Watermark

Volume 15, 2021

Department of English
California State University, Long Beach

Watermark is an annual, scholarly journal published by graduate students in the Department of English at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). We are dedicated to publishing original, critical essays concerned with theory, literature of all genres and periods, as well as essays representing current issues within the field of Rhetoric and Composition. As this journal is intended to provide a forum for emerging voices, only student work is published.

All of the CSULB graduate students who have had a hand in forming and/or continuing *Watermark's* tradition should feel proud. The contributing domestic and international graduate students should, moreover, also feel proud. With this being said, the next edition of *Watermark* will be underway in November 2021, and it intends to positively expand upon its predecessors

All submissions must include a 250 word abstract and cover page which consists of the writer's name, phone number, email address, essay title, and short biography (no more than 2 sentences). All essays should be no less than 6 pages, typed in current MLA format with standard 12-point font, and cannot contain the writer's name. As such, all submission materials must be sent as separate Word documents. Please direct all submission materials and/or questions to csulbwatermark@gmail.com

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Volume 15, 2021

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A Note from *Watermark's* Executive Co-Editors

When we jointly assumed the role of *Watermark's* Executive Editor, neither Brooke nor myself could have imagined the rewarding yet challenging realities ahead. As we write this now, our world continues to face the devastating consequences of a global pandemic—meaning that in-person conversation, interaction, and connection remain halted. While we optimistically anticipate the return of students and faculty to our campus in the Fall, we must, in the meantime, celebrate the resiliency of both our staff and contributors—and this edition of *Watermark* does just that. Brooke and I hope that this edition acts as a beacon of hope, a sign of determination, and an emblem of the talent and intelligence of all involved in its production. Our writers, artists, and staff members make this journal possible through their painstakingly tireless efforts, and we are eternally indebted to them. For this service, we humbly thank those who continue to submit to, and participate in *Watermark's* production. We cannot compose this journal without you.

As with the previous editions of this journal, the fifteenth edition of *Watermark* seeks to build upon its predecessors; it accomplishes this, however, in a way which is unique to the unprecedented times we find ourselves living in. Rather than positing a theme with boundaries during our submission process, we encouraged a *boundless* submission process. In turn, we received a vast pool of profound and compelling works which expounded upon the most pressing social issues of our time: patriarchal structures, Black and LatinX identity, ecological consciousness, and how our chosen language molds these. Although such issues may appear to exist as separate units with distinct boundaries, upon creating this journal, Brooke and I found that they actually exist as boundless ideas which bleed into each other—envelope each other. And so, we hope that you enjoy reading it as much as we did creating it.

Brooke D. Campbell and Noah East, Executive Co-Editors, 2021

"He Was Guilty Before He Killed": Gender Performance and the "Bad Black Man" in Richard Wright's *Native Son*

Ana Hahs

By the 1940s, the story of a Black man's arrest for raping and injuring a white woman was an unfortunately common one in America. Richard Wright responds to this image in *Native Son* through the character of Bigger Thomas. Although Bigger is fictional, he represents the many Black boys charged with rape, often with little to no evidence convicting them. Wright's approach to the novel garnered controversy because he does not seek to minimize or excuse Bigger's crime. Instead, *Native Son* examines the driving forces affecting Bigger's behavior, and in doing so, unpacks traditional assumptions regarding Blackness and masculinity. Wright's portrayal of Bigger is perhaps best understood in terms of Judith Butler's theory of gender as performance, which can be used to argue that Bigger's murder is a performative act, forming part of his masculine expression. Such an interpretation challenges the assumption that Bigger kills because he is inherently violent or savage—as Black men were often stereotyped—focusing instead on how Bigger's gender performance is pre-determined by the norms of twentieth-century American society.

In *Native Son*, Bigger murders both a white woman, Mary Dalton, and his Black girlfriend, Bessie. Butler's seminal book, *Gender Trouble*, provides a framework for interpreting these crimes as an act of gender performance. Butler posits that gender identity consists of repeated acts regulated by cultural norms. She claims, "[g]ender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing" (33). In other words, gender expression is gender; there is no pre-established gender identity responsible for gendered behavior. However, while gender is fluid, Butler notes the limitations of gender within the boundaries of cultural discourse. She argues that societal norms trap people within a heterosexual framework, which enforces compulsory heterosexuality and unnatural binaries of "man" and "woman" (xxviii). In this case, compulsory heterosexuality refers to the idea that heterosexuality is both expected and enforced by a patriarchal society. According to Butler, "policing gender is sometimes used as a way of securing heterosexuality" (xii). Thus, heteronormativity is not inherent but rather a product of societal norms. Such a framework results in cultural scripts dictating proper behavior for each gender. Children typically grow up learning to perform the gender expression appropriate for their particular gender designation. For

example, a girl will imitate girl-like behavior. She might wear feminine clothing or apply makeup. On a larger scale, the girl may learn to project submissiveness, dependency on male figures, and shyness—all stereotypically feminine traits. Under the norms of compulsory heterosexuality, she will become exclusively attracted to men. When this girl performs her gender role, she cites the cultural understanding of what it means to be a girl, or perhaps a woman. Butler uses the term "regulatory fictions" to name the norms and taboos that reinforce and determine gender expression (82).

Although Butler's theory focuses solely on gender, gender often intersects with race in forming a person's identity. Specific traits and behaviors tend to be associated with specific racial identities, implying that race is performatively constructed in the same manner that Butler imagines gender. For example, Black men have been historically stereotyped as aggressive and dangerous in a way that their white counterparts have not. In *Native Son*, Bigger's masculine expression intrinsically links to his Blackness, creating a united Black male identity regulated by outside social forces. This particular application of Butler's theory echoes Bryant Alexander's discussion of how cultural performance constitutes Black male identity. While Butler identifies arbitrary gender binaries, Alexander claims that society automatically categorizes Black men into a bad man/good man binary. Both are cultural constructions and regulated by their norms and taboos. The good Black man is a positive representative of his race, "relatively articulate, relatively intelligent, relatively polite" (Alexander 75). However, the good Black man is often not acknowledged by white society. Meanwhile, playing the role of a bad Black man allows the performer to obtain visibility in the white eye (77).

This process of gaining visibility is illustrated through Bigger's example in *Native Son*. He performs the role of the dangerous Black man and subsequently receives attention and power. Murdering Mary turns him from an insignificant Black boy into a notorious criminal. Suddenly, his face is plastered on every newspaper, and police and angry mobs are chasing him. A girl even faints at the sight of him. Applying Alexander's and Butler's arguments to *Native Son* reveals the performative nature of Bigger's racial and gendered expression. Both authors argue that identity categories, whether defined as gender or race, are merely cultural constructions. Accordingly, *Native Son* illustrates how twentieth-century ideas of race and gender intersect in creating a dangerous Black masculinity, which Bigger's experience illustrates.

When Bigger performs his gender, he cites cultural understandings regarding what it means to be a dangerous Black man. In *Native Son*, Wright hints at the various regulatory fictions creating this image. For instance, Bigger is vilified by the newspapers once his crime becomes public knowledge. He is called a "beast," markedly different from the "grinning southern darky so beloved by the American people" (Wright 280). Such a comment demonstrates the binary of the good/bad Black man. The opposition between these two ideas is clear: Black men are either beasts or fun-loving darkies, with no in-between. The dangerous Black man is labeled "strange," "sullen," a violent "slayer," and overcome by "brain-numbing sex passion" for white women (279-80). Thus, in committing murder, Bigger operates within the bounds of cultural discourse and fulfills a socially recognized role. This racial binary is implicitly attached to ideas of gender. Not only do the above characteristics echo traditional conceptions of male expression as overtly heterosexual, exhibiting strength, and lacking emotion—masculinity is traditionally associated with power. Consequently, the only way Bigger can be masculine in this sense is to perform the role of the bad Black man. Indeed, Bigger thinks that the murders are the "most meaningful things that had ever happened to him," suggesting that his identity as a man is linked to his performance of dangerous Black masculinity (239).

Rape is another vital part of the cultural understanding behind this performance. The bad Black man is almost always assumed to be a rapist, as illustrated by Bigger's fearful reaction to Mary's death: "They would say he had raped her, and…he had not" (227). However, Wright also references this norm much earlier on, in the form of a newsreel featuring the daughters of wealthy families vacationing in Florida. For Bigger, they symbolize the ultimate: young, rich, and white. The announcer's statement emphasizes their status as objects of desire: "Don't you wish you were down here in Florida?" (32). The newsreel visually represents the divide between these beautiful, upper-class women and Black men. In this scene, Bigger is on the outskirts, unable to interact with the women he sees on the screen. White society objectifies white women as desirable while simultaneously underscoring their unattainability for bad Black men like Bigger. Such a divide means that sleeping with or overpowering a white woman becomes a source of power for Black men, something that Bigger internalizes. Notably, Bigger's fantasies about being part of white society invariably include having sex with his employer's daughter. Doing so would mean he had attained something previously only available to white men, thus, metaphorically infiltrating the white world, despite the racial barrier. The association of power with the rape of white women is yet another regulatory fiction governing Bigger's life.

Butler claims that an individual's gender identity is created and constituted through performed behavior. Within the cultural framework of the novel, the murder of Mary Dalton and the events leading up to it are performative actions. Bigger gets hired as the Daltons' chauffeur and finds himself sneaking an intoxicated Mary Dalton into her bedroom late at night through an unfortunate turn of events. The mere fact that Bigger finds himself alone in a bedroom with a drunk white woman evokes a host of cultural taboos, most significantly that of the Black rapist. Already this is an example of how performative behavior creates the illusion of inherent gender identity; if discovered, the assumption will be that Bigger harbors nefarious intentions towards Mary when, in reality, he has not actually murdered or raped anyone yet. Moreover, Mrs. Dalton's sudden arrival on the scene effectively turns her into the object of the societal norms dictating Bigger's behavior. She is described not as a person but as an "awesome white blur," she encroaches on Bigger in the same way that the white community encroaches on him (86). Her presence forces Bigger's hand: he suffocates Mary with a pillow in a desperate attempt to regain control of the situation. This moment is a microcosm of what happened to Bigger on a greater level, namely that society limited his choices. Forced to play the bad Black man, Bigger uses aggression as a way to gain power. Thus, Bigger's violence is a learned aspect of his gender performance, and this scene emphasizes how outside social forces control his display of dangerous masculinity.

The performative nature of Bigger's behavior is highlighted further by his reaction to Mary Dalton's death. Forced to face the fact that he has committed murder, Bigger's first response has a highly racial tone. Bigger speaks of himself in the third person, saying, "[h]e was a murderer, a Negro murderer, a Black murderer" (87). Performative behavior takes on new meaning, and this statement indicates Bigger's acknowledgment of how society will interpret his behavior; he will be a rapist, a menace, a lurking threat to the white community. Thus, Mary's murder and Bigger's reaction to it are gender-proclaiming actions. It is at this point that Bigger's expression of dangerous Black masculinity becomes realized. Significantly, he notes that the "crime seemed natural," a clear indication that he believes in his gender performance (106). As Butler suggests, the appearance of substance regarding gender is merely an illusion, something individuals "come to believe and…perform in the mode of belief" (179). In other words, people cannot recognize the performative aspect of their gender

expression, even as they actively engage with that performance. Thus, Bigger's comment should not be read as an indicator of an inherently violent nature but rather as an example of how cultural norms work to make his particular mode of gender expression inevitable.

Bigger's subsequent rape and murder of Bessie further highlights his internalization of gender performance. By raping Bessie, Bigger purposely commits the crime that white people accused him of doing to Mary. Moreover, while Mary's death is accidental, the killing of Bessie is deliberate. Here, too, Bigger feels the presence of the "white blur," urging him on, reminding him of what will happen if he is caught (Wright 236). As with Mary, he turns to violence as a means of gaining control, which highlights the way such behavior has become part of his learned gender expression. In raping Bessie, he is instinctively performing the role of the bad Black man. Wright's focus on the "white blur" driving Bigger's actions emphasizes the role of society in dictating such a performance. Additionally, this moment illustrates Butler's claim that individuals internalize their gender expression to the point that they view it as inherent. When killing Bessie, Bigger asserts that it "must be this way" (236). She must die so that he can escape. His performance of dangerous Black masculinity has become natural enough that he can no longer conceive any other way to behave. The white newspapers label Bigger a "beast" and "sex-slayer" after he murders Mary, in the same way that someone might call a child a "girl" or a "boy" (279). Both of the former terms categorize Bigger as the bad Black man, and like a child, Bigger comes to perform this gender designation in the "mode of belief" (Butler 179).

Butler ultimately concludes that the norms and regulations of cultural discourse trap people within their gender identity. When Bigger goes on trial, his lawyer aptly sums up this process of entrapment with the comment, "[h]e was guilty before he killed" (Wright 403). Bigger's male Blackness condemns him. In addition, his experience echoes Alexander's struggle with a society that continues to perceive him as the bad Black man whether or not he performs the role (78). For many years Bigger was forced to remain on the outskirts of a world dominated by white people, a world which attacked his masculinity by refusing to allow him any power. As Bigger expresses at the beginning of the novel, such a situation makes him feel "like something awful's going to happen to me" (20). Foreshadowing future events underscores the inevitability of his crime. Moreover, as already demonstrated, his actions are not a rebellion against gender expectations but a fulfillment. Bigger's trial and sentencing, a punishment in one context, can also read as a kind of terrible reward. By taking Mary's life, and then Bessie's, he becomes visible to the eyes of the white community. Not only do they see him, but if the words of the newspapers are any indication, they also fear him. In this way, Bigger finally gains a sense of power that he missed most of his life. It does not matter that one of those murders was accidental; Wright clarifies that Bigger's life was always on a trajectory towards this point. Bigger may believe that he is rebelling against society by becoming the bad Black man, but, in reality, he is merely performing a pre-determined role. The American public turned him into a villain through their racist ideology, harmful labels, and discriminatory behavior.

Accordingly, *Native Son* challenges twentieth-century perceptions of race and gender by highlighting the performative nature of Bigger's masculine expression. The white people in the novel fear the dangerous Black man; yet, his existence results from their racism. Black men like Bigger are not inherently violent or evil. Instead, the image of the bad Black man acts as an identity category in the same way that "male" and "female" are identity categories. Butler calls for "troubling" gender in her book to free marginalized groups from such categories. *Native Son* shares a similar purpose. The same year it was published, Wright gave a speech at Columbia University titled "How Bigger Was

Born," where he detailed the reasons for writing the book. Wright claimed he intended to explain "the conditions which produce Bigger Thomases" (444). In the process, Wright created a compelling argument for reconsidering the treatment of Black men in the United States. To use Butler's terminology, *Native Son* suggests that racial equality will never be achieved unless society is willing to "trouble" its strict conceptions of race and gender, specifically the image of Black masculinity.

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Dehumanizing East Los Angeles: Metaphorical Dogs and Freeway Culture in *Their Dogs Came with Them*

Savannah St John

Helena María Viramontes' novel *Their Dogs Came with Them* magnifies, through a close-scoped description that interweaves the complex lives of several crucial characters, the intricate and often overlooked realities of an impoverished East Los Angeles community. The novel's entirety takes place within the radius of a few blocks of 1st Street that is surrounded by freeways. By situating the novel's plot within such a sequestered and compact environment, Viramontes constructs an accurate and comprehensive exploration of the "underbelly" of East Los Angeles within an important historical time frame (13). Life on the streets of East Los Angeles, and the cultures and communities embedded within it, was altered beyond recognition by the construction of several major freeways in the 1960s. The city's redevelopment, illustrated by its newly emerging freeway culture, effectively uprooted many homeowners and homeless individuals and rendered them invisible by drastically changing the structure of the city. Encompassed by freeways on all sides, East Los Angeles became isolated from the remainder of the city; Viramontes heightens her historically accurate depiction of this enclosure with the inclusion of a fictional government-officiated rabies quarantine that contains and restricts the area. The individuals and animals that inhabit this community merge into a conglomerate of experiences and images that coalesce into the very environment that they are wedged within. Viramontes repeatedly parallels the poverty-stricken characters in the novel with the stray dogs that roam the streets and are targeted by the Quarantine Authority (QA) to construct a sustained metaphor of dehumanization that represents the ways that the modernized cityscape, determined largely by racial bias, displaces and marginalizes the Latin(x) community in East Los Angeles.

The novel's extensive use of the dog motif can be recognized even before the beginning pages of the narrative; Viramontes' references to dogs in the novel's title and epigraph denote the thematic relevance of the animal to the remainder of the text. The novel's title, *Their Dogs Came with Them*, is taken straight from the included epigraph from Miguel Leon-Portilla's *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*: "They came in battle array, as conquerors, and the dust rose in whirlwinds on the roads … *Their Dogs Came with Them*, running ahead of the column. They raised their muzzles high; they lifted their muzzles to the wind. They raced on before with saliva dripping

from their jaws" (Viramontes, epigraph). Viramontes's lifelong involvement in Chicano activism, as well as her Mexican-American heritage, is a central indicator of the prominence of Latin-American history and mythology in her writing. By including this epigraph in the title, the novel centralizes the oppression of the Latin(x) community as its underlying focal point. The "militarized milieu" that the epigraph describes consists of "an assemblage of human, accoutrements, animals, noise, dust, and drool" (Hsu 155). The rising "whirlwinds" of dust caused by these ancient conquerors is almost immediately echoed in the novel by Ermila's recognition of the Quarantine Authority's "whir of blades above the roof of her home" (Viramontes 12). The parallels between the two descriptions indicate, despite the centuries between, that Viramontes is conflating them to exemplify the Quarantine Authority (QA) as modern day oppressors of the Latin(x) community.

The QA functions symbolically through multiple layers within the text. On one level, the QA's broader function as an institutional structure that polices and contains the inhabitants of East Los Angeles allows it to represent the artificial borders constructed and enforced by the newly emerging freeways. Additionally, the QA's fictional presence in a largely historically accurate narrative acts as a clear catalyst for the implementation of the stray-dog motif which develops much of the novel's magical realism, expressive symbolism, and impactful meaning. The dual symbolism of the QA functions to highlight the intersecting levels of systemic oppression in the United States—–where public awareness of the various civil rights movements of the time was reaching an all-time high, but new forms of systemic oppression were emerging simultaneously. *Their Dogs* illustrates how the impact of the freeway system was not one of these publicly recognized issues; instead, the construction of the freeway system was idealized as a necessity for the modern city and celebrated by establishments such as Disneyland with rides like "autotopia" that mimicked freeway travel (Avila 19). In this way, the "Anglo-American world view" predominated the public discourse of freeway construction because it "saw history as a highway—– an unbroken path of linear progress toward distant horizons" (Avila 20). Those who opposed this world view were seen as opposing progress, which is why "an official publicity campaign ... claimed overwhelming public support for freeway construction" (Avila 18). *Their Dogs* recognizably contests this overarching narrative of freeway advocacy by depicting "the quarantine [as] a metaphor of containment that articulates the long-term effects of the freeway construction's initial displacements" (Huehls 160). In this light, the excessive presence of stray dogs in the novel can be seen as a metaphor for the consequences of freeway expansion, which expediently displaced thousands of Latin(x) residents in the name of Anglo-American progress.

Though dogs are interspersed throughout the novel, they're often either already dead or about to be killed: "a bloodied dog carcass," "a lone stray running," "the dog, a furry sack of meshed muscle" (Viramontes 29, 77, 278). These dogs are presented as passive victims of the rabies outbreak and subsequent quarantine. They are the dead bodies that stack the streets as discernible signs of the residual effects of freeway displacement. By including the graphic descriptions of these bodies, *Their Dogs...* attempts to make visible the consequences of the freeway culture and comment on its ability to "institute a social space that discourages empathy and generates political invisibility" (Pattinson 130). Much of this invisibility is linked to how "freeways move drivers *over* communities" instead of *through* them (Pattinson 120). When Viramontes depicts the "two assemblages" on the road, there is a deliberate confrontation between the "gregarious herd of cars" and the "whole pack of asphalt jungle dogs overwhelming the boulevard" (277). The scene goes to great lengths to equalize the overwhelming presence of both animal and vehicle. This "assembling mass of dogs" is impossible

to ignore, and only once the "unstoppable pack raced out of sight" are the drivers able to continue (Viramontes 277). The dog's undeniable presence in this scene and the entire novel can be understood as a critique on the "capsularization" of freeway culture which enforces a lack of "interact[ion] with those outside their socioeconomic and ethnic communities" (Pattinson 118). In this light, it is easy to associate the actions directed towards dogs in the community as representing the dehumanizing effects of freeway culture. Viramontes presents dogs as an irrefutable subject within the community, capable of stopping traffic and commanding power in numbers, and yet often isolated by institutional structures and eradicated one by one.

By emphasizing the impactful images of displaced dogs in the novel alongside these urban changes, Viramontes delineates how "the landscape and residents [both human and animal] bear the stigma of poverty-induced environmental stress" (Kim 513). In this light, one of the novel's significant elements of dog characterization occurs in the only instance where the plot breaches the inner boundaries of East Los Angeles; Ermila takes the bus to Laguna Cliff and then interacts with an "ancient Anglo man" and his "frantically yapping Chihuahua" (Viramontes 348). The Anglo man and his dog, "Peppino," are almost analogous with one another in their representations. The man's "fedora" and "vintage tuxedo" are matched by Peppino's "little top hat fastened by an elastic strand" and his "tiny coat, complete with a red bow tie for a collar" (Viramontes 348). The man is described as a "gentleman" and the dog as being "dignified" which reiterates their implied social class (Viramontes 349). This imagery not only conflates the dog with its owner but also makes a central connection between their location and their appearances. Both man and animal represent some semblance of propriety that is never depicted inside the inner-city communities–– in this way, their outfits expose their economic privilege. Here it becomes certain that "Viramontes' novel redraws the lines of relation between people and their surroundings, indicating a mutual and debilitating exchange" (Kim 511). When Peppino finds a "thrown away hamburger" and "gouge[s] into it greedily" the surplus of edible substances found within the area contrasts dramatically with the "lethargic ghost of the dog" who wastes away without food in the streets of East Los Angeles (Viramontes 249, 213). The "human-environmental interdependency" alluded to in these instances can be seen as highlighting the "racially uneven consequences" enacted on certain denoted areas by institutional structures (Kim 512).

The QA is the novel's most prominent symbol of these institutional structures. The QA's justification in the novel, as described in the English written pamphlet distributed to the predominantly Spanish speaking community, is laden with medical jargon and threatening diction: "a quarter of the pamphlet described rabies symptoms, untimely deaths, rabid squirrels and other urban rodents, city fines" (Viramontes 54). The usage of rabies here, notably "derive[d] from the Sanskrit *rabhas*" which means "to do violence," can be seen as an attempt to localize violence *within* the community in order to vindicate violence enacted on the community (Hsu 155). The QA's public authority here is derived from the *"Health officials"* that were "forced" to sanction the quarantine due to *"rising cases of rabies"* (Viramontes 54). The "medical language of blight" that was used to justify the freeway expansion "envisions racialized and low-income neighborhoods as diseased sites waiting for excision" (Kim 505). The public fear of rabies in the novel underscores the growing public fear of slum areas and inner-city ghettos that instigated "white flight" to the expanding suburbs. The "urban planning discourses of 1940s Los Angeles" depicted the freeways as crusaders for the common good and directly contrasted them with the "public health hazards" that referenced specific racially marginalized communities (Kim 505). By concluding the QA's pamphlet description with the urgent

plea to *"work together to keep our families and our city safe,"* there is an underlying emphasis on the greater good of Los Angeles as a whole to permit the forceful containment of the neighborhood (Viramontes 54). The use of the word *"our"* here effectively conflates the needs of the residents in the community with the needs of the rest of the city; the development of the novel shows how the needs of certain marginalized groups, especially in East Los Angeles, were overwritten and erased by this hegemonic declaration of unified needs.

Despite the implied emphasis on protecting the public, the presence of roadblocks, curfew, and aerial observation in the novel denote a certain amount of spatial imprisonment directed specifically towards one community. The *"shaded area"* on the map, "from First Street to Boyle to Whittier and back to Pacific Boulevard," outlines almost completely where the entirety of the novel takes place (Viramontes 54). On a current map, the QA's fictional borders align with the actual borders constructed by the encompassing freeway exchanges that still surround the community. By centralizing the focus of the lengthy novel in such a small portion of space, especially in terms of the expansive Los Angeles area, Viramontes heightens the enclosing effect of the "artificial boundaries" that the four-freeway exchange implements on the neighborhood (Pattinson 130). Through the QA, these borderlines are heavily policed and the area is "circumscri[bed as] a zone of detention" which "recasts all the area dwellers as suspect and subject to a law that is both outside and constitutive of the neighborhood" (Franco 354). One of the ways Viramontes depicts this enforcement is through strict regulations on documentation and proving legal residency: "The city officials demanded paper so thin and weightless, it resisted the possibility of holding legal import for people like herself ... Didn't the QA know that in the Eastside getting a valid ID was more complicated than a twelve-year-old purchasing a six pack from Going Bananas?" (Viramontes 62-3). Once stripped of its authoritative medical jargon and promises to protect the public from an epidemic, the actual implementation of QA policies is quickly shown as a scare tactic used against a predominantly racialized community.

Although the QA's official pamphlet states patently that "undomesticated mammals" will be shot on sight, the necessitation for heavy policing of the curfewed area and requiring "valid government documentation" to return home is more reminiscent of an international border crossing where undocumented people are targeted instead of "unchained and/or unlicensed mammals" (Viramontes 54-5). The QA's licensed use of helicopters and searchlights to ascertain threats at night can also be easily attributed to the illegal crossings alongside the border of Mexico and the governmental administration border control. The use of language here is notable because the assonance between "undocumented" and "undomesticated" shows a distinct linguistic connection between the two as an effective way of dehumanizing the marginalized residents of the Latin(x) community, especially those who are either homeless, disabled, or not legal citizens and therefore lacking proper documentation. The "ubiquitous woman" exemplifies this visibly in her characterization; she is interspersed repeatedly throughout the various plots of the main characters but is never named (Viramontes 81). When she "realized she had forgotten her own name" because it had been so long since anyone had asked what it was, Viramontes critiques the general lack of human decency for homeless individuals and reiterates the novel's assertion that they are actively dehumanized (93). Her "sole credential" and identifier is her lost Social Security Card, but that is devalued by the reflection that she might have "found it in a county trashcan" (Viramontes 93). Even her backstory is merely imagined by Ben as a coping mechanism for the trauma of having an absent mother, thus characterizing her as a surrogate figure for the novel's overall discussion of undocumented, homeless and displaced people (Viramontes 123-5). In light of the quarantine in *Their*

Dogs…, anyone that doesn't have a home to go to by the time the curfew is in effect is conflated with the stray animals and therefore in danger of interference and violence from the QA.

The ubiquitous woman is significantly depicted traversing the streets at night alongside a stray dog and the passage uses indistinguishable diction to describe the dog and the woman's search for food. The paragraphs are mirrored so closely that the reader has difficulty configuring two as separate beings. This is indicative of what Jina Kim terms a "transference of matter" where "human and environment begin to mirror one another" (511). When mirrored in this way, the QA's directed violence towards the street dogs is understood as similarly pointed towards displaced and disabled individuals who have little to no protection besides each other. When the woman decides to "depend on her instincts" there is a suggestion of her having an almost animalistic nature (Viramontes 83). The emphasis on this nature is heightened as she beings "following a slavering dog" in search of food and a relationship between the two figures is developed (Viramontes 83). Without any form of identification or name, the woman is comparable to the dog and is considered a mere "intruder" by it and therefore imagined as a threat to any potential "edible discovery" (Viramontes 83). Similarly, by "looking over its shoulders periodically" towards the woman with personified "cautious eyes," there is an emphasis on both the dog's and woman's innate distrust for one another as necessitated for survival (Viramontes 83-4). The parallels between the two figures are furthered by their ultimate isolation from any pack or community which justifies their instinctive suspicions of others. When Tranquilina and her ministry provides food for both the dog and the woman, we can see an important emphasis on "wider webs of [communal] support" that contrast with the "state infrastructures" such as the QA which actively dehumanize the inhabitants of the community in the name of protection (Kim 518). In this way, the concept of community is an essential counterargument to the novel's sustained critique on freeway expansion.

The limits of this communal care are tested within the novel, however, since even Tranquilina is ultimately unable to protect the stray dog, referred to in this segment as the singular "mutt," from a "roaming loose-knit pack of dogs" (Viramontes 214). When describing the mutt's "fight notched ears" and "battle scars" it becomes clear that these fights were "part and parcel of its survival" and not anything new or unrecognizable by the standards of street life (Viramontes 214). The dog "knew instinctively" what specific intimidation tactics such as "glar[ing] defiantly at the largest challenging dog" and "growl[ing] its warning to stay away" would be the most effective in a fight such as this, which shows an inherent familiarity with these rigorous competitions for sustenance (Viramontes 214). Similar strategies of survival are echoed in the following chapter through Turtle's recitation of Luis's **"U.S. Army Field Manual 21-71, SURVIVAL"** which constructs an acrostic of the word with instruction such as "**S** for Size up the situation" and "**U** for Undue haste makes waste" (Viramontes 229, 219, 220). Despite the use of these tactics, however, the "dogs of various shapes and sizes" are able to surround the mutt, leaving it completely vulnerable to the impending attack and incapable of protecting itself (Viramontes 215). Just as the mutt is "outnumbered and outmuscled" by the pack, Turtle is attacked by "hundreds of bullet-speed shots to her head, stomach, [and] legs" in her ritualistic initiation into the McBride gang (Viramontes 215, 232). Though Turtle's initial jumping is considered a test of gang loyalty and concludes with "slaps of congratulations on her back," the mutt is left to die "in his own blood" (Viramontes 215, 233). In light of the comparisons between these two figures, however, the killing of the dog crucially foreshadows Turtle's final betrayal by the McBride gang and untimely death.

Turtle's death at the end of the novel is a testament that, like the mutt, instinctual survival tactics cannot alter the foreseeable demise of one who is without a pack, one who "found herself abandoned by the McBride Boys" (Viramontes 323). Nacho, a lone stranger from Mexico without protection, also dies at the end. Having been "stripped of home, resources, family, and friends" (or, in Nacho's case, being thousands of miles from home) Turtle and Nacho both "inevitably perish" because they're utterly vulnerable and lacking access to "informal infrastructures of care" that are necessary to survive (Kim 518). In this light, it's easy to understand the appeal of gang culture as providing a protective pack and a sense of security for its members. The McBride and Lote M gangs operate as "the other authorities present in [the] neighborhood" (Muñoz 32). Turtle goes to great lengths, hopping fences to cut through cemeteries and avoiding major boulevards, to avoid the "Lote M vatos" as well as the QA (Viramontes 218). Like the QA's roadblocks and checkpoints, the "competing gangs of East Los Angeles" impose a "demarcation and subdivision of territory," which directly impedes Turtle's movement (Muñoz 32). The graffiti scrawled across the freeway bridge indicates the specific marking of territory by the McBride Boys, but by "chisel[ing] away at [their] calligraphic tags" Lote M became the "new conquerors" of the area (Viramontes 217). These "turf" wars exemplify the "use [of] space as a means of perpetrating violence on one another" instead of directing their frustration at "oppressive governmental forces" such as the QA and the freeways (Pattinson 132). Significantly, when Turtle encounters Santos and is reluctantly pulled back into the activities of the McBride "pack" to avenge Big Al, "a group of dogs answered one another in triphammer barks" (Viramontes 266).

Their Dogs... questions the ultimate stability of this type of pack mentality by concluding the novel with Turtle's abandonment–– her McBride brothers leave her just as she had previously gone "AWOL" from them after the death of her brother Luis (Viramontes 221). Both Turtle's gang and biological families ultimately leave her to be "cradled" in the arms of a stranger whom only the reader can view in relation to the other characters (Viramontes 324). Tranquilina, the representative of the informal infrastructures of care in the novel, "held [Turtle] as tight and strong as her brother ... until sleep came to her fully welcomed" (Viramontes 324). Tranquilina, therefore, embodies "the mourning Mary and gives tribute to bodies considered either invisible or disposable" (Kim 524). Turtle's social invisibility can be seen as a direct consequence of the lethal effects of freeway culture on the community of East Los Angeles, which obscured the marginalized characters depicted in *Their Dogs* and distanced them from public empathy. Just as Turtle "struggle[s] to form [a] community" of support after being isolated from any aspect of family, Huehls argues that the novel's narrative "structure enacts the individualizing isolation that the freeway construction and the quarantine brought to East LA" (170). By the novel's conclusion, all four distinctive plotlines merge into tragedy to illustrate the "multi-layered narrative" that converges and overlaps just like the four-freeway stack interchange (Muñoz 31). When Turtle recollects how Luis believed that they both "lived in a stay of execution," there is an underlying emphasis on her predestined death (Viramontes 324). Viramontes similarly traps her readers into acknowledging the inevitability of the novel's ending by revealing the novel's horrific conclusion early on [through the police report detailing Turtle's death] and playing out every excruciating step" (Pattinson 136). By reiterating how the institutional oppression enacted on the inhabitants of East Los Angeles necessitates this fatalistic finale, Viramontes critiques the continuous systemic narrative of social progress that overwrites the realities she represents in her novel.

When Tranquilina cries out *"We'rrre not dogggs!"* there is a climactic culmination of the novel's extended use of the dog motif as symbolic of the evident dehumanization of the displaced

Latin(x) community (Viramontes 324). Turtle's murder by the QA sharpshooters is justified in the police report as "alleged fatalities" responding to "possible gang retaliation activity" (Viramontes 296). The inclusion of this before the actual shooting is depicted provides an important element of preemptive perspective for these actions: by overwriting the public narrative of what occurred in the storm, the institutional authorities maintain their lack of blame and instead point the finger at the most conventional stereotypes of impoverished communities, such as gang violence, to vilify the subjects involved. When Viramontes writes that "except for Tranquilina, no one … in all their glorious hallucinatory gawking, knew who the victims were, who the perpetrators were" she underscores once again the public's disassociation from displaced individuals and communities as propagated by the encapsulating freeway culture (325). The inexplicable raging storm in Los Angeles constructs the intentionally melodramatic setting of this momentous juncture of the four fragmented narratives. Although physically necessary in this context, Tranquilina's assertive "roar" over the thunderstorm can be seen as a declaration of rights, a vehement attempt to distinguish them from animals in the eyes of the government (Viramontes 324). The "chaos of commands and shouts and orders and circuslike commotion" that responds to Tranquilina's exclamation solidifies the novel's portrayal of systemic abuses of power, such as the QA, as ultimately indifferent to the marginalized individuals being negatively affected and directly disempowered (Viramontes 324). They are ultimately unable, or unwilling, to hear her "blur of raging language" and therefore denote it as incomprehensible and inhuman (Viramontes 324). As her "words crash into one another, rocketing into one big howl" it becomes apparent that even her most earnest pleas are misconstrued as animalistic by the QA (Viramontes 324).

When Tranquilina's refusal to listen to the QA's commands to "stay immobile" is directly empowered by her "ancestral spirits," we can see Viramontes referencing back to the ancient Aztecs in the epigraph at the beginning and recognize how the novel has come full circle with its use of the dog motif. Dean Franco asserts that by the novel's conclusion, the "motif of the dog is both the sign for and the condition of abjection" (357). In this way, what Franco designates as the novel's "grim foreclosure" can also be conversely seen as a determined reiteration of the ways in which the Latin(x) community has resisted, and continues to resist, their systemic oppression as it historically actualizes itself in new forms alongside the public narrative of racially uneven progression (356). The dog motif extended throughout the novel elaborates into a sustained metaphor for the long-term dehumanizing repercussions of the freeway institutions. This dehumanization occurs by means of containing specific marginalized neighborhoods within the borders of the freeways and thus rendering them and their community disabled physically, emotionally, and mentally by the detrimental environmental and social effects. From the beginning of the freeway construction, the presence of the Latin(x) community was overwritten by the public narrative of modernity and therefore deemed invisible by general historical acknowledgment. The resistance to freeway construction may have been superimposed by the white-centric simulacrum of Los Angeles, but underneath this mirage exists the historical subjugation of these victims. By paralleling the stray dogs of the community with the novel's variously handicapped characters, Viramontes constructs an accurate metaphor for the ways in which they have been negatively impacted by freeway expansion and historically dehumanized like animals without a voice. In *Their Dogs*…, Viramontes courageously advocates for the impactful stories of those who have not been heard and makes certain that they are recognized.

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Borders, Boundaries, and the Body: Politics of Transgression in Cherríe Moraga's *Giving Up the Ghost*

Cara Vejsicky

> "Oppression. Let's be clear about this. Oppression does not make for hearts as big as all outdoors. Oppression makes us big and small. Expressive and silenced. Deep and Dead."
>
> —Cherríe Moraga (1983)

Published in print in 1986 and performed on stage in San Francisco in 1989, Cherríe Moraga's *Giving Up the Ghost* depicts the complex realities of three queer Chicana women living in Los Angeles. Comprised of three "retratos," or "portraits," Moraga's story illustrates how each woman constructs her queer identity while also navigating feelings of alienation, contradiction, and ambivalence as a Chicana in the United States. A rebellious yet perceptive teenager, Corky embodies Marisa's teenage self—a butch Pachuca with a "wide open-heartedness in her face" which contradicts her masculine facade (Moraga 6). Now in her late twenties, Marisa's character struggles to accept herself and make peace with her past as she confronts internalizations of machista sexuality and misogynism that inform her butch lesbianism. Amalia, nearly twenty years older than Marisa, is a talented artist who first left Mexico with her family when she was thirteen years old. Her character experiences deep sensations of loneliness and alienation as she grapples with her mestiza identity, a contradiction emphasized as she reflects on her connection to Mexico, admitting she is "ni de aquí, ni de allá," or, "I am neither from here, nor there" (19). Moraga's play complicates conventional representations of queer Chicana love and loss as the women either experience or perform a violation of boundaries. While Corky, Marisa, and Amalia each transgress traditional Mexican behavioral expectations regarding female sexuality and gender roles, descriptions of rape and sexual violence portray physical violations of bodily boundaries and space. *Giving Up the Ghost* reconceptionalizes radical transgressive acts of female sexuality and gender roles while simultaneously examining the various violations of borders and boundaries that either haunt or empower Corky, Marisa and Amalia.

The first act of Moraga's play is entitled "La Pachuca," a phrase coined during World War II to describe Mexican American women who wore zoot suits and rejected traditional expressions

of femininity. The pachuca figure, in her defiance of ladylike behavioral expectations and feminine dress, is a woman who embodies transgression. Corky typifies the pachuca figure not only in her "toughness" and "'Cholo style'" attire, but also in her butch sexuality (6). In her article, "She's Stylin': La Pachuca, Chicana Resistance, and the Politics of Representation," Lisa Ramos recounts how la pachuca transforms into el tacuche when embodied by a butch woman — a shift that creates ambiguity surrounding gender and sexuality simultaneously:

> The pachuca who wore the male zoot suit, el tacuche, was particularly threatening, as she challenged not only gender roles but also the omnipotence of a heterosexual order. By donning a male zoot suit and sometimes adopting a tough exterior image, the cross-dressing or butch Mexican American woman defied contemporary definitions of male/female roles, the traditional family, and sexual mores. (565)

Corky's "slicked back" hair, masculine dress, and tough persona present her as the prototypical pachuca, or perhaps, tacuche, figure (6). Her transgression is made two-fold as she rejects both heteronormativity and stereotypical femininity; her ambiguous appearance threatens conventional notions of gender and sexuality as she embodies and performs masculinity within a female body. However, while her outward appearance challenges traditional representations of female heterosexuality and femininity, her internalization of machista aggression and sexual dominance influences Corky to violate the boundaries of other women's bodies. Reflecting on her childhood, Corky confesses that she and her friend, Arturo, would "make up [their] own movies," wherein they would imagine themselves as macho kidnappers: "we'd capture these chicks 'n hold 'em up for ransom / we'd string 'em up 'n make 'em take their clothes off / 'strip' we'd say to the wall all cool-like" (7). Corky's fantasies of abducting and sexually assaulting women illustrate her internalization of machista violence as she envisions herself as hypermasculine, dominant, and predatory. Her desire to capture and assault women does not suggest that she is interested in perpetuating violence or inflicting pain; however, Corky's longing to be wanted by women and to "beat men at their own game" motivates her to imagine scenarios in which she can dominate and sexualize women just as easily as men can (9). This internal conflict is highlighted by Sarah Cooper in her essay, "Bridging Sexualities: Cherríe Moraga's *Giving Up the Ghost* and Alma Lopez's Digital Art," as she describes how "Corky disidentifies with the chingón, taking the parts that represent her own feelings while registering the differences that mark her from the 'real' boys" (71). The chingón persona, like the pachuca figure, represents half of the whole chingón-chingada construct—an idea used to express the contradictions embodied by butch Mexican American women who appear masculine yet remain subjected to sexual violence and oppressive gender roles. Cooper asserts that although Corky indulges in fantasies of assaulting and sexually objectifying women's bodies, she eventually "disidentifies" with her chingón image as she recognizes that her movies are "jus' pretend" (7). This separation from her chingón persona reiterates Corky's gender ambivalence as she recognizes that no matter how many times she imagines herself as "big 'n tough 'n a dude," she "always knew [she] was a girl" (8).

While her violent fantasies are initially only enacted in her mind, Corky's romanticization of dominating women becomes materialized when she sexually assaults a three-year-old girl with her friend, Tury:

> so I pull her little shorts down 'n then her chones
> 'n then jus' as I catch a glimpse of her little fuchi fachi . . .
> it was so tender-looking all pink 'n real sweet like a bun
> then stupid Tury like a menso goes 'n sticks his dirty finger on it
> like it was burning hot (10)

Although Corky acknowledges that she was not "completely sold on the idea" of sexually assaulting the girl, her violation of Chrissy's bodily boundaries signifies her desire to both overpower and enjoy the female body, specifically, the vagina (10). Innocent connotations of words such as "little," "tender-looking," "pink," and "sweet" contrast starkly with the description of Tury's "dirty finger" touching Chrissy's vagina. The repetition of "little" emphasizes Chrissy's innocence and adolescence while also characterizing her vagina—her sexuality—as symbolically insignificant to Corky and Tury as they playfully molest her. While Corky practices the male gaze as she studies Chrissy's vagina, Tury's "dirty finger" touching it is a physical representation of how machista ideologies have material consequences, often at the expense of girls' and women's bodies. Corky's eventual pushing away of Tury off Chrissy's body illustrates the internal conflict she experiences as she enjoys preying on the girl but also recognizes the need to rescue her from the situation, reflecting afterwards: "what a jerk I felt like!" (10). The shift from enjoying Chrissy's vulnerability to then wanting to protect her from Tury's touch is indicative of Corky's gender ambivalence, particularly her contradictory desire to "save" women from machista violence while also perpetuating and benefiting from it (34). Although her pachuca style and rebellious personality empower her to transgress oppressive cultural norms and reject compulsory heterosexuality, Corky's internalization of machista aggression and virility also influence her to violate the boundaries of another girl's body—an act that evidently haunts her as she later admits, "after that episode with Chrissy / I was like a maniac all summer" (13). These transgressions both humanize and complicate Corky's character as well as introduce the various ways in which machista performances and desires influence Marisa's relationship with Amalia later in the story.

Marisa's character, representative of Corky's older and perhaps more mature self, reflects on transgressive acts that either haunt or empower her as a queer Chicana woman. Specifically, Marisa contemplates how her internalization of machista ideologies influences her desire for women, acknowledging that she "never wanted to be a man, only wanted a woman to want [her] that bad... but there's always that one you can't pin down, who's undecided" (8). Marisa's confession that she longs for women to want her as badly as they would want a man is a sentiment rooted in and sustained by patriarchal oppression and heteronormative hegemony that center man—the phallus—as sexually dominant and superior. Her desire to seduce women who are "undecided" in their sexualities is not only a way for Marisa to try to "beat men at their own game," but also a yearning to "save" those women from depending on men for pleasure and fulfillment (8). Carla Trujillo defines the relationship between 'genuine' womanhood and heterosexuality in her essay, "Chicana Lesbians: Fear and Loathing in the Chicano Community," explaining that "for many Chicanas, our identification as women, that is, as complete women, comes from the belief that we need to be connected to a man" (282). Trujillo's characterization of the "complete" Chicana woman as being reliant on a man to validate her identity is necessary to consider while examining Marisa's relationship with herself and other women. While her homosexuality inhibits her from being sexually "connected to a man," Marisa's androgynous lesbianism is transgressive because it threatens the legitimacy of authentic womanhood

as she obscures binaries of gender and sexuality. Marisa's queerness, then, transgresses patriarchal boundaries that segregate authentic women from deviant or undesirable women. Her radically enigmatic body challenges the stability of patriarchal hierarchies as she uses it to seduce and "save" women, describing the process as a "battle [she] will never win and never stop fighting" (9).

Marisa's relationship with Amalia requires her to confront repressed memories—her ghosts—as she navigates feelings of love, loss, and alienation throughout the story. Most notably, Marisa reflects on the time she was raped by a janitor when she was twelve years old, recalling how the experience made her "more aware than ever that [she was] one hundred percent female" (25). Marisa's recognition that she is "one hundred percent female" echoes Corky's previous reflection on the inescapability of her womanhood. Corky's acknowledgment that she can only possess the "freedom" to be a man "in [her] mind" juxtaposes with the physical violation of her body when the janitor rapes her—an experience that robs her of her freedom, sexuality, and childhood simultaneously (8). Marisa's memory of being sexually assaulted is then narrated by Corky, who illustrates how the rapist inflicted permanent physical and emotional wounds when she exclaims, "He made me a hole!" (29). It is important to note that Corky does not say the rapist "made a hole," but rather, "made *[her]* a hole"—a distinction which emphasizes the alienation she experiences as a woman whose body has been "took" without consent, as she describes it (25). The forceful denotation of "took" emphasizes how Corky/Marisa's body is objectified, while the violent connotation of the word suggests that her body and sexuality were stolen from her. Furthermore, the connotation of "hole" stresses the void Corky senses after she is raped while also characterizing her body as vulnerable and hollow—an image juxtaposed by her description of the penis as she contemplates how it has "no opening," no space for someone to "get into" (29). Marisa's experience of being raped not only violates the boundaries of her body, but also serves as a violent reminder of the inescapability of her womanhood and the oppression of her female body. Likewise, her cogitation of the impenetrability of the phallus reflects her ambivalence as she both "admires" and loathes men's sexual dominance and power (29).

The image of Corky/Marisa's body and sexuality being taken from her by the janitor who raped her mirrors imperialist ideologies that rely on and profit from the exploitation of marginalized bodies, the rape of indigenous women, and the violation of borders. Marisa's body, then, is a site of oppression and resistance simultaneously as it is both violated and used to transgress the very cultural norms that materialize and normalize violence against women. In his essay, "Relational Bodies: Dancing with Latina, Chicana and Latin American Bodies," Patrick Reyes articulates how Chicana bodies offer a space for transgression, referring to Mayra Rivera's work on corporeal decolonization as he writes:

> By beginning with the body as the principle site where the decolonial knowledge and self-knowledge is made manifest, [Rivera] asserts "the body appears as the site of historical conflict and oppression as well as the source of mysterious, creative powers for resisting, challenging, and transgressing the logic, the 'knowledge,' that supports
> [women's] subordination." (260)

As a Chicana woman living in the United States, Marisa's body is inherently political as it provides her a vessel to decolonize and queer spaces that sustain the "subordination" and marginalization of women of color. Her experience of being raped, however, demonstrates how her sexuality and body are also capable of reminding her of her own subordination and oppression; after Corky finishes narrating the

moment she was raped, Marisa appears on stage and ruminates, "He only convinced me of my own name. From an early age you learn to live with it, being a woman. I just got a head start over some" (29). Marisa's understanding of her name as being inextricable from her identity as a woman implies that she is also "convinced" of her subordination—that no matter how tough she acts, or how many women she sleeps with, she will never be as powerful as the man. To resolve these contradictions and reclaim her sexuality, Marisa practices stereotypical masculine behaviors when she molests Chrissy, fantasizes about violating women, and later, assaults Amalia. However, as she appropriates machista aggression to appease her conflicting desire to "beat" men and act as one, Marisa indulges and perpetuates the same "logic, the 'knowledge,' that supports [women's] subordination," including her own self. Marisa's oppression, as Moraga poetically articulates in her essay, "A Long Line of Vendidas," makes her both "big and small. Expressive and silenced. Deep and Dead"—an effect manifested in her gender ambivalence, bodily alienation, and conflicting feelings of desertion and betrayal as she searches for love and acceptance within herself and with Amalia (135).

Amalia's character, unlike Marisa, crosses geographical borders as she leaves and returns to Mexico throughout the play. Her mestiza consciousness is not only characterized by her feelings of alienation as a Mexican American woman but also in the different ways she expresses herself through art, dress, and language. In her essay, "Anzaldúa and 'the New Mestiza': A Chicana Dives into Collective Identity," María Henríquez-Betancor explicates the relationship between the 'new mestiza' figure and Chicana independence:

> Because of multicultural and multiracial influences, the new *mestiza* expresses herself with behaviors, words, and attitudes that are sometimes contradictory. She learns to tolerate the fact that her racial and cultural identity is not clear to Anglo-Americans or Mexicans, and she adapts her behavior to each situation … the "new mestiza" is a powerful image of the Chicana's appropriation of her independence. Her potent self-definition begins after she has faced and tolerated the conflicts generated by her hybrid identity. (39-40)

Amalia straddles multiple borders: her attraction to women and love for Alejandro, her estranged relationship to Mexico and longing to feel at home, and menopausal changes that signal a shift in bodily functions, age, and womanhood. As Henríquez-Betancor explains in her article, Amalia's liberation and radical self-acceptance can only occur once she has endured and addressed "the conflicts generated by her hybrid identity" as a mestiza woman. Amalia's relationship with Marisa allows her to explore the contradictions and ambiguities that define her mestiza identity within a queer context. Specifically, Amalia's decision to leave Marisa to mourn Alejandro's death for three months in Mexico highlights her autonomy and fearlessness as she "adapts her behavior" to a situation which requires her to confront multiple ghosts. While in Mexico, Amalia is haunted by Alejandro's ghost as she experiences a death and rebirth of her "womanhood," describing how she "just started bleeding and the blood wouldn't stop, not until his ghost had passed through [her] or was born in [her]" (24). Her internalization of Alejandro's ghost and uncontrollable bleeding symbolizes a shift in Amalia's body and identity; the image of excessive blood loss and the symbolic birth of her late husband's spectral body represents a spiritual emptying of grief, shame, and a piece of her "womanhood" that was necessary for Amalia to lose in order to feel free. Her love, loss, and mourning of Alejandro is

indicative of what Henríquez-Betancor describes as the "contradictory" attitudes that define the new mestiza woman. Alejandro symbolizes both Amalia's attachment to Mexico and the heterosexual relationship that was sexually and emotionally unfulfilling; as she reflects on her relationship with Alejandro, she compares having sex with men to "having sex with children … It's all over in a few minutes" (18).

Amalia's transgressive behavior, while not outwardly machista like Marisa's, is reflected in her reimagination of her spirituality and celebration of indigenous Mexican land. Although she feels estranged from Mexico as her home, Amalia possesses an emotional and spiritual connection to its land. As she lays in her bed in Mexico City, Amalia contemplates the violation of indigenous land, describing construction workers digging up the ground outside of her hotel room:

> Afuera los hombres are already at work tearing up the Mexican earth with their steel claws. (*Indigenous music.*) Pero La Tierra is not as passive as they think … When they "discovered" El Templo Mayor beneath the walls of this city, they had not realized it was She who discovered them. (25)

The animalistic imagery of the construction equipment "tearing up the Mexican earth with their steel claws" creates a gendered contrast between the masculine "hombres" perpetrating the act and the feminine "La Tierra" they are violating with their machines. The indigenous music that begins to play as Amalia describes the omnipotence of "La Tierra" is significant because it highlights the intersection of sacred land and bodily space. The capitalization of the words "La Tierra" and "She" emphasizes the underestimated value and power of women as well as the Earth itself. Amalia's declaration that El Templo Mayor "discovered" the men who excavated her ruins elevates and personifies the sacred temple as an omnipotent woman who is exploited but will avenge the violation of her body, indicated as she says, "Regresaré," or, "I'll be back" (25). The image of sacred indigenous land being violated and tainted by the hands of men echoes Amalia's description of her dirtiness and Alejandro's cleanliness, specifically as she reminisces about their bodies touching one another, recalling how she "always loved knowing that when [she] touched him [she] would find him like a saint. Pure, somehow" (18). The purity of Alejandro's body is juxtaposed by Amalia's description of her dirtiness, remembering how she felt most free when she was by herself: "I, on the other hand, was not clean, forgot sometimes to wash. Not when I was around others, pero con mí misma, I became like the animals. Uncombed. El olor del suelo" (19). Amalia's body, like El Templo Mayor and La Tierra, is most free when she does not have to worry about what it looks like or who it has to please. The words "uncombed," "suelo," and "animals," each connote a sense of rawness associated with the natural world; the gustatory imagery of "el olor del suelo" combined with the visual imagery of Amalia's "uncombed" hair elevates her dirtiness to something sacred and radical. This shift illustrates how Amalia transgresses boundaries of traditional femininity, reclaiming her "unclean" body as powerful and uncontainable.

Amalia's transgression of gendered cultural norms is accentuated during the final scene of the play when she recounts a dream involving love, taboos, and the celebration of her queer Chicana individuality. A third-person omniscient voice narrates the dream, describing how Marisa and Amalia transform into "indias" and upset the gods by kissing one another:

> *Marisa and Amalia slowly bend toward each other, their faces crossing in front of Corky's. They kiss. Suddenly the scene darkens, the drumming becomes sinister, the clapping frantic. Thunder. Lightning. The gods have been angered … [Marisa] is being hunted, her arms spread, her body pressed up against an invisible wall.* (29-30)

Their transformations into "indias" suggests a reversion to their indigenous identities as Mexican American women; the gods become angry when Amalia and Marisa kiss because it is a transgressive and taboo act that defies traditional representations of love and female sexuality. The auditory imagery of "sinister" drumming, "frantic" clapping, and thunder and lightning evoke an overwhelming sense of fear in the women as they quickly "scatter" to avoid the wrath of the gods (29). Marisa, however, is being "hunted" by the gods because she embodies resistance; her queer love and happiness with Amalia upsets the gods because it challenges patriarchal religious ideologies that privilege heterosexuality and female chastity. The visual imagery of Marisa's "arms spread" against "an invisible wall" emphasizes her vulnerability while also queering traditional Catholic depictions of Jesus Christ with his arms spread on the cross. Marisa is neither a martyr nor a saint but rather a symbol of the ways in which queer Chicana women are dehumanized and objectified because of their rejection of patriarchal and heteronormative values. Their kiss is particularly transgressive because, as Amalia later confesses to Marisa, it exposes the instability and irrationality of cultural norms that characterize homosexuality and queer love as immoral. While describing her dream to Marisa, Amalia recalls her fearlessness, noting how "she was not afraid of being punished" for their love (33). She continues, pondering the validity of socially sanctioned taboos as she states, "It was merely that the taboo *could* be broken. And if this law nearly transcribed in blood could go, then what else? What was there to hold to? What immutable truths were left?" (33). Amalia's recognition that her and Marisa's love could break the taboos that justify their oppression as queer women is a moment of empowerment and freedom.

Amalia's dream about the angered gods, as well as her acknowledgment of how Marisa had "gone against the code of [their] people," is emblematic of how her spirituality and sexuality intersect (33). Although their kiss angers the gods, Amalia declares that she was not concerned about the consequences of her actions in the dream because she knew the taboo could be broken. This scene demonstrates how traditionally oppressive religious practices and cultural norms can be reappropriated to liberate queer Chicana women. Moraga reiterates this potential for liberation in "A Long Line of Vendidas," writing:

> Women of color have always known, although we have not always wanted to look at it, that our sexuality is not merely a physical response or drive, but holds a crucial relationship to our entire spiritual capacity. Patriarchal religions—whether brought to us by the colonizer's cross and gun or emerging from our own people—have always known this. Why else would the female body be so associated with sin and disobedience? Simply put, if the spirit and sex have been linked in our oppression, then they must also be linked in the strategy toward our liberation. (132)

Moraga's concept of "spiritual capacity" is represented throughout the play in contradictions; scenes of violent gods contrast Amalia's admiration and elevation of sacred indigenous land, for example. Similarly, Marisa's longing to visit Mexico—her "nostalgia for the land she had never seen"—is evident of a spiritual connection she yearns for but cannot possess because "she would never have gone alone," as Amalia indicates (17). Most notably, however, is Marisa's flashback of the spiritual lovemaking she experienced with

Amalia, during which the women exalt each other's bodies as sites of worship—a strategy which coalesces spirituality and sex. As she reflects on their relationship, Marisa remembers a time when Amalia told her, "You make love to me like worship," to which she wanted to reply, "Sí, la mujer es mi religion" (34). This exchange epitomizes Moraga's call for queer Chicana women to reclaim and merge "the spirit and sex" to liberate themselves from the patriarchal and religious ideologies that oppress their bodies and sexualities.

Aimee Rowe extends Moraga's argument in her essay "Vendidas y Devueltas: Queer Times and Color Lines in Chicana/o Performance" as she describes how the vagina can offer a space for queer resistance and liberation:

> The slippage between the vagina and the sacred sites of worship reveres the brown female lover. This slippage between the sexual and the sacrosanct venerates queer desire between dark women, recuperating the abject that such a union represents. It marks the sacred/sexual through an expansive temporality imbued with ancient mysticism that is remembered through the sensual encounter between lovers. (136)

Amalia's likening of Marisa's lovemaking to an act of "worship" symbolizes what Rowe refers to as a "slippage between the sexual and sacrosanct"—an act that recenters and empowers queer desire. This strategic yet symbolic slippage is the ultimate transgression as it violates the boundaries between sex and spirituality, desire and morality. Marisa's confession that she "wanted to answer, 'Sí, la mujer es mi religión,'" reclaims and reappropriates traditional conceptualizations of worship as she admits that the female body, the woman, is her religion. This comparison not only glorifies queer desire and sexualities but also elevates the queer female body to a holy and sacred site capable and deserving of liberation and pleasure. Marisa's description of Amalia "praying" to her for pleasure during their lovemaking exemplifies another slippage between sex and spirituality. The typically sexless connotation of "praying" is contradicted in this scene as it is used interchangeably with the verbs, "waiting," "held," and "suspended," employed to describe Amalia's erotic desire for Marisa's tongue (35). Marisa and Amalia both refrain from using the word "sex" to refer to their intimate moments; instead, the women use the phrase "making love," which humanizes them as queer women as "love" connotes a particularly affectionate and tender experience.

Giving Up the Ghost is a story of contradictions, centering three queer Chicana women who struggle to navigate the violent limitations of a heteronormative and androcentric world. Cherríe Moraga's play is transgressive as it offers profoundly complicated and heterogenous representations of three different characters who perpetuate, benefit from, or destabilize patriarchal ideologies and machista behaviors simultaneously. Moraga's text positions the character's bodies as sites of oppression and resistance; descriptions of rape, death, ghosts, and indigenous land intersect to highlight the haunting sensations of estrangement and contradiction each character experiences. While Marisa and Corky's characters demonstrate how internalized machista discourse and heteronormativity provoke feelings of ambivalence and bodily alienation, Amalia's spirituality and mestiza identity inform her transgressive resistance to cultural norms as she reclaims the female body and the vagina as sacred sites of worship. *Giving Up the Ghost* is productive and revolutionary because, in the words of Carmen Maria Machado, it provides a space wherein queer women "don't have to be metaphors for wickedness and depravity or icons of conformity and docility. They can be *what they are*" (47).

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White Writing: Assumed Obligation and Proto-Post-Blackness in "the children of the poor"

Noah East

In 1986, Gwendolyn Brooks sat down for an interview to reflect on her career as a Black female poet. The lead interviewer was Alan Jabbour, the founding director of the American Folklore Center at the Library of Congress; he was a tall, stately, white man with salt-and-pepper hair and thick, gold-rimmed glasses. Next to him was E. Ethelbert Miller, a now successful Black poet in his own right, but then a charmingly timid, albeit incredibly observant, young interviewer. With all of the charm his southern accent would allow, Jabbour sits up straight, rather cautiously, and stumbles through his question, "Do you feel it's a sort of a burden or a responsibility at this stage in your career to speak to other poets or to speak *for* the Black community or for other Chicagoans or something like that?" (emphasis my own). With the typical, candid grace that one would expect of Brooks, she declines, "I must hop right in here and tell you that I do not speak for quote 'the Black community' there are many aspects to that community, and I just talk about how I feel" (*The Writing Life* 15:10). The whole response makes Jabbour visibly uncomfortable, caught on camera in the way Brooks fights for his eye contact at the end of her response. The implication of Jabbour's question, however, signals toward a unique problem concerning the relationship between underrepresented artists and their assumed obligation to their community.

Gwendolyn Brooks needs no defense from such charges of disloyalty, as her legacy of developing young poets and activists for the next generation speaks for itself. Unfortunately, this does not mean that she herself was immune to such criticisms—in fact, even her early poetry suggests the opposite. Discourse on such responsibilities to one's community rises to the surface many times within Brooks's corpus, but the second and fourth sonnet from her sequence "the children of the poor" (1949) provides a strong foundation for preliminary analysis. In the second, Brooks creates a rich, traditional Petrarchan sonnet which challenges the agency of the poem's speaker—a Black single mother—calling the rugged individualist mentality of white American thought into question. In the fourth, Brooks invokes the paradox inherent to the sonnet form's volta to play with a distinction between fighting and fiddling—creating a powerful argument for utilizing the politics of form.

Reimagining the Western literary canon's traditional use of the sonnet, Brooks's sequence highlights the intersectional relationship between economic oppression, maternal responsibility, and various racial inequities. This is achieved through the disparity between the supposedly lofty choice of the sonnet form and the poem's content representing an impoverished mother and her children. Through a meticulous and measured voice, the mother speaker breaks a barrier of prejudice with the reader—breaking from the established, whitewashed subject matter a sonnet would typically provide to synthesize an argument for their humanity in spite of their poverty. The poem begins with a question, but then transitions into using "who" as a reflective pronoun to make statements on her children's status, "What shall I give my children? who are poor, / Who are adjudged the leastwise of the land, / Who are my sweetest lepers, who demand / No velvet and no velvety velour;" (Brooks 1-4). The repetition of "who" creates a powerful anaphora, focusing upon the children as the subject of each sentence while leaving them unnamed in the veil of the reflective pronoun. This leads to a powerful visual effect for the poem through the repeated "Wh-" opening each of the first three lines. This displaces the iambic rhythm of the poem, allowing the "who" clauses at the end of lines one and three to be read *through*, as if they were both enjambed—even though line one contains a semblance of line integrity through punctuation. Alongside the pleading diction of the first line, the quatrain establishes the subject of the poem—keeping true to the traditional construction of a Petrarchan sonnet as far as the first quatrain is concerned (Fussell 116). The speaker's children are poor and accustomed to being poor; this has been their life and will likely continue to be their life without some large societal upheaval. The pleading resignation of the first line mixed with the assumption of poverty in the fourth hints at a generational, not singular, poverty—one that is based on the family's Blackness. In their understanding of life in America, poverty is to be expected.

After the first quatrain clings to tradition in establishing a subject, the second quatrain follows suit by providing a complication of the subject which propels the movement of the poem's meaning forward (Fussell 116). Following the humble description of how her children do not ask much of her, the speaker shifts attention from the needs of the children toward the factors which perpetuate their needs, "But who have begged me for a brisk contour, / Crying that they are quasi, contraband / Because unfinished, graven by a hand / Less than angelic, admirable or sure" (Brooks 5-8). Not only does this quatrain complicate the factors of poverty facing the family, the second quatrain places responsibility upon the speaker. The children are not merely begging, they are begging *her*. This difference, I believe, hints at a more historicist reading which considers Gwendolyn Brooks's situation during the time she composed these poems. As she discusses in the Jabbour interview, the night before she won the Pulitzer, Brooks was at home with her family. The power had been turned off as they had not been able to pay the electric bill, but she received a phone call from an editor who told her she was going to win the Pulitzer and that some journalists would like to meet her in the morning at her home to discuss her success. With a hint of her charming and mischievous nature, Brooks chose to not tell anyone that the power was off. While all night she imagined the camera crew trying to plug in their equipment, Brooks said that by the time the morning had come someone had turned the power back on—admitting she still does not know to this day who had done it. Despite the povre conditions in which Brooks wrote the poem, the social aspect of her poetry still remains—the children are not asking their mother to write a poem which will free them from poverty, but a poem which will restore their humanity; a poem to remove their "quasi, contraband" status. Notably this status is ascribed to them by an outside force, "a hand" which will be put in contrast to the speaker's hand in the volta.

Nevertheless, the second quatrain exceeds its goal of complicating the subject matter by opening a discussion regarding the systems of power that create poverty. With the children's only demand set, the speaker now has to grapple with her obligation of giving her children the dignity which she herself is denied. As the volta will demonstrate, the speaker is unsure that she is suitable for the task.

With some terminology borrowed from Carolyn Levine, the poem also lends itself to meta-analysis, hinting at the question of whether the sonnet form *affords* such cultural criticism. Levine's concept of affordances helps articulate a relationship between aesthetics and politics that is often difficult to navigate. The term is borrowed from design theory, to describe how objects may be used both inside and outside of their original purpose. In her introduction, Levine gives the example of a doorknob: "A doorknob affords not only hardness and durability, but also turning, pushing, and pulling. Designed things may also have unexpected affordances generated by imaginative users: we may hang signs or clothes on a doorknob" (6). One might foresee how the fourteen lines of a sonnet may not afford enough meaning to persuade an entire generation to rethink the American hegemony and racially motivated, economic oppression which this nation was founded upon—to provide the "brisk contour" her children beg for. Yet this is the obligation which is expected of her as a Black, female, working-class poet—present in the awkward question from Jabbour's interview. This task is one that no man or woman can accomplish alone (assuming such a feat is accomplishable in the first place). This notion is present in Brooks's final tercet of the sonnet, in which the speaker laments that despite all of her planning, one person alone cannot mend these deep wounds of racial inequity, *"Nor grief nor love shall be enough alone* / To ratify my little halves to bear / Across a freezing autumn everywhere" (*Selected Poems* 12-4; emphasis added). Once again, Brooks's word choice is poignant, to "ratify," alluding to how the nation's founders ratified the Constitution which reduced enslaved Black people to three-fifths of a person. While poetry can be an effective tool for political change, to suggest that one poem will fix the whole of America's inequities is a naivety Brooks is unwilling to endorse. To use Levine's language: just as the mother cannot afford to provide everything she desires for her children, the sonnet cannot provide everything the poet desires for their reader—that being, a more equitable society. In this way, the second sonnet creates a sound, tempering argument against the proud indignation associated with the fighting and fiddling described in the fourth sonnet.

Any discourse on how the sonnet form affects Brooks's work must also contextualize the struggle she experienced with the subject of form. Brooks's anxiety about form is evident in the second poem through the speaker's hand, which is "stuffed with mode, design, device" at the start of the sestet proceeding the volta (Brooks 9). The verb "stuffed" hints toward an overfullness which renders the hand clumsy—suggesting that an anxiety regarding traditional forms are constraining the speaker and preventing action or writing. Brooks's anxiety about form came to a head during the Second Fisk Writers' Conference in 1967, which had a tremendous impact upon Brooks's treatment of poetry. Brooks herself treated this conference as a schism within her career, separating her work into two periods: the pre-1967 white or "Negro" period of her writing which integrates Anglo-European prosodic norms, and post-1967 Black writing that served as a rejection of the aforementioned integration. After the conference, the notion of returning to white prosodic forms seemed unthinkable to Brooks (Ford). This does not, however, provide resolution to the poet. The Fisk conference only exacerbates her trepidation about the politics of form—fearing that by integrating Western Literary norms she will receive claims of betraying the emerging Black literary sphere. Speaking of her early writing which consisted of writing alongside both Black and white peers, Brooks says: "I wrote, these

people wrote, we saw each other, we talked about writing. But that was *white writing*, the different trends among whites. Today I am conscious of the fact that—my people are Black people; it is to them I appeal for understanding" (qtd. in Ford 62; emphasis added). With the past tense before and the present tense after the word "Today," it is clear that Brooks views her prosodic radicalization as a homecoming rather than an abandonment of previous successes. Additionally, the entire second sentence of the quote sounds like a type of self-flagellation—seeming to judge her time spent with white poets as a waste. In the context of her integrationist roots within poetry, "the stone" which the speaker "lack[s] access to" can be expanded upon to insist she is searching for a suitable, Black form (Brooks 10). What are the standards in which the speaker is using the word proper? Proper to whom? One interpretation might be having access to using the proper and established form without criticism from white American thought; another could be the opposite, lacking access to other Black poets who might deem her race-mixing poetry sessions as improper. These conflicts—deeply intertwined into the form of the poem itself—are difficult to reconcile without the aid of deconstruction offered by post-structuralist thought.

The value of post-structuralist thought to the cause of Black liberation requires some form of *apologia*. Because post-structuralism arises out of the same Western epistemological frameworks that perpetuated centuries of racial oppression, this trepidation is well-accounted for. The interdisciplinary theorist Derek Conrad Murray provides a strong summation of these concerns in his essay "Post-Black Art and the Resurrection of African American Satire." Paraphrasing the findings of Kwame Anthony Appiah, Murray writes about the struggle between the cause of Black liberation and its tenuous relationship to "post-"ideologies. Murray writes that Appiah identifies that the "post" in postmodernism and the "post" in postcolonialism serve very different purposes. The "post" prefix in postmodernism is a diversifying gesture, clearing space for a new aesthetics that is "consistent with the multiple modernities springing up globally, making voice and place for those formerly underrepresented or erased" (Murray 3). The prefix in postcolonialism, however, "suggested something more than merely 'after' the colonial; it pointed toward a new brand of scholarship and cultural production connected to an imaginary that exists between the colonizer and the colonized" (Murray 3). This imaginary link between colonizer and colonized, according to Appiah, is encouraged by late capitalism's encouragement of self-commodification within the production of art. To Appiah, this has a consequential effect: "the predicament of the postcolonial intellectual is simply that as intellectuals—a category instituted in Black Africa by colonialism—we are, indeed, always at risk of becoming otherness machines, with the manufacture of alterity as our principal role" (qtd. in Murray 3). Between postmodernism and postcolonialism, the intellectual war rages on a battleground similar to Brooks's concern with the conventional Ango-European use of the sonnet and the potential for authentically representing Blackness therewithin.

These concerns about the "post-" manifestations of intellectual thought comes to a head within the current conversations of Post-Blackness and Post-Black art. Here we might find the most applicable post-ideology to exemplify Brooks's form of deconstruction, though the term comes to fruition just after her death. The term was coined by museum curator Thelma Golden in regard to an exhibition held at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2001. Murray provides a strong description of the term: "Post-Blackness does not deal with the problem of racism by merely making external critiques of the dominant culture's bigotry; it also looks inward and critiques the Black community's own complicity with normative standards that cut across race, gender and sexuality" (4). Murray

asserts that these normative standards imposed upon Black art by Black people act *in accordance with* the bigoted dominant culture's attempt to narrowly define a Black experience. In opposition to these forces, Murray asserts that "Post-Blackness speaks to a desire for creative freedom and a need to liberate oneself from the often-suffocating nature of racial polemics" (5). When Brooks criticizes her own former writings as "white writing" and reiterates that she now appeals to Black people for her understanding, the echoes of these forces can be faintly heard. These concerns about portraying an "authentic" Black experience should remain qualified by Murray's assertion of this complicity with the dominant culture's attempts to narrow new and divergent expressions of the Black experience.

The anxieties about form expressed both in Brooks's work and life demonstrate the importance that traditional modes of prosody have on the literary landscape. Such analysis can rest upon both biographical and local evidence within the structure of the poem and the nexus of ideas interacting through the sonnet. The sonnet form affords Brooks's access to traditionalist, white audiences which might be disinclined to appreciate her work if it rejected these traditional forms. Composed with a strict accordance to the "mode, design, and device" of white prosodic expression, these sonnets appeal to white readers. This encourages white readers to encounter something uncomfortable (the difficult realities of racial poverty) within something familiar (the traditional execution of a Petrarchan sonnet). This may explain how the larger collection this work comes from was so well received by the Pulitzer committee, as the sonnets demonstrate a knowledge of and interaction with older modes of prosody. But such olive branches are often interpreted as the artist "selling-out" or betraying the assumed obligation to their community. These accusations always seem exceptionally present when artists of color achieve a newfound degree of recognition for their work—such as, winning the Pulitzer—that has not been previously given to other equally-deserving members of their community. Kanye West is a strong example of this, though I disagree with his politics, it seems that he is forbidden to hold his viewpoints as he wishes, and his history of mental illness always becomes the focus of the conversation (providing for the dismissal of his opinion). This creates a perilous damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation for the artist: not only must the poet express their meaning in a way that is marketable (so as not to starve), they must do so within the pernicious terms of engagement that consistently question one's loyalty to the cause.

These anxieties about conforming to an emerging, Black form might help interpret the sonnet most clearly linked to political action. The fourth sonnet relishes in the paradox between two seemingly distinct forms of protest--fighting and fiddling. In the first line, the comparative value of each form of protest seems to be clearly articulated: "First fight. Then fiddle." While the surface-level reading of the poem encourages one to fight before fiddling, the sequencing in the descriptions of both fighting and fiddling affords a more ambiguous—perhaps, even contradictory—reading of the sonnet. While fighting remains clear enough, the term "fiddle" requires some contextualization. One meaning is to play the fiddle, which is a casual and/or regional term for a violin—but this is admittedly an oversimplification. When asked by Nancy Groce for the Library of Congress, master violin-maker David Bromberg says, "When people ask me what the difference between a fiddle and a violin is I usually say about $10,000. It is the same instrument… Although, fortunately, fiddlers and violinists like different kinds of sounds" (1:06). The class distinctions between, say, a Stradivarius and a fiddle might then become an important way of reading the evaluation of both fighting and fiddling to Brooks. In following this line of thinking, one might argue that Brooks saw the sonnet as a means of acquiring powers similarly granted to the owner of a Stradivarius. Playing the fiddle won't feed your family,

but *playing the violin* might. On the other hand, the term also means to "make aimless or frivolous movements; to move idly or frivolously" (OED). The second sense of the word fiddle is more closely entwined with the previous discussion of affordances. Any work of literature that fails to accomplish its socially determined objective could in fact be seen as the aimless and unsuccessful playing associated with the second sense of the word.

The remaining verse in the first quatrain is enjambed in a way which complicates the first four seemingly didactic words. Although the speaker asserts that the reader must fight first, she immediately launches into a description of fiddling: "Ply the slipping string / With feathery sorcery; muzzle the note / With hurting love; the music that they wrote / Bewitch, bewilder" (Brooks 1-4). Here the speaker evokes the persuasive qualities of music and its ability to enchant or bewitch the listener through "feathery sorcery." These effects are achieved through mastery of the craft—be it fiddling or prosody—a culmination of years spent learning, practicing, and honing the skills of their respective art. Through this description, the rhetorical effects of music are similar to the deliberately elevated language of poetry—there is a sense of disorienting bewilderment that shakes the listener's grasp on reason and allows them to be persuaded by sound. Those familiar with either bluegrass fiddle or classical violin can feel the power in the musician plying their bow, with strength and emotion, away from the string as it vibrates. Whichever experience is pertinent to the reader's experience, the effect lands. In this layering of prosodic and musical meaning, one might also reconsider who the "they" is that writes the music and the purpose of Brooks identifying it as an outside group. The anxieties surrounding form, here, might provide a suitable answer. Notably, genres that would more quickly give the term "fiddle" to a violin value improvisation and style over the classical values of precision, replication, and adherence to tradition. White society might write the music but the musician is afforded agency through their performance of it.

While the first quatrain squarely discusses the rhetorical power of music, the second quatrain plays more intentionally on the distinction between fighting and fiddling. These lines, like the first quatrain, remain heavily enjambed. The speaker continues, "Qualify to sing / Threadwise. Devise no salt, no hempen thing / For the dear instrument to bear. Devote / The bow to silks and honey" (Brooks 4-7). With the first three lines from this selection, each sentence focuses around something of string or threadlike quality—by singing threadwise, the references to fibrous hemp, or the bow. With spare string being a likely candidate for something to fiddle with, the imagery further complicates the distinction between both senses of the word fiddle. Notably, however, the image of the bow allows for dualistic, string-centered interpretation. The bow could refer to the bow of the violin or fiddle which the musician uses to vibrate the strings of the instrument; alternatively, the bow could refer to an archer's bow—a weapon that also operates upon its string. Also, the purpose of altering the objects from the typical exegesis of heavenly bliss as "milk and honey" is an interesting choice. Though the speaker's instruction to devote the bow "to silks and honey" might suggest a musical reading, however, interpreting silks and honey as the spoils of conquest might further complicate this notion.

Up until this point, the text has remained pretty clear as far as its instruction. Despite the impassioned lines that describe fiddling, the clear articulation of the first lines remain, "First fight. Then fiddle." The final sentence of the octave, then, becomes difficult to reconcile: "Be remote / A while from malice and from murdering" (Brooks 7-8). Here the speaker uses the imperative to give a direct and paradoxical instruction to the reader. The reader is given the instruction to stay one's violence for "a while." This concern about the timeliness of social action is reminiscent of the language

Martin Luther King Jr. used in his attempt to sway white moderates during the Civil Rights Movement. The most prevalent passage comes from his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," where King writes:

> I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens' Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice … who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom. (97)

Just as is the case with protest movements today, civil disobedience precipitated violence from the outraged oppressor, and the circulation of footage depicting this violence became the most effective rhetorical weapon of the oppressed. In response, moderate white political and religious leaders often encouraged Black communities to be patient in their pursuit of freedom. The "Letter from Birmingham Jail" was a direct response to these paternalistic demands for patience by white religious leaders. While King is not the only figure worthy of discussion when trying to piece together how much influence the 60s had on Brooks's writing, the connection to King seems the most clear based on the content of the poem. A paper of this length could likely be devoted to exploring the myriad ways that still largely untaught voices of the Civil Rights Era (such as Malcolm X, Kwame Ture, and Ella Baker) contributed to Brooks's style and content. King's primary concern, here, was the white moderates who continued to ignore the injustices undertaken by Southern law enforcement throughout the protests of the Civil Rights Movement. In this way, Brooks and King share a target audience.

While the meaning of the octave is at times paradoxical, the volta and succeeding sestet is given a clean separation with the sonnet's first end stopped line. In similar fashion to the final line of the octave, the first line of the sestet again contradicts the previous element—calling again to the importance of fighting. Returning to Fussel, these contradictions are built into the sonnet form. Writing on the change which should occur from the movement out of the octave and into the sestet, Fussell writes:

> The octave and the sestet conduct actions which are analogous to the actions of inhaling and exhaling, or of contraction and release in the muscular system. The one builds up the pressure, the other releases it; and the turn is the dramatic and climactic center of the poem, the place where the intellectual or emotional method of release first becomes clear and possible. (116)

In context of the sonnet at hand, the octave culminates in a description of terms that have otherwise been put at odds with each other—fighting must come first, though it looks like fiddling in practice and, in the sestet, vice versa. These building tensions of meaning create intense focus for the first three lines of the sestet, which seems radically zealous, "But first to arms, to armor. Carry hate / In front of you and harmony behind. / Be deaf to music and beauty blind" (Brooks 9-11). These three lines—two of them notably end stopped unlike most of the poem prior—are the first inklings about fighting that the poem has to offer. They are also the most stichic, which should have a mosaic effect created from fragmented pieces to create a unified whole (Fussel 112). But the unified whole which is created, ultimately, seems to be keenly ambiguous.

While the final lines are arguably the most violent, they provide the resolution that Fussel argues makes the sonnet whole. With a short strong sentence followed by a strophic one that spans the rest of the poem, the speaker somewhat explains their original ordering of the terms. “Win war. Rise bloody, maybe not too late / For having first to civilize a space / Wherein to play your violin with grace” (Brooks 12-4). Again, here, the speaker emphasizes the importance of timing—focusing specifically on the here and now as the point in which it is important to fight. We must fight now, so we can fiddle later. Interestingly, the instrument is referred to as a violin—the formal, traditional name for the instrument—as opposed to a fiddle. While the message seems clear enough, given Brooks’s fraught relationship with form—especially the white form of the sonnet—a reader might be skeptical to take this on face value. The poet might be inclined to see their art (which to some may be seen as fiddling) as an act of social justice—turning the distinction between fighting and fiddling on its heads and ultimately deconstructing the term. In that way, the poem creates an interpretation of fiddling (or art) which verges on the fight for social justice and civil liberties but equally praises the importance of the men and women who put their life on the line to demand justice from their oppressors through confrontation. Where the rubber hits the pavement (for the fighting present in Brooks’s poetry at least) is through the politics of form. Through the vehicle of the traditionally white sonnet a message for social action is put forward. Brooks, then, usurps the sonnet from its position on the master’s mantle and utilizes it for the cause of Black liberation.

These sonnets from Brooks’s sequence illustrate the interconnected nature of form and content–how each is inseparable from the other and how each shapes the other in constructing meaning within the poem. Decisions about form constrain the poet and these decisions are not taken lightly by critics and readers attempting to understand the poet who is choosing to write within that form. While the politics of form ultimately work in Brooks’s favor, it is important to remember the considerations that made her relationship with form so tenuous. Questions about cultural production and assumed obligation to one’s community remain pending within the court of critical reception. What Brooks seems to identify, however, is the need for multiplicity and interconnectedness within that diversity. One primary notion of Black identity will only further the aims of marginalization and disenfranchisement. Metaphorically speaking, to Brooks, the Black Panther member serves in a reciprocal relationship with the poet writing for Black liberation—each hand washes the other. Action on the front of social justice requires inspiration and that inspiration is toothless without effective action. Through this newfound interpretation of social action through the politics of form Brooks casts her stone. Her later work is a near complete repudiation of the earlier anglocentric literary forms which may have brought her the Pulitzer. These are the opportunities afforded to those who obtain exceptional success. Brooks now has the opportunity to leverage her credibility to move past the need to write poetry to eat and can begin writing poetry to fight.

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A Case Study in the Phonological Processes, Grammatical Processes, and Terminology of African American English and Code-Switching

Andrew A. Leung

Introduction

The effect of African American English (AAE) on the African American experience is mentioned by linguists such as Janet Holmes, who writes in *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* that African Americans' "linguistic differences act as symbols of ethnicity. They express [a] sense of cultural distinctiveness" (188). According to John McWhorter in *Word on the Street*, it is readily apparent that AAE is not monolithic and varies across time and space, and this study seeks to illustrate one woman's linguistic features of and self-identified experiences with AAE (McWhorter 160). The study of AAE illustrates the nuances and intricacies within the language variety that are present, such as, but not limited to, regional, class, and gender differences. There are many different levels and variations of AAE, and feelings of racial solidarity can be expressed with heavy usage, while lighter usage can express feelings of assimilation and/or professionalism (147).

This leads to larger questions about the changes and great variation within AAE, similarly to other language varieties, and a case study can illustrate the features of one African American woman's idiolect.[1] What are the linguistic features of AAE that an African American woman exhibits? How does the passage of time from her youth in the 1960s to now affect trends in AAE, in her view? Equally important to these questions is the following: how do these features of AAE, in the consultant's view, translate into social/employment opportunities—with code-switching as a method of succeeding in these areas? In this study, I define code-switching as McWhorter does: it is when individuals alternate between two language varieties "within a single conversation or even sentence" (1). As this study explores one African American woman's idiolect, I do not intend to make a large generalization regarding AAE. I aim to uncover and explain the intricacies that exist in one African American woman's use of AAE. Analyzing such speech of individual African American speakers is crucial in revealing the varied unique linguistic identities they exhibit.

This study is structured as follows: in the following section, I report the methodologies used when recording my interview and analyzing data; in Results and Discussion, I discuss the grammatical and phonological processes exhibited in the consultant's speech, her self-identified use of AAE

terminology, and her experiences with code-switching; I conclude by discussing future prospects of research about AAE.

Methods

For this study, I interviewed an African American woman from Los Angeles in her sixties who speaks AAE regularly. Her age is of importance to explore the changes in AAE from the 1960s to now. It is also salient to note that the language consultant is a Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus operator who interacts with many in the public daily from various socioeconomic backgrounds ("Fall 2019 On-Board Survey Results and Trend Report"). To conduct this study, I held an in-person interview with the sixty-year-old language consultant, Ms. Cheryl Lomax. This interview was conducted on October 25, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m while Ms. Lomax was operating a city bus headed to Gardena, California.

In our interview, I recorded naturalistic data by asking the consultant to share a story with me. Subsequently, I noted from Ms. Lomax which terminology she would define as being part of AAE and the meaning of those terms. After that, I asked the consultant about terminology from her youth and younger adult years and her perceptions of changes in the terminology of AAE over time. The final part of the interview consisted of asking my consultant questions about her experiences with code-switching. Afterwards, I inquired about how her propensity to code-switch or not to code-switch has changed over time since she was a girl in the 1960s to now. I recorded the consultant's answers and concluded the interview.

To interpret this data, I analyze it in dialogue with linguists' seminal texts on the phonological processes, grammatical processes, and unique terminology of AAE, such as *Spoken Soul* by Rickford and Rickford and *Word on the Street* by McWhorter. I analyze the linguistic features of Ms. Lomax's story, discerning the aspects of AAE she exhibits. Finally, in studying the linguistic features from Ms. Lomax's story with her self-identified terminology of, and experiences with, code-switching with AAE, I gain a greater understanding of one woman's unique idiolect.

Results and Discussion

Below is a transcription[2] of a story the language consultant recounted for me regarding her son Paul. In the following sections, I analyze this story's phonological and grammatical processes.

(1) My son Paul, he always be makin' me proud. He an' dem kee-uhds be
(2) runnin' aroun' an' bein' nice to people. An' Paul get along wit our fren'
(3) Andrew just real fahn. Dat one tahm Paul get a li'l' sad, Ah tink nuttin' bad
(4) happen to hee-uhm. Dat be coo' 'cause dem people ain't up to no good
(5) many a time. 'Cause Paul don't be gettin' wasted an' he don't smoke either.
(6) Now my Paul jus' a sweet kee-uhd. Ah seen him aksing dem ol' ladies at
(7) church if they need hel' an' they all say yes an' love hee-uhm for dat. An'
(8) boy… dat kee-uhd got a voice from hebben. At church, Paul be singin' so
(9) loud an' proud, I be cryin' and thankin' God almighty for my son. Mah frins
(10 say all de tahm, "Cheryl, how you raise such a nahs boy?" An' I always
(11) tell 'em, "He a gift from da Lord. I ain't raise no bougie boy!" Ah tank God
(12) every day for Paul mah son. I jus' so proud of hee-uhm.

Grammatical Processes

This story includes specific characteristics of AAE. According to Rickford and Rickford, "The *verb be* is one the of the most celebrated features" of AAE, and this naturalistic data from my interview with Ms. Lomax supports the linguists' assertion. The habitual "be," an integral component of the grammar of this language variety, is often misunderstood (113). This grammatical feature of AAE occurs only when describing an event that happens habitually. The data I collected demonstrate extensive use of the habitual "be"—"he always be makin' me proud" and "Paul be singin' so loud an' proud." Here, Paul's actions of "makin' me proud" and "singin' so loud and proud" are portrayed as occurring regularly, hence the use of the habitual "be." I observe many examples of the habitual "be" in this story in lines (1), (4), (8), and (9).

Another noteworthy feature of AAE is called the zero copula, or the absence of "is" or "are"—verbs that connect the subject and predicate of sentences together (Rickford and Rickford 114). Speakers of AAE can omit the present-tense "is" or "are" with this feature of zero copula; however, past-tense forms such as "was" and "were" may not be omitted (Rickford and Rickford 115). Zero copula is present in the consultant's story above: "Now my Paul jus' a sweet kee-uhd"; "He a gift from da Lord." The consultant, in using zero copula, describes Paul as he is currently. I observe examples of zero copula in this story in lines (6), (11), and (12).

Multiple negation is also a salient grammatical feature of AAE. This is when negative verbs such as "don't" are used with negative nouns or pronouns such as "no," "neither," or "nothing." I observed one instance of multiple negation in this story in the use of "ain't" instead of "didn't": "I ain't raise no bougie boy" (11). Lastly, I recognized that the story includes the use of double subjects also. Double subjects, as Rickford and Rickford describe, are when "a pronoun corresponding to the subject noun is inserted after it, creating a second, or double subject" (120). In this story, double subjects are observed in line (1): "My son Paul, he always be makin' me proud."

This story demonstrates the above grammatical features of AAE—invariant "be", zero copula, multiple negation, and double subject. These real-life examples from a speaker of AAE support Rickford and Rickford's assertion that "the claim that [AAE] has no grammar is as bogus as the claim that it has no dictionary" (109). However, as McWhorter notes, not all African Americans speak the same way; their linguistic identities can differ (147). Rickford and Rickford's discourse on the grammar of AAE is particularly accurate in describing the grammatical processes of the above story; however, certain features they discuss such as "finna" are not present in the consultant's speech (121). Instead, the use of "gonna" is closer to casual speech in white vernaculars (Rickford and Rickford 152). After reviewing the data from the consultant's story, it is evident that the grammatical processes in the consultant's story provide examples of her use of AAE.

Phonological Processes

In addition to the grammatical processes I discuss above, the consultant's story includes many examples of phonological processes of AAE. The phonological process of diphthongization is when vowels that would normally be pronounced with one vowel sound are pronounced with two. Diphthongization is evident in this story: "kid" and "him" become "kee-uhd" and "hee-uhm," respectively, in lines (1), (7), and (12). At the same time, monophthongization is a part of the phonological processes of AAE. This is when a sound that is normally produced as two vowel sounds is pronounced with one. In this story, I observe "nahs" to be said for "nice" and "Ah" to be said for "I".

Monophthongization occurs in lines (3), (6), and (10). Metathesis is when two consonants are switched within a word, usually to achieve an easier articulation (Rickford and Rickford 103). In Standard English, for example, the word "comfortable" is usually pronounced with the "t" before the "r," making this an example of metathesis. The consultant's story in AAE also exhibits metathesis in "aksing," in contrast to "asking." This phonological feature was exhibited only once in the story—in line (6).

AAE is also notable for its replacements and deletions of certain consonants, some of which are exhibited in the story (Rickford and Rickford 103, McWhorter 186). I observe substitution of the [v] sound (voiced labiodental fricative; <v>) with the [b] sound (voiced bilabial stop; <b>), such as in pronouncing "heaven" as "hebben" in line (8). The use of "nuttin'" for "nothing" in line (3) is evidence of [θ] (voiceless interdental fricative; voiceless <th>) to [t] (voiceless alveolar plosive; <t>) substitution. Additionally, the story demonstrates use of simplified consonant clusters. Consonant clusters are groups of multiple consonants in a row, such as the "cl" in "class." Simplification of consonant clusters is when the final consonant is deleted, as the story demonstrates multiple times in "ol'," "fren'," "hel'," and "jus'." This simplification makes words easier to pronounce. Numerous examples of consonant cluster simplification occur in every line except line (11). AAE also features [l] (voiced alveolar lateral approximant; <l>) deletion. In this story, "coo'" is an example of this [l] deletion.

In English, certain syllables of words are accented, being pronounced more loudly than others. For example, the word "because" has its stress on "cause." Weak syllables are frequently deleted in this story—"'cause" is substituted for "because" multiple times in lines (4) and (5). Nasal fronting is when the [ŋ] (velar nasal; <n'>) sound as in the word "running" is substituted with the [n] (alveolar nasal; <n>) sound. This is also frequently apparent in the consultant's story in "runnin'," "aroun'," "an'," "bein'," "nuttin'," "gettin'," "cryin'," and "thankin'." Lines (1), (2), (3), (5), (8), (9), and (10) all have examples of nasal fronting.

Like the grammatical processes I discuss in previous sections of this paper, these evident phonological processes in the consultant's story provide examples of her use of AAE. The consultant's exhibition of varied phonological processes of AAE, such as metathesis, diphthongization, and nasal fronting, support the fact that this is a language variety with its own set of phonological features.

Terminology

After having listened to the story about her son, I asked Ms. Lomax about the terminology of AAE[3] from her youth and younger adult years and her perceptions of changes in that terminology over time. There are many terms the consultant referred to that describe aspects of urban life, including how people act. Ms. Lomax said, "We have a lot o' terms to describe dem street pee-poh." According to Ms. Lomax's self-identified data, "cray-cray" is in popular use today among African Americans, and it means "crazy." This term is used to describe people who cannot control themselves, especially those on the street. Additionally, among her and her friends, "crazier than a fruit loop" is commonly used, and the phrase means "crazy" also. I asked the consultant to list some situations in which she had used these terms in the past, and Ms. Lomax reported that she called a tightrope walker "cray-cray." Another self-identified term that Ms. Lomax reported to me is "chile," which is an interjection used to convey indignation or disgust. I observed Ms. Lomax use "chile" when describing very unfortunate situations and the people associated with them. The consultant also described terminology of AAE which comments on social class as well. "Bougie," meaning "bourgeois," became popular around twenty

years ago, in her estimation. I observed Ms. Lomax use this term when describing the opulent houses and expensive cars of Rancho Palos Verdes, California, known for its multi-million dollar homes and the wealth of those living there.

Other times, there are terms in AAE that have the opposite meaning of what Standard American English has. When Ms. Lomax was a child in the 1960s, she used “bad” to mean “good.” Today, she still uses this occasionally, in my observation. Naturally, this difference between Standard American English and AAE can make it difficult to accurately convey meaning. For example, the AAE sentence “His cooking be real bad” would translate into Standard American English as “His cooking is always really good.” Additionally, the consultant reported that in the 1960s, she said “I don’t do ______” to mean “I don’t deal with or mess around with ______.” During the interview, I observed Ms. Lomax use this terminology very often, especially when she describes people that exasperate her.

Ms. Lomax then described terminology of AAE used in the 1970s, when she was a teenager. Ms. Lomax used “skank,” “ho,” and “thot” to describe promiscuous women or girls. The consultant reported that these terms were used to describe people at her high school, and I learned that these words were used interchangeably. Next, Ms. Lomax also used “scrub” in the 1970s, and it means “broke-ass [very poor] guy.” Another self-reported term of AAE Ms. Lomax taught me is “go ghetto,” which means “go haywire on someone or something.” In the wider popular culture of America, the word “ghetto” is associated with dilapidated urban settings, but it is used here in AAE to describe disorder and lunacy.

The popular shortened form of “neighborhood,” “hood,” was used by Ms. Lomax in her young adult years; however, “hood” in her usage specifically referred to the area she lived, South Los Angeles, around the intersection of Crenshaw Boulevard and Slauson Avenue. Later, in the nineties, Ms. Lomax used “hella” to mean “very,” “the bomb” to describe something “very good,” and “the shit” to mean “extremely good.” I observed that Ms. Lomax does not use “the bomb” anymore, but “hella” and “the shit” are still used. More recently, she has used the term “heifer” to describe anyone stupid, especially those who commit dangerous traffic offenses in the streets of Los Angeles.

It is important to consider that the consultant was born and raised in Los Angeles and has not been exposed to much AAE from other locales. When I asked Ms. Lomax about whether she could understand African American terminology from outside of Los Angeles well, she responded that she does not believe those other forms of AAE to be correct, being prescriptivist in a way. She also reported to me that she has difficulty in understanding African American terminology from different time periods and locales as depicted in media such as television shows. An example she provided is the television show Fargo, the fourth season of which takes place in 1950s Kansas City, Missouri—Ms. Lomax has difficulty understanding some of the unique terminology of the African American characters in the show.

The terminology of AAE that Ms. Lomax uses is unique to herself and her African American cultural identity. As McWhorter states, AAE is “powerfully influential on our popular culture…existing in an ever-challenging relationship with mainstream society” (128). Ms. Lomax’s speech seems to support this claim—her use of specific terminology of AAE has evolved over time with shifting social situations. Additionally, McWhorter contends that the wider culture of America is also deeply impacted by this terminology, which is appropriated by the youth of today (150). Aside from the terms used to describe people or their actions, terms such as “bougie” and “hood” appear to reveal a broader pattern in AAE, which reflect sentiments about socioeconomic issues, from poverty to wealth. It is also notable

that Ms. Lomax did not report any terminology that are the male equivalents of the decidedly female "skank," "thot," and "ho." This data demonstrates the complexity of terminology in AAE.

Experiences with Code-Switching

The balance between "sounding African American" or assimilating into American culture by using Standard American English (SAE) is present within every African American person. As a result, African Americans code-switch between AAE and SAE in different situations. I asked the consultant to explain to me her experiences with code-switching between AAE and SAE and how her code-switching has changed over time. I initially asked Ms. Lomax if she has ever used code-switching in applying for jobs. She responded that she has never and that simply speaking intelligently is crucial for succeeding in job interviews.

The consultant stated that in her upbringing, however, she had to switch to Standard English in front of her (African American) grandmother, who was a schoolteacher who spoke mainly Standard English. Ms. Lomax recalled how she would be punished for speaking, as her grandmother called it, "improperly" in AAE, such as with double negatives or zero copula. This is evidence that not all African American persons speak the same way with heavy usage of AAE; in fact, some may refrain from using that language variety much at all, as Ms. Lomax's grandmother did.

However, as Ms. Lomax got older and fewer people were focused on teaching her to speak "properly," she code-switched increasingly infrequently. She remarked that today, she very rarely code-switches from AAE to Standard English, and when she does, it is usually to emphasize a point or be humorous. The consultant added that she has been comfortable speaking AAE all her life, and it has not caused her any trouble that would have forced her to switch to SAE for success or safety.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which Ms. Lomax works for, asserts that the second-most-common racial group riding Los Angeles Metro's public transportation is African American (2). That may be an explanation for the lack of necessity for Ms. Lomax to code-switch from African American to SAE regularly; she is able to communicate with her passengers easily. Ms. Lomax asserted that over time, she did not have the need to code-switch much at all. This could be because she has always associated herself with other African Americans, and, according to her, many of her coworkers at Los Angeles Metro are also African American. This forms a community of African American speakers where Ms. Lomax would not have to "sound white" to gain employment or professional opportunities. Many of the bus routes that Ms. Lomax works are also along major thoroughfares in Los Angeles that go through South Los Angeles, an area with many African American persons. Her incessant exposure to other African Americans obviates her from needing to switch to Standard English; she can assert her African American cultural identity. The consultant's experiences with code-switching reveal the complex situations that prompt speakers of AAE to use that language variety or switch to Standard English.

Conclusion

This case study of the language of Ms. Lomax, an African American bus operator in Los Angeles, California, provides real-world insights into the extent of AAE that one speaks and the larger social questions surrounding the language variety. Through my interview and analysis, I gained a greater understanding of one African American woman's unique linguistic identity and how it figures into other realms of her life. The consultant's story is one example of the great variety of AAE and

how its features are exhibited in everyday speech. Using this language variety helps her assert her cultural identity as an African American woman in Los Angeles. The phonological and grammatical processes I describe demonstrate the extent to which the consultant uses linguistic features of AAE that researchers such as Rickford and Rickford and McWhorter have discussed. The terminology she uses changes over time to reflect the changing social situations through which she lives. Moreover, the infrequency of Ms. Lomax's code-switching now speaks to her experiences mainly with African Americans in her life and her comfort in expressing herself and identifying with them without fear of being ostracized. AAE is a very complex language variety; Ms. Lomax's example illustrates one of millions of experiences for African Americans' use of AAE, and their experiences can be studied in dialogue with social events and linguistic works to gain understanding about the larger African American experience and AAE's cultural impact in America.

I recognize that this is but one case study of one African American woman's idiolect; therefore, the consultant's linguistic identity cannot be applied to African Americans' linguistic identities as a whole. Future research on AAE in the locale of Los Angeles is needed in the field of sociolinguistics to better understand this fascinating language variety and how location shapes its features. Additionally, as intersectionality is taking on a larger role in the field of sociolinguistics, the study of African American speakers' intersectional identities—such as class and gender or ethnicity and sexuality—is an important future research area. It is my hope that this study, along with future studies, will illustrate more clearly the intricacies and varieties of AAE.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Ms. Cheryl Lomax for generously agreeing to be a consultant for the data discussed in this paper and agreeing to its publication. I am also grateful to Dr. Iara Mantenuto and Dr. Cheryl Fantuzzi for their invaluable feedback on drafts of this study.

2. For the purposes of this paper, I follow Rickford and Rickford's style of data reporting and transcription of AAE, using the same orthographic style they use as opposed to IPA. For individual phonemes discussed in the "Phonological Processes" section, I use IPA in conjunction with orthography to accurately describe these sounds.

3. I will emphasize that I report all self-identified terminology I was given as a researcher within the constraints of my one-hour-long interview. Therefore, it is not my intention here to create a comprehensive study of all terminology that exists in AAE.

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"Undead Will": How Thoreau's "I am a parcel of vain strivings tied" Threads Weird Loops

Brooke D. Campbell

"Isn't the paranoia that I might simply be a puppet of some demonic external force just the suspicion that I might be a vegetable?" In discussing his concepts of the arche-lithic, agrilogistics, weird loops, and appearing/being, Timothy Morton asks this question in his book, ***Dark Ecology: For A Logic of Future Coexistence*** (101). While Morton's concepts aim to uncover the code for ecological coexistence, they often leave him with questions; at the same time, though, they also lead him to answers. Morton's inquiries of reality, patterns, identity, and flowers guide him toward the manifestation of his own concepts, and they each require definitive explanation. The arche-lithic, for example, is a "primordial relatedness of humans and nonhumans" (63). Here, "primordial" involves a timeless, magical, and "shimmering" state of reality, wherein both humans and nonhumans coexist without the confines of settlements and/or social constructions and contracts (63). Agrilogistics, on the other hand, is the "specific logistics of agriculture that arose in the Fertile Crescent and that is still plowing ahead" (42). In other words, this concept is the antithesis of the arche-lithic, insofar as it chiefly involves settlements and/or social constructions and contracts. To fully absorb these concepts, though, Morton's weird loops must act as their foundation. For Morton, "all things have a loop form," meaning that all existen lifeforms and/or "things," as Morton calls them, are weirdly slippery, "twisted," and reflective (5, 6). Unsurprisingly, this is the form in which both the arche-lithic and agrilogistics exist—but it is also the form in which appearing/being exist. Morton's concept of appearing/being might be summarized as this: appearing is not strictly one's external look, nor is being strictly one's internal character—rather, they maintain an interrelated dialogue with one another, yet, at the same time, maintain a mysterious gap between one another. Although appearing/being are typically positioned as oppositional binaries in western culture, according to Morton, they are actually weird loops: they veer into each other, twist against each other, contain each other, and yet maintain a gap between each other. Despite such abstractness, Morton's concepts can be traced in both scientific and literary texts—especially Transcendentalist poetry.

In Henry David Thoreau's poem, "I am a parcel of vain strivings tied," the speaker is a flower: a flower who is ripped from its arche-lithic roots and transplanted into an agrilogistical vase. While

this is a simple summary of a complex poem, it is nonetheless plain to see how Morton's concepts might help to unpack it. The speaker is a flower—a nonhuman entity—meaning that its position as such predisposes its reality as arche-lithic. Although the arche-lithic, according to Morton, includes human access as well as nonhuman access, human access within the arche-lithic is almost nonexistent as humans have "cover[ed] it over with agrilogistic monotheism" (101). Therefore, the flower's arche-lithic roots are closely tied with its nonhuman positionality—and by extension of this, the agrilogistical vase into which it is transplanted closely ties with its human associations. As mentioned above, the concepts of the arche-lithic and agrilogistics require the base concept of Morton's weird loops, and this is especially apparent when applied to Thoreau's poem. As a nonhuman entity who is accustomed to an arche-lithic space, the flower maintains its initial positionality despite its confrontation with a human, agrilogistic space; and the combination of these renders an unexpected, weird loop. This development is found, according to Morton, in the appearing/being concept as well, considering that this also exists in a loop form. Despite the gap between appearing/being, there is a deeply unanticipated and intertwined relationship between them, and this is evident in the nonhuman/human qualities that the poem's flower recognizes. Thus, Thoreau's poem, "I am a parcel of vain strivings tied," enacts Morton's weird loop: as a flower, the speaker exists within a nonhuman, arche-lithic space—but as it encounters a human, agrilogistic space, the flower begins to thread a loop between them. The flower additionally identifies the gap between appearing/being as both a nonhuman and human phenomena, which, in turn, further enfolds a weird loop between the arche-lithic and agrilogistics.

In the first stanza, the flower establishes a position: it is a nonhuman entity existing within an arche-lithic space. The flower says, in the opening line of the poem, that "[it is] a parcel of vain strivings tied / By chance bond together, / Dangling this way and that" (662). While the flower proceeds to say that its "links" were made "loose and wide" for "milder weather," it is already evident that the flower's positionality is one of a nonhuman—specifically speaking, a nonhuman flower who is plucked from the ground and tied up in rope or "links" (662). Now that the poem's speaker is clearly identified as a flower, Morton's concepts again prove useful. As illustrated above, nonhuman entities align more closely with Morton's concept of the arche-lithic because they exist within a reality of "shimmering" timelessness; and flowers, according to Morton, are nonhuman entities with the same alignment (63). He writes, "Flowers provide an excellent opportunity to study the arche-lithic thought" (99). Although this is due to numerous qualities, there is one which remains distinct: a flower is "uncannily alive after millennia, evidence of an undead will" (99). If the arche-lithic is a "shimmering" reality which is simultaneously timeless, then the "uncannily alive" qualities of the flower render it perfectly arche-lithic, as it is both lucidly beautiful and endlessly existent (63, 99). Therefore, as a flower, the poem's speaker occupies both an arche-lithic and nonhuman role.

After the flower establishes its aforementioned position, it references the permeations of a human-driven, agrilogistical space in the second stanza. Although the flower begins this stanza with a comparable tone to its predecessor, citing the "bunch of violets without their roots, / And sorrel intermixed, / Encircled by a wisp of straw," there begins an underlying, encroaching tone of the human—of agrilogistics (662). Firstly, the flower is ripped from its roots for the sake of a presumed human's pleasure—which effectively means that the flower is ripped from its arche-lithic reality for the sake of a presumed agrilogistic desire. Secondly, once this happens, the flower mentions human-constructed notions: in noting the "wisp of straw" which now "encircle[s]" it, the flower laments, " The law / By which I'm fixed" (662). The notion of law is strictly human—strictly agrilogistic—as it

pertains to social order within social settlements. With this in mind, there is no reason that a flower, as a nonhuman and arche-lithic entity, should be "fixed" to a "law" (662). However, because the flower is now plucked from its arche-lithic space, the qualities which accompany this begin to mesh with the incoming qualities of the space which infringes upon it—which is, namely, human-driven agrilogistics. As Morton points to Nietzsche's Zarathustra "memorably proclaim[ing] that people are halfway between plants and ghosts," so, too, is this poem's flower halfway between people and ghosts (100-01). In other words, the boundaries between the nonhuman, arche-lithic space and the human, agrilogistic space are more slippery and twisted than absolute.

In the third stanza, the permeations of this human-driven, agrilogistical space become increasingly apparent as the flower discusses additional human-constructed concepts. While it is carried to the vase, the flower reflects on Time: "A nosegay which Time clutched from out / Those fair Elysian fields, / With weeds and broken stems, in haste, / Doth make the rabble rout, / That waste / The day he yields" (662). Like mentioned above, the concept of Time, the reference to Greek mythology, and the notion of waste are all inalienably human; they are all inextricably agrilogistical as well, given that temporality, narrative, and excess are consequences of social human settlement. As a flower with "excellent opportunity" for the study of the "arche-lithic thought"—which is, again, a timeless and "shimmering" reality—there is no reason it should bother with such arbitrary human constructions (Morton 63, 99). The flower exists outside of these confinements. However, as Morton writes, "All entities just are what they are, which means that they are never quite as they seem" (105). In addition to this, the flower has been removed from its arche-lithic space and now envelops an agrilogistical one containing human settlement, ideas, constructions, and so on. Thus, the combination of the flower's mysterious, shifting essence and its newfound involvement in literal agrilogistical surroundings renders its arche-lithic boundaries as penetrable.

Now that these permeations have been established, the fourth stanza begins Morton's weird loop: as it absorbs its human, agrilogistical surroundings, the flower is simultaneously a nonhuman entity accustomed to an arche-lithic space—and these mingling forms of reality produce an unlikely loop. In this stanza, the flower stands in its vase for the first time and says, "And here I bloom for a short hour unseen, / Drinking my juices up, / With no root in the land / To keep my branches green, / But stand / In a bare cup" (662). Here, the imagery is, in itself, a weird loop: while the flower grapples with its physicality as a nonhuman, arche-lithic entity, it is concurrently enclosed by a human-made, agrilogistic object. It "bloom[s] for a short hour" and drinks its "juices up," which, on the one hand, centers its physical being as a nonhuman; on the other hand, though, the flower has "no root in the land / To keep [its] branches green," which decenters its being as a nonhuman entirely. Rather, the flower is no longer wholly arche-lithic, and nonhuman—the flower is instead a messy, twisted loop of its former self and its new agrilogistical human environment. In the beginning of the poem, the flower is plucked by a human who wants to observe its arche-lithic glory in his/her agrilogistical settlement, making the flower an intersectional emblem of both the arche-lithic and agrilogistics. Or, as Morton would say, the flower weirdly threads the loop of the arche-lithic and agrilogistics.

In the fifth stanza, the gap between appearing/being becomes evident, as the nonhuman flower contemplates its fleeting incompleteness against its human surroundings. After it stands in the "bare cup," the flower laments that few "tender buds were left upon [its] stem / In mimicry of life" (662-663). Then the flower turns away from its physical, nonhuman being and toward the human environment: "But ah! the children will not know, / Till time has withered them, / The woe / With

which they're rife" (663). As the flower continues to juggle its intrinsic nonhuman and arche-lithic being with its new, enveloping human and agrilogistical environment, the flower not only reinforces a weird loop between the two, but it also suggests the comparable qualities between the arche-lithic and agrilogistics. Throughout his book, Morton repeatedly discusses the gap between appearing/being as a thing which is not strictly human, nor is it strictly nonhuman. In fact, Morton writes that a flower is an especially good example of the arche-lithic thought because it illustrates "being [as] deeply intertwined with appearing" (99). Although the human often suppresses his/her arche-lithic thought, according to Morton, he/she still has access to it—meaning that the human and nonhuman share access to not only the arche-lithic, but they also share the gap between appearing/being, considering that the arche-lithic thought underscores it. Moreover, within this stanza, the gap between appearing/being in the nonhuman flower and its human-driven discussions is specifically apparent: while the flower *appears* to be blooming in its agrilogistic settlement, its *being* is dying—and while the children *appear* to be young, their *beings* are on an inevitable path of death. Hence, appearing/being exists in the nonhuman and the human alike, which only bolsters the loop between their associated concepts of the arche-lithic and agrilogistics.

After the flower contemplates its fleeting incompleteness, it finds a strange contentment: in the sixth stanza, the flower returns to its nonhuman, arche-lithic roots and finds magic in the unknown gap between appearing/being. Now, the flower realizes that it was "not plucked for naught, / And after in life's vase / Of glass set while I might survive, / But by a kind hand brought" (663). Despite the flower's awareness of its transient state of nonhuman being, it concurrently locates a certain fulfillment in the human-made "glass," especially since the glass permits the flower to "survive" (663). In other words, the flower—who is, again, a nonhuman from an arche-lithic space—finds gratitude in human, agrilogistical counterparts, noting that a "kind hand brought" it to a "strange," unknown place (663). This intersectional point between the nonhuman and human marks a chasm in which the magic exists: the nonhuman and human share an overlapping gap between appearing/being, and this gap is the locus of the magic. As the flower contemplates its temporal positionality, so, too, does the human. As Morton writes, "one wonders what causes such things to exist in turn. Isn't it because there is an appearance-thing gap at all as a condition of possibility for existing as such?" (103). Much like Morton in his human positionality, the flower also ruminates over why "things … exist in turn"—and such ruminations act as the glue which binds their weird loop together.

In the seventh and final stanza, the flower fully encloses Morton's weird loop between the nonhuman, arche-lithic space and the human, agrilogistic space. Here, the flower wholly recognizes that the gap between appearing/being is not strictly nonhuman or human; instead, this gap exists for all entities, no matter their occupied space, and now their weird, shared loop will go on indefinitely. The flower closely intertwines its nonhuman predisposition with its new human environment: "That stock thus thinned will soon redeem its hours, / And by another year, / Such as God knows, with freer air, / More fruits and fairer flowers / Will bear, / While I droop here" (663). Firstly, the flower references its former nonhuman companions, saying that they will "soon redeem … hours," and that there will be "More fruits and fairer flowers" in "another year"; at the same time, however, these references are thickly laced with human-constructed ideas, such as the notion of time and a higher-power (663). This interconnected mode of understanding showcases, again, the flower as an emblem for an intersectional point—a weird loop—which arrives at the gap between appearing/being. As mentioned above, Morton writes that "All entities just are what they are, which means that they are never quite

as they seem" (105). Given the evidence of the poem, the flower's voice is beyond its simple beauty, and its human-driven agrilogistic environment, according to the flower, is also beyond its extractive actions. Instead, like Morton writes it, humans and "viruses and tropes and flowers might not only share some family resemblance. They might *actually* be part of the same physical family" (104). And if they are a part of the "same physical family," then they are a part of the same weird loop (104).

Given the analysis above, it is clear that Morton's concepts help to pursue the nonhuman and human loop within Thoreau's poem, "I am a parcel of vain strivings tied": once the flower identifies the gap between appearing/being within itself as a nonhuman in an arche-lithic space, it is then able to identify the same gap within the human and agrilogistic space—which enacts, again, Morton's weird loop. Firstly, the flower clearly defines its position as a nonhuman entity within the poem. Secondly, the flower establishes its unfamiliar, human-driven, and agrilogistical surroundings—which begin to unfold the poem's aforementioned loop. For example, the flower starts discussing human-constructed concepts, such as Time. Eventually, the human and agrilogistical surroundings of the flower permeate its nonhuman, arche-lithic boundaries, and the loop between appearing/being slowly forms as well. The flower recognizes, for instance, that the gap between appearing/being is not strictly nonhuman, nor is it strictly human. It is simultaneously both. This renders a certain contentment within the flower, as it finally encloses this twisted, slippery loop. While the poem ultimately ends, its sentiment does not: the weird loop which threads the "opposing" binary concepts of the arche-lithic, agrilogistics, and appearing/being underscores the illusion of an absolute, definitive inside/outside dichotomy. It is true that there are numerous scales, spaces, and realities in which an existent entity might occupy, but it is also true that these inevitably interconnect with each other—meaning that there is no certain inside/outside dichotomy. Instead, there is Morton's weird loop and Thoreau's poetic flower.

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Intertextual Deployment of Gender Deconstruction in Woolf's *Orlando*

Jack Nugent

In *Orlando*, Virginia Woolf breaks from her usual experimental forms to pursue a biography of the fictional character Orlando: a troubled poet, once a diplomat of considerable nobility, who lives for 300 years, performing gender fluidly through the many phases of English society; from Queen Elizabeth to the Industrial Revolution; from Shakespeare to the publication the text itself.[1] In this essay, I aim to contextualize the critical conversation about gender in *Orlando* through a Fryeian archetypal lens. By investigating the novel on postmodern terms and discussing its parodic form, I will argue that, when read intertextually, the text's satire of gender works to delegitimize heterosexuality as a foundational archetype in Western literary tradition. To further understand the text's treatment of gender, I will reference Judith Butler's "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." The text, being self-aware of its status as literature, can then be read as a parodic biography that utilizes intertextual strategies to posit gender as a social construct.

Though much of Woolf's writing fits into the "modernist" paradigm, *Orlando*'s biographical form stands out as singularly conventional and paradoxically postmodern in its treatment of history. Pamela Caughie argues that criticism on Woolf needs "a perspective that can free Woolf's writing from the cage of modernism and the camps of feminism without denying these relations in her texts" and suggests that "Woolf raised many of the feminist and poststructuralist critical issues that have emerged" within postmodern[2] criticism (qtd. in Marcus 173). While the text operates within its biographical constraints, it also bends history to its will, criticizing the many iterations of modern, heteronormative British society that its eponymous, genderfluid subject experiences. I posit here that *Orlando* does the opposite of what the so-called modernist novel is expected to do: it poses a postmodern view of literary structures and cultural history that Frederic Jameson coins as "fantastical historiography"—a mode that allows Woolf to challenge the construction of gender within her own version of British history. Fantastical historiography is characterized by "the death of the referent, if not the end of history itself" and the view of history as merely "projected afterimages of a certain state or structure" (Jameson 367-8). By this logic, Woolf can superimpose progressive ideas of gender onto the heteronormative structures of tradition in order to deconstruct them. It is significant that Woolf

chose Victorian biography as the form through which to do this, as the text's conventions are integral to the impact of its ultimate deconstruction of gender.

It is also important to point out some useful theories from Frye's "Anatomy of Criticism," and discuss why they are key to this presentation of *Orlando*. Frye theorizes that "conventions within literature [seem] to be a force even stronger than history" and further, that we must study "the poem as part of poetry, and poetry as part of the total human imitation of nature that we call civilization" (105-6).[3] He goes on to claim that the human tendency toward aesthetic creation is a result of the need to express desires "that would have remained amorphous if the poem had not liberated [them] by providing the form of [their] expression" (Frye 106). In other words, he presents literature as a distillation of human reactions to their own nature (embodied by society)—an idea which poses literature and society in a cyclical simulation of each other—one forming the other. Society imitating literature and, by necessity, literature imitating society. Frye concludes that "the efficient cause of civilization is work, and poetry in its social aspect has the function of expressing, as a verbal hypothesis, a vision of the goal of work and the forms of desire" (106). Within this model, it can be concluded that literature forms society by distilling human desire into communicable form, and in this way, informs society of its "goals of work" by reinforcing its norms, its taboos and legalities—a cycle of information that constitutes the basis of our individual identities, and thus is the key to the construction and reinforcement of binary gender.

Orlando makes it no secret that it is in conversation with the ghosts of literature's past. This is displayed *literally* when it is revealed that *Orlando* is friends with canonical heavyweights like Pope, Addison, and Swift, for whom "she kept a book in which to write down their memorable sayings," with only empty pages (Woolf 152). Orlando's irreverence towards these men is further denoted by her reactions as they personally show her their work. She notes "Nothing can be plainer than that violent man," regarding Jonathan Swift. She relates that "intellect… has a habit of lodging in the seediest of carcasses" in response to Alexander Pope's advances and furthermore references the "high opinion poets have of themselves… [and] the low one they have of others…" when thinking about them (Woolf 154-7). This attention to the literature of the past is consistent with the rest of Woolf's work, though *Orlando* is unique because it directly interacts with the tradition it criticizes to reveal it as a structure that can only be formed in hindsight; as Orlando's biographer muses, "the past shelters us on one side, the future on another" (Woolf 219). *Orlando*'s awareness of its status as conventional literature reveals the importance of Frye's treatment of pure originality as an illusion. When she is pondering the texts of so-called great writers, Orlando directly references the impossibility of originality within the intertextual cycle: "Life? Literature? One to be made into the other?... [their works] made one feel… that one must always, always write like somebody else" (Woolf 219). Orlando reveals an attention to literature in Fryeian terms, confirming that she perceives literature as "a structure, historically conditioned but shaping its own history, responding to but not determined in its form by an external historical process" (Frye 284). Furthermore, references to literary figures like Shakespeare, Marlowe, Brown, and Donne are made throughout, often with satirical deployment. Nick Greene, alive during the lives of these men, concludes that "the great age of literature is past; the great age of literature was the Greek; the Elizabethan was inferior in every respect to the Greek," after which he goes on to say: "Shakespeare, he admitted, had written some scenes that were well enough; but he had taken them chiefly from Marlowe" (Woolf 65). In response to Greene's—and many European

critics of Woolf's time—readiness to disregard new forms, Woolf writes *Orlando* as a parody of the old: a farce on the cyclical nature of literature.

This makes *Orlando* a sort of Trojan horse for readers wary of modernist ideas. It must be noted that all of Woolf's other work, when taken within the framework of Frye's theories, would fall into the far end of the conventionality spectrum (the "anti-conventional"). *Orlando* strategically comes closer to the opposite end (the "pure-convention") because it parodies the Victorian biographical form (Frye 103). This is where the Trojan Horse effect comes in: the text masquerades among Woolf's other experimental texts as a conventional biography, a form trusted to deal only in the truths of a subject and the truths of history, and then parodies the form by challenging the very idea of historical truth by rewriting history through the gaze of a gender fluid subject. In Stokoe's terms, the text reveals the constructedness of conventions by parodying them. This works in the same way that drag queens challenge gender, with Woolf writing a novel in "textual drag" (303).[4] Hutcheon's definition of parody and satire is important to this discussion because it offers a stringent definition which targets the "conventions of a discourse" and for satire, which she defines as having an "ameliorative aim to hold up to ridicule the vices and follies of mankind" (Stokoe 305). Parody is defined by the subversion of a conventional form, and satire is defined by providing a context for the mobilization of a parodic form. After establishing *Orlando* as a "fantastical historiography" that uses its parodic form as a mode through which it can interact with the structuration of British culture through literature, I can begin to discuss what the text aims to satirize: heterosexuality as an unstable archetype.

Such an attack on a basal tenant of British traditionalism goes beyond *theoria* "in the sense of disengaged contemplation," and enters into the zone, as Judith Butler says, of "*phronesis* or even *praxis*" (372). Looking at the political implications of Woolf's work is not a new critical topic. Brenda S. Helt—referencing Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, a seminal text in decoding her treatment of gender—notes that the essay "represents the complexity of women's lives and minds, their experiences of desire, their relationships with each other, and, importantly, men's inability to understand and depict these" (141). This idea is important in thinking about *Orlando*, a novel that is hailed as a necessary extension of the theories in *A Room of One's Own*, and the inherent importance of its representation of androgyny, but also when thinking about its politics; its treatment of a literary body formed primarily by heterosexual men, one that the text acknowledges it is a part of. However, Helt also elaborates on a conflict of interest between *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own* that is important to this discussion: how Woolf's theory of the androgynous mind can only be achieved by a fantastical character like *Orlando*, who is recognized corporeally as both man and woman depending on the gender she chooses to perform in response to her shifting desires. Helt goes on to call desire "too multiple, too varied, to be bounded by construction like gender and sexuality" (157). This claim is apt in a Butlerian context. By presenting *Orlando* as a model for true androgyny, the text recognizes that the androgynous state, while unachievable in the individual sense because gender is necessitated by our membership in a society, can only be achieved if heterosexuality is deconstructed through a parody of the history which constructed it.

It would be impossible to address Woolf's deconstruction of the heterosexual archetype without recognizing the political implications of doing such. In "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," Judith Butler theorizes the challenge that *Orlando* poses to the gender binary through its treatment of clothing. Drag can be defined as an enactment of the very structure of impersonation by which *any gender* is assumed; it is "not an imitation or a copy of some prior and true gender," but instead

challenges gender's conditional existence via socially necessitated performance (Butler 378). Drag takes an enormous role in *Orlando*, such as when, after the penultimate sex change, the biographer specifies that "Orlando had become a woman," though "in every other respect [he] remained exactly as he had been—" confirming that there was no change in physical sex. Orlando's gender shift is also noted as doing "nothing whatever to alter their identity," revealing gender as only relevant in its social utility and only asserted through performance—the primary signifier of which is clothing (Woolf 102). The social utility of gender is affirmed by Orlando's experience with the gypsy tribe (an effective "other" through which to recontextualize the self), whose amorphous roles cause gender to be unimportant, as the gypsy men and women are indistinguishable in their societal roles (gathering, herding, farming, etc.). After her interactions with the gypsies' gender fluidity, Orlando presents gender as being a disease "which cannot, it seems, be expelled" (Woolf 104-5). Orlando hesitates to "marry and settle down among [the gypsies] forever," as "some difference" was holding her back (Woolf 104). This difference is one of culture, one of deep importance: the inflection of gender at all levels of social performance. For instance, without the necessity of gender performance during her time with the gypsies, Orlando is unable to write—presenting, metaphorically, that the lack of gender distinction in the gypsy tribe negates the literary tradition that Orlando is unavoidably part of.[5] Orlando must use the tools (conventions, symbols, archetypes, etc.) provided by this tradition in order to write and is unable to, for in the gypsy society "there was neither ink nor writing paper, neither reverence for the Talbots..." (Woolf 110). Ali Gunes points out Orlando's first experiences of gendered society is on the ship back to England, where she dresses as a woman for the first time and is presented, after accidentally revealing her ankle to a sailor and nearly killing him, with a recontextualized awareness of her experience performing the male sex. Orlando, now with fluid gender-consciousness, understands the "difficulties and limitations in her relations with the male sex—" all of which she was blind to before realizing her gender fluidity (Gunes). The Butlerian point I aim to reveal in the text is that *Orlando*'s drag presents "gender [as] a kind of imitation for which there is no original," asserting that "in fact [gender] is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an *effect* and consequence of the imitation itself" (Butler 378). The word "original" here is essential as I move on to discussing the political implications of *Orlando*'s challenge of heterosexuality as the archetype for gender norms throughout western literature.

While Butler's vision of gender as a social construct has been linked to *Orlando* by many critics, I want to build on the conversation by emphasizing the radical political implications of the novel's treatment of gender in the context of its parodic form. A similar line of inquiry comes from Christy L. Burns, who argues that "the crucial question of Woolf's novel becomes that of subjectivity, but subjectivity as it is embroiled in the problematics of historical change and sexuality." Though I agree with this, I believe that *Orlando* is more concerned with sexual subjectivity as it is embroiled in the problematics of literature. According to Frye, this is the formative essence of society, history, and thus, identity. If sex is one of the single most essential attributes of identity, the self can be seen in *Orlando* as a collection of many possible sexualities (350). This line of inquiry reveals heterosexuality as a fundamentally impossible "reality" that has been perpetuated as an archetype in English literature, far beyond even the 400 years of Orlando's fictional life.

Within Butler's theory, we find that "the parodic or imitative effect of gay identities works neither to copy nor to emulate heterosexuality, but rather, to expose heterosexuality as an incessant and *panicked* imitation of its own naturalized idealization" (Butler 379). This naturalization happens

through the endless process, as we read in Frye, of literature performing imitations of itself, and society performing limitations of literature. I believe that the text, though it was written long before Frye's theories, treats this socio-literary cycle as an essential truth. The same goes for the text's proto-Butlerian expression of gender through Orlando's character. Because of these reasons, *Orlando* is a visionary and politically volatile text that subverts its readers expectations in its use of "textual drag" to reveal gender as a socially necessitated construct; gender as separate from any form of essential identity. Beyond this, the text also reveals, with proto-Butlerian flair, that "heterosexuality only constitutes itself as the original through a convincing act of repetition–" a repetition that is most widely perpetuated via the literary tradition (Butler 380). Through this line of reasoning, it becomes clear that *Orlando*'s most effective purpose is to reveal heteronormativity and essentialized gender as one of literature's most fundamental, and falsest, archetypes.

Notes

1. It is possible, *presumable* even, as Marie DiBattista notes in her introduction to the text, that Orlando's timeline ends on the exact day of the novel's publication (xxxvi).

2. Marcus also notes *Orlando* as a quintessential postmodern text, primarily in its "production of performative identities" and deconstruction of fixed gender roles (173).

3. In an attempt to avoid the confusion of weighing the value of poetic writing against poetic writing, Frye uses the word "'poem' and its relatives by synecdoche" for all pieces of literature.

4. The term "textual drag" is in direct reference to Butler, who argues drag reveals that gender is a performance: "that all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation" (378). *Orlando* is an example of "textual drag" because it performs conventionality to deconstruct gender.

5. Orlando's poetic debacle here is one that we might assume Woolf also experienced.

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The Complexities of Mirror Metaphors in Woolf & Duffy

Stevi Nicole Gligorovic

Mirrors remain a prevalent metaphor in literature, referring to reflections of inner and outward selves. T.S Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" offers a different perspective to the history of mirrors, or looking-glasses, as metaphors in literature. Eliot views mirrors as "timeless" and "temporal," where "no poet, no artist, has his complete meaning alone" (Eliot 685). Particularly in the Modernist Period of British Literature, mirrors appear in pieces such as Virginia Woolf's short story "Mark on the Wall" (1921) and Carol Ann Duffy's poem "Warming Her Pearls" (1987). Although published sixty-six years apart, the looking-glasses in each piece may differ in meaning, but neither have a "complete meaning alone" because they both exist and, consequently, affect one another. Both authors use mirrors to depict the complexities of how women see themselves in a patriarchal world. As Eliot observes in his essay, "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (685). Duffy's present use of the mirror metaphor alters Woolf's notion of mirrors from the past; Duffy expands Woolf's argument through the ambiguous nature of poetry.

First, it is important to recognize the meaning of each piece on its own and in respect of their time period before a cross-historical analysis. In "Mark on the Wall," Woolf illustrates how women view themselves in public and in private, and how this contradiction can represent the complex psyche of women in the twentieth century. Woolf makes a direct connection to mirrors in the beginning of her short story that traces her metaphor through a stream-of-consciousness female narrator. The narrator notices she is constantly "dressing [herself] up" in her mind, as if in front of a mirror (Woolf 273). She uses oxymorons to describe this experience, "lovingly, stealthily, not openly ador[ing]" her image (273). Through a mirror, one can "protect the image of oneself" that the public sees, yet this woman is "stealthy" and does not dare to "openly adore" her reflection (274). Woolf complicates what a reflection tells us about ourselves by making the simple action of looking into a mirror into an act of "dressing up." Is it a reflection of who someone is on the outside or the inside? While a mirror is simply a physical manifestation of oneself, it also forces one to reflect on the inner self, especially if the image before the person does not particularly match how they feel on the inside. In a patriarchal society that does not allow most women to openly express themselves, the narrator reflects the psyche of most women in

that they cannot "openly adore" themselves for who they are in their deepest reflections. For example, the constant interruptions the narrator endures reflects this: she cannot get a full free thought, even in her own mind, because it is constantly interrupted by the pressure of society. Therefore, gazing into mirrors is a both daunting and irresistible activity, as it represents both societal pressures and one's truest self at the same time.

In "Mark on the Wall," reflections in a mirror are simultaneously both one's inner and outer self. The narrator ponders, "suppose the looking-glass smashes, the image disappears, and the romantic figure with the green of forest depths all about it is there no longer, but only that shell of a person which is seen by other people…" (273-4). Woolf implies that when humans look at one another they see the "shell" of someone and the least interesting parts of humans, one interpretation being the gender roles we play for society. The mark on the wall ends up being a snail that she can only see the shell of, and the mirror demonstrates the metaphor for what is inside the shell, or the deeper parts of identity: complex and unfiltered thoughts that most women were oppressed for having in the early twentieth century. Woolf questions if "smashing" the mirror will make the inner, or more human identity, "disappear." A snail and our reflections are showing both who we are to the public world and to our private selves. It is easy to see the shell of a snail, but not the snail itself, just as it is easy to see a person's physical appearance in a mirror but not their true inner identity. Through these metaphors, Woolf contemplates the complexities of self-identity. The narrator wants to be both the woman in the mirror that society sees and the private reflection of herself of which she can "lovingly" admire; she wants to be a snail who can come in and out of her shell as she pleases. These selves contradict one another, and Woolf directly acknowledges the internal struggles that come with being a woman in this way.

Similarly, scholar Stephen Howard believes Woolf uses the mirror as an avenue for her to "contemplate the subtlety and variability of identity" (53). Howard points to Woolf's overarching theme of identity interrogation as a part of the mirror metaphor itself. Not only is a woman seeing a reflection of her identities in the story, but Woolf is reflecting her own private self as the author of the story as well, like a kind of mirror of her own. The private self is "fragmented" in this way; almost like being in a carnival funhouse full of mirrors, Woolf is reflecting her own identities within the story as her female protagonist does the same (53). Woolf accomplishes this by referring to women as a whole with the consistent use of "we" and "us," which includes herself (276). Again, it is hard to know what exact identities the mirror is reflecting and what versions are the most authentic, especially within the context of an oppressive society. It becomes even more challenging when all of the women facing the same internal crisis look into every mirror they come across with different reflections, both inward and outward. Women, and humans in general, are individually complicated in their own perceptions of themselves and the person they choose to be—or are forced to put forth into the world—whether that be through art like Woolf, a mark on the wall a woman observes, or through makeup like Duffy's speaker.

Carol Ann Duffy's poems have many complex interpretations that alter the perceptions of her metaphors, and "Warming Her Pearls" particularly changes the way mirrors are interpreted in Woolf's short story. One interpretation of Duffy's "Warming Her Pearls" is to read, "She's beautiful. I dream about her," as a woman speaking to her mistress as she looks at herself in the mirror. Another reading could be that "she" is in reference to herself within the mirror. Both interpretations have two women, but one is a physical other woman and one is a reflected version of the same woman. At least one of

these women looks into the mirror: "watch the blush seep through her skin / like an indolent sigh. In her looking-glass / my red lips part as though I want to speak." (Duffy 14-6). The imagery of her "red lips part[ing]" as she looks into her mirror paints a dramatic image of a woman wanting to "speak" about what she really sees in the reflection but refrains from doing so. Her "sigh" as she applies "blush" indicates that the mirror reflects the outer self, the "dressed up" version of herself for the public. At the same time, in the interpretation that there is another woman with her, her parting lips imply she saw an internal and truer version of herself that she almost said aloud but felt too oppressed to say to another person: one of these identities possibly being her sexual orientation. There is a clear depiction of lesbian sexuality through the intimate setting. Woolf's character focuses more on the snail shell being the only thing left of a person if the looking-glass is "smashed" and the possibility of experiencing the inner self vanishes. On the other hand, Duffy's speaker comes close to speaking her inner self aloud to another woman, but ultimately, she does not. This speaks volumes about Duffy's poem and how the metaphor of the mirror functions as a possible avenue to gain confidence in speaking a woman's truth to others, in this context, her sexuality.

In addition, the use of stream of consciousness in "Mark on the Wall" allows the reader to understand exactly what the character thinks and reflects women's internal crises and opinions. Woolf wants the reader to know that this is exactly what women are doing; their thoughts are complex and intelligent, and it is not just one woman, but many. Contrastingly, Duffy's poem leaves the reader with many interpretations with complex meanings. Duffy's "Warming Her Pearls" is short, sweet, and surprising. The poem is complex and contains layers, a unique poetic element, and possibly even an artistic interpretation of Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" where he also "contains multitudes" (1325). While Eliot might agree with Duffy's integration of his ideas in nineteenth century American poetry, he might also argue that Woolf's use of mirrors can be interpreted through Duffy's modern reference to the looking-glass. Due to the ambiguous nature of her poem, Woolf's notion of mirrors becomes complicated in that if her narrator were looking into a real mirror in the presence of another woman, how would she react? Would it be as direct as her stream of consciousness, or would it become complex and more difficult to interpret, like Duffy's poem? Duffy's poem has multiple meanings and interpretations that change the way Woolf's piece is read. It allows the reader the opportunity to consider different interpretations of Woolf's character and her unique presence of real-life mirrors and metaphorical reflections.

Through the interpretation of two different women in Duffy's poem, Woolf's mirror becomes even more versatile and "smashing the looking-glass" may not be as terrible as allowing the inner self to "disappear." Instead of being left with the shell of one's outer self for the public, smashing the mirrors in one's life may be liberating. The speaker of Duffy's poem shocks the readers with the last sorrowful line, "and I burn," yet gives Woolf's piece a sense of hope (24). If the power of a reflection can bring the contemplation of the "subtleties and variabilities" of identity, then it has the potential to bring someone to simply "part" their lips, and be that much closer to using their voice. "Warming Her Pearls" provides Woolf's "Mark on the Wall" the possibility of embracing the outer self as a tool to open up with our inner selves to the outside world.

The connecting worlds between Woolf and Duffy through mirrors is reflective of how "the past should be altered by the present," and of course, how there will never be a "complete meaning alone," for mirrors represent the experience of a woman in any time period (Eliot 685). Duffy adopts Woolf's feminist lens on the mirror metaphor in a modern way in the context of sexuality, desire, and

identity. Duffy's use of mirrors, however, gives Woolf's story a sense of hope that was not there before. Even though "Warming Her Pearls" has a more melancholic tone, Duffy's mirror metaphors instill confidence into Woolf's version of mirrors and self-image in public and private identities. One glance into a mirror in the presence of another woman in Duffy's poem gives hope to the narrator of "Mark on the Wall" to look into a real mirror and express her love for details aloud for the world to hear. The present gives voice to the past, and in turn, the future looks more hopeful for the full freedom of women to "part" their lips one day.

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To Resistance Resolved: Women Poets and the Royalist Reckoning of the English Civil Wars

Neah Lekan

Amid Cavalier grief over the 1649 Regicide, the execution of King Charles I by a Parliamentary Court of Justice, Royalist poet Hester Pulter enjoined her comrades, "Let none presume to weep: tears are too weak." The era of societal upheaval, reformation, and reorganization which were the years of the English Civil War are, much like the conflicts themselves, retrospectively viewed through the lenses of the men who featured either as combatants, chroniclers, or a combination of the two. The Royalist cause in particular, that of the Stuarts in the form of Charles I's battle to remain in power (and then Charles II's bid to return to it) is all but synonymous with libertine cavalier soldiers and courtiers and their distinctly masculine perspectives. English women were, of course, essential to the Civil Wars and their social impact, yet they were also integral to its literary legacy and memorialization, most especially in the Royalists' post-conflict reckonings of an England without what they perceived to be its essence: the monarchy. In place of tears, Royalist women poets intertwined lamentation and resolve to process a loss so monumental that it drove them to, in Pulter's own words, "suspire [their] souls." Through their poetry, they offer a vision of a grieving, but not defeated England, one that navigated political upheaval and perceived social degeneration while remaining resolute in its commitment to its true sovereign and constitution.

Upon the conclusion of the First Civil War, which ended in King Charles I's defeat at the hands of the Parliamentary New Model Army, Royalist poets found themselves writing not of victory, but of lament at the debasement of the Crown. To them and their fellow Royalists, allegiance to the Crown was not merely a political proposition, but a conviction rooted in their view of the King as essential and foundational to the nation. In discussing allegiance and loyalty in the Civil Wars, historian Barbara Donagan illustrates, "the essential Royalist justification for fighting fellow Englishmen" was their view of "the King [as] both sacral entity and embodiment of the state" (Donagan 97). Women Royalists' poetry dating from the aftermath of the First Civil War reinforces and extends that conception of Royalist conviction, and this is evident most especially in Hester Pulter's "The Complaint of Thames" (1647). Writing "in the tradition of the female complaint," often used to express "amorous woe" or "political lament," Pulter offers her unique perspective in a form specially marked for female

authorship by the poetic and social conventions of the age (Scott-Baumann & Ross 103). "The Complaint of Thames" is not only a poem written by a woman, but uniquely a "woman's poem" by period standards, thus expressing Royalist sentiments in a form no male poet could by convention.

The poem, subtitled "When the Best of Kings was Imprisoned by the Worst of Rebels at Holmby," personifies the River Thames much in the same way that the nation of England, and other nations, are personified in the English language, namely, with a feminine persona. This choice not only multiplies the form of the female complaint but it also conflates the Thames with England, and thereby with the state, allowing Pulter to engage in the discourse of monarchical essentialism so central to the Royalist cause. Pulter depicts that the Thames, on hearing of the King's imprisonment, "thus bewailed the learnèd shepherd King" and threatened "to leave [her] channel once again" (4, 16). This threat of natural vengeance, in this case by flood, evokes a mythological or Biblical judgment while underscoring the centrality of the monarch to not only the English state, but to the land of England itself. King Charles' imprisonment is such an abomination to the land, according to Pulter, that the very rivers of the country revolt against it. An echo of Pulter's later injunction to her fellow Royalists that "none presume to weep" can also be heard in the escalation from "bewailed" in line four to the threat communicated in line sixteen.

The interplay of complaint and wailing, traditional for a 17th Century depiction of a female persona, and the more role-subversive language of revenge, is one that Pulter returns to throughout the poem to express not passive discontent but active resistance in the face of Parliament's ascendancy. The Thames's anger becomes more direct in the subsequent lines:

> But when I have seen of thee all my lust,
> And all thy pride and glory turned to dust,
> Then I, triumphant with my watery train,
> Will make this city quagmires once again. (27-30)

Pulter's emphatic language in these lines accomplishes its chastisement of the English people by employing the same rhetoric of judgment and punishment as before, rhetoric reminiscent of Old Testament prophets cautioning the people of Israel against straying from God. The caution in this poem is less religious and more political as Pulter, through the personified Thames, admonishes the English people for straying from the natural political order of King, Lords, and Commons. In harnessing this rhetoric, Pulter crosses two lines of social convention simultaneously: first, by asserting her equal right to a rhetorical form historically reserved almost entirely for men, and second, by employing language similarly religious in tone to the writings of some Parliamentary and Puritan radicals.

The use of "Biblical language and allusions" to offer "radical critiques of state structures" was common to many writers, and most especially women writers, who adhered to the more radical religious sects that flourished in the chaos of the Civil Wars (Fox 126). Hester Pulter was certainly not among those radicals, but she harnesses a less potent form of the same language in "The Complaint of Thames" to the opposite political end. This represents another display of Pulter's ability to express herself uniquely as a woman poet while also unapologetically engaging in a predominately male discourse.

In other portions of "The Complaint of Thames," however, Pulter's language is markedly more conservative, evoking a sort of golden age of royal preeminence. The Thames herself alternates between grand threats to swallow rebellious London and pining for "those halcyon days, the sweet tranquility / That we enjoyed under his happy reign" (36-7). Alternating between these two modes of language, Pulter simultaneously demonstrates her own poetic skill and a disorientation among the Royalists in the wake of the King's defeat. The confused and rapid shifts from martial language to verses longing for a now fading political order illustrate more subtly the effects of loss and defeat on the Cavalier consciousness. Defeat has not extinguished the passions of the King's supporters, but it has depressed them, as is evident in the Thames' nostalgia for a time when she was "envied…by Severn, Humber, [and] Ouse" (44). The form of the complaint also offers a more direct vantage point into the Royalist consciousness than might be offered in more mediated contexts, such as speeches, pamphlets, or other contemporaneous public writings.

In contrast to this initial back and forth, the balance of the poem merges the resolve of the early rhetoric of vengeance with appeals to a monarchical golden age, exhibiting the "binding socio-political ties that demonstrate the enduring strength and vitalizing power of loyalist interconnectedness" (Schneider 563). Extending the theme of the Thames's once prime position among rivers, Pulter attributes the river's primacy to the fact that "Edgar's glory from her river springs" and indeed comes to exalt the Thames above the Loire and the Nile among others (47, 55-57). The appeal to English national pride here is notable, yet the expression of the Thames's glory is most telling, as Pulter identifies prior glorious monarchs, in this case the venerated Anglo-Saxon King Edgar the Peaceable (r. 958-975), as the personification of the river's majesty, and thereby of the majesty and glory of England itself. The poet's resolve again shines through in this extended exaltation, which is simultaneously a lament at the fall of the Thames from her prime position due to the rebellion of Parliament.

The Thames's nostalgia for her once glorious position atop the world's rivers in prestige encompasses nearly a quarter of the poem's length, extending from line forty-five to line seventy-eight. Moreover, the subsequent lament beginning in line seventy-nine, "but now, alas, they envy me no more," spans nearly the full remainder of the poem. Pulter devotes such extensive time to this rhetorical mode not only to communicate the *prima facie* tragedy of a fallen England straying from the path of monarchy, but also to articulate a Royalist vision of the English constitution. One method she employs to this end is a comparison of English and Ancient Roman society through her reference to the Tiber River, wherein the Thames proclaims, "Tiber said, of Horatius's valour brave she ne'er would speak, but I the praise should have" (69-70). In Pulter's formulation, Roman society, metonymically embodied through the Tiber, was founded on valor and martial dominance, while English society, embodied through the Thames, is founded upon and expressed through the glory of the Crown. The fundamental constitution of Pulter's England then is the "sacred sovereign" whom the Thames first takes pride in and then later grieves over (81-2). By placing the Crown so centrally, Pulter advocates a Crown-centered constitution for the realm, one which, by nature, cuts against the ascendant political sentiments of the age and contributes to the demonstration of Royalist resolve within the poem.

The inextricable connection between the monarch and the land itself is further established when the Thames longingly remembers how her waters would "rise to kiss the royal hand, and hardly would give back at my command" (85-6). The monarch is here positioned as a figure so glorious and powerful that "the royal hand" can command of the waters of the Thames itself. No such poetry is written of Parliaments, only of Kings and Queens. "The Complaint of Thames" comes to embody

Pulter's political sensibilities in its language; the King rightly placed at the center of the constitution and rendering it unthinkable that the Commons would rebel against the indispensable personage of England. This is in keeping with other Royalists' sentiments on the matter, which stressed the near equivalence of the King and the state and contended that "to neither could resistance be justified" (Donagan 97). Pulter's poetry functions again in this regard to communicate the Royalist cause and her persistence in it through her unique poetic voice.

Yet even this noble resolve bows to the state of the King and his position by the conclusion of the poem. As her lament draws to a close, the Thames still sings of "examples unto rebels to be made," but like the nation itself, she now reports that the Parliamentary forces "triumph upon [her] conquered streams" (112-4). A semblance of hope, perhaps naïve, can be heard in the Thames's proud vow to make examples of the Parliamentary rebels, yet most significantly, these lines cast the Parliamentary victory as not merely a political realignment, but as the conquest of the realm. Employing entirely non-standard language when discussing a civil war, "The Complaint of Thames" identifies the Parliamentary cause—English as it is—to be a conquering force thrust upon the Kingdom. Parliament's victory in the First Civil War signifies the defeat of the English constitution, both in its political and cultural senses, leaving England weakened for conquest by the irreverent rebels of the New Model Army. In totality, "The Complaint of Thames" travels from lament to resolve to lament again in attempting to reconcile the fall of the King. What is more lamentable, however, by the conclusion of the poem, is the capture of the Kingdom by forces who, through their actions, lead the poet herself to "[sit] sadly down and with [the Thames and begin] to weep" (121).

This same imperilment and ultimate conquest of English society in its Royalist vision, and the violent upheaval that accompanied it, is reflected even more starkly in the post-regicide poetry of another woman Royalist, Katherine Philips. Where Hester Pulter's "Complaint of Thames" was composed after the King's first defeat and imprisonment, Philips, who was but fifteen in the year of Pulter's "Complaint," wrote her poem "On the 3rd September 1651" upon the defeat of Charles, Prince of Wales at Worcester. Philips's poem, therefore, was written following the ultimate defeat of Royalism in the English Civil Wars, succeeding both the execution of King Charles I and the defeat of the future Charles II at Worcester by Oliver Cromwell. This temporal placement is evident from the opening lines of Philips's poem:

> As when the glorious magazine of light,
> Approaches to his canopy of night,
> He with new splendour clothes his dying rays,
> And double brightness to his beams conveys. 1-4

Philips's language takes on a more elegiac character from the outset when compared to Pulter's from four years earlier. She fashions an august requiem, analogizing the Crown to the Sun, and even accords Prince Charles and his now expiring monarchy a "double brightness" in its death throes. When considering Philips's most often intended audience, one composed of "her coterie society of genteel, supportive, Royalist friends," the high manner of the poem seems requisite, but similarly to Pulter's poetry, Philips's work also communicates its sentiments in form as much as in language (Menges 520). Philips reinforces the power of form to convey meaning in lines that could easily refer to the Prince, the Royalists at large, or the poet herself, "as if to brave and check his ending fate, puts on his highest

looks in's lowest state" (5-6). Even upon the demise of the monarchy, putting on "highest looks" remains essential, and by extension, is essential for all Royalists as defeat arrives. Philips's thus strives to put on "highest looks" on behalf of the cause in this poem and succeeds in crafting a lofty lament for the fallen Crown. Resolve now, with any hope of restoration seemingly lost, is not in a triumphant return, but an honorable departure.

In a fascinating divergence from the prevailing style of women poets of her time, one constructed "as if disavowing competition with men" through the avoidance of "the solemnity of iambic pentameter" and "classical allusion," Philips constructs a solemn and allusion-rich elegy (Mermin 336). The decision to compose the poem in this manner is a profound and meaningful assertion of an equal claim to the subject of the monarchy's fall, whether intended or unintended. Much like Pulter's "Complaint" it offers a woman poet's perspective on issues traditionally reserved for men's writings, and thereby serves to lay claim on behalf of Royalist women, complicating both patriarchal views of history and the canon of Seventeenth Century poetry. "On the 3rd September 1651" is a song of "setting majesty [dying] in state," wherein Philips bemoans the fact the monarchy was "not…so fortunate to fall alone" (20-2). These lines, however, are as sorrowful for the state of the speaker's own social environment as much as they are for the Crown's demise. When taken together with Hilary Menges' observations of Philips's Royalist and upper-class coterie, the lamentations of the poem extend to the now imperiled milieu of the Cavalier upper classes. In transposing her anxieties over the fate of her social surroundings to this poem, Philips offers insights unique to her social position as a prosperous woman of the age. Her poetry adds nuance to the defeat of Prince Charles at Worcester, illustrating how it not only marked the metaphorical sunset of hope for the Royalist cause, but also endangered the continued survival of the social structures of Royalist culture.

Philips's focus on the deterioration of English high society, or at least, Royalist high society, continues throughout the poem. With each mournful couplet regarding the defeat at Worcester comes one mourning the pervasiveness of that defeat and its impact. Just as she remarks that the monarchy had "perceived her period now was drawing nigh," she adds that "she summons her whole strength to give one blow to raise herself, or pull down others too" (12-4). Here again the speaker's concerns for the fates of herself and other Royalists, as well as the social and political world they fought for, are palpable. Scholar Gary Schneider's observations regarding Royalist letter writing during this period elucidate the effect of Philips's focus on the social order and cohesion of England. He notes that Royalist writings, through their exchange in Cavalier social circles, "[served] as a stronghold against civil degeneration" (Schneider 567). References to collective degeneration, such as "pull down others too" or Philips's allusion to "captive Samson" who "could not life conclude, unless attended with a multitude," serve as opportunities for both collective emotional expression and for combatting the despair, dread, and dejection engendered by the collapse of the Royalist social order. In the concluding lines of "On the 3rd September 1651," the shock of social decay and degeneration are evident in Philips's words, and that shock serves as compelling testimony to the Royalist experience of Worcester. The hopelessness in the speaker's question, "who'd trust to greatness now, whose food is air, whose ruin sudden, and whose end despair?" gives emotional life to the Royalists in defeat (27-8). All that was once certain about societal order is now increasingly uncertain, an effect communicated clearly that was no doubt an invitation to commiserate Philips's audience.

Ultimately, it is not commiseration but transcendence on which Philips settles. She concludes with the appeal, "give me virtue then, which sums up all, and firmly stands when crowns and sceptres

fall" (33-4). In this final plea, it is as if the currency of monarchy has been devalued and debased to the extent that Philips and her fellow Royalists must now seek a new store of value. In contrast to Pulter, who ended her "Complaint of Thames" with weeping, Katherine Philips opts to rest her hope on a new force: virtue. In this early poem of hers, she seems to reflect her later reverence for pastoral retreat, a "voluntary removal" that "shelters…friends from the noisy, warring world" (Menges 520). This act of resistance by retreat reflects not only the state of the Royalist cause at the end of the Civil Wars, but the sentiments of a woman who came to search for a new cause, while also retaining her social and political sensibilities. In portraying this, the poem offers a distinct perspective on the Cavalier consciousness at the end of the Civil Wars and an encouragement to all readers of the Royalist persuasion to join in a retreat from a fallen realm.

While the volume of poetry written by women during the Civil Wars is vast, Pulter and Philips's respective poems of lament at the defeat of the Crown represent a unique and often under-examined lens through which to view not only Royalist poetry, but the Royalist experience. Both Pulter and Philips harness their unique positions and perspectives as women poets while also asserting equal claim to forms and manners of expression often restricted to their male counterparts alone. A sense of dejection and disorientation is evident in both "The Complaint of Thames" and "On the 3rd September 1651," yet both poems also seek to transcend defeat and degeneration, offering new avenues to social satisfaction where the political realm and that of society at large seem set upon a course of decay. If, as Hester Pulter claimed, "tears are too weak," then she and her contemporaries provided thorough and resonant meditations on the collapse of the English constitution, political and cultural, and its inestimable effects on their lived realities. In their words, the Royalist reckoning of Parliamentary ascendancy takes on a character of solemn resistance. As Pulter, Philips, and the women of the Royalist cause could never know of the eventual advent of the Restoration—these women held fast to their convictions and remained ever resolute.

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Redefining the Encyclopedic Novel in Valeria Luiselli's *Lost Children Archive*

Lily Nagengast

In 2018, Valeria Luiselli published her first work of fiction written in English: *Lost Children Archive*. An epic novel that spans across nine states, *Lost Children Archive* is made up of Polaroid photographs, collections of boxes, and a bibliography. Luiselli's novel challenges traditional genre-based categorization through its multitudes, contradictions, and sheer literary complexity. Despite the amount of scholarly attention paid to Luiselli's works of nonfiction, few peer-reviewed articles have been published on *Lost Children Archive*. By analyzing *Lost Children Archive* with the framework of encyclopedic narratives, the novel is revealed to be an archival product rife with questions about the slipperiness of memory, national culture, identity, history, and narrative authority. Labeling *Lost Children Archive* as encyclopedic is not merely a matter of categorization, rather, it is a matter inserting Luiselli into literary history and legitimizing feminist epistemologies.

Edward Mendelson introduced the term "encyclopedic narrative" in his 1976 essay, "Encyclopedic Narratives: From Dante to Pynchon." Although this genre has existed throughout history, literary criticism has been slow to define it because of its slippery form, as the genre has both historical and formal conditions (Mendelson 1267). Mendelson names seven encyclopedic novels: Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Rabelais's five books of *The Life of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, Goethe's Faust, Melville's *Moby-Dick*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1267). His selection is hardly surprising because these texts are already considered canonical. He admits "there are others occupying comparable positions in national literatures of which I know far too little to say anything," yet he implies that those other works are either outside the scope of encyclopedic or not worth his time (Mendelson 1267).

Mendelson outlines the general theory of this genre, pointing out that one of the core traits of an encyclopedic novel is its "totality," or its author's attempt to capture the full range of knowledge and beliefs of a national culture while trying to name and identify the ideological perspectives the culture uses to shape and interpret its knowledge (1269). Also central to his conceptualization of the encyclopedic narrative is the genre's "special historical position" in its culture (Mendelson 1267). Encyclopedic novels are located at a "fulcrum… between periods that later readers consider national

pre-history and national history" (Mendelson 1267-68). Each major culture in the West produces an encyclopedic author: "one whose work attends to the whole social and linguist range of his nation, who makes use of all the literary styles and conventions known to his countrymen, whose dialect often becomes established as the national language… and who becomes the focus of a large and persistent exegetic and textual industry" (Mendelson 1268). Encyclopedic narratives also incorporate a handful of other genres, such as the heroic epic quest, romance, and the *Bildungsroman*, as each encyclopedic narrative is an encyclopedia of literary styles (Mendelson 1270-1). Finally, encyclopedic novels focus on national mythical history and are polyglot books that provide a history of language (Mendelson 1273).

In more recent years, scholars have reconsidered Mendleson's conceptualization of the genre. Petrus van Ewijk and Luc Herman argue that Mendelson's definition of the encyclopedic narrative is far too narrow, basing their argument in postmodernism and its insistence on the lack of wholeness in contemporary culture (168). By characterizing the encyclopedic novel as having a specific orientation towards a national culture and having its origins "at the edge" of that culture, Mendelson "severely limits the actual number of member texts and reduces their ideological potential" (Ewijk and Herman 169). Ewijk and Herman contend that Mendelson's term is so reductive that it is unusable to describe novels that incorporate both totalizing tendencies and emphasis on fragmentation (169).

Hillary Clark also challenges Mendelson's definition, asserting that the limits of encyclopedic works are narrativized into the novel itself. Clark, who has worked on Joyce, explains that a text is not encyclopedic simply because it contains a lot of information or looks like a reference work with footnotes and subheadings; instead, it "must speculate on its own discursive processes of discovery and arrangement, and on the limitation of these processes, given the fact of time and change" (105). She continues that the discourse of the encyclopedic novel is built out of other discourses, and "involves rearranging ready-made narratives and chunks of knowledge" (Clark 105). It revises and corrects already-known knowledge, forming complex and elaborate structures while also "recycl[ing] knowledge" so that nothing anyone else has written is wasted (Clark 106). Like Ewijk and Herman, Clark's conceptualization of the genre leaves room for both totality and fragmentation.

Lost Children Archive adheres to and departs from various aspects of Mendelson's definition, but fits with Ewijk, Herman, and Clark's conceptualizations of encyclopedic narratives. Ewijk and Herman assert that a "new working definition [of the encyclopedic novel] is therefore in order" (169). By engaging with the above theorizations of encyclopedic narratives as well as theorizations of feminist epistemologies, literary criticism on *Lost Children Archive*, and conducting my own close readings, this paper aims to call attention to the need for a new definition of encyclopedic narratives while exploring the novel's identification with national culture, precarious historical position, totality and fragmentation, and intertextuality.

Given the positive reception of the novel, Luiselli's work lacks a strong body of critical interpretation. Several literary scholars have written on her book *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions*, a nonfiction work about unaccompanied Central American minors coming to the United States and the immigration questionnaire they must navigate to determine whether they will be admitted. While *Lost Children Archive* also focuses on the child immigration crisis, scholarship on *Tell Me How It Ends* is not transferable to *Lost Children Archive*. Luiselli has spoken about *Lost Children Archive* in many interviews, and because of the lack of scholarship on the novel, I will include a few quotations here in which she discusses the novel's genre. Luiselli thinks of *Lost Children Archive* as a

"typical American road novel, but it's also a reverse or an upside-down road novel that plays against the foundation myth of the U.S. being invented in this expansion towards the West" (Owens). She describes how it complicates the typical American road novel by "crossing another narrative, which is the movement upwards from the south," so "the road trip, which is kind of a horizontal story, is intersected by this vertical narrative that moves upwards" (Owens).

Despite having spoken at length about her novel, Luiselli has not categorized it as encyclopedic or herself as an encyclopedic writer. Perhaps this is related to the ways in which gender shapes who society determines to be producers of knowledge, particularly knowledge worthy of being called "encyclopedic." In contrast to mainstream epistemology, the very premise of feminist epistemology asserts that rational inquiry is a social endeavor, and therefore stresses the significance of the social, cultural, and political context of the activity of knowing (Longino). Rachmad Hidayat explains feminist epistemology by differentiating it from the Western epistemological tradition. Western epistemology values the notions of knowledge in the formula "S knows that P," which "presumes the object of knowledge to be independent and readily observable to the mind of the knower" (Hidayat 144). Feminist scholars such as Sandra Harding and Susan Bordo have revealed that such features are typically attributed to men and are also in conjunction with the idea that masculinity and femininity are opposed to each other and mutually exclusive (Hidayat 145). This further undermines the epistemic capabilities and authority of women and other marginalized groups.

Elisabeth Anderson stresses the importance of gender symbolism in our understanding of knowledge practices in the construction of a hierarchy of prestige and authority among fields of knowledge and in the content of theoretical inquiry itself (63). Anderson explains the idea of "androcentric" knowledge practices, which reflects an orientation to specifically or typically male interests or lives (70). She explains that the majority of Western theory is androcentric because of how it takes up "the view that males, male lives, or 'masculinity' set the norm for humans or animals generally" and "females, their lives or 'feminine' characteristics are represented as problematic, deviations from the norm, and hence in need of a type of explanation not required for their male counterparts" (Anderson 70). Theory can also be androcentric if it does not pay attention to how phenomena from the perspective of men would be different if examined from a women's point of view (Anderson 71).

While these theorizations of feminist epistemologies and knowledge production may seem tangentially related, a brief overview of these theories reveals how Mendelson's conceptualization of encyclopedic novels privileges masculine knowledge production. It also provides insight into why male authors and literary scholars are more willing to categorize novels written by men as encyclopedic, and why knowledge produced by women like Luiselli is typically excluded.

Historical Position

Lost Children Archive is located at a special historical position; that of the child migrant crisis in the United States. It blurs the pre-history and history distinction Mendelson sees as essential to the genre. Perhaps the most overt way Luiselli distorts this distinction is through her emphasis on the historical reasons for the child migrant crisis. The female first-person narrator, who the children call "Ma" or "Mama," reflects on this history:

> No one thinks of the children arriving here now as refugees of a hemispheric war that extends, at least, from these very mountains, down across the country into the southern U.S. and northern Mexican deserts, sweeping across the Mexican sierras, forests, and southern rain forests into Guatemala, into El Salvador, and all the way to the Celaque mountains in Honduras. No one thinks of those children as consequences of a historical war that goes back decades. (Luiselli 51)

Luiselli invokes the past as the reason for the present, implicating the United States' role in causing the crisis. She also clouds the past and present by telling the story of undocumented children closely and congruently with that of Native Americans. Pa is fascinated by the history of the Apache tribe, and as a documentarian, he records sounds of that history. Ma meditates on her husband's stories of Geronimo, Chief Cochise, and the Indian Removal Act: "the more I listen to the stories he tells about the country's past, the more it seems like he's talking about the present" (Luiselli 133). Ma considers the United States' banishing of Native Americans and sending them to reservations and how it is similar to what is being done to the mostly indigenous people from Central America who are relocated to detention centers or deported (Luiselli 133). While the stories of Native Americans and undocumented people are not necessarily parallel, Luiselli complicates the idea of past and present, pre-history and history. Ma reflects: "All I see in hindsight is history repeated, its fucked-up heart palpitating underneath us, failing, messing up again and again as it winds its way around a sun. And in the middle of it all, tribes, families, people, all beautiful things falling apart, debris, dust, erasure" (Luiselli 145).

Identification with National Culture

Lost Children Archive troubles Mendelson's definition of the genre by its refusal to identify itself with a singular national culture. While the subject of *Lost Children Archive* is located at the U.S.-Mexico border, Luiselli simultaneously harkens back to the very American notion of the cross-country road trip and explicitly references Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. Her story, and the stories of the lost children, also have distinct roots in Mexico and the Northern Triangle (Luiselli 19). While the family travels for the entire novel, their precise location is often vague. Despite the frequent mentioning of maps, Luiselli rarely gives specific locations and instead gives names of motels, stores, or small towns. By having Ma tell the story of missing children and "chas[e] ghosts and echoes" Luiselli adds to the novel's feeling of placelessness. As Luiselli explained in the interview cited above, the novel disrupts identification with a national culture by interrupting its horizontal, American, cross-country road trip with the vertical migration of immigrant children from Central America.

Totality and Fragmentation

Mendelson argues that encyclopedic novels must also attempt totality, or to "render the full range of knowledge and beliefs of a national culture" (1269). *Lost Children Archive* does not use quotation marks except when quoting from another source. It is also self-conscious of its fragmentation and the need for stories to achieve totality. On the first page of the novel, Ma reflects: "I'm not sure which parts of our story we might each choose to pluck and edit out for [our children], and which ones we'll shuffle around and insert back in to produce a final version… we'll need to tell them a beginning, a middle, and an end. We'll need to give them an answer, tell them a proper story" (Luiselli 5). Luiselli frequently draws attention to Ma's role as a documentarist and the need Ma feels to identify the distinct parts of her family's story: "Beginnings, middles, and ends are only a matter

of hindsight. If we are forced to produce a story in retrospect, our narrative wraps itself selectively around the elements that seem relevant, bypassing all the others" (Luiselli 62). Luiselli's narrators are more concerned with truth and accuracy, as embodied by Ma, Pa, and the boy's recordings of sounds and conversations. However, Luiselli reveals the novel's "discursive processes of discovery and arrangement" and questions its accuracy and truth as she shifts to the boy's first-person narration in the novel's middle portion and its ending.

The boy's first-person narration both reveals inconsistencies and echoes aspects of Ma's narrative. The names of dividing sections, or subheadings, of both the boy and Ma's narrative sections are nearly identical. Both begin with "Departure," "Family Lexicon," and "Family Plot." However, the rest of the subheadings are rearranged differently, underscoring the differences in the boy's and Ma's interpretations of events. Ma's narration proceeds chronologically, whereas the boy's narration takes place after the events have transpired. At the beginning of his narrative, the boy tells the girl: "This is the story of us, and of the lost children, from beginning to end, and I'm gonna tell it to you" (Luiselli 191). The opening sections of both the boy's and Ma's narrative sections are titled "Departure," but the details diverge. On one hand, Ma's narrative gives an account of the family in the car leaving New York City. She describes the children in the back, her place in the copilot seat checking the map, and the husband driving (Luiselli 5). On the other hand, the boy's "Departure" begins with the departure of the plane with the undocumented children: "We were there, and the lost children had disappeared on a plane into the sky" (Luiselli 191). Both narratives give accounts of departures, but very different ones.

There are also moments when the boy's narrative complicates Ma's. For instance, his explanation of Ma's reactions to hearing the news on the radio about the lost children challenges Ma's narrative:

> She always told us to be quiet when news about the lost children came on, and she always got all strange after hearing it… It was either that or she got so sad and angry after hearing the radio news that she didn't want to talk to us anymore, didn't even want to look at us. It made me so angry at her… And it made me wonder, what if we got lost, would she finally pay attention to us? (Luiselli 208)

In Ma's account of this scene or a similar one, she listens to the radio and then answers questions from the girl, who asks what "refugee" means (48). Ma describes her response: "I tell her a refugee is someone who has to find a new home. Then, to soften the conversation, distract her from all this, I look for a playlist and press shuffle" (48). While not necessarily contradictory accounts, the boy and Ma's accounts do not neatly align; Ma thinks she is "soften[ing] the conversation" by putting on music, but the boy interprets this as her getting sad and angry, and not paying attention to the children. Still, the boy's narration confirms, and almost echoes, Ma's at times. Both provide nearly identical accounts of the girl's responses to Ma and Pa's fighting, for instance. In Ma's narration, she notes how "the girl grunts, puffs, and tells us to quit it… she footnotes a piece of final advice… Now, Papa. I think it's time you smoked another one of your sticks. And you, Mama, you just need to focus on your map and on your radio. Okay? Both of you just have to look at the bigger picture now" (Luiselli 50). In the boy's narration, he explains, "When they were fighting, you would come up with jokes or sometimes even say, Papa, you go smoke your cigarette now, and Mama, you focus on your map and on your news"

(208). By 10 providing accounts from both Ma and the boy, Luiselli documents the slipperiness of memory and the significance of perspective.

Intertextuality

Mendelson explains that an encyclopedic narrative is an encyclopedia of literary styles, "ranging from the most primitive and anonymous levels of proverb-lore to the most esoteric heights of euphuism" (1271). While Luiselli's novel does not include any Spanish, it is rife with intertextual references and is particularly concerned with language. Several sections of the novel focus on the "intimate family lexicon" to explain how members of the family refer to each other and the child refugees (Luiselli 75). Ma reflects on the specific language of her blended family:

> And because hyphenations and petty nuisances complicate the sentences of everyday grammar… They become: our children. And sometimes: the boy, the girl… Quickly, the two of them learned the rules of our private grammar, and adopted the generic nouns Mama and Papa, or sometimes simply Ma and Pa. And until now, and least, our family lexicon defined the scope and limits of our shared world. (Luiselli 6)

Luiselli never provides the family's "real" names. However, early in the road trip, the family decides to "rename" themselves, and each family member takes on a made-up "Apache name." The girl becomes Memphis, the boy is Swift Feather, Ma is Lucky Arrow, and Pa is Chief Cochise (Luiselli 107-108). Although created in a matter of minutes, Ma reflects on how she will "cling to these four certainties" that are their Apache names (Luiselli 108). By renaming themselves, the family, and the children in particular, take on an even more mythic quality.

By engaging with multiple registers of language—such as the language of literature, migration, and the family—Luiselli's novel is a "polyglot book[] that provide[s] a history of language" (Mendelson 1273). Throughout the novel, Ma emphasizes the need for specific language in talking about undocumented children and is frustrated by the media's portrayal of them. She realizes the boy and girl call the child refugees "the lost children," and agrees with their choice of words, thinking this name reflects how undocumented children "have lost the right to a childhood" (Luiselli 75). She reflects on how the word "removal" is a euphemism for deportation: "removal is to deportation what sex is to rape. When an 'illegal' immigrant is deported nowadays, he or she is, in written history, 'removed'" (Luiselli 133). While Ma obsesses over the language of the child refugees, she is less concerned by the precision of the language of her family.

Luiselli inserts *Lost Children Archive* into the literary archive from its epigraph, citing both French historian Arlette Farge and a translation of the Migrant Prayer. After the epigraphs, Luiselli's first intertextual reference is to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Luiselli cites Whitman's work to explain why Ma and her husband decided to devote their lives documenting, or recording, the sounds of strangers. She quotes Whitman: "Passing stranger! You do not know how longingly I look upon you, You must be he I was seeking or she I was seeking, (it comes to me as a dream)" (Luiselli 29). *Lost Children Archive* is filled with an immense amount of literary and extraliterary references, including standard works of American literature like Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* (78), *The Collected Poems of Emily Dickenson* (34), Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (76); works of British literature like William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (77), *Paradise Lost* (90), *Heart of Darkness*; Latinx works such as "El

Dinosaurio" by Augusto Monterroso; songs and artists such as David Bowie's "Space Oddity," Kendrick Lamar's "Alright" (176), Bob Dylan, (139), Janis Joplin (120); and obscure Western movies such as *The Sheriff of Fractured Jaw and Sátántango* (131). By including such a wide array of intertextual and multimodal references into her novel, Luiselli resists totality by not providing space for a single voice or interpretation.

In addition to her intertextual references, Luiselli enumerates items that are in the boxes that accompany the family on their journey. Each member of the family has at least one box. In the Works Cited at the end of the novel, Luiselli refers to the boxes as the novel's "fundamental 'bibliography'" (357). The boxes include books, notebooks, folders, CDs, musical scores, maps, migrant mortality reports, photographs, posters, and many other materials. In the Works Cited, Luiselli describes how *Lost Children Archive* is

> [t]he result of a dialogue with many different texts, as well as other non-textual sources. The archive that sustains this novel is both an inherent and a visible part of the central narrative. In other words, references to sources—textual, musical, visual, or audio-visual—are not meant as side notes, or ornaments that decorate the story, but function as intralinear markers that point to the many voices in the conversation that the book sustains with the past. (357)

Luiselli emphasizes that the intertextual references are central to the novel and its composition, and are not merely an "outward, performative gesture" (358). She closes her Works Cited with what feels like an oath: "to the best of my ability, I have quoted, cited and referenced all works used for this novel" (Luiselli 361). By engaging with and making visible "ready-made narratives and chunks of knowledge," Luiselli inserts herself and her characters into the literary archive (Clark 105). In doing so, she underscores how inquiry is a social endeavor. While there are many possible theories as to why Luiselli provides the reader with references, perhaps one is her awareness of the gendered nature of knowledge production. Therefore, whether consciously or subconsciously, she recognizes the need to document and support her archive because of her position as a Latina writer. By both incorporating and citing such a wide variety of sources, she stresses the significance of the social, cultural, and political context of the activity of knowing and reasserts the epistemic capabilities and authority of women and other marginalized groups.

Labeling *Lost Children Archive* as encyclopedic is more than a matter of categorization. Instead, classifying this novel as such reasserts its literariness, and the idea that it can—and should—be taught in literature classes other than those designated as strictly "Latinx." Lost Children Archive simultaneously resists and adheres to Mendelson's definition of the encyclopedic novel through the ways in which it conforms to and obscures the seemingly dichotomous ideas of history and pre-history and totality and fragmentation; refuses to adhere to a single national identity; speculates on its own discursive processes; and contains an abundance of non-textual and textual references. In this way, an updated definition is necessary to legitimize feminist epistemologies, and therefore open the genre to writers like Luiselli who challenge androcentric knowledge practices.

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Transgressive *Tekken*: Player Expression and Participatory Culture in the Korean Backdash

Jessie Caitlin Bullard

"The medium is the message"-- the now-infamous, though often misunderstood, phrase from media theorist Marshall McLuhan is one that remains prevalent within the now media-ubiquitous landscape of hypermedia, social software, and digital worlds. These words are especially relevant in the still somewhat-nascent medium of video games, wherein the form itself is more significant than its content because the genre shapes and influences the ways in which individuals communicate and interpret meaning. This influence derives from the notion that media becomes an extension of human bodies, according to McLuhan, and therefore there exists a visceral and ambient relationship between media and bodies. Video games, perhaps more deeply than other media preceding it, serve as an embodied illustration of this McLuhanian concept due to the physical and intellectual participation required by the player to experience the medium. The aesthetic experience of video games differs, though not completely, from film, literature, and music because of the particularly unique characteristics of expression and control performed within the medium on the part of the player.

While by comparison film, literature, and music convey a more auteur expression-- wherein the director, author, or artist maintains a centralized control over many aspects of the creative work-- video games directly invoke and invite the control of players both literally via game mechanics and figuratively via player expression and agency. Of course, not all genres within video games prioritize player expression and control. As games scholar Jesper Juul describes, games under the pejorative "walking simulators," which limit player interactions within the game, "[remove] the ability of players to have much influence on the game world" (Juul). This is in contrast to gameplay experiences which Juul refers to as the aesthetics of the aesthetics of video games-- or, aesthetics II. Within aesthetics II, "[games] … are designed for goal-oriented behavior in which [players] evaluate the game's objects for their utility" (Juul). In other words, games of this nature focus on player optimization, strategizing, and development for its own sake. This builds upon the aesthetics of video games, or aesthetics I, where players engage in gameplay without optimization for the sake of *play* itself.

The significance of aesthetics II within video games resides in the player's expression via optimization and utility-seeking, which is in tension with the comparable auteur-style of other

narrative media. With player expression, games "sometimes allow their players to do unexpected things, often just because these actions are not explicitly forbidden" (Aarseth 132). This notion of play is identified by games scholar Espen Aarseth as transgressive play. According to Aarseth, moments of transgressive play are such because they are not part of the game's "intended repertoire, and would in most cases have been rendered impossible if the game designers could have predicted them" (132). Because transgressive play occurs when the player transcends beyond what the game developers envisioned, gameplay emerging from transgressive play can be considered as a type of player expression since it was not controlled or decided by the developers, as well as its potential for optimization within aesthetics II.

Player expression in aesthetics II and transgressive play, as they both consider player agency challenging that of developer or auteur control, also network with Henry Jenkins's participatory culture because players' "voices" and identities are elevated within the fandom of the game. Within a participatory culture, individuals are often gathered together as a community due to shared interest networks, like video games, in which "members believe that their contributions matter" and there is "some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices" (Jenkins 7). Participatory culture allows members of a fandom community to innovate via creative expression and collaborate in making contributions to the fandom-- in other words, those participating contribute actively to the fandom by creating new content for fan consumption and knowledge invention, therefore influencing how others may participate and contribute in the future. With transgressive play as a form of player expression in mind, participatory play is important for members of video game communities because it allows for "producing new creative forms" and "shaping the flow of new media'' within the game world (Jenkins 8).

One game that models transgressive play as participatory play is the *Tekken* franchise (particularly from its third iteration onwards) because of the innovative gameplay constantly being refined within the fandom community. The Korean Backdash (KBD), a strategic move discovered and perfected by the community in the South Korean *Tekken* scene, confirms Aarseth's concept of transgressive play as a form of player expression emerging within Juul's Aesthetics II; within this phenomenon of transgressive play and player expression in the KBD, *Tekken* players also partake in Jenkins's participatory culture, wherein the *Tekken* community in South Korea collaborates through an interest-driven network and makes significant contributions to the fandom--thus, shaping the game as much as the game shapes their community.

Player expression within *Tekken* is illustrated through utility seeking and optimization of the game mechanics intended by the game developers. Within the *Tekken* franchise, it is important for a player to manage their spacing because it is a 3D-fighting game where jockeying for position is crucial for gaining an advantage in the match. As part of this, one vital utility players seek is retreat through moving backwards. The fastest way a player can retreat is by inputting 'back' twice in quick succession, which is called a backdash. However, backdashing is deliberately limited by the game developers; after completing one backdash, there is an intentional animation frame which prevents players from performing successive backdashes. While successive backdashes are not part of *Tekken*'s intended repertoire, players can interrupt the backdash animation with nearly any other command, such as crouching (down input); in this way, players can perform what's known as 'backdash canceling,' by inputting back-back-down-back-back-down, for example, repeatedly to retreat faster than regular backdashes alone (Core-A Gaming). As Juul notes of optimization within aesthetics II, play is not

entirely free but "free movement within a more rigid structure" of rules and limitations (Juul). *Tekken* does not allow its players to move freely without limitations, but players can identify ways to freely move within the limited mechanics and controls of the game. In doing so, players must recognize tools and inputs that will best serve their intended movement, thus optimizing the envisioned mechanics within the game. The optimization of backdash canceling in *Tekken* affirms the player expression within aesthetics II of video games with goals and limitations.

In *Tekken*, transgressive play emerges with the KBD, which competitive *Tekken* players in South Korea discovered through attempts to optimize backdash canceling. In the competitive *Tekken* scene, players sought the most efficient way to backdash cancel, where down-back seemed to be the closest input on the lever to interrupt a normal backdash. However, in doing so, players also discovered a glitch within the controls of an arcade stick. When letting the stick go from a down-back position, another back input would be registered. This glitch occurs because when inputting down-back, two switches inside the arcade stick are being activated (down and back). If players release the stick so that the down input is released first, the back input will activate for a second before the lever goes back to neutral position (Core-A gaming). This split-second activation of the back-switch inside the arcade stick gives players a free back-input just for releasing the lever. If players input 'back' one more time after the controller-glitch 'back' input, then the character performs a backdash. Repeating this pattern multiple times results in what is called the KBD.

The discovery of this glitch serves as an embodiment of McLuhan's notion that media is an extension of human beings: "Our human senses, of which all media are extensions, are also fixed charges on our personal energies [and configure] the awareness and experiences of each one of us" (McLuhan 21). In this sense, media creates an embodied sense of perspective and understanding--technology acts as additional extremities wherein human beings undergo layered sensory experiences, thus surfacing new exposure and invention of knowledge. Through tactile participation via extensions of media, *Tekken* players enter an embodied form of transgressive play because their transgression occurs as a result of tactile apprehension within the controls of the arcade stick.

The KBD is a moment of transgressive play within the *Tekken* franchise because the intended repertoire of the gameplay has been exceeded. In the case of the KBD, the transgressive play is not only exceeding the game's intended moveset, but additionally embodies a tactile extension of the player's self into the game's media. A glitch in the controller led players to discover a way to manipulate other mechanics in the game to optimize backdash cancelation and retreat. For *Tekken* players, the KBD symbolizes what Aarseth calls "a gesture of rebellion against the tyranny of the game, a (perhaps illusory) way for the played subject to regain their sense of identity and uniqueness through the mechanisms of the game itself" (132). The free 'back' input from the controller glitch allowed *Tekken* players in South Korea to gain a unique identity within the game franchise. This glitch would not have been discovered were it not for the arcade stick serving as an extension of the players' selves during the gameplay experience, configuring the awareness of the gitch's utility for optimizing backdash canceling. By transgressing the game developers' intended use for the game mechanics and limitations, players' creative and innovative expressions contribute and introduce a new form of gameplay into the game world.

By contributing a new form of gameplay into the game world of *Tekken*, competitive South Korean *Tekken* players partake in participatory play wherein their participation influences the *Tekken* competitive scene globally. While the KBD originated by competitive players in South Korea, likely

within a micro-community and one of the *Tekken* capitals of the world-- the Green Arcade-- the movement has now become a mainstay in the global, competitive *Tekken* scene (Core-A gaming). The KBD is now a staple of the *Tekken* community, and competitive *Tekken* players utilize the KBD as an optimal form of gameplay internationally. Within Jenkins's participatory culture, the KBD in *Tekken* illustrates the four processes of participation in contemporary culture: affiliations, expressions, collaborative problem-solving, and circulations.

The KBD represents affiliations within participatory culture because the *Tekken* scene in South Korea, notably within the Green Arcade, consists of "formal and informal memberships"-- competitive and casual players-- "centered around various forms of media"-- the *Tekken* franchise (Jenkins 8). Additionally, the KBD models expressions within participatory culture due to *Tekken* players "producing new creative forms" within the game via optimization and transgressive play (Jenkins 8). Collaborative problem solving is depicted through the KBD because South Korean competitive players sought optimization of backdash canceling collectively and collaboratively in order to "develop new knowledge" (Jenkins 8). Finally, circulations of the KBD within the global *Tekken* community shape the way the game is presently played in its newest iterations, with the technique still bearing "Korean" in its name, recalling the micro-community of *Tekken* players who first transgressed the intended repertoire of *Tekken* gameplay (Jenkins 8). The KBD portrays not only the transgressive play and player expression emerging within the *Tekken* community, but also the participatory nature of video games like *Tekken* through collaboration, invention of new knowledge, and acknowledgement of the value new knowledge brings to the fandom space.

Another revelation of the KBD is the identification of gameplay optimization and transgressive play aligning within aesthetics II as one form of player expression. Aarseth's notion of the transgressive player "[gesturing] rebellion" against oppressive forces within the gameworld established by oppressive game designers, wherein transgressive players often innovate and invent completely new ways to play the game that no longer adhere to the designers' intentions, is not quite what occurs with the KBD in *Tekken* (132). Rather, the KBD does underscore the importance of transgressive play in any gaming experience-- that is, unintentional discovery and creation of new gameplay techniques and styles-- as a way to optimize gameplay that is intended by the game designers. Optimization of gameplay and transgressive play, as a form of player expression in aesthetics II, diverge when escalation of skill and strategy are no longer prioritized or of concern. Essentially, when transgressive play turns away from the intentions and purposes the game designers had set for the gameplay experience as a whole, transgressive play takes on a new kind of player expression that frees itself of the game's limitations altogether. While the KBD does, at its core, align with the original gameplay purposes for *Tekken* because it optimizes a planned repertoire within the game, the participatory nature of the South Korean *Tekken* community's invention of the move points towards a possibility of transgressive play that completely transforms the way the game is played in future iterations. The KBD has already made a lasting impact within *Tekken* communities globally, and the participatory culture surrounding *Tekken* as a microworld may still invent new gameplay purposes and styles that radically reframe the way *Tekken* is played and/or utilized.

The KBD is a moment within video game culture and community where player expression and agency are clearly defined in contrast to more *auteur* genres like film and literature. The KBD also clarifies the McLuhanian concept of media acting as an extension of human bodies due to the tactile apprehension players exhibit in transgressing the limitations of *Tekken* planned by the developers. By

optimizing backdash canceling, a form of player expression through the intended repertoire of the game, a micro-community of *Tekken* players discovered an unintended but optimal form of gameplay now utilized globally within the competitive, and even casual, *Tekken* scene. The impact the KBD has had within the *Tekken* franchise elevates the players' transgressive play to that of a participatory play, where the transgression will continue to inform and influence the way future *Tekken* players partake in innovative and collaborative gameplay moving forward.

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