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VOLUME 14 2020

IDIOM

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ACADEMIC JOURNAL

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IDIOM

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I find it ironic that *IDIOM* is named after a literary device so commonly discouraged in academic writing as frivolous and overly colloquial. Indeed, idioms are instead left forgotten in first drafts, rarely making the cut to our final publication. The danger of the idiom lies in reducing the arguments in each paper, making it appear derivative, simplistic, or contrived. Idioms can undermine the sincerity and formality of an essay by making it too humorous or anecdotal. But this aversion to idioms creates a problem in and of itself: the dry, static writing which people so commonly associate with academia.

We at *IDIOM* know that essays are often written off as boring or a necessary evil for students, but we all suffer from the misconception that all papers are similarly dull to read. Yes, there are some real doozies out there which make you want to claw your eyes out of your skull with frustration, but not all are like that. Great essays are those which convey complex arguments in an accessible way, engaging a reader to appreciate a text in an original way. The essays contained within this volume do exactly that. From Shakespeare to Dylan Thomas, Sinclair Ross to Nalo Hopkinson, these papers are stunning explorations into the nuances of social construct, physical embodiment, and much, much more. We hope you enjoy reading this diverse collection of analysis as much as we have enjoyed working with them!

There are many people who made this publication possible, including the authors themselves. Each year as I read the submissions to *IDIOM*, I am astounded at the quality of insight and articulation we receive. These papers are the cream of the crop, and it has been a delight to work with their authors and witness their progression from first drafts to published pieces. Thank you to the 2019-2020 Editorial Board, who worked tirelessly to make Volume XIV a reality. Through each selections meeting, email, and copyedit they brought out the best in the essays and each other. A special mention goes to Jovana Pajovic (Deputy Editor-in-Chief), Kornelia Drianovski (Assistant Editor-in-Chief), and Leyland Rochester (Editor-in-Chief 2018-2019) for leaping valiantly over the continuous hurdles we encountered due to COVID-19. Thank you as well to Professor Nick Mount, our Academic Advisor, and Dr. Vikki Visvis were invaluable in their experience and knowledge of academic

scholarship. Finally, thank you to Becky Caunce and Coach House Books who work together to design and print our final publication as not only a tangible manifestation of our work, but a piece of art.

It has been nothing short of a privilege to work with these exceptional individuals for the past three years at *IDIOM*, and nothing short of an honour to be able to present the sum of all of our efforts: Volume XIV!

OLIVIA ANDERSON-CLARKE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
July 2020

SELF-DECEPTION AND SUGGESTIBILITY OF THE 'INTERIOR GOTHIC' IN SINCLAIR ROSS' "THE PAINTED DOOR"

Emily Barber

Inspired by the stark landscape and haunted protagonist in Sinclair Ross's short story "The Painted Door," Emily coined the term 'interior gothic' to describe a suggestible state of mind that is inspired and fed by internal turmoil, but arises out of formidable external surroundings. Written for ENG252: Introduction to Canadian Literature, this research essay interacts with critical discourse on the gothic and on prairie realism in order to account for the unsettling atmosphere Ross creates in his story and to demonstrate how the lens of the interior gothic diverges from existing criticism. Taking into account the necessarily concise vehicle of the short story, "Self-Deception and Suggestibility of the Interior Gothic" examines how Ross creates the effect of rapid mental deterioration over a short span of time by means of condensing the repetition of external images and the allusions to the protagonist's internal states. Ultimately, Emily suggests that the interior gothic is a human phenomenon that could feasibly manifest under any extreme circumstances, but in "The Painted Door," the Canadian prairie setting and non-Indigenous subject shows this manifestation of the interior gothic to be the by-product of the colonial project in Canada. For the protagonist of "The Painted Door" is alienated from reason by her attempts to impose her will on the landscape—a landscape that refuses to yield to subjugation and control. Emily would like to thank ENG252 TA Kyle Kinaschuk and IDIOM editors Morgan Beck, Delaney Anderson, and Julia Mihevc for their helpful feedback and insights.

The suggestibility of the human mind and its potentially drastic effects are common to the human experience, but take on a particular potency in Canadian prairie literature. Removed in their remote farmsteads, characters situated in the prairies lead an isolated existence as they battle often brutal weather conditions and difficult rural lifestyles. Sinclair Ross sets his short story "The Painted Door" within this stark landscape, employing the modes of realism and localism to display the suggestibility of the mind. Trapped in her own dissatisfaction and guilt, Ross's protagonist Ann experiences increasing internal tension: her perception of the fire grows more menacing, the clock's ticking more grating, and the wind's howling more insistent. These gothic elements in the story create an unnerving psychological atmosphere that is amplified by its genre; the compact form of the short story is conducive to condensing tension, to the extent that the line between experience and Ann's perceptions of those experiences becomes increasingly blurred. Ross creates a juxtaposition between the rapid, temporal deterioration of circumstances and the prolonged suffering of the mind as it works through its internal turmoil. Ann's anxieties construct what I call an 'interior gothic': a self-inflicted atmosphere that becomes more foreboding and destructive than her already formidable outward surroundings. The 'interior gothic' makes use of the unnerving aspects of the outside world as the catalyst for transfiguring the mind, leading it to self-deception and ultimately ruin.

The overall realism of "The Painted Door" makes its use of gothic elements all the more unnerving, especially considering that realism is meant to represent the world as it truly is. The setting of the domestic farmstead is not inherently dramatic or threatening. Ross's initial description of the landscape belies the horrors to come, opting for an account of Ann looking out at "the snow swept farmyard to the huddle of stables and sheds" (Ross 49). Sparsely modified and devoid of ominous diction, this description of the farmstead creates a wholly realistic setting, representing life and society as it generally appears to the reader. Having established an apparently commonplace setting, Ross's gradual introduction of gothic elements is all the more sinister. Additionally, the setting is ideally suited for suggesting the interior gothic: the more non-threatening the outside world initially

seems, the more extreme the contrast between the exterior surroundings and Ann's internal mental state becomes. It is a testament to the power of her surroundings and her own imagination that the perceptions Ann has become confused with reality, that a familiar domestic space is transformed into a malignant force.

Gothic elements may initially seem discordant with the realistic prairie setting in "The Painted Door," yet they actually serve to complicate the notion of what constitutes reality. By inserting the gothic — that which is terrifying, containing an element of the supernatural, and often subconscious — into a realistic setting, Ross suggests that the gothic is part of reality, albeit an aspect of reality that frequently goes unacknowledged (Abrams and Harpham 152). However, the gothic is not solely concerned with exotic, supernatural settings, but can also apply to "a brooding atmosphere of gloom and terror [...] [that] often deals with aberrant psychological states" (152). Ross's atmosphere of gloom and terror is visible in the outside world, yet it is Ann's psychological state that increases her fears. In this psychological state, Ann is susceptible to the interior gothic, for it is through Ann's point of view that the natural landscape develops into an unsettling atmosphere. Ross develops Ann's unease throughout the story, building tension as the narrative progresses. While gazing out the window at the prairie landscape, Ann thinks it "seemed a region alien to life" (Ross 50). Gothic elements are present in the external world but are manifested and amplified in Ann's internal turmoil. Accordingly, Ann's view of the domestic security of the isolated farmsteads is that they "seemed futile, lost, to cower before the implacability of snow-swept earth and clear pale sun-chilled sky" (50). The repetition of "seemed" builds an atmosphere of uncertainty and conjecture. Additionally, the "implacability" of the landscape signals how powerless Ann feels in the face of a force that is beyond her control; the harsh prairie land, with its unrelenting cold and snow, adds to the already formidable toil that is farming life. The effect of the landscape on Ann is momentarily demonstrated through John's point of view. The "brooding stillness in her face" troubles John, thereby connecting the gothic and realist elements of the story (50). This slippage uses the act of observation to map the psychological horror of the gothic onto a realistic, everyday concern: being unable to understand another person's mind. Ross subverts both the expectations of realism and those of the psychological side of the gothic by creating an

unsettling, uncanny atmosphere in a nominally peaceful domestic setting, prompted by outward surroundings and amplified by repetition.

As Ross's story unfolds, seemingly innocuous imagery and motifs are repeated in quick succession, and Ann's interpretation of these images as malignant and even threatening create the effect of rapid change as she grapples with her mind's reading of the domestic sphere as gothic. Even though very little time has passed, Ann's heightened emotion stretches each passing moment to a fever pitch. Whenever Ann is described as tense, still, or self-conscious, these emotions are accompanied by the motifs of the fire crackling and the clock ticking. The constancy of the clock grates on her nerves — as per the omniscient narration filtered through her consciousness, expressing her thoughts — for "always it was there" (52). This tension increases from a minor annoyance to outright hostility, as Ann thinks only a few pages later: "[H]eedless of the storm, self-absorbed and self-satisfied, the clock ticked on like a glib little idiot" (59). This personification of the clock shows malignant, human attributes projected onto the external world as a reflection of her guilt and inner turmoil. Similarly, the silence becomes personified, as it "now seemed more intense than ever, seemed to have reached a pitch where it faintly moaned" (55). Again, the repeated use of "seemed" increases the ambivalence between perception and reality as Ann projects her own frustration onto the natural world. She attempts to keep a grip on reality with repeated vocalized statements including, "I'm a fool" (52). That she feels the need to convince herself out loud speaks to Ann's fear of the gothic, of "the realm of the irrational and of the perverse impulses and nightmarish terrors that lie beneath the orderly surface of the civilized mind" (Abrams and Harpham 152). As Ann feels herself slipping into the gothic realm of the irrational, she tries to counter it with reasonable, common-sense language. However, her counter is verbal, not mental. Despite her professions of normalcy and reasonability as she goes about her chores, in Ann's mind she is becoming increasingly suggestible to the influences of her surroundings, causing her reason to deteriorate and her conjectures to become wilder.

The short story juxtaposes the rapid temporal deterioration of the plot with prolonged mental suffering. Dwelling upon the desolate landscape and Ann's internal turmoil defamiliarizes her domestic space, making

it a source of irritation for her. While painting the door, Ann finds herself going through “thoughts that outstripped her words, that left her alone again with herself and the ever-lurking silence” (Ross 53). As Ann leaves rational articulations behind, her “thoughts” become more immediate than her “words.” The life she has with John makes her restless and dissatisfied. Thinking about her marriage, Ann recalls feeling “eager and hopeful first, then clenched, rebellious, lonely” (53). Sinclair uses conjunctions in the first half of the sentence to represent her stability as she thinks on the early days of her marriage, then opts for asyndeton in the second half, the omission of conjunctions reflecting the disarray and vagueness of Ann’s own thoughts. Cynthia Sugars describes this effect in *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic* as a manifestation of the gothic characteristic called the uncanny, moments when — according to Sigmund Freud — the familiar (especially the home) becomes defamiliarized. The uncanny includes “scenes where the distinction between past and present, real and spectral, civilized and primitive, is tenuous and disjunctive” (Sugars ix). In the case of Ann, the form and content of her thoughts reflect the uncanny, as she recalls all the negativity in her married life as solely a “drudgery” (Ross 53). Whether her recollections are exaggerated by her current mental state or not, such an environment renders her extremely suggestible.

Ann’s suggestibility increases as her outward surroundings become more menacing. Her internal dialogue reflects the degree to which she justifies sleeping with Steven. She makes mental comparisons of the appearance and personas of Steven and John, rejecting John’s steady reliability for Steven’s physical appeal. Instead of feeling affronted by Steven’s presumption, “she [feels] eager, challenged” (60). Here, the narration emphasizes Ann’s emotions, rather than her thoughts, rationality, or sense of loyalty to her husband. The text repeats this notion when the narration reveals that she felt “his inevitability. Just as she had felt the snow, the silence, and the storm” (61). Ann’s self-delusion is linked to the way she projects her own turbulent thoughts onto external surroundings; both are forms of exaggerated suggestibility that twist and distort reality. These short, economical sentences build tension as they work towards the inevitable conclusion of Ann’s internal dialogue. T.D. MacLulich’s *Between Europe and America: The Canadian Tradition in Fiction* addresses this concept more broadly, arguing that this trope in psychological fiction is based on the idea that “experience

is fundamentally private, and cannot be adequately delineated by the mere rendering of external circumstances" (MacLulich 101). While MacLulich is referring to Ross's novel *As For Me and My House*, his remark nonetheless illustrates the mode of "The Painted Door" — the rendering of internal circumstances to show the full process of the protagonist's decline as they fall into ruin. The interior gothic becomes not only a lens through which to interpret Ann's actions, but the means to understanding Ann and her actions in a complete sense: as a product of her interior turmoil as well as her external surroundings.

The serpents Ann sees in the flames reflect the climax of her guilt, as the turmoil of her interior gothic renders her drastically suggestible. As she looks into the fire, the flames and shadows "leaped and sank fantastically. The longer she watched the more alive they seemed to be" (Ross 64). This obsession culminates with an unusually definitive statement: "[T]he shadow was John" (65). Unlike the cultivated uncertainty of previous images, this statement shows the full depth of Ann's guilt and the power of her imagination: she can no longer distinguish between fantasy and reality. A sense of foreboding overpowers Ann, as she feels the shadows — the projections of her guilt — advancing on her (65). Accordingly, Ross uses pathetic fallacy, describing the beams of light as "whips" (65). These associations have strong connotations of punishment and damnation. The "swift and snake-like tongues of snow" (55) that Ann used to see outside have now entered the house and the "whips of light" (65) are transfigured into snakes, the animal associated with the Devil in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Ann's projections of outward gothic elements have now entered the domestic sphere, completing the defamiliarization of the home as the forbidding elements of the outside world are now associated with the inside as well. As Sugars argues, "for non-Indigenous subjects, the Canadian post-colonial Gothic arguably charts a largely psychological experience — haunted minds rather than a haunted wilderness" (Sugars ix). As a non-Indigenous settler with no intimate connection to the land itself, Ann feels the need to control and subdue the land. Yet "The Painted Door" confounds this sense of control Ann has over her surroundings by its rendering of the natural world. While her mind is a self-destructive force that distorts reality, it is rendered that way in reaction to the stark and desolate external world that refuses to be controlled by human means.

Ann's interior gothic becomes self-deceptive to the point of ruin; convinced that her actions can be atoned for, she deludes herself into thinking that she can salvage her old life, only to have this illusion shattered upon her realization of the true circumstances of John's death. After her initial scare with the shadows and flames, Ann resolves to make amends for her infidelity, briefly bringing her peace of mind. Her mental attempts to amend are reflected in her projections of her outward surroundings, for as the storm recedes, the "terror blast became a feeble, worn out moan" (Ross 68). This personification that haunted and chastised her so vividly moments before dwindles into background noise, lulling her into a false sense of security. As Justin D. Edwards discusses in his analysis of "The Painted Door" in *Gothic Canada*, the process of defamiliarization is both an internal and external process — the two work together to create an unsettling atmosphere. Edwards maintains that the "unfamiliar is as much about the breakdown of a stable identity as it is about the unrelenting violence of the storm" (xxxi). However, while Edwards accounts for both the capacity of the external and the internal forces at work, the natural world seems to have more power than he gives it credit for — nature not only reflects Ann's inner turmoil, but anticipates the horror to come. Although she has by this point resolved to make amends for sleeping with Steven, it is notable that the narration does not completely release tension. Details like the "chill crept in again" (68) and the unremitting tick of the clock speak to not only the sensational gothic ending, but the realism of the story as well. The inevitability of time and the realities of the natural world are not mere imaginings of Ann's mind, but are ever constant — though they are exaggerated by her thoughts when in the thrall of guilt and dissatisfaction. Details such as the clock and the chill keep the story grounded in its realistic setting. This may initially seem inconsistent with the gothic elements that work diligently to spiral Ann's reality out of control. However, by using a feature of realism, that is, "evoking the sense that its characters might well exist and such things might well happen," Ross arguably suggests something even more menacing: that this terror could become reality (Abrams and Harpham 333). Keeping Ann's story and motivations plausible suggests that real life can be as haunting and destructive as the representation Ross creates. Unlike a supernatural nightmare that eventually ends and allows one to return to the real world, Ann cannot escape the reality of John's suicide and her role in it. By adding gothic elements to a realist text, Ross suggests that nightmares can be actu-

alized into horrors beyond supernatural imaginings.

Definitions of the gothic tend to focus on either foreboding external or internal surroundings, not both, whereas my notion of the interior gothic proposes an exterior-inspired interior state that is detrimental to the character. Perhaps it is the Canadian prairie landscape that provides this unique space; the mystery and wildness of the natural world unsettles and defamiliarizes domestic settings. By introducing a non-Indigenous subject that tries — and fails — to exert their will onto an unrelenting wilderness, Ross plays out the consequences of the inherent alienation settlers have from the land they inhabit. Ann's haunted mind thereby becomes a byproduct of the colonial project that looms so large in Canadian history, suggesting that the effects of colonialism linger on in present-day reality. The interior gothic shows "The Painted Door" to be an uncanny twist on prairie realism, as the horror of the story cannot be comfortably explained by Ann's external surroundings or her psychological suggestibility, but is rather an unsettling combination of the two — of the mind interacting with the natural world to spawn new terrors.

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STEVENS AND THE TEMPORAL CONDITION OF THE HOUSEWIFE: THE ROLE OF CYCLIC TIME IN ISHIGURO'S *THE REMAINS OF THE DAY*

Beck Siegal

By studying Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day* for its implicit recognitions of dialectical change and the unique conditions of the domestic sphere, one can tease out a theory of change and labor which Ishiguro looks at through the historical background of early British capitalism. This paper attempts to do just that by looking at Ishiguro's construction of a domestic sphere and analyzing it for its conspicuous lack of womanhood and the implied opposition to other forms of historic change presented in the novel's background. It employs Henri Lefebvre's seminal analysis of 'the everyday' as explored in his text *Critique of Everyday Life* in order to understand the theoretical implications of domestic change, especially when understood as a stagnant maintenance as opposed to radical productive change in what Lefebvre understands to be more masculine sectors of life. With these tools and premises in mind, this essay teases out a theory of change from Ishiguro's *Remains of the Day*: namely, that there is no life without radical progression, which, dialectically must be in relation to an everyday stability. This creation of 'the everyday,' and therefore construction of a status quo, is the type of work that is feminized and relegated to the background of history. *Remains of the Day* disrupts and calls attention to this. Focalized through Stevens, we experience masculinized productive change as an unnoticeable background to his primary work of conservation.

Stevens, the protagonist of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, has a tumultuous and unhappy relationship with the concept of change and the prospect of a future. He demonstrates an obsession with the maintenance of the status quo and the everyday; this lifestyle positions progress as a failure of his personal duty towards social reproduction. Stevens' obsession might be explained through the argument of social rhythms that Henri Lefebvre pioneered in his text, *Critique of Everyday Life*. Stevens can be read through Lefebvre's archetype of a housewife, and his problems with change can be related to his own interest in social reproduction. As Stevens invests all his time and labour in not letting change accumulate, his priorities contrast with increasingly unavoidable linear progress throughout the novel.

In *Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre posits the existence of two types of time: cyclic and linear. Cyclic time is present in the household, nature, religion, magic, and reproduction. It is concerned with the maintenance of the everyday, what Lefebvre describes as "biological or social protection" and what is largely evident in pre-capitalist production (862). Linear time, meanwhile, functions in sectors of productive society like private industry and the state, as the means by which capitalism imagines itself as always productive, constantly revolutionizing types of knowledge and production. Lefebvre argues that the newly prominent role of linear time in social production, and the linear configuration of production as non-reproductive, disrupts but does not erase cyclic configurations. Instead, cyclic temporal reality is relegated to places like home and spiritual life (880).

As part of his critique, Lefebvre illustrates how the subject working in several occupations becomes alienated from the temporal mode opposite to the one in which they operate. As an example of the alienation experienced by those who work with cyclic time, such as Stevens, Lefebvre employs the figure of the housewife. He writes, "The housewife is immersed in everyday life, submerged, swallowed up; she never escapes from it" (883). He compares her to the figure of the mathematician, engaged in an ultimately linear and progressive occupation: "For the housewife, the question is whether she can come to the surface and stay there. For the mathematician, the question is whether he can rediscover an everyday life in order to fulfil himself" (884). Stevens occupies the role of Lefebvre's housewife surrounded by

progressive temporal modes such as those occupied by his mathematician. We can analogize the mathematician to many of the circumstances throughout the novel which surround Stevens and degrade his labour, including the American businessman who comes to occupy Darlington Hall, Mr. Farraday.

The role of the housewife in *Remains* is explained through that of the butler. Stevens thinks in depth about his own job, figured through the principle of dignity. For reasons which Stevens imagines to be non-sentimental, he positions his father as an example of a highly dignified butler and, in explaining the principle of dignity, recounts a story his father often told him. In this story, a butler reacts in the following way upon discovering a tiger in the dining room:

> The butler had left the dining room quietly, taking care to close the doors behind him, and proceeded calmly to the drawing room where his employer was taking tea with a number of visitors. There he attracted his employer's attention with a polite cough, then whispered in the latter's ear: "I'm very sorry, sir, but there appears to be a tiger in the dining room. Perhaps you will permit the twelve-bores to be used?" (52)

Here, we see the conservative purpose of dignity. As the butler refuses to react to the threat of the tiger in an emotive way, and also takes steps to kill it, he ensures that the dining room is not physically altered: "I am pleased to say there will be no discernible traces left of the recent occurrence by that time" (53). Perhaps more importantly in the context of Stevens' point about dignity and emotional reservation, he also ensures that the dining room will not be different in anyone's memory or affective response. The butler facilitates the cycle of social reproduction without allowing any uncertainty or volatile emotion to tarnish the sameness of the dining room or home.

Stevens' idealization of imperceptibility figures importantly into the cyclic nature of his work. In a passage that evokes the tireless constancy of Stevens' labour, Lefebvre argues that the housewife suffers or drowns because the evidence of her labour is that there is no evidence: "Every day thousands upon thousands of women sweep up the dust which has gathered

imperceptibly since the previous day […] they stop up the holes the gentle rubbing of heels inevitably makes" (862). Their labour, he writes, is "only perceptible in [its] consequences" (862). As a butler, Stevens' performance of household labour effects a similar internalization of this imperceptibility as an essential component of his duty. To react emotionally would be to draw attention to the labour which must remain unacknowledged. Stevens' desire to conceal his labour is evident early on. For example, the action of the novel comes when he notices his failure to maintain the household to the standard of its previous state: "[O]ver the past few months, I have been responsible for a series of small errors in the carrying out of my duties […] I think you will understand that to one not accustomed to committing such errors, this development was rather disturbing" (8). Here, there is an echo of Lefebvre's analysis of the condition of the housewife. Stevens' main concern is not that an error of any consequence has transpired, but that things are noticeably different than they were before.

Because of this cyclic, reproductive ideal, Stevens positions himself as cold and detached by default. The novel plays with this disposition of Stevens by following him as he is forced to reckon with the reality of change and the cracks in his emotionless facade. For example, one such point which forces Stevens to acknowledge the fiction of his ideological conservatism is the death of his father. In recounting his behavior during this time, he says: "[I]f you consider the pressures contingent on me that night, you may not think I delude myself unduly if I go so far as to suggest that I did perhaps display, in the face of everything, at least in some modest degree a 'dignity'" (110). Despite his significant linguistic detours and circumlocutions that protect him from too emotional or honest a self-reflection, he reveals that he feels pride about his own dignity. This pride stems from his ability to continually serve both while his father was dying and directly following his father's death.

It is especially significant that, having recounted the story of his father's death, Stevens describes his behavior as dignified, since this trait is closely bound up with social reproduction through the method of non-emotivity. As explored above, dignity prevents change from taking root in its refusal to acknowledge the change as radical. Because the butler was calm, the tiger did not significantly alter the state of the household in a way that

would rupture its cycle of conservatism. By extending this analogy, we can understand that Stevens considers his own composure to have prevented the house from being significantly affected by the senior Mr. Stevens' death.

This pretense, however, breaks down in Stevens' very account of it, and we, along with a reluctant Stevens, see the ways in which his father's death presented a point of rupture in his understanding of his own life. This is evident in other people's reactions to Stevens' emotional state. For instance, Mr. Cardinal reacts in the following way:

> "I say, Stevens, are you sure you're all right there?"
>
> "Perfectly all right, thank you, sir."
>
> "Not feeling unwell, are you?"
>
> "Not at all, sir." (105).

Soon after, Lord Dalloway is similarly taken aback:

> "Stevens, are you all right?"
>
> "Yes, sir. Perfectly."
>
> "You look as though you're crying."
>
> I laughed and taking out a handkerchief, quickly wiped my face. "I'm very sorry, sir. The strains of a hard day" (105).

Stevens has been affected to the point of visible emotion by the death of his father. This is something that he refuses to explicitly recount for us, almost as if he had never consciously conceptualized his own emotions as a factor. Instead, he manages the effects of his emotional reaction by dealing with those who react to his emotional reaction. Despite Stevens' reluctance to acknowledge it as such, his notable distress demonstrates that he can recognize the irreversible change effected by the death of his father.

As Stevens reminisces throughout the novel, he is confronted with

increasing evidence of temporal rupture. His effort to rehire Miss Kenton represents his last hope of rejecting the accumulating disruptions of his cyclic conception of time (16). He imagines that he might recapture the past of Darlington Hall by recalling the people who were present. He cannot bring his father back from the dead to re-employ him, but the fact that Miss Kenton wrote to him in a moment of nostalgia introduces the hope that he could bring her back from her marriage (16). In the face of the unignorable evidence of change brought on by the death of the senior Mr. Stevens, the death of Lord Darlington, shifting expectations of service, and the beginnings of the deterioration of Stevens' own body, the possibility of Miss Kenton's re-employment comes to represent Stevens' last chance to preserve his world view. The letter represents several impossibilities for Stevens. He thinks of it as the undoing of the staff reduction at Darlington Hall in the face of a cultural shift away from aristocratic life, the negation of his own bodily deterioration, and the mending of his estrangement from Miss Kenton.

Before leaving for his road trip, Stevens attributes the mistakes around Darlington Hall to his inadequate staff plan. On the possibility of hiring Miss Kenton, he says: "[T]he letter from Miss Kenton, containing as it did […] an unmistakable nostalgia for Darlington Hall, and—I am quite sure of this—distinct hints of her desire to return here, obliged me to see my staff plan afresh" (9–10). Here, Stevens spectacularly misreads his own situation and Miss Kenton's letter. Miss Kenton does not actually wish to return to Darlington Hall, which he says he is "quite sure of." Later in the novel, obsessively rereading the letter, Stevens is surprised by his inability to locate any evidence of her desire. He is only able to recognize the possibility of his misreading once he begins to understand that the present in which he operates is actually a future brought into reality by past events (207). Further, Stevens' fantasy that Miss Kenton will return to her former post is made more impossible by the fact that Miss Kenton no longer exists; married, she is now Mrs. Benn. The fantasy version of Miss Kenton cannot be called by her proper name because, in Stevens' reproduction of the past, Miss Kenton would not have changed. She and Stevens would be able to reproduce the unattached flirtation of their earlier relationship, which came with the unarticulated possibility of their marriage. In Stevens' own words:

> 'Miss Kenton' is properly speaking 'Mrs Benn' and has been for twenty years. However, because I knew her at close quarters only during her maiden years and have not seen her once since she went to the West Country to become 'Mrs Benn', you will perhaps excuse my impropriety in referring to her as I knew her, and in my mind have continued to call her throughout these years. (67)

In the above passage, Stevens comes close to articulating that Miss Kenton cannot be acknowledged to have changed during the years of her absence, as this would reveal the futility of his effort to halt change and constantly reproduce the previous day. Stevens deludes himself that, were Miss Kenton to return, she would be the same Miss Kenton who left twenty years earlier.

By reason of this intense psychological alienation from time as it functions outside of the household, and the deep significance which Stevens has placed on the fantasy of Miss Kenton's return, the moment of her rejection is one of intense grief. In fact, it is the only point in the novel in which Stevens explicitly articulates a point of rupture as such. When she tells him that "[her] rightful place is with [her] husband," the fiction of his life's conservatism comes crashing down on Stevens (239). He says: "[A]s you might appreciate, [the words'] implications were such as to provoke a certain degree of sorrow within me. Indeed—why should I not admit it?—at that moment, my heart was breaking" (239). Deprived of the narrative of reproduction and forced to acknowledge that linear time has been intertwining with and progressing outside his constructed, cyclic reality, Stevens has no reason to prevent himself from acknowledging the rupture. He responds, "You're very correct, Mrs Benn. As you say, it is too late to turn back the clock" (239). By calling Miss Kenton by her married name and vocalizing his admission that he cannot reproduce the past, Stevens acknowledges and solidifies the role of progress in his everyday life, breaking with the limits of his cyclic reality.

The Remains of the Day showcases somebody consumed by the reproduction of the household as he is forced to acknowledge that his job of maintaining and reproducing the status quo is being made obsolete by a confluence of individual personal and social political factors, particularly

the fall of the British aristocracy and the aging of his body. Stevens has no choice but to acknowledge that the present in which he functions is different from the past he has been trying to reproduce. He denies the progressive tendency surrounding him and affecting his life by attempting to drag the past into the present. This is played out through the character of Miss Kenton, who could never live up to Stevens' historic ideal of her or re-enter a space which she has progressed beyond. Tragically, having formulated his understanding of life around the time-space in which he operates, Stevens must acknowledge that it is not a totality, and reassess his social position and identity in the evening of his life.

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"A PASSION THAT WAS LIKE AGONY": SENTIMENTALITY, LOVE, AND AUTHENTICITY IN FORD MADOX FORD'S *THE GOOD SOLDIER*

Sasha Aristotle

This essay, written for the course ENG328: Modernist Fiction, examines the twinned themes of sentimentality and passion in Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* via a binarized character analysis. The paper maps Ford's portrayal of sentimentalism's detriments as encapsulated in his juxtaposition of Edward, a self-professed romantic and ultimately doomed protagonist, with Leonora, a critical if immoral realist and Edward's wife. Edward's sentimentality, grounded in a deep internalization of the sickly-sweet love exemplified in "sentimental novels" and poems, contrasts directly with Leonora's cold and brutal pragmatism; ultimately, however, this mindset prevents her from succumbing, as Edward does, to false love. Ford notably does not make a blatant model of Leonora, but subtly emphasizes how her authenticity and ability to differentiate literary tropes from complex realities serves her far better than Edward's sentimentality serves him. In showing, not telling, the attentive reader that sentimentalism and an uncritical mindset make a poor match, Ford seems to advocate for the adoption of a realist and rationalist attitude to protect oneself against a decidedly unsentimental world.

Sentimentalism, with its emphasis on excessive or seemingly contrived emotionality, was for many modernist authors associated with such weaknesses as "intellectual softening, nostalgic lassitude, effeminacy, or romanticism" (Cuddy-Keane et al. 210). Indeed, a dichotomy seemingly existed between "unserious" and inauthentic literature that promoted sentimentality, and modernist literature which aimed to cultivate a more perceptive, critical, and truth-seeking readership. Within this framework of modernist critique, Ford Madox Ford highlights the detriments of embracing a sentimental attitude in his celebrated text *The Good Soldier*, which explores the passions and trials of two married couples over the course of their various affairs. Specifically, Ford's depiction of sentimental Edward and realistic Leonora, one of the married couples, contrasts the effects of misinterpreting and chasing false love with those of cultivating an active, critical, and nuanced understanding of passion. While Edward uses his idealized and self-destructive romantic ideations to immorally justify his numerous affairs, particularly his alarming affection for his daughter-figure Nancy, Leonora employs a distinctively unsentimental attitude towards love that allows her to emerge from the novel's tumultuous events relatively unscathed. By juxtaposing Edward and Leonora's characters, Ford ultimately demonstrates that sentimentality, particularly that which stems from the consumption of inauthentic literature, skews one's understanding of genuine emotion, prevents an individual from cultivating a critical consciousness, and fosters passivity. Although Ford notably does not advocate for the adoption of Leonora's characteristics, he calls attention to her ability to think independently of the sentimentality that blinds one to truth and inhibits one's ability to act both genuinely and autonomously.

Edward's consumption of sentimental texts and consequent adoption of sentimental ideas skews his understanding of love and results in disastrous consequences. John Dowell, the novel's narrator, emphasizes Edward's sentimentality by drawing attention to his engagement with a certain genre of literature, noting that Edward would "pass hours lost in novels of a sentimental type [...] And in his books, as a rule, the course of true love ran as smooth as buttered honey" (Ford 55). The simile here highlights the saccharine and unblemished nature of the love portrayed in these texts; an ar-

chetype that Edward internalizes much to his own detriment. Later, Dowell remarks that “Edward was […] to the last, a sentimentalist, whose mind was compounded of indifferent poems and novels” (231). The phrasing of this sentence insinuates that Edward’s “mind,” or analytical capacity, is dependent almost entirely upon “indifferent” works of literature, and suggests that he relies too heavily upon such texts to inform his worldview. As a result of the influence of such books and poems, Edward views both women and love through a simplistic, virtue-focused lens which paradoxically permits him to rationalize his infidelity. Edward’s “sentimental” past experiences contribute to his hyperbolically “intense, optimistic belief that the woman he was making love to at the moment was the one he was destined, at last, to be eternally constant to,” even if such a woman was not his lawfully wedded wife (55). Edward’s ironic equation of infidelity with the promise of future constancy parallels the idealistic and utterly false romantic narratives promoted in the aforementioned “indifferent” literatures that he often consumes. Edward further nurtures his “sentimental view of the cosmos” by saying “how much the society of a good woman could do towards redeeming you,” and “that constancy was the finest of the virtues” (54). As a result of his sentimentality and idealism, he confuses fleeting lust with eternal love and hypocritically prioritizes “constancy” despite failing to espouse it himself. The paradox of this phrase draws the reader’s attention to Edward’s deep belief in these misguided principles; he views women as a conduit by which he can be made better, and he does not practice the very virtue that he praises. Hence, Edward’s willingness to embrace and emulate literary sentimentality facilitates his fundamentally flawed romantic outlook.

Edward’s sentimental, simplistic understanding of women and love also causes him to misconstrue and misrepresent his own emotions within the context of his affairs. Dowell recognizes that “anyone less sentimental than Edward” would not so fundamentally confuse lust for love, yet Edward’s all-consuming sentimentality causes him to romanticize his unfaithfulness:

> [T]o enjoy a woman's favours made him feel that she had a bond on him for life. […] Psychologically it meant that he could not have a mistress without falling violently in love with her […] [when a woman] surrendered to him her virtue

> [...] he regarded it as in any case his duty to provide for her, and to cherish her and even to love her—for life. In return for her sacrifice he would do that. In return, again, for his honourable love she would listen for ever to the accounts of his estate. (160)

Edward believes in an archaic view of women as unsullied maidens saved from the ruin of their sexuality by his own devotion and protection. Transactionality underscores Edward's conception of romance; he erroneously believes that his protection and devotion should be granted in exchange for a woman's "virtue" and listening ear. The polysyndetonic excess and punctuation in Dowell's description of Edward's perceived "duty to provide for [a woman], and cherish her, and even to love her" emphasizes the supposedly absolute and endless nature of Edward's desire for his mistress-of-the-moment, La Dolcequita — even though he ironically moves on to another woman soon after his affair and very clearly no longer "love[s] her—for life" (160). Indeed, the sardonic repetition of "for life" in this passage highlights this fallacy for the reader. The repetition of "in return" contrasts each individual's understanding of the nature of their exchange; Edward naively believes he is exchanging his love and protection for his mistress' virtue, while La Dolcequita correctly understands that she is essentially purchasing an insurance policy against the loss of her other lover and benefactor by exchanging sex for money. Love becomes an insincere by-product stemming from lust and from what Edward believes is an honourable responsibility, not from true or authentic emotion; indeed, "love" is listed last amongst Edward's romantic duties. While Edward recounts his belief "in the virtue, tenderness and moral support of women" and in "salvation [that] can only be found in true love," Dowell asserts "that nine-tenths of what [Edward] took to be his passion for La Dolcequita was really discomfort at the thought that he had been unfaithful to Leonora" (160). As Dowell notes, sentimentality blinds Edward to his own wrongdoing; in his own eyes Edward acts out of love, while Dowell insinuates that Edward acts out of guilt and miscasts his own actions in order to conform to the archetypical sentimental ideal that he has learned from novels and poems.

Edward's reliance on sentimentalism as a means by which he understands and interprets "love" causes him to make disastrous choices

and incorrectly understand his own emotional motivations. For instance, Edward's sentimentalism encourages him to adopt intensely destructive habits like drinking and excessive spending: Dowell notes that Edward's emotionality makes him feel "uncommonly bad, that is to say—oh, unbearably bad, and he took it all to be love. Poor devil, he was incredibly naïve. He drank like a fish [...] he would have thrown away every penny that he possessed" (160). More disturbingly, sentimentalism blinds Edward to the true nature of his feelings for his daughter-figure Nancy Rufford and validates what is actually a deep perversion under the guise of his supposed love for her. The latter part of the text continually repeats Edward's ultimate wish: that Nancy, the young woman who is essentially his adopted child, "should go five thousand miles away and love him steadfastly as people do in sentimental novels" (222). Indeed, that was "all he desired in life [...] if—the girl, being five thousand miles away, would continue to love him. He wanted nothing more, he prayed to his God for nothing more. Well, he was a sentimentalist" (219–20). Edward's sentimentality demands that the two continue to love one another from afar, a kind of fabricated romantic chivalry that fails to address Edward's disturbing lust for his adopted ward that is at the core of the relationship. Dowell himself sardonically recognizes that "Edward's actions were perfectly—were monstrously, were cruelly—correct" in that he, Edward, insisted that Nancy go away from him in order to purportedly preserve her innocence (223). As Dowell's adjectives "monstrously" and "cruelly" suggest, although Edward believes he has acted gallantly, as a romantic "sentimentalist" hero would, he fails to recognize that he is still acting according to his most base emotions. Indeed, he still wishes that Nancy continue to love him despite his role as her father-figure, and actually believes that "some essential attractiveness in himself must have made the girl [Nancy] continue to go on loving him" at a distance (223). In the end, Edward's sentimentalism ensures that he never sees the wrongdoing of loving his ward; in fact, it results in self-aggrandizement because Edward believes that he has played the role of the heroic, self-sacrificing lover of the sentimentalist novel.

In contrast, Leonora is depicted as the antithesis to Edward's sentimental character; although she is not necessarily a good person, she embodies the qualities of an authentic and critical realist. Unlike Edward, Leonora does not subscribe to sentimentalist literature and is thus able to act with a

more nuanced and fulsome understanding of the trials and tribulations inherent to true love. Leonora is "well read" in "learned books," not popular fiction, for she "could not stand novels" (174). Furthermore:

> She saw life as a perpetual sex-battle between husbands who desire to be unfaithful to their wives, and wives who desire to recapture their husbands in the end. That was her sad and modest view of matrimony. […] She had read few novels, so that the idea of a pure and constant love succeeding the sound of wedding bells had never been very much presented to her. (179)

Having not been exposed to novels which encourage sentimentalism, Leonora is prepared for imperfect romantic relations. The diction employed in the excerpt above, such as "pure and constant love," contrasts directly with Edward's understanding of love that runs "as smooth as buttered honey" (55) and his belief in "constancy" (54). Leonora's critical consciousness enables her to recognize the fallacies and inconsistencies of a sentimental worldview.

Aware of the standards of loving relationships portrayed in novels, Leonora is nevertheless able to distinguish them from reality and does not let them prevent her from acting according to her own will. In one instance, Leonora relates how she attempted to have an affair in a manner reminiscent of that in a sentimental novel, yet her emotional intelligence and awareness prevented her from proceeding further. She recounts:

> I was saying to myself, fiercely, hissing it between my teeth, as they say in novels […] 'I'll really have a good time for once in my life—for once in my life!' […] And then suddenly the bitterness of the endless poverty, of the endless acting—it fell on me like a blight, it spoilt everything. (39)

It is alluded to in this specific mention of "novels" that Leonora chooses to exercise her own will instead of subscribing to the sentimentalist expectations. Despite feeling that she ought to have an affair in order to conform to some preconceived notion of contentment, she recognizes she would feel inauthentic or as though she was "endless[ly] acting," while doing so;

indeed, the prospect of succumbing to the "bitterness" and "endless" emotional "poverty" of an affair ultimately "spoil[s] everything" and prevents her from proceeding further. Sentimentality has not tainted Leonora's view of the world; despite the fact that she is more cynical than Edward and her view is more "sad and modest" as a result, she is better prepared to navigate a romantic terrain according to her own genuine desires (179). Edward's sentimentality encourages him to have affairs and makes him misunderstand his guilt as a manifestation of passion, while Leonora's lack of sentimentality allows her to interpret and act on her instincts to make beneficial individual choices.

Leonora's realistic understanding of passion as both love and suffering keeps her from being destroyed by sentimentality. For instance, Dowell says that "Leonora adored [Edward] with a passion that was like an agony, and hated him with an agony that was as bitter as the sea" (54). The contrasting yet complementary themes of love and hatred, repetition of negative diction such as "agony," and the simile comparing Leonora's emotions with the vast and "bitter" sea highlight the correlation between passion and suffering in the text and underscore Leonora's less idealistic understanding of relationships. The expression of both Leonora's love and hatred for her husband alludes to the imperfect nature of love in reality, in stark contrast to Edward's naïve vision of romance. Unlike Edward, Leonora is deliberate and assertive in the pursuit of her desires. Dowell characterizes her as the only one whose actions are motivated by "active, persistent, instinct with her cold passion of energy" (214). In particular, "the main passion of [Leonora's] life was to get Edward back," and she is determined to do so by any means (178). Leonora believes that "all that she had to do was to keep [Edward] well supplied with money and his mind amused with pretty girls" in order to win his love (181). She subsequently saves the couple from financial ruin after Edward's blackmailing by La Dolcequita, continues to oversee the household finances, and essentially leads Maisie Maidan, another of Edward's mistresses, "into adultery" with Edward on the premise that "if [Edward] could smile again through her [Leonora's] agency he might return, through gratitude and satisfied love—to her" (175). Indeed, Leonora alone acts upon "her agency," even to immoral ends. In order to pursue what paradoxically might serve her own interests, she helps facilitate her husband's affairs in the slight chance that feeding all his desires might make him realize that she alone is

his true love. Thus, Leonora comes to know — and to demonstrate to the reader — that love is not the pure thing that sentimental Edward believes it to be. She acts appallingly in leading both Maisie and Nancy into relationships with Edward out of a selfish desire to satiate him and, in the process, redirect his affections towards herself; nevertheless, she does so with a full, unvarnished understanding of her own selfish intentions and a relentless energy that would be impossible if she had employed Edward's sentimentalism.

Edward is blinded into passivity under the guise of honor when he wishes for Nancy's love; in contrast, Leonora actively seeks Edward's affections, even at the cost of undertaking drastic and terrible measures as exemplified by her treatment of Nancy. At the text's end, it is Leonora who emerges triumphant because of her critical, active, and realistic perspective: Edward and Nancy are "steam-rollered out and Leonora survives, the perfectly normal type, who is [re]married to a man who is rather like a rabbit" (218). Dowell describes Edward and Nancy as villains that are "punished by suicide and madness. The heroine [Leonora]—the perfectly normal, virtuous, and slightly deceitful heroine—has become the happy wife of a perfectly normal, virtuous and slightly deceitful husband [...] A happy ending, that is what it works out as" (228). Although this assertion seems ironic given that neither Edward nor Leonora fits the conventional mould of a villain or heroine, Dowell appears to be hinting to the reader that the couple is characterized as such for something that extends beyond black-and-white wickedness or goodness. For instance, the repetition of "perfectly normal, virtuous and slightly deceitful" complicates the assertion of Leonora's righteousness by juxtaposing positive — and sarcastically described — traits like "perfectly normal" and "virtuous" with negative "deceitful[ness]," thus demonstrating how she is much more complex and multi-faceted than the typical heroine. Indeed, Leonora's apparent superiority stems not from her supposed moral edge over Edward, but from her ability to at least act unsentimentally and therefore to survive the novel's events untouched by suicide or madness, unlike Edward or Nancy respectively.

In essence, Ford's depiction of Edward and Leonora exemplifies the negative effect that a sentimental outlook and ethic can have on a realistic understanding of love and passion. When Edward embraces sentimentality

he learns to misconstrue love, lust, honor, and virtue, and ultimately dies by his own hand because he is unable to reconcile his sentimental yearnings with his reality. Leonora, as an unsentimental and unidealistic individual, is able to act in a way that is — while not virtuous — at least autonomous and in accordance with her desires. Ford does not advocate for a blind emulation of Leonora's person; indeed, a critical and active reader would note Leonora's flaws as readily as he or she would recognize Edward's. Instead, Ford advocates for the reader to note Leonora's authenticity and ability to separate literary fiction and tropes from reality. By exposing his readers to the dangers of sentimentality, Ford emphasizes the modernist perspective which advocates for realistic and rational approaches when addressing life, love, and suffering. In doing so, Ford prepares his readers to be better equipped to participate in and contribute to a decidedly unsentimental world, lest they too risk the emotional danger to which Edward eventually succumbs.

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THE OPHELIA OBSESSION: HOW PRE-RAPHAELITE DEPICTIONS OF OPHELIA FROM SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET* FETISHIZED AND ICONIZED THE FALLEN WOMAN AESTHETIC

Anna Yermolina

This essay offers a small exploration of how Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was received by Pre-Raphaelite artists by analyzing what are arguably their most significant representations of Ophelia, a character who up until the Victorian era was deemed too indecent to even be portrayed in art. The depictions of Ophelia by John Everett Millais, John William Waterhouse, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti make use of indexical codes in the form of water, flowers, or particular colours to problematically denote a type of femininity that is both innocent and fragile but also (in consequence of the medium and artistic tradition) fetishizable. By projecting that aesthetic onto and within their depictions of Ophelia — images that often portray her death after her mental breakdown — these artists romanticize the tragedy of Ophelia's position as a fallen woman. Their artistic interjections become part of the legacy of the play and, for better or worse, ultimately cultivate the quintessential visual references by which people continue to remember Ophelia.

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In nineteenth century painting, the character most often depicted — not only from Shakespeare's plays but from literature in general — was *Hamlet*'s Ophelia. Exhibition catalogues of the Royal Academy alone record more than fifty known interpretations, many of which were made by members of the Pre-Raphaelite movement (Falchi 175). In opposition to the exaggerated elegance of the preceding Mannerists, the Pre-Raphaelites relied heavily on the minute details of a referential text in order to create what they deemed the most true and accurate representation possible. Prior to the nineteenth century, paintings based on *Hamlet* had never depicted Ophelia as a focal point — she was only ever included within larger group contexts, if at all (Peterson 3). This absence may reflect how her behaviour in the play was considered controversial during the 1700s, often resulting in her part being cut or censored because of the "lewdness of her mad-songs," which may have made her an "unsuitable and indecent" focus for artists (Falchi 172).

By the Victorian era, issues of women's rights and sexuality had gradually become more socially acceptable in the arts, inviting very different interpretations of Ophelia for the Victorians (Falchi 175). Despite this, the image of Ophelia most frequently depicted by Pre-Raphaelite artists is of her drowning (or the moments immediately preceding her death when she first enters the water), a focus that emphasizes her dead, floating body as the most distinctive part of her narrative. The image of the mad, drowned Ophelia has become the iconography by which she is most often recognized and remembered. This representation was cultivated from the Victorian-male reading of *Hamlet* by instrumental Pre-Raphaelite artists like John Everett Millais, John William Waterhouse, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who ultimately perpetuated the problematic ideal and fetishization of the ruined woman.

There is an essential irony in the fact that — because of the pervasiveness of depictions of her death — Ophelia has become synonymous with her drowned body despite the fact that her drowning is only *reported* in the play, not acted out. In a play full of lying and deceit, it is uncertain whether or not Gertrude's report of Ophelia's death is the truth. The way that Ophelia has, as Kaara Peterson puts it, become an imprinted "visual cliché" prompts the audience to either ignore that her death is inadequately reported in *Hamlet* or to augment what they read by imagining a drowning scene which "literalizes into a 'seen', appearing in our mind's eye as we read" (2). The audience

is at first persuaded by Gertrude's only extended monologue in the play that Ophelia had accidentally drowned, but this declaration is discredited by the gravediggers who call her death a suicide: "Is she to be buried in Christian burial when / she willfully seeks her own salvation?" (5.1.1–2).

Shakespeare is evidently not afraid of exhibiting explicit female death or suffering in his plays, as is proven by the fates of Cleopatra, Lavinia, Juliet, or Desdemona (4). This suggests that having Ophelia's death retold rather than shown is a deliberate choice. Peterson argues that Gertrude's lyrical and highly romanticized retelling is an inappropriate over-aestheticization that highlights the suspicious conditions of Ophelia's death. Peterson compares this treatment to that of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, where Shakespeare has Marcus use "incongruous Petrarchan love poetry when he paradoxically and grotesquely praises her mutilated body" (4). Just as Marcus seems to derive virtue and beauty from Lavinia's dismemberment, so does Gertrude associate Ophelia's drowning with enticement and allure by calling her "mermaid-like" (4.1.175). The use of beautifying language to describe truly traumatic scenes promotes an aestheticization of death and suffering. This aestheticizing mentality became especially prevalent in Victorian culture as artists navigated how to represent taboo topics like suicide or sexuality. They seemed to take closely to heart Edgar Allan Poe's claim that "the death of a beautiful woman [is], unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" (qtd. in Peterson 1). The Pre-Raphaelites participated in the perpetuation of a problematic new aesthetic and ultimately cultivated the quintessential visual references by which people remember Ophelia.

Arguably the most iconic representation of *Ophelia* is John Everett Millais' painting Ophelia, finished in 1852 (Figure 1) and which, despite its current fame, was initially criticized for adhering too much to the play. One critic even called Millais "strangely perverse" for sticking Ophelia in "a weedy ditch" that "robs the drowning struggle of that love-lorn maiden of all pathos and beauty, while it studies every petal of the darnel and anemone floating on the eddy" (176). Simonetta Falchi argues that the general disapproval was because of Ophelia's sexuality; her open arms suggest a mature woman's come-hither body language and her spread out robes are symbolic of mermaids and sirens, seducers of men (177). In artistic tradition, deaths related to water and suicides were also hallmarks of "fallen women"; women

who have lost their chastity or innocence from being implicated in improper sexual behaviour, including women who have had premarital sex, prostitutes, and rape victims. Although Victorian artists had begun representing sexuality more liberally in their art, there was a rigid dichotomy between those representations that glorified a woman's chastity and those that condemned her sin. Falchi argues that the fate of fallen women was sentimentalized because a young woman was always theoretically in danger of "falling" from unavoidable circumstances, in which case she could repent and be redeemed by her family (177). Ophelia's only present family in the play are Laertes and Polonius, who not only provoke Ophelia's breakdown from their constant interjections of their ideas of propriety, but even when she goes mad are absent and unable to help her. Gertrude calls Ophelia "one incapable of her own distress, / Or like a creature native and endued / Unto that element," meaning that the extreme mental stress that Ophelia has experienced has overwhelmed her and made her unable even to help herself (4.4.177-179). In accordance with this description, Millais has her appear passive rather than deranged, her palms turned up submissively so as to sentimentalize the inescapable tragedy of her fall.

In keeping with Pre-Raphaelite principles, Millais prioritizes the representation of nature in his painting, so much so that the surrounding vegetation takes up significantly more of the scene than Ophelia does. This de-emphasizes her presence in the painting and suggests that additional meaning and significance can be derived from Ophelia's surroundings. Millais uses flowers liberally, both the kinds that are referenced by Gertrude in her monologue and by Ophelia in her songs. These flowers, as well as their symbolic implications, become part of a set of visual codes and motifs that are used as hallmarks for representing Ophelia. A particular flower that Gertrude mentions are the "long purples," which are the purple orchids surrounding Ophelia that "liberal shepherds give a grosser name," meaning the indecent names alluding to male genitalia that the flower had been associated with (4.4.168-9). This flower signifies Ophelia's lost innocence as a result of her relations with Hamlet. Millais also includes other symbolic flowers that are not mentioned in *Hamlet* like forget-me-nots and pansies, standing for unrequited love, and the poppy to represent sleep and death.

Although beginning his career considerably later than Millais, John William Waterhouse continues the aesthetics and values of Pre-Raphaelite artistic

traditions in his series of three *Ophelia* paintings. The series presents stages of Ophelia's progression towards her death in line with Pre-Raphaelite principles which reflect the Victorian male artist's ideal fallen woman. Similarly to Millais, his depictions of Ophelia are all set outside with nature in full bloom around her, alluding to her femininity. Her constant proximity to the river symbolizes her sexuality and fertility, and also foreshadows her drowning. The chronological order of his paintings show *Ophelia*'s growth; she matures and becomes more womanly as she inches closer to her death. Waterhouse's Ophelia portraits still represent Ophelia as beautiful and graceful, maintaining her countenance and desirability. Although she is about to commit suicide, it is still necessary that she maintains Victorian expectations of beauty.

In his first *Ophelia* of 1889 (Figure 2), Waterhouse depicts a young Ophelia, sprawled out in the grass while wearing a white dress, symbolic of her innocence and virginity. The flowers around her represent her "bloom"; her beauty, youth, and fertility, as she transitions into sexual maturity. She is naïve, inexperienced, and unprepared for the realities of life, men, and sex. Here she is still the receiver of Laertes' warnings not to allow her "chaste treasure open" to Hamlet (1.3.30) and of her father, who tells her to "be something scanter of your maiden presence; / Set your entreatments at a higher rate" (1.3.120-1). This *Ophelia* represents the anxieties of a girl becoming a woman while under the pressures of a cruel lover and the judgements of her male relatives.

The second *Ophelia* of 1894 (Figure 3) is again dressed in white, sitting on a rock next to the river, putting flowers in her hair with her face turned up and away from the viewer. Her subdued and disinterested attitude downplays her madness; if it were not for the clues of the specific flowers and her long, free hair (traditionally a signifier of madness), this could be interpreted as a peaceful moment of a woman by a stream, not an imminent death. The subtlety of the visual clues in this interpretation seem to take the death report at face value — because the sense of madness is not as evident, this suggests that Ophelia did accidentally drown as Gertrude had said. The attitude of this Ophelia reflects what Gertrude described as her unawareness to the danger of her situation, ultimately emphasizing Ophelia's elusiveness and her lack of self-awareness or agency during her death.

The final 1910 *Ophelia* (Figure 4) is the most chaotic of the three; Waterhouse achieves an effective representation of Ophelia's entranced state of madness through her red cheeks, wild eyes, and the way she clutches bunches of flowers in her skirt. The bright red and blue fabrics of her dress remove the innocence that her white dresses represented and replace them with her state of mania. The figures in the background, unexpecting witnesses to her death, suggest the validity of Gertrude's recounting, which in turn validates the legitimacy of the depiction because of its faithfulness to the source. In this portrait, Ophelia appears powerful and threateningly mysterious but only because of her wildness and implied sexual agency. This version romanticizes self- and socially destructive behaviour, manipulation, and mental illness because it is performed by a beautiful woman. Notably, although Ophelia is the subject of all these paintings, she appears more aloof and disassociated than engaged. In paint, she has become something to fetishize and project upon, a person and a story for artists to manipulate to fulfil their own fantasies and ideals.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's pen and ink drawing of *Hamlet and Ophelia* of 1858 (Figure 5) stands at some contrast from the paintings mentioned thus far. Notably, he depicts the nunnery scene, not Ophelia's death, wherein Ophelia seems to have just attempted to return Hamlet's letters and heard his condescending remark that "if / thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well / enough what monsters you make of them" (3.1.134–6). In "Textual Critique Through the Artist's Eye: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Hamlet and Ophelia (1858-59)," Luisa Moore asserts that Rossetti "transgressively re-envisaged" Hamlet as "dark and partially menacing" rather than like the "sweet prince" of Victorian society and gave Ophelia a "degree of psychological autonomy rarely shown on stage in his era" that ultimately "facilitate[s] a less sympathetic (and therefore unromantic) interpretation of Hamlet" (14). Moore's reading credits Rossetti with giving Ophelia unaccustomed agency, but this is perhaps too generous given the low, off-centre point of view from which the viewer looks into the scene. This perspective creates the experience of spying on Hamlet and Ophelia with Polonius and Claudius (Moore 8). The viewer observes from a position of authority and expectation, knowing the performance that is demanded of Ophelia. This reminds them that Ophelia is aware of being watched in this moment by her male superiors and is acting accordingly. To Rossetti's credit, he does present Hamlet in a darker attitude that, unlike the "sweet prince" norm, suggests he is culpable in Ophelia's

worsening condition. Hamlet is depicted crushing a rose, a symbol for love as well as Ophelia's innocence and vulnerability. Destroying the rose implicates Ophelia as a "threatened object of sexual desire" in how Hamlet's rubbing of the rose's petals can be "likened to physically caressing her body" (Moore 13). The tradition of Pre-Raphaelites relating Ophelia to flowers makes it impossible to separate her femininity from floral imagery, therefore unavoidably implicating Hamlet as the main cause of Ophelia's unravelling because of her social position as a woman.

Pre-Raphaelite representations of Ophelia aestheticize and romanticize Victorian ideas about fallen women. The tragic circumstances of her life are made poetic by artists taking advantage of the ambiguity of her death in order to project their own problematic ideals. Symbolic indexical codes like water and flowers coalesce into an iconography of Ophelia that goes beyond her character's depiction in the play. She has become emblematic for victims of patriarchal domination and of "deranged girls seeking guidance," her story a warning to cultivate agency and self-sustainability (Falchi 174). The works of John Everett Millais, John William Waterhouse, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti ultimately participate in the perpetuation of the fetishized image of Ophelia as a fallen woman in a way that has become iconographic not only of Victorian society, but also in our culture to this day.

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Figure 1: John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851–52, Oil on canvas, 30 × 44 inches. Tate Britain, London.

Figure 2: John William Waterhouse, *Ophelia*, 1889, Oil on canvas.

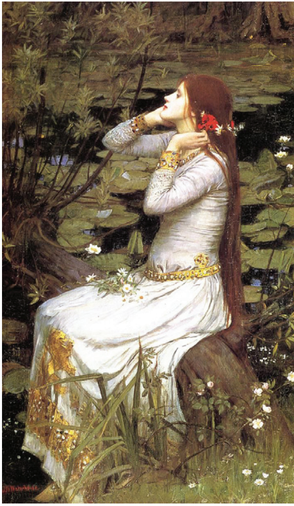

Figure 3: John William Waterhouse, *Ophelia*, 1894, Oil on canvas, 29 × 49 inches.

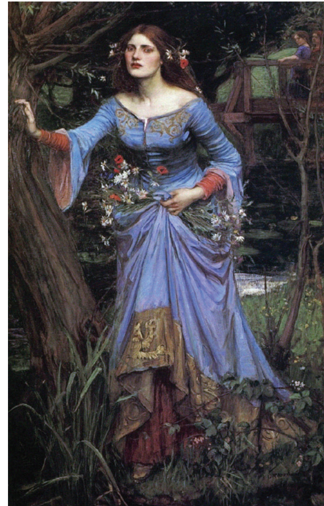

Figure 4: John William Waterhouse, *Ophelia*, 1910, Oil on canvas.

Figure 5: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Hamlet and Ophelia*, 1858, Pen and ink on paper, 12 x 10.5 inches. The British Museum, London.

"A PASSION THAT WAS LIKE AGONY": THE TRIAD OF MIND, BODY, AND HOUSE IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *MRS DALLOWAY*

Valery Goutorova

This essay was originally written for ENG482: The Novel and Everyday Life taught by Professor Audrey Jaffe in the Fall of 2019. It began as an assignment wherein the student was tasked with analyzing a text through the lens of two theorists who recognized the significance in how an individual interacts with their daily environment. Valery chose to pair Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* with Elaine Scarry's work *The Body in Pain* and Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. She noticed a deep connection between Clarissa Dalloway's identity and the houses which she has occupied throughout her life. Valery expands upon this idea and argues for a symbiotic relationship between house and occupant, as the house functions as a container for memories and physical artifacts. She discusses themes of sexuality, femininity, and aging in the refuge of the home in post-war London. The essay is an exploration of the rich inner life that flourishes in the domestic sphere, which is at times overlooked. With the guidance of her fantastic editors, this essay bloomed from its humble beginnings as a final paper into the culminating work of her undergraduate career. She is eternally grateful that they saw potential in this essay and would like to thank them for all of their support throughout the editing process.

> I detest the hardness of old age — I feel it. I rasp. I'm tart […] I walk over the marsh saying I am I: and must follow that furrow, not copy another. That is the only justification for my writing, living.
>
> —Virginia Woolf (*Diary V* 347)

In the aftermath of the World War I, Virginia Woolf wrote *Mrs Dalloway*, a domestic novel that explores the relationship between Clarissa Dalloway's identity and the architecture of her house. Woolf illustrates this relationship between the body of her protagonist and the house through what she calls her "tunneling process" (*Diary* 263). She writes: "I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight at the present moment" (263). In *Mrs Dalloway*, these caves "connect" the reader to Clarissa's present-day house in Westminster, London. Borrowing from Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* and Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain*, I will argue that the figure of the house is both a psychological container for memories and artifacts, and a reminder of the physical and mental states of the body. Scarry's theory of artifacts and Bachelard's topographic model will assist in revealing the way in which the reciprocal relationship between the house and the self manifest in *Mrs Dalloway*.

In *Poetics of Space*, Bachelard introduces the concept of "topoanalysis" to suggest that "space contains compressed time" and that through the "study of the sites of our intimate lives," one can "psychoanalyze" memories (8–9). The house functions both as a physical structure and as a catalyst for introspection when it enables one "[t]o localize a memory" (9). The physical layout of the house for Bachelard thus becomes a blueprint of the individual's mind as each room holds its own associations with select memories. Similarly, Scarry writes in *The Body in Pain* that the house contains "artifacts" and "fixtures" that allow one "to move weightlessly into a larger mindfulness" (39). The house then acts as a projection or "enlargement of the body," as "whole rooms within a house attend to single facts about [it], the kitchen and eating, the bathroom and excreting, the bedroom and sleeping" (Scarry 38–9). In this way, the room is to the house what the body is to the self, as "it keeps warm and

safe the individual it houses in the same way the body encloses and protects the individual within" (Scarry 38). Meanwhile, the fixtures and artifacts found within the room act as extensions of the individual's identity.

Clarissa's relationship to the architecture of her Westminster house reveals the significance of her early memories at the Bourton estate. According to Scarry, the window "enables the self to move out into the world and allows that world to enter" (38). For Clarissa, the window becomes a physical manifestation of crossing the threshold of time because it represents her nostalgia for the freedom she experienced during her young adulthood. Clarissa's venture into her memories is "a lark! [...] [A] plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air" (3). With the physical opening of the doors in Westminster (Clarissa's present) and the cerebral opening of the French windows at Bourton (Clarissa's past), she crosses the temporal threshold into Bourton from her present state as a woman of fifty-two to her past state of adolescence. The action of opening a door in the Westminster house triggers memories of Bourton as they shed light on Clarissa's sexuality and her feelings for Sally Seton, a prominent figure of Clarissa's youth, whose "charm [is] overpowering," (37), and the memory of whom leads her to wonder if their relationship "had not [...] after all, been love" (35). The contrasting vocabulary used to describe the "little squeak" of the present and the dynamic "plunge" at Bourton demonstrates that Clarissa felt most unburdened and free at Bourton. She briefly experiences this same freedom when she remembers Bourton, which reveals her own deep-rooted longing for youth and the freedom of experimentation. By "enabl[ing] the self to move out into the world" of Bourton "and allow[ing] that world to enter" through the window, this reciprocal relationship between fixtures of the house and the inhabitant demonstrates how the past can inform one's present identity (Scarry 38).

In contrast to Scarry, who focuses more on the artifacts and fixtures contained by the house, Bachelard explores how the overarching structure of the house connects to the psyche. In *Mrs Dalloway*, a house with a distinct "cellar and a garret, nooks, and corridors" provides "refuges that are [...] clearly delineated" for our memories (Bachelard 8). This connection between the house and the psyche applies to Clarissa's association of intimacy with the

upper bedroom; when she is in her present-day bedroom at Westminster, she "[feels] what men felt" (34), "[sees] an illumination" (35), remembers how she and Sally "sat, hour after hour, talking in her bedroom at the top of the house, talking about life, how they were to reform the world" (36). The space prompts memories of Sally, much like how the opening of the Westminster doors "plunge[s]" Clarissa into Bourton. When she visits her present-day bedroom, feelings associated with the cerebral space of Bourton return to Clarissa as she remembers, exclaiming, "she [Sally] is beneath this roof!" (37). The roof of the house is, therefore, significant, not only because it physically secures the structure, but also because it prompts Clarissa to remember Sally. Clarissa's relationship with Sally informs how she understands the nuances of her own sexuality and femininity.

Bachelard adds a second function to the house as a space that facilitates introspection, a notion that illuminates Clarissa's identity as an aging woman. This introspection is captured in her ascent to the attic, where she feels "herself suddenly shriveled, aged, breastless [...] out of her body and brain" (33). According to Bachelard, the attic is where clarity is achieved; the stairs "bear the mark of ascension into a more tranquil solitude" (26). In Clarissa's case, this ascent into the attic marks her confrontation with her ageing body and consequent loss of femininity. As a "sheltered being [she] experiences the house in its reality and in its virtuality, by means of thought" (Bachelard 5). She feels "cloistered, exempt, the presence of this thing which she [feels] to be so obvious to her" — this "thing" being menopause — "[becomes] physically existent" as the "tranquil" space of the attic contrasts "with robes of sound from the street, sunny, with hot breath, whispering, blowing out the blinds" (*Mrs Dalloway* 133). At this point in the novel, Clarissa "disrobes" to strip herself of her "rich apparel," her "hat" and her "brooch" — objects that accentuate her femininity — and distract her from the reality of her aging body (40). Without these feminine adornments, she is now able to reflect upon her identity as a woman past her prime. She admits to herself that "she [has] turned almost white" since her illness, and, "[l]aying her brooch on the table, she [has] a sudden spasm" (40). The spasm seizes her and she lies down in the attic bed, the part of the house that not only protects her physical body but shelters her rich interior life through different epochs.

The fear of aging looms over Clarissa as she watches an old woman from

the window previously used to access her past at Bourton. The window now has the ability to project her future self in the form of the old woman next door, seeing herself in the present as "young; at the same time, unspeakably aged" (8). This experience is what Joanna Kavenna calls "the self, viewing the self, viewing the self" in her introduction to *Essays on the Self* (Kavenna x). At this moment in the novel, the women are interchangeable as they withdraw, climb the stairs, gain their bedrooms, and part their curtains (*Mrs Dalloway* 138). The woman looks at Clarissa unexpectedly through the window and they exchange a knowing look as present meets future. Clarissa exclaims: "There! The old lady had put out her light! The whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her" (204). The exclamation ruptures the flow of Woolf's free-indirect discourse and plunges the reader into Clarissa's stream of consciousness. She spirals at the foreboding image of the sudden darkness and recalls the dirge from *Cymbeline*, a lament for the dead, or in this case, her dying youth: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun / Nor the furious winter's rages" (Shakespeare 4.2.258–9). Clarissa is then left alone, gazing at the darkened window, seeing herself reflected where the old woman once stood. Now aware of her aging, Clarissa feels a new sense of weariness and resignation in her experience of everyday life. As "the clock [is] striking" (204), these sentiments echo throughout her body and house, filling the spaces with a foreboding reminder of the passage of time.

While the window reveals to Clarissa her declining years, inside the house is a cupboard that contains Clarissa's torn green dress, an artifact of her youth. The cupboard functions similarly to the way in which the house functions as a container for memory in the recesses of the psyche. As Scarry writes, the house is "an enlargement of the body: it keeps warm and safe the individual it houses in the same way the body encloses and protects the individual" (38). In this way, the house acts as an "enlargement of the body" by keeping the cupboard and Clarissa's youth shielded from the outside world. The green dress thus becomes an organ encased in the protective shell of the cupboard within the body of the house. Clarissa "detache[s] the green dress and carrie[s] it to the window. She ha[s] torn it. Some one ha[s] trod on the skirt. […] By artificial light the green [shines], but los[es] its colour now in the sun" (41). The window illuminates the truth for Clarissa; the natural world reminds her that she is aging, while the cupboard preserves this artifact of her youth.

While the house's function as a physical and psychological container aids Clarissa in her ability to recall and reflect on the past, it becomes a space of trauma and confinement for the mentally ill Septimus Smith, as epitomized in his death. Scarry examines the dangers of forced confinement that threaten to transform a given space into what she calls a "torture room" (41). For Septimus, this room is Bradshaw's country estate, where he is ordered to "rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends [...] six months' rest" (108). The country estate becomes a torture room for Septimus because his "rest" is non-consensual. While Clarissa willingly ascends into the attic for clarity, Septimus is condemned to isolation for his mental trauma. His room is "literally converted into another weapon, into an agent of pain. All aspects of the basic structure [...] undergo this conversion" (41). Thus, for instance, food becomes a weapon when Septimus learns that he will be force-fed like the other men who "[come] in weighing seven stone six [and] com[e] out weighing twelve" (108). Food loses its original purpose as nourishment and represents a loss of autonomy for Septimus. The Bradshaw estate, his "torture room," amplifies his fear of abandonment, and in a final rebellion against confinement, Septimus leaps to his death from a window which, in this case, illustrates the threshold between life and death. Earlier, the window projects Clarissa's longing for Bourton, whereas for Septimus, the window reveals an escape from persecuting forces. The contrast between Septimus and Clarissa demonstrates different interactions between the individual and the architecture of their respective houses.

The house in *Mrs Dalloway* acts as a container for the inhabitant's memories and is portrayed as an enlargement of the body with artifacts inside. Woolf's unique narrative technique, the "tunneling process," enables her to move through time and space so as to access Clarissa's life in parts and to portray a composite image of her identity. Bachelard's theory of topoanalysis makes it possible to draw connections between Clarissa's house and its ability to invoke memories of Bourton, while Scarry's theory is essential to the discovery of the ways in which Clarissa's identity is tied to her interactions with artifacts. The body travels its course in *Mrs Dalloway*, contained and protected by the house, which in turn, projects and amplifies hidden aspects of the individual. While finishing *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf asked herself, "But is it 'unreal'? 'Is it mere accomplishment'? I think not [...] [*Mrs Dalloway*] seems to leave me plunged deep into the richest strata of my mind [...] the happiest feeling in the

world" (*Diary* 323). Ultimately, by establishing a connection between Clarissa and her physical space, creating this triad of mind, body, and house, Woolf offers a complex scenario in which there is value to exploring the psychological workings of the domestic realm.

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MUTILATING MARGINALIZED BODIES: VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACK WOMEN IN NALO HOPKINSON'S *BROWN GIRL IN THE RING*

Christina McCallum

"Mutilating Marginalized Bodies" was originally written for ENG484: Contemporary Dystopian Fiction in Fall 2019. As Professor Michael Johnstone emphasized, the significance of dystopian fiction lies in its ability to defamiliarize the reader from their own world, and thus encourage a critical examination of prevailing societal issues. Starting as a research assignment, this paper evolved into an analysis of the historical injustices faced by racialized communities in North America highlighted in Nalo Hopkinson's *Brown Girl in the Ring*. Hopkinson defamiliarizes the reader from present-day Toronto by creating a geographical and political structure that consumes the bodies of the city's vulnerable populations. During her research, Christina was particularly struck by a line from an interview with Hopkinson: "[R]acialized others [...] will inhabit the future, but what will that future mean to us who have a history of being racialized?" (Nelson 101). Christina was prompted to explore the theme of violence that prevails in *Brown Girl*, and to analyze why racialized communities are most impacted by this violence. The consistent mutilation of Black women's bodies is particularly salient throughout the novel; focusing on these moments, this paper analyzes the systemic issues portrayed in Hopkinson's dystopia that allow these injustices to take place. In writing this paper, Christina wished to learn from and amplify historically marginalized voices. She hopes that the reader will go forth considering the necessity of literature, and all forms of creative expression, to hold a mirror up to our world and reveal a truth that may otherwise, to some, remain hidden.

Nalo Hopkinson's novel *Brown Girl in the Ring* explores the dystopian future of racialized communities in Toronto through the interrogation of hierarchical social and political structures that profit from the bodies of the city's most vulnerable residents. In Hopkinson's dystopian Toronto, these structures sustain the power dynamics that oppress marginalized communities. Hopkinson consistently portrays the alteration and mutilation of racialized bodies — specifically Black women's bodies — whether through the transformative powers of Vodou, or the violence of using one body for the benefit of another through organ harvesting. This cycle of repeated violence against the bodies of Black women emphasizes the enduring nature of racial and patriarchal power dynamics, echoed in Rebecca Romdhani's idea of the "zombie" as symbolizing the "brutal history and emotional legacy that African people have experienced from the transatlantic slave trade" (72). With Romdhani's idea of zombification in mind, I will examine how Hopkinson stages violence in her novel to interrogate this "emotional legacy." I will also illustrate how the cyclic nature of violence in Hopkinson's novel leads to the sacrifice of Black female bodies for the consumption of others, and the perpetual oppression of Toronto's racialized communities.

The patriarchal violence that Rudy, a tyrannical gang leader, displays toward the residents of the Burn (the inner city) and the women of his family is a consequence of the colonial government structure of Hopkinson's dystopian Toronto in which investors, commerce, and government move to the suburbs, "leaving the rotten core to decay" (4). The government neglects to enforce laws within the Burn and bribes Rudy into harvesting the organs of the Burn's residents, thereby enabling Rudy's violence. Rudy physically mutilates Melba, his servant; Mi-Jeanne, his daughter; and Ti-Jeanne, his granddaughter, while simultaneously forcing Mi-Jeanne's ex-boyfriend Tony into acts of violence against Mami Gros-Jeanne, Rudy's ex-wife. As the plot unfolds, Rudy's desire for power is shown to have originated from his own negative experiences with poverty, immigration, and unemployment. Rudy is defeated in the end, demonstrating a rupture in the cycle of violence that he perpetuates. However, through the transplant of Gros-Jeanne's heart into the government leader, Premier Uttley, Hopkinson

undermines any indication of a utopian ending by allowing the White politician to embody and appropriate the physical and ideological components of Gros-Jeanne, a Black woman. As these aspects of racial and gender violence intersect, the bodies of Black women become sacrificed for the consumption of others. This consumption is represented both in the context of feeding duppies (evil spirits in Afro-Caribbean folklore) and finding organ donors.

While it may appear that Rudy is violent without cause, the systemic oppression to which he has been subjected is at the root of his tyranny. The political and geographical structures of Hopkinson's dystopian Toronto, which reflect and perpetuate highly stratified inequities, catalyze the violent organ harvesting plot of the novel. Rudy explains his immigration to Canada as one reason for his hunger for power:

> From I born, people been taking advantage. Poor all me born days. Come up to Canada, no work. Me wife and all kick me out of me own house. Blasted cow. If it wasn't for me, she woulda still be cleaning rich people toilets back home, and is so she treat me. Just because me give she little slap two-three time when she make she mouth run away 'pon me. (131)

From this passage, it is clear that Rudy has been violent toward the women of his family long before the beginning of the novel. His abuse of his ex-wife, Gros-Jeanne — as demonstrated by his language ("[b] lasted cow") and brute force ("me give she little slap two-three time") — is part of the novel's cycle of violence in which the Black female body is mutilated time and again. Rudy displaces his anger at the injustices of the government onto the women in his life. His wife's alleged ingratitude, combined with his geographical displacement, feed his desire for power.

Rudy compensates for his previous hardships by making the "*tallest freestanding building in the world*," Toronto's CN Tower, his office (191). Its "*needle shape* […] *stretch[es] up to the clouds, with the bulge of the observation deck in the middle*" (191). Tall and imposing, the tower physically

marks Rudy's desire for power over the city space and its residents; he aims to compensate for the injustices he feels he has faced in his life, including poverty and unemployment in Canada (131). His hunger for power manifests not only in his abuse of Gros-Jeanne, but also on a larger scale by orchestrating the murders of his fellow city residents. While Romdhani argues that the CN Tower's needle shape points to its status as a "symbol of power" that highlights Rudy's position as the head of a drug-dealing gang, the tower also suggests a phallic symbol of the patriarchal power Rudy holds over the Burn (79). In reclaiming this structure for himself, Rudy redefines the power it represents, shifting it from a marker of oppression to a means through which he can oppress others. The dystopian future imagined by Hopkinson is therefore marked by the traumatic past experiences of the characters, demonstrating how violence is reproduced by the very people it affects.

The most graphic instance of violence towards a Black female body is when Rudy flays Melba alive and feeds her to his duppy, the spirit from which he draws his powers. Romdhani writes that "zombies are associated with powerlessness"; Melba, Rudy's servant, is a 'zombie' throughout the novel, in that she is completely under Rudy's control (77). She is technically alive, but she has no control over her body or will. The culmination of Rudy's violence against Melba is shown in her prolonged and bloody death:

> The drug that [Rudy] had been feeding her had that much power to place her will under his control […]. Most horribly, since Rudy had ordered her to lie perfectly still on the dining table, she had made no attempt to escape over the last minutes as Rudy methodically flayed her alive. […] Wet, red muscles glistening with fluids, Melba presented her neck to the knife. (135–7)

In this moment of mutilation, Melba's body is no longer her own; Rudy has already stripped her of her agency and is now physically stripping away her skin. The effect of the drug he gives her is to eliminate her autonomy, place "her will under his control" such that she "lie[s] perfectly still" and makes "no attempt to escape." Her mind and body have be-

come so far removed from herself that she presents her own "neck to the knife." Rudy's "methodical" flaying of Melba reinforces his control of the situation and his power over her body. Melba's complete subjugation and eventual death is a graphic representation of violence against Black women, and demonstrates the physical effects of the power dynamics present throughout the novel.

Another woman subjected to violence in the novel is Mi-Jeanne, who has also been zombified by Rudy, becoming his duppy, allowing him to maintain a connection to the spirit world. However, Romdhani points out that unlike Melba, Mi-Jeanne's zombification is multilayered and "thus she incorporates multiple ways in which the African diaspora has historically been brutally subjugated" (80). The reader learns that while Mi-Jeanne's spirit is being held by Rudy in his duppy bowl, her body wanders the streets as "Crazy Betty." The very name, Crazy Betty, as well as Ti-Jeanne's reaction to this character, presents negative associations with madness and the detachment from one's body, echoing Ester Jones' idea that "black belief systems are marginalized and reduced to the level of madness" (92–3). To Jones, "knowledge production" in relation to "black bodies and epistemologies" has historically been undermined in favour of Christian-centred ideologies or secular scientific beliefs, depending on the paradigm of the historical era (92). In all cases, Afro-Caribbean spirituality is, from a Western perspective, associated with otherness, madness, and irrationality. This is an idea that Ti-Jeanne has internalized: when Crazy Betty is first introduced, "[t]he old fear of madness [makes] Ti-Jeanne go cold. She [jerks] Baby out of Crazy Betty's reach […] Madwoman in front of her" (17). As this passage suggests, madness functions as a "metaphor for cultural alienation" (Brown 232). Because of the internalized hierarchical norms of Western cultural dominance, Ti-Jeanne fears the state of madness that indicates Crazy Betty's otherness and relationship to the non-human, which she associates with the spirit world.

Mi-Jeanne is consistently dehumanized throughout the text as a result of her madness, and, like Melba, falls victim to male violence. When Mi-Jeanne comes to Gros-Jeanne's house, Tony attacks her: "He turned and shot her full in the chest. […] Mi-Jeanne fell like a sack of

bones. A red mist rose from her crumpled body. Ravening jaws, mad eyes, and clawing hands swirled in it" (163). This moment of physical violence by Tony reiterates Mi-Jeanne's own helplessness, with her "crumpled" body falling "like a sack of bones." Again, she is described as mad, this time through the spirit that emerges from her body. As Romdhani argues, Mi-Jeanne's zombification is multilayered: not only is she subjected to the violence of Tony (who tries to kill her) and Rudy (who uses her as his duppy), but she is also feared by her own daughter. These varying levels of violence against Mi-Jeanne intertwine to show how gender and racial-cultural power dynamics reinforce her marginalization, highlighting how members of her own family contribute to her subordinated condition.

Despite Ti-Jeanne's fear of her mother's zombie-like state, Ti-Jeanne herself is also nearly made into a zombie by Rudy, reiterating the repetitive nature of violence against Black women in the novel. The process of putting Ti-Jeanne under his control is described by Rudy as he physically mutilates her body:

> And the other things I mix in? They go lower your emotional resistance, make you more suggestible. For you see that paralysis, Ti-Jeanne? Is the first stage in making a zombie." Then he took the knife and slowly made a deep incision in the meat of her thigh muscle. Ti-Jeanne arched her back as the knife traced a line of agony up her leg. (211)

This passage strongly echoes the scene in which Rudy flays Melba alive. Rudy begins the process of putting Ti-Jeanne completely under his control through "paralysis" and begins the calculated butchering of her body with the act of "slowly" making a "deep incision" in her leg. Unlike Melba and Mi-Jeanne, Ti-Jeanne is never made into a zombie, as she is able to use her spiritual instincts — which have been growing throughout the novel — to defeat Rudy. The fact that Ti-Jeanne does not succumb to zombification provides a moment of resistance against Rudy and the power he represents; yet Hopkinson explicitly concludes the novel with Ti-Jeanne's enduring cultural alienation. In the end,

Ti-Jeanne "still [doesn't] feel a part of these ways that had been so much a part of her grandmother's life," that is, the traditional Afro-Caribbean spiritual practices carried out by Gros-Jeanne throughout the novel and at Gros-Jeanne's funeral (245). As Romdhani says, "in the last part of *Brown Girl* [...] [Ti-Jeanne] feels shame, experiences trauma, and is detached from her community and ancestors" (75). It is clear by the end of the novel that despite Ti-Jeanne's resistance against Rudy, the violence inflicted upon her body, as well as the bodies of the other women in her family, has lasting consequences that extend beyond the end of the story. Not only does the moment of Rudy slicing Ti-Jeanne's leg demonstrate a repetition of the same kind of mutilation experienced by Melba, but it also asserts that even the characters who embody resistance and liberation experience the violent effects of the power structures in the dystopian environment staged by Hopkinson.

In any discussion of the novel's depiction of violence against Black women it is important to examine the way in which male characters are not just the perpetrators of violence, but also victims of larger systems of inequalities. As I have already discussed, Rudy desires revenge for the injustices that he feels he has faced in his life. However, his actions impact both the female and male characters of the novel, including Tony. Despite the main victims of violence being women, Hopkinson is careful to represent the way in which systemic oppression impacts Black men, rather than limit them to the role of perpetrator. According to Sonja Georgi, "When Hopkinson [...] discusses black male violence in [North] American urban centers [...] she does this in order to point out that this violence is a manifestation of the economic, social, and racial inequalities within [North] American society" (312). Georgi's observation is reflected in Rudy's own experience of being unemployed after moving to Canada, thus taking his frustrations out on his wife, and eventually turning to drugs and gang violence. Georgi continues her argument by saying that "Tony [...] has received medical training but is unemployed due to the missing infrastructure, which in this instance is an example of the systemic inequalities the novel addresses" (320). Tony is therefore forced to work for Rudy and his posse in order to make a living, carrying out the task of finding an organ donor for Premier Uttley.

It is clear that Tony also falls victim to the cyclical violence resulting from the inequalities highlighted by Georgi. For instance, when Rudy flays Melba, he does so not only to feed his duppy, but also to threaten Tony, saying, "'Look at me, my brother. […] This is what I go do to your Ti-Jeanne if you nah get that heart for me'" (136). Aside from verbal threats, Rudy also temporarily takes away Tony's bodily control, leaving him momentarily zombified: "He was flopped limply in the armchair in Rudy's office, head flopped to one side" (129). What is troubling about Tony's character is the fact that he carries out Rudy's commands — like Melba and Mi-Jeanne — without being completely zombified. Rather than physical dominance, Rudy's power over Tony is mainly psychological. While it is important to highlight this contrast in physical and psychological violence toward female and male characters, what Tony ultimately displays is the cyclical nature of all types of violence in the novel. Rudy's desire for dominance, brought about by his past experiences, makes him violent toward Tony, which in turn makes Tony violent towards characters such as Mi-Jeanne and Gros-Jeanne. In portraying Black men mutilating the bodies of the women in their own communities, Hopkinson highlights the systemic inequalities working against these men as the root cause of this violence.

Another significant moment of violence in Hopkinson's text is the murder of Gros-Jeanne by Tony, followed by the harvesting of her heart by the government. The entire plot of finding an organ donor is carried out because of Premier Uttley's need for a transplant, executed through Rudy's power over the Burn. In the actual moment of physical violence against Gros-Jeanne, Tony is the one who commits the murder: Gros-Jeanne "never [sees] Tony pull the hammer out of his pocket and slam it into the top of her head" (150). Georgi characterizes his actions as a consequence of the "disintegrating city" (320), calling for a "dog-eat-dog violence" (321). She states that "[t]he peak of this hyper-individualistic ethos, of which Rudy is the key representative, is the exploitation and killing of orphaned children and single women in order to sell their organs on the human transplant market" (321). Tony's murder of Gros-Jeanne is not only the "peak of this hyper-individualistic ethos," but also the peak of the novel's violence against Black women. The moment of the murder is the culmination of each type of violence seen in the

novel: Gros-Jeanne, who embodies traditional Afro-Caribbean beliefs, is killed by the men of her own family for the benefit of the White settler colonial government. Additionally, Gros-Jeanne has reluctantly taken Tony into her home to help him escape the grasp of Rudy and his posse, only to be stabbed in the back — or smashed in the head — by Tony. The most violent act that Tony can commit against Ti-Jeanne and her family is to kill Gros-Jeanne, the source of cultural knowledge and tradition, and the means through which Ti-Jeanne is able to connect to her heritage. In killing her source of cultural knowledge, Tony cuts off and further perpetuates Ti-Jeanne's cultural alienation. In the mutilation and exploitation of Gros-Jeanne's body the various types of violence in the novel come full circle: patriarchal violence, with Rudy and Tony orchestrating her murder, and racial violence, with Gros-Jeanne becoming an organ donor for Premier Uttley.

Beyond the moment of Gros-Jeanne's murder, the violence against her body persists past the end of the novel through the act of transplanting her heart into Premier Uttley's body. The effects of Gros-Jeanne's heart being placed into Uttley's body can be seen in the reformation of the politician's platform; Uttley's embodiment of Gros-Jeanne's beliefs reveals a troubling ending in which a White woman appropriates the body and ideology of a Black woman. In the pages following the heart transplant scene, Uttley tells her advisor Constantine that she is "going to change [her] tactics a little" (238). She goes on to describe the ways in which she will change the organ donor program in Toronto and "rejuvenate" the city (239). In her analysis of this resolution, Jones argues: "The novel suggests that not only has Mami's heart been transplanted, but her spirit as well. […] In this respect, the novel further highlights the potential for unintended subversive consequences to undermine racist power structures" (111–2). While it can be argued that Uttley's social conscience points toward positive changes for Toronto, it is problematic to suggest that these changes can only be made through the murder and harvesting of Gros-Jeanne's body and beliefs. As Romdhani says, "even though Uttley experiences positive changes by being colonized/infected by Gros-Jeanne's heart, Gros-Jeanne is also being eaten by Uttley: she is killed and her heart is stolen and consumed" (87). Any gestures toward a utopian ending are ultimately undermined, not only through the con-

sistent mutilation of Black women's bodies throughout the text, but also through the appropriation of these bodies that extends beyond the end of the novel.

The exploitation of marginalized bodies in Hopkinson's dystopian Toronto occurs in order to maintain the power structures that caused violence against Black women's bodies in the first place. Both Rudy and Tony experience the effects of unemployment and gang violence due to a lack of infrastructure; these experiences, combined with the government's corruption, cause the most vulnerable citizens to fall victim to the physical consequences of cyclical violence. The most violent instances of bodily mutilation and harvesting in the novel are performed against Black women: Melba, Mi-Jeanne, Ti-Jeanne, and Gros-Jeanne. In the end, Hopkinson denies the reader a utopian resolution by creating a troubling situation in which Gros-Jeanne's body continues to be exploited. Hopkinson demonstrates that the issues discussed in the novel cannot be easily resolved by a simple change of heart — metaphorical *or* physical. Other solutions to systemic violence must be found. Although I do not have space to consider it here, one such solution can be seen in Hopkinson's use of genre; the combination of both science fiction and fantasy allows her to bring Afro-Caribbean spirituality to the forefront. Using the genre of fantasy, Hopkinson incorporates Afro-Caribbean folklore into a dystopian novel. In doing so, she offers a hypothesis of what the future will look like for historically marginalized cultures. Thus, the transformation of bodies through the practice of Vodou can be examined as a potential site of resistance to the instances of violence against Black women. In bringing forward the recurring mutilation of Black women's bodies in her novel, Hopkinson sheds light on the persistent injustices experienced by racialized communities, suggesting that transformation, not transplant, is required in order to break the cyclicality of structural violence.

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THE (UN)MAKING OF LANDSCAPE AND LANGUAGE: POETIC CREATION AND DECAY IN DYLAN THOMAS' "ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OCTOBER WIND"

Grace Ma

"To know a poem more is to know it less, for knowing gives way to embodying. In October 2019, students in ENG348 — Modern Poetry — were all handed the same poem, Dylan Thomas' "Especially when the October wind." We were to write 1500 words about it. It is always interesting and frustrating to write essays that cannot rely on sources other than the work itself and a dictionary. Anything goes, nothing goes. What I loved about Thomas' poem was the bursting tension of the voice, the atmospheric content, the physical space the poem had to occupy. It was a meta-poem, but it also felt like a renouncement of the meta-poem in its attitude of finality. By observing and exploring how the speaker moved between subjective descriptions and poetic awareness in a decaying landscape (which spans different spaces and times), the essay argues that the speaker consolidates what cannot be consolidated — the self and nature — by acknowledging a dual position that he shares with (his) words. I'd like to thank Professor Ming Xie for a fruitful year of modern poetry learning and for his keen guidance as I tackled Thomas' poem. I'd also like to thank Antonia Facciponte and Clare O'Brien for giving my essay much attention and love — this essay would not be nearly as coherent, and still a humble 1500 words (it is now 1757!), if it were not for their excellent editing.

In Dylan Thomas' "Especially when the October wind," a male speaker observes his landscape while voicing his struggle with words. The speaker's use of personification, metaphors, and meta-poetic language reflects his psychological, rather than objective, crafting of a decaying landscape. This psychological treatment demonstrates how words distance him from the factual reality that he wishes to connect with: nature. Despite his psychological rendering of the landscape through language, the speaker's awareness of the poetic act of creation, underlined by the "some let me make you…" refrain, permits him to also form a landscape that is beyond his rhetorical reach. Presented alongside the descriptions of impermanent summer elements, the decaying quality of the winter scene illustrates the speaker's transition towards a fuller, more complete manner of knowing the landscape. This fuller way of knowing is revealed in the last stanza, which underscores how the speaker attempts to consolidate his self with nature by subjecting language and landscape to cycles of poetic creation and decay. Ultimately, this consolidation reflects the inconclusive agreement of the speaker with his poem, as he acknowledges both his mastery of words and the words' mastery of him.

The speaker uses a variety of poetic devices to describe a wintry landscape, rendering his perception of reality into a psychological projection. The poem begins: "Especially when the October wind / With frosty fingers punishes my hair" (1–2). By personifying the wind as possessing "frosty fingers" that "punish," the speaker immediately rejects any suggestion of a factual narration and brings a moral, and thus human, impression of the landscape to the foreground. He continues to craft this decaying landscape with poetically rich language, declaring how he "[walks] on fire" (4) and hears the "raven cough in winter sticks" (6). Furthermore, the speaker visually deconstructs the familiar term "seaside" to "sea's side" (5); the added sibilance with the apostrophe "s" slows the reading of the line, underscoring the speaker's linguistic involvement in the lines that he crafts. Although the approaching winter season itself implies a process of decay, the speaker's pervasive use of poetic devices suggests that he is psychologically, and thus subjectively, invested in crafting this decay.

Although the speaker is invested in poetically rendering the natural world, his literary construction of the landscape stresses his meta-poetic

criticism of the limits of words, as he details his distance from nature due to the circularity of language. At the end of the first stanza, the speaker unsubtly eases into a meta-commentary, describing how his "busy heart who shudders as she talks / Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words" (7–8). The use of words like "busy" and "shudders" alludes to the speaker's restlessness, which is intimately tied to a struggle with communication. Shifting into the next stanza, the speaker builds on his hostility towards words as he declares: "Shut, too, in a tower of words" (9). This image creates the symbolic notion of a poet trapped by the subjectivity of language, one that closes him off from the landscape that surrounds him. Circular descriptions generated in the poem further emphasize the poet's tragic entrapment. Circularity is most evident through the interchanges between nouns and adjectives, such as when the speaker declares: "Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches, / Some of the oaken voices" (13–4). In the former line, the linguistic term, "vowelled," is the adjective, while the nature term, "beeches," is the noun. In the latter line, the nature term, "oaken," becomes the adjective, while the linguistic term, "voices," becomes the noun. This subtle dance between adjectives and nouns highlights the ability of words to move between different states, to be both the descriptor and the described. The metaphor of the "vowelled beaches" becomes the metaphor of the "oaken voices," creating a distinct sense of the circularity of language. This circularity does not permit an objective meaning to be derived from the words, illustrating the limitations of language.

However, alongside the idea that words are futilely circular in meaning, the image of the "tower of words" accentuates the very act of constructing a poem in its physical form, showing that the poet is the agent of his creative action as much as he is confined to language. No matter the structure, the visual words of a poem are always "shut" in some limited shape and space, but "the tower of words" is a jarring meta-statement because it visually represents the poem itself, a "tower of words." The poem's rhymed iambic pentameter generates lines of generally consistent width, which stacked onto each other as four octet stanzas create an elevated, structured form. The physical accuracy of the visual image makes the reader aware of the speaker's entrapment in his own words, affirming his power as a creator, to create with choice.

This power of creation is suggested by the refrain of "some let me make you…" which attempts to define creation as an evasion of poetic rhetoric, sustaining the limitlessness and uncontrollable nature of creating art. The refrain first appears with, "Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches, / Some of the oaken voices (13–4), previously discussed as an example of circular language. The ambiguity evoked by the line's circular words and structure instills the refrain with a grammatical ephemerality that escapes interpretation. The speaker, with "you," addresses perhaps the woman in the first stanza, or the reader, or even the poem itself. "Some" could mean some people, some words, or some poems. The characters in the line are indeterminate — what is alluded is that "some" (whatever some is) are made of matters such as "vowelled beeches," "oaken voices," and "water's speeches" (16). "Some" suggests artistic creation is never a fully encapsulated act: at any time, there is only "some" that is made, and only "some" that "let[s]" itself be made. The line capitalizes on the grammatical possibilities of "some," rendering it as both an adjective and a noun, a hypnotic hum that evokes a poetic creation rhetorically limitless in its incompleteness.

Although the speaker upholds the act of creation as something unreachable due to the unlimited facets of creation, the transition to winter shows an attempt to strengthen the act of creation. This idea is bolstered by the poem's subjection of mundane, summer imagery to time's decline, which begins with the third stanza's portrayal of declining time: "Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock / Tells me the hour's word" (17–8). Despite the grounding visual of a household plant, the speaker immediately draws the reader's attention to the time that lurks "behind" it. The reality of the "wagging clock," wagging like a judgemental finger, reveals that the stasis of the "pot of ferns" is merely an illusion. The perpetual nature of time is further emphasized as the speaker declares, "The signal grass that tells me all I know / Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye" (22–3). In a direct manner, these lines state how a common element of nature, in this instance grass, decays with the passage of time. A real genus, "signal" grass also neatly points to the idea of "signs," suggesting that common signs, established ways of knowing, disintegrate with time. With the end of summer's mundane certainty, a haunting scenery is introduced, one of worms piercing the eye and of the "raven's sins" (24). These gloomy images metaphorically

and physically transition the poem back to the chaos of the October wind by the "sea's side," showing how the loss of one time permits another to be created.

The return of this October wind in the last stanza is melded with the "some let me make you…" refrain, thus showing how the transition ushers in a new scene rather than repeating the initial scene of decay. This hybridized October scene creates a dynamic landscape that constantly moves between creation and dissolution, ultimately suggesting that the poet's mastery of words and the words' mastery of him are one and the same. In one sense, the reappearance of the refrain "(Some let me make you of autumnal spells, / The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales)" (26–7) interrupts the occurrence of the "October wind" (25) scene. Although this refrain is an interrupting force, the roundness of the parentheses reflects a sense of softness, dropping the lines into a bracketed background, similar to an echo. Thus, the refrain neither overpowers or fades behind the "October wind," but rather compliments it: both the winter landscape and the voice of creation work towards the same ideal in different manners, which is to free the speaker of words through the dissolution and creation of meaning. This ideal can never be achieved, but it demonstrates how the subjectivity of words can be seen as an opportunity for a constant re-imagination of meaning, rather than a constant cycling of it. Thus, as his "heart is drained," (30) it is "warned of the coming fury" (31), suggesting that his creative blood never reaches a stasis, but rather enters a new realm of creation that is always indefinite, always incomplete.

The speaker's closing line embraces this realm in both a resolved and unsettled tone, showing how he remains simultaneously trapped and freed by his poem. The speaker ends the poem by remarking: "By the sea's side hear the dark-vowelled birds" (32). The commanding use of the word "hear" creates a sharp finality to the poem, demonstrating how the speaker chooses to guide the reader to a specified scene. Yet, despite the lucid tone, the senses provoked by the line's images and command leave the poet, and the reader, in a state of cognitive dissonance between the psychological and the natural. While the declaration to hear the birds stimulates the reader to attempt to reach a natural element, the birds' description as being "dark-vowelled" draws the reader's attention away from the sky and to the

dark ink that marks the page. The speaker pulls his command into two different directions, the metaphorical and the natural, creating a distinct sense that both are comprehensible yet completely unreachable. To the very end, the speaker negotiates between the power and helplessness of bridging the human pen to and from the reality of nature.

Throughout Thomas' "Especially when the October wind," the speaker oscillates between the limiting and creative power of words in an attempt to consolidate a psychological and objective perspective of his landscape. By wrestling between these two perspectives in an acutely aware and poetic manner, the speaker shows how his greatest despair is also his greatest mastery, for words are nothing but words, and everything beyond words.

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