuality, and lifestyle are inferior to Roman
culture. However, once the Romans are caught peering at Egypt with flushing desire,
this gradation of power shatters. For instance, Antony, Caesar, Enobarbus, and others
become drunk from wine, and thus inch closer to the society they condemn and covet;
Caesar observes “we have burnt our cheeks: strong Enobarb Is weaker than the wine,
and mine own tongue Spits what it speaks: the wild disguise hath almost Anticked
us all. What needs more words?” (2.7). The triumvirate even turns on itself; the
desperate marriage between Antony and Octavia marks the end of Rome’s unity
instead of a hopeful revival of strength. Symbolically, the Romans are drawn into
Egypt to do battle, and they even fight on the sea — Cleopatra’s element. In his
death, Antony’s paradoxical identity is blurred and disgraced. At this point, the
voyeur becomes the patient of activity, and has lost authority not only over his lustful
object, but over his own agency as well. One of the last images of the play is of
Cleopatra’s servants hoisting Antony’s awkward, heavy body to the summit of the
pyramid. All voyeuristic idealism has retired, and it is discomforting to see the once
great Roman general sink to such a pathetic low. Clearly, the Romans cannot
maintain Egypt as the inferior “other” while they at once crave its forbidden fruits.
The voyeurism in Antony and Cleopatra also represents the larger scope of the
disintegration of the old Roman Republic and the associated virtues of “gravitas,
fides, religio, and pietas.” Surely the patrician founders of the Republic would be
disappointed to see voyeurism’s erotic desire and corruption bring down their holy
city walls from within.

In their works, Donne and Shakespeare use voyeurism as a method of
defamiliarization, a literary-linguistic term that describes how authors shock us out of
habitual ways of thinking and make us see in new ways. The poem/sonnet/song form
of Donne’s romantic expression is thereby deceiving. Instead of a traditional, sappy
love poet, Donne emerges as a cutting, deliberate, economical, witty, and conscious
master of language and persuasion. While he is an enraptured voyeur, he is so on his
own terms, and he cannot be mistaken for a naïve romantic or a tool of his lust. Ultimately, he uses voyeurism to embolden his authority rather than detract from it. Shakespeare’s play contains an equal but opposite reversal. Antony, the veteran soldier and “triple column of the world,” unexpectedly stumbles into the role of naïve romantic. The complications of his voyeuristic relationship with Egypt force him to reconcile his own splintering identity, but he ultimately fails. As a result, we must re-evaluate our conventional definition of “hero.” Shakespeare suggests that we accept heroism in a new package that embraces emotion and personal transformation over classical feats of bravery. Donne’s love poetry and Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra, therefore, are perfect representatives of Renaissance literature. They offer a rebirth of creative fervor, as well as invite us to broaden the standard interpretations of beauty and possibilities of style.