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Symposium

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Dedicated To the Best That Has Been Thought and Said

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INTRODUCTION

Dead White Men...

This criticism that often accompanies Great Books is unwarranted. The analysis of Shakespeare, Plato, Byron, and Kant, for instance, that appears within this issue of the *Great Books Symposium Journal* expresses the perspective of what some might consider the privileged majority. However, what makes these texts so important is not who wrote them or the ideas they convey but the thoughts they inspire.

As Oscar Wilde argues, all art is "amoral." One can easily blame the influence of a novel because, as a mirror reflects a person's appearance, books reflect the human soul. Great Books, in particular, can reveal inner truths about an author or reader that may be hidden, even from themselves, truths that they may not want to acknowledge. Whether it is Dorian's moral and spiritual degradation or Victor Frankenstein's incomprehension of motherhood, these texts remind us that we are all unreliable narrators. At its best, a Great Book demands creativity, inspires empathy, and teaches self-awareness; at its worst, it reveals our lies or exploits our desires. The existence of many "dead, white males" on the Great Books list is not the point; rather, it is what these author's inspire within the reader that is important: inquiry.

The essays contained within this issue of the *Symposium Journal* are not just research papers based on Great Books but inquiries into the human experience. While the subject matter of these essays does include many "dead, white men," the works are analyzed by a diverse group of students from non-traditional backgrounds whose perspective, therefore, provides a real-world interpretation of the classics. The intended result is not for the reader to agree with the contributors but to disagree with them, thereby encouraging the reader to make their own inquiry.

Since its inception in 2000, the *Symposium Journal* has been a labor of love, a collaboration between students and faculty who have invested an immeasurable number of hours in analyzing, editing, and revising essays. Like Vali churning the ocean to produce nectar for the Gods, the result is the rich culmination of everything great about Great Books and the Great Books Curriculum at Wright College, introducing students to "the best that has been thought and said."

I would like to thank all involved, but special thanks to Professor Michael Petersen for his tireless effort in keeping alive the publication of quite possibly the only academic journal from a two-year institution produced by students. The *Symposium Journal* not only highlights the importance of developing critical thinking skills but also the significance of cultivating friendships through collaborative efforts such as *Symposium Journal* and The Great Books Student Society. These programs can determine the academic path of a student.

The ideas expressed through these texts define the human experience. In a way, the jigsaw puzzle of ideas and concepts produced in Great Books characterizes what is the best life to live while shedding the shackles of temporality. As editor-in-chief, I would like to welcome you to the seventh addition to the *Great Books Symposium Journal*.

Ad astra per aspera
Roberto Pacheco
Spring 2020 Editor-in-Chief, *Great Books Symposium Journal*

"Into Darkness": Cain's Journey into the Kantian Sublime in Lord Byron's *Cain: A Mystery*

IZAKI METROPOULOS

War of the Worlds: Emergent Radicalism and Byron's Controversialism

The legacy of poet George Gordon Byron carries with it many associations, primarily those of controversy. He was, to quote Clara Drummond, the definitive nineteenth-century "bad boy": a man known for his gambling habits, promiscuity, purported incestuous relationships, and ownership of many exotic animals, among those a tame bear which he kept during his days at Trinity College (Francis, "Bears"). However, Byron was also a deeply political figure who lived during a tumultuous time of radical political experimentation that challenged the last bastions of theocracy in Great Britain. Consequently, revolutionary politics meant everything to the Romantics—especially for Byron's close friend, Percy Bysshe Shelley, who ardently declared the French revolution the "master theme of the epoch in which we live" (qtd. in Bainbridge 16). The relative instability of the period had tremendous intellectual consequences that gave rise to a form of radical politics in Britain. As John Barnard observes, the "storming of the Bastille, the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789… and the consequent political crisis in Britain dislocated readerships" (77). Furthermore, due to the widespread availability of print, access to literature ceased to be an upper-class luxury, and political and religious reformists saw an opportunity to disseminate propaganda among the increasingly literate masses.[1] An anonymous publication in *Blackwood Magazine*, for instance, described the British readership as "an inquisitive, doubting and reading people" (Barnard 77). In other words, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain witnessed what Jacques Rancière sees occurring during the French Revolution of 1848—a reconfiguration of society's "sensible texture" (8), or a type of equalization of the conflicting political narratives of British society.

Among those ideas challenged was the political efficacy of religious tactics, partially spurned by a literary movement keen on satirizing the Book of Genesis, a key example of which was Byron's *Cain: A Mystery* (1821). Peter A. Schock identifies a catalyst of this literary movement in Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1794), which "ridicules the Christian story of the origin of evil by the hand of Satan" and "systematically reduces the narratives of the war in heaven, the Fall of man, and the Redemption to the level of mere fable (15). However, the ideas of Paine and his

[1] A notable example of the growing radical press includes William Cobbett's *Political Register.* The price of the publication was lowered to promote anti-government politics (Cannon 734).

contemporaries—such as William Hone and Robert Carlile—were met with militant opposition, earning them trials for blasphemous libel in the late 1810s (Schock 87). As a result of their irreligious publications, Byron and Shelley were accused by poet Robert Southey of being "[m]en of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who […] have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of human society," and ultimately of being the founders of the new "Satanic school" of audacious writers (xix-xxi).

As a political response to the punishment of irreligion, Britain witnesses what Schock has termed "a resurgent fascination in the Satanic." Integral to this trend was a reimagining of Milton's Satan as a sort of sympathetic hero, not merely to combat conservative religious voices directly, but to reimagine and interpret prominent philosophical ideas. Central to the works of the Romantics is the notion of the "sublime," which built upon the philosophical foundation of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant (Johnston). Yet, Kant's sublime appears to be the most prominent philosophical bedrock of *Cain*, a historically plausible idea given Byron's relationship to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a poet who described *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) as a work that "took possession of [him] as with the giant's hand" (264). Furthermore, Byron was heavily involved in the "Coppet circle," an intellectual gathering at the salon of Madame de Staël (Rosa 356). Known there informally as "his Satanic Majesty," Byron would have encountered August Wilhelm Schlegel, who may have shared his own assessment of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*.

However, despite evidence of the connection between Kant's ideas and Byron's late period works, surprisingly little has been written on the subject. To attempt to fill this void in current scholarship, this essay will: outline the sublime as presented in Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, examine the relationship of Kant's ideas to *Cain*, and, finally, understand the ways in which Byron challenges the aesthetic dimensions of eighteenth-century political consciousness. In *Cain: A Mystery*, Lucifer becomes a facilitator of the sublime experience as understood by Immanuel Kant. Only through this sublime experience does Cain obtain what Kant describes as "dominion," or autonomy, gained through the realization of the power of cognition.

1790: A Sublime Odyssey

Kant's Second Book of his Critique of Judgement, entitled "Analytic of the Sublime," diverges from his analysis of the beautiful and instead attempts to define and categorize the mind's experience of the sublime. The sublime, Kant prefaces, is "that which is absolutely great" in magnitude, or "great beyond comparison" (132). Nevertheless, Kant's sublime cannot be reduced to the quality of an object; for example, the crashing of waves does not render the sea sublime in and of itself. Rather, the sublime is a phenomenon of the limitations of the imagination as it tries to comprehend the violence or infinitude of nature itself (Johnston). By contrast, the experience of beauty for Kant is one that involves the harmony, or "free play" (Kant 102), between the faculties of understanding and imagination— or a perceived unity between subject and nature— while the sublime is a phenomenon that disrupts or

disconnects one's ability to have this type of aesthetic experience.[2] As Kant writes, the sublime can be interpreted as an act of unpleasant "violence" (142) inflicted upon reason, limiting the imagination's ability to comprehend the infinite. However, as reason begins to cognize the object, a type of "negative pleasure" arises (129); counter-intuitively, "the subject's own incapacity reveals the consciousness of an unlimited capacity of the very same subject" (142). In other words, the sublime is ultimately an experience of the unlimited creative capacity of the human mind itself, only possible through a paradoxical understanding of its limitations.

Critique of Judgement further differentiates two types of the sublime: the mathematically sublime and the dynamically sublime (131). First, the mathematically sublime is an experience of the limitations of the imagination to comprehend that which is "absolutely great" in magnitude or size. To illustrate, Kant mentions the sense of "bewilderment" when encountering the Pyramids of Egypt or St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (135-36). Common examples also include the enormity of mountains or the seemingly endless sea: "Nature is thus sublime in those of its appearances the intuition of which brings with them the idea of its infinity" (138). When the imagination struggles to comprehend infinity, reason intervenes in its demand for "totality for all given magnitudes" (138) and thus exerts its sublime superiority.

Conversely, the dynamically sublime is more abstract and concerned with the power relationships between the subject and nature, specifically the "dominion" of the thinking subject. Kant distinguishes that, "[power] is called dominion if it is also superior to the resistance of something that itself possesses power" (143). One way to illustrate this concept is through Kant's dichotomy of fearfulness vs fear presented in *Critique of Judgement* though a religious framework. A devout Christian subject may recognize God as "fearful," that is, capable of releasing plagues, turning water into blood, or killing all first-born children. The "virtuous" subject (143) understands his resistance to be "completely futile," yet he also understands his dominion, autonomy, or independence from a powerful object by recognizing the power of cognition itself. The same can occur in the natural world: while we hypothetically understand that a meteor could strike Earth, killing us all instantly, for Kant, this understanding reveals to us "a capacity for *resistance*[3] of quite another kind, which gives us the courage to

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[2] Specifically, in the *Critique of Judgement* of the Power of Judgment, Kant uses the term "aesthetic" to delineate subjective judgments of taste. However, it is important to distinguish the difference between an "aesthetically grounded logical judgment" (Johnston), and an aesthetic judgment of taste. For example, when one says, "chrysanthemums are beautiful," one is making a cognitive judgment of what is or is not beautiful. For Kant, cognitive judgments are separable from experiences of beauty that are distinctly pleasurable. Aesthetic relationships may be understood as subjective relationships based on pleasure and displeasure: in the aesthetic judgment of an object, one does not say "this is x's purpose," but, "this is my relation to this object."

[3] Emphasis added.

measure ourselves against the apparent all powerfulness of nature" (144-45). This power of resistance is the source of negative pleasure within the experience of the sublime: it is the relief through realization, the freedom *from* pain that only the power of reason can provide. For Kant, reason is the faculty which renders the subject as *separate* from the all-powerful object, thus reminding itself of its own power to resist the illusory irresistibility of nature's power.

To proceed with a reading of Byron's *Cain* in light of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, it is necessary to understand the necessity of the sublime experience in attaining aesthetic freedom. While the sublime interrupts one's ability to have an aesthetic experience, the experience of incapacity reveals the unlimited capacity of the mind to generate ideas or conceptions about the world. For Kant, the world is fundamentally conceptual, and many of these concepts function *a priori*—that is, the subject proceeds through daily life without the awareness that these concepts are informing reality. However, there was a moment in history where these concepts did not exist. For Kant the sublime experience is one which disrupts conceptual reality, and through this experience of liminality, there is room for reconceptualization. And the power to reconceptualize a seemingly fixed conceptual world *is* the reflective power of judgment: it is the ability to find the universal for a given particular. As Robert Doran summarizes, inherent to Kant's philosophy is "the idea that man can transcend the limitations placed on him by his sensuous nature and natural causality, thereby realizing the essential freedom on which rational moral consciousness is grounded" (221). But without the understanding of limitations, there is nothing to transcend, nothing to strive to overcome. The subject becomes like Cain in the first act of Byron's drama, merely sensing his own limitations without any mechanism to surpass them: "I / despise myself, yet cannot overcome— / And so I live" (1.1.113-15). Rather, Lucifer becomes a facilitator of the sublime by subjecting Cain to the experience of his own insignificance, and although this knowledge may seem debilitating or depressing, it is what allows him to be free to conceptualize the world on his own terms.

Cain in Space: The Final Frontier

Act Two of *Cain* offers a striking depiction of the mathematical sublime through a dramatized exploration of the universe, contemporary scientific developments, "the mysteries of Death" (2.1.140), and the obscuration of time itself. Cain, having agreed to Lucifer's promise of revealed truth, follows him to where he dwells: the infinite "Abyss of Space" (2.1.0). As they traverse through space, or the "unimaginable ether" (2.1.99), as Cain describes, Cain is bewildered by how small and insignificant the Earth appears among the stars: "Oh God! or Demon! or whate'er thou art, / Is yon our earth?" (2.1.26-7). It quickly becomes a "small blue circle, swinging in far ether," that "appear[s] to join the innumerable stars / Which are around us; and as we move on, Increase their myriads" (2.1.35-43). Here, Cain witnesses what Kant refers to as key elements of the mathematical sublime—the qualities of greatness in *both* magnitude and *multitude* (132)—through the

observation of the boundless universe and the limitless stars that occupy it. Cain's imagination fails to conceptualize the infinitude of the universe, even if he is experiencing it firsthand, and hence he undergoes the first stage of the sublime imagination fails to conceptualize the infinitude of the universe, even if he is experiencing it firsthand, and hence he undergoes the first stage of the sublime experience as understood by Kant: that of the *displeasure* associated with the subjective feeling of insignificance. Witnessing the limitations of his mind to comprehend such infinitude, Cain soliloquies,

> Oh thou beautiful
> And *unimaginable*[4] ether! And
> Ye multiplying masses of increased
> And still-increasing lights! what are ye? What
> Is this blue wilderness of interminable
> Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
> The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
> Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
> Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
> Through an aërial universe of endless
> Expansion—at which my soul aches to think—
> Intoxicated with eternity. (2.1.98-109)

In this passage, Cain undergoes an experience of the sublime through his experience of space; its form is "unimaginable" and "unbounded," its objects are seemingly "multiplying" and "interminable," and, finally, its existence is "intoxicated with eternity" or free from the bounds of time itself. Yet, he is also able to judge aesthetically the vastness of the cosmos without being in any direct danger and is thus able to postulate its status as a mere "object of fear" (144). Yet there is also an oscillation between attraction and repulsion; Cain is not having an experience of the beautiful but something that distances himself into the capacity for aesthetic judgment, the experience to view himself in relationship to the powerful world.

Next, Lucifer trivializes the importance of humankind by postulating the existence of other, greater worlds. He proposes,

> And if there should be
> Worlds *greater* than thine own—inhabited
> By *greater* things—and they themselves far more
> In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
> Though multiplied to animated atoms,
> All living—and all doomed to death—and wretched,

[4] Emphasis added.

What wouldst thou think? (2.1.44-49)

Here, one finds instances of both the mathematically and dynamically sublime: there are entire worlds that are *greater* than Earth in magnitude, beings that trump the Adamites in terms of power and intellect. However, Cain intuitively responds, "I should be proud of *thought* / Which knew such things" (2.1.49-50). This reply, under the Kantian purview, is evidence of reason's capacity to comprehend totality. After the sublime experience, Cain posits that the faculty of cognition is something to be *proud of*; he is beginning to understand the revealed unlimited capacity of the imagination through the paradoxical experience of his own insignificance. In the face of *greater* objects, Cain is reminded of the superiority of reason, and his "capacity for resistance."

Lucifer and Cain eventually reach the land of Hades, the "world of phantoms" (2.1.174) and "beings past," when Cain is paralyzed at the sudden disappearance of the stars. A cosmos once illuminated by "lights innumerable" has now faded into a "dreary twilight"; even the "deep valleys and vast mountains" appear to have faded into the distance." Cain attributes the ability to see to a "fearful light" (2.1.175-185), again acknowledging the aspect of *fearfulness without fear*, retaining the power of aesthetic judgment due to being in no real danger. Lucifer then reveals the truth of the

Pre-Adamites: they were

> Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things
> as much superior unto all thy sire
> Adam could e'er have been in Eden, as
> The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,
> In its dull damp degeneracy. (2.2.68-72)

Again, Lucifer trivializes the importance of the Adamites by dismissing their capacity to evolve even tens of thousands of generations into the future. However, there are multiple layers of rhetorical minimization which encompass the equalization of divine forces. Not only does Lucifer undermine the story of Genesis and divine authority by presenting a race superior to the one created "in the image of God," he even trivializes the greatness of these supposedly "great" beings. Ultimately, every being, from "past Leviathans" that occupied "immeasurable liquid space / of glorious azure" (2.2.178-89), to the future "unborn myriads of conscious atoms" (2.2.43) is reduced to nothingness. Even the fundamental anatomy of living organisms, as mere collections of atoms, is something that is difficult for the imagination to comprehend in its totality. "And this should be the human sum / Of knowledge," Lucifer proclaims, "to know mortal nature's nothingness" (2.2.421-22).

Yet, after his rather demoralizing tour of the mathematically sublime universe, Lucifer ends the voyage on a compelling closing note:

> One good gift has the fatal apple given,—
> Your *reason*:—let it not be overswayed
> By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
> 'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
> Think and endure,—and form an inner world
> In your own bosom—where the outward fails;
> So shall you nearer be the spiritual
> Nature, and war triumphant with your own. (2.2.459-466)

Ultimately, Lucifer, the drama's spiritual and scientific authority, reminds Cain, and ultimately the reader, of reason's role in establishing autonomy in defiance of divine law. By encouraging Cain to protect his reason from tyrannous threats, he is informing him that the capacity for resistance is entirely within the power of the human subject. Inherent to *Cain* is the notion that an "inner world" is always possible; a world free from the seeming domination of *a priori* concepts, a world that is redefinable once discovered. The "fatal apple" Lucifer describes mirrors the potentiality of the sublime experience: while it is initially unpleasant, it is the only way to reconfigure the conceptual network of the natural world. Eventually, Cain, disillusioned by the knowledge of the true nature of his condition, returns to his wife Adah and his sleeping child, and, following the events of the original biblical source, murders Abel during a sacrifice. Finally, Cain is condemned to "the eternal Serpent's curse," the existence of a "vagabond on earth" by a visiting angel (3.1.403; 480). Yet this act of condemnation is equally Cain's potential for autonomy.

Cain ultimately does not shy away from accepting responsibility for his brother's murder: "Tis blood—my blood— / My brother's and my own; and shed by me! / Then what have I further to do with life, / Since I have taken life from my own flesh?" (3.1.345-8). However, in the acceptance of responsibility is equally Cain's first successful attempt at establishing agency. For example, Cain appropriates the divine word by taking authorship or ownership of scripture itself: "That which I am, I am" (3.1.509) echoes the words of God to Moses in Corinthians. While it is simple, perhaps intuitive, to conclude that *Cain: A Mystery* is a sort of didactic Faustian tale: one in which knowledge is exchanged for a desolate future of damnation, the drama instead challenges this exchange by the experience of the mathematical sublime, and the unpleasant splitting of his subjectivity, Cain can traverse into the unknown with the power to reconceptualize the world free of the divine laws that once governed *a priori.* And, by extension, *Cain: A Mystery* alludes the possiblity of reconceptualizing our world itself.

Judgment Day: Cain's Critical Reception

Considering *Cain*'s possibilities for changing the landscape of political consciousness, it is no surprise that Byron's closet drama was challenged by his theocratic contemporaries. Two years after *Cain*'s publication, a satirical print created by Charles Williams attempted to portray Byron as the subject of a Faustian bargain. The engraving, entitled, "A Noble Poet—Scratching Up His Ideas," depicts

Byron pensively scribbling away at his tawny wooden desk; a hooved devil, colloquially referred to as 'Old Scratch,' perches upon Byron's head, physically imparting to him a form of demonic wisdom ("A Noble"). For Williams, Byron is as equally associated with irreligion as he is political subversion: not only does a painting of the "End of Abel" hang on the adjacent wall, but an edition of *The Liberal*, a radical publication, lies in a stack of books on the floor (Schmidt 57). Similarly, press articles by religious conservatives showed that they were less than thrilled with Byron's drama. Bishop Reginald Heber proclaimed in *The Quarterly Review* that Byron "devoted himself and his genius to the adornment and extension of evil" (Schock 101), and similarly Henry Crabb Robinson, an English lawyer, decried the drama as "calculated to spread infidelity" (qtd. in Garrett 48). These criticisms come as no surprise, as *Cain* possesses a seditious type of moral obfuscation. Lucifer, Byron's herald of the sublime, even claims that "Evil and Good are things in their own essence" (2.2.452), further distancing the protagonist from divine law's claim to objective universality. Yet, Lucifer's act of obfuscation is rendered even more provocative when combined with Byron's claim to biblical authenticity. The poet claims in his 'Preface' to "preserve the language […] taken from actual *Scripture* [making] little alteration, even of words" (208). "I take the words as I find them," Byron ironically proclaims, "and reply […] Behold the Book!'" Ultimately, Byron knows no one is falling for this charade and, using his familiarity with the Hebrew Bible acquired in his religious upbringing, manufactures a closet drama tailored to attract contention. And, as Ralph O'Connor describes, it comes to no surprise that this "particularly dangerous" work was extraordinary popular (148).

Yet despite *Cain*'s thinly veiled blasphemy, its radical implications ultimately belong to its experiment with political consciousness. The Byronian sublime, as exemplified through Lucifer, creates a potentiality for reflective judgment. The sublime liberates Cain from the objective universality of divine law; he instead, to borrow the language of Walter Johnston, becomes free to "experience the process in which the faculties [of the mind] begin to account for an unknown experience." Cain's exile is then to be understood as a curse enacted by an authority whose legitimacy is ultimately baseless, his departure symbolizing a shift into a different aesthetic mode of experiencing the world: a mode of infinite possibility. And this overturning of divine authority—this neutralization of hierarchy—precisely elucidates the political ramifications of the sublime as understood by the Romantics. There is, as Rancière has coined, an attempt at a transformation of the "aesthetic of politics," a fundamental reconstruction of the relationship between a subject to his political environment (8).[5] *Cain*'s ideology, if implemented on a larger scale, beckons a

[5] Rancière writes: "Politics is not primarily a matter of laws and constitutions. Rather, it is a matter of configuring the sensible texture of the community for which those laws and constitutions make sense. What objects are common? What subjects are included in the community? Which subjects are able to see and voice what is common? What arguments and practices are considered political arguments and practices? And so on" (8-9).

redistribution of the sensible and a neutralization of theocratic hierarchies within political discourse. Lucifer reduces God's dominion to a type of Platonian noble lie, of which "its power rests on its own absence of legitimacy" (Rancière 11). Hence, scripture, stripped of its ontological potency, becomes a mere mechanism to explore the human experience in secular terms. Reframed, the sublime reality of knowledge in *Cain* informs us that, while no longer at the center of a divinely orchestrated universe, we are, as Kant posits, the creators and masters of our limitless conceptual world.

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Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*: The Mother's Job to Maintain the World

CASSANDRA LAGUNAS

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) has long been considered a revolutionary novel because of its feminist, scientific and moral values. The mother figure, at first glance a minor presence, represents these values and serves as a catalyst for Victor Frankenstein's moral corruption. Shelley's mother figure is embodied by Caroline Frankenstein and Elizabeth Lavenza, who serve to represent *all* women of the Romantic era. Through these characters, Shelley emphasizes the maternal instinct inside all women, as well as the male characters' unacknowledged need for them outside the domestic area. Shelley explores the importance of a mother by subjecting her protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, to the presence and then tragic absence of a mother figure. Furthermore, the shortage of women in Victor's isolated college setting during his years of studying causes him to detach morally. Thus, the moral corruption presented in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* stems from the absence of a mother figure and represents the ramifications of the lack of women outside the domestic sphere.

In the novel, Victor Frankenstein's life is presented as idyllic until the death of his mother. After this loss, Victor transforms his ideal life into a tragedy through secluded academic study and a fascination with the occult. Victor becomes consumed by his ambition to assemble and then revive a dead body, leading his life into a dark spiral. There are parallels between *Frankenstein*'s protagonist and its author. Like Victor, Mary Shelley experienced the great loss of a mother. However, Shelley lost her mother after only ten days, whereas Victor has the advantage of growing up with a mother for twenty years. Shelley was instead raised by her stepmother and father, causing a life of instability ("Romanticism" 708). Although she never had the opportunity to know her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, Shelley grew up surrounded by people who spoke of her mother's involvement in the feminist movement. Wollstonecraft notoriously proposed the then-radical idea that women should be treated equally to men. In her most famous work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), one of the foundational texts of the feminist movement, Wollstonecraft also states, "Women are, in fact, so much degraded by mistaken notions of female excellence […] that this artificial weakness produces a propensity to tyrannize […] which then leads them to play off those contemptible infantine airs that undermine esteem even whilst they excite desire" (376). Shelley's mother disapproved of women who conformed to the childlike treatment of male society. Wollstonecraft also disliked the unrealistic expectations that men set for women, causing them to become completely fixated on the prospects of marriage and family rather than academic study. This important legacy that Wollstonecraft left for her

daughter is manifest in *Frankenstein*'s Caroline and Elizabeth.

Mary Wollstonecraft preferred women to strive for a life involving academic study rather than the domestic life that society would have them pursue. As Wollstonecraft's daughter, Shelley might have been inclined to create female characters fulfilling these views, characters that are strong-minded and independent. Instead, Shelley's protagonist Victor, a man who struggles with personal desires and moral choices, becomes endlessly fascinating and complex, while secondary characters in comparison seem dull and unimportant. Such secondary characters include Caroline Beaufort and Elizabeth Lavenza, who are depicted very similarly. When Caroline, the matriarch of the family, dies, Elizabeth, an orphan raised in the Frankenstein household, must become the new mother figure. Victor observes, "She consoled me, amused her uncle, instructed my brothers, and I never beheld her so enchanting as at this time, when she was continually endeavouring to contribute to the happiness of others, entirely forgetful of herself" (26). It is evident that Shelley creates Elizabeth as a self-sacrificing woman who reflects a motherly nature, one who is the opposite of Wollstonecraft's ideal woman.

Not only does Elizabeth replace Caroline in the role of matriarch but she becomes a reincarnation of Caroline. Some wonder why Shelley seems to contradict her mother's views by creating one-dimensional female characters. As George Levine points out, "These kinds of redoublings are characteristic of the whole novel. […] Every story seems a variation on every other" (313). As Levine notes, Elizabeth and Caroline do have similar characteristics and oftentimes seem like the same person, but this is not a fault of Shelley's writing. Wollstonecraft might have written these characters as opposites, distinct and uniquely important. However, Shelley's nearly identical characters, realistic to the setting, show, perhaps even more than Wollstonecraft's characters would, the vital influence of women within the world. By writing Elizabeth and Caroline as "doubles," Shelley supports Wollstonecraft's views by demonstrating that daughters like Elizabeth were raised, without consideration of their own happiness or needs, to be support systems for their families.

Shelley creates Elizabeth and Caroline as "sacrificers" to emphasize the females' natural response to nurture through motherly instinct, an instinct that allows them to become emotional outlets. Caroline's death is an act of sacrifice for the ill Elizabeth, whom she deems as her child: "During [Elizabeth's] confinement, many arguments had been urged to persuade my mother to refrain from attending upon her. […] [Caroline] could no longer debar herself from her society and entered her chamber long before the danger of infection was past" (25). Caroline's death is considered honorable because she risks her life for her child, something, according to Shelley, a mother would naturally want to do. Similarly, Elizabeth's own death is an act of sacrifice for Victor, toward whom she acts motherly. Her murder by the creature also serves as the final blow to Victor's unwillingness to be accountable for his creation, as he has no choice but to reveal his actions to the authorities.

These two female characters allow the reader to clearly differentiate between the two worlds that Shelley presents, the worlds of men and women. Men, raised to

thrive in an analytical setting, can be free of emotions and feelings (Mellor 356-357). In Shelley's world, where men are accustomed to work in an emotionless world, women, with or without children, are expected to develop a giving, loving, "motherly" nature. Consequently, women become more in tune with their emotions than men. Women are then obliged to become emotional outlets for their families, leading men to be emotionally dependent on women and, as they are less adept emotionally than women, more susceptible to moral corruption. After Caroline dies, no one has authority over Victor other than his father. Because his father is a man, and therefore lacks a woman's emotional intelligence, he apparently does not consider the emotional toll of Victor's two-year isolation from his family. In this way, Shelley presents the ramifications of women's absence and the lack of feminine influence in work settings.

Mary Shelley was fortunate to have parents who encouraged her literary ambitions, but most other women during the Romantic era did not enjoy these same advantages. Shelley realized that women had had to prove themselves as equal to men for centuries, just as her own mother had done. Still, unlike men, women were denied access to universities and careers. Victor's absence from Elizabeth demonstrates that women's presence in educational settings would prove beneficial to both women and men. Anne K. Mellor notes how women served as emotional outlets for men, and as "a consequence of this sexual division of labor, masculine work is kept outside of the domestic realm; hence intellectual activity is segregated from emotional activity" (356). Men were not permitted to be emotional in business outside of the home because such behavior was considered womanly and weak. However, in the domestic area, the woman's "workplace," emotion in men was permissible, as women served to help their husbands express his feelings.

Victor's isolation at his university is connected to his mother's death, an event that makes him desperate to defy death. Eventually, he succeeds in creating a new being from dead body parts and giving it life. He is horrified by his accomplishment, suddenly realizing that he had not considered the consequences of his success. However, he abandons his creation, focusing on himself and never considering the Creature's feelings or needs. The Creature is then forced to fend for himself in a society that would harass him for his appearance, ultimately resulting in his own isolation and misery and leading him to avenge himself by killing most of Victor's family and friends. Victor's tragic story would have ended differently if a woman were allowed outside the domestic realm and to be present at his university. Unlike Caroline and Elizabeth, Victor does not sacrifice his life, nor even his reputation, for his creation. His irresponsibility and lack of empathy towards his creation is evidence of this man's inability to contend with emotions without the influence of women. Victor's father demonstrates a similar lack of emotional intelligence when earlier in the novel he fails to bring Victor home from his isolation and when he does not fully explain to him the dangers of necromancy. After he dismisses the books that had caught Victor's interest as "sad trash," Victor observes, "If, instead of this remark, my father had taken pains to explain to me […] I should certainly have thrown [those

books] aside" (22). His father's insensitivity is the beginning of Victor's downfall, demonstrating that men's lack of emotional intelligence can lead to disastrous results.

Mary Shelley conveys the importance of acknowledging the woman behind the man, or in this case, the mother behind the father. The father figure is a significant theme in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, as Victor Frankenstein's relationship with his Creation is the central point of the story, overshadowing the more subtle mother figures. More than that, Shelley indicates that there is no denying the motherly instinct of all women. There is a softness and a gentleness that inhabit most women, a statement that Shelley's mother might have disputed because these qualities are often associated with weakness, but Shelley proves that there is strength in emotions, too. She turns society's views on women's disadvantages into advantages that disprove their limitations. Many failed to recognize the integral roles of women within their families and society. With her novel, Shelley gives her audience insight into the tragic life of a man without a woman.

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The Redemption of the Fall of Eve in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*

NINA ASTORINO

Throughout history, humanity has been obsessed with the idea of sin, an obsession which spans from most traditional religions to many works of literature and film. *Original sin* in the Christian doctrine refers to the story in Genesis depicting the Fall of humankind when Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. This depiction predominately blames Eve for the Fall, as it is she who first eats the fruit after Satan tricks her. In 1667, John Milton retold the story of Creation, adding his own fictional background to the story of Genesis, in his epic poem *Paradise Lost*. Milton makes Eve more sympathetic than she is in Genesis. In the elevation of Eve's story and the degradation of Adam, Milton criticizes the misogyny prevalent at the time and supports printed assertions against the anti-women standards prevalent in the 1600s.

Milton's Eve reflects a stance of gender equality in his depiction of her confession and of God's reaction to it. After the Fall, God questions the couple about why they have disobeyed him. In the poem, Milton quotes the Bible word-for-word as Eve takes the leadership role and accepts responsibility for her actions, confessing to God, "The serpent me beguiled, and I did eat" (10.162). This is a noble act that pleases God, as even in sin, she remains devout and honest. Stella P. Revard asserts the underlying equality shown in the way God delegates blame for the Fall: "[God] neither suggests that she is only partially to blame nor treats her as a creature unable to shoulder the burden of her act and its consequences" (70-71). Revard's interpretation of the text highlights Eve's strength in remaining devout and honest with God. Milton, who here and elsewhere uses Eve's words from Genesis, apparently does not need to add dramatic context in order to develop her as a more likeable character and for the reader to respect Eve's goodness in response to God.

Another way that Milton makes a case for women is through the creation of an Adam more flawed than the biblical Adam. While the faults of Eve are often well documented and frequently cited as character defects in all women, Adam is far from perfect despite his supposedly elevated status over Eve. Adam acts out of regret for his actions, as he must now suffer alongside Eve. In Genesis, Adam says to God, "The women whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (3.12).1 In the Bible, Adam refers to Eve as the gift from God, though he places the blame on Eve; however, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton expands Adam's response to God, blaming Eve and God and suggesting that God's "perfect gift" was beyond suspicion:

This woman whom Thou mad'st to be my help
And gav'st me as Thy perfect gift so good,
So fit, so acceptàble, so divine
That from her hand I could suspect no ill,
And what she did, whatever in itself,
Her doing seemed to justify the deed,
She gave me of the tree and I did eat (10.137-143).

In both passages, Adam blames not only Eve but also God for their Fall since God created Eve. In contrast to Milton's treatment of Eve's confession, which only uses biblical language, this expansion of Genesis more directly shows Adam questioning God's perfection, making Adam more flawed.

Milton creates a more damaging mark against Adam's character. As God further questions Adam on the events leading up to the Fall, the reader knows Adam is lying to God about what happened. Adam claims that he suspected "no ill" from Eve before the Fall, but the reader knows that he did. Right before Adam and Eve separate, they have an argument during which Adam states, "But bid her well beware and still erect / Lest by some fair appearing good surprised / She dìctate false and misinform the will / To do what God expressly hath forbid" (9.353-356). Adam is clearly concerned that Eve will believe false information and disobey God, which shows a perceived fault in her character. The fact that Adam believes Eve capable of sin is not surprising; however, it raises the question of why he does not attempt to stop Eve. If Adam is supposed to be "the goodliest man of men" (4.323), "[innumerably] ordained" (8.297), with "true authority in men" (4.295), then he should do all he can to prevent evil, especially if he believes Eve is a danger to herself. Adam's choice to blame Eve for the Fall shows a lack of accountability for his own inaction.

In addition, though Adam had been concerned that Eve would fall, when Eve asks Adam to eat the fruit with her, she tells him, "On my experience, Adam, freely taste," and Adam eats the apple (9.988). Adam appears to trust her not because of what she says, but due to the knowledge he believes she possesses, despite Adam knowing that eating the fruit may be a spiritual death sentence. According to Kat Lecky, "Milton's emphasis on Eve's experience complicates misogynist interpretations by speaking to a seventeenth-century culture in which 'experience . . . was everywhere exalted.'" (453).[2] During Milton's time, women were rarely given formal positions of power; however, Milton chooses to show that Eve's experience and knowledge of the Garden is substantial enough that, despite any concerns Adam may
have, he trusts her and follows in her footsteps.

Not all scholars have agreed that Milton's depiction of Eve advocates the equality of women. According to Sandra Gilbert, "The story that Milton, [whom

[1] All biblical quotes are from the King James Version.

[2] Lecky quotes from Adrian Johns, "Science and the Book," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. IV: 1557–1695, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie, Cambridge UP, 2002, p. 297.

Virginia Woolf called] 'the first of the masculinists,' most notably tells to women is, of course, the story of woman's secondness, her otherness, and how otherness leads inexorably to her demonic anger, her sin, her Fall, and her exclusion from the garden of the gods." (370). Similarly, other critics have interpreted Milton's Eve as a lesser character who symbolizes the biblical tradition of viewing women as the root of sin and reinforcing the patriarchal, sexist view of women at this time. This view is understandable, as, during the time that *Paradise Lost* was written, women had few rights and were treated as less than men. However, Milton engages with a well-known biblical story that maintains underlying sexist undertones and infuses a dimension and character development that makes Eve more sympathetic than she is in Genesis while diminishing the likeability of the traditional male heroes, God and Adam. Furthermore, I disagree with Gilbert that *Paradise Lost* is about women's secondness. While the text aligns with the biblical tale that she is made from Adam second, Eve is shown to be more knowledgeable about the Garden. Also, when she is tricked, she remains honest and devout, admitting her mistakes and taking accountability for her actions. The depiction of Milton's Eve is not always favorable, but it shows that she is genuine and human.

While many readers have criticized Milton's depiction of Eve in comparison to her biblical counterpart, people striving for equality for women within the modern Church of England have used the overlapping lines of *Paradise Lost* and Genesis to show that women can be held accountable for their actions. A modern interpretation of Adam and Eve's confessions to God has been put forth by Monica Furlong, writer and campaigner for women's status in the twentieth-century Anglican church. Furlong points out, "When accused by God of having broken the commandment he had given them, Eve blamed the serpent, and Adam, refusing to take any responsibility for his own action, blamed Eve" (17). In addition, this scene raises the issue that while Adam is supposed to be the better of the two, acting as the moral compass for them both, he allows his desires to overpower his reasoning. Furlong's elevation of Eve for taking accountability for her actions, even though Eve could have blamed Adam or her perceived ignorance for her own sins, is similar to Milton's elevation of Eve in *Paradise Lost.*

Many Milton scholars interpret Milton's characterization of Eve as opposed to the Eve presented in Genesis. Barbara Lewalski explains that even when Eve is blamed for solely causing their Fall, she responds admirably: "Eve responds first to 'prevenient grace' [11.3], and so first breaks out of the seemingly endless cycle of accusations and recriminations, becoming the human means to lead Adam back from the paralysis of despair to love, repentance, and reconciliation first with his wife and then with God" (473). Significantly, her bringing the couple back together and onto the path to redemption with God establishes Eve in a position of power, as one capable of solving problems, which contradicted gender norms that dictated that men, and by default Adam, should be those to solve life's problems.

Moreover, it is important to distinguish Eve, whom Satan manipulates into sin, and Adam, who blindly follows another human into sin rather than being tricked.

Milton's Eve is not perfect by any means. She is a mere mortal, vain and lacking proper reasoning skills at times. Her vanity is evident from the very beginning when Eve pines over her own reflection, crooning, “Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks / Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed / Mine eyes till now and pined with vain desire” (4.464-466). Throughout the poem, Milton indicates possible signs of trouble regarding Eve. Satan specifically targets Eve, knowing that tricking her will be easier when Adam is not with her; however, none of these character traits attributed to Eve in *Paradise Lost* are present in Genesis. She is deceived in both stories, but it only takes Eve’s asking to convince Adam to join her in disobeying God. Eve is supposed to answer to Adam (“she for God in him”), while Adam is "for God only" (4.299). Adam does not abide by this command when he listens to Eve, even though it is against God's will. Adam suffers as a result, and in this sense, it is Adam's failure, not Eve's, that brings the downfall of humanity.

At the time when Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*, the seventeenth-century mainstream Christian Church prevented women from having leadership roles due to the way the Eve of Genesis is interpreted, which is different than how Eve is portrayed in *Paradise Lost* and which points to the misogyny prevalent during Milton’s time. The biblical injunction states, “Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Timothy 2.11-14). The Bible here claims Adam is not deceived, which apparently means he chooses to fall, but this is not the problem; the problem is that Eve is deceived. As a result of this sort of bias against women, it has been difficult for women to achieve places of power in the Christian Church.[3]

The underlying sexism in biblical stories and the blatant misogyny in the seventeenth-century mainstream Christian Church has carried on well beyond Milton's time. For example, in 1916, George Tolman, a historical writer and preacher, spoke before The Concord Antiquarian Society, an organization which had been devoted to preserving local history since 1422, about how church officials have been overly critical of women. Tolman explained that he believes women should enhance their appearances, as much as is allowed by God's will, which is arguably sexist; however, he acknowledges that women have been judged for improving their appearance as “the stricter portion of the people, and especially their spiritual leaders, did not look with favoring eyes upon these innocent feminine traits, and the pulpits and General Courts fulminated temporal and financial as eternal and spiritual penalties against their indulgence” (Tolman 16). From this, it is seen that women are

[3] In 1642, “I. H.” wrote a response to the Church: “Now let us [see] if any of you blind [priests] can [speak] after this manner, and [see] if it, not a better Sermon then any of you can make, who are against women speaking?” This proto-feminist piece of writing argues that women are just as competent of speaking in church as men and interrogates the mainstream seventeenth-century Church regarding the exclusion of women.

criticized for enhancing their appearances and remaining natural, which is unfair to them. Although this speech was written long after the publication of *Paradise Lost*, one can see that Milton rejects this long-standing criticism of feminine traits in the seventeenth-century mainstream Christian Church by maintaining Eve's beauty and desirability, as seen when Adam delights in "[b]oth of her beauty and submissive charms," while keeping her as a more likable character than God or Adam (4.498).

Although the Bible and *Paradise Lost* are not the same, the two stories are often conflated, yet significant differences in details change the message of Milton's epic. His additions alter how one views Adam and Eve. Shannon Miller highlights this difference when she argues that, "The protracted experience that Adam and Eve have in the Garden—rather than the almost immediate Fall conventionally represented within analogues—allowed Milton time to explore Eve's character" (56). The development of Eve most dramatically sets *Paradise Lost* and the story of Genesis apart, changing her from the first woman who sins and disgraces humankind because she is tricked to a character with complex emotions and reasoning. Milton portrays her as one who makes a mistake but who is not solely responsible for humankind's downfall. In addition, Mary Nyquist challenges the continued interchangeability of *Paradise Lost* with Genesis: "For in spite of the existence of scholarly studies of Genesis in its various exegetical traditions, the view that the relationship of *Paradise Lost* to Genesis is basically direct or at least unproblematically mediated continues to flourish" (101). The two texts are not the same and therefore not transitive. Nyquist's interpretation that some readers unrightfully conflate *Paradise Lost* and the Bible to justify misogynistic interpretations of *Paradise Lost* reinforces Milton's apparent condemnation of the misogyny Adam uses against Eve. The reader who finds Adam demeaning towards Eve and who judges him as a result is representative of the characterization of gender that Milton establishes.

Milton appears to side with women's criticisms at the time through his depiction of the important males in the story, God and Adam. God is supposed to represent the ultimate good, but the God of *Paradise Lost* is not particularly likable. From the beginning, Milton makes Satan's disdain for God clear, as Satan and his demons contemplate how they will get revenge against God. Alternatively, Milton presents an image of God that makes Satan's anger seem justified, as the demons lament the dictatorship of God, while Satan, in contrast, appears to be a likable and often relatable character.

While the grievances against God are more subtle, Milton creates an Adam who is rude and demeaning. One example that shows Adam as the lesser person occurs after their Fall. Because Adam believes Eve is ungrateful that he fell for her, he becomes hateful towards her and once again lies, "What seem'd in thee so perfect that I thought / No evil durst attempt thee" (9.1179-1180). However, Adam previously had believed Eve was weak and could be corrupted by sin. Next, Milton describes Adam as moving beyond justifiable anger to foolish rudeness. Adam not

only claims he regrets his actions and blames Eve but that he also condemns all women by saying,

> Thus it shall befall
> Him who to worth in women overtrusting
> Lets her will rule! Restraint she will not brook
> And left t'herself if evil thence ensue
> She first his weak indulgence will accuse. (9.1182-1186)

Although this argument is exceptionally misogynistic, it may be that the reader is supposed to judge Adam for this sexism, as his argument over-generalizes to the point of being silly. Adam claims that all women are bad and will tempt men; however, Eve is the only woman he knows. He makes a broad generalization about half of the human race, most of which does not yet exist. We may be inclined to feel worse about Eve's having to cope with Adam than we feel about Adam's decision to fall for Eve or his regret for having done so.

In contrast to Milton's characterization of Adam, his characterization of Eve highlights the good in women even though she is blamed for humankind's downfall. Even worse than the underlying sexism that pervades society to this day, the sexism presented by Milton's male characters reflects the time in which he wrote, as men excluded women from the Church and undermined their faith and actions. The writing of these individuals who spoke out against the anti-woman culture of the 1600s led to the development of modern women's demands for equal rights. As a result, the modern feminist movement has been able to rise above Milton's more subtle call for female empowerment to active protest and elected women in the government passing feminist reform. In keeping with Milton's Eve and with other writers who championed women's rights both then and now, there is still a long way to go until women are treated as true equals in literature and society.

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A Literary Feast: William Shakespeare, Paradox, and Rosemary's Many Meanings

MADELEINE IACO

"Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?" (2.4.201-02). And doth not rosemary improve most recipes? Used long before Shakespeare's day, the herb rosemary has a long history of culinary flavor, medicinal usage, and allegorical symbolism. The supposed health benefits and symbolism of rosemary were no mystery to Shakespeare. We see him use herbology and its symbolism in many plays, but as we magnify his herbal metaphors, their complexity grows, as if he were crafting hidden recipes of meaning. Rosemary is a strong herb whose aroma and flavor go a long way. Thus, Shakespeare often uses rosemary as a symbol for the necessity of moderation and restraint while exploiting its paradoxical properties. The application of rosemary, when used as a form of seasoning, requires thoughtfulness and a steady hand; otherwise, the balance of the entire meal is thrown off, much like a Shakespeare play thrown into chaos. He often mixes rosemary into the story with symbolic excess, bringing attention to paradoxes while commenting about life, death, marriage, and identity. This paper will examine four of Shakespeare's plays and argue that the author uses the paradoxical qualities of rosemary with potent and yet inspiring restraint to craft complex layers within his characters and their stories. The Bard does this by seasoning his plays with this herbal symbolism. In this process Shakespeare appears to understand the limits of moderation and the temporary imbalance achieved by exceeding its limits. As a result of this imbalance, we often see characters behaving paradoxically in paradoxical situations. Through a balancing act of herbal symbolism, Shakespeare provides healing transformations and resolutions.

Peter G. Platt studies the frequent use of paradox in Renaissance-era works and how Shakespeare so readily relied on them in his plays. Platt refers to the paradoxes in Shakespeare's work as "crucial to a transformation of mind" (12) and believes that "Shakespearean drama reveals that paradox can 'neutralize,' stupefy, overwhelm, even annihilate. But the plays also suggest that paradoxes can—if we let them […] help bring variety, complexity, and insight to a world that too often can seem weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" (16). We can view rosemary as a paradox but also a trigger of "stupefying, overwhelming" events that call attention to the transformative experiences the audience might witness.

Philip Williams discusses the symbolism and history of rosemary in Shakespeare's works. Williams's focus is the paradoxes found in *Romeo and Juliet* (c. 1595). Rosemary "is itself a paradoxical plant [. . .]. [I]t signified remembrance and was customarily employed at both weddings and funerals. Because of its dual usage, rosemary has both favorable and unfavorable connotations: it suggests both love and

death" (401-02). This subtle connection between the plot of Shakespeare's plays and its herbal symbolism demonstrates layers of deep questions regarding life, death, morality, and peace. A study of the deeper contextual history in our literary feast shows that Shakespeare's symbolic use of rosemary is a paradoxical tool for critiquing the characters, their society, their situations and their transformative experiences.

The story of the rosemary plant has been slow cooking for thousands of years. Although there is no exact date as to when these herbal practices began, we can confirm they were created centuries before Shakespeare. In ancient Greece and Rome, one could find a rosemary plant growing on its native coast of the Mediterranean or in the gardens outside homes. The ancient Greeks and Romans valued this plant above most others, as it was recognized for its healing and preservation properties, as well as its ability to ward off evil spirits ("History"). It was brewed in teas or added to tonics and wine. It was also used to preserve foods (Habtemariam). It was commonly thought to cure all ills; it was used to fight coughs, colds, and many other maladies. These legitimate findings of healing and preservative properties led to the development of more exaggerated folklore. Greek students would wear it around their necks or place it under their pillows during exam time for maximum luck (Perry). It was also found in early sterilization techniques ("History").

Soon, other countries throughout Europe adopted the plant for its health benefits. By the thirteenth century, the herb was believed to help preserve youthfulness and was used for skincare (Picton and Pickering 76). During the plague of 1665 it was either burned to clean the air or carried by people for good luck and good health ("History"). These practices also gave way to new symbolism and folklore. In Christian culture, rosemary is often likened to the legacy of Christ. If well-cared for, it is said that the plant can live up to 33 years, the same lifespan as Jesus himself (Picton and Pickering 75). As a health remedy or Christian metaphor, rosemary can revitalize or "resurrect" one's health when its declining—most likely derived from the belief that rosemary can purify your blood vessels, which would then lead to an increase in circulation and better memory (Habtemariam).

Some of the longest-standing folklore traditions regarding rosemary concern weddings and funerals. Couples might receive the gift of rosemary to ensure a lucky, happy, peaceful, and prosperous married life. The bride or groom could even use it as an accessory at the wedding (Picton and Pickering 74). In the Middle Ages, couples would plant rosemary, and its growth was a good omen for the union (Perry). If rosemary signals a happy beginning to married life, the herb also aligns with the tradition of laying rosemary on the grave of those who have passed, an act that ensures the deceased a lucky, happy, peaceful, and prosperous afterlife. It also ensures that our loved ones will not be forgotten ("History").

In the Renaissance, Shakespeare's work shows a deep awareness of the complex history of rosemary and its applications. Like a chef preparing an exquisite multi-course meal, Shakespeare serves us rosemary in all its paradoxical forms in

multiple plays (or, dare I say, plates). For our first appetizer, we will be delving into *King Lear* (c. 1606). Edgar, accused by his illegitimate brother of trying to kill their father, is forced to take on the identity of a madman. In the course of the play, his faked madness seems to transform into genuine madness. His reference to rosemary (2.3.16) in his early monologue signals the herb's relationship to memory and his later attempt to manifest sanity, or any resonance of who he was before the false accusation. (He ends this monologue with "Edgar nothing I am" [l. 21].) Furthermore, the rosemary can indicate that he is mourning the person he had been, as rosemary might be used at a funeral. Finally, the paradox reveals a darker, "mad" part of Edgar that had existed all along: by pretending to be mad, he is unknowingly being authentic.

Hamlet (c. 1599), our second appetizer for this evening, covers themes of death, betrayal, and power. When her father dies Ophelia, like Edgar, is thrown into a bout of madness, during which time she remarks, "And there's rosemary, that's for remembrance" (4.5.170). As in *King Lear*, she can be asking here that her former self be remembered. More generally, these words reflect the tradition of using rosemary during a funeral service to mourn loved ones, as well as their symbolic use in resurrection and purification. Ophelia's mention of rosemary, therefore, functions to mourn her father and to summon her father back, as mourners often wish they could. Also, perhaps she hopes that phrase will manifest a happy, peaceful, and prosperous afterlife for her now-passed father. In these two monologues, the word "rosemary" seems to pinpoint a moment within the two characters' lives when their balance or moderation is thrown off by the hardships they face.

The soup is *The Winter's Tale* (c. 1611) stew. The play has a strong taste of jealousy and loss, while still revealing undertones of forgiveness, identity, and love. In the play, Perdita hands out herbs to the disguised Polixenes and Camillo, each herb chosen for its specific meaning. She informs them: "Reverend sirs, / For you there's rosemary and rue. These keep / Seeming and savor all the winter long. / Grace and remembrance be to you both (4.4.84-89). As noted, rosemary is linked to peaceful funerals and happy marriages. This paradox of rosemary here represents the earlier death of Perdita's mother and older brother and her future marriage to the Prince of Bohemia. In this scene, Perdita, through her reference to rosemary, pays homage to the royal deaths that surrounded her birth, while referencing the royal wedding in her future. (As we'll see, there is similar foreshadowing in *Romeo and Juliet*.) A final paradox is that Perdita grew up as a humble daughter of a shepherd, but her true origins, as well as her future, are in royalty. These two opposite identities exist in one character.

For our main course there is a deeper analysis of *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare's *mise en place* (the preparation of ingredients before cooking starts) foreshadows the turning points, but the narrative's resolution demonstrates that although it may seem over-seasoned, potent with tragedy, the dramatic arc is still balanced, tender, and delicious. First, there is the garnish, in this case, lines by Friar

Lawrence, who counsels Juliet's parents:

> She's not well married that lives married long;
> But she's best married that dies married young.
> Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
> On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,
> In all her best array bear her to church:
> For though fond nature bids us all lament,
> Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment. (4.5.77-83)

Friar Lawrence not only speaks of her marriage, but he "mis-en-places" her funeral before it even happens, and he speaks of laying rosemary on her "corse" (corpse). He speaks directly to the customs of rosemary regarding weddings and funerals. Not only does he reveal her marriage and predict her death through talking about rosemary's customs, but he subtly demonstrates the paradox of rosemary by combining both symbols under a singular custom. It is also significant that the Friar speaks of this marriage-death rosemary paradox, since he conducts both ceremonies.

As the main attraction of this dish, the lines from Juliet's Nurse have the potential of multiple complex meanings in just a tablespoon of words: "Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both / with a letter?" (2.4.201-02). The nurse uses the first common representation of rosemary, to celebrate the upcoming wedding of Juliet and Romeo, comparing the good omen of rosemary to the potentially good omen of Romeo. Another possible folkloric representation is the belief that if a man cannot smell rosemary, or if he does not enjoy the smell, then he will be an "inferior lover" ("History"). In this context, we can see Romeo as a paradox as well, for he is both a good omen and unqualified for love, as the day before he meets Juliet, he is pining after another girl. However, the most notable conclusion regarding this line is that rosemary represents death. In this sense, the nurse unknowingly "mis-en-places" rosemary as foreshadowing for the lovers' deaths. The paradox of rosemary also reflects the paradox of the Capulet and Montague families. It seems as if this age-long feud can only be fixed by the young lovers' marriage or death, two opposite solutions which create yet another paradox. The reference to rosemary also signals the purification of Verona as a result of their tragic deaths, as many health benefits of rosemary are promoted as "purifying." An excess quantity of rosemary finally ends the Capulet and Montague rivalry, revealing the play's ultimate paradox: an excess of death eventually gives way to peace.

Rosemary is a healing herb, and in the process of healing, the wound always gets worse before it gets better. The process is painful, and one is unsure of its outcome. If one burns rosemary to purify the air, the smell potent and unpleasant, but after the smoke disperses the new air is purified. In these four plays, we see rosemary used either as a tool of foreshadowing or as a turning point of events. When rosemary

appears in the dialogue, transformations begin, culminating in truth, wisdom, and purification. In *The Winter's Tale* and *Romeo and Juliet*, an excess of tragedy and death gives way to peace and forgiveness. An excess of madness gives way to truth in *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. The paradoxes and herbal symbolism in Shakespeare's works highlight the conflicts of the stories while offering healing solutions. According to Platt, the paradoxes found are a "discovery of double, multiple perspectives" (1). This multiplicity is apparent in rosemary's symbolism. The occurrence of the word enhances themes and paradoxes in a story, potentially representing some of rosemary's healing qualities, its pungent and flavorful traits, its folklore, and the traditions that make it a complex paradox itself. It is no wonder Shakespeare would have kept this herb handy on his spice rack.

Shakespeare's plays demonstrate that moderation balances his stories concerning life or death, peace or chaos, and sanity or madness. Rosemary can bring healing properties and heavenly tastes when used correctly, but when that line of moderation is crossed, one discovers the other side of the paradox: a bit too much rosemary, and the story is thrown into chaos. Rosemary itself becomes a symbol of balance (and lack of balance) in Shakespeare's plays. The herb foreshadows many outcomes before dinner is served. One might say Shakespeare is a literary chef himself, balancing all the symbolism, themes, and paradoxes in the perfect ratios, showing the absurdity of the stories and the complexity of the characters, making it a memorable feast.

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Hyde-ing the Hero: An Analysis of Moral Corruption in Robert L. Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Feodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*

VICTOR COLOME

In the context of literature, a story rarely has no effect on the reader. Intentionally or not, authors always leave behind lessons of some kind. This logic can be applied to all tales but most notably to those stories which concern moral corruption. Many perceive these tales as cautionary, warning readers to avoid the mistakes of morally corrupt protagonists. However, these supposedly immoral characters can sometimes serve as figures of admiration rather than criticism. For example, this is true of the protagonists in Feodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). While some believe Dostoevsky's Raskólnikov and Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll are dangerous and crazed individuals, they are martyrs who seek to improve society through their transgressions.

The narratives of both *Crime and Punishment* and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* follow men who commit acts considered horrendous by society. They are thus labeled as evil, or, as Nicholas Berdyaev writes regarding Raskólnikov, "pitiless, impious, and inhuman." (584). Many contend that both Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll do not act according to moral law, which provides the rationale to consider both characters morally bankrupt. However, this position oversimplifies the complex ideas of these novels, and it is necessary to analyze the motives of the protagonists, as well as examine the classifications themselves.

Confirming or disproving Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll as unjust characters calls for an evaluation of definitions. The term "morality" refers to "behaviour conforming to moral law or accepted moral standards, esp. in relation to sexual matters," while "moral" is partly defined as "of or relating to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil."[1] These definitions suggest that "moral" includes the ability to distinguish right and wrong, as well as to abide by the unspoken rules and values of society. "Corruption" is more challenging to define as it relates to morality, since it is both "[c]hanged from the naturally sound condition, esp. by decomposition or putrefaction developed or incipient" and "[d]ebased in character; infected with evil; depraved; perverted; evil, wicked."[2] While both definitions add to our understanding of the concept of corruption, neither encompasses the term. A more fitting definition for corruption is "depravity." The word "deprave" means to "make bad; to pervert in

[1] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "morality," 3. a. and "moral," 1. a.

[2] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "corruption," II., 2, a. and II., 4.

character or quality; to deteriorate, impair, spoil, vitiate," which connects both character and moral behavior.[3] Therefore, to be morally corrupt is to be changed from a condition where one can determine right from wrong and follow societal standards to a position where one does neither or does them improperly.

If one adheres to these definitions, Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll are indeed morally corrupt. However, the characters' complexity, especially when one considers the definitions in parts, leaves much unaddressed. On one hand, the characters are not morally corrupt because they are able to determine right from wrong. Raskólnikov, for example, clearly differentiates the two. At the start of the novel, when he contemplates murdering Alëna Ivánovna, he expresses his fear, exclaiming, "How could such a horrible idea enter my mind? What vileness my heart seems capable of! The point is, that it is vile, filthy, horrible, horrible!" (6). He acknowledges that even considering murder is immoral and just as frightening as the action itself. Even after murdering the sisters, Raskólnikov's conscience never falters. He clearly criticizes Svidrigáylov, telling Razumíkhin, "Dúnya must be protected from" Svidrigáylov because he is "very much afraid of that man" (248-49). He also foils Lúzhin's manipulations to become Dúnya's benefactor and savior through financial means. If Raskólnikov were morally corrupt, he might have considered Svidrigáylov and Lúzhin friends rather than enemies. The same logic can be applied to Dr. Jekyll, who, like Raskólnikov, recognizes the evil that resides within him, stating "I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse" (55). Even when he reverts once again to his alter-ego, Dr. Jekyll is conscious of Hyde's actions and experiences, such as the trampling of the young girl and the murder of Sir Danvers Carew. He laments these transgressions, stating, "Into the details of the infamy at which I thus connived (for even now I can scarce grant that I committed it) I have no design of entering" (53). His aversion to Hyde's shameful actions demonstrates that his moral compass remains unimpaired

On the other hand, one could contend that Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll are morally corrupt simply because they act outside of societal norms. However, this argument is problematic because any action not conforming to society's expectations might be considered immoral. Also, morals generally are established based on the collective rather than the individual; what is just for one community may be unjust for another, making social definitions of good and evil unreliable. In Victorian England (1837-1901), during which time *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was written, social definitions were especially problematic given this era of mercurial, judgmental, and hypocritical sentiments. As Walter Houghton notes,

> One, [Victorian-era people] concealed or suppressed their true convictions and natural tastes. They said the "right" thing or did the "right" thing: they sacrificed sincerity to propriety. Second, and worse, they pretended to be

[3] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "corruption," II., 2, a. and II., 4.

> better than they were. They passed themselves off as being incredibly pious and moral; they talked noble sentiments and lived—quite otherwise. Finally, they refused to look at life candidly. They shut their eyes to whatever was ugly or unpleasant and pretended it didn't exist. Conformity, moral pretension, and evasion—those are the hallmarks of Victorian hypocrisy. (146)

Victorians went great lengths to safeguard their values, often turning to science for rational explanations. Criminal anthropology was established as a profession, and experiments were conducted that claimed to have "[identified] born criminals because they [bore] anatomical signs of their apishness" but were later found to have no merit (Gould 133). Although Houghton's observations are specific to Victorian society, historically most populations strive to portray themselves as just, compassionate, and understanding, while simultaneously condemning others and ignoring their own inner desires. However, during a discussion of good and evil in Plato's *Republic* (c. 375 B.C.E), Glaucon proposes that if one were to give "the just man and the unjust license to do whatever he wants [we] would catch the just man red-handed going the same way as the unjust man out of a desire to get the better. […] No one is willingly just unless compelled to be so" (359c-60c). In this way, morality is fluid, and the perspective of the masses is subject to change. Perhaps we blame men like Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll to escape the uncomfortable truth these novels address: regardless of one's place in social hierarchy, all are capable of unjust behavior.

Whether just or unjust, Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll prove to be necessary elements in society. These protagonists, and others like them, shock the middle class out of their fictional, shared utopia and into harsh reality through exposure to taboo subjects like murder, manipulation, abuse, and criminality. The characters are both intimidating and appealing due to their relatability. Most consider themselves like Dr. Jekyll, "[learning] to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream" (49), or like Raskólnikov, who "[amused himself] with fancies, children's games" (2). Their dreams, however fantastical, are admirable, coherent, and above all, well-intentioned. Raskólnikov's experiments on himself and human nature test if he is fit for power. As Sergei V. Belov states, "Raskolnikov does not seek power out of vanity. He wants to acquire power in order to devote himself entirely to service to human beings; he wants to use power only for the good of the people" (490). Similarly, Dr. Jekyll hopes the potion that creates Mr. Hyde will make it so "life would be relieved of all that was unbearable" (49). Both characters' willingness to dedicate themselves to serving humankind is hardly worth condemning. However, their ability to act out these dreams make them both dangerous to and unique in society.

This uniqueness stems from the characters' extended capacity to do more than is allowed. They transcend or, in Raskólnikov's case, transgress beyond society's structure and restrictions to benefit both themselves and others. These characters are comparable to Plato's philosopher-kings as demonstrated in his cave analogy. In the *Republic*, Socrates describes prisoners bound by their legs and necks from childhood

and facing the wall in a cave. They are only shown shadow puppets projected by a fire behind them, and the prisoners begin "naming these things going by before them that they see" and eventually "hold that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of artificial things" (515b-515c). Socrates continues that if a prisoner were to exit the cave and see the truth for himself rather than accept the information conveyed through the puppets, he would surely return as "the source of laughter" and that it would be "said of him that he went up and came back with his eyes corrupted" (517a). Like this enlightened prisoner, Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll deviate from accepted standards in the pursuit of truth. Plato holds that few people can be true philosophers because most are led by the irrational parts of their souls that pine for the luxurious lifestyle of food, drink, and sexual pleasures. Philosophers, on the other hand, are insatiable "[desirers] of wisdom," "willing to taste every kind of learning with gusto and [approaching] learning with delight" (475b-475c). Plato deems such individuals who favor knowledge and self-discovery as necessary in forming and ruling a just city. Similarly, these philosopher-kings, Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll, as morally corrupt as they seem, lead us to new and clearer understanding.

As poet William Blake notes in "Proverbs of Hell," "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." Raskólnikov, Dr. Jekyll, and other morally corrupt characters fulfill the role of philosopher-king through their mistakes and transgressions, thereby extending the boundaries of knowledge. These characters return to the cave in order to reveal truth about society's deceptive culture. Their actions impact readers and, in turn, impact the public, providing the tools necessary to escape the lies society thrives on. Thus, it could be said that although the murders committed are evil, they could be justified out of the notion of necessity. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* shows that evil is equally as necessary and natural as good, that evil should be accepted as a natural part of life, and that disturbing the ties between them yields drastic consequences.

Just as their transgressions serve to bring about truth, the downfalls of Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll present yet another lesson. Nicholas Berdyaev notes that the pains the characters endure serve as a test of freedom and faith: "Dostoevsky believed firmly in the redemptive and regenerative power of suffering: life is the expiation of sin by suffering. Freedom has opened the path of evil to man, it is a proof of freedom, and man must pay the price. The price is suffering, and by it the freedom that has been spoiled and turned into its contrary is reborn and given back to man" (581). Like good and evil, society and such transgressors are destined to be intertwined. Without transgressors, the structure and morality of civilizations would never be questioned or transformed. It is also the transgressor's destiny to be martyred and to complete the cycle of transgression and redemption that Berdyaev mentions. Sometimes this process is overtly religious. Konstantin Mochulsky notes that the purpose of Doestoevsky's novel is to assert that "there is no freedom other than freedom in Christ" (512). Redemption can be found in other, non-religious forms, as well. Dr. Jekyll finds redemption through acceptance of his fault and the relinquishing of his freedom, stating, "Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my

confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (62). Similarly, Raskólnikov is saved by his love of Sonya. This cycle of redemption allows readers to transgress vicariously while the fictional transgressors fulfill their roles as the philosopher-kings.

Though widely seen as evil, Raskólnikov and Dr. Jekyll are complex heroes who seek to improve their world. Judging them based on subjective concepts like morality diminishes their overall value. As characters who transgress society's deceptive structures, they highlight the hypocrisy that many, knowingly or otherwise,try desperately to preserve. While their actions are horrific, their crimes help us better understand the nature of mankind; all people, no matter how just, possess evil within them.

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The Gay in Gray: Homoeroticism in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) by Oscar Wilde is well-known for its sexual provocation and its underlying homoerotic element. Sections of the novel were used against Wilde during his indecency trials in 1895, and these passages supported accusations of his partaking in homosexual acts, despite the lack of any graphic description of homosexual behavior.[1] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "homoeroticism" is "[s]exual or romantic attraction to, or engagement in sexual activity with, people of one's own sex." Homoeroticism differs from homosexuality, which suggests a more permanent state of sexual identity rather than simply desires. Also, Wilde discreetly employs multiple aphrodisiacs such as strawberries, flowers, and silk to convey methods of seduction. Furthermore, the interactions between male characters in the novel suggest the eroticism of homosocial relationships. As Luljeta Muriqi observes, "Although Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is considered to be one of the best known homoerotic novels ever written, the novel does not contain any explicit statements of homoeroticism which leaves the novel to be more suggestive work of such theme" (3). Although *The Picture of Dorian Gray* does not explicitly demonstrate homosexual acts, the language, gestures, and other visual imagery reinforce the homoerotic nature of the male characters' relationships and, through the use of aphrodisiacs and the passionate encounters, reinforces and advocates homosexuality.

Aphrodisiacs

Many world cultures have long believed in short-term restorative methods to increase sexual appetite. These aphrodisiacs serve as instruments of seduction and are connected to themes of intimacy and eroticism. Lord Henry Wotton says, "Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul" (21). Aphrodisiacs seem to dominate the senses, inducing one into a dream-like state.

While reading *Dorian Gray*, the reader is taken into a wild journey of self-discovery, hedonism, and sexual freedom. Lord Henry, older and well-educated, understands how to manipulate Dorian. As he controls Dorian's environment, Lord Henry inspires sin and lust in order to seduce his prey. In the novel, the presence of flowers, including roses, poppies, and orchids, is very evident. They are vividly described, their unique shapes, colors, and scents, and often invoke sexual intimacy. Roses are traditionally a "symbol of love and desire" ("Twelve"). They increase sex drive while relieving stress. Orchids are "a symbol of desirability" due to their

[1] See Ellmann, pp. 435-78, for a full account of the trial.

aesthetic beauty and production of vanilla beans. "Vanilla and orchid both produce a sexual lust." Modern science has confirmed the Mayan and Aztec's use of vanilla beans as a natural medicine and aphrodisiac (Rain). Poppy flowers are considered aphrodisiacs because of their vibrant colors that "boost […] sexual imagination and desire" ("Twelve"). They also lead to the production of dopamine, which enhances mood. In the novel, flowers establish sexual tension and reflect the characters' relationships. Near the beginning of the novel, as Dorian listens to Lord Henry, a bee lands on a blossom and starts consuming its nectar: "A furry bee came and buzzed round it for a moment. […] The flower seemed to quiver, and then swayed gently to and fro" (23-24). This image creates an ominous foreshadowing of Lord Henry and Dorian's future relationship, a bee consuming the sweet nectar of a beautiful blossom.

Dorian Gray embodies a hedonistic ideology, where the valuable life involves indulgence in the senses and pleasure.[2] Dorian becomes fascinated with activities that please his senses and intoxicated by the adrenaline that his hedonistic lifestyle provides. Gray's fixation with silk is sensual and obsessive: "[T]here was something that quickened his imagination" (117). The novel provides the reader with images of silk laid upon human skin, inducing almost a heavenly or orgasmic state. In *Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde effectively stimulates the reader through such images that invade the senses.

Basil Hallward and Dorian Gray

The description of Basil's infatuation with Dorian, evident from the very beginning of the novel, is more straightforward evidence of homosexuality: "When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me. [If] I allowed [his fascinating personality] to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. […] I have always been my own master […] till I met Dorian Gray. […] We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again" (10). Although Basil learns to love in "secrecy," his affection for Dorian is never discreet; it is passionate, erotic, and tangible. Basil's confession confirms the speculation of same-sex desire. He admits with a fervent intensity:

> Dorian, from the moment I met you, your personality had the most extraordinary influence over me. I was dominated, soul, brain, and power by you. […] I worshipped you. I grew jealous of everyone to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself. I was only happy when I was with you. […] Weeks and weeks went on, and I grew more and more absorbed in you. (95)

This intimate confession assures the reader of Basil's romantic feelings for Dorian. However, Dorian never reciprocates those feelings. He reflects, "There seemed to him

2 *Oxford English Dictionary*, "hedonism," "The doctrine or theory of ethics in which pleasure is regarded as the chief good, or the proper end of action."

to be something tragic in a friendship so coloured by romance" (97). Basil represents a kind of pure idealistic love drowned out by Dorian's lechery. However, Lord Henry's temptation of hedonism, much more appealing to Dorian, offers temporary satisfaction but also eternal damnation.

Domination is another important theme in *Dorian Gray*. The characters of *Dorian Gray* express romance, and the novel navigates its homoeroticism through dominant / subservient roles. Emotionally, mentally, and physically Basil is dominated by Dorian. Basil confesses to Harry, "As long as I live, the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me" (15). In cruel subjection, Basil willingly submits himself to Dorian: "Every day. I couldn't be happy if I didn't see him every day. He is absolutely necessary to me" (12). Also, elements of bondage and the desire for the same-sex relations are frequent. Basil and Dorian's co-dependent relationship resembles that of a slave and a master.

Lord Henry Wotton and Dorian Gray

There are parallels between Basil and Lord Henry's reactions to Dorian Gray. Lord Henry compliments Dorian's beauty on various occasions, establishing his physical attraction to Dorian: "Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth was there, as well as all youth's passionate purity. […] No wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him" (17). When Dorian and Henry first meet in Basil's garden, the encounter is extremely sensual:

> Lord Henry went out to the garden, and found Dorian Gray burying his face in the great cool lilac-blossoms, feverishly drinking in their perfume as if it had been wine. He came close to him, and put his hand upon his shoulder. […] The lad started and drew back. He was bare-headed, and the leaves had tossed his rebellious curls and tangled all their gilded threads. There was a look of fear in his eyes, such as people have when they are suddenly awakened. His finely-chiselled nostrils quivered, and some hidden nerve shook the scarlet of his lips and left them trembling. (21)

Lord Henry perceives Dorian as an ethereal being; at first glance he is immediately captivated and feels an intense, magnetic pull towards Dorian.

Throughout the book, Lord Henry seems to indulge himself in Dorian's beauty, always making eye contact and admiring Dorian's lips. As Jessica Hale notes, "In many romance novels of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the eyes were pools of desire, and the mutual glance a form of flirtatious, erotic foreplay" (13). Dorian's eyes always seem to express his emotions. Henry "felt that the eyes of Dorian Gray were fixed on him […]. [Dorian] never took his gaze off him, but sat like one under a spell, smiles chasing each other over his lips, and wonder growing grave in his darkening eyes" (39). From the subtle glances to direct eye contact, both seem

mesmerized by and infatuated with one another. In these moments between Dorian and Lord Henry, the reader feels the danger of a forbidden encounter and the magnetic pull of sin. The book glamorizes these sexual taboos and invites the reader to consider those "unthinkable" possibilities.

Lord Henry's theories and aphorisms seem to trap Dorian's soul in a state of insatiability. Steven Seidman says, "The individual becomes trapped in a life of sexual excess and perversion. He […] becomes unwittingly the 'slave of his passions.'" (50). Lord Henry's influence over Dorian is seductive, touching Dorian's erogenous spot, his mind, and this dynamic relationship between Dorian Gray and Lord Henry was used against Wilde in the 1895 indecency trials where Wilde admitted to the court he had invited young men to his hotel room for stimulating conversations. These relationships have a common theme: the appetizing, yet taboo, pleasures of same-sex desire.

Homoerotic Male Friendships: Conclusion

In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the bonding of these three characters, the power struggles between them, and the ambiguity of Dorian's bodily pleasures help one to speculate regarding Oscar Wilde's homoerotic intentions for the novel. Ed Cohen says, "Wilde's 'obviously' homoerotic text signifies its 'deviant' concerns while never explicitly violating the dominant norms for heterosexuality. That Wilde's novel encodes traces of male homoerotic desire seems to be ubiquitously, though tacitly, affirmed" (Cohen 805). Although the text is "saturated with homoerotic sexual feeling" (Carroll 394), the obscure relationship between all three male protagonists supports the "highly emotional friendships between boys but [denies] that they [result] in sexual intercourse" (Trumbach 4). However, although no explicit sexual encounters occur, this apparent absence of explicit homosexual acts, the emphasis on aphrodisiacs, and the passionate interactions between male characters nevertheless suggest same-sex desire.

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Philosophizing William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: An Analysis of Hamlet's Development

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Philosophical schools of thought are integrated into many, if not all of William Shakespeare's works. *Hamlet* (c 1599), in particular, evokes the inspection of human desire, knowledge, and emotions through the creation of the character, Hamlet. In his soliloquies, Hamlet displays a concern for the existential human condition that involves a desire to find the value and meaning of his own life before death--revealing his neurotic, curious, and reflective qualities as he internalizes these considerations. With these possessions, he embarks on a journey of self-discovery and adjustment, while simultaneously being faced with challenges that contribute to his eventual quietus.

Although Hamlet's downfall and internal conflicts may seem initiated by the discovery of his father's death, the complexity of Hamlet's character begs a closer inspection. Hamlet's multi-dimensional identity is produced primarily by a growing curiosity in the existential human condition (both in life and death), his attempts to self-regulate behavior, and his desire to achieve autonomy and uniqueness above other men. His development of the self can be illustrated best by analyzing his soliloquies, concluding with an exploration of and comparison to Montaigne's essays "On Solitude" and "To Philosophize is to Learn How to Die."

Understanding the Existential Human Condition in *Hamlet*

Hamlet's increased knowledge and embitterment coexist with his thinking abstractly about life and death, meaning, and purpose, and these elements significantly influence Hamlet's character development throughout the play. Existentialism is a "philosophical movement or approach which focuses on the analysis of human existence and on individual human beings as agents freely determining by their choices [upon gaining knowledge] what they will become."[1] Jean-Paul Sartre, expanding this definition regarding existential thinking, argues, "humans [...] try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe" (Mastin). Sartre's extension not only notes the importance of an individual's moral honesty and "authenticity [...] to grasp human existence" ("Existentialism") but also accentuates the influence external conditions have on human freedom—inhibiting rational decision making "despite existing in an irrational universe." Considering the many ways that existentialism is defined in different contexts, Sartre's idea of regarding the self as a victim of one's environment seems very pertinent to Hamlet's character. After Claudius and his mother speak to him regarding his father's death and

[1] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "existentialism," 2.

implore him not to return to school in Wittenberg, Hamlet reflects on their improperly "hasty" (2.2.57) relationship and the value and meaning of his life:

> Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world! […]
> O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
> Would have mourned longer!—married with my uncle,
> My father's brother, but no more like my father
> Than I to Hercules. (1.2.129-34; 150-53)

The themes of death and decay are woven through this soliloquy: first in the contemplation of forbidden suicide in his line, "His canon 'gainst self-slaughter," then when he discusses the pointlessness of life, referring to the world as "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," and later comparing life to an untamed garden (1.2.132-134). Hamlet's nihilism stems from his feeling that life is unfair and distressing as he struggles to be rational in an irrational world. His embittered emotional investment and anger about his father's death and Gertrude's relationship with his uncle connect to the existential condition by showing that he views the changes occurring in his life as uncontrollable.

Additionally, Hamlet's behavior demonstrates how the intersection of experience and existential thoughts--life, death, human choice and value-- can cause an individual to view the world with an obsessive caution. For instance, Hamlet creates a protective barrier against those "confidants" he fears will betray him, doubting "the nature of his former companions, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and even that of his mother" (Lloyd 23). Furthermore, as Peter Lloyd notes, he begins to doubt himself, causing his erratic behavior that, in turn, causes others to doubt him. Peter Holbrook further observes that this intersection in Hamlet's mind not only manifests into a habit of wariness but also an obsession (34). Hamlet's need to discover hypothetical truths, a motivation based in a desire for involvement and control, makes his identity and behavior mercurial. He does, however, attempt to manage these tendencies, revealing other challenges he endures.

Self-Regulation in a World of Men

The frequent use of "soft" in the soliloquies illustrates the underlying conflict of thought and action in Hamlet's internal regulation. After discovering that Claudius is responsible for the death of his father, Hamlet does not quickly take his revenge. Instead, he plots with obsessive caution. In this process, his attempt to regulate his actions is sometimes indicated through the use of the word "soft." One example occurs in his fifth soliloquy: "Now could I drink hot blood, / And do such business as

the bitter day / Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother" (3.2.362-64). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "soft" in a now-obscure sense more common in Early Modern English as, "to calm or restrain oneself."[2] Its frequent use in his soliloquies illustrates his underlying conflict in regulating thought and pursuit. Often, when considering taking physical action against someone, he pauses to maintain rational control over decision making. This consideration demonstrates Hamlet's battle between the incongruous identities of pursuit and thought—as Hamlet observes about his words and inclinations, "My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites" (3.2.369). Hamlet is imprisoned by these two contradictory impulses. While his "tongue" wishes to "drink hot blood," his "soul" wishes to restrain him from doing so.

While trying to regulate these two antithetical desires, the possible ramifications of his actions guide his behavior. Holbrook notes Friedrich Nietzsche's observation that Hamlet "has peered into the 'abyss' of being—comprehended the meaninglessness of existence and futility of all action, including punishment" (46). In his fifth soliloquy, for example, Hamlet recognizes his capability to spite and harm others, but he self-regulates to prevent acting out against them unless it is worth doing so: "O heart, let not lose thy nature! Let not ever / The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom. / Let me be cruel, not unnatural" (3.2.365-67). Similarly, Harold Bloom argues that Hamlet modulates his thoughts through critique and revision: "Hamlet modifies himself by studying his own modifications. […] Hamlet is the paradigm for all introspection" (233). Bloom's analysis of Hamlet suggests that there is a familiarity to Hamlet's thought process related to the human condition; while Hamlet's efforts should produce a stronger, more regulated moral compass, his excess of thoughts prevents him from having clear direction. These attempts by Hamlet to gain control over himself illustrate the conflicting dimensions in his identity, which only further complicates his decisions, leading to his suffering and prolonging his mental anguish.

Another existential quality that leads to Hamlet's mental anguish is his desire for autonomy. In his studies on masculinity in Shakespeare's works, Bruce Smith recognizes that men who do not fulfill society's expectations—holding authority in their homes and politics, governing, protecting, and fiscally supporting their wives and homes, and being highly educated—may not be considered smart or valuable enough: "Men, while emasculating other men, devalue the individual and can lure them to existential, deviant thoughts and actions" (Smith 92). Conversely, Margreta de Grazia argues that in his search for autonomy, Hamlet intends to gain success and pleasure not from his "interiority," but from what he applies to himself externally, his "'antic disposition'" (8). She argues that Hamlet's hyperactivity throughout the play likens him more to a "clown of medieval folk tradition" than an individual who exhibits introspective consciousness (9). However, given Gertrude and Claudius's

[2] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "soft," 7.

relationship, Claudius's murder of his father, his inability to rely on Gertrude for guidance or nurturing, and being surrounded by uncertainty, he nevertheless adapts to this irrational environment.

In addition to his desire of autonomy, Hamlet's commitment to his vows further prolongs and increases his mental anguish, specifically his vow to the Ghost. Mark Matheson argues that Hamlet arrives at his first main source of internal conflict when he battles between his already-established commitment and self-regulation of ethics and pride: "Shakespeare makes a point representing Hamlet as a product of Humanism and (more cautiously) of the Reformation. […]. [H]e cannot simply, as he vows to do, 'wipe away' an act of will. In respect and self-pride, he is resilient in fulfilling his commitments" (385). This observation also evokes the question of how society influences Hamlet's identity: is it a matter of adjustment for Hamlet or external reliability? These concerns of dependency, influence, and supernatural fears can be further understood through Michel de Montaigne's analysis of solitude.

On Montaigne: Hamlet's Identity and Repair

The central foundations of Montaigne's essay "On Solitude" pertain to independence and dependence. In order to prosper individually, he argues, one must not rely on loved ones for happiness or let their happiness be contingent on the well-being and stability of another (100-101). Giulio J. Pertile observes that an "ability to detach himself from himself at the very moment of experience [is] what I shall call instantaneous self-reflexivity," a revolution in the history of self-consciousness (43). This ability to detach is challenging for Hamlet because although he feels that he can no longer depend on Gertrude, he still desires a connection with her, complicating his actions and decisions.

Montaigne further argues that the soul of each individual has two parts: the public and the private. As demonstrated by his dissonant soliloquies, Hamlet's identity is detrimentally complex because he has unified both the private and public parts of his soul, leaving little room for effective self-reflection. He has developed a dependency on Gertrude's commitment to his deceased father and, given his highly emotional disappointment that she has married his brother, feels an insecure attachment to her—further adding to his need for self-regulation.

Montaigne likewise believes that clear thought processes and concrete ideologies result from an effective detachment from the world: "We should set aside a room, just for ourselves, at the back of the shop, keeping it entirely and establishing there our true liberty, our principal solitude and asylum" (100). Montaigne believes that personal self-development builds a better sense of the self, leading to stronger bonds with others. On his journey of self-discovery, Hamlet progressively develops more existential concerns that result in both withdrawal from and insecure attachment to nearly every character in the play, including Gertrude and Ophelia. In this way, Hamlet experiences a kind of cognitive dissonance in his identity, a trust-distrust effect concerning his friends and family.

For Montaigne, humans cannot fulfil their desires without first acknowledging the reality of death. He argues that repressing fears of "after virtue" prevents individuals from living happily and fearlessly: "To practise death is to practise freedom" (24). In addition, Montaigne's concept of achieving 'solitude' and 'freedom' through understanding death suggests that when a virtuous and existential life are harmonious, both the body and, more importantly, the mind, are made strong.

However, the community must be unified in practicing "death together." Colette Gordon connects *Hamlet* to the tragicomedy of Kapoor's clowns, noting that the careers of characters like the Gravedigger and clowns and "tragicomic figures" lead them to have "one foot in hell or at least firmly planted in the rotting earth" (133); while they accept that death will one day occur for them as it already has for others, their other foot is planted in the present life, and their solitude does not allow death to be feared. If Hamlet were more supportive of these questions regarding existential concerns, and if other characters would have engaged in conversations about death with each other, it is plausible that we would recognize the most gratifying and stable life as one contingent primarily on cultivating a comprehension of death.

Hamlet does not effectively distinguish his public and private side, resulting in less comprehension of his emotions, ethics, interests, and beliefs. As a result, he battles with his two identities, the "tongue and soul" (3.2.369), which differentiate thought from pursuit. Also, by exploring Montaigne's concept of the soul and identity, Hamlet's complicated character can be simply explained as the result of his development and self-understanding. Between struggling with existential concerns, attachment, and infidelity, he explores his identity. As Montaigne observes, "We have a soul able to turn in on itself; she can keep herself company; she has the wherewithal to attack, to defend, to receive, and to give. Let us not fear that in search of solitude as that we shall be crouching and painful illness" (100).

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The Faust in Dorian: Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) is a novel wrapped in controversy and debate. Oscar Wilde wrote the novel during England's Victorian era, and the book faced immense criticism due its society's strict moral code. At the time, many believed that art should reflect socio-political values. However, Wilde, a pioneer of the Aestheticism movement, believed in "art for art's sake."[1] While Christopher Marlow uses the Faustian legend to make *Doctor Faustus* (1604) a morality play, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Wilde repurposes the Faustian legend to express his aesthetic ideals and demonstrate the consequences of pursuing a hedonistic lifestyle.

Influence is central to the Faust legend. In *Doctor Faustus*, Faustus's newfound obsession is the practice of magic. Faustus states,

> Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
> Know that your words have won me at the last
> To practice magic and concealed arts. […]
> Philosophy is odious and obscure;
> Both law and physic are for petty wits; […]
> 'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me. (1.1.100-02; 106-07; 110)

The great influence of magic over Faustus is indicated by the term "ravished," a sexually charged word associated with force. Also, unlike science, which has been studied for centuries, magic is forbidden, unknown, and therefore exciting to Faustus. However, Faustus's desire for magic becomes his downfall, demonstrating the consequences of ambition in excess.

Similarly, Dorian in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is influenced by the discovery of hedonism, the "doctrine or theory of ethics in which pleasure is regarded as the chief good, or the proper end of action."[2] The yellow book given to Dorian by Lord Henry, presumably based on Joris-Karl Huysmans' *À Rebours* (1884), exposes him to the hedonistic perspective of *decadence*, a movement associated with extravagance,

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[1] For Wilde's discussion of "art for art's sake," see "The Preface" of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, pp. 3-4. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "aestheticism" as, "The quality of being aesthetic; the pursuit of, or devotion to, what is beautiful or attractive to the senses, esp. as opposed to an ethically or rationally based outlook; *spec*. adherence to the Aesthetic Movement." For the beginnings of the Aesthetic Movement in the nineteenth century, see Ellmann, pp. 88-90.

[2] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "hedonism."

excess, artificiality, and transgressive sexuality.[3] Dorian sees himself reflected in this book that will be very detrimental to him. Wilde writes, "One hardly knew at times whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some mediaeval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner. It was a poisonous book. The heavy odour of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain" (104). The "poison" of the book, so impactful that it leads to the ruin of others and, ultimately, Dorian's own death, demonstrates the consequences of pursuing a hedonistic lifestyle.

The selling of one's soul to the devil is at the heart of the Faustian legend. In *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe uses the "Faustian bargain" as a moral lesson for the audience. Faustus abandons all moral integrity in order to acquire knowledge by selling his soul, and consequently he is damned to hell for being too ambitious. Similarly, Dorian "sells" his soul for eternal youth. The novel symbolically depicts the "bargaining" between Dorian and the devil when Dorian desperately states, "If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grown old! For that—for that—I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" (26). Dorian is oblivious to the consequences that will arise through his arrogance and narcissism, yet Dorian receives his wish and pays the price. Dagmar Magnadóttir notes that Wilde "used the famous theme of selling one's soul to the devil as a way to split the novel into thematic layers. On one hand, Dorian is beautiful to exemplify the way the aesthetic movement looked at life and art. On the other hand, the picture grows more grotesque with Dorian's every sin" (22). By projecting Dorian's soul through the painting, the audience can visualize how each of Dorian's sins strips away his beauty. Dorian may retain his physical beauty, but his humanity and integrity suffer. Wilde uses the Faustian bargain to show how pursuing hedonistic pleasure poisons the soul.

Furthermore, there are parallels between Mephistopheles' influence on Faustus and Lord Henry's influence on Dorian. Mephistopheles, while serving Faustus with his magic powers, desires to damn Faustus to hell by enticing him with vague powers and ideals. Mephistopheles states, "Why, Faustus, think'st thou heaven is such a glorious thing? / I tell thee, 'tis not half so fair as thou, / Or any man that breathes on earth" (2.3.5-7). He attempts to dissuade Faustus from saving his soul for Heaven when it is no greater of a place than earth. Similarly, Lord Henry's influence is foreshadowed when early in the novel he states paradoxically, "There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr. Gray. All influence is immoral—immoral from the scientific point of view" (19). Furthermore, Lord Henry introduces Dorian to hedonism, making him conscious of the shortness of life:

> Ah! realize your youth while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days, listening to the tedious, trying to improve the hopeless failure, or giving

[3] For the relationship of *À Rebours* to Wilde's work. see Ellmann, pp.252-53. For the influence of *decadence*, see Ellmann pp. 225-31.

> away your life to the ignorant, the common, and the vulgar. These are the sickly aims, the false ideals, of our age. Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing. (23)

He tempts Dorian, instilling in him the fear of old age and wasting one's life, but Lord Henry's position is more ideological; because he does not commit the atrocities he tempts Dorian with, he is free of any consequences. Sheldon W. Liebman writes, "Henry turns to Dorian Gray, who offers him both the opportunity to analyze a complex personality and the chance to create a new and beautiful self. Furthermore, Dorian also represents a new life of sensation, emotion, and thought that Henry can experience vicariously and therefore safely" (447). Lord Henry views Dorian as an outlet. He gets pleasure from watching Dorian suffer in the same way that Mephistopheles receives satisfaction from the damnable actions of Faustus. Lord Henry does not appear to care what happens to Dorian. Additionally, as Magnadóttir writes,

> Lord Henry's power over Dorian is not a good influence. Dorian's self-knowledge is poisoned by Lord Henry, and therefore he becomes corrupted by hedonistic ideas which end up negatively shaping his future. Mephistopheles has the same effect upon Faust. Mephistopheles and Lord Henry are the malign characters who focus more on their own ideologies than on Faust's and Dorian's well-being. (20)

Mephistopheles and Lord Henry, the antagonists responsible for the corruption, lead these characters down irreversible paths.

While Marlowe's Mephistopheles more closely resembles the character in the original Faustian legend, Wilde adapts Mephistopheles to his aesthetic ideals. Julian Hawthorne writes, "He may be taken as an imaginative type of all that is most evil and most refined in modern civilization—a charming, gentle, witty, euphemistic Mephistopheles, who depreciates the vulgarity of goodness" (376) Lord Henry is a modernized Mephistopheles, appealing to Dorian through his charm and wit. Rather than being the devil's assistant, Lord Henry represents the hedonistic pursuit of aesthetic beauty while conveying to the audience the dangers of pursuing the instant gratification that results in moral corruption.

Additionally, in both works Christianity defines the moral boundaries of the characters. In *Doctor Faustus*, the Good Angel and Bad Angel clearly distinguish Faustus's desire to repent and desire to sin, making the audience aware of what is morally right and wrong. In *Dorian Gray*, Wilde alludes to the Faustian bargain:

> "There goes the devil's bargain!" she hiccoughed, in a hoarse voice.
> "Curse you!" he answered, "don't call me that."

> She snapped her fingers. “Prince Charming is what you like to be called, ain't it?” she yelled after him. (158)

The negative religious associations of the phrase “devil’s bargain” reinforce the malignancy and sin of Dorian’s selling his soul to the devil for youth, a foul and corrupt bargain.

While some may argue that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is purely an aesthetic novel, Wilde uses the Faustian legend to demonstrate how morality relates to aestheticism. In the preface to the novel, Wilde argues that aestheticism and morality are separate: “There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all” (3). He explains that art does not set out to have morals, that art does not determine good from evil. Art is meant to be beautiful but not to edify. After Dorian’s corruption is removed from the painting, the portrait is simply beautiful without any moral significance. Michael Patrick Gillespie notes, “*The Picture of Dorian Gray* does not and should not bring us to a new ethical position or reinforce our old one. Rather, through the actions of its characters its discourse establishes within us a sense of the wide-ranging aesthetic force that ethics exerts upon a work of art.” The novel need not be seen as one that attempts to change readers’ view of morality.

However, the painting works as a symbol of the relationship between morality and aesthetics and a reflection of Dorian’s soul. After Dorian has pushed Sybil to suicide, murdered Basil, and blackmailed Alan, the painting becomes horrifying. Furthermore, Dorian’s narcissism ruins himself as well as the people around him. His sins and unspeakable acts lead him to destroy the painting and in turn kill himself. Therefore, the novel concerns morality, teaching us that such actions lead to damnation: he sins, breaking the moral code, and must pay the consequences.

Ultimately, Oscar Wilde repurposes the Faustian legend to express his aesthetic ideals, as well as the consequences of pursing a hedonistic lifestyle. While Christopher Marlowe uses the Faustian legend as a morality play, Wilde juxtaposes the pursuit of pleasure and aestheticism to show the wicked effect of hedonism on the individual.

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Macbeth's Will Against Time in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

ROBERTO PACHECO

> "It was" — that is the name of the will's gnashing of teeth and most secret melancholy. Powerless against what has been done, he is an angry spectator of all that is past. The will cannot will backwards; and that he cannot break time and time's covetousness, that is the will's loneliest melancholy.
> …This, indeed this alone, is what revenge is: the will's ill will against time and its "it was."
>
> (Z: 1 "The Creator," Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*).

The Shakespearean tragedies *Macbeth* (c. 1606), *Othello* (c. 1604), and *Hamlet* (c. 1599) illustrate the autonomy of Time and Fate as the rightful rulers of the world of man. The concepts of evil, destiny, and temporality are not just tools to heighten the dramatic element of a play but ubiquitous in both Elizabethan England and Shakespeare's literary world. *Macbeth*, in particular, illustrates how supernatural beings, Time and Fate, are to be feared and avoided since the supernatural represents forces that cannot be understood by human logic. To Macbeth and King James, Time and Fate are not illusory concepts but real evils that shape human action and inhibit human ambition (Kermode 1307). The existence of the supernatural in Macbeth gives insight into a reality where the lines of good and evil are blurred; "fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.9). Time is both a "destroyer" and a "redeemer" while everything and anything is justifiable, even disrupting the natural order as a means of obtaining power (Kermode 1310). Since the destiny of Macbeth is already pre-determined by Time and the absence of an objective good to restrain evil, Macbeth's tragic flaw is not his ambition to become king of Scotland but his attempt to rule over Time. This essay will argue that in killing Duncan, Macbeth is exempt from moral judgement since he acts in accordance with the laws that govern his realm, and that Time and its servant, Fate, are not only central to the narrative but are Macbeth's chief tormentors.

Chaos is already in motion at the beginning of the play with the introduction of Time and Fate. The Witches are the audience's first impression of a world in which "figures" of "mysterious power" are "undeniably" real (Introduction 7). Witch 1 begins the play by uttering, "When shall we meet again" (1.1.1). The narrative not only calls ahead to the future, creating a sense of urgency that torments Macbeth throughout the rest of the play, but it also introduces Time as the omnipresent power of the play. The Weird Sisters may "stand outside society and nature" and hold a "kinship with the three fates" but must submit to the laws of Time. They plan towards the future, to meet Macbeth when the sun sets, unable to move without the permission of Time; that is, the Sisters cannot set their plans into motion without letting Time work its natural course. Yet, the witches are not completely subdued by Time. Their

association with Fate allows them to glimpse into the future, bestowing them slight sovereignty and the ability to stand outside the realm of Man and Time (Introduction 7). Many would argue that this ability allows the Sisters to manipulate Macbeth into immoral action; however, they are merely agents of Fate. Their job is to put disorder into the natural progression of Time in order to bring balance to nature and revitalize society by a process of destructive renewal. They want to begin their denaturalization of Time after "The hurly burly is done" (1.1.3), meaning after order is restored from the battle and Time progresses normally. The Sisters proclaim the battle is "won" and "lost" (1.1.4), affirming that two destinies are possible, and that they are merely messengers and not actors within the play.

Witch 1 continues "in thunder, lightning, or in rain" (1.1.2). The Witch, along with the narrative, is giving a prelude to the disorder to come— informing the audience not only of the chaotic nature of the world Macbeth inhabits but the ways that Time and the life of Macbeth will progress through the tragedy. The sequence in which the Sister utters "thunder," "lightning" and then "rain" signifies that first there will be pandemonium, followed by destruction, and finally, renewal in the play. The opening lines by the Weird Sisters are essential to the structure and order of the narrative, which also highlights the importance of the role of the supernatural in Macbeth.

The immediate presence of the witches and the prediction of tempestuous weather ahead, both political and literal, signify Macbeth's reality in a state of corruptive malevolence. Curtis Perry argues that both the supernatural and nature symbolize an element of unpredictability that affects the destiny of individuals: "The association between the witches and the storm makes thematic sense as well, for both represent a kind of threatening power beyond human control; whenever the witches reappear in the play, the stage directions call for thunder" (13). Perry implies that Macbeth is only a puppet, a tool, and even a victim of the machinations of higher beings. The influence of the witches creates a "crisis of conscience" and an interior "conflict" between personal gain and his powerful "sense of duty" (14-15). Perry mirrors the sentiments of other critics who argue that murdering Duncan unleashes Macbeth's madness.

However, Macbeth is a manifestation of a culture that thrives on chaos, where being good is an abnormality: "[*Macbeth*] immerses its audience in a world presided over by enigmatic and terrifying forces, a world in which nature itself is violent and tempestuous" (13). Perry acknowledges the fickleness of Macbeth's Scotland, which reflects the dangerous mindset of the powers that bind it, Time and Fate. The killing of a king, for example, is inconsequential in the presence of Time. The kings in both *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* are quickly ushered from the memory of all except those characters who are of good will. The good and the just who stand in the way of the ambitious are the ones who act unnaturally against the laws of their dangerous worlds and are therefore punished severely. In *Macbeth*, Banquo and Macduff oppose Macbeth's will, which seals their black fate, while others who are not suspicious of the new king's sudden change of fortune are kept safe from the wrath of the powerful

forces of Macbeth, Time, and Fate. In *Hamlet*, no one in court except his son is suspicious about the death of King Hamlet and the abrupt shift of power.

King Hamlet's death is trivial within the narrative just as is the death of Duncan in *Macbeth*. Those present at Claudius's speech (1.2.1ff.) have just buried King Hamlet less than two months prior and are now in celebration of Time's renewal of nature, Claudius' coronation. However, Hamlet challenges the will of Time and ambition, like Banquo and Macduff, thereby suffering their fate—causing both his own death and the demise of his loved ones. In neither play is the king properly mourned. They are simply discarded, implying that death and revenge are just natural consequences of obtaining power. The lack of public outcry calls into question the nobility of the former kings. In both plays, their respective nations are at war, stressing that a king's duty is neither glamourous nor beneficent; it is a bloody business: "We are given no hint in Shakespeare that Duncan's reign was ever anything but bloody and chaotic" (Foster 321-322). Duncan is quietly killed off-stage, eliminating audience sympathy, while King Hamlet is caught in purgatory for past crimes. Duncan and King Hamlet could be as tainted as Claudius and Macbeth, guilty of their own power plays and victims of their own ambitions. These are worlds where powerful men fail to recognize their mortal limitations. Their triumphs delude them into believing themselves to be above Time and Space. They are not kings, but players in a cannibalistic game of power in the court of Time. One is either a competitor or a victim of the more dominant power. The good and the just are prey to ambition, as ambition is to Time and Fate.

However, Macbeth is a warrior with a fathomless hubris that forbids him to become a mere instrument of Time. On the battlefield, he carries himself with a vicious elegance and self-assurance that has seen him ascend to the top of both the social and military hierarchy. Therefore, when the Witches appear before Macbeth, revealing the future, they only reaffirm the warrior's pride while furthering his perception of himself as a man of great destiny. He does not view the Sisters as evil agents of fate but as subordinates to his own greatness; they only speak of what he already knows to be true. Similarly, in *Othello* Iago only reflects the beliefs of Othello, thereby becoming a credible ally in the eyes of his commander. Othello is also a soldier and an extraordinary man, one who like Macbeth is not restrained by social and moral law. A soldier is "admired" for his "bravery" on the battlefield by society, one in which "bravery" is justified "cruelty" (Waith 262). The justification of murder has given Macbeth and Othello a heightened sense of elitism through social amnesty. Therefore, Macbeth and Othello do not distinguish the battlefield from society and politics. Macbeth views violence through his Machiavellian lens as necessary to obtain power; therefore, "death" and morality mean nothing to him (Waith 268). This society-given authority makes soldiers like Macbeth devoid of conscience since, like Niccolò Machiavelli's Prince, a "conscience […] is irrelevant to political activity" and "impedes the acquisition of power" (Goehring 1527). Othello and Macbeth are not ordinary men who must adhere to the laws of society. When Barbantio requests that the senators hear of Othello transgressing social order, Othello

welcomes the challenge. His heroic record and vanity give him assurance of his victory against Brabantio before the council (1.2.18-24; 31-32). Iago and the Weird Sisters only present alternative paths for the protagonists to choose.

Othello and Macbeth only follow the innate instincts that have made them both successful in the battlefields of war and society. Rather than recognize Time as an authority and his success as result of Fate, Macbeth views Time as a retainer and Fate as a woman that can be tamed by brute force: "A woman, and those wanting to hold her down and bully her" (Machiavelli 72). In order to defeat Fortune or Fate, a man must possess *virtú* in order to bend her to one's will, since *virtú* represents both the ability to control the self and a "political man's desire to challenge fortune and to impose his will on human affairs" (Goehring 1526). Macbeth demonstrates his unrelenting will in his attempt to kill Banquo's legacy by killing his children. He attempts to rewrite history by tampering with the prophecies of the Weird Sisters, demonstrating his belief that he, too, stands beyond Time and space.

The attempt to control Time is evident through both the use of language and the manipulation of key events by Macbeth. In Act I, Scene 5, Lady Macbeth is the first to fall victim to Macbeth's disruption of Time: "Thy letters have transported me beyond this ignorant present, I feel now the future in an instant" (56-58). Macbeth wants Time to skip, to bend it to his will, so he can "jump the life to come" (1.7.7). The Macbeths, too intoxicated with the idea of ascension, are living in the future, failing to realize that Time has begun its vengeance on them. The "rapid succession of events" that follows into "two action-packed nights" showcase that the "flow of Time" has been disrupted along with the Macbeths' ability to sleep (Introduction 65). After Duncan's murder, the Macbeths are in a state of perpetual disorientation where "sleep," the source of human renewal, is taken away by Time. In essence, the plots to murder Duncan and Banquo cast them into a limbo of time. Evidence lies in the banquet scene in which the ghost of Banquo appears before Macbeth (3.4.42ff.). While the scene often is interpreted as Macbeth's conscience working against him, one could argue that Macbeth is simply witnessing Time's disorder in which Banquo is not the ghost of the deceased but a fusion of two separate timelines. Macbeth is haunted by the reality where Banquo still lives, while everyone else exists in the world Macbeth has created through his actions. Macbeth's madness results from his mind being torn apart by two conflicting realities. Similarly, Lady Macbeth suffers her own purgatory by re-living the events of the murder in an endless cycle. Her body is present and tangible, yet her mind is trapped in stasis. Time denatures its flow to offset the unnatural acts caused by tyrannical men.

However, Time is incorrectly associated with liberation. Frank Kermode believes that Time is a benevolent power but a temporary prisoner of evil and an eventual emancipator of "virtue" (Foster 320). Evidence is found in Macduff's proclamation that "time is free" as a result of the death of Macbeth, yet, Time, is the true "usurper" in the lives of men (5.9.21). Yet, Macduff views himself as an ally of time, and by assisting Malcolm in reclaiming the rightful order of kings, the world will once again "perform in measure, time and place" (5.9.39). However, Time's

fidelity is not guaranteed to Macduff. David Foster advises that one should remove the veil of optimism and view Time not only as Macbeth's main adversary but as the enemy of mankind: "[W]e find that Macbeth is plagued by a persistent though largely unconscious impulse to take revenge on time itself, as the chief obstacle to the human will, as the very devil from which man must be redeemed" (324). The "will" that Foster refers to is the human desire of dominance, while the "obstacle" is the resentment of the will's inability to move freely, which causes the will to rebel against the rules of Time. Macbeth cannot simply wait for Time and Fate to deliver his kingship. His will, or ego, will not allow him to be at the mercy of "chance," to be a "slave" and "passively" wait for Time's acknowledgement while his "mortal hands" can "actively" deliver the goods (328). In Macbeth exists a person whose determination exceeds his mortal shell. He does not want to be just the King of Scotland; he wants to be the king of kings, Time itself, immortal and everlasting.

Macbeth's war against time reflects a poet's desire for immortality. Kings and poets not only share the desire for eternal life, but a common enemy in Time. Both are forced to sit idly as Time strips everything they hold dear. Shakespeare's Poet in the sonnets, like Macbeth, desperately attempts to hold onto a present that is quickly becoming the past. John Irwin argues, "All narration is to use the temporal medium of narration to take revenge against time, to use narration to get even with the very mode of narration's existence in a daemonic attempt to prove that though the process of substitution and repetition, time is not really irreversible" (4). Irwin stresses that poetics is futile in its attempt to validate one's existence. Since verse is an unnatural venture into denial, it can neither retain the past nor preserve the future. Similarly, in Shakespeare's sonnets, the Poet hopes to conserve the beauty of his muse by sheer poetic will. Emily E. Stockard argues: "Presumably, the young man's beauty shares this flaw of nature, since 'every fair from fair sometimes declines.' But when mutability is defined as a flaw, the 'eternal lines' of poetry can be said to make verse superior to nature's 'changing course'" (471). The laws of Time insist that beauty and power are only temporal, but Stockard's analysis draws attention to the tempestuous personality of both nature and beauty that can be overcome by a Poet's own mortal hand. Macbeth wields a sword while the Poet's weapon is a pen, both instruments of immortality. Unlike the Poet, however, Macbeth does not want to be remembered in tales or scripture. He wants to usurp the usurper, Time, and rule over all existence.

While *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* share similar qualities, such as the theme of regicide and omnipresence of the supernatural, Hamlet and Macbeth differ in philosophies. Hamlet wants to be memorialized and celebrated upon his death because he is no longer wary of the untold future. He says, "When our deep plots do fall – and that should learn us / There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (5.2.9-11). Hamlet's verse encapsulates the progression of maturity of the young prince since Act 3. He acknowledges the power of Time and Fate, displaying a self-control that Macbeth does not possess towards the end of the play. To be remembered will only taint his accomplishments, contradicting his wish to "mock the time with fairest show: / False face must hide what the false heart doth

know" (1.7.94-95). The “false face” conceals the truth of his world, that kings are “slaves” and “fools” in the presence of Time (Foster 323).

Beyond the Machiavellian schemes of the protagonists, *Macbeth* is about the power of the human “Will.” The play demonstrates that the Will, like Time and Fate, is an immovable force. A rational being has the power to Will inclinations into reality, making horrors justifiable and desires a mandate. Therefore, Time and Fate are the chief conspirators against the human Will, as they regulate the Will through the inevitability of mortality.

It is not that humans fear Time because it decides their Fate. It is Time and Fate that are wary of humanity, for humanity’s Will has no bounds. Unlike their mortal shells, the Will looks to conquer everything in its path, even the gods themselves.

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