

nomad²⁰¹⁸ Outlaw

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This edition of the *nomad* Undergraduate Journal revolves around the theme of “Outlaw.” The essays in this volume invite us to interrogate what it means to be an outlaw: who and what is deemed unacceptable and forbidden, whether these labels are valid, and why this process of outlawing has taken place. These essays investigate how, when considered from alternate perspectives, that which has been outlawed is not all that different from that which is deemed tolerable. I admire the intellectual energy the students have invested in their work over the course of the last year.

The Nomad Undergraduate Program and Journal would not be possible without a team of people who believe in the mission behind *nomad*. The members of the Department of Comparative Literature serve as the program’s backbone as mentors to our undergraduates, and are vital to the program’s success. Thank you for the time and energy you invest in our students. My thanks also to Cynthia Stockwell, whose dedication to this program is boundless, and to Robin Okumu, who served as our wonderful Mentorship Coordinator this year.

I would also like to thank the faculty and graduate students who presented at our three Nomad Speaker Events: Prof. Katya Hokanson, Prof. Roy Chan, Dr. Dawn Marlan, and our graduate student speakers Dr. Baran Germen, Elizabeth Howard, and Joanna Myers.

The Nomad Mentorship Program is a unique and essential creative outlet for undergraduates dedicated to literary research and writing. I am proud to have had the opportunity to work with this group of students, and look forward to watching the program grow in the years to come.

With gratitude,

BESS R. H. MYERS

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Outlaw

MADDI CARR

Maddi Carr is a psychology major who is pursuing minors in legal studies and classical civilizations. Her interests include abnormal developmental psychology, the criminal justice system, and the interplay between the two.

Mentor: **Dr. Rachel Eccleston**

FOLIE À DEUX: THE PSYCHOPATHIC DYAD IN *FAUST*, *DRACULA*, AND *RED DRAGON*

“**WHO HOLDS THE DEVIL, LET HIM HOLD HIM WELL.** He will hardly be caught a second time,” says Bedelia Du Maurier, staring into the face of Will Graham. The words of Goethe’s *Faust* apply only too well to the situation on screen. In the lyrical tone so common to NBC’s *Hannibal*, a television adaptation of Thomas Harris’s 1981 novel *Red Dragon*, she warns him of the danger he has put them all in by planning to release a cannibalistic serial killer from prison. The camera switches to capture Graham’s reaction. He tilts his head and assures her that by no means does he intend for Hannibal Lecter to be caught a second time. “Can’t live with him. Can’t live without him. Is that what this is?” Du Maurier demands, fear showing plain on her face. Graham, who has until this point scarcely acknowledged his own allegiances out loud, says, “I guess...this is my Becoming.” Du Maurier’s response encompasses Graham’s entire character arch throughout the three-season run of the program: “What you are *becoming* is pathological” (“The Wrath of the Lamb”).

There have been many attempts to explain the existence of the outlaw personality. It has moved between spheres of reasoning that range from Arnold Buss’s theory that “a rejecting mother...leads to a hostile and rejective male child” (qtd. in Smith 10), to 19th century descriptions of “moral insanity” (Werlinger, qtd. in Federman 46). Before the forensic psychologists of the modern era, the duty to define and outline the rights of individuals deemed criminally insane fell to alien-

ists. These individuals determined whether defendants were mentally competent to stand trial, which led to the eventual conundrum of whether or not the diagnosis of psychopathy was a medical or moral state of being. Phillipe Pinel, a late-18th century physician, illustrated his prototype of a psychopath as “unmoved by passion,” “wealthy and aristocratic,” with “all the social and environmental advantages” and without “grounds for [the] abnormal behavior of... the lesser [and] more socially maligned” (Smith 3–4). In *The Psychopath in Society*, Robert J. Smith cites the conclusion of multiple sociological studies: psychopaths do not live by the expectations of society because they do not “have the normal anxiety in anticipating the outcome of...antisocial actions.” This allows them to “[exercise their] whim without inhibition” (15). In this way, psychopaths transgress our understandings of both mental illness and human morality. They are often portrayed in literature and the media as demonic entities, or creatures famed for their psychosexual peculiarity.

One adjacent mental health curiosity that has emerged since psychopath entered the cultural lexicon is that of *hybristophilia*, or the attraction to an individual based on the knowledge of their having committed a violent crime. It is colloquially known as “Bonnie and Clyde Syndrome” and is present both in fiction and nonfiction (Griffiths). There is, as of yet, no agreed-upon explanation for this, but it is the oft-publicized reason behind curious occurrences like prison fan mail. The case of Veronica Compton is one extreme example of someone with hybristophilia, a woman who went so far as to attempt a murder in order to free one of the Hillside Stranglers in the 1970s (Johnston). Others have fought to marry incarcerated individuals, a move that is especially controversial (and popular) with regards to serial killers. It seems as if this tendency is proportional: the more serious the crime, the more serious the devotion. In “The Aesthetics of Serial Killing: Working Against Ethics in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and *American Psycho* (1991)”, author Sonia Baelo Allué argues that these intertwined associations between violence and desire are a form of “cultural criss-crossing” whereby “reality and fiction become mixed and influence each other” (7). She compares the crimes of those characters like Lecter to serialized stories—“each new murder...a new installment, a new chapter in the news” (9)—and fine art with “aesthetic implications” that may be “socially unacceptable” (10). Finding the concept of such brutal violence appealing in the realm of the hypothetical warps into an attraction in the realm of reality. If evolutionary psychology suggests that humans seek to ally themselves with whatever person or course of action will provide the highest chance of survival, and a

subset of individuals exist with no moral qualms against ensuring their own social dominance, then it is logical to claim a subconscious draw to this archetype exists within the fabric of our collective drives. From this, the issue then becomes how a species that functions largely through widespread understanding and enforcement of cooperative behaviors harbors such a latent reverence for antisocial and predatory characteristics. This essay will explore the recurrence of male-centric partnership in psychopath literature, with an emphasis on homosexuality and cannibalism in *Faust*, *Dracula*, and *Red Dragon*. These works use cannibalism as a metaphor for homoeroticism, while at the same time enforce the problematic idea that such a tabooed practice is more palatable to an intended audience than the overt representation of a homosexual relationship.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Late in the second season of *Hannibal*, Lecter and Graham have a conversation while Lecter sketches by the light of his office fireplace. The drawing depicts two mythical figures with the faces of Will and Hannibal. Lecter describes the drawing as “Achilles lamenting the death of Patroclus” and offers, by way of explanation, that “Achilles wished all Greeks would die, so that he and Patroclus could conquer Troy alone” (“Tome-wan”). The Heroic Dyad is a concept popularized by this legend. Although fictitious, this dynamic has been used to inspire countless subsequent relationships, including that of Alexander the Great and Hephaestion, who respectively appropriated Achilles and Patroclus as nicknames for themselves. In this type of two-sided bond, generally there is an *Aossētēr*, or protector, and a *Therapōn*, or attendant—a dominant and submissive personality, if you will (Chamberlain, Nagy). For the purposes of this essay, we will be looking at this dynamic’s counterpart, a model with an equally historical literary basis, henceforth referred to as the Psychopathic Dyad. Where the Heroic Dyad is one of support and strength, the Psychopathic Dyad is one of destruction. There is an aggressor and a defendant, seducer and seduced, and the two feed off of one another’s energy in a type of parasitic mutualism. The Psychopathic Dyad is defined as consisting of two fundamental elements, cannibalism and homosexuality.

Caleb Crain compares historical attitudes towards cannibalism as reminiscent of those towards homosexuality, both being “unspeakable” (28). In an essay remarking upon the connections between homoeroticism and cannibalism in the novels of Herman Melville and Thomas Harris, Crain states “the discovery of cannibalism...resembles the discovery of homosexuality in Gothic novels. An ir-

resistible curiosity impels the hero. He is attracted to something repulsive; he is not in control of his own actions” (32). For many, cannibalism brings to mind the Hollywood-perpetuated stereotype of the jungle tribe that captures and devours the civilized, white interloper. But despite its “savage” roots, more often than not, it becomes a literary byproduct of privilege (28). “Lecter,” Allué writes, “is not presented as a savage bloodthirsty man but a selective, high-class gourmet” (15). It is the tool of the dominant personality, a way of fully consuming their passive counterpart. Another translation of *Therapōn* is “ritual substitute” (Chamberlain). Their lot, by entering into the dyadic relationship with the *Aossētēr*, is their own destruction.

Perhaps the most succinct term to describe this phenomenon is not Greek, but French. An early episode of *Hannibal* shows the feminized version of Harris’s character Alan Bloom, Alana, comforting a young girl whose own father attempted to murder her. “Can you catch somebody’s crazy?” the girl asks, not expecting an answer. “*Folie à deux*,” replies Alana. “It’s a French psychiatric term. Madness shared by two” (“Potage”). Our first example is that of the Faustian Contract. Goethe’s *Faust* tells the story of a demon, Mephistopheles, who wagers with God that he can sway the human doctor Faust to sin. Faust is “himself half-conscious of his [own] frenzied mood”, and “craves every highest good” (Goethe 16). Because “all that’s near, and all that’s far/fails to allay the tumult in his blood,” Mephistopheles realizes that Faust will very likely submit to anything that will bring him actual “pleasure” (16, 18). The Doctor is egocentric, “cunning,” questions whether he himself is a God, and claims that “neither can devil nor hell now appal [sic]” him (18). From the outset, Faust is morally ambiguous, which may be what leaves him open to the advances of his psychopathic foil. When Mephistopheles first appears to Faust in his study, Faust cries, “Incubus! Incubus!” (36). An incubus is a male demon known for seducing human women, implying that Faust immediately assumes he is about to have a sexual encounter. As scholar Jane K. Brown suggests, Mephistopheles on his own is “neither evil nor destructive, but...has an astonishing amount in common with...nature” (Brown). His actions are not overtly evil, so much as “like cats with captive mice to toy and play,” (Goethe 17). The character describes himself as part of that power, “which wills the bad and works the good at every hour (31).

In similar fashion, the eponymous character in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is equally unashamed to serve his own nature at all costs. The 1897 novel, described by Steffen Hantke as “the first massively popular treatment of the serial killer in

his mythic dimensions” (179), follows the seduction and subsequent maiming of multiple characters at the hands of a Transylvanian vampire. A real-estate contract draws solicitor Jonathan Harker to a “vast and ruined castle, from whose tall black windows [come] no ray of light,” only for him to slowly realize that the Count has no intentions of allowing him to leave. Dracula is “strong,” “cruel-looking,” and possessing an “astonishing vitality” (Stoker 20). As the horror of his own imprisonment continues, Harker questions, “What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of a man?” (35). And yet, Harker is irrevocably drawn to Dracula, increasingly captivated by his inhuman displays. Upon witnessing the Count scale an exterior castle wall in the middle of the night, Harker says, “I kept looking...I leaned out to try and see more” (35). As Harker recalls sneaking into the Count’s bedchambers one night and attempting to steal a key off his body: “the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood...I shuddered as I bent to touch him.” He notes with acceptance that “the coming night might see my own body a banquet...” (51). This interplay of “repulsion” and attraction is a fixture in these dyads, and only draws the disparate parts closer (35).

Red Dragon and *Hannibal* thematically cue Lecter as something devilish, despite the fact that he is physically human. Both Lecter and Graham exist in the gray area between fully-good and fully-bad. Alexandra Carroll theorizes that, between true humans and true monsters lies an amalgam that is more powerful than either. Graham specifically says, “Dr. Lecter is not crazy, in any common way that we think of being crazy...he can function perfectly when he wants to” (Harris 66). When asked what he calls Lecter, Graham replies, “He’s a monster...but he looks normal and nobody could tell” (67). David Schmid argues that one of the driving forces of a psychopath’s actions is his conviction in his own exceptional existence. Lecter seeks to dismantle “any system that has the temerity to try and classify him,” but ultimately fixates on Graham for his ability to empathize with psychopaths like himself.

All of these relationships are cyclical; something keeps these two magnetic personalities together. They push and pull against each other, but ultimately define one another. The outlaw is rarely his own narrator, but we need a lens through which to view him, and so his counterpart becomes the orator. According to Smith, “people are used as objects for extending the ego” (26). As Hannibal Lecter would find a long-winded monologue about himself to be exceedingly gauche, his and stories like his are relegated to those lesser beings that encounter them and live to—literally—tell the tale.

The Unspeakable

Though it may by now be obvious, this essay will use exclusively traditional male pronouns with reference to its subjects, since literary examples of these same dyadic interactions in female-female relationships are in short supply. The public's contact with female psychopaths is of a fundamentally different type, and it is worth considering that the stomping grounds of the literary psychopath are predominantly and homosocially male because their power reflects that of the patriarchal default in which they operate. Rolf J. Goebel identifies what he calls "queer articulations" touched upon by author Robert Tobin, such as "the veneration of Greek love, the cult of male friendship...and the orientalist projection of same-sex desire" (385). The Ancient Greeks were known for a sexual practice tied up heavily in politics and social hierarchy. *Pederasty* was a publicly acknowledged romantic relationship between an older (usually politically influential) aristocratic male and a young teenage boy. This was seen as a privilege allowed before marriage, and which was used as another tool for the social exclusion of women. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was, in fact, a proponent of the practice, considering it "both in and against nature" in much the same way Brown described Goethe's deuteragonist Mephisto (Kuzniar).

Both Goethe and Stoker lived during time periods when sexuality was rigidly regulated. Talia Schaffer proposes that Wilde's incarceration was "an earthquake that destabilized the fragile, carefully elaborated mechanisms through which Stoker routed his desires." In point of fact, Bram Stoker began work on *Dracula* one month after Oscar Wilde, his contemporary, was arrested for "gross indecency," the Victorian term for sodomy (Yu). Goethe's sexuality is even more explicit. He is quoted as saying, "I like boys a lot...if I tire of...a girl, she'll play the boy for me as well" (Bullough 72). Tobin's "orientalism of same-sex desire" gives name to the phenomena of queer-coded characters representing the strange, foreign, or threatening by which authors displace their homophobia on the quintessential Other.

Most works published any earlier than the late decades of the 20th century could scarcely hope to incorporate homosexual themes without severe recourse, leaving only the realm of subtext. This could be anything from thematic cues to specific word choice. Season two, episode ten of *Hannibal*, entitled "Naka-choko," has possibly one of the most artistically- and confusingly-illustrated sex scenes in television history. Simultaneously, Lecter is having sex with Alana Bloom, while Graham is simultaneously sleeping with heiress Margot Verger in a different location. However, the camera angles blend and merge until it becomes unclear who is

with whom, and what constitutes reality. With prior knowledge that the series ends with the couples switching (i.e. Bloom marries Verger and Graham picks Lecter), the set-up is a visual orgy masterminded with intent to communicate the connection between the two lead males. While they may not be having sex physically, the cross-cutting of the scenes implies that they are thinking about each other rather than their true sexual partners.

Similarly, Jonathan Harker's late night meeting with the vampire women in chapter three of *Dracula* uses sensory viscous language to bring sex to the reader's mind without actually depicting it. Harker describes an encounter with three female vampires during which a "fair girl went on her knees," "as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal," "lower and lower went her head," and Jonathan "closed [his] eyes in languorous ecstasy" (Stoker 39). This scene becomes even more sexually charged when the Count appears suddenly in the room, enraged with jealousy, shouting, "How dare you touch him, any of you? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me!" (39). In a moment of transparent double meaning, the same "fair girl" cries, "You, yourself never loved; you never love!", to which Dracula whispers, "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past" (40).

Here, violence and intimacy are inextricably linked. Take for instance the bargain between Mephistopheles and Faust: if Mephistopheles can make Faust so happy that he never wants to leave one specific moment, then Faust will follow Mephisto into hell and stay with him for eternity. "Man loves to think himself a whole," the demon says (Goethe 32). This contract that binds them together forever is signed in blood, and ends with the destruction of both their mortal vessels. In the first chapter of *Red Dragon*, Will Graham alludes to his last face-to-face encounter with Hannibal Lecter: "The looping scar across his stomach...was finger width and raised...It ran down from his left hipbone and turned up to notch his rib cage...Dr. Hannibal Lecter did that with a linoleum knife" (Harris 7). There is an intimate connotation to stabbing in the collective consciousness rather than alternate forms of injury. The act is frequently equated with penetration. Vampires employ a similar method to subdue their victims. There is a forceful entering of the flesh, and an exchange of bodily fluids. Mark Seltzer posits that human sexuality has an "essentially traumatic nature" (6), which may lend to the "public fascination with torn and opened bodies...a collective gathering around shock, trauma, and the wound" (3). In a way, this violence is more readily understood in our culture than outlawed sexualities have ever been.

Although *Red Dragon* author Thomas Harris claims not to have included any purposefully homoerotic undertones in the Hannibal Lecter series, both the original novel and its reworking are rife with tension between the two leads. There is a recurring element of intellectual seduction throughout the three works dealt with in this paper, and they come in two types. The first is when the more passive *Therapōn* demonstrates an advanced capacity to empathize with the traditionally unsympathetic *Aossētēr*, as in the case of Graham and Lecter. “Fromage,” the eighth episode in the first season of *Hannibal*, contains a scene in which Lecter describes to Bedelia Du Maurier his desire to befriend Graham. “He is nothing like me,” Lecter says. “We see the world in different ways, yet he can assume my point of view.” Du Maurier finds this dubious, clarifying, “By profiling the criminally insane?” This is played for laughs. She goes on: “It’s nice when someone sees us, Hannibal. . . You spend a lot of time building walls. . . It’s natural to want to see if someone is clever enough to climb over them” (“Fromage”).

The second type of intellectual seduction happens when the dominant personality demonstrates their power over the other. As Hantke describes, the “overwhelming power induces a lustful yet guilty submissiveness in the victim” (180). This is exemplified by both Faust, who spends a significant amount of time de-crying the presence of Mephistopheles—all the while basking in his power—and Jonathan Harker, whose fascination grows with every display of Dracula’s inhumanity. Harker describes Dracula’s voice as “smooth and resistless” (Stoker 33). “What could I do but bow acceptance?” he asks the reader, completely resigned to his stay in the castle. Schaffer adds that “By the novel’s last page, Harker has learned to love the memory of his internment. . .” (382). Taking this even farther, it is implied that the castle signifies one’s most internal private sphere, and Jonathan moves through it as a representation of Stoker himself. When Stoker’s public persona became one of hostile heterosexuality, “the face Stoker was supposed to see in his own mirror. . . would indeed support his accusation of ‘ugliness.’ Thus Jonathan Harker expects to see the monstrous face of Dracula in his own mirror” (388). Eric Kwan-Wai Yu identifies that the “dominant form” of fear established within the novel “has to do with sexual menace or the dreadful perception of sexual perversity” (147).

Psychopathic dyads have as historic a literary basis as heroic dyads, but, for many reasons, they are talked about less frequently. The appeal of the latter dynamic is to create a whole stronger than the sum of its parts, two protagonists better able to complete their purpose because their strengths and weaknesses comple-

ment each other. This cannot be the case for a Psychopathic Dyad, because their trajectory is not one of mutual self-improvement.

We do not know exactly why this mirror-dyad developed, or why it is perpetuated so heavily, other than that it fulfills some need in those that perpetuate it. If we live in a “wound culture” where people like Bram Stoker and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—and maybe even Thomas Harris—feel the need to displace the emotions and feelings that society has forced them to stifle, then the psychopathic partnership may be a compulsive construct of suppressed desires and fantasies. *Faust* is the story of a man with delusions of grandeur, willing to risk an eternity in Hell for one moment of Heaven. *Dracula* is a novel of closeted terror: sickness, sexual aggression, who knows what and when. *Red Dragon* charts the protagonist’s acknowledgement of, and attempts to free himself from, this landscape. All seem to speak to a level of constraint and subconscious yearning that is meaningful wholly because of the scale on which it appears.

This essay would be remiss if it did not conclude with a final, important observation. The Psychopathic Dyad is a paradigm in which characters that embody those compulsions which have historically been condemned into silence are explored by their narrators and then ultimately punished. But while cannibalism has not shifted in terms of moral understanding, and likely will not any time soon, homosexuality now occupies a vastly different position in the public’s consciousness than it did in the past. It is out in the open, recognized and, in an ever-increasing number of countries around the world, accepted. Perhaps then, the dyad as we know it is dying. No more apt an example could be found than the ending of NBC’s *Hannibal*, which veers heavily away from the more traditional Thomas Harris narrative that one would expect. Rather than destroy or reduce each other, the on-screen versions of Lecter and Graham reach a violent and romantic understanding. This climactic, textual acknowledgement of their non-heteronormative relationship is, for once, not the nail in their coffins. Instead, they escape into the proverbial sunset to, presumably, live out their lives in murderous bliss. The inexorable evolution of our socio-cultural landscape is slowly breaking down the repetitive thematic elements of this dyad, and likewise, the need for “outlaw” relationships built upon foundations of historically unspeakable traits will steadily dwindle as those attributes move into the public sphere.

Just, hopefully, not the cannibalism.

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LAUREN JOHNSON

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Mentor: **Pearl Lee**

DESIRES FOR LIBERATION IN *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* AND *WESTWORLD*

THE DYSTOPIAN SOCIETIES IN THE TELEVISION SHOWS *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Westworld* are both outlawed societies, but why and how they are outlawed is very different. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the United States is turned into the Republic of Gilead, in which each person is assigned a fixed role based around procreation. Fertile women are assigned to wealthy, upper-class families to procreate with the heads of the households. This is the only time sexuality or intimacy is legal, and it is meant to be viewed as sacred and purely for the intent of procreation, not pleasure. Offred, who was named June in the old society, is a handmaid hopelessly attempting to break free of her role in the Republic of Gilead. *Westworld* is on the opposite side of the spectrum. It is outside of the dominion of law, a society in which anything goes. It is an escape from the inhibitions in society, a place to break free and explore even the most sordid desires. This, however, poses a problem for the robotic programmed hosts, primarily female hosts, because in *Westworld* they are often used as sex toys for the guests visiting. Maeve works as the madam at a brothel in a town called Sweet Creek, where people come from around the world to sin without consequence.

While these two societies that Offred and Maeve live in are very different, the emotions and representations of women are at times similar. Both Offred and Maeve are bound in hierarchal relationships controlled by men, a confinement that ignites their desire for liberation and power. A common theme present in both

The Handmaid's Tale and *Westworld* is desire: the desire to please, the desire to be obedient, the desire to be touched, the desire to have power. In order to fulfill their desires both Offred and Maeve have to battle against stereotypical views and rigid roles they are forced into based on their gender. For Offred, she is stuck in a place of obedience, obligated to have sex, outlawed to enjoy it. It is viewed as immoral or "slutty" behavior for Offred to feel or act on her sexual desires. This contrasts with Maeve's situation, as she desires power and respect but is stuck being viewed as an object for others' sexual desires. Given her role as a Madam, she is othered from society to be viewed as an outlet for male desires. In both of these series, women are subjected to commodification through the male gaze and fetishized for being the Other. However, due to their status as the Other, these women experience outlawed emotions that challenge social constructs allowing them insight into ways of being liberated from their current situations. I will consult theories by scholars such as Laura Mulvey and Jacques Lacan, among others, to interrogate notions of desire and sexuality. Both Offred and Maeve seek liberation in order to fulfill their desires, which can be compared to the scrutiny women in our current Western society face to accomplish their goals. Through these examples, I will examine how these two different versions of outlawed societies treat and represent women and how that representation mirrors struggles women face today. By pointing out these two female characters' power struggles, representations, and abilities to gain agency, we will better understand what type of societies and representations of women can lead to or further impede their liberation.

In both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Westworld*, the main characters, Offred and Maeve, are subjected to the male gaze. The male gaze, as described by Laura Mulvey in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" is the act of looking at a woman as an image from the male's perspective. As audience members, one understands this perspective because when looking at the screen, audience members often try to find those who they can identify with among images presented. However, Mulvey explains, in order to understand the male gaze the spectator has to identify with the male protagonist. But this is not necessarily a choice; the cameraman puts the audience into this view regardless of whether the audience member identifies with the character. The reason that we identify with this male protagonist, according to Mulvey, is because he is the one controlling the power and the erotic look. It is an established social norm to identify with the character in power. In *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Westworld*, the female protagonists are put into this view as a way to symbolize the desires their superior counterparts are inflicting on them. In media,

women are often used and viewed in the male gaze to be framed as sexual interests that distract the leading male characters. However, in these two dystopian societies, the use of sexuality by Maeve and Offred are key components in their ability to gain agency. Both Maeve and Offred are still used as sexual distractions, but not just as distractions to the male characters but as distractions to their own desires, their own liberation. When a female is put into the male gaze, her power in the moment is taken away and given to the male. Maeve and Offred being viewed as sexual objects creates a constant back-and-forth battle for liberation from their restrictive gender-based roles. They are not just battling the restrictions imposed on them in their societies, but the stereotypes and representations of the viewers as well. Framing both Offred and Maeve in the male gaze re-establishes the social norm that women are subordinate to men. While these are both fictional dystopian worlds, these works reflect the societies that produced them.

Both women are subjects of the male desire, but the way they approach being viewed in this light is different. Maeve is able to break free of the male gaze because of the role she plays. In Season 1 Episode 2, Maeve is laying on the table in the lab in *Westworld* where the hosts are brought in to be worked on. Maeve is lying unconscious on the examining table after being stabbed in the abdomen, completely exposed to the male technician, the camera, and the audience. Her unconscious body has no say in the view that has been cast upon it and it appears consent is not needed. According to Mulvey, the female becomes powerless in situations like this because everyone will be looking at her in a sexualized light. She no longer has control of her own body; it now rests in the hands of the viewers. The male gaze exists, according to Mulvey, because of male anxieties towards women and their differences (270). These anxieties are made more prevalent when Maeve wakes up and startles the technician working on her. Part of this fear and anxiety is related to Maeve waking up as a robot of her own accord. However, this can also point to the technician's desire to sexualize and passivize the Other who is different or foreign. Due to the frame Maeve is put in, it makes the audience feel she is in a threatened position, and we are viewing her as a vulnerable body rather than as a woman. However, Maeve is unfazed by her naked body and sees it as a mode of transportation rather than as a spectacle. Women like Maeve are viewed in the male gaze "to freeze the flow of action in moment of erotic contemplation" (270). This is just what happens as the overhead, dominating camera angle peers over Maeve's unconscious body, and the moment freezes to symbolize the contemplation of the technician's desire and opportunity to take advantage of a women's body.

Maeve is able to break through this by finding her own agency. As Maeve stands up, she reclaims control of her body from the men who moments before thought they held the power. She threatens Sylvester, one of the technicians, to “get your fucking hands off of me” (Season 1 Episode 2). The way Maeve reacted to the power dynamic that was established when she opened her eyes was pivotal to determining whose desires would come closer to fulfillment. Maeve escapes, acting on her own desires of freedom and safety rather than following the desires of the technicians of submission and order. As Maeve gains agency the audience meets her at eye level. She becomes an equal with the audience, no longer subjected to the male gaze. She stumbles off through the lab as she is bleeding out, still naked but no longer viewed as exposed or as a spectacle because the darkness shields her. The role a female plays in society, her own personal desires and the way she reacts to being put into a place of submission are all crucial aspects in her ability to gain agency. Maeve exist in a society fueled by different impulses thus making it easier for her to act on her own desire, such as her desire to flee her objectification.

Offred, on the other hand, lives in a society fueled by rules and order. For her to attempt to fulfill her desires, such as her desire for freedom, she must play by the rules of those in power. In her case, those that are in power are the ones viewing her in the male gaze. Offred cannot gain agency in the same way that Maeve is able to or take back power in forward and forceful ways. She instead needs to meticulously find cracks in the regime while also engaging in other outlawed activities. The male gaze can be used to inflict power and obedience over women as sexual objects which is the way it is used by Mr. Waterford, the Commander, on Offred. In Season 1 Episode 2, Offred is in the Commander’s chambers for the first time, a forbidden place for women. The scene starts with an overhead shot of Offred, looking down on her as if we, the audience, are viewing her from the eyes of the Commander. The audience can hear the Commander talking to Offred, but the camera stays focused on Offred’s face, partially hidden by the darkness. From the audience’s perspective, Offred automatically looks like the subordinate in the relationship, and then the dialogue begins. “You can look at me,” the Commander tells Offred. “We’re not supposed to,” Offred responds. This sets a clear division of power between Offred and the Commander, reestablishing why we as an audience are looking down at Offred. It is made even more clear that this downward camera angle is the power stance the Commander is holding over Offred when the camera moves to meet him at eye level. The audience confirms that they are identifying with the dominant male in the scene which, as Mulvey argued, is who we



Offred in the Commander's chambers

are naturally supposed to identify with. Offred looks up at the Commander after he responds, telling her that they can break the rules while they are in his chambers, hinting at his desire for Offred by allowing her to also break the rules. He is bringing her into a role of submission, taking away her desires and aspirations and instead projecting his own onto her. He turns Offred into the object of his desire, a woman that is outlawed in his society but one he is able to obtain through his position of power.

Unfortunately for Offred, she has very few options in this situation because of her lack of power. Her body, her actions, and somewhat her mind are under strict rule. Mr. Waterford allows Offred to play Scrabble, an outlawed activity for women in Gilead, liberating her just enough that she will trust him and their relationship. Connecting this back to Mulvey's argument, males create this dynamic because they often feel threatened by women's lack of a phallus, or penis, and are afraid of being emasculated: "Her lack of penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure" (271). This anxiety to insert dominance is evident through the Commander's body language and verbal language with Offred, ranging from how he peers down at her using the male gaze to how he allows her to read, to when he tells her, "It's getting late. It's time for you to go home," leaving her with no choice but to obey. While the Commander is trying to create trust and build a relationship with Offred, it is less for compassion and more based on his need and what he

personally wants to get out of his relationship with her. She is not a person to him, but an object. She is the Other who is less than him and thus can be controlled by him. This is a significant moment for Offred and the Commander's relationship because this is the beginning of Offred becoming a slave to the Commander, as Bahman Zarrinjooee and Shirin Kalantarian would argue. Zarrinjooee and Kalantarian believe Offred becomes a prostitute when the Commander begins using her as his mistress because she is a slave to his desires. She is obligated to him, which becomes more apparent as he continuously takes advantage of his power over her.

Maeve and Offred are viewed in the male gaze while simultaneously put into outlawed situations in their respective societies. The way each of them reacts is based on the role they must play and the rules of their societies. Maeve acts on her impulsive desires, similar to the actions of those she is surrounded by in *Westworld*. Offred, on the other hand, must carefully think about her long term desires and plan out her actions to increase her chances of liberation. For both of these women, their desire of safety trumps any of their other desires. Maeve flees because she feels she is in danger, while Offred closely follows direction for she too fears for her well-being. A significant aspect in both of these scenes is the male dominance in outlawed situations. There is a sense of fantasy and temptation to act on their sexual desires, and both Maeve and Offred become someone what of a forbidden fruit. While Maeve and Offred have to think about the type of desire they believe that they can actually obtain, the men they interact with believe their own desires are more of a right. This is made evident through the dominance that the males hold in these outlawed situations. Jacques Lacan argues that the reason people act on their desires, specifically sexual desires, is due to different motivations: "The object of man's desire, and we are not the first to say this, is essentially an object desired by someone else" (295–296) Both Maeve and Offred become objects of desire, objects that men can project their desires on to. But part of what Lacan argues is that these objects of desire are merely pawns for men to take what someone else has. They are a tool for power. Turning women into objects robs both characters from having the opportunity to act on their own desires. However, while Lacan argues that men desire an object desired by someone else, he also believes that our main motivation behind desire is recognition. This is evident in how these men treat Maeve and Offred, but also in the way they attempt to fulfill their own desires.

When Maeve and Offred pursue their own desires, whether those desires are sexually- or safety-oriented is seen in different ways. Maeve acts on her own desires more than Offred does, because Offred also seeks to understand and live

out the desires of the Commander. While it can be questioned how much Maeve acts on her own desires because she is programmed, she breaks out of her role and expectation of her character. Due to this, it can be seen that both her programmed character and her personality chase desires that would lead to her liberation. Both Maeve and Offred have to face and attempt to break out of rigid stereotypes and rules of their societies in order to accomplish their intended goals or desires. While Maeve and Offred exist in very different societies, the stereotype of a whore or a slut holds true in both. In the Republic of Gilead, women who have sex for pleasure or love rather than for procreation were deemed immoral. In the town of Sweet Water in Westworld, the prostitutes are viewed as easy pickings and not respected in the same way other hosts are who appear more innocent and modest. Maeve and Offred are both able to fight against these stereotypes and find ways to pursue their sexual desires while also gaining some agency and power for themselves.

For example, in Episode 8 of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred is found in an outlawed situation, in the bed of one of the male workers, Nick. He is not fertile, meaning the fornication between him and Offred is completely illicit. Offred lays there, sad, regretful, and lonely. She admits the only reason she is with Nick after finding out her husband is still alive is due to the desire for a companion, to not be alone in this world. In Offred's voice over she says, "I wish this story were different. I wish it showed me in a better light. In a different story maybe I wouldn't be such a fucking weakling," (Episode 8). She is immediately made to feel shameful and regretful for acting on her sexual desires. Whereas, her counterpart in the story, the Commander, receives more power by acting on his desires in similarly illicit ways. This highlights the double standard that exists in our society, which causes women to neglect or feel as if they need to hide their true emotions and desires because they are not the way our socially-constructed version of a "respectable" women should present themselves. Offred does not claim this story that is her life as her own. She is no longer in control; it is "this story," rather than "my story".

Maeve, on the other hand, attempts to create her own story in order to seem more appealing to men as a motive to gain power. Maeve attempts to fill a void with the validation and satisfaction from male interest. Offred seeks comfort and companionship to no longer feel lonely, to fill her desire for a true connection. Maeve is driven by the same motive, as Lacan would argue, to have her desires recognized. She does this by playing into the male fantasy, a role she is already expected to portray. She sits, leaning into a male guest, engaging with him about a dream she had. She ends the story with her hook to sink him in, "they told me,



Maeve in control of the situation

‘you can do whatever the fuck you want.’” However, Maeve is not telling this story to create a real connection or start a conversation but instead to frame herself as the ideal women, to lure this man in. In actuality, she tells this guest to embrace the moral of her dream and do whatever he wants to her. She takes advantage of the role she is meant to play in order to have her desires fulfilled. However, she is still left seeking him to accept her sexual invitation, and the power still lays with the male’s desires.

However, there is a time where we see Maeve break out of this mold. She acts based on her own curiosity and aspiration without regards to the men or society around her. This is a significant moment for Maeve as a character because she begins to use her own agency to abandon the submissive role. It can be argued that Maeve was able to see her situation more clearly and understand how to best take advantage of her situation because she experiences different emotions as the Other. Maeve is able to demonstrate her understanding of what men desire in her and use it to her advantage. Maeve turns the dynamic between her and Hector, a gunman host that robs the saloon, so she is in the place of power. She tricks him into coming upstairs with her, telling him that she has what he wants, appearing to

refer to both the money in the safe and herself. It becomes more clear that Maeve is in control of the situation as she sits up on the safe with her legs spread, peering down over Hector. This immediately puts in image in the head of the audience that he is there for her pleasure, for her satisfaction as he goes between her legs to the safe. This is somewhat of a reversal of the male gaze. We no longer view her as powerless and submissive to men. Rather, she is in the place of power. She is still in a sexual position, but now it feels to the audience that she is in this situation because she wants to be in it. She uses Hector as a way to obtain her desires both for sexual freedom and physical freedom.

However, the key component here is not only their body positions, but how Maeve continues to command Hector into helping her discover whether this world she lives in is fake. She has him cut her open to discover the bullet inside of her, determined to find the answers she desires. She is able harness power by using her sexuality as a weapon for her success rather than her destruction. She ends the scene embracing Hector and making love to him as bullets fly around them. It symbolizes the reckless behavior Maeve is willing to engage in to accomplish her desires while also embracing her sexuality and temptations.

Offred tries to harness her sexuality and the Commander's desire for it in a similar way as Maeve does with Hector, but Offred not able to act with the same impulse. The Commander sneaks Offred in to the brothel for a "special" night out. He assumed she would be flattered, unaware that being smuggled in as contraband would come off as anything but a compliment. In the mind of Mr. Waterford, allowing Offred to break the rules is a reward, a way to make her feel special. But in actuality, he projects his forbidden love onto Offred, assuming it is something she would desire as well. Offred is able to take advantage of her outsider perspective and see the situation for what it truly is: a man turning her into his whore, turning her into a doll he dressed up for the night to live out his fantasy. Offred has a stronger sense of clarity for what is happening and can understand how she needs to behave to ultimately accomplish what she desires: freedom and safety.

Her friend from before the Republic of Gilead, Mora, lives at the brothel, and Offred is able to use her trip to her advantage. This is a significant act of rebellion for Offred, as she is able to use her submissive and unthreatening position to find agency to act on what she truly wants. While Offred is momentarily allowed liberation, she still must go to bed with the Commander at the end of the night and once again become a submissive object for his pleasure. It is made evident he does not pay close attention to what Offred wants and is solely using her for his own

sense of satisfaction “You *do* understand me, don’t you?” He says to Offred as she barely responds to his continuous talking. Unfortunately for Offred, she is stuck in a submissive role, and is crippled by fear and the need to satisfy the Commander’s desires. Offred is stuck, and she can never have her own desires because she constantly acknowledges the desires of the Commander rather than her own. As Offred becomes the Commander’s mistress, she becomes his slave and prostitute. She is now at the order of his sexual pleasure, serving the Commander based on his needs rather than serving him as a passage for procreation.

Both Maeve and Offred have similar battles that they have to face in order to achieve their desires. However, due to the societies, Offred is not able to gain the agency required to act on fulfilling these desires. Maeve is able to because of the role she already has in society. She is already viewed as “less than” because she is a madam. She is expected to break the rules within reason of her society. However, she has to enter an outlawed realm within her already outlawed society to be able to break away from her restrictive gendered stereotypes. Maeve is more outwardly able to use her sexuality to her advantage. She acts on her desires, as Lacan would argue, to have her desires recognized. She was able to shift the male gaze when with Hector so she was in a power position. Through Maeve’s determination to make others aware of her desires, sexually and physically, she assumes power to enact her own liberation. Offred, on the other hand, is forced to hide her sexuality and desires. In the last scene I examined, when Offred is in the brothel with the Commander, she is still stuck in her submissive role. We see her framed in the male gaze, continuously objectified by both the Commander as well as the audience at home. Stuck in her submissive role, Offred cannot act the way Maeve does in order to reach her ultimate desire of freedom due to fear of potential consequences.

While both characters want to be liberated from their restrictive roles, the women they represent in their respective societies speak to how women are represented in our society today and the struggles that they face. Both Maeve and Offred have to make choices on how to act based on accomplishing their aspirations and doing so safely. A common theme in both of these television series and our society is the threat that comes along with power, including the threat of sexual violence or even the threat of death. Offred represents the women who are stuck, left voiceless by the rigid rules and negative connotations of being free and embracing their sexuality. This is a role she is unable to breakout of because of fear, similar to why many survivors of sexual assault stay silent. Maeve, on the other hand, represents the women breaking out of her social constraints. We can see how it is easier for

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Maeve to do so because she is not denied her sexuality, and she is able to use it to her advantage. Maeve is able to embrace the role of the “slut” and change the way she is perceived, thus gaining agency to act on her desire to escape *Westworld*. Of-fred is ultimately left helpless in a submissive role, neglectful of her sexuality and desires, and ruled by fear and power.

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PERCEPTIONS OF SELF AND OTHERS: COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE BEAT GENERATION AND PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND ADDICTION IN *RIGHTEOUS DOPEFIEND*

A WOMAN NAMED TINA STANDS OUTSIDE OF A STOREFRONT as she waits for a friend. She grabs some grapes from an outdoor display and eats them. The owner of the market sees this and begins yelling obscenities at her, as Tina's friend Al comes over to defend her. The confrontation escalates until the two men are verbally fighting with each other. Finally, the market owner says, "I'm sick of you fucking homeless. Fuck you, homeless!" and walks back inside. Al is offended at the disparaging comment, but later, as they are riding in a car, Tina looks into the rearview mirror and resignedly says, "Oh well, homeless." As narrated in the text *Righteous Dopefiend*, this was a defining moment for Tina, a person experiencing homelessness and a cocaine addiction on the streets of San Francisco. In this moment, Tina seems to accept the circumstances that she has been battling for a while. From her resigned tone, the reader can gather that Tina feels shame and displeasure at using this word to describe herself. And she is just one of the many subjects interviewed and observed by Jeffery Schonberg and Philippe Bourgois, two anthropologists that spent twelve years with some of San Francisco's homeless heroin addicts for the visual ethnography that is *Righteous Dopefiend*. The two authors dive

deep into interpersonal relations between the members of “Edgewater Boulevard,” the camp where many people experiencing homelessness slept and injected drugs, and the policies that contributed to their being there in the first place. The authors focus on the social and political forces that affect homeless populations. However, they do not consider how and why some social groups are more readily accepted than others. For example, a certain social movement took place in the same city four decades earlier, but lives on as a defining moment in American literature: the Beat Generation lived similar lifestyles to the Edgewater Boulevard community in terms of drug use, lawlessness, and as cultural outcasts. But unlike the Edgewater Boulevard community, the men and women representing the Beats garnered media attention and found support from similarly disaffected Americans, and they now occupy a reverential place in history.

The men and women that make up the Edgewater Boulevard community are outlaws by definition. This manifests in their physical location in the city and also in their day-to-day activities. Schonberg and Bourgois describe the camp that many members of the Edgewater Boulevard community occupy as “one of the many accidentally remaining nooks and crannies at the margins of this publicly funded freeway infrastructure. . . . It was a classic inner-city no-man’s-land of invisible public space, out of the eye of law enforcement” (4). This hole under a busy freeway overpass is an optimal place for outlaws to live. But it also represents a space that alienates this community from the rest of the city, thereby creating cultural outlaws. In addition to outlawed physical space, the Edgewater Boulevard community also regularly participates in illegal activities such as drug use and theft, and this causes them to live as literal outlaws: people participating in criminal activity. Furthermore, this community is also subject to many of San Francisco’s “quality of life” crimes that make it almost impossible for people experiencing homelessness to survive on the street without being ticketed for actions they typically engage in such as jaywalking, loitering, and drinking and urinating in public. These quality of life crimes punished the Edgewater Boulevard community for circumstances they could not escape while living on the street. In this case, being alive was breaking the law, which makes this community a band of outlaws, whether that is what they wanted or not. Furthermore, these crimes make it much more difficult for the Edgewater Boulevard community to achieve the means necessary for stability, such as housing and jobs. To emphasize this point, Bourgois and Schonberg describe the death of a man named Leo, who died of an aneurysm while smoking crack in the tent of two other people (218). However, they later write, “Leo was quickly forgot-

ten, overshadowed by the actions of law enforcement, the most pervasive destabilizing force in the lives of people on the street” (219). Members of the Edgewater Boulevard community often found themselves caught in the middle of a struggle between politicians to both support people living on the streets, and evict them from their living spaces, making it difficult to survive.

But while the men and women of Edgewater Boulevard struggled to survive, members of the Beat Generation willingly cast themselves as outlaws. Andrew Vogel describes the Beats’ voluntary departure from mainstream culture as opposition to consumerism and militarism (391). Because the Beats actively rejected American norms and ideals, they often lived destitute lifestyles very similar to the ones described in *Righteous Dopefiend*: “Since dropping out left them generally poverty stricken and adrift, they embraced such marginalized positions as delinquents, drunks, hoboes, junkies, homosexuals, and petty criminals that often led to dangerous encounters with authorities” (392). This is similar to the modes of living described in *Righteous Dopefiend*, but it was the chosen lifestyle for the Beats. In addition, Beat poets like Allen Ginsberg also turned to drugs, but Ginsberg did so to help fuel creativity. Jonah Raskin explains that, “As a poet, Ginsberg plunged bravely into the wreck of his own life and the lives of those around him. He used drugs to stimulate his imagination and wrote enthusiastically about marijuana, LSD, Methedrine, and laughing gas.” In this sense, Ginsberg’s drug use is akin to the use in *Righteous Dopefiend*, but it is recreational, rather than an addiction. One of the defining differences when comparing the drug use between the Beats and the Edgewater Boulevard community is a perception of control. Ginsberg and other Beat poets used drugs to create art. Beat poets used illegal substances as an act of defiance against aspects of American culture they disagreed with. This drug use allowed them to create poetry and other works of writing that they then used to spread their ideas. But the Edgewater Boulevard community had seemingly less control over the activities they engaged in. Heroin addiction rocked their lives and consumed their every dollar, causing them to live on the street and constantly search for another fix.

Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl” has descriptive lines that are remarkably similar to some of the situations described in *Righteous Dopefiend*. Ginsberg’s book of poetry shows how alike the lives were between the Beat poets and the men and women experiencing homelessness on Edgewater Boulevard. For example, Ginsberg’s famous opening reads, “I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging them through the negro streets at

dawn looking for an angry fix” (9). Ginsberg’s poem is a cynical ode to the darkest parts of life. The opening line describes what could be characterized as withdrawal symptoms in drug addicts. The description “starving hysterical naked” resembles the cruel realities of being sober when a mind is addicted to substance. It is an experience that many of the men and women on Edgewater Boulevard had to face. Many of the people addicted to heroin would go to any lengths to get a fix when they were “dopesick,” even if it meant inflicting harm unto themselves. For example, a man named Hogan was taken to the hospital for an abscess on his left leg. However, after he received the treatment he needed and was released from the care of the hospital, he started injecting heroin into his skin graft just weeks after he had received it. Bourgois and Schonberg write: “At first glance, it appeared to be a self-destructive, even masochistic practice, but we soon came to realize that when one’s veins are scarred by a lifetime of daily injection and when one’s priority is to consume heroin by any means necessary, an abscess is a convenient and effective sight for injecting” (100). Bourgois and Schonberg accurately summarize the intense desire—promoted by the body and a brain addicted to substance—to inject a drug, even at the expense of one’s own health. This is a practice that Ginsberg might describe as “madness” in his poems. In part II of “Howl,” Ginsberg writes, “Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in parks!” Again, he describes situations that are similar to homelessness. “Ashcans and unobtainable dollars” characterizes the constant search for money and pan-handling that plague many people who are homeless. His references to Moloch, filth, and ugliness chronicle the worst details of life. The introduction to *Howl*, written by William Carlos Williams, says, “It is the poet, Allen Ginsberg, who has gone, in his own body, through the horrifying experiences described from life in these pages” (8). Based on the introduction to *Howl*, Ginsberg has lived situations similar to the ones the Edgewater Boulevard community has lived. However, Ginsberg was able to turn his experiences into poetry and garner fame and attention.

Bourgois and Schonberg draw on Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to help make sense of the psychological and cultural effects of homelessness. Bourdieu’s habitus helps us understand symbolic power structures and how they “legitimize hierarchy and oppression through everyday ‘practice’” (Bourgois & Schonberg 18). Habitus is how Bourdieu refers to this practice. According to Bourdieu, habitus are everyday behaviors that are related to a person’s class position in society:

Habitus make different differences, they implement distinctions between what is good and what is bad, between what is right and what is wrong, between what is distinguished and what is vulgar... Thus, for instance, the same behavior or even the same good can appear distinguished to one person, pretentious to someone else, and cheap or showy to yet another. (Bourdieu 17)

This theory also offers an explanation for how two distinct social groups living similar lifestyles can be viewed so differently. Even though these the Edgewater Boulevard community and the Beat Generation lived similar lives in terms of drug use and inhabiting a space outside the cultural norm, one group is highly regarded, while the other is looked down upon. Beat poets are largely revered as cultural change makers, people who went against the norm and thrust American democracy and capitalism under a critical lens. The Beat Generation has books and articles written about them. They are the subjects of movies and documentaries, whereas Tina's experience of viewing herself as homeless, and many other experiences described in *Righteous Dopefiend*, indicate that members of the Edgewater Boulevard community have been negatively viewed due to their circumstances. The men and women experiencing homelessness were met with contempt because of their living situation and their addictions to drugs and alcohol. Yet on the other hand, members of the Beat Generation engaged in these same practices to make art, and are admired for it.

In part, these differences in perspective have to do with the backgrounds of the two respective groups. Beat poets like Allen Ginsburg attended Columbia University, a competitive Ivy League school. This gave him a cultural foothold and an amount of respect, despite his engagement in drugs and alcohol. Another one of Bourdieu's theories can explain this. In a 1984 article, Bourdieu argues that taste is a product of a person's education level and their social conditions. He writes, "Whereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices... and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level... and secondarily to social origin" (1). This means that education has a strong influence on what people will regard as tasteful or not. Because Ginsburg attended a prestigious Ivy League College, not only will his tastes be different, but also the way people regard him and his tastes will differ from the way they regard the people written about

in *Righteous Dopefiend*. American society places great emphasis on education. It is what most children do for the first 18 or 19 years of their lives, and increasingly, with many more people pursuing bachelor's degrees, for the first 22 years of their lives. Furthermore, he explains that tastes are symbolic of class status. This feeds into a chain of "nobility" in which education allows a person to have higher taste, which allows them to be upwardly mobile in terms of class, or at least appear to do so. He writes, "Culture also has its titles of nobility – awarded by the educational system – and its pedigrees, measured by seniority in admission to the nobility" (2). Ginsberg achieved one of the highest titles of nobility by attending a premiere university.

But it is much less likely for people subject to extenuating circumstances, like members of the Edgewater Boulevard community, to attend Ivy League colleges. Bourgois and Schonberg delve into these differences and how external factors often influenced the life trajectories of the men and women living on Edgewater Boulevard: "The structural political-economic forces that are in fact at work operate "invisibly" at a more subtle, long-term, and incremental level of habitus formation," they write (133). These forces often influence perception of self, as described by Bourdieu's habitus theory, and they can influence other people's perceptions of the homeless. Bourgois and Schonberg state, "In routine interactions, the political-economic basis for the racialized habitus formations of middle-aged African-American outlaws and white outcasts on Edgewater Boulevard are hidden because their everyday behaviors express themselves as the purposeful actions and conscious choices of individuals" (133). However, the authors explain that even people who live through systemic issues that prevent upward mobility do not fully understand the challenges they face. The authors point out that African-Americans experiencing homelessness, in particular, did not understand how social factors played into their own life outcomes, social factors such as mass incarceration in the United States. The authors write, "the proliferation of segregated youth gangs coincided with President Richard Nixon's declaration of the War on Drugs in 1971 and the shift in funding from social services, education, and job training to law enforcement. Police records from the era note with alarm the disproportionate number of African-American youths being jailed in San Francisco" (133).

These differences are critical to understand because they are the underlying powers that influence how people's lives will take shape. Oftentimes, it is easier to judge others based on their present circumstances, rather than considering the factors that brought them to this place. It is easier to believe that every person has

full autonomy of his or her life, even though external forces can have a significant amount of influence. These beliefs can even inform the perception of self and play into certain behaviors and actions exhibited by individuals. This is the core foundation of the differences between the Beat poets and the Edgewater Boulevard community. Both groups are perceived as making decisions that brought them to their end points. However, members of the Beat generation generally had a higher degree of autonomy: they willingly cast themselves outside the boundaries of cultural norms. On the other hand, members of the Edgewater Boulevard community often found themselves in their situation because of certain policies implemented outside of their favor, such as increased incarceration rates mentioned above. Even though these two groups exhibited similar behaviors and lived similar lifestyles, members of the Beat generation are often held in higher esteem because they created dialogue surrounding what they perceived as problems in the United States. They were able to do so because of their educated backgrounds at some of the best universities in the country. Raskin notes that Ginsberg's time at Columbia University introduced him to poetry that he was unfamiliar with before (367). The Edgewater Boulevard community had more limited opportunities and, was thus unable to express critiques on American culture and society on the same magnitude.

In regards to how social contexts can influence perception of self, there is a moment in *Righteous Dopefiend* that highlights how different life experiences can lead to drastically different demeanors among individuals. The authors go to visit the family of one of the men they meet within the Edgewater Boulevard community. According to Bourgois and Schonberg, Frank is the only member of his family to use heroin and he is the estranged son of his biological father, who owns a million-dollar home in San Francisco. They write, "Although father and son resembled on another physically, their very different demeanors in front of the camera uncannily highlighted their distinct positions in the world" (138). They note that Frank's father implemented good posture, while Frank "squatted on the ground and remained hunched over throughout the entire interview" (138). The passage goes on to document Frank's history of drug use through the transcribed interview between his father and himself: "Father [gently] Well okay, okay that's fine. But we just go around in circles on this. [shrugging] What difference does it make? You got hooked and basically committed suicide. Basically that's what you've done, Frank. Huh?" (40). Frank's father exhibits animosity towards his son for his drug use and how it affected the other children in his life. Frank's father admits that he eventually kicked Frank out of the house.

This descriptive scene exemplifies how even though these two men are biologically related, their different life experiences have led to contrasting perceptions of self. Most notable is what Bourgois and Schonberg describe as Frank's bad posture, indicating that because he is in the midst of experiencing homelessness and a drug addiction he has a poor self-image that manifests itself in his behavior. The disappointment expressed by the father demonstrates that he too looks down on Frank for being addicted to heroin and living on the streets. The authors use the language "distinct positions in the world" to accentuate the distance between Frank and his biological father. However, "positions" are nothing more than social constructs that people abide by willingly. Based on this passage, it is clear that Frank and his father have garnered social cues about how to act based on their positions in the hierarchy of society and what they have been told about how people in those positions should act. This too, influences the perception of self.

One cultural theory that could explain how the Beat poets became widely accepted is Dick Hebdige's Two Forms of Incorporation. This theory deals with the incorporation of subcultures into a more widely accepted, unifying culture, known as hegemony. Hebdige describes how subcultures gradually become accepted through mainstream media: "In most cases, it is the subculture's stylistic innovations which first attract the media's attention.... Whichever item opens the amplifying sequence, it invariably ends with the simultaneous diffusion and defusion of the subcultural style" (131). Hebdige explains that over time subcultures are slowly incorporated into mainstream culture. He outlines two ways this is done: "conversion of subcultural signs into mass-produced objects, and "re-definition of deviant behavior by dominant groups" (132). This is the process that the Beat poets underwent. The Beats were a previously disregarded group with destitute lifestyles, but then became more highly regarded. Previous outlaw status by the Beats became a popular counter-culture revolution. However, this same process had not happened for the Edgewater Boulevard community. And although the Beat poets began with similar lifestyles as the men and women on Edgewater Boulevard, the Beats were incorporated into the hegemony and are regarded differently.

Another theory that can explain why one group, such as the Beats, is accepted and the other group, the Edgewater Boulevard community, is outcast is Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas." This was a critical essay assessing how ideology is spread through culture. Marx and Engels write, "The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those

who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it” (31). This concept applies to comparisons between the Beat generation and the people studied in *Righteous Dopefiend* because ultimately, the Beats were the class that had the power to create material and mental production. Although the principles of the Beat Generation were to throw off the cultural and societal demands in the United States, by doing so the Beats somewhat created the counter-culture revolution that was prevalent after World War II. In this way, the Beats were members of the ruling class, because they had the means for material and mental production. Mostly, they influenced ideology by writing books and poetry and doing readings for the general public. This also relates back to the backgrounds of the Beats and Allen Ginsberg in particular. By attending prestigious universities like Columbia, Ginsberg was equipped with the education to write and market his art to audiences across the nation.

Alternatively, the Edgewater Boulevard community is largely “those who lack the means of mental production” and “are on the whole subject to it” (31). Bourgois and Schonberg address Marx’s theories in the introduction of *Righteous Dopefiend*. They write, “Accordingly, he [Marx] would have summarily dismissed the Edgewater homeless as members of the lumpen proletariat. Marx defines the lumpen as a residual class: the historical fall-out of large-scale, long-term transformations in the organization of the economy” (17). In this case, Marx would almost completely disregard the Edgewater homeless as unworthy of being a part of social change. However, Bourgois and Schonberg adopt the theory without keeping the derogatory nature of the word: “To understand the human cost of neoliberalism in the twentieth century, we are resurrecting Marx’s structural sense of the lumpen as a vulnerable population that is produced at the interstices of transitioning modes of production. We do not, however, retain his dismissive and moralizing use of the word lumpen” (17-18). The lumpen class, according to Marx, would be one of the lowest classes. It would not lead a revolution or spark any type of social change. Bourgois and Schonberg dismiss these criticisms of the Edgewater Boulevard community, but that being said, the Edgewater homeless do not make up members of the ruling class and therefore do not have the means to influence mental production within society.

Marx’s theory and the nature of the Beats and the Edgewater homeless in general speak to the many different kinds of outlaws that can coexist simultaneously, yet contradict each other in ways that are not inherently obvious. Both groups live on the margins of society. Both groups engage in drug use, have little

money, and frequently had run-ins with the law. Furthermore, the Beats and the Edgewater Boulevard community acknowledged their outlaw statuses. However, the major difference is that one group is highly respected and revered for literary achievement, while the other is consistently disregarded and looked down upon. In recognizing this, we must concur that the Edgewater homeless are even further cast out into outlaw status. It is worthwhile to consider why this is so. Bourdieu's theory of habitus explains much of it, and how social backgrounds can inform taste and how people perceive themselves and the world around them, and even more, themselves within the world around them. There were many instances in *Righteous Dopefiend* when the men and women experiencing homelessness were acutely aware of other people's perceptions about them and even the consequential ways the government was treating them. Tina and Frank's experiences are largely representative of this. Through Bourdieu's theory of habitus, we can examine why some outlaws are more accepted than others.

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Abbie O'Hara is majoring in history and comparative literature. She is honored to dedicate her work with Nomad to her dear friend Nicole Panet-Raymond, whose endless encouragement and validation while writing this essay will last a lifetime.

Mentor: **Alican Akyuz**

MISOGYNOIR AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: A BARTHESIAN ANALYSIS OF A HISTORIC STRUGGLE AS THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND GENDER

IN 1957 ROLAND BARTHES PUBLISHED *MYTHOLOGIES*, a text examining how culture has the power to shape social perception and interpretation of the world around us. Following the same line of thought, in 2010 black feminist and theorist Moya Bailey coined the term “misogynoir” to mimic sentiments expressed by early black feminists such as Pauli Murray surrounding the earlier vernacular “Jane Crow.” These terms verbalized concepts of intersecting racial and gender hierarchies that uniquely converge to articulate the discrimination experienced by black women. This discrimination in society that targeted black women arose from a long history of the dynamics between mythologies in a Barthesian sense within our collective and immutable perception of the world. The word misogynoir encapsulates the professed “second language” or code that shapes our reality, according to Barthes. Misogynoir played an influencing role in the development of the Civil Rights Movement, which acted as a critical notion in the development of the narrative and actions of the Civil Rights Movement. Through an analysis of the movement so intertwined with and influenced by misogynoir, this paper aims to more fully understand its impact on hierarchical subjugation established through

cultural signs and semiology's second language, as well as how we interpret the world around us. Thus, the Civil Rights Movement serves as a lens to examine the intersections between race and gender, and the consequential manifestation of misogynoir, in patriarchal society.

Roland Barthes analyzes culture through semiology and linguistics. His theory on mythology illuminates the social underpinnings of the Civil Rights Movement, and the motivations behind the injustices that brought on a need for such a movement and even the functionality of the movement itself as a representation of confrontations with misogynoir. Barthes writes, "I resented seeing nature and history repeatedly confused in the description of our reality, and I wanted to expose in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying in the ideological abuse that was hidden there" (*Mythologies*). Barthes seeks to decode our social perceptions tacitly accepted in our collective culture, which are the immutable understandings of everyday life that construct our conscious being. This goal is, arguably, the unintentional goal of the Civil Rights Movement. This unconscious perception of the world can be referred to as the ideological state apparatus. In this exposure of our manifested reality, Barthes brings forth a new understanding of cultural reality. When one applies Barthesian theory to the concept of misogynoir, we are able to deduce that the word itself is representative of our culture's mythological interpretation of race and gender. The Civil Rights Movement, being fraught with such a coalition of race and gender, allows us to examine cultural mythology of misogynoir.

Black women became the central figures that launched the Civil Rights Movement due to their marginalized positions in society as the result of misogynoir. Their comprehensive subjectivity to the social code exploited their being to be read, or socially connoted, within a social construct that devalues them. The intersection of the two primary influencing hierarchies involving race and gender within society is evidence of social prejudices against black women. Women such as Recy Taylor, Claudette Colvin, Mary Louis Smith, Aurelia Bowder, Susie McDonald, Betty Jean Owens, and Joan Little, among many others, played pivotal roles within the early Civil Rights Movement. These figures, serving as organizers, leaders, martyrs and public figures, acted as symbols for the black community as a whole and worked to combat this discriminatory and seemingly immutable social environment that mythologized them. Their struggles significantly changed cultural definitions of gender, race, and the subsequent intersection between them while mobilizing communities. Gender and race perfectly intersected to motivate

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women to redefine gender through their activism in the Civil Rights Movement. One of the most important redefinitions of black women can be seen when victims of sexual assault finally saw small amounts of justice within the legal system after grievous activism and organization. Challenging rape culture became a prodigiously important area of the Civil Rights Movement where gender and race intersect.

Richard Godbeer, a theorist who analyzes 14th-century colonialism in America and race relations, analyses these colonial practices to shed light on the historical roots of the entanglement of race and gender. Racial remarks and perceptions divide white colonists from indigenous peoples forming a dichotomous relationship and allow the development of a racial hierarchy and the construction of an ideological state apparatus that enforces the interpretation of ethnicity minorities as mythological representations of inferiority and subservience. Further establishing social hierarchies, gender plays a prodigious role in how colonists compared and contrasted whites and nonwhites, creating a racial dialogue centered around gender and sexuality. He explains how “descriptions of Indian women were often at least implicitly pornographic, incorporating fantasies of the scantily clad, innocent yet alluring, and apparently available women into narratives of sexual aggression” (95). Here, Godbeer explains how colonists saw Native women, and women of color, as racialized beings that did not conform to white supremacist standards and therefore fell outside the confines of white womanhood as a virgin and pure concept. These ideologies acted to excuse rape and sexual assault of native women. Colonists dehumanized them and hypersexualized them as a result of the unique patterns under both male and white supremacy. It is safe to state that what Godbeer observes in colonialist practices, namely the marginalization of black women not only through race but also gender, has resonated in modernity. In such a colonialist practice, we observe how gender and race intersected and brought forth a marginalized apprehension of black women in our society.

Sarah Deer, another intellectual focusing on telling the stories of Native women, claims that rape and colonialism go hand in hand. Building off claims made by Godbeer, Deer hypothesizes that colonization revolves around gender and sexuality. Colonization, being a product of a racially biased ideological state apparatus, operates systemically to disenfranchise individuals coded as inferior in our collective culture. According to Deer, the systemic nature of colonization operates primarily through sexual assault in order to undermine minority groups in an effort to bolster social hierarchies based in patriarchy. “The effects of colonialism are lasting, and the systemic and long-standing violence experienced by the Na-

tive American population across the U.S. persists, leaving Native American women among the most vulnerable members of society," (1). The social concept of race was invented during the time of colonization in America, paralleled by the rampant sexual assault of Native and black women. Ideology centered around Social Darwinism, a theory that justified political conservatism by stereotyping groups of people as less socially developed, expands beyond just race and intersects with gender. Our society began to code identity with caste position and privilege, or lack thereof. Many colonists strictly adopted the Victorian sex gender system to interpret gender and enforce conceptions of gender expectations. Due to the inconsistencies between the Victorian sex gender system and native perceptions of gender expectations, colonists easily propagated a slanderous dialogue based on the intersection of race and gender to undermine the character of indigenous people and their culture, placing them below colonists on the developing social hierarchy of the time. This creates a unique perception of women of color under the patriarchal colonial lens as inferior, which will persist in American culture into the Civil Rights Movement.

Sexual assault and misogynoiristic ideologies embedded in the collective behavioral patterns in society continued into the 1930's and 1940's. When women such as Rosa Parks and Jo Ann Robinson began their work as social activists, they focused their attention on this particular social complex. Rosa Parks worked as a sexual assault investigator for the NAACP and through this work, heard of Recy Taylor, a black woman in her community that was brutally assaulted and repeatedly raped by a gang of white men. Taylor was seen as a perfect candidate to take to the American court of law to finally seek justice for the black women victimized by sexual assault. Many described her as an "upstanding woman" according Danielle McGuire in the historical novel *At The Dark End of The Street*. Her lifestyle and image perfectly aligned with the feminine standards of "white southern womanhood." She was a church goer and a married woman who was faithful to her husband. She cooked and cleaned and fulfilled her gendered expectations of this time period. The only thing that alienated her from the complex of white southern womanhood was her race. She therefore was not able to access the mythology of pure woman to racial codes. For this reason, activists like Claudette Colvin were rejected as the face of the early Civil Rights Movement, in particular during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Furthermore, this concept is seen in courtroom rhetoric when black women sought justice against their white male oppressors. Many lawyers claimed things such as "black women cannot be raped" due to the implicit

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cultural portrayal of black women as non-virgin, impure dehumanized objects. Black women were also characterized as jezebels and harlots within the claims that they cannot be raped. This factor denied her justice under the legal system. Because of this, Rosa Parks acted and demanded justice to liberate the black female demographic from the confines of racist rape culture in America.

When one examines the Recy Taylor case, one can clearly see the intersection of race and gender continued into the 1930s and 1940s and were reflected in almost every sphere of our society, including judicial discourse. Under almost all social standards, as a woman, she the deserved protection from sexual assault under the law. Her reputation as a faithful wife and a churchgoer conveyed to her peers that she was a pure, quasi-virgin woman that “could not be raped.” This is a phrase repeated in many primary documents from the Civil Rights Era. A woman who, even if she was a virgin, could be described or associated with such an idea due her level of adherence to Western gender ideals and any woman who fell even slightly outside the expectations of these ideals was slandered as a whore, slut or jezebel. This kind of slander was not uncommon but worked in a systemic fashion in the way society views black women and therefore how legal matters were approached regarding sexual assault of black women. Almost all survivors were dismissed and disregarded.

Another important case within the Civil Rights Movement is the case of Betty Jean Owens, who McGuire defines as a “black everywoman.” This observation on part of the black community reflects that community’s understanding of systemic sexual assault as a product of a larger cultural system of subjugation rather than a case-by-case occurrence. Owens became a symbol of black womanhood, converting the sign of her existence and experiences into a mythology of systemic sexual assault onto black women. The white supremacist aversion to associate socially feminine characteristics to black women warped their image as alien, separate from humanity, thereby dehumanizing them and leading to their objectification. Black women, due to their racialization were perpetually fated to fall outside the bounds of social femininity due to early racialization of Natives. This hypersexualization of women of color by western men dissociated ideas of pureness and virginity from non-white races.

This same idea of black women as “not capable of being raped” is seen in *Southern Horrors* by Ida B. Wells. Wells, in her autobiographical novel, tells her story as a black female slave in the South. She alludes to her sexual assault and focuses mainly on the ways gender and race overlap to manifest in a phenomenon

that falsely accuses black men of sexually assaulting white women and the irony of such a thing. She explains, "Not only is it true that many of the alleged cases of rape against the Negro, are like the foregoing, but the same crime committed by white men against Negro women and girls, is never punished by mob or the law," (110). She claims that black women are commonly assaulted by white men. It was a systemic issue of the time that resulted from the marginalization of black women. As property, and something labeled less than human, they have no autonomy. Black female bodies, due to the mythology of their identities, see no justice for actions done onto them due to the systemic victimizations and erasure of black women under the legal system. Black women are considered, by public social perceptions, incapable of being raped because, in a constructional sense, they belong to their rapists. Black femininity, as evidenced by historians such as Godbeer and Deer, was coded within white supremacist culture as impure and non-virgin. This rampant assault of black women served a double purpose in that it confronts masculine gender roles as well as feminine.

Through the sexual assault of black women, white men are able to simultaneously enforce white supremacy and male supremacy through the dehumanization of black women and the feminization of black men caused by the institutionalization of cultural signs and coding them as inferior to "male." Parallels between race and gender complexes are seen in the systemic sexual assault of black women. Black women, targeted due to misogynoir, are subjugated and dehumanized through rape culture. This act also bolsters notions of white male supremacy due to the fact that the legal system almost never convicts white men for their crimes against black women. Masculinity is therefore defined as a state where one can own others' bodies and act upon them how they choose without repercussions: "Lynching, disenfranchisement, and segregation solidified a social order in the American South based on white male supremacy" (Estes 5). This, paired with ideas of *feme covert*, act as a unique culmination of hegemony within male gender expectations. When these "privileges" are denied, individuals are revoked of their masculine titles. Within the black community, the racialization of black men served as a tool to undermine their status and place them as inferior to white men. Manifestations of this within our society are displayed through the withholding of male privileges such as *feme covert* and legal culpability. Black men routinely see their wives and daughters assaulted and are not able to protect them. The inability to protect women served to demasculinize black men and place them below white men on a social hierarchy.

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The rhetoric used to discuss the role of black men in a society that codes them as less masculine became feminizing and therefore subjugational, creating the sentiment that revolution was necessary to reclaim black manhood, which then contributed to the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, black men are routinely and falsely accused of rape and punished either to the full extent of the law with no evidence needed, or they are punished by community members adhering to social dogmas of race and gender and are lynched. The false accusations of rape onto black men mongolized them and criminalized them, which painted them as less than human and therefore dehumanized entities that needed to be removed as society due to their threatening nature. This justified the systematic extermination of black men as a genocidal force inflicted onto a marginalized minority group. Men who were also financially successful and were able to gain economic and political advancements despite the intense segregationist views of the time were also punished through the slandering of their character of rapists, always to have sexually assaulted white women therefore engendering as a symbol of challenging white male supremacy. White women, through *femme covert*, a law that defined women as property of husbands and fathers, were symbols of white masculinity, then an assault of the white woman was subconsciously connected to the assault of white male supremacy. Although, the purported assault of white women at the hands of the black man illuminates the notion that this popular rhetorical mechanism signified the economic and political advancement of black men as seen as a threat to the white man.

When cities and riots are incited by white onto black neighborhoods, there is always reference to a black man assaulting a white woman used to excuse the following violence. For example, race riots incited by violent white supremacists were centered in primarily black areas. The Burning of Tulsa Oklahoma took place in an extremely affluent and successful black community after white citizens claimed, without evidence, that a black man had assaulted a white woman. It is then clear, when we examine these circumstances, that the false rape accusations by the white community onto the black man becomes an excusatory symbol of an assault on white supremacy used to incite violence and further marginalization onto the black community. It also serves as a system to disallow black economic success and perpetuate inequality through monetary means. Through the manifestation of race and gender complexes we are able to provide evidence for the socially constructed complexes that provided or denied privileges to individuals based on the intersection of gender and race identity operating at this time in history.

During the formative years of the Civil Rights Movement we are able to see militarization in black communities due to World War I and the drafting of black men into combat. Their military training and access to firearms served as another avenue to remasculinize the black community as a call to egalitarianism and civil rights: "...masculinism embraces the notion that men are more powerful...they should have control over their own lives and authority over others" (Estes 7). This call to masculinity begins as radical sentiment acts as a necessary precursor and indication of the approaching Civil Rights Movement. Because these men were given the opportunity to fulfill their gender roles as powerful figures, they reframed their perspectives within a sociological context and demanded an extension of these rights to fulfill their gender roles into the rest of societal spheres. One intellectual of the time, Howard University professor and NAACP leader Roosevelt Williams, perfectly encapsulates this sentiment in one of his speeches: "This is my man and he is a man in every respect" (Estes 39). Masculinity then, in a sense, becomes a mythological foothold for integration and activism based on the intersection of race and gender conceptions and a demand to fulfill masculine roles as black individuals.

The demasculinization of black men not only served as a justification for extermination, but also served as a means to deny enfranchisement. Voting and politics both are primary foundations within the public sphere, a space in society deemed masculine under the Victorian sex/gender system. Since black men were feminized under the denial of masculine privileges, they were also denied the right to vote and participate in politics. Women, as a cultural sign, are coded as separate from politics. The dissociation of black men from masculinity along with feminizing linguistics instigated the disallowance of black male enfranchisement. Eventually, black men rebelled against their feminization and declared a demand for masculinization and the privileges to act in masculine ways. This sentiment is described in *I Am A Man* by Steven Estes.

"Masculinist rhetoric uses the traditional power wielded by men...it rallies supporters to a cause by urging them to be manly or support traditional ideas of manhood," (Estes 8). Chauvinism led the movement. The primary objective was to redefine black masculinity as equally as masculine as white masculinity within a gendered society. A cry for masculine privileges birthed radical sentiments surrounding equal rights. As the movement progressed, this way of thinking and the gendered language that accompanied it resulted in hierarchical gendered roles within the mobilization and organization of the movement. Men assumed lead-

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ing figurehead and speaking positions as an assertion of manhood while women did secretarial and organizational work, redirecting public attention to men and disregarding female efforts in the movement, a pattern common in other regions of modern America due to the mythologizing of gender as a system of regulations and expectations.

This sentiment is later seen in rhetoric used during the formation of the Civil Rights Movement, more particularly the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The men who were present during the formation of the SCLC were brought together and organized in an effort to protect black womanhood, which they claimed would also remasculinize them. In McGuire's historical novel she recounts conversations between male members of the SCLC as well as national rhetoric of the time: "...they could fulfill their manly duty to defend black womanhood, a role that white supremacy had denied them for centuries" (108). Black men were encouraged to join the Civil Rights Movement and "remove their aprons." These two specific quotations demonstrate how emasculated black men felt during this time due to racial hierarchies and socially constructed conceptions surrounding the intersection between race and gender. The word apron here connotes domesticity, something associated with femininity. The image of a black man in an apron then comes to represent the perception of black men as feminine due to their inability to protect black women. This perception of black men as a demographic creates the mythology of the black man as inferior to white men, rooted in our collective perception of female as less than male. This supports the assumption that civil rights activists were constantly basing their perspectives on the intersection of gender and race. The misogynoir that defined black gender so deeply for so many years manifested in violence against women and the demasculinization of men that eventually motivated the mobilization of a community in an act to redefine black gender norms which was reflected in the burgeoning moments of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Civil Rights Movement began as a chauvinist based Movement in its ideology. Chauvinism, being a culturally recognized ideology that shapes expectations of gender expression, coded our interpretation of what gender what in relation to sex and what kind of influence and roles people had in society based on their gender. However, as the movement discussed gender and race, black women were presented with an opportunity to redefine black femininity and its influence in society. The primary avenue utilized to shape new definitions of gender expression under coded chauvinism was through organizational work and grassroots activ-

ism. Women's work, within a chauvinist climate, has been devalued despite its pivotal importance. Women acted as micro organizers and bridge leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, forming a new type of organization that remained constant and key to black activism in the late 20th century. For example, Jo Ann Robinson was a primary organizer within the Civil Rights Movement who founded the women's political council, a group critical in the catalyzing force to the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The group also prompted the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights organization led by the reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Rosa Parks acted as a litigious activist that fought against rape culture directed at black women and eventually became a martyr after being arrested, galvanizing the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Fannie Lou Hamer founded the Freedom Democratic Party, organized the Mississippi Freedom Summer and guided the direction of the Civil Rights Movement through her pragmatic bridge leadership within the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Ella Baker complimented the work by Fannie Lou Hamer, building onto the established narrative of nonhierarchical leadership and engendering grassroots organization among young activists. Even a nonhierarchical structure challenged the chauvinism that guided the Movement due to its rejection of the social perception of men as innate and unquestionable leaders. "...Guyot recalls telling a group of women that included Victoria Grey, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Annie Devine that the time had come for them to step back and let the men come forth" (Crawford 4). This is a primary example of women's formative and vital work to the Civil Rights Movement as organizers and the reformation of the movement due to chauvinistic standards. The reformulation due to misogynoir stems from socially coded ideas of race and gender and originated as a social response to women's redefining of feminine roles in society.

Ultimately, it was not the primary concern of the Civil Rights Movement to destroy the black community's interpellation in regard the collective culture as mythological signs, but it was to redefine the mode of subjectification to which their mythological state was accessed through. The patriarchal and hierarchical pretexts to subjectification were being challenged, not subjectification itself. This is seen primarily through the efforts of the black community to redefine themselves, but achieved this by adhering to the foundational and grammatical principles of the preceding system of semiotics. The redefinition of gender and race within the Civil Rights Movement is most obvious in later campaigns addressing black femininity. Posters depicting women holding groceries and children while wearing black power pins and baring arms proliferated during the late Civil Rights Move-

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ment and early transition to black power narratives. These posters recognized the subjectification of black women as mythological symbols of inferiority and sought to challenge this insinuation by utilizing the stereotypes that allowed for the public to mythologized black femininity. Groceries and children highlight femininity and black power pins and shotguns emphasize blackness in America. These two denotative signs connote a black feminine presence as a mythology of both black and feminine, without the historic inferiority. The connotations of political activism go so far as to reject white standards of femininity as empowerment and seek to define what black femininity can be as a respected and autonomous identity. The poster signals our cultures typical identifiers of black femininity, two things that are traditionally coded as weak and inferior, and refuses to subjugate the black woman. Instead she is depicted as strong, knowledgeable and capable. These posters operate under a semiotic system that codes black femininity as inferior and ironically uses these denotative codes to connote strength and intelligence as a reclamation of black femininity. This reclamation is able to exist within the same system that previously oppressed black women by manipulating the same collectively recognized symbols and cultural signs that have been historically utilized to connote inferiority.

Women managed to find unique ways to influence and build the Civil Rights Movement, despite the according chauvinistic atmosphere, redefining and challenging hegemony within the intersection of race and gender. This furthered the efforts to reclaim black femininity. The mobilization of the Civil Rights Movement can be seen as a galvanizing force that allowed black women to redefine black femininity and challenge chauvinist forces in society through their unique and gender nonconformist participation in activism at this time. The Civil Rights Movement, through women's organization and activism, provides a space to define black womanhood in new terms. Roles referred to such as micro organizers and bridge leaders are formed and filled primarily by women focused on bureaucracy and egalitarian dynamics between leaders and organizers. Micro-organizers are individuals who worked under primary leaders, but proved to be some of the most vital participants within the Civil Rights Movement. They managed and organized lower level activists and spearheaded communication efforts between upper and lower levels of leadership providing the movement with more synergy and collectivism. Bridge leaders acted in very similar ways to micro organizers in that their intercommunication between upper divisions of the movement and lower divisions of the the movement proved to have been invaluable. These roles typically were associated

with gender according to dominant patriarchal practices of the time. Men took on roles that typically had more power and became speakers and influencers while women remained in lower positions such as secretaries and door to door organizers, facilitating the glass elevator effect. Men naturally assume positions of power due to established social dogmas while women gravitate to lower level organizational work that has historically been developed through the narrative within the modern workforce. However, new roles like micro-organizers and bridge leaders actively defying this hierarchical and chauvinist system. Therefore, the devaluation of women's roles in the civil rights movement is directly reflective of a battle against anti-black misogyny, or misogynoir.

There are two avenues through which women challenged expression of black femininity in the Civil Rights Movement in an effort to reclaim the myth. Some approaches directly challenged feminine expression and roles in society by defying coded gender roles. In these instance, women such as Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer are most applicable. These women are credited with famous and influential speeches as well as influential and pragmatic leadership decisions that shaped the Civil Rights Movement. Power and influence are characteristics that are commonly code in collective culture as aligning with masculinity, making the actions performed by Hamer and Baker a display of women defying heteronormative expectations. Other approaches drew attention to the value of traditional women's work, something historically coded as less valuable than men's work. Georgia Gilmore who "funded the civil rights movement" through her church oriented bake sales becomes the beacon of reclaiming black femininity as connotatively powerful during the Civil Rights era. Collective social recognition of gender demanded that femininity was equivalent to subservience and domesticity. This meant that women such as Hamer and Baker were challenging traditional feminine codes and women such as Gilmore were reshaping the coded implication and perception of women's work.

A Barthesian analysis of the intersection of race and gender in collective culture, as well as its development and within the American Civil Rights Movement, is crucial in understanding misogynoir and the experiences of black women as mythological signs in American culture. Once we are able to recognize this subjectification of black women, we are able to more accurately analyze the motivations and interpretations of the Civil Rights Movement and other historical movements such as the Black Power Movement and the more modern Black Lives Matter Movement. This then consciously reclaims interpellation of the subjects af-

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ected by social constructs of race and gender. With this reclamation of the myth surrounding black gender, we are forced to examine the ways that power structures and hierarchies oppress and marginalize minority groups.

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RACHEL PETTY

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Mentor: **Nadège Lejeune**

CAMUS' *THE STRANGER*: MEURSAULT AS A SOCIAL OUTCAST

*Enfin, est-il accusé d'avoir enterré sa mère
ou d'avoir tué un home ?*

IN ALBERT CAMUS' NOVEL, *THE STRANGER*, we see a complex protagonist who lives by different laws than the rest of society. Eventually he is tried for murder, and, in the process, his unusual traits distinguish him as an outlaw than the crime he commits. Meursault's defining characteristic is his apathy, and this affects his relationships with people: namely, he does not observe the social institutions of marriage, friendship, and religion. And while Meursault is not in touch with his emotions, his actions are very strongly influenced by physical stimuli, especially the sun. These two elements differentiate him so much from society that when he is tried for his crime, he is judged by people who cannot understand him. In the words of Camus himself:

I summarized *The Stranger* a long time ago, with a remark that I admit was highly paradoxical: "In our society any man who does not weep at his mother's funeral runs the risk of being sentenced to death." I only meant that the hero of my book is

condemned because he does not play the game... He refuses to lie... One would therefore not be much mistaken to read The Stranger as the story of a man who, without any heroics, agrees to die for the truth (qtd. in Carroll 27–28)

Meursault does not plan to commit murder, but a combination of his characteristic apathy and the power of the sun lead him to it. Nevertheless, Meursault is sentenced to death—he cannot undo his action, and cannot be anyone other than he is.

Throughout the novel, demonstrations of Meursault's unusual passivity and rejection of social norms are very commonplace. When his companion Marie asks whether he wants to marry her, he says "cela [m'est] égal" (69). And when she further asks Meursault whether he loves her, he replies "cela ne signifi[e] rien mais...sans doute je [t'aime] pas" (69). Marie counters his answer with "Pourquoi m'épouser alors?" and he replies "cela [n'a] aucune importance et...si [tu désires], nous pouvions nous marier" (69). (Marie subsequently decides that Meursault is peculiar, but that she wants to marry him anyway.) It is evident that Meursault does not believe in marriage, and, from his statements, that he is not in touch with his (or Marie's) emotions, or at least considers them to be unimportant.

Meursault also exhibits similar traits with one of his neighbors. When Raymond, a fellow tenant in his apartment building, asks whether Meursault wants to be his friend, Meursault replies "ça [m'est] égal" and stops there (49). Satisfied with this underwhelming answer, Raymond then asks a favor of Meursault, who obliges, recounting to the reader: "je me suis appliqué à contenter Raymond parce que je n'avais pas de raison de ne pas le contenter" (54).¹ Meursault does not act out of any deep sentiment for this man, and we see that, in addition to marriage, friendship is another social institution to which Meursault does not subscribe. His relationships with Marie and with Raymond simply *are*.

Not all of Meursault's relationships are this. Meursault's unusual qualities become clearly evident to Meursault's trial. The magistrate ushers Meursault into his office and reviews the events of the crime with him. Meursault remembers "il s'est levé et m'a dit qu'il voulait m'aider... et qu'avec l'aide de Dieu, il ferait quelque chose pour moi" (105)². Clearly Meursault is faced with a devout man. Then, upon

¹ "I tried my best to please Raymond because I didn't have any reason not to please him." All translations adapted from Kennedy.

² "He stood up and told me that he wanted to help me...and that with God's help, he would do something for me."

debriefing Meursault on his act of murder, the judge asks him why he paused between the first and second shot. Not knowing the answer, Meursault remains silent, and the magistrate poses the question again, insistent. When he still receives no answer from Meursault, the incensed and unsettled magistrate stands up, opens a file cabinet in the corner, and brandishes a silver crucifix at him. Meursault remembers:

il m'a dit très vite d'une façon passionnée que lui croyait en Dieu, que sa conviction était qu'aucun homme n'était assez coupable pour que Dieu ne lui pardonnât pas, mais qu'il fallait pour cela que l'homme par son repentir devînt comme un enfant dont l'âme est vide et prête à tout accueillir... Il agissait son crucifix presque au-dessus de moi. A vrai dire, je l'avais très mal suivi dans son raisonnement, d'abord parce que j'avais chaud et qu'il y avait dans son cabinet de grosses mouches qui se posaient sur ma figure, et aussi parce qu'il me faisait un peu peur (106–107).³

Meursault, a man who does not believe in God and who has previously shown himself to be unemotional, is confronted with a passionate and religious diatribe. Because Meursault does not subscribe to the social institution of religion, this speech cannot mean anything to him. Not only is he affronted by the religious content, but what disturbs him most about this encounter are the physical aspects: the heat of the office, the flies, and the intensity of the magistrate's emotions.

After the magistrate calms down, he lowers his crucifix and says to Meursault “Je n'ai jamais vu d'âme aussi endurcie que la vôtre. Les criminels qui sont venus devant moi ont toujours pleuré devant cette image de la douleur” (109). Meursault almost reminds the magistrate that “c'était justement parce qu'il s'agissait de criminels” before suddenly realizing that he himself is a criminal (109).⁴ His crime was not premeditated—it was a consequence of Meursault encountering the wrong person at the wrong time on day that happened to be exceptionally hot. And, given his characteristic passiveness, the murder that he commits does not shatter Meursault's life or his perception of himself as a human being, which

³ “He told me very quickly in an impassioned manner that he believed in God, that it was his conviction that no man was so guilty that God would not forgive him, but in order for that to happen a man must repent and in so doing become like a child whose heart is open and ready to embrace... He was waving his crucifix almost directly over my head. To tell the truth, I had found it very hard to follow his reasoning firstly because I was hot and the flies in his office kept landing on me, and also because he was scaring me a little.”

is why the statement about criminals brings him a shock. When the magistrate asks Meursault whether he is sorry for his crime, he replies “plutôt que du regret véritable, j'éprouv[e] un certain ennui” (109).⁵ Rather inappropriate response from a murderer, but only natural response from such a man who unintentionally shot someone and is subjected to questioning by an official with whom he does not share common values. Once the magistrate realizes that he and Meursault will never see eye to eye, he refers to him thereafter as “monsieur l'Antéchrist” (111).⁶

Up to this point, Meursault has proven to be exceptional in all of his social interactions. With his female companion, we see his opinion on the institution of marriage; with his neighbor, we see his ambivalence towards friendship; and, with the magistrate, we see Meursault's rejection of religion. In the face of such words as marriage, friendship, and religion, the attitude of Meursault's general response is “it doesn't matter.” From this attitude and vocabulary, it is evident that we are dealing with an absurdist protagonist: Meursault knows that “human life has no redeeming meaning or purpose” (Ragapriya 283). But when he is put on trial for murder, this is not taken into account; he is tried by a society that lives by different rules, and he is judged as a heartless criminal who, on top of murdering a man at the beach, did not even weep at his mother's funeral and may as well have killed her. But how can you decide to kill a man or not, or weep at your mother's funeral, if you know that, loosely speaking, nothing matters? During Meursault's trial, the prosecutor points out that Meursault “[n'a jamais] une seule fois au cours de l'instruction... paru ému de son abominable forfait,” but Meursault remembers to the reader: “Je ne regrettais pas beaucoup mon acte... J'aurais voulu essayer de lui expliquer cordialement, presque avec affection, que je n'avais jamais pu regretter vraiment quelque chose” (154–155).⁷ This is a man who simply passes through life without attaching meaning to anything, emotion

During his trial, the prosecutor is obsessed with the fact that Meursault was unemotional at the burial of his mother (when this story starts), and uses this detail to convince the judge and jury that Meursault is a stone-cold killer—that “[il a tué] moralement sa mère” (156).⁸ Indeed, the prosecutor continues, the day after his mother's death, Meursault “prenait des bains, commençait une liaison irrégulière,

⁴ “That's exactly because they were criminals.”

⁵ “Rather than feeling any regret, I just felt bored.”

⁶ Mister Antichrist

⁷ “I didn't really regret my act. I would have liked to explain to him politely, almost with affection, that I had never been able to regret anything.”

⁸ “Meursault is morally guilty of killing his mother.”

⁹ “Went bathing, started a dubious liaison, and went at laughed at a funny movie.”

et allait rire devant un film comique” (94).⁹ Supposedly he is on trial for murder, but the prosecutor uses his seeming immorality as evidence against him to show that he is unacceptable to society in more ways than one. When his own lack of emotion at his mother’s burial is pointed out to him, Meursault reflects “sans doute, j’aimais bien maman, mais cela ne voulait rien dire” (102).¹⁰ Again we see his rejection of emotion, and that he does not by any means *dislike* his mother, but this ambivalence is considered unacceptable to the people who are trying him for murder.

When witnesses are called in support of Meursault, one of them reveals something that serves to condemn him as heartless once and for all. This man is the owner of the retirement home where Meursault’s mother was staying when she died. The man recounts the events after Meursault’s arrival: “[il] n’avai[t] pas voulu voir [sa mère]... [il avait] fumé... [il avait] dormi et... [il avait] pris du café au lait” (138).¹¹ At this last comment, a rustle moves through the audience, and Meursault says “pour la première fois, j’ai compris que j’étais coupable” (138–139).¹² At the time of his mother’s wake, Meursault had no second thoughts about drinking coffee by his mother’s casket. But the court deems this as the height of impropriety, and, in the words of Peter Schofer, “Meursault deduces his guilt from the reaction of the audience, not from the words of the concierge nor from figuring out what he had actually done” (143). To Meursault, the coffee meant nothing, and neither did his mother’s death. But it is the proverbial nail in the coffin, and with that small snippet of testimony, his fate is sealed.

Dr. Robert C. Solomon explains Meursault’s baseline unemotional condition thusly:

What Meursault does not do is make judgments, and judgments...are essential to emotions. As the narrator of the novel, he factually describes, but he does not judge, the significance of his actions or the meaning of events. Nor does he even try to understand other people’s feelings—or his own, for that matter. Accordingly, he does not reflect; he has few thoughts and is only minimally self-conscious. He cannot be true to his feelings, not only because he does not know what they are but also because, without judgments, he cannot even have them (15)

¹⁰ “Of course I loved Maman, but that didn’t mean anything.”

¹¹ “He hadn’t wanted to see his mother...he had smoked...he had slept and...he had taken some coffee.”

¹² “For the first time, I understood that I was guilty.”

Meursault passes through his life, the act of murder, and the ensuing trial without emotion and without judgment. There is, however, a pattern to his actions, is that Meursault is strongly affected by physical needs and stimuli, and these also contribute to the events that lead up to his trial. Catherine Savage Brosman describes Meursault's general condition in this way: "he is a son of the bright Mediterranean skies ...who is indifferent to the mind and worships the body" (240). This is evidenced in all of Meursault's actions. Recall his meeting in the magistrate's office, where not only does Meursault completely ignore why he is there, he turned off by the magistrate's emotional and religious display. The things that really catch his attention are the heat and the flies hovering around him.

Early on in the trial process, Meursault explains to his lawyer that "[j'ai] une nature telle que mes besoins physiques [dérangent] souvent mes sentiments" (102).¹³ Indeed, we see this everywhere in his day-to-day life. The day after his mother's death, Meursault goes swimming by the harbor. He meets Marie and pays particular attention to the feel of her body and to the warmth of the sun. In addition to mentioning the feeling of brushing against her breasts, he also describes sunbathing with her on a float:

Il faisait bon, et comme en plaisantant, j'ai laissé aller ma tête en arrière et je l'ai posée sur son ventre... Sous ma nuque, je sentais le ventre de Marie battre doucement. Nous sommes restés longtemps sur la bouée, à moitié endormis. Quand le soleil lest devenu trop fort, elle a plongé et je l'ai suivie. (34)¹⁴

It is a deeply physical scene, in which Meursault makes a point of enjoying the warmth of the sun and of Marie.

Meursault also has negative reactions physical stimuli. On the day of his mother's funeral, he walks in a procession from the retirement home to the chapel, and he sweats profusely, noticing only the heat. He thinks to himself "l'éclat du soleil [est] insoutenable" (29).¹⁵ This sensation follows him to the beach on the day he commits murder. The day is unbearably hot, and he remembers:

Toute cette chaleur s'appuyait sur moi et s'opposait à mon avance. Et chaque fois que je sentais son grand souffle chaud

¹³ "My nature is such that my physical needs supersede my emotions."

¹⁴ "It was, nice, and, sort of joking around, I let my head fall back and rest on her stomach. . . On the back of my neck I could feel Marie's heart beating softly. We lay on the float for a long time, half asleep. When the sun got too hot, she dove off and I followed."

¹⁵ "The force of the sun is unbearable."

sur mon visage, je serrais les dents, je fermais les poings dans les poches de mon pantalon, je me tendais tout étroit pour triompher du soleil et de cette ivresse opaque qu'il me diversait (92)¹⁶

We see that the heat has a strong, negative, physical effect on Meursault, and this is the condition that he is in when he encounters a nameless character known as the Arab reclining in the shade of a rocky outcrop by a small stream. When Meursault comes across the Arab, he is struggling to maintain his composure (and even his sanity) under the splitting heat:

C'était le même soleil que le jour où j'avais enterré maman, et, comme alors, le front surtout me faisait mal et toutes ses veines battaient ensemble sous la peau. A cause de cette brûlure que je ne pouvais plus supporter, j'ai fait un mouvement en avant... Je savais... que je ne me débarrasserais pas du soleil en me déplaçant d'un pas. Mais j'ai fait un pas... (94)¹⁷

The sun in this moment causes Meursault intense pain, and is reminiscent of the crushing heat on the day he buried his mother. He knows he cannot escape the sun by advancing one more step, but he does anyway, and this prompts the Arab to flash his knife at Meursault. Consequently, Meursault shoots him with a revolver, and the deed is done. He is driven by intense physical discomfort to commit a senseless act. This is a summary of most of his actions: they are driven by the physical, usually without consideration for the situation or the consequences. Meursault is perfectly happy to relax with Marie in the sun, but marriage is a very different thing. He does not mind having a cup of coffee at his mother's wake, but cannot actually dwell on her death. He is content to spend a day at the beach, but when the heat intensifies, he loses his self-control. It is therefore not extremely surprising that his trial goes the way it does: he is so concentrated on the physical that, in the end, the people trying him for murder interpret his lack of emotion as a lack of morality altogether. The reader is not generally given the impression that Meursault is moral or immoral; he is simply different. However, his differences—such as a rejection of social norms due to apathy—are enough to condemn him.

¹⁶ "All this heat pressed itself on me and opposed my advance. And each time I felt that hot breath across my face, I ground my teeth, clenched my fists in my pants pockets, I held myself firmly against the sun and the opaque grogginess that it poured down on me."

¹⁷ "It was the same sun as the day I buried Maman, and, as it had then, my forehead especially was hurting me, and my veins throbbed under my skin. It was because of this unbearable burning I took a step forward... I knew... that I wouldn't get rid of the heat by taking a single step forward. But I took a step..."

All told, Meursault is an outlaw: he commits murder and is tried and condemned for it. But what interests his persecutors more than his crime is his character, namely his apathy and, as a result, his apparent immorality. Meursault goes against the grain of society, and cannot be understood—nor, it stands to reason, be fairly judged—by anyone at his own trial. Throughout the novel, we see that he is not a person with criminal habits; rather, he is simply more emotionally detached from life than the rest of society. Perhaps there are many people like him in our systems of prosecution, and we ought to be sensitive to our differences in order to avoid misunderstanding or—even worse—mistrial and execution of a person whose crime was unpremeditated.

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LUCAS QUENTON

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WHEN THE OUTLAW TRANSITIONS TO THE INSIDE: MICHAEL CORLEONE

IN THE MOVIE *THE GODFATHER*, one's position within a family dictates his or her position in the world. Most importantly, one's position in the family determines which laws must be abided, as the basis of laws does not lay in collective reason, but in the personal interest of those with power. The preservation of the family name and personal attachments are the motivations that lead to the conflicts of the story, much like a theatrical tragedy. *The Godfather* was originally written as a novel of the same name, published in 1969 by Mario Puzo, born in New York in the 1920s. The novel was adapted into three films in 1972, 1974 and 1990, by Francis Ford Coppola, and Puzo himself. The story takes place in a romanticized post-World War II New York City, and, with prohibition having ended in 1933 and the war at a close, narcotics are seen as the next logical step in organized crime. The story follows the youngest son of Don Vito Corleone, Michael Corleone, as he succeeds his father and becomes the head of the Corleone family after an assassination attempt and Vito's subsequent retirement. The Corleones are one of the most exclusive, violent, and influential crime families in the city. Vito is able to completely impose his law on all those under him, but this system does not last. It is Michael's unique position outside of this traditional law, and the law of the family, that allows him to avoid the consequences of breaking both and to eventually succeed when his father is unable to continue imposing his own law. If Michael had been bound to either set of laws, he would have been destroyed.

The Godfather is foremost a family tragedy, as Marcia Citron explains. The trilogy exploits themes commonly found in 19th-century Italian opera: honor, loyalty, betrayal, revenge, which are typical features of Sicilian culture (425). Because the Corelones' business is dependent on personal drama, one's family, religion, and respect for tradition are placed at the core of the family's actions and the consequences of those actions are secondary to the protection of the family. In order to romanticize the Mafia world, like the romanticized Medieval feudalistic world, Coppola uses the classical operatic act structure. As Citron says, "Coppola planned structure and detail carefully in each film. He has said that the trilogy resembles a symphony in its structure, a kind of ABA form," and, by invoking this three-act operatic structure, he is able to wrap the rule of law in a domestic narrative (146). Michael's unique position outside the rule of law but within the domestic narrative is what allows him to avoid the consequences of breaking the law while succeeding Vito as the leader of the family.

In the first act of the story, we find that Vito Corleone dominates the world. With established lawful figures like judges and police officers bribed or corrupted, the power rests with Vito. Vito, however, is free to do as he pleases without regard for the law. He has an extravagant wedding for his daughter, he performs favors for his family, and he exercises his form of justice with violence against people such as rapists. Those around him are bound to his will as he controls the law and without him there is chaos. The first sequence of the film takes place at the wedding of Constanzia "Connie" Corleone, the only daughter of Vito Corleone. The actual wedding is absent from the film, further showing that the wedding itself does not matter to the people involved. This film, like many tragedies, sets up many of the important actors of the plot in the first scene, and, as we see at this wedding, the guests have arrived for Vito, not Constanzia. Their attention is on how their actions are seen by Vito, revealing that, if Vito were not there or had no power over them, they would not be following the law, as revealed in the guests' banter. Paulie Gatto says, "Thirty, forty grand. In small bills, cash, in that little silk purse. Madon', if this was someone else's wedding, sfortunato!" The film even opens on Vito's office as he takes requests on his daughter's wedding day, further showing the mix of the domestic narrative and business politics. Vito's law is what truly matters.

The wedding is on a bright day with bright Italian music and dancing. The characters laugh and drink, while Vito's office is dark, with windows blocked and stained wood that blends in with the suits that Vito and his sons wear. This contrast between light and dark shows the difference between the perception of the

family and reality that will follow Michael. The wedding also shows Michael's position in the family: at the start, he is absent and is late for the wedding, but Vito refuses to take a picture without him and he is greeted kindly by members of the family individually and personally. These actions show that even though he is outside the family's law, he is still connected. At the wedding, Michael stands out among the family and guests, the only guest wearing a brown military uniform. He also brings Kay, who stands out as the pinks and purples silks of the bridesmaid's dress clash with her red dress and hat. It is also clear by her ignorance of conventional dress that this is the first time she has dealt with his family or anyone from the Mafia, deepening the divide between Michael and his family. This is shown in the way that Michael describes his family to Kay saying, "That's my family, not me." He shows that he himself does not take ownership over his family, yet he expresses extensive knowledge of the guests, demonstrating that he does have people who care about him in the family.

Michael's position stands in contrast to his brother Santino. Santino grew up in the family and is unable to change who he is to fit circumstances. At the beginning of the film, he is in the inner circle of his father and is present at the audiences in his office but is absent from his family and is instead with one of the bridesmaids or with his father on business. The characters of Santino and Michael contrast each other in the way they both approach being the child of Vito. Santino, who is the next in line to be the Don, embraces the criminal element: he is hot-tempered and quick to violence. However, unlike Michael he has no regard for his family, focusing only on immediate problems and tasks. All of this strife is kept in check by Vito's ability to impose his law.

The second sequence of the film is a direct result of Vito's inability to keep Santino in check during the meeting with Solozza, who represents the narcotics business. It is Santino's inability to be controlled during this meeting that leads Solozza to sense the internal power struggle that would ensue if Vito dies. If Vito were not there, Santino, who is more impulsive and willing to take a chance on narcotics, would be put in his place. It is this line of thinking—that breaking the Corleone law would result not in punishment, but with a reward—that allows Solozza to begin a war. Thus, it is Santino's breaking of his father's law and Vito's inability to impose his law on his son that leads to Vito's attempted assassination and subsequent hospitalization. Without Vito, all of the laws that his presence evoked are no longer enforced, and his kingdom devolves into chaos as different factions try to take control and destroy the Corleones. Michael is not present for

any of these events; instead, he finds out in the paper while out with Kay shopping for Christmas gifts, oblivious to the fact that his entire family is collapsing, stressing further that he is not involved in the family at all.

The second act of the story details both the success of the Corleone family at revenge, with Michael as its leader, and the failed attempts of Michael and Santino as they each try to establish their own law in the absence of their father. For Michael, his revenge comes down to the sequence in which he guns down the police chief and Solozza. From the wedding to this point, Michael has transitioned from an outsider to the vengeful son. The progression from outside to inside comes as the family's methods slowly begin to be the only option in accomplishing his goal of protecting his family. The desire to protect his family becomes the reason behind all of Michael's actions, and during the process of the attempted assassination of his father and the subsequent erosion of law and authority, Michael is forced to make decisions that, though they might align with his motivations, are against the established law that he abides. As a result, he must change.

Michael's shift from outside the law to eventual successor begins with the scene at the hospital. It is the first time he has seen his father since the wedding. After saving his father from a second assassination attempt, the police chief shows up and clearly demonstrates that he is not willing to protect Michael's father or anyone in his family. In fact, as it is revealed later, the police chief is paid by a rival family. This scene is the first time that we see Michael on the same side of the common law as his family. At this point, Michael has done nothing wrong, yet in this scene, he is reminded that he will always be at the mercy of his family and the political drama that establishes who controls the law. The next scene is a direct result of this hospital altercation. After returning to his father's home Michael articulates his plan to the rest of the inner circle. Michael now sits in the darkness in a large chair in his father's office and insists upon getting revenge, even after being ridiculed by the remainder of the family. In this scene, Michael recognizes the legitimacy of his family's methods. This change leads to the final scene of Michael's progression from an outsider to the person who will take over as he kills the police chief and Sollozzo. In this act, Michael has forgone his civilian life and accepted that he is a part of the family. This is the point of no return for him and shows that he is neither bound by the common law provided by the government and he is also free from the violence of breaking the mob law by escaping to Italy. Over the course of this progression, Michael's motivations have remained constant, but after taking on new responsibilities, he is unable to abide by the laws that people as-

sumed governed him and instead imposes his own idea of justice and must flee as a result. It is Michael's ability to escape from the law that would otherwise exercise its judgments that allows him to survive. If he had stayed, then the conflict would have continued, but by escaping, he allows time for his family to make up for the conflict and restore peace. This also proves to the extended family that he is competent in the family business and is able to impose his own version of the law in order to accomplish his goal. This makes it much easier for the family to accept his law when he returns, instead of having to start from a position like Santino, who is tied down by the mistakes of his past.

In contrast to his brother Michael, Santino is bound by his responsibilities as he always has had to both follow the law and try to assert his own law. Santino wants to go to war almost immediately after the attempted assassination of his father. Santino's temper and eagerness get him into trouble, as it was his lapse in judgment that leads to the attempt on his father's life. However, unlike Michael, who must assert law in the Mafia world for the first time, Santino must assert his law over his family for the first time. It is this inability to assert his law that is exemplified by the character of Carlo, the groom from the wedding at the beginning of the film, who turns out to be an abusive assaulter, eventually selling Santino out to Sollozzo's family. Santino is unable to either kill him for what he does to his sister or leave him out of the business entirely because he does not have the moral high-ground or understand the problem because his family is afraid to talk to him because of his past actions. This is shown in the dinner scene where "we don't talk about work" is met with silence. There is nothing else for Santino to talk about and everyone around him is scared of setting him off. Eventually, Carlo sells Santino out to Sollozzo's family because Santino is unable to do anything besides intensify Carlo.

Michael's problem, in contrast to Santino's, is that he is unable to focus on the business at all, and he goes to Italy gets married and lives a peaceful life until he is betrayed by a guard and his wife is killed. Unlike Santino, who failed to assert his law on people that he trusted, Michael fails to trust and assert his rule onto anyone and thus fails to have loyal people in his employment, leading to the death of his wife. Peace comes with the return of Vito, who sits all the heads of the families together and asserts his rule, or at least comes to a compromise: "How did things ever get so far? I don't know. It was so—unfortunate—so unnecessary. Tattaglia lost a son, and I lost a son. We quit. And if Tattaglia agrees, then I'm willing to—let things go on the way they were before." He is able to create the conditions for

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Michael to come home. Unlike Santino, Michael is not bound in the same way as Santino, and is given majority control immediately along with a smooth transition of power.

In the third and final act of *The Godfather*, Michael replaces Vito and becomes the new head of the family. Unlike Santino, who was subservient to Vito, Michael takes an active role in exercising judgment, while Vito takes a much more subdued role. Michael, in this act, fully establishes that he has complete control over the law. The shift can be viewed in Michael's interactions with Kay, who he had not seen since before he left for Italy and before he killed two people. She is no longer dressed in colors that make her stand out. Instead, she blends in with her environment, showing that she, as opposed to how she was at the beginning, would be able to go unnoticed in the Mafia world. Michael shows the same kind of change: he is dressed in a heavy black suit, which shows how he, too, has transitioned from someone who stands out to someone who is able to fit into the world of his family. They talk about the nature of power and being naïve: "Oh—who's being naïve, Kay? Kay, my father's way of doing things is over. It's finished. Even he knows that. I mean, in five years, the Corleone family is going to be completely legitimate. Trust me. That's all I can tell you about my business." These lines show everything that has changed about Michael since the opening scene. He says that Kay is naïve to think that powerful people do not kill people, then says that the family will be legitimate in five years, showing that he is either lying to her or is himself hopelessly naïve. Then he calls it "my business," in direct opposition to his distancing himself from his family at the wedding, as he has taken ownership of the business. This scene also shows how imposing Michael has become, as he completely ignores Kay's protests and, even after disappearing and getting married in Italy, he expects for her to just come back to him so that he can start a family. This shows how he has transitioned from outside the law to the one who imposes his law on the family, and that Kay has also transitioned from someone who is outside the family to someone who is in the family and is thus under the rule of Michael.

By the end of the film, Michael has become what he feared at the beginning. He is dressed in all black and uses the same tactics that his family used before and plays the game at family events, and his actions at his father's funeral are really about who will betray him and the family. In the penultimate scene, after the death of his father, he avenges his brother and father and kills the rival family heads who were plotting against him, while becoming the Godfather to Connie's son. However, unlike Santino, who was fully capable of imposing his law on others but could

not impose his law on his own family, Michael imposes his law on his family. The first thing that he does after the baptism of his nephew is have Carlo killed. When confronted by his sister about it, he lies to Kay before shutting the door for the final time. In the final scene, Michael is consistently moved in and out of the shadows as he talks to Kay, who always remains in the light, showing how Michael has decided to go with his family. In the end, Michael stands in the doorway in the office from the beginning as his father's family confirms him as the leader, and the door is shut.

The first *Godfather* film, in contrast to the two sequel films and the latter half of the book, focuses on the rise of Michael's law as he moves from the fringes of the family to its leader. Over the course of Coppola's three operatic acts, Michael slowly must impose his form of justice, or he risks the same fate as his brother, Santino. The first film lays the groundwork for the tragic end that eventually awaits Michael because, eventually, he is unable to impose his law on others or escape the Mafia world. However, Michael is able to establish a rule that lasts so long because he starts outside of the law and is not able to be punished when he breaks their laws. Freed from restraints, he is able to exercise his sense of justice and establish his form of law, while those who are unable to assert their law like Santino are destroyed, as other people decide that it is okay to break the law. Michael's position ensures that everyone knows that his motivation is to protect the family because he has no other apparent ambitions. Michael's moral absolutism allows him to transform from an outlaw to the person who creates the law in the place of his father.

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THE CODE AND THE CLOSET: QUEER CRIMINALITY IN ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S *ROPE*

ONE OF THE GUIDELINES SET FORTH in the Motion Picture Production Code stipulated that on-screen kissing must not exceed three seconds, so as to avoid becoming excessive and lustful. If you keep a stopwatch handy, you will notice that, for the duration of a romantic three-minute sequence in Alfred Hitchcock's 1946 film *Notorious*, Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant make sure to pull their lips apart every three seconds to gaze into each other's eyes or offer up a charming bit of dialogue. As a director interested in the full spectrum of human behavior, perversity included, Hitchcock found ways around the moral confines placed on the films of his time. As is reflected in his compulsion to insert himself through cameo roles into all his films, he breached the boundaries between the fictional worlds of his movies and the reality in which they were constructed, which often involved the threat of censorship. His 1948 film, *Rope*, epitomizes this dynamic.

Enforced 12 years earlier in 1934, the Motion Picture Production Code reveals an institution determined to impose traditional values onto the film industry. It is commonly known as the Hays Code, after Will H. Hays, the chairman of what would become the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). In most contemporary film rating systems, the presence of material considered unsuitable

for certain audiences is qualified as such upon release. The Hays Code, however, sought to enforce a binary system of approval or rejection based on a film's adherence to the principles set forth in the document. Conservative values and Catholic undertones permeate the guidelines, specifically restricting the presentation of the clergy as both villainous or comedic and forbidding depictions of interracial relations and "Sex perversion or any inference to it."

One of the underlying suppositions of the Code was film's potential to corrupt its viewers not only through the presence of morally reprehensible material, but also through narrative formations and the configuration of characters in relation to the audience. One section states that "No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown on the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin." This moralization of thematic material posed a censorial structure that was bound to generate complex tensions between censors and creators, and to foreground the practice of interpretation in the determination of a given film's fate.

It is this climate in which *Rope* serves as an exploration of its own context and as an interrogation of the nature of perceptibility. On multiple textual levels, the film asks the questions of what is allowed to be seen and by whom, who dictates the limits of visibility, and how these boundaries can shift or become distorted. The forbiddance of on-screen homosexuality relegated the subject to the realm of quiet implication, but in a film about the threat of discovery, queerness is central.

Rope's main characters are two young Ivy League Manhattan socialites, Philip Morgan and Brandon Shaw. In a demonstration of intellectual superiority, they murder their former classmate, David, believing that their "perfect crime" is a work of art. To heighten the prestige of the act and affirm their invulnerability, they host a dinner party in their apartment while David's body remains hidden in plain sight in a large wooden chest. The guests include David's father, aunt, and fiancée, as well as another classmate, and James Stewart's character, Rupert Cadell, the prep school housemaster of the four men and the source of philosophical inspiration behind the murder. In their prep school days, Rupert lectured the boys on his belief in the Nietzschean concept of the Superman, an individual for whom, in Rupert's interpretation, murder is a justifiable privilege, reserved for the culturally and intellectually superior.

Brandon believes that Rupert is the only one who could understand and perhaps even appreciate the logic behind the murder. His craving for recognition conflicts inherently with his goal of secrecy. At the last minute before guests arrive,

Brandon decides to serve dinner from the very chest that acts as David's coffin. This is the first of many decisions made in order to position what must not be revealed as near as possible to the boundary of visibility without directly exposing it. This drive to simultaneously conceal and make visible one's identity is a prominent theme throughout the film, expressed not only through the murderers' crime, but also more notably through their implied homosexuality.

In the first scene, two essential elements are established: the sexual undertones of Phillip and Brandon's relationship, and the alignment of this sexuality with the act of murder. The action and dialogue around the killing is infused with a post-coital quality. The image immediately following the first scene is of the two men panting in the dark, with Phillip's head nearly resting on Brandon's shoulder. When Brandon turns on a lamp, Phillip tells him to turn it back off: "Don't ... not just yet. Let's stay this way for a minute." After they open a bottle of champagne, Phillip asks, "Brandon, how did you feel? During it." to which Brandon responds, "I don't know, really. I don't remember feeling much of anything until his body went limp and I knew it was all over, and then I felt tremendously exhilarated. How did you feel?" Homosexuality is suggested in this scene through the utterance of phrases which the audience may recognize as familiar within sexual contexts. There are moments in the film of diegetic indication of Phillip and Brandon's lifestyle, such as a conversation about the house phone when it is implied that the two men share a bedroom, but these are few and far between. The majority of the work of signification is left to suggestive language and visual cues, such as the murderers' physical proximity to each other. The fact that the true "it" of "how did it feel?" is not sex, but murder, indicates for the first time the film's interest in thematically combining the two acts. In this sense, the two main characters are doubly outlawed, a setup that would seem to be bound for rejection by the Hays Office. But as the party guests arrive, sympathies and perspectives become more complex.

As *Rope* progresses, the character of Rupert Cadell becomes a loaded beacon of morality, the nature of which is at times difficult to distinguish. *Rope's* screenwriter, Arthur Laurents, himself a gay man, has spoken in memoirs and interviews about the homosexuality of not only the murderers, Philip and Brandon, but also of their teacher, Rupert. Though he noted that due to the watchful eye of the censorship board, the final script was so discreet that Laurents was unsure whether James Stewart ever realized that his character was gay (*Rope Unleashed*).

In Brandon's eagerness to push on the boundaries of his secret, he encourages Rupert to discuss his theories about Nietzsche and murder as a privilege. Rupert

obliges and professes his belief in the superiority of a small few individuals. Mr. Kentley, the victim's father, struggles to discern whether Rupert is being facetious or sincere. Rupert assures him that he means what he says, but his sarcastic tone betrays the conviction of his words. He allies himself to some degree with Brandon and Philip insofar as the philosophical debate, but while he seems to endorse this philosophy, he interrogates the murderers on numerous occasions about David's whereabouts, clearly willing to antagonize them. His reluctance to fully embrace an identity one way or another will become an essential element of his moral positioning, something that could determine film's approval under the Hays Code.

One of Hitchcock's decisions in adapting *Rope* from *Rope's End*, a play by Patrick Hamilton, provides insight to the nature of Rupert's character and the thematic construction of the film as a whole. In the play, Rupert Cadell is heavily implied to be gay and to have had affairs with his students at prep school, including Brandon. Additionally, Hitchcock originally wanted a more effeminate actor to play Rupert such as Cary Grant or James Mason (Allen 143). With this information, his uncertain positioning in the film becomes more probably aligned with the gay subtext, but his plausible distance from homoerotic participation plays a significant role in the film's conclusion.

The party falls apart as the guests' stress over David's absence and various tensions throughout the night lead to a collective resignation. As they exit, Rupert accidentally finds David's hat, but does not reveal this to Philip or Brandon. He exits with the other guests, but makes an excuse to come back up to the apartment. Philip is visibly distressed and drunk, unable to cope with the pressure. "Cat and mouse, cat and mouse! But who is the cat and who is the mouse?" he shouts at one point as Brandon and Rupert discuss the strangeness of the night and the prospect of the young men having done something with David. Rupert exhibits willingness to engage in a hypothetical prompt that Brandon gives him about how he would kill David if he were to do it. It is still unclear how much Rupert actually knows, as the body remains concealed and he is willing to humor Brandon with his dark and philosophical conversation.

In her 1990 book, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Sedgwick writes, "Even an out gay person deals daily with interlocutors about whom she doesn't know whether they know or not; it is equally difficult to guess for any given interlocutor whether, if they did know, the knowledge would seem very important" (68). This uncertainty around not only the distribution and possession of knowledge, but also the consequences of its exposure is dramatized through the murder. In 2013,

French filmmaker Alain Guiraudie based his film *Stranger by the Lake* around the same concept. The film, about a beach in the South of France that serves as a gay cruising site, features a murder committed by a gay man and the effects of the act on his relationship with his lover. What distances this film furthest from *Rope* is that it contains completely unobscured depictions of sexual acts between men. One of the most sexually explicit scenes in which a close-up shows the protagonist, Franck, being stroked to orgasm by an unnamed partner is immediately followed by the central murder scene. Franck wanders alone through the forest as the sun sets and he sees Michel, the enigmatic object of his desire, swimming with another man. A playful game of dunking and splashing seamlessly shifts into cold-blooded murder as Michel holds the man underwater until he drowns. Franck, the sole witness, leaves immediately. The remainder of the film follows Franck as his simultaneous lust and fear of Michel compel him into an ambiguous sort of complicity. Thus, intricate and precarious knowledges about sex, guilt, and identity are configured in a similar fashion to those in *Rope*. Sedgwick presents the uncertainty around the consequences of this knowledge as an essential component of queer existence.

After the corpse of Michel's victim is found elsewhere in the lake, an inspector comes to the beach and interrogates the cruising men over a number of days. Franck lies to the inspector about his knowledge of the murder in front of Michel. His motives for this are ambiguous and multiple. Neither Franck nor the audience knows whether Michel is aware that Franck has witnessed the murder. As his relationship with Michel develops into a desperate, lustful closeness, it becomes unclear whether he is driven more by fear or desire.

Despite the illusion of openness represented by the cruising site, the environment in which this investigation and suspicion take place is not unlike that of *Rope*. In the social order of the beach, the most common public expression of identity is through the naked body. The trees in the nearby forest where men go to have sex obscure geography and visibility just as, in that area, social legibility is distorted and redefined, largely due to its confinement. Many of the men do not know the names of the people they have picked up. The heterosexual inspector, a representative of the outside world, struggles in the face of this completely unfamiliar framework. As is the case with Phillip and Brandon, possessed by Rupert's philosophy, the standards of morality are unstable. Rupert, like the inspector, is uncertain of his relationship to the social order which he is simultaneously intruding on and surrounded by. To varying degrees, both interlocutors also represent

the world of compulsory heteronormativity which led to the existence of the queer spaces. In Rupert's case, he is more directly responsible as an individual.

Stranger by the Lake's radically unrestrained portrayal of sex works to contrast the forces of repression that permeate the story. The film serves as a contemporary reassertion and investigation of the same themes that *Rope* presented while embracing the progress that standards of censorship have made. Both films dramatize the ways in which the restriction of identity can cause the barriers of knowledge to divide any range of information, reaching far beyond sexual orientation. Guiraudie's film is often described as Hitchcockian due to its treatment of murder and mystery, but its queer content also resonates. *Rope's* conclusion features an equally precarious arrangement of identity.

In the game of cat and mouse, Brandon works to subtly encourage Rupert to discover the body while simultaneously refusing to admit to any actual guilt. The revelation could either realize his desire to be affirmed by his role model and potential sexual interest or it could bring about his own destruction.

For Rupert, there is a clear interest in the actualization of the philosophy he had espoused for years, but to see it happen would make him complicit in murder and forever tie him to Philip and Brandon's lives. He is desperate to peer into the closet, but cannot stand to be dragged inside. As he grows increasingly suspicious, he eventually summons the courage to open the chest. "I hope you like what you see," Brandon shouts. The camera remains behind the chest as Rupert flings its lid open. The body is never shown to the viewer, but its presence is reflected in Rupert's horrified face. In one movement, he slams shut both the lid of the chest and the figurative closet door. He launches into an impassioned speech which betrays his very nature:

You've given my words a meaning that I never dreamed of. And you've tried to twist them into a cold logical excuse for your ugly murder. Well, they never were that, Brandon, and you can't make them that. There must have been something deep inside you from the very start that let you do this thing. But there's always been something deep inside me that would never let me do it and that would never let me be a party to it now.

Rupert then swings open the window and fires a number of gunshots into the nighttime air. He breaks the barrier between inside and out, beckoning to the moral authority of the anonymous public to enter this space and correct its trans-

gressions. Voices and sirens are audible, signaling the success of his call. In condemning the young men, Rupert disavows what has been an undeniable component of the way he had previously presented himself to the world. His vague and suggestive word choice, “something deep inside you,” shapes a resounding retreat into heteronormativity. With the shutting of the chest, ostensibly, order is restored. The film ends with a long take of the three men sitting speechless while the sirens outside grow nearer. Rupert holds the gun and the murderers are in clear view.

Rope's final scene is likely read by many as a wholesome and rightful administration of justice, the kind of ending that the MPAA approved without reservation. But the underlying hypocrisy of Rupert's monologue becomes more evident with each viewing. Hitchcock places the murderers in full view of the audience at the film's end, as though their visibility in the eyes of the viewer and the law ensures that their depravity will be corrected. But, much like the body of their former classmate, a darker truth is hidden in plain sight through the character of Rupert.

The fact that such a queer film made it into theaters around the world in 1949 raises the question of exactly how the censors viewed the work. It is possible that they missed the gay subtext entirely, or phobically refused to acknowledge it, which would have required that they perform their own queer reading of the film. Perhaps they read the ending the way that Rupert would have them see it: as a moral victory over the perverse. There are varied accounts of cities in the United States banning the film's exhibition, due in some reports to the homosexual elements, and in others to the on-screen violence. The exact history may be unknowable, but debate and discourse around the film continue, and the ongoing variety of critical readings is a testament to its complexity and cultural resonance. Produced in a time when the power of film was feared and repressed, *Rope* endures as a sneaky classic of queer cinema.

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HOLDEN CAULFIELD: A DELINQUENT MARTYR FOR SOCIETY'S YOUTH

IN 1951, THE PUBLISHING HOUSE LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY released *The Catcher in the Rye*, a novel written by the established author J.D. Salinger. The novel would go on to become a New York Times best-seller and one of the books chosen for their Book of the Month Club. Since its release, the publishing house has sold over 65 million copies. However, *The Catcher in the Rye* has not gone without criticism. Notorious for its scandalous reputation and forbidden themes, *The Catcher in the Rye* has been challenged multiple times by literary authorities, and its availability to the public has been threatened on countless occasions. What draws controversy about the novel is its protagonist, Holden Caulfield. Throughout the story, Holden's problematic thought pattern and actions establish the teenager as the quintessential juvenile delinquent. However, there are aspects to Holden that make his case more disconcerting than simply irritating and agitating to the public. Rather than writing him off as an indecent and persuasive troublemaker who contributes no positivity towards society, understanding Holden as a fictional depiction of an adolescent with realistic issues allows for further analysis of his character. In turn, serious analyses could subvert the taboo status of the novel itself due to the wisdom gained through the comprehension of Holden's character.

While Holden does not have a spotless reputation, he is well-known in the literary world. What makes *The Catcher in the Rye* effective as a novel, especially when shelved alongside young adult classics, is "Mr. Salinger's rendering of teenage speech... the unconscious humor, the repetitions, the slang and profanity,

the emphasis, [which] all are just right” (Burger). The characterization of Holden Caulfield brings to life a living “seventeen-year-old narrator and his matching of syntax and idiom to that choice” (Ohmann). *The Catcher in the Rye* is an extremely character-driven novel, and the praise that it receives for the realistic depiction of the young protagonist entices the readers, who are drawn to Holden.

Salinger uses syntax, specifically italics, as a tool to mold the believable perspective of a seventeen-year-old boy. Holden’s dialogue and narration include the use of italics, such as when he describes Lillian, a former partner of his brother D.B., as “blocking up the *whole goddam traffic*” or when he explains that the phrase “Glad to’ve met you” towards a person is false when, in actuality, he is “not at all glad [he] met” (Salinger 87). The stress that Salinger puts on his words via the use of italics internally helps to form the voice of Holden as an annoyed, snide young man. In an exchange that Holden has with Lillian, Salinger uses italics in Lillian’s dialogue:

“How marvelous to see you!” old Lillian Simmons said. Strictly a phony. “How’s your big brother?” That’s all she really wanted to know.

“He’s fine. He’s in Hollywood.”

“In *Hollywood*! How *marvelous*! What’s he *doing*?”

“I don’t know. Writing,” I said. I didn’t feel like discussing it. You could tell she thought it was a big deal, his being in Hollywood. Almost everybody does. Mostly people who’ve never read any of his stories. It drives me crazy, though.

“How *exciting*,” old Lillian said. (86)

In this exchange, none of Holden’s dialogue is italicized. However, Salinger decides to italicize parts of Lillian Simmons’ dialogue, in particular only certain syllables of the words. The function of italicizing parts of words and not the entirety is that it creates a sonic quality, so the reader can hear the exaggerated speech of Lillian. Therefore, the reader is able to gain a deeper understanding of Holden’s perception of the people he interacts with. While he speaks normally and without exaggeration, he views Lillian as overly excited and even fake with her excessive use of inflection. Through italics, Salinger is able to create an atmosphere of adolescent realism and natural cynicism around Holden, and because Salinger communicates that to the readers, the readers invested in Holden are prepared for their journey either to empathize and understand him or to judge him in depth.

Besides Holden's composure as conveyed through his speech and actions, Salinger's choice to write in the first-person point-of-view brings the readers closer to Holden and his difficulties. The chosen perspective makes it seem as though Holden is talking directly to someone, which is, in this case, the reader, about his life and his adventures in New York City. Toward the end of the novel, Holden disrupts the moment in the narrative when he is with his younger sister Phoebe when he tells the reader that "God, I wish you could have been there" while "I felt so damn happy... [even though] I don't know why" (213). With diction appropriate to someone his age, Holden confides to the reader his raw emotion, which stems from a place unknown to him, and, in this moment, like a friend, the reader may feel close to this struggling young man. The reader can infer that Holden holds this memory of his sister on the carousel fondly and melancholically, and he empathizes with his sister's happiness. When he is speaking from the first-person perspective, Holden invites the reader to experience what he is experiencing in the moment.

At the time of *The Catcher in the Rye's* release in 1951, one of the first reviews of the novel was published in a journal called *The Christian Science Monitor*. In it, T. Morris Longstreth tells his readers that, "Fortunately, there cannot be many of [Holden] yet. But one fears that a book like this given wide circulation may multiply his kind—as too easily happens when immorality and perversion are recounted by writers of talent whose work is countenanced in the name of art or good intention" (Longstreth 6). Acknowledgement of Salinger's writing talent does not exempt Holden Caulfield and the novel from criticism and condemnation. Like many members of the opposing public, Longstreth strongly disapproved of the existence of Holden Caulfield because he believed that a fictional character like Holden had the potential to corrupt the youth. Of the opposing public in the 1970s, "many censors freely admit they have never read it, but are relying on the reputation the book has garnered" (Whitfield 581). Their ignorance of the material stems from their superficial impressions of the novel. Aside from ignorance, other commentators on *The Catcher in the Rye* tend to simplify the characterization of Holden Caulfield and not provide it a thoughtful review. For example, on July 15, 1951, James Stern, the author of a short story collection called *The Man Who was Loved*, wrote an unkind review of *The Catcher in the Rye*. In the review, he recounted a conversation about *The Catcher in the Rye* that he had with a woman named Helga, who happened to enjoy the novel. While he recounts the conversation, he writes his description and dialogue in a mimicry of Salinger's writing style:

This Holden, he's just like you. He finds the whole world's full of people say one thing and mean another and he doesn't like it; and he hates movies and phony slobs and snobs and crumby books and war. Boy, how he hates war. Just like you, Hel, I said. But old Hel, she was already reading this crazy "Catcher" book all over again. That's always a good sign with Hel. (Stern)

Stern excessively uses negative words that Holden would say to parody the youthful language in the novel, which shows Stern's dissatisfaction with Salinger's writing. Stern goes on to condescend Holden by condensing his ideals to those of a miserable teenager drowned in cynicism. The shallow criticism and mockery of Holden disallows readers like Stern to look beyond individual crude vernacular terms and run-on diction.

The public views the protagonist of *The Catcher in the Rye* as an unstable adolescent who decides physically to remove himself from his discomforting situation, fails, and, conclusively, is admitted into a mental hospital. The more opposing public summates *The Catcher in the Rye* as the journey of a misguided youth who "[goes] through the motions of adolescent play—he attends nightclubs, drinks alcohol, smokes, chats and dances with young women, goes on a date, tries to have sex by any means possible," but what is not included in their summation is that "[Holden] never seems to know why he does any of these things and they bring him no developmental satisfaction" (Priest 215). To perceive all of Holden's story as consecutive points on a timeline or items on a list of misdeeds simplifies him greatly. Instead, the issues that Holden faces in his narrative, such as depression and suicide, bear more weight in reality than that demographic would think.

In visualizing the plot, *The Catcher in the Rye* may be viewed as an utter descent with a significant dip by the two-thirds mark of the novel, as the characterization and mental health of Holden composes much of the narrative. By the end of the book, the descent of his narrative never ascends to a resolution because Holden never achieves mental recovery and resolution to his likely mental condition, major depression. Throughout the novel, Holden possibly unknowingly alludes to his depression, especially with the moment he is about to throw a snowball:

I started to throw it. At a car that was parked across the street. But I changed my mind. The car looked so nice and white. Then I started to throw it at a hydrant, but that looked too nice and white, too. Finally I didn't throw it at anything. All I did was

close the window and walk around the room with the snowball,
packing it harder. (36)

Subsequently, he reveals to the reader that he decides to take the packed snowball onto the bus. Holden starts an action with the intent to execute it, but in the end, he decided not to go through with his intentions by not throwing the snowball. Holden resists the destruction of the peaceful appearance of the objects, and while he is conflicted, this failure to carry out the action of throwing the snowball implies repressed emotion. The repression of his emotions then results in depression. Holden expresses his depressive thoughts of apathy and suicide, implicit and explicit, to the readers:

I stayed in the bathroom for about an hour, taking a bath and all. Then I got back in bed. It took me quite a while to get to sleep—I wasn't even tired—but finally I did. What I really felt like, though, was committing suicide. I felt like jumping out the window. (104)

Regardless of the decade, suicide is a harsh subject to raise, so opposing parents, educators, and critics may find the fact that Holden is a teenager openly declaring these ideas of apathy and suicide very problematic. However, Holden's frank tone and simple diction brings forth the reality of adolescence and depression. In this quotation, Holden expresses a lack of motivation to move and expresses his desire for death so that not even his suffering but rather his listlessness can end. In the last quotation, Salinger injects some darkly humorous irritability, a trait indicative of a person who is young and jaded. Even then, his feelings of suicide are a byproduct of a larger concern within Holden Caulfield.

The most prevalent matter of Holden's mental being is his escapism. Because he feels that the institution does not suit him, he makes a literal escape from Pencey, and in doing so, he escapes from the reality that his parents would be upset to discover his premature departure from the school. Furthermore, not only do external forces unhealthily encourage his destructive behavior, but his internal state and past experiences fuel his escapism. The largest conflict Holden faces within himself is one that he has not accepted, and it is his internal resistance against the present while maintaining a firm hold on his past. At one point in the novel when Holden secretly meets with his younger sister, Phoebe, they have a discussion about his expulsion from Pencey and his decision to run away from the

academy. After Holden complains at length about Pencey and lists every reason why he despised his stay there, Phoebe begins the following exchange:

“You don’t like *anything* that’s happening.”

It made me even more depressed when she said that.

“Yes I do. Yes I do. *Sure* I do. Don’t say that. Why the hell do you say that?”

“Because you don’t. You don’t like any schools. You don’t like a million things. You *don’t*.”

“I do! That’s where you’re wrong—that’s exactly where you’re wrong! Why the hell do you have to say that?” I said. Boy, was she depressing me.

“Because you don’t,” she said. “Name one thing.”

“One thing? One thing I like?” I said. “Okay.”

The trouble was, I couldn’t concentrate too hot. Sometimes it’s hard to concentrate. (169)

The repetition and italics in Phoebe’s dialogue clashes with the repetition and italics in Holden’s own dialogue. However, while Phoebe’s structure of dialogue illustrates exasperation with her older brother, Holden’s repetition and italics reveals how he is trying to assure himself of a concept that he is not certain of. He can list numerous reasons why Pencey was an awful school experience, but he hesitates to name one singular thing that brought him an ounce of contentment or joy. Instead, Holden spends a mass amount of time struggling to conjure up one positive subject or experience involving Pencey, which results in Phoebe starting the following exchange:

“You can’t even think of one thing.”

“Yes, I can. Yes, I can.”

“Well, do it, then.”

“I like Allie,” I said. “And I like doing what I’m doing right now. Sitting here with you, and talking, and thinking about stuff, and—“

“Allie’s dead—You always say that! If somebody’s dead and everything, and in Heaven, then it isn’t really—“

“I know he’s dead! Don’t you think I know that? I can still like him, though, can’t I? Just because somebody’s dead, you don’t just stop liking them, for God’s sake—especially if they were

about a thousand times nicer than the people you know that're alive and all." (171)

Salinger's exclusion of actions is effective because any mention of a speaking action would disrupt the emotion within this scene. Again, the repetition in Holden's dialogue reveals more than the words he is using. Instead of asserting his ability to name one positive thing once, he asserts it twice, as though he is uncertain of his own assertion. Then, when Phoebe bares the truth of Allie's death to Holden, he reacts fiercely and even retracts his statement regarding death to defend the validity of his affection for the late Allie. For Holden, it is as though Allie, a formerly positive, heavily mourned relic of his past, is what tethers him to withstand the present.

Another representation of his conflict with the present and past is the figure of Jane, a former sweetheart of Holden. While Sally makes a physical appearance in the novel, the reader knows Jane only through Holden's memories. Sally's appearance occurs within the timeframe of the novel, so her character and actions present themselves as they exist. However, with Jane, because she is presented through only Holden's perception, the reader is treated to a likely romanticized version of her. To Holden, Jane's most memorable habit was how she kept her kings in the back row during a game of checkers. He learns that Stradlater is going to meet with her, and Holden tells Stradlater to "ask her if she still keeps all her kings in the back row" (Salinger 34). His request to Stradlater, a person rooted in the present, reveals how much Holden treasures the past. Jane becomes a part of Holden's present when Holden receives the news that a classmate from Pencey, an institution of the present, engages with her, so his inquiry of whether or not Jane has continued her habit with checkers is Holden making sure that a fond memory of his past has not changed. If Jane were to have changed, then he would have lost one of the few things that he could say that he liked.

His disdain for the present, the mundane, and the phonies of the world is so strongly vocal that he does not even notice that he is shouting about it when Sally points out the volume of his voice (130). Instead of directly facing reality, he chooses to turn to escapism again and tries to convince his date Sally, whom he does not like that much, to run away from civilization with him while he shares with her his seemingly thought-out plan to do so (132). In the end, Holden never loved Sally, and he acknowledges his lie (125). Sally is one of the figures of his present, and he is willing to sacrifice her well-being for what he views as the only viable option for happiness due to his unwillingness to move on from his past.

Resisting society and its norm casts Holden out as an outlier, but while society regards him as a menace that needs to be hidden from adolescent readers, Holden's aim, which actually stands as a detriment to his declining mental health, is to prevent them from suffering from a downfall similar to his own. From his flawed interpretation of a poem by Robert Burns, from which the novel gets its name, Holden draws that he must be the salvation of children, "the catcher in the rye." Holden envisions "little kids playing some game in this big field of rye..." where he is "standing on the edge of some crazy cliff" and must "catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff" (173). He implies that as the catcher, it is too late for his life to be saved because it has been ruined by age and its effect on reality, but for other children and even by extension the young readers of the novel, they are still able to have a life more fulfilling than his. Ultimately, what drives Holden's depression is his conflicting relationship with the past and present, where he "sees the mixtures, the inextricably mingled good and bad, as it is, but the very knowledge of reality is what almost breaks his heart" (Ohmann 21). Holden is an adolescent male who sees the world through a young critical lens, and he sees the world as fake and rotten as it grows more fetid over time. Watching the world change and become corrupt by adulthood, Holden wishes to preserve the world's innocence and save the children and the young readers' incorruptibility, but because he is young and therefore powerless in the world of maturity, his depression develops further. The ending that the narrative provides does not offer resolution or comfort. After being committed to a hospital, Holden confesses that he somewhat misses people like Stradlater, Ackley, and Maurice, and he tells the reader and instructs them, "It's funny. Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody" (Salinger 214). Instead of providing an encouraging message that counters depression, Holden resigns himself to solitude for fear of further hurt.

Looking at Holden from this perspective, it could be possible to shift the interpretation of Holden Caulfield from that of a juvenile delinquent with a troubled personality to a cry for help, or even more specifically to the voice of the universal adolescent. Both sides of the argument regarding the approval of *The Catcher in the Rye* and Holden recognize the power and influence of fiction, so the opposition towards the novel comes from a place of valid concern. The opposing public holds a strong aversion to *The Catcher in the Rye* because they believe that Holden Caulfield, his actions, and his thoughts will have a negative effect on their children, so they dispute the novel for the well-being of the youth.

With the intention of protecting the children from the influential profanities of *The Catcher in the Rye*, parents and educator choose to tabulate the novel's language such as the "237 instances of 'goddamn,' 58 uses of the synonym for a person of illegitimate birth, 31 'Chrissakes,' '[the use of] the Lord's name in vain two hundred times'" (Whitfield 597). However, in their strong concern for the young adults, parents and educators fail to consider the possibility of Holden Caulfield being one of their children. Rather than Holden being an enemy to teenagers, Holden could be interpreted as a reflection of adolescent mental health. Though they may seem too disconcerting and too exaggerated because *The Catcher in the Rye* is a work of fiction, Holden's concerns and the mental health issues that he faces within the novel are more relevant and credible to the adolescents in the real world than the opposing public realizes. What Holden grapples with is the struggle to enter into adulthood because he has emotional baggage from his younger years weighing him down, and in the novel, he deals with this by indulging in forms of escapism and spending time with his younger sister Phoebe, a member of the age group that he aims to protect.

What the adults who are in opposition of Holden Caulfield do not acknowledge is that, when viewing a protagonist, there is likeability and relatability, and in the interest of their children, they are viewing Holden as a character who is dislikable and inappropriate and therefore not suited for their children. However, what children and young adults may need is someone to relate to. Despite his status as a fictional person, Holden faces real, natural struggles for someone his age, and his struggles evolve into drastic circumstances because more or less, he faces them by himself. Many hold the same opinion as Drew Chappell, a Ph.D. student in the Theatre for Youth program at Arizona State University, when he describes *The Catcher in the Rye* as "the first book I had read for English with a protagonist my own age, facing pressure that I understood" (Chappell 182).

The society of the outside world rejects Holden because Holden rejects his own society and reality within the novel. Holden Caulfield is resistance itself, a young and defiant icon for nonconformity, adolescent rebellion in human form. As a non-conformist amidst conformity, he stands for resistance against adulthood and societal norms, and as such, the world outside of the novel labels him as a criminal with destructive potential against the well-being of society. However, adolescent rebellion is called such because it is an inevitable, universal resistance felt by the majority. Depriving the youth of a Holden Caulfield robs young adults of a reassurance that their confusion about transitioning from a child to an adult is not

unwarranted nor isolated. The fear of a work of fiction that may influence people to commit harmful acts to others or unto themselves will dissipate when one bestows trust. Instead of withdrawing Holden from potential readers, they should be trusted to make their own interpretations of him. Parents and educators may worry that adolescents will romanticize Holden and not recognize his faults, but their apprehension implies an underestimation of the youth. Imparting trust will grant not only a friend and partner in adolescence, but also the opportunity to grow.

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