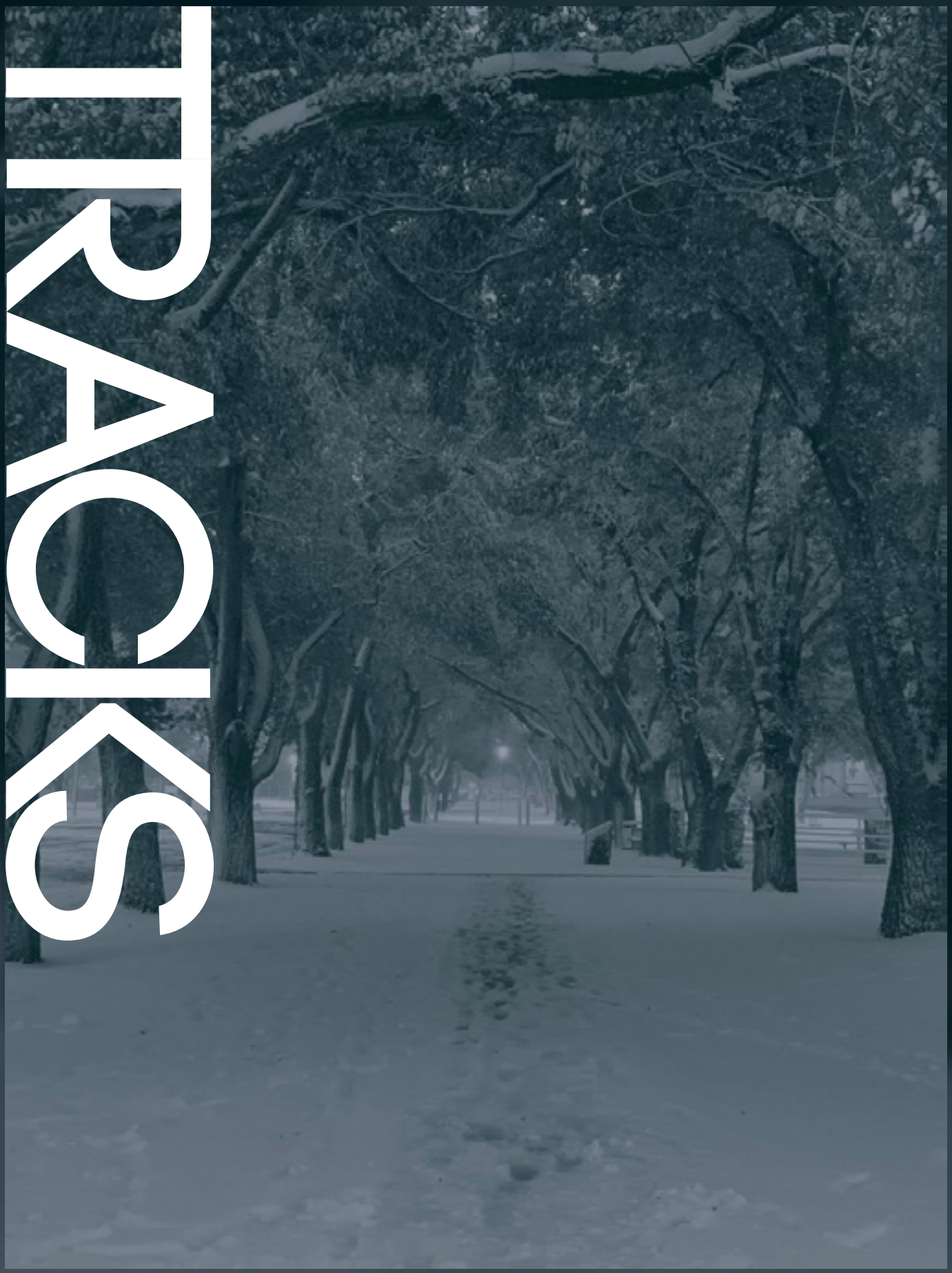
TRACKS

Research in the Humanities



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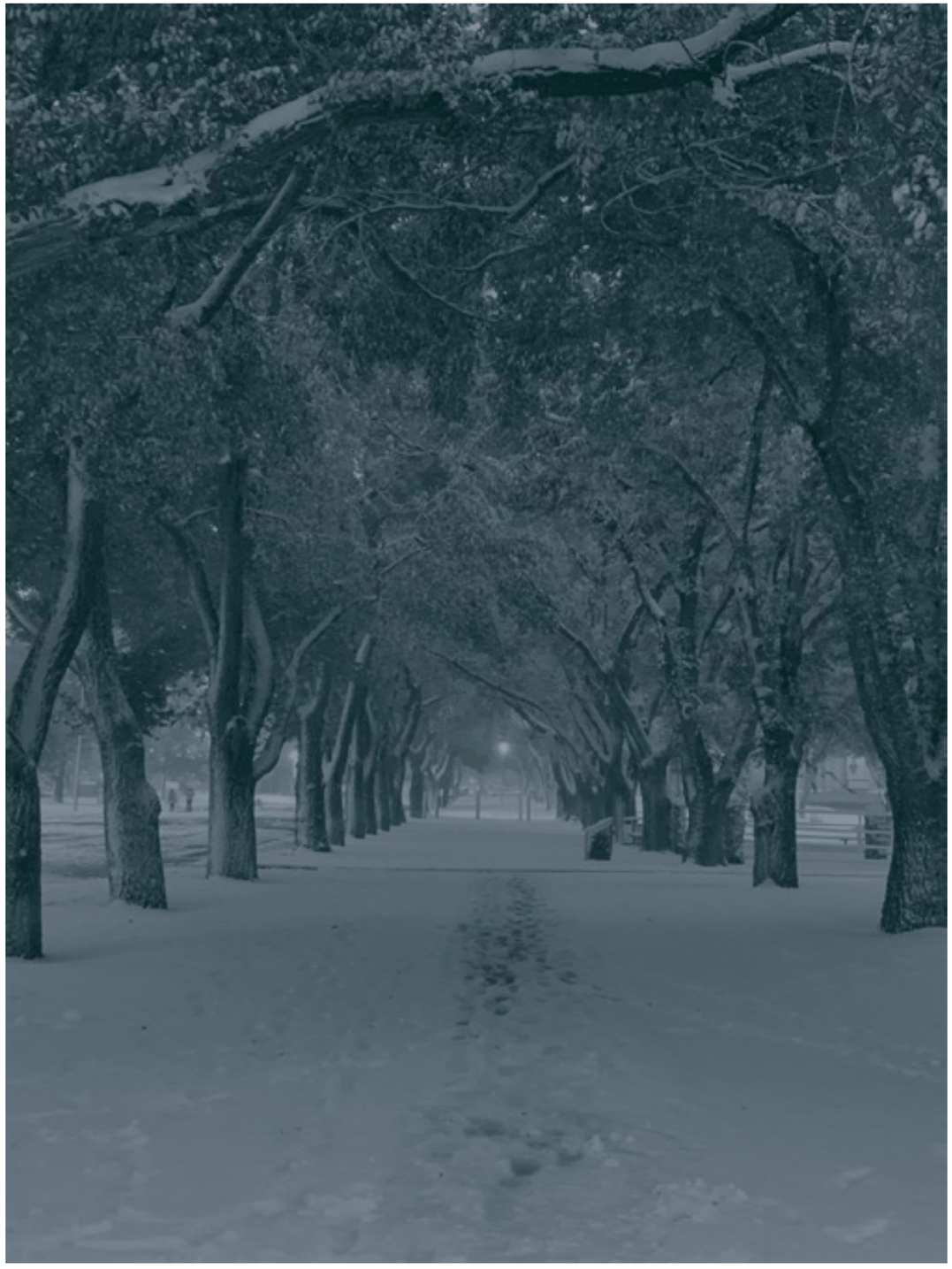

Makenzie Merritt
A Walk In The Frost

Makenzie Merritt graduated from WTAMU in Fall 2022 with her B.A. in English and a minor in Theatre. She loved working for the Theatre program at WT until she graduated, and she is currently working a new job at Bar Z Winery as their new sales representative. In her free time, she loves taking pictures of nature, reading, and hanging out with friends.

"A Walk In The Frost" is the 2022 *Tracks IV* cover contest winner. About this photograph, Merritt writes:

I took this photo my sophomore year in college on my way to class, and I couldn't help but feel so calm as I walked through the snow. It was so serene and beautiful. There was no one else around, so I got to take my time to enjoy the peace the snow brought me. That's what I think you have to do with a lot of these pieces for *Tracks IV*. Just take your time reading them, really enjoying and basking in what the author has to say.

TRACKS

Tracks is a student-edited research journal housed in the English, Philosophy, and Modern Language department at West Texas A&M University. Submission is open to all outstanding undergraduate research in the humanities at WTAMU, including literature, the arts, history, social studies, communication and cultural studies. This fourth edition of *Tracks* highlights essays on feminism, popular culture, and Milton. If you are interested in submitting your work for the next edition, or want to discuss joining our editorial staff, please contact Dr. Rebecca Weir at rweir@wtamu.edu.

Website

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Volume IV

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FOREWARD

Tracks IV marks several firsts for the journal. *Tracks* was embedded in a senior-level writing class for the first time in Fall 2022, and from drafting the initial call for papers to essay selection to editing to layout and formatting design, the students in 4306 Advanced Editing & Publishing led the decision-making process, crafting an inclusive issue that clusters essays into thematic pairs. This celebration of WTAMU's undergraduate humanities research is the result of many hours of hard work by Shelby Davis, Rachael Draper, Stephanie Espinoza, Carly Evetts, Samuel Lay, Niang Lun, Alice McDonald-Pate, Makenzie Merritt, and Brinn Reeves. These nine *Track IV* editors have produced an engaging and dynamic publication that showcases outstanding research and writing by EPML students and recent graduates.

Fall 2022 was also the first *Tracks* cover contest and resulted in a strong response from many talented artists, and we are pleased to feature the three winning artworks by WTAMU students.

I sincerely enjoyed being part of this process and know readers will enjoy it as well.

Rebecca Nicholson Weir
Assistant Professor
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Jennifer Francis
***Καλοψία* (“*Kalopsia*”)**

Jennifer Francis a Senior General Studies Major. This major is a combination of Music, Art, English, Writing, and Theatre classes. She considers herself to be a well-rounded artist and has used drawing as an outlet for most of her life.

This is a self-portrait Jennifer created in October of 2022.
Kalopsia is Ancient Greek. καλοψία, from καλός - kalós, meaning, “good, beautiful, lovely,” and ὄψις - ópsis, meaning “view.” This translates to “the delusion of things being more beautiful than they are,” or “seeing with beautiful eyes.” The belief mentioned in the title has to do with a renewed belief in herself. The inspiration for this portrait was derived from past experiences Jennifer has lived through. It also included experiences she has witnessed others encounter. These include domestic violence, homelessness, and addiction.

Forgotten Women

The essays in this section consider the ways women have been underestimated, underappreciated, and overlooked in every facet of society. After encountering these two essays, readers will be able to say they now know who the poet Elizabeth Hands is and how her work impacted the world of Romantic literature despite the lack of attention she garnered during her lifetime. Readers are also invited to reconsider the films *I, Daniel Blake* and *Sorry We Missed You* with a recognition of and appreciation for the work of women as caretakers.

A Supposition of Snark: Elizabeth Hands's Crafted Defiance

By Madi Nation

Madison C. Nation graduated cum laude with a BA in English from WTAMU in 2020. She is currently finishing her MA in English and is set to graduate in May 2023. She hopes to pursue a second Master's degree in Library Science to help achieve her long-term goal of being a reference librarian. Madison's research interests center around recovery work for non-canonical authors, particularly women and people of color. Outside of her studies, she enjoys spending time with her partner and their two young children, as well as reading fiction novels and watching movies.

This article works to establish Elizabeth Hands, an author who has been mostly ignored by her contemporaries and the academic world, as an author worthy of praise and introduction in the English literature canon to be more-thoroughly studied. Hands employs a snide tone throughout her poetic works in opposition of the upper-class population that dictated what she could write about, when and why. As a working-class woman, Elizabeth Hands was expected to tend to her work above all else, and the upper class tended to view working-class authors quite negatively, believing that they should not aspire to rise above their station in life. Hands's crafty use of many different poetical forms works against the biased idea that working-class people were uneducated and coarse, and this article aims to overturn that still-prevalent bias by showcasing Elizabeth Hands's works and the brilliance behind them.

"To earth it bows the knees, but lifts the soul
So high above all sublunary things,
That this low world shews like a fleeting dream
Already past away."

— "Reflection on Meditation" By Elizabeth Hands

Elizabeth Hands stands out among the many less-fortunate writers of the Romantic era such as Mary Savage, Christian Milne, and Anne Finch. Known for her openness to most of the major poetic forms of the age including the friendship poem, the satire, odes, heroic epics (or mock epics, at least), and epistles, Hands craftily toes the line between what she "should" be writing as a laboring-class women and cheekily ridiculing anyone who puts her into that box. As Paula Backscheider tells us in her book *Eighteenth Century Women Poets and Their Poetry*, "Literary movements are not made by single great poets, as the canon of Great Men implies; they are collective efforts that express a number of things—the taste of a time, the longings and aspirations of a people, the creative genius of a poet, and the feelings of individual writers" (Backscheider 14). With her creative look into the laboring class, her use of many different poetic forms, and her saucy commentary on the upper class, Elizabeth Hands should have several of her works displayed, proudly, within the English literary canon, and students should be studying her poetry to better view Romanticism as a whole.

Women writers in the Romantic era struggled to get their writing out into the world, particularly women within the laboring class. Their lower-class status coupled with their inability to receive a traditional education (which I will refer to as *differently educated*) makes it challenging for an aspiring writer to become a published author, let alone a best-selling one. However, "Provincial subscription publishing, another revolution in the book trade, made access to print even easier ... the local gentry and circles of friends and supporters from Coventry and the Rugby School were the subscribers to Elizabeth Hands's the Death of Amnon" (Backscheider 4). Most of the lower-class authors relied on subscriptions or a patronage, so those without access to these had an even more difficult experience trying to make their way within the world of literature. Luckily, Elizabeth Hands was able to seize a subscription with a very long list of subscribers which, as Cynthia Dereli forces her readers to acknowledge, "perhaps the only thing this long list [of subscribers] tells us with any certainty is that there was a general agreement to support her and her poems ... she was a person for whom many of these people were prepared to go to some trouble" (Dereli 174). So why, then, has Elizabeth Hands been excluded from literary education when she clearly had a large following interested in her works?

Literary scholarship throughout history has been limited to the elitist authors who were in the upper class with formal educations and who were able to write without being taken from the work they "should" be doing. This

limited view wherein authors were considered valuable, and existed just as the laboring class has caused the "arbitrary" literary canon to be "rooted in rigid literary and gender assumptions," which has "sealed women's silence for more than a century" (Crisafulli and Pietropoli 2). Roger Lonsdale does some of the work for us with his Oxford anthologies of laboring class writers, but there is still work to be done regarding these women and their works that have been passed over for almost three centuries.

Many poems by laboring class authors are excerpted within literature anthologies like Lonsdale's, but this small exposure is not enough to see what these authors can contribute to Romanticism and the literary canon. Donna Landry makes the claim that "to have poems or extracts of poems by Mary Collier, Mary Leapor, Elizabeth Hands, Janet Little, and Ann Yearsley suddenly so easily accessible to students as [Lonsdale's] anthology renders them must challenge knee-jerk assumptions about elitist scholarship and should prove radically productive for the field" (Landry 187). While Landry is not incorrect in her argument, she makes a large oversight—students are not reading Lonsdale's anthologies and many other anthologies are not inclusive of these authors. Unfortunately, making these authors accessible is only part of the battle as well— people must actually read their works to see how amazing many of these lower-class women were, in their writing and their own lives. If we are to learn anything about the Romanticism movement, we need to read a large sampling of authors and poems. The Big Six (William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, and Lord Byron) are not the only Romantic authors, and it is long past due that we begin including laboring class and non-traditional writers in the canon and then teach them within literature classes. Regretfully, "Only a few women poets, notably Aphra Behn, Anne Finch, and Charlotte Smith, have received any real sustained study by a number of critics or been included in anthologies often enough to be seen as poets whom students and scholars of literature should recognize" (Backscheider 395). Laboring class and/or differently educated authors have something additional to bring to the table and students deserve to see the variations in poetry written between the different social classes of the Romantic era. These lowly authors offer something that nobody else in this period can; "they were continually examining the sex-gender system and its implications for them and their nation, as Hands and [Anna] Seward did, and that they found many ways to use poetry to question and even destabilize the status quo" (Backscheider 396). Giving these authors the time and recognition they deserve in academia allows students to get a more rounded look into Romanticism as a literary movement, and validates these authors' works as something imperative to the literary era and effort that these authors put into their poetry collections, which has too long been overlooked. There is a "need not only to distinguish women's poetry from the canonical male Romantic poetry with which some students are already familiar but also to be wary of grouping all female poets as an undifferentiated whole" (Mellor 63). By grouping all Romantic women poets into a single group, one makes the claim that all historical women authors write the same way, with the same content, and are not good enough to be read along with their male counterparts. Whether this claim is made inadvertently or not, does not matter. Reading a small sampling of these poets all together at once diminishes the work that they have done and perpetuates the assumption that women should not be writing poetry because they could never come close to their male contemporaries.

Within the poem "Critical Fragments, On Some of the English Poets," Hands demonstrates to her audience that while she may not have the formal education that most of her contemporary authors received, she has read the classics that everyone else has read. She mentions authors Milton, Shakespeare, Young, Swift, Pope, Prior, and Butler, and then comments on their writings in an effort to prove that she is as well-versed as the upper class in poetry. As Emma Mason points out, "Poetry, it was thought, sweetened the medicinal requirements of morality and virtue so that they could act on the individual without his or her assent, repairing and healing the damaged body and soul" (Mason 55). This ideal authenticates a woman's ability to write poetry. They have feelings and longings and morals just like men do, which affirms their ability to write poetry that can heal a soul, or make another person feel what the author is feeling.

Hands writes within several different forms of poetry, sometimes in a single poem, which really establishes her competence in composing poetry. One example of this is the twenty-seventh poem in her volume:

Whilst I beneath this silent shade,
Contented sit and sing,
I envy not the great their joys,
That from their riches spring.
Let those who have in courts been
bred,
There still in splendor shine;
Their lot of bliss may not surpass,
Perhaps not equal mine.
("Contentment" lines 1-8)

Hands mentions the upper class and how they will never be happier than she

in this moment of contentment within nature, where she can admire the trees and flowers around her. Where the happiness of the upper class only comes from what their money can get them "I envy not the great their joys / That from their riches spring," they do not have what the speaker has: "These friendly trees on either side, / From heat a shelter stand" ("Contentment" lines 13-14). While Hands does not call this poem a pastoral, it has that simplistic life-in-nature ideal that a pastoral exemplifies. In addition to the meditative pastoral essence of the poem, Hands's use of common meter—iambic tetrameter and trimeter alternating twice within each stanza with an intermittent rhyme scheme— make "Contentment" flow like a song that she is singing to her audience. As Bridget Keegan claims:

> To varying degrees and with varying effects, laboring-class poets remind readers how their social position led them to produce poetry that resembles but revises the kind of poetry produced by their more refined contemporaries. (563)

Elizabeth Hands shows us exactly what the bigger (male) authors do not have—poetry from a lower-class woman who uses words as a weapon and is able to fit several different poetic forms into one small poem. This is a trait that most other poets do not utilize, or even have, so by including Hands in the literary canon, we get to see the interesting discussions and layers within her poetry.

She also writes a couple of epistles, another long-discussed form of literature that an author may or may not have planned to be published. Hands's "An Epistle" is addressed to her "long absent friend" Maria ("Epistle" line 1). It could also be described as a friendship poem addressed to someone that she misses dearly, or even a heroic couplet about a friend who makes everything better in life. Hands's work in this poem is rarely talked about, yet she manages to fit three different poem types into a single poem in a manner similar to Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*. As Paula Backscheider tells her audience,

> Friendship poems reveal women's longings for beautiful poetry, for the opportunity to characterize experiences, and for participation in the century's public-sphere debates … the friendship poem is the unique poetic kind in which women do not have to appropriate or accommodate to a space already claimed by men. They are places to contest or ignore the definitions of and expectations for themselves. (175)

Hands's use of the friendship poem within the other forms exemplifies Backscheider's statement—She longs to participate in beautiful poetry, and the friendship poem is her way into the literature that the canon reserves for the male poets of the age.

Another poetical form used is the Ode—An ode to friendship. She describes friendship as "first of blessings here below, / The best gift Heaven can bestow!" ("Friendship" lines 17-18). This poem is an example of what Margaret Koehler describes as a shift that occurred around the time in the subject of odes:

> the midcentury ode moved away from celebrating tangible, external phenomena (like King William or Anne Killigrew or a hurricane) and instead fixed its attention on allegorical personifications of intangible, abstract qualities or phenomena (like Simplicity or Evening or Cheerfulness). More and more, the ode took the form of direct and prolonged address of a personified abstraction. (396)

An ode to friendship is certainly within the abstract boundary, but it can still be relatable to the general audience reading the poem. Odes give a lot of room to be creative. While often noble and serious, odes remain relatable in a way that makes that abstract read more universal. An odes should be something that envokes feelings and makes one think, and Elizabeth Hands is no exception to this ideal:

> Calm, humble bliss of friendship rise,
> Superior to the splendid joys,
> That glitter round the world;
> Temptations so profusely spread,
> With dazzling glares mislead
> The feet that heedless tread,
> And all those joys are in confusion hurl'd.
> ("Friendship, An Ode" lines 22-28)

The irregular meter and rhyme scheme make this poem feel like it could come from anybody. People can relate to this; everyone has had a friend at some point or another in their life and they know that having a good friend makes everything better or happier. The free verse structure makes the poem almost inspiring, which just helps its universality. "Tis friendship's rite, / To give and take delight" ("Friendship, An Ode" 29-30). Her lofty view of friendship feels like a peaceful dream with someone you love, who would do anything for you—the kind of friendship that everybody wants in their life. Margaret Koehler describes how odes occupied a unique formal postion:

> Poetic genres like the ode did not simply dictate what a poet would produce but allocated places for a wide range of poetic expression and effect. In the terrain of the ode, a poet had license to undergo passionate transport and to move beyond the everyday to some extravagant exaltation of a powerful subject. It was this capacity of the ode that attracted eighteenth-century poets most strongly and that was best able

to absorb the new directions poetry took during the period. (388)

The abstract idea of friendship is a powerful subject that can be talked about passionately. Hands talks about friendship with an intimate look into something that many people can only dream of having in their life. She makes her audience yearn for the friendship she is describing, which upholds the entire concept of a good ode.

Several of her poems show a very traditional aspect of the Romantic era—a short piece on nature that ties back to religion. While her poem is only eight lines whereas some authors span pages with their wonder-filled nature poems, "Observation on the Works of Nature" is sweet and to the point. Her first four lines set up the scene of dawn approaching and the beautiful spring-filled landscape that you can see, almost like the flora is giving the speaker and readers a morning greeting. The last four lines relate the picturesque backdrop to the "power of the Almighty's hand; / They spring, they blow, they sade at his command" ("Observation" lines 5-6). She goes on to tell the audience that nature never lets the Almighty down, it does everything he tells it to, unlike Mankind because "'Tis Man alone rejects his Maker's will" ("Observation" line 8). She uses the same methods in this Observation that more canonical male authors such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats also employ. She describes nature meditatively and makes it seem infallible, as opposed to mankind who does not do what the Almighty instructs. She tells her audience that mankind can only let you down, but nature never will. This idealistic view of nature follows the same pattern as the nature poems written by the more popular male authors of the time. Elizabeth Hands making her way into the very male tradition of the meditative nature poem with "Observation" which proves that women during this time were thinking about some of the same things as men, and therefore are deserving of the same relevance within literature that we give those male poets. As Kathryn King observes,

> It is often observed that women of the eighteenth century challenge constructions of the feminine simply by writing poems that give voice to their own wishes, feelings, desires. The very act of taking up the daring pen, that is to say, breaks up the traditional alignment between femininity, passivity, and silence. (441-42)

By ignoring a poem that directly correlates to the Big Six's most discussed poems, because it was not written by those well-known men, we further sustain the illogical idea that women cannot write poetry as well as men. Hands's wielding of the same structures and values that the Big Six use within their own poetry can only serve to bolster her own poetry even higher than it has been thus far kept.

She continues "Observation" in the evening. While it does not tie back into the 'Maker,' it is a lovely natural setting and has almost meditative quality.

> Sweet and refreshing are the dews,
> That deck the ev'ning shade;
> Sweet are the winds that sweep the plains,
> And whisper through the glade
> We faint beneath the sultry sun,
> But when the day is o'er,
> We gladly meet the ev'ning shade,
> And think of toil no more.
> ("Evening" lines 1-8)

This is another poem that reads melodically due to the common meter. Song poems were common during the Romantic era, especially for women poets. As Paula Backscheider points out, "The popularity of musical entertainments in spaces from the most private to the most public and the rapid movement of songs from the theater into the music and drawing rooms are familiar. We know next to nothing, however, about the part that women poets played, but the number of their poems titled 'Song' ought to awaken our interest" (11). This Observation can only serve to further shorten the distance between her poetry and that of the Big Six's. She is a rural maid, and her poetry stays close to her upbringing yet still aspires to be one of the greats: "Hands's personal view of rural life from a laboring-class perspective finds a happy accommodation with the poetic tradition: close enough to the tradition of the pastoral to be inoffensive to her betters, close enough to reality not to offend her peers. Hands's rural idylls do not deny the harsh realities of life; they simply focus on the good" (179-80). Hands knows her place in society and keeps her poetry close to where a rural maid with little education would be writing, but with her constant utilization of the tactics that the upper-class authors use she gives herself credit as a somewhat-educated woman who knows how to write poetry that can be held up to those big author's works.

Hands also largely puts to use the pastoral form—around 14 of the poems in her collection are pastoral poems. In "A Pastoral Song," the speaker narrates a scene. Amintor waits for his love, Delia, to come impatiently, and begins to sing a song about Delia. While Amintor is not described as some sort of nymph-like creature such as a satyr or triton, Delia, on the other hand, takes the role of the innocent and fair shepherdess, who is "chearful and sprightly, good humour'd and gay" ("A Pastoral Song" line 13). In his song, Amintor describes Delia as

> ... unskill'd in their wiles,
> And all the coquetry of love:
> She thoughtlessly meets me, with innocent smiles,

And trips with me into the grove
("A Pastoral Song" 21-24).

He loves Delia because he can manipulate her due to her innocence. This explains what he sings in the previous stanza as well—

Let prudes and coquets to their
artfulness trust,
They ne'er shall have place in my
arms;
Their wits and their arts do but give
me disgust,
Tis' virgin simplicity charms
("A Pastoral Song" lines 17-20).

He has no use for other people because they see through his artful game. This is what makes Hands's "Pastoral Song" so intriguing—it is an interesting take on the traditional pastoral poem that readers do not see elsewhere. Hands gets crafty with traditional forms and puts her own spin on them. By only reading the traditional, readers miss the diversity that writers like Hands put into their works. One important thing to acknowledge with Hands's pastoral poems is that "women attempted pastoral elegies, and many of their adaptations of it are good poetry and, perhaps more interesting for us today, insights into how genres are gendered and used by people in different situations from those of the canonical writers of such poems" (Backscheider 276). Hands uses a poetical form that has been widely utilized, but as a laboring class woman author, she adds something to the form that the bigger authors of the time could not simply because she is not an upper-class male.

Another poem where she takes some creative liberties is the title poem "Death of Amnon," her longest published poem. "Death of Amnon" has five cantos of Miltonic blank verse narrative and is based on the biblical story found in the second book of Samuel where Amnon (David's son) rapes his half-sister. The poem begins with Amnon declaring his love for his sister Tamar. The first canto is filled with plots to unleash Amnon's passion on Tamar. Canto two introduces Tamar with flowery language. Cantos three and four are filled with speeches and evil schemes to destroy others' lives. Canto five gives Amnon the ending he sadly deserves and could have avoided. "Death of Amnon" is a great poem because even though it is lengthy, the language flows well and the plot is compelling enough to keep the reader engaged. In her article, Backscheider says, "The poem shows how subversive and relevant the form can be" and that "Hands reveals the way lust, which might have been conquered, is transformed by male bonding and rivalry[1]" (160). Many women make their way into poetry with religious writings, and Elizabeth Hands is no exception. By taking a story from the Bible and reworking it, she really shows how much skill she has. Emma Mason claims that, "biblical paraphrase was popular as a way of echoing God's word while avoiding any blasphemous attempt to replicate it" (62). Hands's choice to paraphrase, as Mason calls it, was smart because she chose a less popular story in the bible that her audience would not expect. Paraphrasing something like Psalms or Song of Solomon would have lessened the positive reception to this poem, because they were so popular. She also showed some creativity with the different characters and their point of views, and by altering the ending from the Bible. What started as a paraphrase ended with something that can only be claimed by Hands. This could have been a bad choice because they audience might have taken insult with Hands changing the original biblical story. Luckily for Hands, "Death of Amnon" was received well by her audience, as shown by a review in *Gentleman's Magazine* from 1790: "'When I speak,' adds he, 'of Mrs. H's poetry, I speak of the Death of Ammon, which I consider as by far the best'" (*Gentleman's*). This review is a great historical example of Hands's general contemporary reception after the publication of her work. This review came out the year after the publication of *Death of Amnon*, so it shows that even a year later people were still reading her book and being surprised and delighted with the poem "Death of Amnon." Interestingly, this poem is not her most talked about poem in modern times.

Within modern critical discussions, two poems from *Death of Amnon* are referred to the most—Hands's "A Poem, On the Supposition of an Advertisement appearing in a Morning Paper, of the Publication of a Volume of Poem, by a Servant Maid" and her "A Poem, On the Supposition of the Book having been published and read." These poems really show Hands's character and her ability to turn an insult into something comical, without calling someone out directly. Not naming her oppressors directly is essential, because she could make big problems for herself by offending the wrong person. As a laboring class writer, she had to toe a fine line to keep herself out of trouble with the upper class, who already had strict ideas about how laboring class authors should be writing and the subjects they should be writing about. This awareness makes her suppositions even more incredible, "It is Hands's knowingness and her control of it, for fashioning into a good joke, that astonishes. Modern critics have scarce got the measure of the insubordination—the barefaced cheek, the nerve of it—that the two 'Suppositions' imply" (Steedman 11). She shows extreme skill through both poems, and her attention to detail is flawless while still staying within her expected boundaries.

1 Backscheider credits this idea to Carolyn Franklin with no citation

Her first mention of the mistresses who snub her comes within the "Advertisement" poem:

> I suppose you all saw in the paper this morning,
> A Volume of Poems advertis'd — 'tis said
> They're produc'd by the pen of a poor Servant Maid.
> A servant write verses! says Madam Du Bloom;
> Pray what is the subject? — a Mop, or a Broom?
> He, he, he, — says Miss Flounce; I suppose we shall see
> An Ode on a Dishclout — what else can it be?
> ("Advertisement" lines 9-14)

Hands uses nicknames for the mistresses so her poem can have "all affected reserve, and formality scorning" them, without facing retribution or being accused of "reaching out of [her] sphere" ("Advertisement" lines 7, 34). The upper class believed that the laboring class should be attending to their work, not trying to move up to a higher social class with their writings. However, Hands's use of satire against these women has a purpose—to show her audience how the upper class not only speaks of their servants, but also participates in the exploitation of those servants:

> Hands, who often unexpectedly comments on employer-servant relationships within poems apparently about something else, has Miss Prudella, Mrs. Candour, and Lady Marr-joy discuss the behavior of servants and how to manage them. The former servant portrays the women as thinking of the servants without understanding or empathy... Hands is a much underrated poet and thinker, as attested to by her multiple ways of satirizing the women and her ability to make the reader recognize how completely external and superficial their view is of servants, whether they write or not. (Backscheider 106)

It is not necessarily the writing that these women are taking offense with, it is the idea that their maids could possibly dare to have lives outside of their professions in these women's houses. This accusation against the women is compounded by the difficulty Hands (and other laboring class writers) had to go through to get their works published. These workers had to jump through so many hoops to receive publication, and then are criticized once they achieve that publication because of their class status and their audacity to compose poems rather than work their lives away as servants.

This accusation is continued in her second "Supposition" poem. The ladies return after the publication of *Death of Amnon*, and ask: "have you seen the new book (that we talk'd of that day, / At your house you remember) of Poems, 'twas said / Produc'd by the pen of a poor Servant Maid?" ("Book" lines 19-21). They all agree and one of the mistresses has even purchased the book for her daughter but has had no time to read it herself. Then they discuss the title poem... "A rape! ... / A delicate theme for a female I swear" ("Book" lines 32-33). Their disbelief over a woman writing about a rape scene, biblical or not, is apparent. Hands counters their asinine displeasure with her poetry by giving them satirical names that covertly slight them. Miss Rhymer, Mrs. Routella, Captain Bonair, Mrs. Consequence, Miss Gaiety, Sir Timothy Turtle, Lady Jane Rational, Lady Pedigree, Miss Coquettilla, old lady Marr-Joy, all these names blatantly call the characters out for something in their personality or appearance, and as Backscheider points out, "Another group of women with satiric names ridicule the poet from a superior position... Suddenly the fact that the women are merely behaving like men is writ large, and their attitudes toward Hands, women's poetry, and the class system are shown to be the effects of the sex-gender system" (105). She seems to be saying that it is bad enough for the upper-class men to be degrading towards a laboring class woman, but for the women who might employ this maid to be so derogatory towards a laboring woman is unnecessary and ridiculous. The importance of the class system during this century was amplified and the participants who so strictly enforced it were almost melodramatic in their theatrical upholding of that system, particularly against the lower class and what was expected of them. Hands's use of satire here, therefore, challenges not only the classist system employed by all of Britain at this time but also the expected boundary for women to stay within. It is no surprise that these are two of her most known poems due to her careful defiance against her entire reality.

As Paula Backscheider indicates:

> "Literature is a record of and a call to our humanity, and it has always provided humankind with beauty, intellectual stimulation, pleasure, and inspiration. It consoles and inspires us, makes us laugh and urges us to care for the victimized. We can never have enough good literature, and the exclusion of" laboring class women like Elizabeth Hands, among others, "leaves us all the poorer." (27)

Considering Hands's intricate work with the multiple popular contemporary forms of the era, added with her ability to sass the upper-class readers who attempt to ridicule her without completely calling them out and ruining what little credibility she has really demonstrated the skill she has in her composition. With the limitations that she is faced with in her life—stuck

in the laboring class and differently educated than her so-called superiors—Hands's poetry speaks for itself. The collection situates Elizabeth Hands as a skillful poet who can defend herself against her critics and as a worthy author who can successfully write within many modes of poetry, proving Hands deserves all the attention that her more-privileged contemporaries receive within literary academia.

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Revealing the Gendered Experience: The Complexity of Care Work in Loach's *Sorry We Missed You* and *I, Daniel Blake*

By Courtney Umphress

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In his films *I, Daniel Blake* (2016) and *Sorry We Missed You* (2019), Director Ken Loach uncovers the exploitation and inequality working-class members experience in the age of neoliberalism, when market values such as profit, efficiency, and competition overshadow the needs of the individual. Loach specifically highlights the expectations neoliberalism places on mothers who perform care work within the workforce and at home. This essay draws on Hochschild's description of the different kinds of work mothers carry out, Duffy's explanation of the expectations of nurturant jobs, and Berlant's argument of the working class's participation in cruel optimism, to discuss women's experiences in care work in a neoliberal economy, and then unpack the way Loach interrogates these challenges in his films.

Director Ken Loach's objective to create films that illuminate the exploitation, precariousness, and inequality of the working-class in present-day society attracts both praise and ridicule from movie critics. Two of Loach's more contemporary films, *I, Daniel Blake* (2016) and *Sorry We Missed You* (2019), demonstrate the difficulties families face in the age of neoliberalism, when competition, cold efficiency, and the raised expectations of personal responsibility devalue the needs of the underprivileged. Though there have been some exceptions—such as *Variety* contributor Owen Gleiberman's reflection of the impersonal behavior of welfare workers towards single mothers in *I, Daniel Blake*, and *New York Times* writer Wesley Morris's observation of care work employers' apathy toward their employees' humanity in *Sorry We Missed You*—most critics focus on how the male figures in Loach's films navigate these challenging circumstances. They tend to underrate Loach's consideration of the obstacles his female characters face, particularly regarding care work in the workforce and at home. In this paper, I will use Hochschild's representation of the second and third shifts, Berlant's description of cruel optimism, and Duffy's explanation of the expectations of nurturant jobs to discuss women's experiences in care work in the age of neoliberalism, and then unpack the way Loach interrogates these challenges in his films *Sorry We Missed You* and *I, Daniel Blake.*

Dr. Arlie Hochschild redefined the boundaries of labor with her books *The Second Shift* and *The Managed Heart*, in which she identified two shifts mothers perform in addition to paid labor in the workforce: the second shift and the third shift. The second shift refers to the unpaid labor of childcare and housework, and the third shift, known as emotion work, is the ability to induce or suppress feeling to maintain harmony within the family. Hochschild contends that because of the sharply increasing number of women joining the workforce since the 1950s, more women felt the constraints of overwork as they labored in the second and third shifts in addition to their paid jobs. The distribution of work between spouses within the home failed to keep up with the rising employment of women, creating an imbalanced workload that relied on women to not only maintain childrearing and housework but also an emotional balance within the family (Blair-Loy et al. 437). In 2015, Hochschild contributed to an article addressing the transformation of labor and gender since the publication of *The Second Shift* in 1989, arguing, "mothers continue to do two to three times more routine housework than do fathers, spend more time alone with children, and do more household management and planning" (Blair-Loy et al. 440). In this context, household management refers to tasks that keep the house running in an orderly manner, though it arguably comes to include the management of emotional stability between the household members, as Hochschild addresses in *The Managed Heart*.

Mothers labor in the third shift, Hochschild claims, by controlling their emotions to foster a positive atmosphere in their homes, especially to "affirm, enhance, and celebrate the well-being and status of others" (165). Ultimately,

women's conditioning in the third shift encourages them to suppress their feelings to sustain the proper state of mind in others and maintain harmony within their families. The working class, however, participates in what Dr. Lauren Berlant calls "cruel optimism," or "when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing" (1). Those of the working class desire upward mobility, believing that "society will reliably provide opportunities for individuals to carve out relations of reciprocity that seem fair and that foster life as a project of adding up to something" (3), what we call the good life or the American dream. According to Berlant, this optimism is cruel because precarity and exploitation erase the effectiveness of hard work leading to the American dream, resulting in overworked, underpaid, and mistreated people never seeing reciprocal benefits to their work or home lives, making harmony within families stressfully hard to maintain.

Suppressing emotions for the benefit of others within the home mimics the characteristics of workers in the care field. Feminist scholars have long recognized women's "domestic labor as work," categorizing labor within the home as essential to the continuation of society (Duffy 11). But as Mignon Duffy notes in her book *Making Care Count*, the "gendered division of labor" extends into the workforce so that jobs within the care field resemble "paid versions of the jobs [women] do at home" (11). Duffy identifies these care jobs as "nurturant" jobs that involve "feelings of affection or responsibility combined with actions that provide responsibly for an individual's personal needs or well-being, in a face-to-face relationship" (15). These jobs, such as teaching, nursing, and caregiving, not only require critical care that enhances a person's well-being, but also relational care encouraged through face-to-face interactions. Relational care depends on emotional responsiveness and meaningful personal relationships specific to the individual.

Despite the intimate connections nurturant jobs require, however, Duffy acknowledges that many care theorists "pose nurturant care as antithetical to market values" (13) like efficiency and profit. These ideals, often summarized as neoliberalism, impacted the care industry through "direct cuts to publicly funded care enterprises" and private care work, which redefined the organization of care by limiting worker control and "squeezing out the relational aspects of their jobs" as unimportant and uncompensated (Duffy 75-76). Neoliberalism's emphasis on self-reliance suggested families should provide relational care for their loved ones, cutting companionship and relationships from the necessary requirements of institutional care. A job that simultaneously promotes an extension of care women have been conditioned for yet forbids this type of relational care either "creates conflicts for workers," damaging their mental health, or "becomes a mechanism for exploitation and the extraction of additional labor from care workers" (Duffy 89).

Loach examines the intertwining dynamic of care work in the workforce and at home throughout *Sorry We Missed You* and *I, Daniel Blake*, showcasing how the exploitive practices toward workers in the care field affect the precarious lives of working-class mothers. *Sorry We Missed You* in particular follows a Newcastle couple working tirelessly to obtain financial security despite the obstacles of their precarious jobs and the devastating impact of their jobs on their personal lives. While the father of the family, Ricky, works as a package delivery driver under the misleading guise of the gig economy, the mother, Abby, works as an in-home care worker for the elderly and disabled. Loach draws special attention to Abby's skill in managing not only her clients but also her family as she demonstrates the exhausting cycle of shifts mothers perform.

Many of Abby's scenes involve bus rides from client to client, as she was forced to sell her car so her husband could purchase a vehicle for his job. During these periods in between clients, she participates in the second shift despite being outside the home. Loach purposely draws attention to Abby's phone calls to her children as she monitors the time her daughter spends on homework versus the computer and offers to look over her school projects when she gets home. She ensures her son is attending class and correcting his behavior problems. Even without including a specific scene of Abby cooking, Loach reveals Abby's dedication to her second shift through phone messages that inform her kids that food for dinner is ready in the fridge. In "Paid, Domestic, and Emotional Work in the Precariat," Zoe Goodall and Kay Cook point out that throughout the film, Ricky shows no signs of cooking, cleaning, or checking homework, "implicitly reinforcing that Abby is the rightful primary caregiver of their children" (7). Loach's consideration of the feminized existence of the second shift allows for an understanding of a true representation of the challenges working-class women face in the home.

Abby's work in the second shift extends to her work as an in-home care worker, for the cooking, cleaning, and care she provides for her clients echoes the work she completes in her own home. Loach's representation of her nurturant job validates Duffy's argument that domestic labor translates into the workforce as feminine jobs. In fact, during one of Abby's visits to a client, she gently wakes him up to

get him ready for the day, and then the scene cuts to Abby's daughter, Liza Jane, similarly waking her brother up so he can get ready for school. The two scenes provide a direct correlation between paid and unpaid care work and allow a basic understanding of the importance of relational care in the care field.

In addition, Loach's portrayal of Abby's care work job accurately aligns with Duffy's concerns regarding the organization of care work. The care field began to place more value on quantitative data than relationships with the clients, and to remain competitive with other companies offering in-home care, Abby's company requires every carer to spend a limited amount of time with each client, paying them only for the time allotted. Abby consistently tells her clients, "I don't have time," because, within her contract, she is only paid for her work. Relational care, such as exchanging pictures and doing each other's hair, is not included as a requirement by her company, emphasized when she claims, "I can't get friendly with the clients" (*Sorry* 37:21). Of course, Abby struggles to be completely objective in a nurturant job that requires intimate relationships. The film addresses this dissonance when Abby works extra, knowingly unpaid, to clean up a client after they had spread excrement all over themselves, their surroundings, and Abby during a mental breakdown. Abby claims she had one rule, to "treat them like your mum and look after them," for "nobody" would leave their mom "in a state like that" (*Sorry* 48:06). Her maternal instincts to look after those who needed help clashed with the care sector's dismissal of relational work, allowing Abby's employers to obtain extra unpaid labor from her, revealing a specifically gendered exploitative practice.

Loach's critique of the corruptive nature of precarious nurturant jobs focuses not only on the organization of care work, however, but also on the hours and pay. Abby works on a zero-hour contract, a system regularly used by the care and hospitality sector (Ndzi et al. 5). In this system, an employer offers a predetermined number of hours to an employee every week, and an employee can decide how many hours they want to accept. Employers reason that allowing employees to choose their hours means that zero-hour contracts have a flexibility not available through other types of jobs. The Trades Union Congress (TUC), however, reports that zero-hour contracts routinely have problems with low pay, underemployment, income insecurity, and lack of employment rights (4-5). Although Loach chooses to focus on overwork as an exploitative practice of the contracts, Abby likely also experiences underemployment as a care worker, as an employer could just as easily deny hours to a worker as they could overload them. In fact, the TUC acknowledges that employers of zero-hour contracts tend to punish those who do not accept the hours offered to them, claiming employers reduce their hours or dismiss them for "refusing or failing to be available for work" (8). Whether Abby feels the effects of this threat, she rarely denies the work given to her even as the long hours begin to disrupt her home life.

Abby's experiences as a carer in an exploitative working environment inevitably affect her mental health, her sense of stability, and her relationship with her children. As Duffy argues, the conflict between the nature of nurturant jobs and the practice of eliminating relational care creates tremendous pressure and conflict on the workers. In the "Report on the Use of Zero-Hour Contracts," professors at the University of Hertfordshire found that zero-hour contracts overwhelmingly increase anxiety, stress, and depression in workers, and they found a fifty percent relation between poor health and work under a zero-hour contract (12). Loach highlights that despite all her efforts to be an effective care worker and still maintain her duties as a mother, Abby "still feels guilty that she's an insufficient mother" (Goodall and Kay 8) for not being as present in her children's lives as she believes she should be. Her son's struggles in school and her daughter's responsibility to take care of herself at home feed her guilt because she feels her obligations to her job prevent her from being an effective mother.

Because the challenges people face in working-class jobs deeply affect the functionality of home life, mental health plays a clear role not only in the workplace but within the family. Loach depicts how both Ricky and Abby inevitably bring home the vicious consequences to their mental health caused by their jobs, prompting Abby to work her third shift: trying to promote an emotional balance in a family existing in precarity. Ricky's reaction to the corrupt practices of his job manifests in unrelenting anger, most notably as he yells, curses, and argues with his teenage son. Despite the equal amount of corruption she faces, Abby's response to his outbursts, asking Ricky, "Can we just talk instead of shouting?" (*Sorry* 40:26), signifies her labor within emotion work. She tries to de-escalate the argument between her husband and her son, warning Ricky of the damage he is doing to his relationship with his family. In addition, Loach shows how she further tries to maintain harmony within her home by hiding from her husband her daughter's bedwetting and the messages she receives about her son's misbehavior at school. She suppresses her feelings to protect Ricky's state of mind, shielding him from the negative aspects of their

lives that would further disrupt his emotional well-being and cause more dysfunction within the family.

One of the reasons behind Abby's labor in the third shift is her participation in cruel optimism. Abby and Ricky trust that with time, they will be able to pay off their debt and purchase their dream house for their family to live in. Abby works to prevent arguments in her family and protect Ricky's state of mind to help preserve relationships within the family and their mental health because she believes that if they could get through this difficult time in their lives, they would eventually achieve the good life they long for. Of course, Abby constantly performs emotional work due to the damaging consequences precarity has on mental health, which simultaneously chips away at her faith in achieving the American dream and forces her to realize the underlining cruelty of the optimistic hope of upward mobility.

As Loach demonstrates, the climax of Abby's character that signifies the damage exploitation has caused to her well-being is the phone call she makes with Ricky's boss in the middle of a hospital waiting room. Despite understanding that Ricky is severely injured after a run-in with thieves, his boss begins to list the things stolen or damaged that Ricky must financially compensate for, prompting Abby to take the phone from her husband and exclaim, "How do you get away with this? How does your company get away with treating people like this?" (*Sorry* 1:33:22). Abby's breakdown is a realization of the reality of cruel optimism. Before this moment, her efforts in the third shift confused the conflicting relationship between precarity and familial harmony. Yet, Loach emphasizes that during the phone call, as she realizes the futility of her efforts in the face of precarity, as well as the full extent of Ricky's exploitation, her control of her emotions breaks and she expresses unrestrained anger. The audacity of Ricky's boss to demand money from her husband after Ricky had experienced such a traumatizing and violent ordeal rightly draws many movie critics' attention, yet Abby's realization that they will likely never experience a debt-free "good life" because of the exploitative and precarious nature of their jobs deserves equal consideration. Loach's viewers can feel the moment Abby's hope and optimism for the American dream vanishes as she curses and sobs in front of the other patients in the waiting room, highlighting the harsh reality of the working-class.

Loach recognizes, of course, that a mother does not have to be a part of a typical nuclear family to labor in the second and third shifts, experience the drawbacks of the care field regarding relational care, and function in a state of cruel optimism. In *I, Daniel Blake*, Katie is a single mother who must take care of her two children and her home while she desperately searches for employment. Katie relies on the UK's welfare program to support her family, which allows Loach to provide the film with an example of the necessity of welfare benefits. After waiting in a women's homeless shelter for two years, Katie finally moves into a flat as authorized by her London council, transferring from her hometown of London to Newcastle. Daniel Blake, a widowed fifty-eight-year-old carpenter who suffered a heart attack on the job, meets Katie at the welfare office while trying to access his benefits through Employment and Support Allowance. The two become close friends as they navigate the tribulations of working-class experiences.

Unlike in *Sorry We Missed You*, Loach explicitly shows Katie's labor in the second shift as she cleans their living space: dusting surfaces, washing dishes, and scrubbing the bathroom tiles. Because the film begins with Katie's move to the flat in Newcastle, Loach critiques the state of homes provided by the welfare program once a tenant moves in by showcasing the filthy and damaged condition of the flat. Despite the place's disorder, Katie claims she will "make this place a home" (*I, Daniel* 18:42) and continually cleans to bring their surroundings to a livable condition. In addition to housekeeping, Katie prepares food for her kids and Daniel and disciplines her children. Dylan, her lively and energetic son , requires constant attention, and Katie complains to Daniel, "I can't sit down for five minutes without him getting in trouble, can I?" (*I, Daniel* 18:05). Despite the differences between Abby's and Katie's families, both mothers unfailingly labor in the second shift.

While her unemployment forces her to rely on welfare benefits, Katie desperately searches for a job to support her family in addition to the work she performs at home. She creates flyers that advertise herself as a "reliable cleaner" and distributes them to different hotels, cafés, and restaurants, as well as walking door to door in residential neighborhoods to drop them in mail slots. Unsurprisingly, Loach follows this scene that displays Katie's search for a job in housekeeping with the scene of her scrubbing her bathroom, deliberately connecting her domestic labor to a paid job in the workforce. Therefore, Loach clearly identifies the job Katie searches for as an extension of her care work at home.

Although Loach focuses less openly on the care field in this earlier film, he nevertheless demonstrates the importance of relational care in welfare work. While welfare is not strictly a nurturant job as described by Duffy, Loach illustrates how welfare workers must have an empathetic understanding of their clients in face-to-face interactions to

provide responsibly for their needs and well-being. As neoliberal ideals have successfully reformed welfare work, workers have displaced relational care to individual families, promoting familial independence outside of the government system . This shift of care from the welfare office to individual families has led to impersonal dealings from welfare workers in which their main objective is to urge independence in their clients by stressing the importance of finding a job regardless of their circumstances.

To reinforce the negative impact of impersonal care, Loach depicts Katie on the receiving end of businesses controlling the output of their workers by creating a cold, objective environment that encourages efficiency rather than a personable environment that produces quality relationships. Her first scene takes place in the welfare office after she learns she is being sanctioned, or receiving a reduction in benefits, for arriving a few minutes late to her appointment. Although she desperately tries to explain that she is new to Newcastle and was on a bus that made a wrong turn, forcing her and her two children to run to the office to try to make it to her appointment on time, the workers refuse to listen to her explanation and immediately have security escort her from the office, claiming, "We have rules here, rules that we have to stick to" and that she has "a duty to be here on time" (*I, Daniel* 16:10). The workers' emphasis on sticking to a strict schedule mirrors Abby's care job in *Sorry We Missed You* as time restraints affect her ability to provide relational care. With Katie, Loach shows how the elimination of relational care forces the welfare workers to ignore Katie's individual needs and stress the importance of self-reliance through sanctions.

Loach reveals how Katie's decrease in benefits combined with her inability to secure a job prove to have disastrous consequences on her home life. She is forced to prioritize which bills she should pay, and unsurprisingly, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that "benefit sanctions" are a key factor "driving demand for food banks" (8). To ensure her children have enough to eat, she neglects feeding herself, relying on small portions of fruit to sustain her until she can attend her local food bank. As she waits in a dishearteningly long line to enter the food bank, Loach draws attention to her pale complexion, somber demeanor, and unsteady footing to dramatize starvation. After she enters the food bank, the camera follows her around the shelves as she begins gathering the items she needs, with the help of a volunteer, before she grabs a can of beans, opens the lid, and desperately shoves cold beans into her mouth with her hands. Once she comprehends her actions, she begins crying, apologizing profusely to the volunteer and Daniel as they work to clean her up and get her some food. She admits to Daniel, "I can't cope, Dan. I feel like I'm going under" (*I, Daniel* 54:50), expressing her guilt and disappointment with herself despite all her efforts to take care of her family at the expense of her well-being. Loach's demonstration of Katie's desperate attempt to secure essential needs for herself after being forced to deny them reminds his audience of the corruption of working-class experiences caused by neoliberal values.

Loach takes Katie's desperation one step further, because not only must she deny herself food, but she is also unable to gain access to feminine products. The food bank did not supply feminine products, so Katie feels she has no other choice but to shoplift sanitary pads, razors, and deodorant from a local grocery store. The front security officer immediately apprehends her and takes her to the manager of the store, who graciously lets her go. In "Vulnerability, Care and Citizenship in Austerity Politics," researchers Jacqueline Gibbs and Aura Lehtonen argue that regardless of the manager's compassionate response to her effort to shoplift, her decision to expose herself to criminality and potential punishment is because of "the processes of being sanctioned and removed from previous modes of familial and social support in London" (54). Loach demonstrates how working-class experiences directly related to self-reliance and impersonal efficiency created a desperate, vulnerable mother trying to secure essential needs for herself after being forced to deny them.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation describes sanctions as a way to "require people to behave in a certain way" through the threat of "reducing, suspending, or ending" welfare benefits (1), yet the consequences of sanctioning include "unfavorable effects on long-term outcomes" such as reduced "earnings over time, child welfare, and job quality" (7). Despite her sanctioning that subjects her to abject poverty and the possibility of these long-term effects, Katie exists in a state of cruel optimism, claiming she is "gonna get a part-time job" and then "go back to me books" (*I, Daniel* 21:55). Even though she realizes poverty impedes her progress toward the American dream, she argues, "I'm not gonna give up" (*I, Daniel* 22:05). The more time Katie spends around Daniel, the more she is encouraged to continue her optimism, for he urges her to keep moving forward to "make her kids proud" (*I, Daniel* 1:08:15), yet the obstacles that inevitably surface in working-class conditions, including her desperate need for food at the food shelter and her theft of feminine products at the grocery store, continue to threaten the existence of her optimism.

To highlight the breaking point that leads to Katie's recognition of the reality of cruel optimism, Loach captures the moment Katie believes she has failed to adequately perform her second shift. One night, her daughter, Daisy, reveals that girls at her school are making fun of her because her shoes fell apart for the second time. Katie promises she will buy Daisy new shoes even though she lacks the money, but this last obstacle forces her to acknowledge that despite her good intentions, poverty holds her back from shielding her daughter from their precarious lifestyle, much less an opportunity to experience the "good life." She meets with the security officer of the grocery store, who offers a "nice girl" (*I, Daniel* 1:02:05) like her a job as a sex worker. Daniel, who had consistently persuaded her to hold on to hope, finds out what she is doing and tearfully tries to convince her to quit, telling her he built her a bookshelf for all the books she had intended to study. Loach shows Katie rolling her eyes and sighing loudly at Daniel's admission because she had already discovered that her attachment to pursuing schooling as a means to achieve the American dream was cruel in nature. Dreaming of college prevented her from finding the means to support her family. Daniel's insistence on trying to separate her from sex work in favor of existing once again in cruel optimism "jeopardizes Katie's efforts to support herself and her children" (Gibbs and Lehtonen 55), revealing another harsh reality of working-class circumstances.

For a large part of the movie, Daniel participates in the third shift with Katie as they both try to emotionally support Katie's children. Yet, when Katie becomes a sex worker, she shields Daniel from the reality she discovered. She allows him to exist in his cruel optimism, protecting him from the avenue she needed to take to support her children even as she relinquishes her own hope for the good life. By protecting his state of mind, she labors in the third shift not only for her kids but for Daniel as well. As Daniel's health begins to deteriorate, she continues to care for him physically and emotionally, accompanying him to his appeal and trying to alleviate his anxiety toward successfully receiving his benefits. Loach depicts how she reassures Daniel that he has everything he needs to confront the board hearing his appeal, and then she mentions when he is done, he can "come to dinner to celebrate" (*I, Daniel* 1:31:22), demonstrating Hochschild's point that women manage emotion to "celebrate the well-being of others" (165). Despite her emotional turmoil, she suppresses her feelings to support her friend, displaying how one continues "living on" despite "visible experiences of precarity" (Gibbs and Lehtonen 55).

Although critics have tended to overlook Loach's consideration of the complexity of care work in the age of neoliberalism and its impact on care workers' and patients' personal lives, Loach highlights the gendered experiences working-class mothers face within the workforce and at home. His films *Sorry We Missed You* and *I, Daniel Blake* were made before the Covid-19 pandemic, but they reveal problems within the care field that have only intensified since the pandemic began. Because the pandemic has increased demand for care, care work has transformed to further encompass the lives of workers as they are forced to acclimate themselves to new ways of teaching, nursing, and caregiving amid the same neoliberal expectations of efficiency and personal responsibility. Despite the risk they face interacting with those they care for, care workers contend with their own economic insecurity and the pressure of market values, which forces them to continue caring for as many people as possible. To protect care workers and their clients, students, and patients, we must value qualitative care over quantitative, relational care over profits. As directors create new films to represent the impact of the pandemic on working-class families, they must continue to recognize the gendered experiences of women in care work as Loach did so that society may more readily recognize and find solutions to the precarity and exploitation of working-class women.

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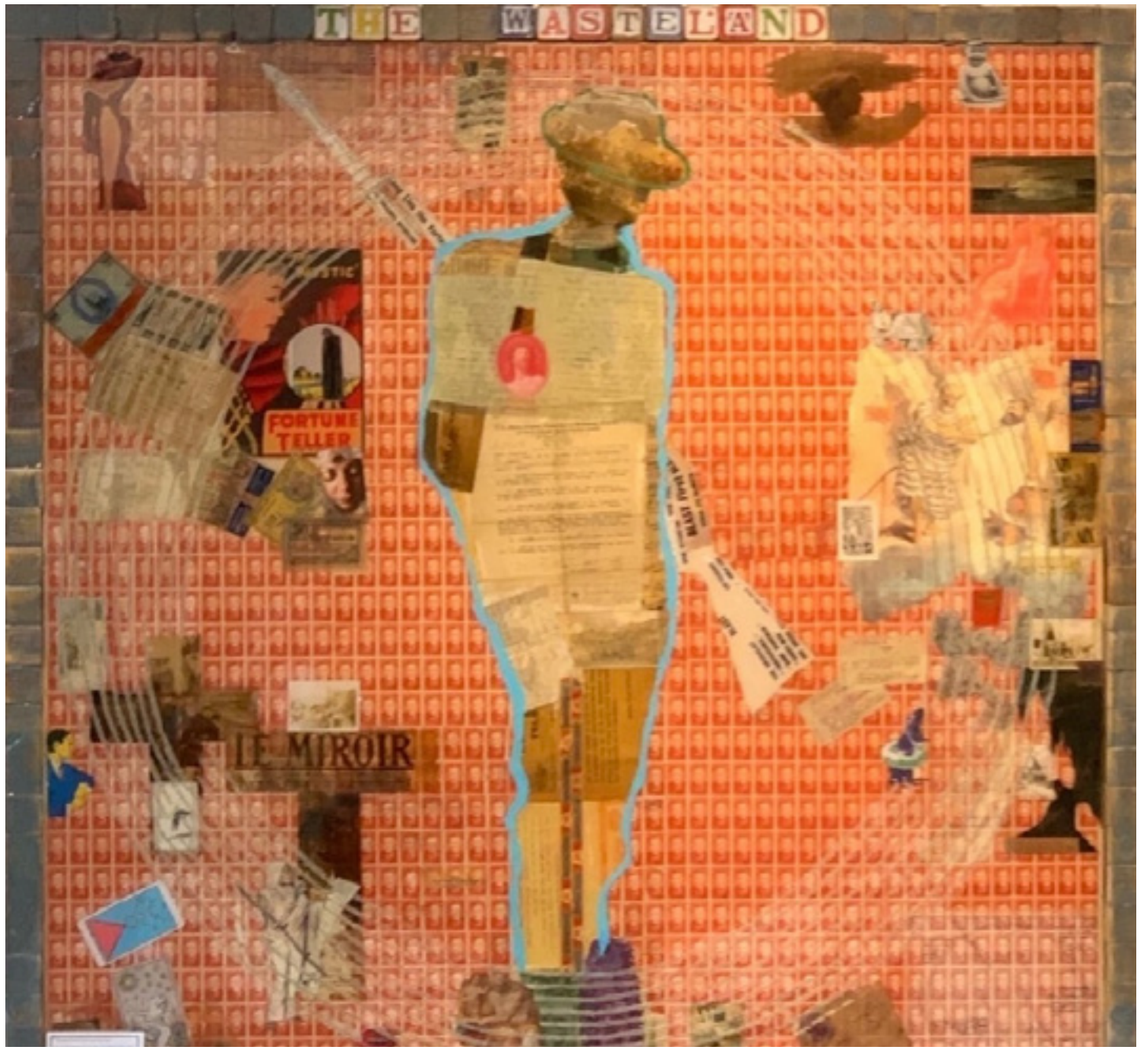

Joshua Kornexl
The Waste Land

Joshua Kornexl has experienced many transcendental moments of life, from the solitude of youth to the raging of soldierly experience in foreign lands to the questioning environment. This led him to build a mixed family of two beautiful, adopted children (from birth) and leave nothing but kindness in others around him. He works these experiences onto paper through writing stories and poems, onto the canvas in paintings, and into sculptures to share in these intimate conversations. Joshua is a 2022 graduate of WTAMU with his master's degree in English. In Chandler, Arizona he teaches 8th through 12th grade English both in person and online – sharing as much knowledge and life lessons as he can through his experiences and academic trials, and art occupies all other hours – often late into the night.

This artwork titled "The Waste Land" represents T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land poem which among many themes, addresses the Circle of Life, Death, and Rebirth. Joshua's work centers around the intimacy of those lost in World War One, and contains original paper ephemera, photographs, Liberty Passes, playing cards carried by soldiers, currency collected during tours, bus tokens and slips, and so much more. The soldier is imprisoned in concentric rings of his life and destiny using duty orders, photographs, letters, as well as telegrams. The complete rings of poetry represent the levels of Dante's Hell, which many considered to be a true No Man's Land. The frame is made of children's blocks, representing the first stages of life. This work is personal to Joshua because he himself is a veteran of conflicts and collects those same scraps of paper and mementos from his time when enlisted. That is sometimes what remains of a person long after they are gone, poems and bits of information.

Media Studies

Our perception of the world through the media we consume is ever-changing and what is considered 'popular' media fluctuates with advances in technology and changes in societal trends. These perceptions vary even further as individual facets of pop culture are identified and considered. In this section, essays address how media in the forms of books, films, and TV series are born from certain perceptions of reality and how they impact society on various levels. Popular pieces of media such as 500 Days of Summer and Knives Out are used in these essays among many others to identify and analyze societal issues we face today.

The Sorrows of Unrequited Love: A Comparative Study of Tom Hanson and Young Werther

By Denise Velarde

Denise Velarde is a WT English major graduate and a member of Sigma Tau Delta since 2022. She is now a graduate student at Texas Tech working towards a Master's in Technical Communication. The topic she chose for her research was for her undergraduate senior capstone, in which she chose to focus on the tragic tale, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. This story captivated her since the first time she read it and she kept finding reflections of the character Werther represented in modern media. Rejection from love is a human experience that is certain to come across one's life. Each individual copes with rejection differently, and the topic of love and its consequences has been a long-term interest of Denise's. Werther's character is a complicated one, but it is one that deserves to be studied.

"The Sorrows of Unrequited Love: A Comparative Study of Tom Hanson and Young Werther" compares Werther from *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and Tom Hanson from *500 Days of Summer. Werther* was written in the 1700s and was quite a marginalized book for its time, due to the graphic nature of depicting Werther's suicide after experiencing heartbreak. *500 Days of Summer* is a twenty-first-century retelling of *Werther.* This article compares Tom and Werther and notes how despite the hundreds of years in difference, the stories are too similar to be coincidental. This essay argues that *Werther* laid the foundation for modern stories of unrequited love, and presented an Ur-figure for those rejected from love.

There are many books that not only leave an impact on their readers but also on the world. One story that globally left its mark in literature is Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther.* This peculiar story touched on taboo subjects such as mental illness and suicide that other love stories of its time did not discuss. Goethe transformed the way writers approach love and mental disorders, and the severe consequences relationships can carry if a partner is mentally ill. Goethe takes fragments from his own experience with losing a friend to suicide and writes about the risks of being in a relationship with a suicidal person. One can believe that *Werther's* story of unrequited love precipitated other writers' love tales. Centuries later, it is still possible to connect Goethe's themes in modern media and trace them back to *Werther.* Tom Hanson, from the 2009 movie *500 Days of Summer,* is a great example of how *500 Days* is linked to *Werther.* The stories share much in common, and it is impossible to ignore how Goethe influences the themes and characters presented in *500 Days*. Tom and Werther seem to share similar roles and follow similar paths that lead to heartbreak and life-changing decisions. Though the stories are not precisely the same, *500 Days of Summer* draws on the Romantic tradition of unrequited love that is initiated by texts like Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*.

German Romanticist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe made waves when he offered a different kind of love story from the typical medieval love tales in the 1774 epistolary novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In this epistolary, Werther struggles when he falls in love with Lotte, who is engaged to Werther's friend Albert. Werther spends his days pursuing Lotte, and although he knows she is engaged, he deliberately misinterprets Lotte's innocent remarks as evidence that she loves him back. One day, Werther painfully accepts that Lotte will never belong to him. He commits suicide to set Lotte and Albert free from what he thought was an awkward love triangle where someone would undoubtedly be hurt. Ultimately, Werther's suicide worsens the situation by leaving his friends feeling guilty, grieving, and dealing with his gory demise. With this ending, Goethe shifts from traditional happy endings—and even from noble, high-minded deaths—by introducing an alternative ending in romantic tales. He uses *Werther* to show that suicide is a possible response to unrequited love and that this is not a story about perseverance, but rather shines a spotlight on the effects of mental illness. Nonetheless, after *Werther*'s publication, protagonists who are incapable of understanding unrequited love, such as Tom Hanson from the movie *500 Days of Summer,* become part of the standard in romantic stories.

In the romantic comedy, Tom Hanson experiences a similar situation to Werther's. The movie tells the love story of Tom and Summer in the span of 500 days. Tom and Summer become coworkers, and the pair spend a lot of time together in and outside of work. While the two seemingly act and do romantic couple-related things, Summer is very clear that she does not want to enter a serious relationship with Tom, despite her actions hinting otherwise. Like Werther's treatment of Lotte, Tom takes Summer's assertion as a challenge and wholeheartedly

believes he can change her mind. During a karaoke night, Summer and Tom compare their different points of view on relationships and love. She confesses that she hates being someone's girlfriend and states, "There's no such thing as love. It's fantasy," to which Tom objects, "Well, I think you're wrong. I think you'll know it when you feel it." Summer changes the subject and "nominate[s] young Werther here" to sing karaoke next. This subtle reference suggests that director Marc Webb intentionally alludes to Goethe.

Like many others who read the story, the writers and directors from *500 Days* felt connected to *Werther*. Werther's story is relatable because the humanity of Goethe's characters is as true for us today as it was for people of his moment. In fact, the collective experience is demonstrated by the number of people who sought to emulate Werther's actions when Goethe's novel was published. As Clara Tuite claims, Werther is the "Ur-figure of the romantic unrequited lover, modelling a range of ritualistic behaviours that were imitated at various social levels across different cultural media and transnational contexts" (337). She notes that many people committed suicide as an act of love following the publication of *Werther* and that many unrequited lovers were seen wearing Werther or Lotte's garb or found with copies of *Werther* at the scene of their suicides. Of course, *Werther* is not intended to provoke readers to think of Werther as a hero or suppose that suicide is reasonable. As Edward Batley explains, Goethe recognizes the seriousness of suicide and only includes the gory details of Werther's death to "shock and alienate his reader...against the act of suicide itself" (877). Werther is intended to be an anti-hero and a sort of cautionary tale of how wrong unrequited love can turn. Goethe writes Werther as a character who is depressed and existential in the sense that he struggles to find meaning in his existence but romanticizes the idea of attempting to fill the lonely void within himself with a relationship. Werther's pessimism is rooted in his disregard for adulthood's social order and "continually draws attention to constraint and unfreedom and complains bitterly when he suffers from them" (Constantine xxiv). This disgust for conformity to a socially constructed order births existentialism, or the belief that life is meaningless but that meaning can be created by the individual, within Werther's personal principles. Before Werther even meets Lotte, the relationship is already forbidden as other people tell Werther that Lotte is already betrothed to Albert. Werther disregards this information and dedicates his time to pursuing a relationship with Lotte, one that he knows could never occur, to create his own existential meaning.

Werther's strong opinions on the meaning of life reject the ideals we see exemplified in his relationship with nature and work. Werther hates being a working-class member of society and is not keen on allowing mundane labor to distract him from what he thinks is truly important in life. He instead wishes to focus on seeking a simple life with Lotte living isolated from others in nature, but he knows the chances of her joining him are slim, and he creates chaos in his mind. Before he meets Lotte and Albert, Werther ambles around in nature, painting and observing others. Werther even admits that nature is what makes him such a good artist. In his letters to Wilhelm, he writes that "rules destroy the true feeling of nature and the true expression of nature" and compares nature to love (12). Werther concludes that love should be able to grow as free as nature intends it, and that the only reason love has been reduced to small tokens of appreciation on special occasions is that humanity has involved the need for work. Werther thinks that human rules, such as putting employment above all else, intrude upon the world's natural sentiments. This idea spells for Werther the end of sensibility and creativity, and thus the end of him. John Bolin explains that Werther believes a mate would "fix" his sorrows, adding that Werther "sees life as a 'raree show' of human marionettes whose efforts 'serve no purpose but to prolong [a] wretched existence'" (104). Werther turns to nature in hopes of finding self-sufficiency but fails due to finding the world he lives in valueless. Once Werther meets Lotte, however, "Lotte replaces nature as Werther's 'beloved,' forcing him to abandon what he now realizes are 'tiresome abstractions' for a physical and independent other who nevertheless remains identified with the freedom and unity sought from the world within" (Bolin 105). Werther suffers constraint and denial from his position in the world's social order and feels further denied as he tries to find love with Lotte.

As part of his condition, Werther rewrites the "real" world according to his preferences. For example, Werther knows Lotte is marrying Albert but chooses to believe that she secretly loves him. Alice Kuzniar explains that Werther interprets her actions in a way that is convenient for him, as he wants "the license to interpret both idiosyncratically and unequivocally. We see evidence of the former in his fetishizing of Lotte's words and actions" (17). Kuzniar's theory is proven when Werther exaggerates Lotte's actions during a ballroom party. Lotte invents a game where players count numbers quickly and without mistakes, or they receive a slap. Werther romanticizes Lotte's slaps towards him as he "noticed that the blows were harder than those she was dealing to the rest of the

company" (Goethe 22). Kuzniar admits that Werther is aware that he exaggerates his interpretations: "Engrossed by the fragment, Werther reads the slightest sign as an omen," she says (17).

One can infer from Werther's letters to Wilhelm that he is an exaggerated romantic. Werther dramatizes everything in his letters to Wilhelm, especially concerning Lotte. Werther exclaims, "When Lotte came up, I'd have liked to prostrate myself before her as a prophet who had by holy rituals taken away the sins of a nation" (30). When he discovers that Lotte is already engaged, he tells Wilhelm that it matters little because he feels a special connection to her. Werther writes to Wilhelm about how happy he is to have chosen Wahlheim to live in after meeting Lotte. He describes everything he sees in nature to Wilhelm and appears in good spirits. Werther writes, "I shall see her! And for the whole day then I have no further wish." (34). Readers see that Werther's perspective on life changes according to how deeply in love he is. His letters' pessimistic or infatuated content depends on whether or not he has seen Lotte that day. Unfortunately for Werther, this infatuation does not last long. As Martin Silverman recounts in "*The Sorrows of Young Werther* And Goethe's Understanding Of Melancholia," Lotte forbids Werther from seeing her every day: "She offers to remain fast friends with him, but he cannot accept such a lesser relationship with her" (203). Silverman also suggests that "Goethe was able to peer into the soul of those afflicted with what is now termed Major Depressive Disorder" (199). Werther's obsession and mental illness prevent him from moving on as a neurotypical person might.

Instead of seeking a purpose within himself, Werther spends his time looking to nature and art in hopes of finding a sign that will tell him how to live, with or without Lotte. Kuzniar explains that much like looking through a window, one sees the image on not only the other side of the glass but also the pale reflection of themselves (17). He cannot correctly read the signs he wants to see outside of the window because he projects himself onto the signs he sees and is trapped inside the window in his imagined world. These signs lead Werther to suicide because he realizes he uses Lotte as a placeholder for finding true meaning in his life. Even when Werther leaves town to detach from Lotte, he writes to Lotte that he met a woman with the same qualities as her and ends the letter asking Lotte if she is still with Albert. Werther's attitude has a distinct shift from Book One to Book Two. His letters have an infatuated tone in Book One, whereas, in Book Two, Werther turns obsessive. As the end of the novel shows, this obsession leads to Werther's tunnel vision and catastrophic suicide that

marks a distinct literary change from past writers' precedent on love stories, such as medieval courtly love stories. Goethe's point is to lift the blindfold on previous fairytale-like stories and open a discussion on mental illness. Werther takes the liberty of cleaning up, paying all of his debts, running last-minute errands, and even coming up with an alibi before committing suicide. He borrows a gun from Albert and learns that Lotte is the one who handed the weapon to Werther's servant. It could be said that Lotte metaphorically kills her unrequited lover:

> They have passed through your hands, you wiped the dust off them, I kiss them a thousand times, you touched them. The spirits of heaven favour my decision! And you, Lotte, you hand me the instruments, you whose hands I desired to receive my death and now receive it! Oh I questioned my boy very closely! You trembled when you handed them to him, you said no goodbye... (Goethe 108)

The letters give readers a look into Werther's thoughts, and Robyn Schiffman theorizes on the effectiveness of Goethe's writing this story as an epistolary novel. In "*Werther* and the Epistolary Novel," Schiffman explains that "Werther's letters consistently maintain a kind of immobility" (432). Goethe keeps Werther confined to the town as he speaks through a monologue of letters. This confinement symbolizes how Werther is stuck in an arrested development in Wahlheim, which continues the motif of one-sidedness. Additionally, Schiffman adds, "It becomes easy to read the novel as a confession or a diary and to forget altogether the exchange that epistolary correspondence, by definition, guarantees" (433). Readers do not get to see anything outside of Werther's perspective. Silverman notes in his article that Goethe himself was recovering from a depressive infatuation with a woman betrothed to someone else.

In *500 Days of Summer,* this movie offers a case study of how Werther's story evolves in the twenty-first century. "This is the story of boy meets girl" is how the narrator begins *500 Days of Summer*. The narrator introduces Tom, who describes him as someone who "grew up believing he'd never be truly happy until the day he met the one." Right away, the narrator labels Tom as a romantic. The narrator claims, "This belief stemmed from early exposure to sad British pop music and a total misreading of the movie *The Graduate.*" Viewers can infer from the first impression of Tom that he overromanticizes and falls in love at first sight. When Summer first appears, the narrator confirms, "He knows almost immediately, she's who he's been searching for." As with Werther's relation to Lotte, Tom's relationship to Summer transforms when it is clear she is not looking

for a serious relationship. Tom and Werther know that they are getting into something that could hurt them. Still, because they tended to over-romanticize, they let themselves yearn for a relationship, ignoring that their lovers never intended to establish relationships in the first place.

Tom and Werther share several characteristics aside from the tendency to overromanticize their place in a potential partner's life. Despite being an architect, Tom is stuck at a dead-end job writing greeting cards, and it is evident that he longs for something more. Tom enjoys sitting at a park where he spends most of his time drawing the buildings. Werther is nearly exactly like Tom in this aspect. He, too, spends a lot of time in nature, painting under his favorite lemon trees. If Werther is Tuite's Ur-figure of the unrequited lover, I propose that Tom is a successor of Werther's tragic life. *500 Days* splits from the suicidal theme as Tom transitions from rejection into accepting himself. In a way, he experiences death several times throughout his story. The first occurs when Summer's guilt of pursuing another relationship behind Tom's back encourages her to tell him that they should stop seeing each other. After arguing about the specifics of his and Summer's relationship, Tom gets up to leave as she shouts, "Tom, don't go. You're still my best friend." The scene turns to slow motion, which gives the audience time to see Tom figuratively die inside at the thought of being her friend and nothing more. Towards the movie's end, Tom "kills" the old version of himself. After the breakup, Tom indulges in his grief and lies in bed, drinking liquor and eating junk food. However, by day 456, Tom decides to quit his job at the greeting card office after being relegated to writing condolence cards. He begins a new architecture career that symbolizes the end of Tom's Wertherian behavior with Summer.

Just as Werther commits suicide, Tom similarly eradicates his old self. This eradication begins when Tom gets out of bed and erases his chalkboard wall. He literally wipes away the chaotic wall filled with notes and papers, which one could argue, signifies his old messy self. We see Tom study and drop off his work at several jobs which shows how hard he is trying to improve and move on from Summer. He replaces the notes with a neat list of contending jobs and crosses them off as time passes. More significantly, he carefully draws a city on the board. The detail in this scene shows how Tom is now acting with calculation and not going through life according to his whims. He learns from his situation with Summer and finds his purpose independently. Tom differs from Werther because he reinvents himself instead of committing suicide. Tom's story does not end after his relationship with Summer. He continues to work to create his own meaning in life and overcomes depression.

Summer offers to remain friends with Tom, but he cannot accept it as he feels he has invested too much time and feelings in her. Just as Tom rejects being friends with Summer, Werther challenges Lotte's request to stay away and revisits Lotte. Tom, too runs into Summer again and rekindles a spark with her at a friend's wedding. Unfortunately, he later learns Summer is engaged after she invites him to a rooftop party. Similarly, Summer "kills" Tom during her rooftop party as she gives him false hope that she is open to starting a relationship with him again. The demotion to writing condolence cards and Summer's engagement are metaphors for Tom's death and foreshadow his life change.

Tom buries his suffering and relationship with Summer and starts a fresh new career. Tom and Werther show signs of depression as their characters aimlessly attempt to find a fulfilling career and relationship. Tom confides in his sister, Rachel, who offers him words of wisdom. Rachel reassures him: "Look, I know you think she was the one, but I don't...next time you look back, I really think you should look again." She is always there to set her brother back on the right path to reality. Wilhelm equally appears to give Werther advice: "I thank you, Wilhelm, for your kind sympathy, for your well-meant advice" (Goethe 77). Wilhelm and Rachel play a kindred role in connecting the audience to the character by giving them an exclusive pass to Tom and Werther's innermost thoughts. Wilhelm and Rachel provide the characters with honest advice that they may not want to hear but aid them in coming to terms with their reality.

Similar to *Werther, 500 Days* only tracks Tom's life. The movie is only told from his perspective, and viewers only see his friends, outings, and thoughts. The film specifically follows Tom's journey and pushes the audience to side with Tom's point of view. The director of *500 Days*, Marc Webb, purposefully juxtaposes the story out of chronological order. He uses a series of flashbacks and flashforwards, switching between the happy and miserable days of Tom and Summer's relationship. Viewers are taken on an emotional roller-coaster as the film builds up to the inevitable heartbreak in the rooftop party scene. The movie transforms into a split-screen of Tom's expectations versus reality. The audience sees that Tom hopes to get back together with Summer, but the reality screen tells the truth: Summer is engaged. Michael Weber, the writer of *500 Days,* explains why he chose to frame his story as an unconventional romantic comedy. He tells *Entertainment Weekly* writer Mary Sollosi, "The secret sauce, in some ways,

is that memory isn't linear, and the way you look back on things, it jumps around." The writers explain that many of the scenes from the movie were anecdotes taken from their individual experiences. Just as Goethe writes about events from his personal life in *Werther*, the writers of *500 Days* also projected their experiences. *Werther* and *500 Days* are based on actual events, show characters stuck in life, and demonstrate how consequential love can be to anyone involved in the relationship. On another note, both the movie and novel highlight how those in love view the world through rose-colored lenses.

Tom experiences the same happiness. After being intimate with Summer for the first time, Tom breaks out in a musical number. Tom walks to work as the world around him seems to move in his favor. People engage in a flash mob-style dance with him, and a cartoon bird even appears to exaggerate the bliss he is in. Francesca Minerva explains in her article, "Unrequited Love Hurts: The Medicalization of Broken Hearts Is Therapy, Not Enhancement," that "emotional responses such as euphoria, intense focused attention on a preferred individual, obsessive thinking about him or her, [and] emotional dependency" are all part of the beginning of a relationship (480). However, the happiness that Tom and Werther were experiencing can only be met by something of opposite and equal force—misery. After Tom's musical number is over, he enters the elevator to go to work, and the scene cuts to Tom exiting the elevator looking disheveled. Like Tom, Werther also took control of his life after his heartbreak. Werther had decided to end his life, but not before seeing Lotte one last time (95). As Werther arrives, he and Lotte share an intimate moment where he reads her poetry (96). Lotte suddenly cries in an outburst, and Werther joins her in grief. Lotte cries because she cannot return the love Werther gives to her and possibly because she loves him, too. He cries because he knows this is the last time he will ever be close to her again. He kisses her in a last desperate attempt, but his expectation of winning her over ends in the reality of Lotte kicking him out and exclaiming she will never see him again.

Tom's final meeting with Summer is equally painful. Tom goes to his favorite park, and to his surprise, Summer is there. She sits on the bench next to him as Tom congratulates her on her wedding. After exchanging cordial words, Tom confronts her: "You should've told me when we were dancing." Summer never gives him an answer on why she strung him along, but she admits that her belief in love has changed and that he was right to be a romantic. Summer and Tom exchange a teary-eyed look before she walks away. The tears expose Tom's feelings of mourning for what could have been, but also the sigh of relief from gaining closure after spending months in agony. Minerva believes that unrequited love is such a painful experience that it should be recognized as a medical condition. She describes unrequited love with an analogy: "Just as the brain in love releases 'good' chemicals that make us feel good, the rejected lover's brain also produces chemicals [that] make us feel miserable, if not desperate [and obsessed]" (480). In Frederick Miller's article, "Adolescent Transition: *Ordinary People* (1980), *Fly Away Home* (1996), and (500) *Days of Summer* (2009)," he recounts how *500 Days*' flashback sequence format "symbolizes the progression, fixation, arrests, and regression frequently seen in psychological development" (102). He explains that traumatic fixations from childhood affected how the relationship plays out. Both Summer and Tom experience childhood trauma from their parent's divorce, but they each process it in different ways, resulting in Summer finding it hard to believe in true love, and Tom growing up to be a romantic.

Unlike Tom, Werther never gets closure on his relationship. Goethe included Werther's suicide letter to Lotte in the novel, where he confesses his feelings to Lotte. Tuite explains the role that Werther's suicide note plays, "as the Goethe scholar David Wellbery notes, 'is not to communicate something to someone, but rather to make imaginatively accessible the tonality of a unique subjective experience'" (338). Readers get to see all of Werther's final thoughts in this note. It sets the reader in Werther's headspace as he prepares to end his life. He writes, "From this moment on you are mine, Lotte, mine" (105). Even in his final moments, Werther never gave up on his obsession for Lotte. Minerva ends her article by saying, "Sometimes people learn something important when they suffer for love, and sometimes they don't learn anything at all" (483). This sentence is relevant to Tom and Werther. Tom was able to rise again and create art through architecture, but Werther could not handle the rejection and was unable to produce any art as he settles on making a simple silhouette of Lotte instead of a portrait.

As each romantic story begins, one can usually guess the plot and infer that the main characters end up together. For *500 Days* and *Werther,* the probability of guessing where the stories go becomes less. One would not guess that Werther's story ends in suicide, or that Tom finds another potential relationship soon after Summer. After introducing Summer at the film's beginning, the narrator repeats, "This is the story of boy meets girl, but you should know upfront, this is not a love story" (*500 Days*). The ending of Tom's story concludes on an ambiguous note.

During his talk with Summer, she never tells him why she hid her relationship with someone else, why she let him be her impromptu date to their coworker's wedding, or what it was about him that was not enough to convince her that love is real. The only thing Tom learns is that this is just the way Summer is, "You just do what you want, don't you?" is his only response (*500 Days*). Later in the movie, Tom meets another woman. She states her name is Autumn, and Tom looks into the camera with a suggestive smile. The ending offers an array of interpretations. In Sollosi's interview, the writers and director have their own speculations. For example, Weber comments, "I think it's fun to think he makes all new mistakes on the next relationship" (Entertainment Weekly).

The vague endings leave much to wonder. The point of each tale is that love is not something that can be expected. Love is not always linear and sometimes takes many years of starting and ending romances before understanding that love is out of anyone's control. It is something that can be so beautiful yet excruciating and catastrophic. But unrequited love can also be learned from and retold to help others cope and know they are not alone. Unrequited love is a universal experience that people with vast differences and cultures like Werther and Tom will always endure. As the introduction to *Werther* notes, "draw comfort from his suffering and let this little book be your friend…if you can find none nearer" (Goethe 4). *Werther* and *500 Days* help us find better ways to address unrequited love and alienation. Such stories, though heartbreaking, give us an outlet to talk about anger and depression in productive ways. Goethe's social and romantic rejection themes continue to be reproduced in media and provide cathartic healing to anyone who has suffered the same misfortune as Werther.

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From Audrey Hepburn to Nicolas Cage; How Language and Dialect has Evolved in Movies

By Maegan Story

Maegan Story is a sophomore English major, a Rogers LEAD WT Scholar, an Attebury Honors Student, and is involved in the Baptist Student Ministry. After her anticipated graduation in 2025, Maegan plans on working in an editorial position at a publishing company. She enjoys reading, writing, and research. She wrote "From Audrey Hepburn to Nicolas Cage; How Language and Dialect has Evolved in Movies" for Academic Writing and Research and thoroughly enjoyed the process. She was drawn to research dialects and accents in movies because she wanted to better understand the correlation between how they are presented in media and how such linguistic factors shape audience perception.

In "From Audrey Hepburn to Nicolas Cage; How Language and Dialect has Evolved in Movies" the correlation between linguistic factors used in movies for character development and how we perceive such factors in real life is explored. The three movies, *Roman Holiday* (1953), *Valley Girl* (1983), and *Knives Out* (2019) were chosen for analysis due to their linguistic approach to character development and plots which center around class dynamics. Choosing movies from three distinctly different eras of film allowed for a wide scope through which to explore how linguistic factors have been used over time. This analysis is supplemented by survey results, these results show the average person's relationship and perception with the correlation between such linguistic factors and class. This topic is important because observational learning persists even in a fictional setting. Understanding more about influential movies helps us to better understand our own worldviews and those of others.

With the expanding presence of movies and television in our lives, it seems that the language used in these mediums we regularly consume can greatly affect how we perceive the world. In no medium is this as evident as in movies, as Paul Murphy explains in "Sociolinguistics in Movies: A Call for Research,": "A Hollywood director must attend to the minute details of everyday human interaction as he creates their semblance for the screen. Situational variables of nearly any sort have appeared on film and so has a correspondingly rich catalog of small-group and individual speech behaviors" (226). Because of this, I plan to investigate the sociolinguistic implications of the use of dialect and accents by analyzing three movies from three different eras: *Roman Holiday* (1953), *Valley Girl* (1983), and *Knives Out* (2019). This analysis will be supplemented with survey results, exploring the implications of such linguistic characteristics in movies and how they translate to real life. In all movies discussed, class plays a defining role in the plot and accents and dialects are used to highlight class differences.

Roman Holiday uses linguistic factors to illustrate class differences when Princess Ann, played by Audrey Hepburn, runs away from her royal responsibilities while in Rome and meets American journalist, Joe Bradley- played by Gregory Peck. In one of *Roman Holiday's* most famous scenes, Audrey Hepburn's character admits that she's run away from her responsibilities to Joe Bradley. This is a pivotal scene in the film as Joe decides that Ann should enjoy her newfound freedom and takes her to do all the things she's dreamed of. Ann's dialect is so precise in this conversation that she almost sounds robotic when she admits that on her day off she'd, "Like to sit at a sidewalk café, and look in shop windows- walk in the rain! Have fun and maybe some excitement!" When Hepburn delivers her lines, she seemingly pronounces each letter in a word, making them come together in the most proper way possible. In contrast to this, Joe's dialect comes off as slightly more down to earth since he incorporates fewer formal pronunciations. For example, he responds to Ann, "Tell ya what- why don't we do all those things, together?" Though the actors use dialects differently, they convey that their characters are well-educated people of high social and economic standing while also reminding the audience of their differences. Hepburn's character, above Joe in both class and linguistic demeanor, never looks down on him and he never treats her as superior. Though their dialects show the characters' potential to be divided by their differences, they are ultimately united by their similarities.

Later at a party, Joe and Ann meet an acquaintance of hers, a barber with a thick Italian accent. As more of a working man, the barber's accent is a foil to those of the two main characters. He says things like: "Why you not come dancing tonight with me? You should see, so nice!" and "If you come, you will be most pretty of all girl!" According to Julia Dobrow and Calvin Gidney as they write in their article titled, "The Good, the Bad, and the Foreign: The Use of Dialect in Children's Animated Television," "Language is a

powerful means of signaling social and personal identity. In fact, it is one of the principal means by which we distinguish members of our own and other communities. Our speech can provide indications of our age, ethnicity, gender identity, region of origin, and socioeconomic status," (107). While the barber is a minor character and not all these aspects are communicated through what little lines he has, he nonetheless represents a differing economic standing and nationality which has become increasingly sought out in movies today. The inclusion of characters with noticeably different nationalities and the representation of minorities helps to convey Ann and Joe's removal from the familiar and their experience with the novel while in Rome.

Though Ann is surrounded by this unfamiliarity with the ideas, concepts, and dialects presented to her, she never changes her manner of speaking. Unlike other movies in which a change in a character's dialect reflects their inner change, Ann's maintenance of her distinctive way of speaking reinforces her decision at the end of the movie to accept her responsibilities at the price of her freedom. This is shown to the audience in her dialect, which conveys how uncompromising she is in her values.

In *Valley Girl,* Deborah Foreman plays Julie, who lives a seemingly shallow life in the San Fernando Valley of California until she meets Randy at a party and, much to the disgust of her peers, soon falls in love with the bad boy from Hollywood played by Nicolas Cage. The 1983 movie offers a unique approach to investigating linguistic features with its young cast of characters and many different accents portraying polarized social classes. The movie begins with Julie's dialect being highlighted by the conversation between her and her friends with her admission, "It's like I'm totally not in love with you anymore Tommy." The line and its delivery illustrate typical characteristics ascribed to someone like Julie whose family is well off and lives in the valley. The movie portrays valley speak as a dialect used by a younger crowd who are caught up in shallow and materialistic ambitions as they are trying to compensate for their insipid personalities. Furthermore, Julie's dialect is shown as a learned trait as neither of her parents talk the way she does. This implies that the way she speaks is a conscious decision she made so that she'd be more likable, popular, or just to better fit in with her friends. When Julie meets Randy, she admits he "...For sure doesn't dress like my friends, or even talk like 'em." This is when she experiences the beginning of her growth as a character, keeping in mind how she's built her identity on the defining linguistic factors of a valley girl and yet likes Randy even though he's the antithesis of all of it. As Julie continues to spend time with Randy, she adopts some of his linguistic mannerisms. This is seen when Julie's friends try to dissuade her from hanging around Randy because they think it'll negatively affect her social standing to be seen with him. Julie shows her deviation from her class and geographical norm when she adopts Randy's coarse and direct way of speaking, momentarily abandoning her own dialect, to respond to her friends' bad advice.

In Allen Bell's "Language Style as Audience Design" published in the 1984 issue of *Language In Society,* he analyzes the external effects on linguistic features on the grounds that "linguistic variation correlates with variation in a speaker's class, gender, social network, and so forth," (145). Randy's influence on Julie is an external influence on her dialect and evidences her changing perception of the world around her as she shifts her identity away from what her peers expect of her and embraces her own way of looking at things, to which Randy acts as a catalyst. Bell states that: "We must not confuse the linguistic code with extralinguistic factors which may affect the code. Just as the so-called social axis is correlated with certain extralinguistic factors, so the 'style' axis should be correlated with genuinely independent variables," (145). To put his idea in context: one's linguistic style, which is the conscious decisions we make with our dialect, is constantly being influenced by unpredictable and even social variables. This could mean that one's dialect or accent has the potential to reveal much more about them than their education level or where they're from. In the movie, Julie's character arc exemplifies linguistic factors reflecting unseen influences and inner change as she grows in response to the situation. This is seen as she changes her mindset about popularity and shifts her focus away from shallow relationships to valuing deepening relationships above those she previously had with her friends and ex-boyfriend Tommy. In this change, we see Bell's theory in action. As for the real world, this indicates that the linguistic factors we possess can tell what we've allowed to influence us. It gives an insight into the colored lenses we see the world through, which make up the mosaic of our identities.

Knives Out offers an insight into class distinction when Harlen Thrombey, patriarch of an upper-class family, suddenly dies, leaving his family (played by Jamie Lee Curtis, Don Johnson, Toni Collette, and Chris Evens) and his caretaker Marta, (Ana de Armas) to grapple with his death which is investigated by southern detective Benoit Blanc, played by Daniel Craig. The cast of characters in the movie *Knives Out* offers many

linguistic factors for investigation. The most prevalent factor, however, is the contrasting dialectic manners of Linda and Marta. At only five minutes into the *Knives Out*, the characters' dialects reveal much about them. When Linda describes Marta in her police statement as a "Good girl. Hard worker. Family's from Ecuador" the audience gets the impression that Linda is authoritative and confident through her concise and clipped manner of speaking, which combined with her clear enunciation, makes everything she says seem like a prepared speech. Whereas Marta is portrayed as sympathetic and meek by her consistent soft tone and hushed pitch. Marta tends to speak with a gentle intonation, which makes her seem unsure of even her truthful statements. Marta acts as Linda's dialectical opposite, where Linda asks a question as a statement- because she thinks she already knows the answer- Marta allows her statements to become questions, likely because she is more used to listening rather than being listened to. The differing economic standings of Linda and Marta have influenced their perception of the world and the effect of which has trickled down to influence their dialects, too.

In his article published in *Anthropological Linguistics* called, "Sociolinguistics and Anthropology," author David Minderhout discusses the discipline of Sociolinguistics and his studies on dialect and class on the island of Tobago. He writes:

It occurred to me in my analysis both of the speech variables and of the social class of the speakers that the relationship might well be reversed. That is, the frequency of use of a speech feature could be used as a diagnostic tool to analyze the social class of a speaker. Instead of social class being used to measure linguistic usage, linguistic features should be taken as measures of social class (173).

In his findings he evidences the observable correlation between dialect and class, Minderhout asserts that "linguistic features" can be accurate "measures of social class." To put his idea in the context of *Knives Out*, Linda and Marta's dialects are used to emphasize their differences and further illustrate the power distribution in the group of characters. This power distribution is especially evident at the climax of the movie when Marta, the caretaker, is found out to be the sole beneficiary of Harlen's will.

Another important linguistic aspect of *Knives Out* is the accent of Detective Benoit Blanc. His southern drawl plays into the audience's expectation that he'll be a slow and daft detective and was used to add to the twist ending by subverting audience expectations. In the process of piecing the case together, Blanc articulates his thought process referencing that he "Spoke in the car about the hole at the center of this doughnut. And yes, what you and Harlen did that fateful night seems at first glance to fill that hole perfectly. A doughnut hole in a doughnut's hole. But we must look a little closer. And when we do, we see the doughnut hole has a hole in its center- it is not a doughnut hole but a smaller doughnut with its own hole- and our doughnut is not whole at all!" Blanc's accent in this monologue serves the additional purpose of setting him apart from the other characters and conveys his alternative mode of thinking, allowing us to hear that this character is very different from anyone else introduced in the movie.

In all three movies, it was a common theme that a character's dialect reflected their inner change or lack thereof. In *Roman Holiday* Ann never adopts her companion's slightly more relaxed way of talking, foreshadowing that she'll stay true to her royal roots and responsibilities. Julie's dialect changing in the movie *Valley Girl* helps to illustrate Randy's influence over her and her process of grappling with growing up and outgrowing ideas. Similarly to Ann, Marta's lack of dialectical change in *Knives Out* helps to convey her uncompromising honesty and ability to stay true to herself even when under intense scrutiny. Collectively these movies show that dialect and other linguistic factors are heavily influenced by our perception of the world and have the ability to reflect that to audiences.

In Allen Bell's "Language Style as Audience Design," he asserts that the speaker's dialect and pronunciation changes with audience perception in the quote, "Sociolinguistics has long since established that speakers can produce, and listeners perceive, very fine quantitative differences. It does not seem far-fetched to link the two and propose that a speaker's production of a level for a variable can occur in response to perception of an addressee's level for that variable..." Bell's stance can also be applied to my idea that one's dialect can change in response to changing perception, wherein one person is essentially acting as both the audience and the speaker.

In a survey that asked if dialects in movies helped to reflect real life, the majority of people surveyed agreed that they do, with a few saying variations of a movie's accuracy depended upon the actor's abilities which can either enhance the realism or ruin the whole effect. The most telling results from the survey, however, was when those taking it were asked if they believed they spoke with an accent and if they did what it says about them. Even when surveyees answered that they didn't speak with an accent, one admitted that they do speak with certain telling linguistic factors, which may possess

some correlation to class. This particular surveyee's awareness of how their dialect is correlated to class said that this knowledge comes from the perception that people from higher classes distance themselves from their dialect by omitting the use of slang. As Dobrow and Gidney observed, dialect is a way in which we distinguish or distance ourselves from certain communities and here we see an example of that happening (108). Additionally, in this survey answer we see Bell's theory that a speaker will adapt to their audiences' linguistic factors so that the "communicators have no problem using the ingroup's code" is also true in reverse: that a communicator will purposefully omit the linguistic factors of their audience to distance themselves from them. Furthermore, this idea is seen in Lila Abu-Lughod's research on the correlation between culture and television, in which she ties in her observations from her time in an Upper Egyptian village writing, "[A woman] distanced herself in moral language from what she perceived as a cultural difference between life here, in Upper Egyptian villages, and there, in Alexandria, Cairo, or other cities," (116). This idea that people are also using linguistic factors to make distinctions between themselves and others they view as not like them is similar to what we see in movies as dialect was used to both illustrate similarities and differences between characters.

Finally, when asked if there is currently a way to distinguish a person's economic standing based on their dialect, those who took the survey seemed to either think that there isn't a definitive way to distinguish a person's class based on their dialect or that it depended on the specific situation. This perceived weak correlation between dialect and class represents a very different stance than what is portrayed in movies as it is a common way to reinforce class-driven plots and an indicator of character development.

I initially believed that dialect would be a revealing element in both movies and real life, to show societal standards, gender roles, and class divides. While my research proves my initial belief was correct, what I didn't anticipate was just how integral dialects would be in driving and reinforcing character development in the movies I analyzed. This realization of how important and telling dialects are in movies led me to be even more surprised at the survey results as I believed they would reinforce the correlation I saw. Though the correlation is evident as Dobrow and Gidney write, "American dialects vary according to ethnicity, gender, and social class" it seems that this correlation is one that we may not be consciously acknowledging, however, I believe that this is a connection we acknowledge nonetheless as it contributes to our classification of people and communities (110). The movies analyzed convey a strong correlation between dialect and class and while the connection in real life is evident, it is not as overt as it's portrayed to be in movies.

The level of linguistic realism reflected in a movie can influence the message and the overall atmosphere that the characters exist in. If Hepburn had talked in any other manner in *Roman Holiday,* her progression as a character wouldn't have made sense to the audience; just as if Forman's character had not expressed discontent with how she and her friends lived their lives in *Valley Girl* through her changing linguistic patterns her growth as a character wouldn't have seemed important or necessary. In *Knives Out,* we see realistic linguistics in Marta's dialect expressing her hesitancy and uncertainty whereas these average attributes are not seen in the way the Thrombeys speak, affecting how the audience perceives the characters in relation to each other. In movies, audience perception is essential to a character's development and the message the audience takes with them after seeing the movie. This is important because these thoughts, feelings, and perceptions can be carried for a long time and allowed to influence someone's perception of the world, which in turn, affects their actions and behavior. We learn so much from watching others and that learning doesn't stop when something is fictional. Understanding how an aspect so important as dialects and accents in movies portray real life helps us better understand our and others' perceptions of the world. The correlation between linguistic factors and how characters are presented to us in movies versus how we feel about people in real life may not seem strong enough to seriously consider how this affects our outlook. However, since pop culture and how we choose to perceive things are such an important part of our daily life, the topic deserves consideration.

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Doré, Gustave (1832-1883), *The Fall of Satan.* (1866), Engraving for *Paradise Lost*.

"A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n."
(1.232-234)

John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667)

Religion & Milton

This section of Tracks pairs two essays on the great English poet John Milton: "'Lycidas': Milton's Growth in Critique" provides insightful historical context for the critique in the poem "Lycidas" towards the English Church. The second essay, "The Flowing Gold of her Loose Tresses Hid': Titillating Exegesis in *Paradise Lost*," explores Milton's use of (and the absence of) sexualized language to describe Adam and Eve's relationship.

“Lycidas”: Milton’s Growth in Critique

By Erin Lewis

Erin Lewis graduated in the year 2021 with a B.A. in English. Currently, they work as a Technical Writer in Aerospace and plan to continue writing within this field. What originally drew them to Milton was the description of the flowers in “Lycidas”. The first time they read these gorgeous lines, Erin wanted to explore the meaning of natural beauty being created and destroyed. They were later given the opportunity to explore this interest during their Capstone assignment. What began as studying flowers evolved into studying how a man cleverly and purposefully critiqued the Church using something that resonated with the congregation deeply: pastoral elegies.

Before the publication of “Lycidas,” Milton’s loyalty to the Church began to fade after King Charles’ ascendency. This was due to the Caroline ecclesiastical polity and their violent tendencies for regulation. Moreover, the Puritan narrative that Milton identified with was being replaced by a more Catholic one and through this, those in power also began to manipulate religious practices in a way that nursed power toward their own ideas of religion. Those that disagreed got punished. Being dissatisfied with the Church and receiving news that a member of the Church recently passed, Milton took this as an opportunity to call out the Church and its corruption.

For most modern readers of “Lycidas,” Milton’s work is an intricately woven piece of art. The poem’s structure is filled with imagery, pastoral scenes, and elements that serve as a memory of the late Edward King. It is well known that “Lycidas” was publicly written as a dedication to the premature death of King. The work highlights the aspects of him that remained, according to Milton, still righteous and God-fearing. The peom’s use of pastoral tradition meets a satirical style; drawing attention to how this tradition has overall lost its true meaning through the Church’s rule at the time. For Milton, the pastoral element within “Lycidas” was neither alien nor coincidental. He was closely acquainted with poetry of this kind, recognizing the pastoral as a basic approach to literary expression. Knowing this, the setting of “Lycidas” becomes more than an accessory to the poem, but rather a crucial component of its composition and style. Scholars have continuously discussed the actual relationship between Milton and King, providing evidence that they were either unlikely friends or lovers. Although, collectively, what has been overlooked in these conversations is what exactly King represented to Milton. King represented a once possible future version of him: a priest within the Anglican Church attempting to reform the Church from within. Regarding Milton’s severity of criticism, one may argue that “Lycidas” falls between his “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” written in 1629, and his “Eikonoklastes.” The former, being a scenic and conservative poem about Jesus’ birth, written while Milton was still studying to become an Anglican minister himself under the rule of King Charles, and the latter, a much more robust defense of the public execution of King Charles, written in support of a revolutionary Puritan government. This transition can be seen through how Milton utilizes the genre of the pastoral elegy, disguising his powerful claims through the portrayal of flowers and shepherds, to criticize both the Church and, ironically enough, the pastoral elegy.

To understand this shift in tone, we must first acknowledge that Milton’s loyalty to the Church began to fade after Charles’ ascendency due to his dissatisfaction with the Caroline ecclesiastical polity and their violent tendencies for regulation. Mainly, this disdain was due to the Puritan narrative and traditions that Milton identified with being replaced by more Catholic traditions. The key advocate of King Charles’ religious reforms was William Laud, a clergyman in the Church of England, appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by Charles I in 1633. During his time, Laud used religion to justify the acts of King Charles when the people disagreed. He manipulated religious practices and scripture in a way that nursed power toward his ideas of religion, not bothering to hear those around him. As Elizabeth Sauer explains in her essay, “Milton and Caroline Church Government,” Milton saw the clergy to be corrupted and at the height of their power “in 1636–37 when Laud reigned... and [he] saw the public torture of three Puritans” (203). Bastwick, Prynne, and Burton were these three puritans, damned to public humiliation due to their comments on the “innovations” made to the Church orders by Laud. As previously stated, Sauer describes this public display as an “act of humiliation” (203). However, it’s important to note that all three men were pilloried [1] and, unfortunately for Prynne, the “remaining parts of his ears were sawed off and his cheeks [were] branded” due to the severity of his earlier punishment of already having his ears cropped in

1 “A means for exposing one to public scorn or ridicule.”

1633 for his anti-episcopal writings (Sauer 202). While being pilloried is a lighter punishment in comparison to what occurred to Prynne, his severe torture was the result of multiple publications, one of them being the "Breviate of the Prelates Intolerable Usurpations" in 1637. As it happens, the opening of the pamphlet contains Ezekiel 34. 2-3: 'Thus saith the Lord God unto the Shepherds of Israel that doe feed themselves: Should not the Shepherds feed the Flock? Yee eate the fat, and yee clothe you with the wool, yee kill them that are fed, yee feed not the Flocke'(*King James Version*). This verse calls the Church out directly, using conventional Christian pastoral imagery, indicating Pyrnne's awareness of their hypocrisy. Milton performs a similar critique within "Lycidas," focusing on idolatry; he transforms it into something that is, instead, a critique of concepts and devotion to certain figures. Later providing a pastoral scene that ticks off all the boxes: nature, grazing sheep, and shepherds yet matching it with a contrasting narration, Milton reveals the truth he sees within the misplaced values of the Church and how they have manipulated certain practices to gain more power.

As aforementioned, Charles' ascendancy led to Laud being appointed power. Along with this came the introduction of a power dynamic within the Church that Milton's Puritan identity opposed, seeing that it placed a human hierarchy within the worship of God. For example, Ian Atherton, in his article, "Cathedrals, Laudianism, and the British Churches," states that "... puritan critics of cathedrals denounced them as bastions of popery..." and furthers this by mentioning that Bishop David Lindsay of Edinburgh had defended the ceremonies in print with the sole purpose of these ceremonies and cathedrals to be that of status (897-899). Using the pre-established authority of religion, Laud and other bishops, under the rule of King Charles I, were able to reform and tend to their agenda. Amalgamating this with the public display of torture furthers the damage to the conceptualized loyalty Milton would have had to the Church due to his ties with Puritan beliefs. He could easily place himself within the role of each of the victims. It is shortly after this public torture that Milton decides to reject this idea of pursuing ministry, later recalling this resistance to the bondage of the Church because he refused to take the clergy's orders (Sauer 199). This continuation of refusal to hear criticism met with intense punishment is exactly what Milton chooses to highlight within "Lycidas." By placing the clergy within the role of shepherds just as Pyrnne had done, Milton exposes their failure to imitate God and their overall abuse of power.

Definition from "Pillory Definition & Meaning.", Merriam-Webster

This combination of a Church's crumbling appearance and King's death provides Milton with a strange opportunity to face his transitioning beliefs. But first, to understand this poem as a moment of transition, we must also understand what King meant for Milton. Scholars such as Michael Gadaleto in his article, "Who Would Not Sing for Lycidas," argues that the only true evidence critics possess for this famous literary relationship is the poem's headnote describing Lycidas as "a Learned Friend" (155). While Bruce Boehrer in his work, "'Lycidas': The Pastoral Elegy as Same-Sex Epithalamium," states that there are moments of romantic imagery within "Lycidas" that depict Milton and King to have been lovers. In regards to Gadaleto's argument, the contents of "Lycidas" contain little to no praise or personal references in comparison to the other poems written by friends and colleagues of King for his memorial. Although, it is arguable that these are not crucial for a poet's feelings to be genuine. However, the poetic style of "Lycidas" conspicuously contrasts with that of the other poets in a way that "raises pastoral directness and plainness over the [*Justa*'s] 'poetry of tears' and its elaborate baroque contortions" (Gadaleto, 157). This observation only furthers the idea that "Lycidas" not only served as a tribute to King's life on the surface but also as a personal narrative of Milton's dance with religion and mortality when looking closer. However, the larger point being missed in this conversation is what King represented for Milton: a potential version of what he might have become.

Taking into consideration the similarities between King and Milton, their age, and the pursual of the same career path within the Church — a man who dies young and unfulfilled — places Milton in a space to seriously reflect on life's fragility. Notably, King was a figure within the English Church at the time of his death while Milton was pondering the idea of growing further within the Church or dedicating himself to the life of a poet. Still, it is important to note that Milton identified more with Puritan values than he did with the new Laudian rule within the Church, causing his religious growth to become stunted. It is because of this that the narrative created within "Lycidas" appears as polemical writing, writing that criticizes the clergy using careful symbolism and pastoral references. This factor becomes a driving force towards the argument that King and Milton were unlikely friends. Although, if this were to be the case, then the question remains as to why Milton would write such a beautiful poem that memorializes someone that he despises. Again, it was not the

closeness shared with King, but what King represented to Milton: someone whose values, career goals, and future resembled such a strong likeness to his own.

Beginning to look at the religious similarities between King and Milton, both men, at the time of King's death, were currently considerable figures within the Church with two different sets of ideals. However, the Laudian's new perspective on Church worship had again affected the nation as well as a youthful Milton. Seeing as Milton grew up mainly Puritan, the continuation of Laud appointing his own men and repressing Calvinist predestinarian doctrine[2] and Puritan efforts to reform the Church and government becomes controversial regarding Milton's documented stance on religion. This being said, for Milton, King began to represent a version of himself that he could've been. As Gadaleto explains, King represented an unfortunate victim of powerful institutions such as the Laudian Church and Cambridge University, institutions which were meant to nurture and protect promising young scholars, but which finally, in Milton's view, corrupted and betrayed him (161). This representation, in the eyes of Gadaleto, furthers the idea that these similarities are not powerful enough to mark King and Milton as friends. In fact, Gadaleto claims that King "represents certain religious, political, and cultural commitments that Milton oppose[ed] in 'Lycidas'" (160). These cultural commitments regard that of ornamentation, ecclesiastical careerism, and the seeking of royal patronage. On the other hand, critics such as Bruce Boehrer state the opposite, describing "Lycidas" to be an "erotic fantasy" based on an in-depth reading of the poem itself. Both readings are meritable, which makes the speculation about King and Milton's relationship even more mysterious and interesting. However, these readings also reveal that there is simply not enough textual or historical evidence to truly uncover the nature of that relationship, and the conclusions found within them rely too much on assumptions about Milton's personal feelings toward King. Moreover, the focus relies mainly on what King represented for Milton: King was a vision of Milton's future self within a Church that, Milton felt, had abandoned and betrayed him. Therefore, King is the catalyst through which Milton channels his personal political and religious evolution from docile reformer to polemical revolutionary.

Considering this, Prynne's work begins to serve as a helpful guide to the leading contributor to the corruption found within the transforming Church and demonstrates one of the key factors resulting in Milton's disdain toward the Church: idolization and the way

it was performed. Referencing Exodus 20:3-5, it is known that there is a prohibition against the worship of other gods and, specifically, of graven images. Commonly, this would place Milton with the Puritans that understood any idolatry that pertains to worship to either represent the true God or some sort of falsehood. Matching this with the traditions of Catholicism: mass, clerical vestments, and religious statues and images would cause any Puritan to become weary of the changes that unfolded within the Church. This idolization and ornamentation reach farther than just physical objects for Milton, however. As Barbara Lewalski explains in her piece, "Milton and Idolatry," "God is incomprehensible" and "attach[ing] divinity or special sanctity to any person, pope, king, or to any human institution, was idolatry" (214). This meant that Milton's focus was not just on the stained glass and statues of Mary adorning the spaces of worship. Milton saw idolization within the figures of the Church, within Laud, and his refusal to allow change that did not serve himself.

An example of Milton displaying this belief against idolization and ornamentation other than the contents of "Lycidas" can be found in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" which he wrote in 1629. Within it, Milton portrays both nature and himself being led by music and glorious imagery, "That glorious Form, that Light insufferable" (8) to visualize Christ's second coming. The following passages focus on the senses being engaged by the astounding environment that surrounds the speaker. This, in turn, emphasizes the awe that the holy spirit possesses and begins to demonstrate how easy it may become for one to grow accustomed to seeing what is holy instead of feeling it. However, lines 165-166, "And then at last our bliss / Full and perfect is" reestablishes that this visual attraction is not needed. Here, Milton finalizes his belief that God is perfect as is, and that this all-consuming awe is only apprehensible through death. There is no need for ornamentation or to idolize something that is physical, for it is not

true to its representation. He furthers this in the passages before, "speckl'd vanity / Will sicken soon and die" (136-137), reinforcing the idea that these objects are nothing compared to what they are attempting to stand for. Lewalski describes these earlier passages as "iconoclasm" (215), that Milton is identifying these presented idols and breaking them down until they are nothing. Milton takes these idols, "the yellow-skirted Fayes" and paints the image of them leaving, "Fly after the Night-steeds, leaving their Moon-lov'd maze" (235-236). By doing so, Milton solidifies his idea that these

2 "The belief that God not only chooses some for salvation, but he also "devotes" others to damnation." Definition from David Luebke's, "The Doctrine of Double Predestination: A Summary."

idols are not immortal. They will leave, all the same, abandoning those that lay at their feet without remorse. These idols pertain to false promises – distractions. They will eventually lead those that follow astray, just as the Church and its members currently do.

Almost ten years later, "Lycidas" is published, shedding light on the very same ornamentation witnessed within the Church. However, what is important to note here, is the tone of the criticism being shared. The icons within Milton's "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" are subdued in a manner that reinforces the act of maintaining good relations with the Church and the public. Comparing the iconoclasm within both these poems identifies "Lycidas" as possessing a much more intense and purposefully jarring criticism. An example of this is the infamous line, "Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread" regarding the sheep that are being kept by the shepherds, or, in Milton's case, the members of the Church (127). This line evokes both imagery and smell, depicting a horrific waste occurring to innocent animals due to the neglect of their owner. However, in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," the shepherds' sheep are "all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep" (Milton 92). The contrast between these two lines is striking. Not only does Milton carry on the same pastoral writing as he did in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," but he does so in a way that is impossible to go unnoticed. The writing is damning in a more explicit tone in "Lycidas," as Milton no longer worries about keeping peace with the Church.

Taking this tone shift into account, "Lycidas" becomes more than just a monody[3]. It becomes a conscious work of art, a personal reflection from Milton on life, death, and religion. Using delicate imagery, Milton invites us to read traditional floral images within the 'standard' understanding of the pastoral genre and its ability to help us grieve the cycle of life. However, a deeper reading of the images reveals criticism of the Church and its ability to provide "rebirth" into heaven. An example of this is in Milton's first line, "Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more" (1), which is followed by the later line, "I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude" (3). At first glance, this appears to be a basic pastoral scene. The speaker is greeting some flowers, announcing that "once more" they are coming to pluck away the berries that have grown to create funeral arrangements to honor the death of Lycidas. The pastoral environment within an elegy serves to embellish the intensity of grief that contrasts the angelic atmosphere and cycle of life in which death disrupts it. It is meant to provide comfort due to its reference to religious imagery, enforcing the idea that death is just a passage into the next life. The use of "laurel" here is purposeful, for when the plant is presented within an arrangement, it represents triumph - a victory, as one now has achieved eternity. However, here, the act of removing such berries equates to the act of removing this sense of salvation, or a true tie to religion. This is because one must pluck the berries of a laurel before using it as decoration, for the berries are dark and needless when it comes to aesthetics. Yet the berries are the seeds in which the plant would continue to grow, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11). Tearing away this inward growth that later sprouts and blossoms into something natural and free causes the laurel to become a true decoration, a stagnant object that is no longer adhered to the natural world. It serves as a reminder that the person being mourned is gone, just as the plant is the moment one removes it from the soil and rids it of any seeds. Removing the "needless" ornamentation of the berries also reveals the facade of the Church. Ridding the laurel of them allows the speaker to encounter the deadness that is truly beneath. For although it is still said to represent something holy, the part of it that truly does is no longer attached. The comfort that should be provided by religious sentiment is gone. It is separated and forgotten, while the dead leaves of the laurel will, instead, be focused upon and undoubtedly shrivel up and crack.

This involvement of the speaker with what is naturally grown and what is not serves as a mirror of the Laudian rule to emphasize Milton's overall disdain towards it. Again, it is important to note Milton's stance upon such ornamentations — that it was not just the aesthetics that he despised, but also the figures that represented religion upon Earth. "Plucking your berries" also resembles Milton's previous acts of disassembling the ornamentation of religion within "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." The line, "Apollo from his shrine" indicates something holy leaving the manmade implications placed upon it, inherently causing this "shrine" to become meaningless (Milton 176). During the time of "Lycidas," Laudianism was established on the idea that salvation was something that could be won by good deeds and that it was something that contributed more to the physical world. As Martin Evans explains in his work dedicated to John Milton, "the only way to achieve salvation [in the eyes of Puritans] was through the God-given gift of faith" (156). This focus on creating things that appeared visually holy inherently steered away from the belief

3 "An elegy or dirge performed by one person."
Definition from "Monody Definition & Meaning.", Merriam-Webster

that salvation pertained to a personal connection with God because it placed a distraction between the two. The similarity between the speaker and what Laud had continuously done to the Church is simply coincidental, seeing that the Speaker would correctly bury their deceased friend, Lycidas, in the proper way of their beliefs. Therefore, Milton performs this act of interference only to honor the unfortunate passing of a beloved friend and to highlight the sorrow that is experienced when acknowledging what this decoration truly is.

This emotional strain is experienced and emphasized within the following lines. As the poem continues, Milton writes, "myrtles brown, with ivy never-sear," expanding on the sentiment of nature that surrounds the speaker and their decaying state (2). Again, the plant that is chosen is purposeful. Myrtles are shrubs, like laurels, that represent love. Depicting these myrtles to be "never-sear" indicates that this "love" has withered, that it has been harmed in some sense. This act of "pluck[ing]... berries harsh and crude" is more than just the removal of something that is grown naturally from within an individual, it is aggressive, "harsh," and "crude." I am also positive critics like Boehrer would raise awareness of the obvious connection between a dying love and the death of King regarding the meaning of myrtles. However, I again propose that this symbolism ties to the love found within salvation/the clergy. By having the speaker remove what is still alive, blossoming, and growing from a plant that is surely withered away, Milton is suggesting his views on what Laudianism has continued to have done to the faith. This speaker claiming that collecting these flowers with "forc'd fingers rude," demonstrates this unwanted dynamic (Milton 4). Being "forc'd" to remove these flowers for the sole purpose of the burial of Lycidas brings Milton pain, as the act is unwanted, and the flowers are dying. The only meaning these future arrangements have in reference to Milton is what they represent for Lycidas, for in Milton's eyes, they are just dead flowers.

The loss of salvation due to the misguidance of the Church finds itself in the line, "shatter your leaves before the mellowing year" (Milton 5). The visual verbiage here, 'shatter,' pushes the reader to see the full destruction inflicted on a plant, a common symbol established as representing salvation or personal connection with one's creator. This is important when viewing the following phrase, "before the mellowing year," an obvious reference to the unexpectedness of King's death and death in general. Together, these two lines illustrate an immediate and unexpectedness for Milton. There is a sense of unpreparedness that Milton blames solely on the clergy. As Neil Forsyth states in his essay, "'Lycidas': A Wolf in Saints Clothing" the teachings of the current Church "created enormous anxiety" as "no one really knew whether he or she belonged to the chosen elite" (687). Milton found himself in a place of anger when it came to Puritanism and the current Laudianism conversion. On one hand, Puritanism believes that salvation is something God can only give to you, that believing in Jesus and participating in the sacraments were not enough to affect one's salvation, and that salvation is not chosen by the believer or awarded, for it is the privilege of God alone. At the same time, Laudianism was preaching that salvation was something that could be bought and won. It was because of this that Milton detested the hierarchical power of the Church. The shock of King's death and the revelation that it evoked within Milton was due to the corrupted clergy and their interference with people's devotion to God. Therefore, the phrase, "mellowing year" transforms into a futuristic peacefulness that one might obtain if the leaves were not shattered. Without the interference of the Church, one might be able to obtain true salvation, to blossom fully as the natural world intended.

Milton begins to dissect the underlying means of corruption within the Church, directing his audience to a desperate desire to accumulate money, power, and an attractive outward appearance in lines 78-79. Here, Milton writes, "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil / Nor in the glistering foil." Again, Milton draws from the concepts of naturalism and ornamentation. These lines claim that fame is not something that can be truly gained through a mortal life. It is only awarded in death. He then adds the line, "glistering foil" which references a glittering structure alluding again, to the idea of embellishment. This statement is powerful in the sense that Milton is telling the Church directly, stating his beliefs in a way that predetermines their failure at achieving such selfish awards. Continuing to the line, "Set off to th'world, nor in broad rumor lies / But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes" (Milton, 80-81), these lines draw attention to the same theme of righteousness, that "fame" is not found through false claims. Here, Milton is declaring that the rule of Laudianism has done this. It has twisted scripture in a way that suits them better than what Milton believes to be the truth. This "fame" or "salvation" that the Church is apparently after is only obtained through those with "pure" eyes. They will never reach this fame because just as the plucking of the berries has shown — beneath their ornamentation and corruption is nothing. These lines point to the salvation that is promised within the clergy and the unbecoming

truth that is offered instead. According to Milton, following the Church is a meaningless waste of time. It will not offer you true "fame" because that fame is only awarded in Heaven and by God.

Milton's separation from Laudian rule lies within the appearance of nature and its state when viewed. The following line "With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown," indicates thyme and vines that are beginning to outgrow themselves, they are no longer being controlled (Milton 40). King's death pushed Milton to see the infection of the Church. Its lust for power and wealth lying beneath the lie of salvation was inside both men. It was not until King's death that Milton began to outgrow this lie, to outgrow the control of the Church. However, in their article, "Who is Lycidas," Louis Martz points out that, "Despite the hints of sorrow and death, created nature is a place of comfort and rest..." (184). This idea of comfort and rest opposing the darker themes within "Lycidas" connects directly with the fact that Milton was utilizing the popularity of pastoral tradition at the time of its publication. Beginning with "the glowing violet," this later–mentioned burial scene is full of specifically named flowers to adorn the body of Lycidas, furthering Milton's personification of nature (145). The "glowing violet," however, represents faithfulness according to Lee Jacobus in their article, "'Lycidas' in the 'Nestor Episode'" (192). This faithfulness, in the eyes of Milton, may be tied to the blind faithfulness King had continued to have to the Church during his life. Additionally, "The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet" (Milton 144). It can be noted that the pansy flower is a symbol of freethought, seeing that it derives its name from the French word *pensée*, which means "thought." Allegedly, it also received this name because the flower resembles a human face, and in mid-to-late summer it nods forward as if deep in thought, something that, at this time, Milton cherished.[4] Opposingly, King was unable to think this freely due to the influence of the Church. The specific colors of a pansy — yellow, purple, and white — are also meant to symbolize memories and loving thoughts — all of which are more than appropriate for a funeral.[5] Although, drawing attention to the description of these flowers within this line, "freak'd with jet" depicts a spotting overtaking the petals. This may represent an illness or infection brought on by a parasite, a common theme that Milton includes throughout "Lycidas" — this rotting from within. Or, perhaps, the flowers are personified in a way that signifies this abnormal coloring to be a representation of their mournful states. Overall, this section continues a theme of Milton's, this mirroring of bringing meaning to things that are not directly tied to what they apparently represent. By doing so, Milton emphasizes the meaninglessness of the ornamentation that Laud's rule enforces. Although these flowers are beautiful, they offer no ability to console a mourning Milton. They cannot heal the wounds brought on by death nor can they can provide ease to the eyes. This is something only God can do.

We are brought back to the line, "The musk-rose, and the well attir'd woodbine," (146). The woodbine flower is a type of honeysuckle that vines. It is known to be very fragrant and carries colors like the pansy.[6] Both flowers combined are extremely fragrant and pertain to love. Although, Jacobus explains that this "erotic image" from the appearance of the rose may have been "somewhat attenuated in Milton" (192). However, in this instance the "musk rose" is known to hold white petals. This coloring separates it from the traditional connotations of the colors red and pink: love and romance. As Jacobus previously expressed, the symbolism of the rose here is diluted in comparison to its common usage. However, I disagree. Milton, as he does with all his symbolism throughout "Lycidas," purposefully chooses this rose due to its meaning of purity, innocence, and remembrance.[7] Doing this excludes King from the criticism of the Church that develops within "Lycidas," continuing the idea that Milton truly saw some version of himself within King. King was just another victim of the Church's misguidance.

This pastoral narrative shifts, however, as Milton announces the death of Lycidas. Milton states in lines 45-46 mourn for Lycidas, saying, "As killing as the canker to the rose / Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze." Again, Milton addresses the inner corruption of the Church through the imagery of nature. Both lines involve parasites that affect the outward appearance of their hosts. A cankerworm produces a canker within the blossom upon feeding on it and a taint worm infects the cow's body.[8] This means that, according to Milton, King's life is more than the unfortunate event of someone passing. For Milton, King's death is an awakening, a call to evaluate what Milton truly thinks of his salvation and the Church. Not only is King's death a tragedy, but it is parasitic, an infestation that manifests within Milton constantly. However, by threading these beautiful flowers with an inward rot, Milton also exposes his idea that these idols and the Church both contain nothing more than death from within. What once appeared as a beautiful, holy place for believers has

4 Pansy section within the *Plant Encyclopedia* on Better Homes & Gardens

5 Pansy section within the *Plant Encyclopedia* on Better Homes & Gardens

6 Woodbine section within the *Plant Encyclopedia* on Better Homes & Gardens

7 Rose section within the *Plant Encyclopedia* on Better Homes & Gardens

8 Lee Townsend's *Cankerworms*

developed into something foul in the eyes of Milton. This imagery paints a vivid picture of something delicately beautiful beginning to shape into something devastatingly foreign.

This infestation takes on a different meaning in the lines, "Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep / Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas?" (Milton 51-52). As King was a follower of the Church, his salvation was something completely unknown to Milton, perhaps even unreceived due to the differences in their beliefs. Because of this, a sense of responsibility goes unaccounted for, and Milton expresses this through the image of the nymphs. He goes on to write, "`Had ye bin there'--for what could that have done?" mocking the Church's own belief in their power in a way that makes it clear that it is still beneath that of God's (57). If the Church could promise their followers the gift of salvation, a gift that Milton thought only God could give, how could they not prevent an innocent, young man from dying so tragically? This question is not directly answered, except by the possibility that fame, that 'last infirmity of noble mind,' might give a better return on investment in the Church's eyes (Forsyth 694). This attaches itself again to the idea that ornamentation and even outward appearance appears to be the focus of the Church. However, this focus is meaningless because it offers one nothing but empty structures. Just as removing the berries from the laurel caused it to become a lifeless, hollow thing, living a life dedicated to physical possessions, power, and appearance contains nothing applicable to an afterlife.

The tone shift in Milton's criticism towards the Church's rule is especially heavily applied within the pastoral imagery of the shepherds and in the lines, "The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed, / But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw, / Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread" (Milton 125–27). Critics such as Bruce Boehrer, Gadaleto, and Neil Forsyth have also extensively analyzed the role of the shepherd in "Lycidas," however. Bruce Boehrer views this role as something intimate, almost domestic, between the two, highlighting the traditional delicate light of the pastoral tradition, "It performs the act of wedlock... celebrat[ing] the union of God and Humanity" (223). In contrast, Gadaleto and Neil Forsyth see the representation of sinners and saints through the usage of sheep and shepherds. Forsyth draws attention to how the shepherds of Milton and Lycidas reveal "the frustration of a sincere shepherd in a corrupt church" (691). Agreeing with Gadaleto and Forsyth's argument, this role shows to have been incorporated to chastise the Church and its rule, lacking the

previous circumlocute found within "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity."

Beginning with the role of the shepherd is referenced through the lines where, "under the opening eyelids of the morn" the speaker and King "... drove a field" (Milton 26-27). Here, the act of "[driving] a field" equates to the flock of sheep shepherds have responsibility over. One could argue that this scene is a representation of the similarities between Milton and King, that each man sought out righteousness and took their positions within the Church seriously. This idea is furthered through the line, "For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill," emphasizing again, that Milton and King were both notable believers of the Church. This use of the shepherd's role ties to previous acts of Milton, highlighting the use of idols and figures to advertise one thing, yet perform another. Notably, the passage that includes pastoral imagery of shepherds remains light and tranquil, matching its traditional form. Furthermore, Lycidas and the speaker remain responsible throughout the lines as well, taking care of their flock as they should, "Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night" (Milton 29). Here, Milton and King's similarities serve a purpose. Seeing that Milton writes this passage in a way that presents them as responsible shepherds, one can conclude that, in Milton's eyes, King and him were separate from the Church through their youth and moral righteousness. They were not actively seeking power, money, or status. Their minds were simply focused on following the rules of the faith. As Forsyth explains in this passage, it "moves us between what the imagination can offer and what reality actually consists of" (691). Seeing that they both were able to see what their purpose was as shepherds, to lead their flock away from danger and to protect them, they only assumed their fellow Church leaders would do the same.

Milton gradually begins to call out the authoritative Church members' behavior after some floral passages. Emphasizing the labor that is tethered to the role of a shepherd, Milton makes sure to open a stanza with the lines, "Alas! what boots it with incessant care / To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade" (64-65) By incorporating these lines, Milton is reminding the Church of the true role of the shepherd. He is not directly tying them to the symbolization of shepherds as he did earlier within himself and King but as the prime examples of what a shepherd should not be. It is laborious work to be righteous, to see that those that follow the Church are not doomed. Milton then goes on to say, "Were it not better done, as others use / To sport with Amaryllis in the shade / Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair" (67-69). Here, Milton describes actions of lust and

relaxation. Both the names Neæra and Amaryllis are also names well-known within erotic pastoral poetry at the time. Instead of keeping their promise of "incessant care," these authoritative leaders are instead tangling themselves with lovers in the shade, or simply stated, sinful behavior in the eyes of Milton. It is extensively clear that this use of pastoral imagery throughout this passage derives from Milton's outrage towards the danger posed by Laudianism to England's Church and hence to vulnerable contemporaries like King himself (Gadaleto 179). By exposing the actions of the Church, Milton returns to this act of tearing down idols. Represented as shepherds through a pastoral tradition, the current members of the Church are false idols. They do not carry out the responsibilities that they should.

The introduction of the Pilot of the Galilean Lake who alludes to Saint Peter then delivers a condemnation dedicated to Laudian power. Here, St. Peter indicates that it is due to the interrelated problems of bad pastorship, "The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed, / But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw, / Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread" (Milton 125–27). This is clearly because those in leadership positions within the Church, academy, and even arts have become drowned in their own corruption. Through these lazy and selfish shepherds comes a wave of destruction and malice that affects those that innocently follow them through the rope of trust. These lines are damning, lacking any sort of sympathy regarding the members of the Church. The "hungry sheep look up," the followers of the Church follow blindly, seeking comfort and salvation. Yet, they are not fed. They are left to be outwardly harmed by the winds, by the natural pains of life. Not only do they suffer outwardly, they "rot inwardly." Without true salvation, these members of the Church can offer nothing to their followers and are to blame for the isolation felt within the death of Lycidas through the poem.

As Milton began his college education towards becoming a priest in the Anglican Church, King's unfortunate death proved to be the perfect opportunity for Milton to explore and consider his vocation. Exposing the constant neglect of the Church led by their sinful desire to achieve power, money, and worldly fame mislead followers of the Church. This greed also cost followers their salvation. The infamous lines, "The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed, / But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw, / Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread", offer a stunning escalation of critical rhetoric in comparison to the glittering imagery found within "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." This act is on purpose, for Milton knows eyes will be upon this written dedication made to King. Making an obvious connection to figures within the Church and shepherds calls out the Laudian rule, revealing to them that a once-follower is fully separated from them and their current ideals. Just as Prynne's previous work may have influenced Milton, Milton's work becomes a voice for those unable to speak, or in Edward King's case, for those that it became too late. The pastoral elegy works as a genre due to its emphasis on rebirth, focusing on the cycle of seasons. Although winter comes to freeze and kill what is naturally grown, spring and warmth emerge to restore it once again. However, Milton refuses this comfort to the audience reading "Lycidas" because this version of himself that King once represented is not returning. The burial of Lycidas is a burial for Milton's old self, the self that countered disagreement in subtle ways hidden within imagery and prose. "Lycidas" is Milton unashamedly voicing his transitioning beliefs to people he once found comfort and identity within. He refuses to be, in his eyes, a false shepherd or, undoubtedly, a sheep that rots from within.

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"The Flowing Gold of Her Loose Tresses Hid": Tittillating Exegesis in *Paradise Lost*

By Jonah Dietz

Jonah Dietz lived in Germany for 13 years before returning to Texas in 2018 to attend WTAMU. (The thought behind returning to the states after a life in Europe was that to study English-language literature, it would be best to study in the English language.) Dietz graduated in 2021 with a mind stuffed full of great literature, expert opinions on it, and–after his capstone paper–a passionate fascination with John Milton and his magnum opus, ready to begin my life as an author. He now lives paycheck to paycheck working for the City of Amarillo. His greatest ambition has always been to create meaningful literature.

This essay looks at the concept of how one might imbue a poem with holy meaning and Milton's careful and often counterintuitive execution of it. His use of veils to smooth out the wrinkles of his human retelling of a holy story is an epic and paradoxical device, which, in both intended and accidental ways, reminds us of human limitations, the mysteries of art and the elusive nature of truth.

"Eve Undeckt, save with herself more lovely fair / Then Wood-Nymph, or the fairest Goddess feign'd / Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove, / Stood to entertain her guest from Heav'n; no vaile / Shee needed, Vertue-proof, no thought infirme alterd her cheek" (4.380-385). This is one of the many instances in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where the first humans, naked and perfect, are described by way of a referential veil. Here it is Eve, who, entertaining a holy guest, finds no shame in her undecked state. At the same time, the reader is held at arm's length regarding the intimacies of her appearance. Upon investigation of other descriptions of Adam and Eve's unrobed state and Milton's many allusions to metaphysical clothes within this poem, a fascinating question arises. On its own, it may sound distressingly licentious, but when fully explored I believe it gives us insight into not only how Milton viewed language, but how humanity deciphers it. The question is: Why doesn't Milton describe the holy couple's genitals?

Though a common misconception exists regarding the language and poetry of centuries past, evidence that it was as lewd and sexually oriented as today abounds. A significant portion of the literature contains carnal puns, rude allusions and many times, divulging and explicit images of genitalia and the various acts these can perform. For example, Vicar Robert Herrick, author of the much-loved carpe diem poem "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time," had many verses that spoke about his lover's bodily beauty. In a poem entitled "Upon Julia's Breasts", he tells her to "Display thy breasts, my Julia, there let me / Behold that circummortal purity" (1,2), before describing how he will nestle his lips between them. "Upon Julia's Nipples" was another possible example.

Stories of the 17th century and the centuries that preceded *Paradise Lost* were full of naked women, exposed bodies, and sex. Even within the community of the pious, the talk of genitalia was not taboo. Saint Augustine of Hippo in his theological book *The City of God*, speaks on the intricacies of Adam and Eve's genitalia, going into detail when theorizing on the prelapsarian hymen and phallus. Not to mention the various paintings of the very naked Adam and Eve lining the walls and ceilings of churches and cathedrals. Milton's moderation, then, when describing his naked characters, though not surprising considering his background, bears significance. Milton appears to shy away from many an opportunity to go down Eve's body in a blazon-like fashion or masterfully craft a complex verse about Adam's exploration of it during their ambiguously worded bower sessions. Two of the major players in Milton's long and incredibly dense poem *Paradise Lost* are nude for most of their time before the reader but are never truly exposed. Milton chooses his words carefully and although Eve is naked, she is never intricately displayed and although the language of the poem implies sex, the act is never described.

It is this careful and concealing language that Milton employs, or in some cases the language he does not employ, that I wish to call veiled language or language that veils. Whether it be by inserting words that are akin to the convenient foliage covering the couple in paintings, excluding expressions that circumvent the reader's visual exploration, or an intricate use of a temporal modifier, Milton makes sure to veil his holy couple in a way that invites careful and intentional uncovering so that the truth behind his words can be exegeted like the veils in biblical texts.

Paradise Lost is full of veils. And Milton uses them in his quest to bring a perfect paradise tethered to God to a reader far removed from this haven of purity and conceal the mysteries of the divine human pair and their relationship to their environment for the reader to uncover. Milton wishes to add to the story of Adam and Eve, but

in doing so must find a way for them to remain virtuous in the eyes of the virtue-less. To keep the impossible perfection of both the divine and the sexual as it was, Milton places it behind a cover of unknowability he cannot put into words but must to correctly contextualize the perfect couple's fall.

By using literary traditions like innuendo, the blazon, and literary figures of old, he deftly implies the sexual. By using biblical traditions like the veil and marriage, he implies the divine. And by mixing both traditions into his theatrical prose, Milton has Adam and Eve perform for a fallen audience that cannot help but see them as naked within a fallen context but fail to see them entirely as shame-fully exposed due to the veils Milton employs.

Veils have a seemingly endless tradition in literature, particularly biblical literature. In the Old Testament, God has his people construct a temple to house his presence and orders a veil to be drawn between him and even the most devout of priests. In the New Testament, Paul describes the mystery of the Gospel as being veiled to those who do not seek understanding. Origen of Alexandria, the highly influ-ential theologian, in his hermeneutic theory says that the truth of scripture "remained covered by a veil until the coming of Christ," and goes on to detail how revelation of truth relies completely on the unveiling of it. For Origen, biblical language was a veil that covered divine truth. As Susanna Drake puts it when describing Origen's view of language, "the spiritual meaning of scripture is like a treasure hidden in a field of worldly words" (816).

There is little doubt that Milton felt similarly and sought to use his proficiency with words to craft a piece worthy of exegesis; a field of poetry that houses treasure of understanding. Beyond the theological, veils as objects shrouding truth are commonplace, and as Theodore Ziolkowski puts it in "Veils as Metaphor and as Myth," have become a cliché in almost all modern languages. He later simplifies veils as things that cover the sexual and the divine and muses that "the idea seems to be that any direct confrontation with that which is hidden would blind or otherwise distract us" (70). This is in line with Drake's study of Origen and her historical summary of female veils, with which "a woman expressed her honor and bodily self-mastery by ensuring that she was properly concealed and demure in public" (824). When worn, veils guard women against invasion and protect society around them from their bodies and the temptations these arouse.

Pulling again from Herrick, we see this image of a veil covering the sexual in ways that may even elevate it in his work "Upon Julia's Clothes":

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly
flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.
Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
That brave vibration each way free,
O how that glittering taketh me!

There is enough evidence of the male gaze permeating this poetic society to conclude that Milton, a man himself of this time, would know of the traditions and learned behavior of men, which he may have thought to be completely natural if still sinful, and have the desire to steer clear of a depiction of Eve that would exist solely for sexual gratification. Milton's motiva-tion was not one that could be compared to Herrick drooling in verse over Julia's nipples. He wished to expand upon and clarify what he regarded as the historical story of the Earth's creation, Satan's fall, Adam and Eve's temptation, and the salvation of man. If he was to succeed in presenting perfect truth to a sinful audience, he must veil Eve and her interactions with her husband and angels with a linguistic composition that either distracts the reader, detracts from their supposed pure intent, or titillates a desire to exegete in order to uncover Milton's layered understanding of biblical and metaphysical truth.

One of the more obvious examples of veiled language in *Paradise Lost*, this time being language specifi-cally avoided by Milton, is the absence of direct and explicit nouns such as tail, sheath, or even rear, to name a few. Milton does not let the reader glide across Adam or Eve's body to gorge their eyes in touristic fashion on the holy parts of the couple. Eve in partic-ular must be protected by this veil as she, like a pious nun, must remain a source of no temptation by way of the exposed corpus. Milton is aware of even the most pure-hearted reader's sin and even when he allows the viewer an image of divine caress between the couple, in which Eve's breast is a focal point, and the word is used for the one and only time, he makes sure to veil her body physically:

[Eve] half imbracing leand
On our first Father, half her
swelling Breast
Naked met his under the flowing
Gold
Of her loose tresses hid.
(4. 492-504)

Eve's hair acts as her purity-preserving veil, shielding her body and the tempta-tions that it holds from the reader while also remaining naked and perfect in her majestic completeness. But this is not a veiling that arises out of prudish bash-fulness on Milton's part. The hair here, in its looseness and wild abandon, both harkens back to the kind of looseness and chaos that sexually arouses Herrick, while also negating that intent and even calling to the mind of the reader the fact that, in this garden, there is no danger

of sexual arousal or violence. The hair is a literal veil, covering her breast, and a figurative one, separating us from the couple through sin. When we are first introduced to the holy couple, Milton foregoes a detailed tour of their exposed bodies and instead reminds the viewer that their exposure is in itself nothing shocking or arousing:

> With native Honour clad
> In naked Majestie seem'd Lords
> of all, (...)
> "Simplicitie and spotless
> innocence.
> So passd they naked on, nor
> shund the sight
> Of God or Angel, for they thought
> no ill.
> (4.289-291, 318-320)

Here is another often used and important veiled linguistic tool that Milton uses. He clothes his couple in metaphorical clothes. Here they are clad in honor and innocence. When the angel Raphael visits the pair, Milton describes Eve as standing naked but that "no vaile / Shee needed, Vertue-proof, no thought infirme / Alterd her cheek. On whom the Angel haile" (Book 5—383-385). When the sublime and perfect nudity of the couple can no longer prove enough to show how tranquilly and perfectly Adam and Eve sit within the hierarchy of their world, as it contends too much with the sinful thoughts and evil intents plaguing the reader's mind, Milton must veil Eve with the actual word "veil." He must acknowledge that the thing worn to protect a woman and the viewer of her person is not physically needed and therefore inherently present in her nakedness.

In another instance of clothing his pair with words, Milton describes Adam's walk to meet the angel in the following paragraph:

> [Adam] walks forth, without
> more train
> Accompani'd then with his own
> compleat
> Perfections, in himself was all his
> state,
> More solemn then the tedious
> pomp that waits
> On Princes, when thir rich
> Retinue long
> Of Horses led, and Grooms
> besmeard with Gold
> Dazles the croud, and sets them
> all agape.
> (5.352-358)

Nudity, marred by sin and shame, cannot carry the majesty that it did for Adam and so Milton must use royal attire from the reader's expectations of majesty to clothe his Adam so that when a nude man walks to meet a holy angel the reader does not see a lack of covering and an exposed member but a royal procession and divine authority. The reader is not set agape by the wrong things here, but instead in awe of a confidence and propriety no longer existing.

The human state is perfect in the garden. It contains a level of selfness and belonging that could not be replicated in the reader's mind. Especially, when Eve is involved, and when Eve is in a situation where she interacts with her lover or someone outside of their marriage. So, Milton veils these interactions with more language. While attending to her husband and their angel visitor's needs, Eve is, to a fallen reader, in an awkward position of imbalanced power. Raphael is taking the form of a man and looks on the naked Eve, who has frequently been said to be beautiful. Later in another interaction with Raphael, Eve's departure is stamped with a reminder that her grace is "grace that won who saw to wish her stay" (Book 7, 680). And even within this paragraph describing Eve's wifely ministry, Milton acknowledges that the angel would not, in a sinful sense, be entirely at fault in finding Eve desirable. But at the same time, he covers the scene with a nostalgic disclaimer:

> O innocence
> Deserving Paradise! if ever, then,
> Then had the Sons of God excuse
> to have bin
> Enamour'd at that sight; but in
> those hearts
> Love unlibidinous reign'd, nor
> jealousie
> Was understood, the injur'd
> Lovers Hell.
> (5.444-450)

Milton acknowledges the libido of the reader while also reminding them that it does not factor into this scene. In her essay, Karma DeGruy says "the repetition of 'then' emphasizes this singular moment and suspends it for an extra syllabic beat before the imaginative faculty of the reader, focused with the narrator on the naked body of Eve" (137). This "veil," then, comes in the form of an inextricable link to an unobtainable past—a reminder that this perfect scene of unlibidinous interaction of naked beings cannot be found precisely because the reader must be reminded that it is unlibidinous. Milton, DeGruy continues, gives us "a wrenching reminder of the distance in the cosmos that can no longer be overcome through proper attunement of the sensitive faculty. The chain of being has expanded to include the perspective of fallen desire" (135). Instead of describing how Eve's breasts lightly bounce before the eyes of her angel guest like a court poet might, Milton yearns for her naked innocence. And so too must the reader.

Milton employs another similar linguistic veil when he gets as close as he ever does to mentioning the lower genitalia of his couple. He calls them "mysterious parts," and, before too many images may be conjured by the reader, plunges into a monologue cata-

loging the shameful voided innocence of the present:

> Nor those mysterious parts were
> then conceald,
> Then was not guiltie shame,
> dishonest shame
> Of natures works, honor
> dishonorable,
> Sin-bred, how have ye troubl'd all
> mankind
> With shews instead, meer shews
> of seeming pure,
> And banisht from mans life his
> happiest life,
> Simplicitie and spotless
> innocence.
> (4.312-318)

New and fallen concepts, such as guilt, shame, and dishonor cloud the couple's unconcealed mysterious parts. If readers be tempted to imagine the intricacies of these parts, then they are straightaway forced to reckon with their sinfulness and how this fallen state keeps them from the world where Adam and Eve need not cover their mystery. And here "mysterious" takes more meaning when veiled by the lack of description and a stirred-up cloud of modern modifiers of a sinful humanity—a humanity that has taken the spotlessly innocent bodies and acts of the garden's inhabitants and turned them to shows of false purity and pride, mere masquerades.

Indeed, in the first of the two marital intercourse sessions that Milton describes between the pair, he explains that they are "eas'd the putting off / These troublesom disguises which wee wear" (4.738, 739). Here, their nudity acts beyond a mere royal robe that grants them status, as they need no signifiers at all. Eve need not wear a veil to protect society from her body, as society is lustless, and she need not wear a monarchal dress to purport false importance, as she stands undisguisedly regal and perfectly placed within her environment. Taking this further, more biblical imagery may be inferred if one acknowledges the lack of disguises coming from a rightful standing with God. The veil of the temple comes back to the mind of the reader, who must dress according to their status in a sinful world and cannot interact directly with their God, needing a veil to be seen cleansed by their judging King.

Milton has immense respect for Adam and Eve's bodies and the acts they commit but also is making a larger point about prelapsarian identity and existence—one that is so far removed from the existence of the readers—a paradoxical combination of unveiled and veiled existence and an identity that is completely secure. When it comes to the precise ways Adam and Eve use these undescribed and unmentioned parts of their bodies within their secure and perfect marriage, Milton is still vague and theatrically playful in his ambiguity. In his essay, Kent Lehnhof goes so far as to advocate for a non-penetrative reading of their marital affairs, described in book 4 with this paragraph:

> Strait side by side were laid, nor
> turn'd I weene
> Adam from his fair Spouse, nor
> Eve the
> Rites Mysterious of connubial
> Love refus'd.
> (4.738-743)

Lehnhof points to the words "I weene," which is defined as "I assume" to argue that sex as we understand it was not what Adam and Eve partook in before their fall. Regardless of whether this is true, the words do successfully veil the act enough to where both arguments can be made. Milton is careful to never state the concrete. But after this mostly undisputed account of sex, the couple sleeps and it is said "on thir naked limbs the flourie roof / showrd Roses" (4.772-773). These flowers could be, through their showering, a symbol of deflowering or, through their intact state, a sign that Eve is still virginal further a sense of vague unknowability regarding the specifics of Adam and Eve's sexuality. The sex act is in Book 4 but in Book 9 Eve is still referred to as a virgin. But as Lehnhof points out, "Milton's virginal images might mean to emphasize not the absence of prelapsarian sexuality but rather its purity" (71). Certainly, the descriptor is helpful in keeping Eve's purity and dignity intact for the reader. And, as Eve has yet to fall, these instances of virginity may be in reference to the fact that Eve still wears her veil of innocence, as the removal of veils was typically associated with the loss of virginity. Like the virgin Mary is still virginal after pregnancy, so Eve is virginal after sex.

Lehnhof also tries to use the aforementioned scene where Eve leans against Adam to argue that Milton denies any sexual behavior as we know it. The scene follows Eve's hair-veiled breast pressed against Adam's chest—a scene charged, for fallen readers, with sexual tension:

> [Adam] in delight
> Both of her Beauty and submissive
> Charms
> Smil'd with superior Love, as Jupiter
> On Juno smiles, when he impregns
> the Clouds
> That shed may flowers; and press'd
> her matron lip
> With kisses pure.
> (4.492-502)

"References to fatherhood, nakedness, swelling breasts, and impregnation direct the reader to carnal conclusions," Lehnhof says of this excerpt. "But the reader who attends to the classical allusion is arrested in this eroticized understanding of Adam and Eve's behavior" (73). For Juno and Jove, sexuality is built on lies and deceit. This stark contrast between the sinful passions of the mythic gods and the

perfect harmony enjoyed by Adam and Eve forces a comparison by the attentive reader; an exegesis built on a study that affords comparison and contrast to arrive at a state of understanding. Adam and Eve's sexuality is not like that of the fallen literature you have read before.

Examining this scene further, one finds another instance of Milton's veiled language. Milton decidedly cuts off the eroticism of the scene. As Lehnhof describes it, "the passage's steamy eroticism ends rather abruptly with the decidedly unsexy term 'Matron' and the tame task of pressing 'kisses pure'" (73). In Lehnhof's mind, this is to disavow any genital involvement in their romance. But whether it does so or not, it manages to, once again, keep the specifics of their romance veiled by ambiguity while also introducing a new linguistic veil in Milton's arsenal of shrouding implements, namely that of situating the reader and their sinfulness beside that of Satan, whose eyes we use when seeing the couple for the very first time.

The reader is a voyeur. It is one of the main reasons for Milton's veils, why he needs to cover the body of his heroine. And because he is always aware of the reader as a voyeur or the audience at a play, he deftly stages the interactions between Adam and Eve to cover the explicit actions, preserve mystery, and contextualize them as mysteries worthy of exegesis. In this instance, as Lehnhof puts it, Milton's letting us voyeuristically imagine a sexual component to Adam and Eve's marriage:

> The simile's jarring conclusion forces us to acknowledge the lustful and fallen nature of our interpellations into Eden. In fact, the self-conscious discomfort that we feel when we are frustrated in our erotic pleasure reminds us that we are at this point occupying the exact same subjective position as Satan, who is also watching Adam and Eve's conjugal converse and envying their short pleasures. (73)

> Aside the Devil turnd
> For envie, yet with jealous leer
> maligne
> Ey'd them askance, and to himself
> thus plaind.
> (4.502-504)

At this moment, the reader is viewing this interaction, as Stephen Dobranski references in his essay, "over Satan's shoulder" (342). By contextualizing the actions performed by the couple along with the way in which the reader perceives it as sexual, with Satan's voyeurism, Milton manages to hold the lust perceived by the reader at bay. Satan, in a moment of perhaps the purest depiction of Eve's nudity, turns away in jealousy, bringing us back to a place of sin and lust. The framing of Satan in the garden is a way to mirror how fallen humanity interacts with the ideas of sex and nudity, and how even Christians must see all natively human interaction with the eyes of the devil in mind. Where one is tempted to craft one's own blazon of the scene, Satan manages to bring the veil before our fallen eyes back into view.

And it is through this veil of Satan's perspective with which we first see Milton's numerous literary and poetic traditions that taint our view of Eve arise. So much of the way Milton frames his couple with words is intended to evoke the sin in the reader to remind them that it does not apply in the garden. Eve's veil of hair is frequently described as a chaotic golden tress of wantonness and discomposed curls—something the poetry of the time used as a symbol of adultery and sexual promiscuity:

> Shee as a vail down to the slender
> waste
> Her unadorned golden tresses wore
> Dissheveld, but in wanton ringlets
> wav'd.
> (4.304-306)

But in Eden, these traits are the natural state of perfect humanity and have no place in the sexualized world of carnal poetry. "Milton deliberately draws upon the concupiscent meanings of "wanton" to emphasize the complete absence of carnality in Eve's prelapsarian appearance," Lehnhof posits. "Milton repeats the same pattern of suggesting sinfulness in order to refute sinfulness" (72).

Milton does this, in part, because of the aforementioned cultural view of the female body. To present a virtuous woman that is also nude and arguably sexually active before the audience, Milton always refers the reader back to the sinful way women were viewed and remind them that these views are not applicable here. In her essay, Moira Baker analyses Fulke Greville's poem "Caelica," specifically the portion where he compares his spurning lover's genitals both to the garden of Eden and the reason for his expulsion from it. Baker explains:

> The woman's body, specifically
> her genitals, caus[ing] an exile
> from happiness suggests she is the
> conduit of sin and death. Woman's
> sexuality is inscribed in an impos-
> sible, self-contradictory position: it is
> at once the earthly garden of sexual
> delights and the forbidden pleasure
> that, once tasted, exiles man from
> heavenly bliss. (13)

But Eve cannot be viewed this way. Not only is Milton trying to protect the holy mother of humanity from the vile darts of voyeuristic eyes, but he is trying to establish an adequately perfect image of a perfect living human so that her fall is all the more impactful. A common, sexualized, and sexually exploited female body is not what Eve is meant to be—she is half of a pair that perfectly encapsulates the divine intents for which humanity was created and the mysterious and unknowable perfection that no one could imagine possessing.

And when both have fallen to sin and shame, Milton brings his use of symbolic veils to its natural and inevitable conclusion, as the couple awakens and finds their innocence stripped from their bodies and their standing in the environment shaky and uncertain:

> Soon found thir Eyes how op'nd, and thir minds
> How dark'nd; innocence, that as a veile
> Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gon,
> Just confidence, and native righteousness,
> And honour from about them, naked left To guiltie shame hee cover'd, but his Robe
> Uncover'd more.
> (8.1053-1059)

Both crudely crafted clothes of leaves and twigs, clothes that are labelled, like Satan's shapeshifting disguises, vain coverings, and, naturally, this shameful concealment of their once sublimely unshrouded bodies is the primary giveaway of their sin (that, and their shame itself) that "sought vain covertures" (9.336). But in a much more depressing sense, this acquisition of veils that were not needed before indicates that the fallen state of the reader, that state marked by a fractured relationship with God and a confused and terrified state of identity, has now been reached by the previously pure couple. What was previously so natural and holy that it was metaphysical—inherent, is now a loincloth made of leaves. One veil has been torn off and replaced by a new one; one that separates instead of sewing together. Like a text meant to be exegeted and uncovered, their bodies are exposed and with this the state of the reader themselves. Where before it was said that in themselves was all their state, this state is now inadequate, embarrassingly so, and presides behind a physical veil of their making that makes an exegesis of their bodies, like that of their souls, lead to distressingly shameful conclusions. Where once they were shadowed by a veil that held guilt and shame at bay, they are now shadowing that guilt and shame, unsuccessfully, with themselves. Throughout all of this, however, the veil of Milton's language has remained unremoved, and the power of Eden's unknowable truth and beauty remains up for exegesis.

Previously I posited that one of Milton's main reasons for veiling the prelapsarian bodies and sexual acts of Adam and Eve in ambiguity is to keep them from the voyeuristic eyes of the reader, but I believe that even more important to Milton is preserving the vagueness and purported perfection the biblical source material contests. While Milton is trying to expound upon that holy history, confident in his intelligence and skill, he is also knowledgeable of his limitations and clearly

reverent of the players in his poem and the state they inhabit. The marital acts they partook in are too wonderful for a reader with a less magnificent experience to understand and Milton wants to do them justice. This constant linguistic veiling lends itself nicely to what Milton most assuredly desired: the careful interpretation of his every word. But within this, Milton also wants his readers to exegete his meaning as well as interpret it. Milton does not wish that all who read *Paradise Lost* simply be able to construe paradisal sociality in a sinfully sexual manner. Nor does he want us to merely uncover his alluded meanings. He wants us, like good theologians, to imbue the text with meaning. Like John Savoie, who attempts to argue for the presence of fellatio in the postlapsarian lovemaking of Adam and Eve by diving into the almost identically passionate and sensuous accounts of lovemaking and asserting that the use of the word fallacious coupled with the oral fixation of Milton's language and symbolism infer an act of lovemaking that will not lead to children. Savoie imbues Milton's possible punning upon "fellatio" with a rich interpretation that, in his words helps "clarify the difficult distinction between love and lust, between the ideal of sex as designed by God and its corruption into mere appetite and sensual pleasure" that Milton was aiming for (162). Or Wolfgang Rudat, who reads in Eve's devouring of the symbolically feminine fruit, an act of sexual self-gratification and in Adam's post-fruit initiation of sex, a loss of the autonomy he once had over his body and a new subjugation to the woman for arousal. Milton, to an exegeting Rudat, is showing us the evils of a disturbed hierarchy, and an in-depth allegory for human interpersonal politics.

Exegesis is not simply interpretation by way of an imparted meaning as well as an uncovered one. Milton wants the reader to dissect his words, find the deeper truths hidden in these allusions and imbue them with more. By diminishing its presence and veiling the actual perfections of the holy couple's bodies and how they use them, the reader can try and uncover the extent of that beauty and perfection, and then can ruminate on what Milton finds the missing component of contemporary marriage. Perhaps Milton knew that, where his limitations ended, the boundless possibility of exegeted meaning begins. And when we try and make sense of linguistic veils, we place higher truths than we can comprehend behind them.

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