SYMPOSIUM

Great Books Curriculum of Wright College

A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND INQUIRY

symposiumjournal.org

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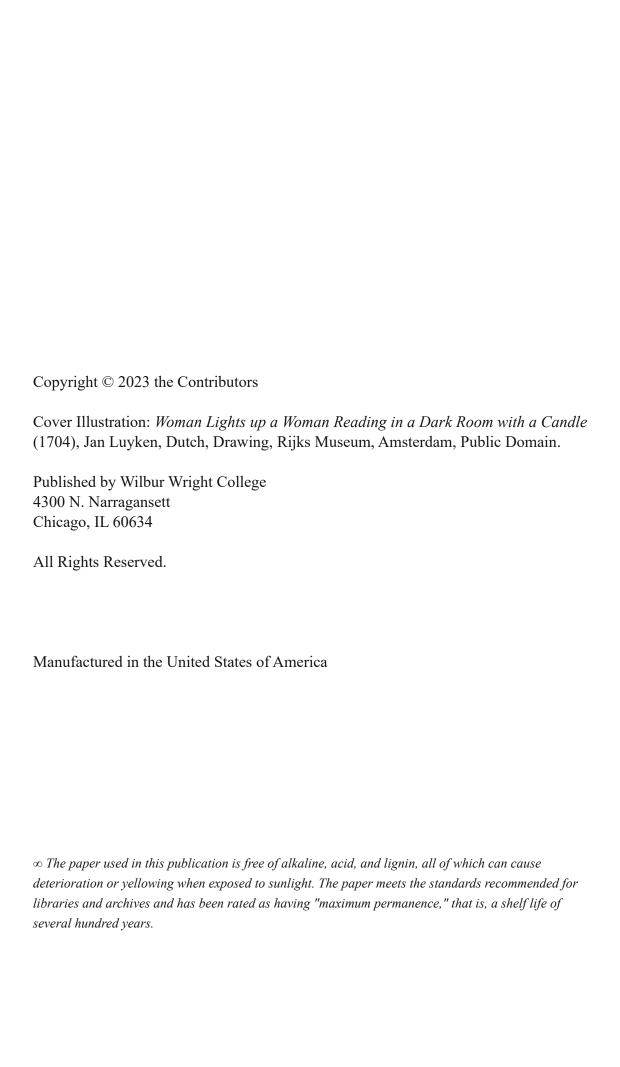## A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND INQUIRY

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Great Books Readers,

Welcome, Wright community! We are pleased to present the ninth edition of the *Great Books Student Symposium*, a journal comprised of student-written and student-edited essays about the Great Books that showcase new conversations concerning these timeless works. The *Symposium* is of great importance to the Wright community, as it displays the strength and enduring relevance of the humanities in academic study. Reading and writing about the Great Books require complex thought, argument, and the interpretation of nuanced ideas, all of which are demonstrated in these essays. Thank you to everyone whose extensive efforts have made this journal possible.

Although the Great Books are renowned for their ability to inspire complex thought and discourse regarding ideas that comment and sometimes challenge societal norms, there is a substantial flaw with the current catalogue: the dearth of female authors. The oppressive patriarchy of the past often has prohibited women's ability to pursue an education, disallowing them the ability to spread their ideas through literature. The repression of these voices serves as a reminder of the importance of having female authors on the list. Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein* (1818), stated, "I do not wish women to have power over men; but over themselves," an idea which speaks for all women who long for agency and representation in literature when all too often they have been considered merely damsels in distress, dependent on men to rescue them.

In light of the scarcity of works by female authors on the list, it is perhaps ironic that this issue of the *Great Books Symposium Journal* has been created entirely by women. The female student authors and editorial board members here present essays about either female characters or literary works written by women. Historically, many male authors have succeeded in creating complex female characters who try to assert their agency in an oppressive society while nurturing realistic motivations and desires. However, expanding the current catalogue of Great Books authors engages new readers and greatly improves the potential for diverse and intellectual conversation, particularly through the inclusion of those exceptional female authors who deserve the high praise of being Great Books authors. In recent years, the Wright College Great Books program has begun to address the need for more diverse representation on the Great Books list, including the addition of women authors such as Gloria Anzaldua, Aphra Behn, Octavia Butler, Kate Chopin, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), Sor Juana, Nella Larsen, Doris Lessing, Audre Lorde, Margaret Mead, Toni Morrison, and Mary Wollstonecraft. It is exciting to see the progress toward a more inclusive catalogue of Great Books authors, as these diverse voices are necessary to depict the strength of women.

While it is an honor to contribute to the *Great Books Symposium Journal*, this edition did not come without its hardships. The collective struggle the pandemic brought to our community manifested in innumerable distractions from school, difficulties that have disrupted the past two years of submissions to the journal. We attempted to overcome these challenges by creating school and workspaces like those we enjoyed before the pandemic, and, through determination and hard work, the writers and editors present these essays, which we hope will reconnect our Great Books community.

In addition to recognizing the editors and contributors, we would like to give a tremendous and appreciative thank you to Professor Michael Petersen for his persistence and dedication, as he is the backbone that allows this academic journal to exist.

In closing, the ideas expressed through these texts define the human experience and each of our collective struggles. James Baldwin notes that the struggles we embody every day are not original: "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive." In creating relatable interpersonal conflicts, Great Books authors recontextualize our familiar troubles, encouraging readers to reflect on the circumstances that surround us. In this way, our differences allow us to sympathize with and accept each other, encouraging us to grow together in a more positive community.

Love and understanding triumphs all,

Gretta Komperda

Spring 2022-2023 Editor-in-Chief, *Great Books Symposium Journal*

LETTER FROM THE ALUMNI BOARD

Dear Reader,

Three years ago, amidst a global pandemic, we – the former editors of the *Symposium Journal* – reunited over a Zoom call. The reason for the reunion was simple: we wanted to catch up and stay connected.

After graduating from Wright College, we embarked on different career journeys. Individually, we have worked on reducing suicide rates in the community, studied the nuts and bolts of becoming an audio-video technician, explored the science of cell regeneration, and gotten our foot in the door of the financial world. We have become world travelers by receiving a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in New York City, researching mid-sixteenth-century architecture in England, and performing operas in Italy.

We vividly recalled being back at Wright College, attending the early morning Great Books meetings where we hustled to meet deadlines and participating in literary discussions where we savored *Frankenst*ein, Wordsworth, and other works from around the world. Despite our differing life paths, we all agreed that our academic journeys started at Wright, with the Great Books Student Society and the *Symposium Journal*. The journal taught us the importance of collaboration and teamwork in an academic setting and nurtured our sense of identity and self-confidence. We took on roles that we did not think we could be - we were editors-in-chief, contributors, website designers, graphic artists, and most recently, one of us served on the faculty editorial panel. It felt special to us that we were publishing - and thereby advocating for - the works of our fellow students, a rare opportunity in the community college system. Importantly, the journal helped us cultivate lifelong friendships and establish a support system that transcends geographical and temporal boundaries.

As our discussions continued, we realized that we wanted to stay involved with the Great Books, though in a new way. We formed the Great Books Alumni Board, an entity that will focus on broadening the outreach of the *Symposium Journal* and providing mentorship to the next generations of editors and graphic designers. You will see us at Wright College sharing opportunities with prospective and incoming students. We will continue to establish relationships with other community colleges to further student and faculty involvement. Moreover, we are creating awards and scholarships dedicated to recognizing students who make significant contributions to the journal. As our ideas come to fruition, we will keep you informed of our progress via brief annual notes published in the journal. We hope our new contributions – big or small – can make a meaningful impact on community college students and those associated with two-year colleges.

As a final note, dear reader, we want to emphasize the non-linear nature of our life journeys, a consequence of the challenges of mostly being first-generation students, non-native English speakers, and, in many cases, from low socioeconomic status. Yet we persevered. We hope that despite the many inevitable twists and turns

you may experience along the way, you will never get discouraged from pursuing your dreams and exploring your passions. Embrace the challenge of undertaking difficult tasks to discover your true potential. Persist in the face of adversity to build an unwavering belief in yourself. Discover the courage to venture into uncharted territories and welcome the possibility of failure. As T.S. Eliot noted, "If you aren't in over your head, how do you know how tall you are?"

Best wishes,

    Yaryna Dyakiv
    Edgar Esparza
    Amanda Jiang
    Allen Loomis
    Izaki Metropoulos
    Miguel Orozco

Shakespearean Tragedies: Condeming the Patriarchy

DIANA GARZON

While the works of William Shakespeare have gained wide acclaim throughout the years, critics have not ignored the problematic concept of misogyny present in his literature. I will examine *Hamlet* (c. 1599), *Othello* (c. 1603), and *Measure for Measure* (c. 1603) to establish that Shakespearean tragedies channeled conventional qualities of the tragedy genre coupled with the subordinate characterization of female characters to criticize the Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan patriarchy. Through Ophelia, Desdemona, and Isabella's lack of autonomy, Shakespearean tragedies addressed the ongoing personal and political crises regarding the lack of female agency encompassed within Elizabethan society.

The conventions in Shakespearean tragedies do not entirely deviate from those of classic tragedies, as the plays of both eras included tragic heroes and their downfalls, the dichotomy of good and evil, and many other common elements. Their differences lie in the intersections and blend of multiple genres demonstrated by Shakespeare's work. *Measure for Measure* is a notable example of Shakespeare's genre-blending, and the play cannot be classified strictly as a comedy because it includes darker and heavy elements, particularly themes of corruption and sexual violence. The play's comedic, romantic, and tragic aspects have led scholars to question whether this is a tragedy, romcom, tragicomedy, or all three. Shakespeare's distinctive genre results from his creative liberty and ability to utilize other conventional works. As Robert Ornstein details, Shakespeare, through imitation, channeled the influence of contemporary works like *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1587) into his individual treatment of the genre (258). This ability to incorporate multiple genres and adapt them to the contemporary context was a hallmark of Shakespeare's work. It allowed him to create tragedies that inserted his political and social commentary while concurrently drawing on the traditions of earlier works. This "genre mixing" allowed Shakespeare to incorporate varying narratives to shift what was usually seen on the Elizabethan stage and subvert potential complications that arise from outspoken behaviors.

Moreover, Shakespeare further adheres to, as well as subverts, the conventions of the tragedy genre by depicting a sense of inferiority between female and male

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[1] See, for example, Tony Martin for an overview of identifying the genre of the play.

characters throughout his tragic plays. An inferiority complex—the feeling of being inferior or inadequate to others—is present in each of these plays between the female and male characters. The dynamic between these counterparts illustrates the dearth of female agency—a female character's free will or autonomy—in Elizabethan society. With the social norms and misogynistic nature of the period, Shakespeare's works challenge the era's predisposition, criticizing the period's lack of female autonomy instead of adhering to social norms. Claire McEachern emphasizes the connection between Shakespearean works and the prevalent patriarchy:

> Shakespeare's experience and understanding of the pressures that patriarchy exerts upon its members enabled him to write plays that interrogate those patriarchal systems. He developed this understanding by engaging with his artistic fathers and the cultural authority they represent and embody. To empower his writing, Shakespeare rebels against the archetypes he inherits. His refusal to replicate the assumptions of the patriarchy—while obviously not part of any specifically feminist agenda—originates in his inquiry into the nature of power, particularly as it is manifested in the imitative pressures of the patriarchy. (272)

The ability of Shakespeare to "rebel" against the contemporary ideas of the period distinguished his tragedies. Shakespeare analyzes and criticizes the patriarchy in his plays through an intentional characterization of tragic female characters, for example, through Ophelia, Desdemona, and Isabella's lack of autonomy. Furthermore, Shakespeare's portrayal of his female characters—through imitation of the patriarchy—makes it challenging to confine "female agency" within a box. Much like genre, character agency is not simply black and white. Desdemona, the female protagonist in *Othello*, can be said to have gained intellectual autonomy by marrying against her father's wishes. However, she is devoid of physical agency, and this is emphasized as she meets her demise at the hands of Othello. It is essential also to consider the magnitude of a character's agency; if we compare Lady Macbeth—one of Shakespeare's most agentive female characters—to Desdemona, we notice a stark difference in their social or individual power throughout the play. Lady Macbeth wields significant power and influence over her husband, whereas Desdemona lacks agency and is subject to the whims of those around her. For this reason, we must not get lost in the confines of female agency but instead examine the presence of the female-to-male inferiority complex.

To better contextualize the discussion of misogyny and the patriarchy throughout Shakespearean tragedies, we must first consider the social order of Elizabethan England. In this era, traditional values regarding gender roles remained prevalent throughout society. English women were expected to maintain unwavering loyalty to their fathers and, if married, to their husbands. The concept of obeying the husband or father of the family came from the belief that men were "superior to women […]. Wives, children, and servants were expected to yield to the authority and

wisdom of the male head of the family" (Peddle 312). The patriarchy was realized throughout this society and consequently affected the social perceptions of women concerning power and autonomy. As a result, women were perceived as dependent figures since their lack of control disallowed them from taking charge of their actions or decisions. These patriarchal ideas were consistently conveyed by playwrights of the era. As in the tragedy genre, Elizabethan works often include complex, subordinate female characters that meet their end at the hands of men. In Shakespearean tragedies, the ongoing social and political crises regarding women's societal position reflected the misogynistic condition in Elizabethan England.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the prevalence of misogyny is criticized through the characterization of Ophelia. From the beginning of the play, it is evident that Ophelia has no voice regarding her personal life. As her male family members Laertes and Polonius denounce Ophelia's relationship with Hamlet, there is no room for her opinion or feelings. Even as Polonius forbids her from interacting with Hamlet, the scene ends with her saying, "I shall obey, my lord" (1.4.135). Her response to Polonius is not a rarity in Elizabethan society—it is actually how Ophelia was *supposed* to respond. This interaction, however, leaves a sour taste with *Hamlet's* audience. Clearly, Ophelia cannot recount her feelings regarding Hamlet and, instead, relies on her male family members to influence what she should think and how she should act. The lack of Ophelia's agency goes beyond her personality or behavior and presents as the inability to defend herself. The mistreatment she faces from Hamlet is startling and delves into the conventional image of Elizabethan women: "I have heard of your paintings well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures and make your wantonness ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't. It hath made me mad" (3.1.141–46). As Hamlet says "God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another," he inflicts judgment on the female tendency to use cosmetics and therefore create a fallacious presence in society. Hamlet's apparent criticism of women, indicated by understanding of its limitations "yourselves" (l. 142), presumably contributes to her eventual madness, granting us insight into his version of the female social crisis. He fails to see, though, that his apparent hatred for Ophelia or women in general is the result of the social and political crises of the patriarchy, illustrating the profound impact of societal gender roles on Hamlet's beliefs and behavior. The lack of Ophelia's voice and her eventual death result from the expectations of society and the male characters in her life. Her characterization "[echoes] concern about the vulnerability of girls and the potential dangers they face growing up" (Gonick 12). It is precisely Ophelia's vulnerability and fragility that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* exaggerates to criticize the patriarchal norms of the era. If we consider Ophelia's actions throughout the play, she has no autonomy to make her own mistakes or act according to her beliefs. Consequently, Ophelia remains voiceless *until* her tragic demise, nothing more than a product of her environment.

In *Othello*, Desdemona's agency has garnered much more scholarly disagreement. Although women in this period were expected to obey their fathers' wishes, Desdemona disobeyed her father's preference concerning her marriage to Othello. Her decision has scholars arguing that she *does* have agency and labels her as a "warrior" throughout the play (Holmer 132). This perspective, however, ignores a more significant portion of Desdemona's characterization. While she does disobey her father's wishes, Desdemona quickly places her loyalty on the subsequent male figure in her life—Othello. The willingness to express loyalty to Othello so quickly indicates Desdemona's awareness of the period's gendered expectations. Ironically, as she abides by the era's norms in her new role as a wife, Desdemona falls into an easure ourselves against the apparent all powerfulness of nature" (144-45). Desdemona falls into an inevitable, misogynistic cycle that leads to her demise. Even in her most vulnerable time, the moment of her suffocation, Desdemona does not relinquish her dedication to Othello:

> EMILIA: O, who hath done
>   This deed?
> DESDEMONA: Nobody. I myself. Farewell.
>   Commend me to my kind lord — O, farewell! (5.2.121–23).

As quickly as Desdemona takes self-blame for her death, she could have accused Othello. Desdemona's final decision to spare Othello could be interpreted as a moment that illustrates her agency and ability to think for herself. This interpretation, again, ignores how her "first concern is not to pray but to clear her name, that is, to reaffirm her innocence of adultery to her lord while she properly defines his attempted ritual sacrifice as actual murder" (Holmer 140). Joan Ozark Holmer's use of "lord" perfectly expresses the energy of Desdemona's commitment to Othello; she ignores the chance to save herself from God, clearing the notion that she committed adultery, and instead dedicates her last moments to Othello. The lack of concern illustrates the depth of her dedication to her husband. Desdemona's final words and energy are not dedicated to bringing herself literal salvation—but salvation in the eyes of Othello. Ironically, it is the expectation of this unwavering obedience that leads to her death. Desdemona, whose name is Greek for "ill-fated" or "unfortunate," perfectly portrays the flaws in patriarchal values (142). The political crisis of social and personal misogyny is criticized through Desdemona's unavoidable damnation. Although Desdemona is not disrespectful of Othello, Iago's interference catalyzes Othello's mistreatment of her. She is damned if she does *and* damned if she does not—leaving her life to balance in the hands of the husband. With her lack of agency and naiveté, Desdemona's downfall is the fault of her male counterpart, Othello, despite all her efforts to follow her role in Elizabethan tradition.

In upholding the gendered expectations during the Elizabethan period, *Measure for Measure's* Isabella similarly loses her agency due to societal pressures. Given that Isabella is a sister—soon in both meanings of the word—she finds herself

herself at a divide when Angelo pressures her for sexual reciprocation. As he says, "You must lay down the treasures of your body / To this supposed, or else to let him suffer" (2.4.95–96). Here, Isabella must decide whether to abandon her chastity in exchange for having her brother's life sparred. In either situation, as sister or sister of the cloth, Isabella must act within the confinements of each position's social expectation. As she undergoes an internal battle because of the period's patriarchy, it becomes clear that Isabella lacks an independent voice in society, especially toward her male counterparts. This lack of independence is especially revealed at the play's end when the Duke asks for Isabella's hand in marriage. Although it is unclear how she reacts or if she accepts, it is clear that she is under the "control of a man she has no choice but to obey—a man whose orders are highly questionable—and as a consequence her character is markedly diminished" (Riefer 159). Because of the power dynamic between the Duke and Isabella, she has no autonomy to decline or accept his proposal; as the Duke is a man of power, it is assumed that Isabella only has one choice. Accepting the Duke's proposal contradicts the convictions she expresses earlier with Angelo. As she firmly stands by her morals and declines Angelo's sexual advances, Isabella appears to have voice and agency (ll. 99-103 ff). However, if she accepts, she succumbs to societal pressures and loses the powerful convictions she once held, illustrating how Isabella's agency is determined by the men surrounding her and society's misogyny. Otherwise, Isabella would never lose her voice or standing as an individual and free-thinking woman who acts according to her convictions. Once again in the case of Isabella, the social and political crisis of the patriarchy is inflicted upon the subordinate female character in Shakespearean tragedies.

While critics may argue that Shakespearean tragedies contributed to the patriarchal Elizabethan culture, this argument ignores the characterization of Shakespeare's tragic female characters. If we carefully examine Ophelia, Desdemona, and Isabella, we will notice that each character follows the traditionally gendered norms of English society. If Shakespearean tragedies were meant to continue the misogynistic narrative of the era rather than criticize it, female characters would thrive and be rewarded for their behavior. Instead, each is confined by her lack of agency and meets her demise accordingly. Richard Levin argues against this position, disagreeing that the patriarchy has anything to do with Shakespeare's tragic finales: "It is even hard to see how [Shakespearean tragedies] could be conducting an inquiry into patriarchy, when the actions they focus on are clearly meant to be atypical" (127-28). Considering the imbalance between female and male dominance in Shakespearean tragedies, how could the misogynistic behaviors not be an attempt to represent a group? Levin disregards the trend in female destiny throughout Shakespeare's tragedies; the demise of female characters throughout the plays is derived from oppressive behavior inflicted on them. Even in the case of Isabella,

although she does not physically die, we can infer that her spirit is not alive in a in a forced marriage.

Furthermore, the relationship between Elizabethan society and Shakespearean tragedies is too apparent not to acknowledge. Because misogynistic values were pervasive in English society, it is logical that female oppression is normal in the works of the period. Beth Rose establishes a connection between oppressive culture and Shakespearean works: "Elaborating the well-documented silencing of women in the patriarchal culture of Renaissance England, these contributing factors from the theatrical, legal, and demographic domains, along with their implications, all command attention when considering the representation of [womanhood] in Shakespeare's drama" (294). Rose's observation further exposes the relevance of considering Elizabethan women in society and Shakespeare's works: if women did not face oppression during the era, would they maintain such characterization throughout Shakespearean tragedies? The social and political crises of the era's patriarchal society allowed Shakespearean tragedies to criticize the inequality women faced. As subordination in female characterization is a staple in the genre, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Measure for Measure* reflect the period's adversities concerning women's agency

England's social and political climate during the 1600s created an unsettling societal environment for women. Shakespearean tragedies produced during the Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan eras incorporated female characters who criticize the ongoing societal difficulties. Through well-known works such as William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Measure for Measure*, social and political criticism is embedded in the plays' stories and depicted through the exaggeration of female fragility. The lack of female agency in Ophelia, Desdemona, and Isabella's characters reflected the reality within Elizabethan audiences and supported the argument criticizing the profound societal limitations of female positionality reflected in Shakespearean works.

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Two Minds, One Body: Seeking the Truth Behind Jekyll and Hyde's Strange Case

JESSICA GRAMAJO

Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) does not solely serve the purpose of entertainment. Many in the late nineteenth century viewed those with disabilities as both physical and mental outcasts. The characters of Jekyll and Hyde exhibit characteristics associated with mental disability, more commonly referred to as either mental illness or mental disorder. In today's world, the two disorders that closely resemble these characters' behaviors are Dissociative Identity Disorder (or Multiple Personality Disorder) and Bipolar Disorder (or Manic Depression). Dissociate Identity Disorder (DID) is defined as a disorder in which "[one] may feel the presence of two or more people talking or living inside [one's head]" ("Dissociative Disorders"). Bipolar Disorder (BP) is a condition that disrupts one's mood which includes "emotional highs (mania or hypomania) and lows (depression)," creating abrupt mood swings ("Bipolar"). Of these two conditions, it is evident that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde's set of characteristics can be classified under Dissociative Identity Disorder, not Bipolar Disorder.

Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde falls under the genre of science fiction, but the science behind the tortured Jekyll and Hyde's corruption shows a strong resemblance to early cases of dissociative identity disorder recorded during and after the publication of the novel. Rokeya Sarker Rita, in her analysis of the novel, defines dissociative disorder as a disruption in "memory, identity […] and sense of self" (75). Some symptoms of DID specifically include "headache, amnesia, time loss," dissociative episodes, "and out of body experiences" ("Dissociative Identity"). These symptoms are present in Jekyll and Hyde's case, especially in the closing chapter when Jekyll speaks of his personal experience with his so-called "twin" (49). One of the earliest cases of DID was recorded in 1883, just three years before the novel was published. A forty-five-year-old woman, called Léoine, took on three different personalities. She and patients in other cases struggled to remember what "they did in their changed state of mind" (Rita 76). Dr. Jekyll, too, has an entirely different personality that emerges from within, that personality being Mr. Hyde, and in some instances Dr. Jekyll fails to remember what has happened while he was "gone" (57). With an elixir's help, Jekyll voluntarily turns into Hyde, but when the drug fails to work properly, Jekyll unwillingly awakes as Hyde, just as Dr. Jekyll has feared (62). Stevenson demonstrates Jekyll involuntarily switching to Hyde, from one identity to another. The exchange of personalities is the dissociative aspect of DID, where Dr. Jekyll feels detached from his usual self and fails to remember the order of events.

Frederic W. H. Myers's article, published in 1886-87, describes the peculiar case of Louis V., who had a difficult upbringing but was "quiet, well-behaved, and obedient" before an incident with a snake. Louis was 14 years old when he was greatly frightened by a "viper," and he became paralyzed in the legs and suffered physical symptoms, such as epilepsy. Suddenly, after "a hysteron-epileptic attack— fifty hours of convulsions and ecstasy," Louis' memory was "set back […] to the moment of the viper's appearance, and he could remember nothing since" (134). Louis was not paralyzed anymore, and he became "violent, greedy, and quarrelsome." Louis V.'s abrupt change in behavior is remarkably similar to that of Dr. Jekyll. In the two different identities, Jekyll's entire demeanor changes, and he is seen as a separate individual when embodying the character of Mr. Hyde. Dr. Jekyll, as described by other characters, is a handsome, kind gentleman of older age with an admirable reputation. Meanwhile, Hyde is described as "troglodytic" (15), or like a cave-dweller, implying he is ill- mannered and uneducated, as well as "deformed" (11). Louis's original set of characteristics differ from those he possessed after he was frightened, and it may be assumed that a new identity emerged due to an imbalance, or corruption, that occurred in the left and right hemispheres of the brain (Myers 135). Similarly, Jekyll and Hyde are viewed as two separate individuals because their personalities contrast with one another, but they are in fact one person who has developed two distinct identities.

Furthermore, Rita also notes that the diverse set of personas that reside within one individual "have their own age, sex or race" (75). In addition, other features such as "differences in voice, gender, and mannerisms" are displayed ("Dissociative Disorders"). Even though Edward Hyde is presumably the same sex and race as Dr. Jekyll, he is "so much […] younger" (51). Not only do their ages differ, but presumably their voices are also distinct from one another, Mr. Hyde's voice being "husky, whispering, and somewhat broken" (17). The last thing that sets Jekyll and Hyde apart is their mannerism, the way each personality interacts with the rest of society. The contrast regarding the way they behave is evident when considering the roles they play, Hyde being the vicious criminal while Jekyll is the pristine doctor. Each behaves accordingly, and his reputation is one of the main reasons why Jekyll desperately tries to suppress his alternative personality: he does not want to bear the guilt of his crimes.

These contrasting personalities lead to consideration of the double brain theory. Anne Stiles states how scientists from the Victorian era argued that cases of DID were caused "from an over-enlarged right brain overpowering the rational activities of the left brain," which would explain Hyde's criminal tendencies and Jekyll's overwhelming worries (886). Stiles also notes that Stevenson read scientific articles relating to multiple personality case studies, including Myer's article which was sent directly to him by Myers himself. However, Stevenson denies taking inspiration from them in an attempt to keep the novel's true meaning a mystery (880-881). Stiles further claims that Stevenson's use of the multiple personality concept

derived from "the theory of the double brain" (881-82), noting science historian Anne Harrington's work with the "civilized, rational left hemisphere" and the "uneducated, evolutionary backward right hemisphere" (882). These Victorian studies support Stevenson's use of what became known as DID in the creation of these characters.

Furthermore, Stevenson, as Stiles asserts, wrote about psychological advances of the 1870s and 1880s that focused on the "the conscious and unconscious realms of psychic life" (882). Ed Block, Jr., too, writes about the psychology incorporated in Gothic literature, focusing on Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde tale. Block notes that Stevenson was acquainted with psychologist James Sully and claims that "Stevenson suggests artistically what Sully analyzes scientifically" (445). These connections reaffirm the notion that Stevenson took inspiration from scientific studies regarding topics such as duality and multiple personality cases. Not only that, but Sully also asserts that when evaluating oneself, one must consider one's own "just as a second person would view it" (Qtd. in Block 448). Jekyll was able to divide his mind into two, which gave him the ability to assess a different part of his identity, a part he failed to subdue. From an outsider's perspective, though, this is an act of dissociating, attempting to separate his evil side from his good side. Hyde's physical appearance also resembles his placement within Jekyll's mind, i.e., the underdeveloped right hemisphere that Harrington described, since Hyde is much smaller and seemingly less human than Dr. Jekyll. Sully's research also focuses on the dream state, wherein we "lose all hold of ourselves, and take up the curious position of spectators at a transformation scene," which also aligns with the act of dissociation. When Dr. Jekyll transforms into Mr. Hyde, Dr. Jekyll becomes a spectator and claims to no longer have control over his own body or thoughts, which may be a reason he is never accountable for Hyde's scandalous actions.

Alternatively, it can be argued that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde display symptoms primarily linked to Bipolar Disorder (BP), as this condition also consists of "unpredictable changes in mood and behavior." However, these symptoms tend to vary depending on the type of BP disorder, such as BP I or BP II, like psychosis, which is when "mania [triggers] a break from reality" ("Bipolar"). In this sense, it is Jekyll's mood that changes significantly from a depressive state to a manic one, exemplified through the character of Hyde. Dr. Jekyll experiences tranquility for some time with no clear pattern. After that period, his mood changes and Hyde arises, causing the death of Carew. In the case of unspecified types of BP, drug use can induce similar symptoms, like the elixir Jekyll uses to transform into Hyde. The novel's concluding chapter details Dr. Jekyll's addiction to the substance, urging his servant to acquire copious quantities of it, despite its scarcity. Considering these circumstances through the lens of BP, Dr. Jekyll is undergoing an uncontrollable mood swing that forces him to behave manically, releasing his Mr. Hyde persona. However, even if Jekyll and Hyde exhibit some of the symptoms of BP, this theory does not consider one of the important causes associated with DID. As B. B. Wolman states, "Unless [a subject's] organism was impaired by hereditary factors

[…], the mental disorder is started by his interaction with the social environment" (52). Unlike DID, BP is a mental disorder that is inherited most times by "a first-degree relative, such as a sibling or parent" ("Bipolar"). There are no accounts stating that Jekyll has an underlying mental illness, and family medical history is nowhere to be found, although this lack of information adds to the ambiguous effect Stevenson hoped to achieve. DID, however, is developed under the circumstances of the individual's environment, which best illustrates Dr. Jekyll's case.

Stevenson, like his characters, also took on many roles in his life and viewed life as a drama. According to his friend, Arthur Symons, he was "never really himself except when he was in some fantastic disguise" (Qtd. in Oates 604), alluding to the idea that we all can assume several personalities. In these ways, the true origin of Stevenson's strange tale correlates with contemporary scientific research involving the duality / imbalance of the brain and dreams. It is clear that the condition of the protagonist of Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde should be classified as Dissociative Identity Disorder.

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Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Ethical Dilemmas

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Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein* (1818), examines the ethical challenges inherent in scientific progress. Victor Frankenstein becomes obsessed with his power to create life, losing track of his moral senses. Audiences today might recognize the correlation between the novel's monster and modern-day destructive technology. According to Shelley, there must be a balance between conservative and progressive approaches toward science. If one is too conservative, less innovation may occur. However, if one is too progressive, an unethical manipulation of nature can result in unacceptable moral consequences. In this way, *Frankenstein* is a cautionary morality tale warning about the dangers of an amoral progressive attitude towards technology.

Manipulation of nature can have positive consequences on society, as shown in *Frankenstein*'s early stages of Victor's character development. Victor demonstrates an excellent knowledge of science. His intellect stems from genuine curiosity, regardless of whether he has good or bad intentions. However, this curiosity leads to Victor's corruption of the human mind's righteous principles. Kim Hammond, quoting Marina Warner, asserts that "the tale-of-perverted-science interpretation misses Shelley's 'much more urgent message' – 'that a man might make a monster in his image and then prove incapable of taking responsibility'" (182). Victor, the protagonist, represents humanity as a whole. Hammond explains how Victor brought it upon himself to fail, even though his intentions might have been good (190). Victor reveals that being careless with intellectual ideas can emotionally scar a person. His blind determination to gain knowledge leads to making mistakes, and his errors are a result of the absence of accountability for his own actions.

Nevertheless, he should not be held accountable for nature's unpredictable outcomes. As much as Victor controls the experiment, he cannot control life after the monster forms. Even though Victor's curiosity and scientific progress help society move forward, humanity cannot control nature's forces. For example, the danger of attempting to control these forces results in the physical deformities and mental anguish that the monster experiences. Despite Victor's initial intention to create a being that can improve society, his lack of consideration for the ethical implications of his creation ultimately leads to the monster's suffering. The monster initially seeks love and acceptance but is rejected by society and becomes for the reader a symbol of the dangers of playing with nature. Additionally, Victor's pursuit of scientific knowledge and control ultimately leads to his downfall. His obsession with creating life drives him to neglect his relationships and responsibilities, his relationships and responsibilities, leading to isolation and despair. These factors underscore the idea

that humanity cannot fully control the forces of nature and that attempting to do so can result in tragic consequences. While the pursuit of scientific knowledge and progress can benefit society, it is essential to consider the ethical implications of such advancements. Victor's creation of the monster ultimately demonstrates that even with the best intentions, humanity cannot fully control or predict the consequences of its actions.

Furthermore, Victor's low self-esteem causes him to search for affirmation through knowledge. Victor is intelligent enough to comprehend scientific ideas, yet he does not possess solid psychological capabilities, for example, using logic in deliberating a plan for the monster's well-being. The lack of a healthy mind causes Victor difficulty in considering the outcome of putting scientific theory into practice. Daniel Cottom proposes that *Frankenstein* illustrates a moral lesson: "in seeking to represent himself, man makes himself a monster. Or, to put it in other words: Frankenstein's monster images the monstrous nature of the representation" (60). Through seeking knowledge, Victor tries to better understand himself, but he hesitates. Victor's self-doubt causes his sense of worth to diminish, and his ability to consider the consequences of his actions is impaired. His creativity and analytical mind remain strong throughout the process of his creation. However, his inability to consider other possibilities leads to his creation becoming a monster. This process is exemplified in *Frankenstein* when Victor says, "I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (38). Victor's initial excitement and passion for his creation turn into hate and disgust once he realizes the consequences of his actions. Victor's lack of several things, including a moral compass, a consideration of potential consequences of his actions, a clear vision of the future, and an internal motivation to continue his work, all lead to his downfall and self-destruction.

While Victor's lack of a moral compass and self-destructive tendencies lead to his downfall, the novel also presents the contrasting character of the monster, an inherently good being more curious to explore the world than to destroy it. In the novel, the monster reflects on his experiences and desires, saying, "I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned. Was there no injustice in this? Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all humankind sinned against me?" (166-67). These words demonstrate that the monster is not inherently evil. We see that he desires acceptance and companionship and that his actions result from his rejection by and isolation from society rather than a desire to cause harm. If society had welcomed the monster, Victor's work would have been a success. Theodore Ziolkowski shows how the monster's solitary achievements are more self-nurture than nature, including how the monster "learn[s] to talk by observing a family from his hideaway, how he educate[s] himself by studying the literary classics, and how his attempts to enter human society by means of kind deeds [are] always repulsed by people horrified by his savage

appearance" (41). The monster has no previous genetic or biological factors to cause him to do evil because he was created from dead organs and chemicals. Victor makes the creature out of human parts, but he is not considered part of the human species because he has come from a lifeless body. The monster's negative experience highlights the consequences of societal rejection on an individual's development and actions: the monster's inherently good nature is impaired by this rejection. If society would accept the creation, he would be nurtured into peacefully co-existing with humankind.

Shelley creates Victor with no self-awareness, suggesting how even the most knowledgeable and wisest people in society cannot foresee the consequences of interfering with nature's forces. Through acting out of pure self-interest to gain knowledge, Victor disconnects from his true self. He moves away from the core values that build a strong, positive character, such as humility and service to others. Claire Stubber and Maggie Kirkman propose that "*Frankenstein* serves as both a vessel of past concerns about hubris and a foreshadowing of the possibilities of new technologies" (31). Victor's ego shields him from having to confront the truth of his work, the horror his experiment has brought into the world. He cannot accept moral failure because his scientific research is the core of his sense of individualism. As his sense of self becomes more robust, he becomes more disconnected from society. Victor's need for knowledge also stems from the need to find the truth. "'Truth' is an inadequate concept to set against 'myth.' There are inexplicable events that defy science and logic; mythology reflects attempts to understand, explain, reify, and codify these existential dilemmas" (Stubber and Kirkman 32). However, unable to accurately see himself and his actions, Victor misses the truth. Ethically, it is essential to understand what is happening in the present moment and to be able to predict future outcomes of the given situation, but Victor has too much pride in himself, leading to the tragic consequences of his hubris.

Throughout the novel, society's disapproval causes the creature to become a monster. However, this disapproval of the monster's appearance, as well as a disapproval of Victor's godlike role as the creator, ultimately reflects the dangers of unchecked scientific ambition and the responsibility of wielding such power. Victor sees the boundaries of life and death as imaginary. Furthermore, he thinks that any being he brings back to life will owe its existence to him (35). Although Victor momentarily feels disgusted by his actions, he does not end the experiment and crosses the moral boundary of bringing the dead back to life. As Josh Bernatchez notes, the "interrogation demands of the Creature that he betray himself—confess, against his aspirations for self-creation, virtue, and recognition, that 'I am a monster.' This verbal component of torture played out in *Frankenstein* is, effectively, a naming contest" (207). Even if individuals hold to a standard, the public's perception may differ. Victor's carelessness in planning his ideas is dangerous, and his actions have a negative effect. In this way, *Frankenstein* is a morality tale because it highlights the importance of responsible innovation and ethical considerations when pursuing advancement in science and technology.

Victor violates the law of nature by bringing his creation to life. Hammond, citing the ideas of Ulrich Beck, supports the claim that "where the pre-risk society 'logic of scientific discovery presuppose[s] testing before putting into practice,' this is 'breaking down in the age of risk' […]. In *Frankenstein* we see that knowledge and expertise, in the wrong hands, and with no structures of social accountability, can be dangerous, and as such present a risk to society" (191-192). Although progressive thoughts without a clear structure often go beyond ethical boundaries, cohesively organizing ideas minimizes this risk.

Frankenstein remains relevant today because humans struggle with their relationship to scientific technology. With current scientific advancements in biotechnology, humans have begun manipulating human genomes through genetic engineering. For example, scientists, working with germline editing, are experimenting with eugenics, which can potentially eliminate any defects and undesirable traits in fetuses. These modern-day practices are evident in the novel, as Victor similarly manipulates and selects biological factors that suit his vision (Hammond 182). Modern scientists continue to worry if this process is a danger to society. Even though this innovative technology seems to streamline the progression of science in society, it can also have negative consequences if it falls into the wrong hands. *Frankenstein* teaches the dangers of what could happen if scientists overstep certain scientific and ethical boundaries.

While Mary Shelley promotes responsible innovation and advancement in her novel, Victor lacks the gift of foresight, making it difficult for him to weigh the ethical consequences of his creation. His intellect and knowledge cause him to be prideful of his work, and he does not have the wisdom to respect nature's rules. *Frankenstein* is a morality tale about balancing progress and tradition. When humans test the boundaries of scientific innovation, they must remain humble and responsible to avoid humankind's destruction.

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Nonconformity to an Early Modern Society's Expectations in William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

In William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1595), Helena is seen as reliant on the love of a male figure, Demetrius. This reliance is destructive, even to the point of self-sabotage: "The more you beat me, I will fawn on you. / Use me but as your spaniel: spurn me, strike me, / Neglect me, loose me" (2.1.204-06). She pleads to be spurned and stricken, which demonstrates her absolute demoralization and lack of integrity due to her complete infatuation. To audiences, both of the early-modern period and now, Helena can be seen as stereotypically feminine and bound by the patriarchal norms of Shakespeare's time. As David Scott Kastan explains, these norms are upheld by [early-modern] societal standards that "a woman's proper role was docile and domestic" (115). However, despite the perception of Helena as a stereotypical early-modern female, one who is nurturing and obedient to her lovers, she defies these heteronormative and patriarchal social perceptions. Defiance of such traditions is seen through the accumulation of Helena's actions and her relationships. While, as Kastan explains, many female characters in early-modern drama conform to such patriarchal expectations, Helena does not allow herself to be defined as inferior to male lovers.

Helena is complex, allowing scholars to analyze her character and motivations extensively, and some modern scholars demonstrate the depth of Helena's character in unfamiliar ways. Katherine Heavey asserts that Shakespeare's usage of the name Helena allows for early-modern audiences to draw comparisons to the fate of the ancient Greek mythological character, Helen of Troy. She then considers how the tragic fate of Helen of Troy, a life of domesticity, resembles that of Helena in her seemingly happy union with Demetrius, which allows audiences to recontextualize the character. Similarly, Melissa Sanchez allows us to see Helena's relationships in the context of Helena's destructive fate. Helena goes to great lengths for her love of Demetrius, only for her lover to abuse and berate her in return. Sanchez argues that Helena's pursuit of love in this way is atypical and that her "exchanges with Demetrius and Hermia reveal that women's perverse desires - whether for women or for men - can threaten ideals of proper, 'normal' 'sexuality,'" suggesting aspects of homoeroticism or deviance in her close relationships (506). As Sanchez studies *Midsummer* "through the lenses of sex-radical feminism and queer theory," she encourages her readers to see that Helena distorts normative portrayals of love. I also argue that Helena's is a nontraditional portrayal of a female in the early-modern period. However, I believe Helena's relentless pursuit of Demetrius in his denial of

her love empowers her further, showing the untraditional nature of her character in an early-modern context.

Just as Sanchez allows us to analyze Helena's romantic relationships using queer theory through early-modern ideas of heteronormativity, James Kuzner also reassesses Helena and her relationships. Kuzner compares the stable friendship of Helena and Hermia to the turbulent love of Helena and Demetrius, emphasizing Helena's romantic uncertainty in their relationship. He states that "Helena has a right to Hermia as a friend. […] Demetrius being Helena's own but not her own also means that love can't complete Helena," suggesting that Helena does not view her love with Demetrius as valid because she does not possess the right to him as a lover in the way she has a right to Hermia as a friend (107). As we will see, these various perspectives recontextualize our understanding of Helena through her relationships with Hermia and Demetrius respectively. Kuzner allows audiences to view Helena's relationship with Hermia as influential rather than as a rivalry where the females compete for the attention of their lovers. However, his emphasis on the stability of Helena and Hermia's relationship highlights the unfortunate trend of deception and betrayal in Helena's intrapersonal relationships.

Shakespeare's choice of the name "Helena" provides one instance in which the audience should perceive the character as going against the traditional feminine grain. Heavey notes that, in using "Helena" for one of his heroines, Shakespeare expects his audience to recognize the ancient Greek character Helen of Troy, mythologized by Homer and other writers (428). This allusion deepens Helena's character through similarities and differences of Helen's pre-established personality and fate. Helen of Troy is a sexual agent in her relationships, whereas Helena is insecure and doubtful because she is not desired. Helen is depicted as an object to be fawned over, as she had much control over the men around her, whereas Helena is undesirable, only obtaining the attention of both male lovers after they have been put under a spell. Heavey notes the difference between Helen and Helena, arguing that Helena suffers "because she cannot believe [in love's] effect, and instead imagines herself to be a figure of fun, particularly in comparison to Hermia" (430). While the men are under the effect of the spell, Helena's beauty is realized; despite this opportunity, Helena remains modest, as well as confused. To contrast, Helen of Troy takes advantage of men's infatuation with her. She is successful in her pursuit of male relations, as she believes that their desire for her is genuine, whereas Helena's hesitance demonstrates her distrust of typical patriarchal expectations of love, which have not worked in her favor.

However, these difficulties that Helena faces in her romantic pursuits may be innate in her character's existence. David Bevington notes that the name Helena has darker consequences that can be tied to "an old false etymology" in *Hele*n, misinterpreted as "the Greek root *hele*, or 'destroyer,' despite the efforts of Euripides and others to defend her reputation" (112). This misperceived origin of Helen's name creates negative connotations in the character of Helena, despite her yearning for the love of Demetrius. The misapplication of the Greek root *hele* in Helena's name

suggests the destruction of her own love life, or the love lives of others. Helena internalizes these unreciprocated attempts for Demetrius's love self-destructively. She repeats patterns of renouncing her agency, placing his affection above her own worth, all for Demetrius to spurn her anyway. Her self-destructive nature manifests itself as unworthiness and wariness in her relationships. Despite Demetrius returning her feelings after the reversal of the spell, Helena believes she is unworthy of love, as she is unattractive in comparison to Hermia. She muses, "Sickness is catching; O, were favour so! / Your words I catch, fair Hermia; […] O, teach me how you look, and with what art / You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart" (1.1.186-87; 192-93). Helena wishes that Hermia's beautiful words and disposition were contagious, like sickness, so she can win over Demetrius. Consequently, she is confused by his sudden attraction to her and becomes wary in her pursuit of further relations, as she was only attractive while the lovers were under the spell of the fairies. Because her love for Demetrius is unreciprocated as she is unattractive to him, Helena fails to be defined by early modern norms that depict women as docile objects to be fawned over.

The fates of Helen of Troy and Helena are seemingly opposite, as Helen is forced into a miserable existence of domesticity as punishment for her infidelity, whereas Helena chooses her lover for marriage, contented with her romantic future with Demetrius. Although the contrast between the fates of Helen and Helena might encourage early-modern audiences to interpret the conclusion of *Midsummer* as happy, Helena's marriage misaligns with traditional societal expectations. As Heavey states, recollecting the story of Helen of Troy might prompt early modern audiences "to reflect that seemingly intact marriages do not entirely heal old wounds, or guarantee future happiness […]. [A]ny laughter is tempered with an awareness of the dark or even tragic consequences of desire, for both men and women" (431). Helena's name as an allusion allows for early-modern audiences to apply these darker consequences of desire to Helena's romantic relationship with Demetrius. Although they are paired up at the end of the play, expecting marriage, this resolution does not restore the damage that has been done by Helena. She has been unrelenting in her pursuit of Demetrius, and his hatred for her and her masochistic tendencies cause unease in their relationship prior to their being romantically paired. In the ancient Greek myth of Helen of Troy, Theseus took part in the rape of Helen, "thereby introducing the theme of sexual violence" into the story of Helena, too (Bevington 112). Contextualizing Helena through Helen of Troy allows for an early-modern audience to expect malicious treatment of Helena in her relationships and in her society. Also, the females' uncertain fates parallel each other, especially the justice of Helen's sentence of domesticity and the question of Helena's love for Demetrius. Helena subverts the recognizable fate of Helen of Troy, dissuading audiences from believing that the seemingly "happy ending" of forcibly pairing an unknowing Helena and Demetrius together is to be celebrated.

Moreover, the insecurity created by Helena's resentment and envy of Hermia and Lysander's relationship further drives Helena to pursue a relationship despite Demetrius's indifference to her. Their relationship is unstable and one-sided in the beginning scenes of the play. Helena is committed to Demetrius, while

he repeatedly rejects her rejects her. In an early scene, Helena pleads to Demetrius:

> [G]ive me leave,
> Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
> What worser place can I beg in your love
> (And yet a place of high respect with me)
> Than to be used as you use your dog?" (2.1.207-10)

Her insecurity is clear and seemingly self-perpetuating, reinforcing the need to feel sustained, even to her detriment. Helena approaches her romantic desire for Demetrius untraditionally, masochistically referring to herself as a dog in her pursuit of him to emphasize her devotion and desperation for love, as the love of a spaniel is unconditional despite abuse. This untraditional nature of Helena's female sexual agency poses a challenge to patriarchal perceptions of love and sex (Sanchez 505). Sanchez correctly asserts that Helena's sexual agency does not align with traditional and early modern contexts of love and sex, as Helena has only known unreciprocated love. Additionally, as Kuzner argues, when Helena does acquire the love of Demetrius, she categorizes his personhood as a possession. He states that Helena's depiction of Demetrius as a jewel (4.1.190) allows Helena to fall "short of a certain standard: of [what Roland Barthes called] the 'non-will to possess' […], to receive [love], not to keep [it] (107). Because of her confusion while the spell directs the lovers' attraction to her, she struggles to make sense of her relationships. She is unsure if their intentions and love for her are true, thus in her relationship with Demetrius, she needs him to belong only to her for their romance to be valid. Helena's insecurities manifest in her resorting to animal-like comparisons to empower herself and to express the need to possess her lover once they are in a relationship, all of which reinforces her nontraditional approach to relationships.

Throughout the play Helena clearly defies perceptions of the early-modern heteronormative and patriarchal society through her realized friendship with Hermia and her convoluted relationship with Demetrius. Nevertheless, Lorraine Helms argues that Helena is a stereotypical early-modern female, one who is dependent on the love of another and lacking self-agency, confined to stereotypically domestic love and traditional perceptions of gender. In the early-modern theater, female characters were performed by young men (190). She believes that as a result of boys' acting in the roles of women, female characters would not be as complex as their male counterpart roles. She then asserts that the "all-male acting company contrasts the boy and the mature male to create the illusion of female presence," though, she believes, strategies that depict these boys as more traditionally feminine through poetic and narrative attempts fall short. As such, actions to feminize the boy actor may simplify or eroticize the woman who now performs the woman's role (192). Helms argument is

important because the young boys that played the women's roles were not overtly feminine, which disallowed for the nuances of complex female characters. However, despite the lack of overt femininity being a factor in their initial creation, these traditionally "male roles" do not strip the depth of their characters. In this way, Shakespeare's roles transcend surface level depictions dependent on the way that they are analyzed. Helena and other female characters within his works are complex in their relationships and motivations. The development of Helena and Hermia, and all their attributes, are "melded into an assemblage that reaches beyond the boundaries of the autonomous human" (Bailey 408). Their relationship transcends what females were confined to in their established patriarchy. Helena's relationship with Demetrius is also intricate because Helena has agency in her pursuit of Demetrius, and she can communicate her desires to her lover in a period when female characters often lacked the ability to do so. Evidently, Helena is more complex than the sum of her parts, a model of how subversive a seemingly simple female role can be.

Through the Greek myth, Helen of Troy and her stubborn pursuit of Demetrius, Helena challenges stereotypical perceptions of females in an early-modern society. However, like Helms, Louis Montrose argues that Helena conforms to an early-modern patriarchy, that she is traditionally feminine due to her dependence on male affection. Helena and Hermia are both dependent on the male characters, fleeing to the woods with them to take control of their own lives. Despite each male lover resenting them, Helena and Hermia do not "fluctuate in their desires for their young men, […] the ending ratifies their constant if inexplicable preferences" (Montrose 488; see also Dent 116). The early-modern society confines Helena's character to a fate of being subservient to a male lover. These female roles reflect the male gaze, serving an androcentric society inside and outside of the play. Montrose's argument is crucial due to how each female may have certain aspects of agency, i.e., Hermia's decision to run away from her father's arrangements, and the women's inability to detach themselves from male love after they begin their pursuits. As Helms notes, the presence of the early modern patriarchy resulted in "cinematic representation [that] can often construct the female as an object of the male spectator's gaze" (190). This "male spectator gaze" complements Montrose's argument, as these relationships between the male and female lovers were constructed with a male audience in mind. Helena is denied power in her relationships because she was written to fawn over Demetrius incessantly and depend upon him despite his rejection of her. By contextualizing the plays through an androcentric lens, we see that the history of these theatrical events excludes women and, therefore, their gender constructs due to the male-dominated audience. Since the role of Helena was written in a context where she must conform to typical domestic roles, the complexity of her character diminishes as Demetrius is a crutch to rely on – renouncing her own self agency.

In comedies, the end goal is often intimacy and marriage, reinforcing the idea that female roles follow a trend of domesticity in early-modern Shakespearean works. Though Helena does love Demetrius by the play's conclusion, her subversive

approach to their relationship culminates in apprehension of their relationship, as Demetrius's past animosity for her has vanished. She questions the validity of her feelings, "And I have found Demetrius, like a jewel / Mine own, and not mine own" (4.1.190-91). Despite Helena's effort in obtaining Demetrius, she is still uncertain of the nature of their relationship. Prior to them waking up from their dreamlike state, Helena's beauty hadn't been enough to attract Demetrius as she could "never hope to live up to her namesake's reputation without supernatural intervention" (Heavey 430). Compared to Helen of Troy, Helena is not confident in the love of others, relying on supernatural intervention to repair what she lacks. Helena is in control of her destiny as she chooses her love with Demetrius rather than Lysander when the fairy intervention occurs. In *Midsummer's* story and early modern society, Helena changes perceptions of the contemporary woman, adding nuance to how early-modern societal structures and relationships within them can be interpreted.

To conclude, Helena is a rounded and fully realized character despite social pressures demanding her to conform to patriarchal norms of an early-modern society. Her connection with the ancient Greek figure, Helen of Troy, allows Helena to demonstrate her nonconformity regarding early-modern expectations of female characters and their relationships. Also, Helena's relationship with Demetrius highlights the self-sabotaging nature of her personality when it comes to unreciprocated love. Helena is contextualized and transformed through her rejection of Demetrius, as his spurning begins to change Helena's approach to all her relationships. Repeated rejections by Demetrius and the mocking nature of the love spell create insecurity in Helena, which manifests as a distrust in all future relationships. Furthermore, her insecurity with romantic relationships contradicts the understanding that Helena's character was created with the male audience in mind, a woman who is docile, domestic, and dependent on the love of a male figure. Through her relentless pursuit of Demetrius, she is agentive in her repeated attempts at his love. While I concur with Kastan that other female characters in early-modern dramas are "victimized by the patriarchy" and attempt "to evade the rigidities of paternal will" (126), Helena is different. She subverts expectations and grapples with more complex issues, such as understanding her own wants and needs as well as the wants and needs within a relationship, rather than simply conforming to the typical familial expectation that she marries according to her father's will. Overall, Helena's subversion of tradition creates a compelling character to which both early-modern and modern audiences can relate. She experiences intrapersonal struggles with rejection and the agony of unrequited love, but with this unrequited love, Helena resists patriarchal expectations of love, pursuing her lover until she gets what she desires.

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