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NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

Hannah Bushon is a 28-year-old undergraduate student originally from Louisville, Kentucky, although she considers Atlanta, Georgia, her second hometown. Majoring in International Affairs and Gender & Women's Studies, Hannah's goals include working to mitigate human trafficking and improving the lives of marginalized women and children in the future. In her spare time, she enjoys documentary films, hanging out with her French Bulldog named Lola, and spending time with her friends and family. Hannah draws much of her inspiration for study from her late mother and late father and their emphasis on the importance of higher education.

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Julianna Lowe is an Honors College junior English major with a concentration in Professional Writing and a second major in Political Science. Born and raised in Middle Tennessee, she comes from a small town north of Nashville to get her Bachelor's Degree in Spring of 2021. On top of her studies, she also writes for the Features section of the *College Heights Herald* and produces weekly web content for the *Talisman*. She hopes to continue her education in graduate school to become an English professor, sharing with the world the aspects of English that have been shared with her.

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SCIENTOLOGY: THE CULT OF RELIGION

by Hannah Bushon

In 1951, L. Ron Hubbard began assembling groups across the United States to practice what he deemed the “applied religious philosophy” of Scientology, a movement based on his first major book, *Dianetics*. In 1954, the first Church of Scientology opened in Los Angeles, California (Lewis 228). According to the official Church of Scientology website, *Dianetics* addresses the separation between and unity of an individual’s body and their soul, and “handles the effects of the spirit on the body.” The ultimate aim of the organization is to arm members with tools to improve themselves through individual growth. Rather than being a theistic religion, based on a superior being or God that followers worship, Scientology claims to help its followers become “clear,” or “Operating Thetans”¹—the ability to transcend the “questions that have troubled Mankind for millennia” (“What is Scientology?”). In reality, the Church of Scientology sells the promise of an ultimate Utopia, a mental utopia that frees the individual from past traumas

¹ The Church of Scientology officially explains an “Operating Thetan,” or “OT,” as someone who “can handle things and exist without physical support and assistance” (Wright 19). Scholar James R. Lewis explains that a “Thetan” is the name for soul or spirit in this instance; someone who is “operating” as a Thetan has undergone Scientology’s teachings and trainings, or auditing, and is able to separate their soul or spirit from the body completely, see into past lives and will reincarnate as a Scientologist in lifetimes to come (228-29).

or negative emotions. Despite all of Scientology's grand promises, the organization in fact uses a combination of ritual, rites of passage, indoctrination, and isolation to control members of the organization, with countless former members telling harrowing stories about their experiences. The external projection of the promised utopia juxtaposed with the internal dystopia paints a complex picture when contemplating the utopic value of Scientology as a whole.

Worldwide membership numbers for Scientology are unclear, with the organization claiming larger membership than can be proven, and they offer no support to back up their claims. A CNN News article by Tricia Escobedo lists the church as having "10,000 churches, missions and groups operating in 167 countries, with 4.4 million more people signing up every year." Escobedo speculates that membership numbers likely hover in the hundreds of thousands, though scholars like Mikael Rothstein argue that this could be much lower. Lawrence Wright, author of *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood and the Prison of Belief*, points to a "survey of American religious affiliations compiled in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*" that projects roughly 25,000 Americans who self-identify as "Scientologist" (IV). The Church of Scientology has never released official membership numbers despite requests from authors and journalists. Wright highlights in the conclusion of his book, "the Church promised to provide an organizational chart, but never did so" (455). But understanding Scientology's global scope is important to understanding the organization's reach in their indoctrination. Some former members highlight that courses, meetings, events, and rituals conducted at "Int," the International Headquarters in Los Angeles, California, and at "Flag," the Flagship base in Clearwater, Florida, include people of diverse nationalities, implying that members do in fact traverse the globe to receive training at major Scientology centers, even if a Scientology center exists in their own country or city.

In essence, Scientologists can be effectively divided into two broad categories: the “Sea Org,” or “Sea Organization,” Scientology’s top-ranking members and potential future members, “Cadets,” and the “civvies,” or civilians who take courses and go home to their normal lives (Hill 116). All members of both categories are expected to follow the religious path, “The Bridge,” L. Ron Hubbard’s teachings and auditing practices, to ultimately reach the highest level: OT XV or “Total Freedom” (“The Bridge to Total Freedom”). Each level requires a substantial time commitment, with many former members like Paul Haggis claiming to have spent over 20 years and hundreds of thousands of dollars before reaching the final levels, although still failing to achieve “Total Freedom.” Members allege the church is constantly soliciting members for more in donations, and estimated assets of the Church of Scientology are believed to be in the billions of dollars. Combined with Scientology’s vast scope of rituals, practices, and celebrity endorsements, and contrasted against the controlling and outright volatile behaviors towards members and critics alike, the line between religious movement and “cult” becomes blurred.

The Sea Org

Jenna Miscavige Hill, the niece of the current Scientology leader, David Miscavige, includes in her memoir recollections of her childhood with parents serving in the Sea Org and how that grandfathered her into signing a billion-year contract at the tender age of seven: “Nothing about the billion-year contract was strange to me” (3). For Hill, signing a billion-year contract required little thought: “I was all too willing and ready to commit myself to the cause that was so dear to my parents” (2). Hill outlines in detail her childhood as a Cadet—the childhood fast track to Sea Org membership, and where most Sea Org members come from. Young Cadets are indoctrinated to pledge allegiance to the Church of Scientology and commit their lives to the organization. For Hill, the

isolation from her family began at a young age as well. With her parents deciding to devote their entire lives to the Sea Org, she and her brother were sent to live on “The Ranch,” a heavily fortified compound on the outskirts of Los Angeles designed for the children of Sea Org members. Over the course of several chapters in her book, *Beyond Belief: My Secret Life Inside Scientology and My Harrowing Escape*, Hill outlines how the children performed manual labor all over The Ranch: fixing dilapidated buildings and drywall, painting, cleaning, farming, and paving roadways in blistering heat and desolate winters. In addition to grueling physical labor, traditional education is also neglected in lieu of Scientology-based education. Children and Cadets at The Ranch do not learn math, sciences, or arts as most school children in America do, but instead spend several hours a day studying lectures, books, and mental exercises by L. Ron Hubbard. Cadets also begin introductory auditing courses. Hill writes of The Ranch, “it was around this time that my serious indoctrination into Scientology began” (49-50). For Hill, becoming an inaugural member of the Cadet Org, a precursor to the Sea Org, meant her own dive into the psychological practices of Dianetics and Scientology.

The extreme isolation and indoctrination of Sea Org members and Cadets reveals the organization’s desire to foster the interests of the group over the individual. In addition to training, members go through hours of auditing—a form of psychoanalysis of one member to another, using L. Ron Hubbard’s electropsychometer,² or “e-meter,” to track clarity in the individual (Wright 15). According to Wright, Hubbard related the e-meter to a lie detector test, capable of locating and curing phobias, obsessions, bad memories or emotional trauma—the ultimate tool to achieve “Total Freedom” (15). There is also the billion-year contract that many critics take

² Lawrence Wright explains this device as a tool for measuring “bodily changes in electrical resistance that occur when a person answers questions posed by an auditor,” while L. Ron Hubbard declared it “similar to a lie detector test” (15).

issue with. Sea Org members are required to sign an agreement stating they “contract themselves to the Sea Organization for the next billion years,” and outlining the official mission of the Sea Org being “to get ethics in on this planet and the universe” (Wright 116). This directly links members of the Church of Scientology to future lifetimes where life will be better since Scientology is being practiced in this lifetime. The billion-year contract acts as a barrier between Sea Org members and the outside world, a dystopic confinement to the service of the Sea Org.

Sea Org members do, however, have access to special privileges and leadership opportunities. Hill describes absolute luxury for her parents in the organization, including luxurious apartments in Clearwater, Florida, and Los Angeles, private drivers, gourmet food deliveries, and a slew of personal assistants. The parallel between the luxurious lives of the adult, elite Sea Org members and The Ranch mimics the utopian and dystopian undertones of the organization as a whole. While not all Sea Org members live like Hill’s parents, the highest-ranking members do. A majority of Sea Org members live in dormitory-style housing, with communal meals, daily uniforms, various jobs and duties around “Int” and “Flag” bases and across the organization, often working 60-70 hours a week and allegedly taking home pay around \$50-\$100 per week. According to former organization leaders such as Marty Rathburn, Sea Org life is not considered conducive to family life, hence the separation of spouses and children (*Going Clear* movie).

The Sea Org’s origins can be traced to the earliest years following the official formation of the International Association of Scientologists (IAS), as rumors swirled amongst members of an official Church of Scientology. Following a 1963 raid on Church of Scientology by U.S. Marshals, a 1967 audit by the IRS, an official condemnation from Australia, and legal inquiries by New Zealand, Britain, and South Africa into local IAS chapters, L. Ron Hubbard began planning a clandestine Naval force to spread the message of

Scientology, comprised of the church's most elite members, and he dubbed it the Sea Org (Wright 112-13). The idea was that in international waters Hubbard would be able to escape any potential obstacles facing his new movement and his own personal issues, like charges of tax evasion or accusations that e-meters did not lead to the medical miracles Hubbard promised: the diagnosis and treatment of "all mental and nervous disorders and illnesses" along with "psychosomatic ailments of mankind such as arthritis, cancer, stomach ulcers, and radiation burns from atomic bombs..." (Wright 111). Legal troubles trailed the Church of Scientology from the start and escaping to open waters with the promise of eventually finding a permanent port was the goal.

Louis Theroux's film *My Scientology Movie* depicts the Sea Org as Scientology's version of clergy, one of several references within Scientology to other religious structures and traditions. The Sea Org holds the organization's highest-ranking leaders, although this power comes with a price. In Alex Gibney's HBO documentary *Going Clear*, former members recount stories of simple mistakes—laughing at an inappropriate moment, spending money on themselves, or wanting to connect with family members outside the church—and how that led to captivity and isolation as a form of re-indoctrination. Hill recounts the discovery that her mother engaged in an extramarital affair while in the Sea Org and had subsequently been "beached," a term originally from L. Ron Hubbard's sailing days, meaning literally that the fleet would leave an individual on a beach. Hill's mother was isolated from her children and husband and sent to serve a 12-month sentence of "hard labor" in an undisclosed location, allegedly in squalor and poverty, being sustained only by basic nutrition and minimal sanitation standards (170-77). In Gibney's *Going Clear*, former member Marty Rathburn tells the story of being held in a similar location at the "Gold Base" location in Los Angeles called "The Hole." Rathburn goes on to assert that "even if law enforcement knocked down the doors tomorrow, no one would want to be saved." Instead, members would insist that they *chose* to

be there, they deserved these dismal conditions, and they want to remain. Rathburn attributes this mindset to Scientology's indoctrination tactics.

The juxtaposition of the luxury lifestyle of Sea Org executives against the work-camp-style lodging of Sea Org Cadets at The Ranch and keeping in mind the inhumane and disturbing images of "The Hole," the Church of Scientology stands firmly at a crossroads between utopia for the elite and simultaneous dystopia for all others. Cadets, Sea Org members, and everyday "civilian Scientologists" are often sold the idea that if they only work a *little* bit harder, they will have the ability to reach "Total Freedom." The Sea Org's position in the hierarchal structure of the Church of Scientology is vast: estimates range from 3,000 to 5,000 members, meaning they comprise roughly 12% to 20% of the total membership of the Church of Scientology.

Indoctrination & Ritual

Without understanding the indoctrination tactics of Scientology, it can be difficult to understand why anyone might subject themselves to the organization. Scholar Mikael Rothstein outlines in his article "The Significance of Rituals in Scientology: A Brief Overview and a Few Examples" four specific examples of rituals employed by the church to cement loyalty among followers.

Rothstein's first ritual, auditing, is focused on the individual and their growth. Through a series of combative and confrontational therapy-type sessions, members are tasked with overcoming hindrances in their past to think more clearly—the ultimate goal being that late-stage mental state of "Clear." Auditing is a crucial part to the breakdown of mental blockages, traumas, or misdeeds in an individual's background through a series of techniques developed by Hubbard in *Dianetics*, and in almost every subsequent Scientology text. Hill outlines one particular auditing technique used around age 13: bullbaiting. In this session, auditors attempt to engage the "Pre-

clear”³ by screaming insults at them, lunging or jumping towards them. The “Pre-clear” must remain seated, calm, and totally still; they must be able to withstand bullbaiting by an auditor for one hour without flinching or so much as blinking irregularly, in order to pass. Hill recalls a male auditor screaming to her 13-year-old friend about “rosebud breasts,” a memory recalled with disgust (181). Immediately following bullbaiting, Hill and her classmates were made “to yell at square glass ashtrays at the top of our lungs,” the concept being that this would improve overall communication skills and give “Pre-clears” the ability to effectively convey their thoughts (182). Without studying Dianetics and Scientology from foundational texts up until the course Hill refers to, the utopian value of this ritual is subjective. Based on estimated numbers of “Clear” members since Scientology’s conception, several thousand people have felt compelled to move through this level and upward on The Bridge. Hill points repeatedly to moments when she felt she had not gained much from the courses she underwent: “it was often hard to tell what real progress looked like” (183). In order to progress in Scientology where there is no higher being or “God” to praise or pray to, an individual finds the strength within themselves and summons it. In this way, the individual’s inner journey will greatly influence the perception of the practice as inherently utopic or dystopic.

Second in the types of rituals outlined by Rothstein are the annual Scientology events to engage members in celebration of their founder, L. Ron Hubbard: May 9 each year is known as *Dianetics* day, the anniversary of the book’s publication; March 13 is L. Ron Hubbard’s birthday; Auditors’ Day is the second Sunday in September, etc. Each of these holidays become large-scale events, often recorded and broadcast live on the Church of Scientology’s

³ A “pre-clear” is a practicing Scientologist who has not yet reached “clear” levels, typically sometime between levels thirty-nine through forty-eight, depending on the individual. The courses from zero to “clear” precede “Operating Thetan” levels of study (Lewis 229).

website. Some of these events, such as the annual meeting of the International Association of Scientologists⁴ (IAS), often turn into events worshipping L. Ron Hubbard. Rothstein writes that “Hubbard is adored for his achievements and is whole-heartedly embraced and ritually reinforced as the most unique person in the history of humankind, just like Christ among Christians” (63). Footage of annual IAS events depicts large gilded stages mimicking Hollywood award shows, even featuring stars like actor Tom Cruise. Other regularly occurring events are less grand, such as weekly Accomplishment presentations and graduation ceremonies at large training locations such as “Int,” “Flag” and “Gold Base,” where members are invited to recount their “successes” from the previous week. Hill describes her most euphoric memories from these ceremonies: “hearing these speakers amplified all the positive things I’d been feeling about the Sea Org,” reinforcing Hill’s belief that the Church of Scientology was a utopic safe haven for her, even instilling a sense of community.

The third and fourth forms of ritual in Scientology are arguably less important in day-to-day function and serve to legitimize the group in the eyes of critics and U.S. federal standards. Third in the ritual practices fall rites of passage: funerals, weddings, and births become Scientology-based ceremonies, linking the most important instances in a member’s life directly to the organization. The fourth and final ritual revolves around “services emulating (to a certain degree) their Christian counterparts” that are held weekly but are not mandatory for members to attend, although many “civilian Scientologists” do (Rothstein 55). Following FBI raids on Los Angeles headquarters of the Church of Scientology in 1977 after

⁴ The IAS is a separate entity from the Church of Scientology. Church of Scientology members are expected to pay their local Church or training location a tithing, a percentage of monthly income, and for services rendered such as auditing and courses. Church of Scientology members also pay separate membership dues to the International Association of Scientologists, as a requirement (*Going Clear* movie).

allegations of abuse, “a Scientology cross was created. Scientology ministers now appeared wearing Roman collars” (Wright 281). Adapting the Church of Scientology into the loose guidelines the federal government defines as “religious movement” allowed the group to begin lobbying for 501(c)(3) religious tax-exemption status. The Church of Scientology’s movement towards traditional religious symbols aimed to realign it with institutions like the Catholic church, and distance it from other New Religious Movements like Hare Krishnas or The Unification Church (Wright 280-81).

The complex and individualistic approach of Scientology’s rituals serves to draw in and indoctrinate members further. As Hill writes in her book, Sea Org members themselves do not pay for the courses they take in order to advance, though “civvies” or civilians, pay thousands per course. Instead, Sea Org members take all classes for free, but will be required to pay back the cost of any courses should they decide to leave the organization. Speaking to Louis Theroux for his documentary, one former member explains that to go from a beginner status to “Operating Thetan” or “OT,” the highest level, can cost anywhere from \$500,000 to \$2,000,000. This financial investment fuels an individual’s need to feel a sense of belonging within the organization. For example, a new member becomes enthralled with L. Ron Hubbard’s books, begins spending money to attend courses, undergoes auditing that mimics emotional breakthroughs often felt in therapy settings, adding importance to group rituals and gatherings—in this instance, each step in the progression means more income for the Church of Scientology. For the member, this is a utopic, idyllic path with which they will gain the ultimate mental clarity and freedom. For veterans of the Church who spend upwards of 10 or 20 years in the organization, these are the tactics by which Scientology slowly drains the individual’s resources, financial and otherwise.

The Charismatic Leader

For Scientologists, L. Ron Hubbard is the patriarch of the entire ideological practice and is revered in a manner resembling some of the most well-known cults of modern history. Hubbard's early life is vaguely sketched out in journals, and Wright outlines his chaotic family life and bouncing from town to town, his father absent at times and present at others. Hubbard long held an exceptional view of himself, enlisting in the military following World War I and later claiming to have various combat injuries, although the U.S. Veterans Affairs medical records show no signs of any combat-related ailments. Aside from alleged military service, Hubbard was making a name for himself as a science fiction writer. After writing hundreds of stories over the course of several years, under more than half a dozen pen names, Hubbard published *Dianetics* in 1950 as a direct rebuke to the growing field of psychiatry. As Wright outlines, "the appearance of a do-it-yourself manual that claimed to demystify the secrets of the human mind and produce guaranteed results—for free—was bound to attract an audience" (79). This is how Hubbard marketed *Dianetics*: why pay someone else to work through your problems when Scientology can give you the tools to solve these problems yourself? But for Hubbard, the major flaw for *Dianetics* was the lack of residual income. Once someone buys the book, they have no reason to spend more money on the system. "I'd like to start a religion. That's where the money is," Hubbard is reported to have said on multiple occasions (Wright 100). This is just one piece of evidence critics use to argue that the Church of Scientology is not a religion at all, but a profit-driven commercial venture.

Two major tactics solidify Hubbard's role as eternal leader and founder: staged praising and his paternal role. In terms of staged praising, each conjunction of study within the Church of Scientology is marked by a resounding celebration of the founder. When a "Pre-clear" moves one level up on The Bridge, for example, they are invited to share this accomplishment after which the group will

shout, “To LRH!” followed by thundering applause. Each auditing session, training session, and school day for Cadets is closed with a collective chant “To LRH!” and applause. In spite of the organization’s emphasis on personal growth, L. Ron Hubbard is championed as the pioneer responsible for each member’s growth.

Additionally, Hubbard explicitly directed all members of all ranks to reject anyone who questions his system. L. Ron Hubbard’s directives against “Suppressive Persons” commands members to cut ties with any person who questions his authority or the legitimacy of the organization. The Suppressive Person Defense League, an organization dedicated to assisting individuals slandered by the Church of Scientology, defines a “Suppressive Person” or “SP” as someone who will “goof up or vilify any effort to help anybody,” according to L. Ron Hubbard. Hubbard has also been recorded in lectures telling members to report wavering faith among other members—if a family member begins to doubt Scientology teachings, they are a potential “SP” who may bring harm to other members or the Church of Scientology as a whole. According to L. Ron Hubbard, an “SP” will take as many people down with them as possible (“SP Doctrine”). This further isolates members by turning families and friends against each other. This again brings Scientology to the gray area straddling religion and cult. This utopic aspect of a charismatic leader is strong within Scientology; the concept that a single man from humble beginnings can rise to create an expansive set of self-help books and tactics is inspiring. Alongside the fear-mongering message that no one is safe and no one outside Scientology can be trusted, the dystopic, prison-like system of accountability can serve to trap members within the group.

In early 1986, a young man entered the stage at the annual IAS conference and announced to the world that L. Ron Hubbard had ceased to need his physical body any longer and had graduated to a new plane of research. Hubbard was dead, and the young man addressing the crowd was David Miscavige. Miscavige had been a

lifelong member of the church, a Sea Org Cadet who had worked alongside Hubbard for most of his life, and who was hand-chosen by Hubbard to lead the organization after Hubbard's death. Former Sea Org executives describe David Miscavige as cold and calculating, humiliating and bullying Sea Org members, and accusing him of ousting all other executives in an attempt to consolidate power over the organization (*Going Clear* movie.) David Miscavige's first and last public interview on CBS Evening News in 1992 proved to be indicative about the new leader's character: he was combative, repeatedly speaking over and interrupting news host Ted Koppel. Many scholars and former members agree that not much is known about David Miscavige, his personal life, or background that qualifies him to run the Church of Scientology, other than his years working for L. Ron Hubbard. Jenna Hill writes repeatedly in her book on "Uncle Dave," a warm and kind family man who took special interest in her studies, making sure that she was audited and trained by the best teachers. Each documentary and TV series about Scientology speculates on David Miscavige and his day-to-day life, with some members alleging that his wife, Shelley Miscavige, has not been seen publicly since 2005.

Both L. Ron Hubbard and his successor, David Miscavige, bring to light the absolute rule over Scientology. Whether the totalitarian rule over the organization is utopic or dystopic in nature is dependent on perspective—for someone who believes L. Ron Hubbard's teachings are irrefutable, the idea of an unconditional leader could be comforting. To an outsider examining the religion, David Miscavige and L. Ron Hubbard appear as oppressive and controlling leaders hell-bent on maintaining the Church of Scientology, which contributes to the dystopic reality that some members may feel trapped by the Church of Scientology.

Public Fascination & Scandal

From allegations of sexual abuse, kidnapping and unlawful detainment, to tax fraud and the fight for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, Scientology's history is fraught with legal and public relations issues across the globe. In Russia, Scientology's locations are often raided under laws that protect citizens from "unreasonable scams" (Lewis 230). In the U.S., Leah Remini, an actress and former Scientologist, produces and stars in a documentary-style TV show called *Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath*, where she speaks to other former members about alleged abuses, furthering the negative publicity. A report by Australian authorities in 1967 asserts that "Scientology is evil, its techniques evil, its practice a serious threat to the community, medically, morally, and socially; and its adherents sadly deluded and often mentally ill" (Wright 111). Australian authorities also went so far as comparing Hubbard to a dictator (Wright 111). Countless memoirs and books exist outlining members' experiences within the church. Each year, more movies and documentaries about Scientology debut. Every so often, major news outlets will publish stories with catchy headlines: "Celebrities You Didn't Know Were Scientologists" and "Where Does All of Scientology's Money Go?" The human interest of the organization brings the public back time and time again to examine the group.

The church largely refutes these public allegations, and they have been known to retaliate. Several outspoken former members have found websites created in their name, outlining how each of their accounts of the church is false, often with links and videos on these smear campaign websites leading directly back to the official Church of Scientology website. Paul Haggis, a former Sea Org executive and current outspoken critic of the Church of Scientology, whom Wright interviewed extensively for his *Going Clear* book and who appears frequently in Alex Gibney's *Going Clear* documentary, discovered WhoIsPaulHaggis.com, a website dedicated to discrediting each claim he's made against the church, with links to instructional videos

about how to correctly practice Scientology, and links that lead directly back to the official Church of Scientology website. Harassment by the organization is rampant; in *My Scientology Movie*, Louis Theroux and his cameramen and producers are routinely followed by what they assume to be private investigators and individuals with cameras, filming them as they discuss the organization, presumably on fact-finding missions directly from Church of Scientology leaders. Television stars like Leah Remini routinely show “cease and desist” letters sent by legal counsel representing the group. Lawrence Wright outlines how he was given the runaround by executives when gathering information for his book. Directives by L. Ron Hubbard at the time of the initial IRS investigation in 1967 call on members of the Church of Scientology to harass the IRS right back: “a ten thousand-dollar reward was offered to potential whistle-blowers to expose IRS abuses. Private investigators dug into the private lives of IRS officials, going so far as to attend seminars and pose as IRS workers, to see who had a drinking problem or might be cheating on a spouse” (Wright 280). This is only a small fraction of many retaliatory practices by the organization. Later directives by L. Ron Hubbard, such as the aforementioned “SP Directive” call on members to do anything possible to discredit critics, even threatening family members, filing lawsuits or partaking in 24-hour surveillance on an “SP,” regularly reporting back to Sea Org executives. Outspoken critics such as Marty Rathburn and Paul Haggis have posted videos to their own websites featuring members of the Church of Scientology showing up on their doorsteps, cameras in hand, to taunt and threaten the men (*Going Clear* movie).

The extensive accounts of harassment by the church paint a troubling picture. For those entrenched in the belief system, the utopic aspect of defending one’s beliefs aids in the sense of community, the idea that Scientologists must band together to protect their community. This also serves to increase the “us versus

them” mentality that L. Ron Hubbard wove into the “SP Doctrine” and other foundational texts. In contrast, the dystopic image of a non-profit, religious organization threatening non-believers with legal action or physical harm echoes religious political regimes guilty of genocidal tactics against adversaries, evoking images of The Crusades, or of Nazis fighting to exterminate Jews. Scholars and average Americans alike cannot seem to understand how a religious group can rely so heavily on fear-mongering and harassment, and the consumption of media related to the topic reflects this: both *Going Clear* by Lawrence Wright and *Beyond Belief* by Jenna Hill hit the *New York Times* Bestseller list, Leah Remini’s *Scientology and the Aftermath* television show on A&E Network has been consistently renewed for recurring seasons, documentaries and made-for-TV specials debut each year with new critics sharing disturbing stories of the Church of Scientology—the amount of dissenting opinions available is staggering, and they shroud the Church of Scientology in a perpetual cloud of mystery and cynicism.

In examining Scientology, its structures, rituals, hierarchal organization and leadership, it is easy to understand exactly *why* so much media is produced about the topic, and why so many “tell-all” books exist: The Church of Scientology is complex, secretive and expansive. For several thousand members, Scientology is the pathway to ultimate accountability and safety in an ever-changing world. For others, the Church of Scientology holds the worst memories, abuses and attacks against them, and stands as a constant reminder of an organization that took hold of their life without hesitation.

The utopic aspects are clear in accounts by former members—the promise of total mental clarity, utter control over one’s mind, body and spirit—*salvation*. This utopia offers the promise of a better life for a member’s children and the future of humankind. It offers the promise that members serve a higher purpose, the emancipation of humanity. The disparity in the idyllic community set forth in

Hubbard's writings and the chilling accounts, videos, photos, and audio recordings of direct harassment against critics is astounding and eerie. Despite decades-long campaigns against the church, critics still question what exactly defines a "religious movement" and where Scientology falls in that realm, articulating a larger issue when defining utopias and their success: where is the boundary between a harmless group of like-minded individuals and a cult? Some argue that a group such as Scientology harms society overall with its divisive and combative attitudes, or on the contrary, that Scientology protects the select few, the elite, from the outside world. The Church of Scientology remains active in its marketing campaigns, public relations crusades, and advertising—as well as its work to discredit critics. The Church of Scientology, in both its utopic and dystopic aspects, can conceivably continue to exist well into the future, with members climbing the "Bridge" for billions of years to come.

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WRITING TECHNOLOGIES IN COMPARISON:
SECURITY IN THE AGES OF TELEGRAMS AND
WHATSAPP

by Max Chambers

Privacy and security have been chief communication concerns since the advent of civilization, and since the invention of written communication, the desire to keep conversations and records private has only increased. Although modern technological innovators tout their unprecedented solutions to technological issues, writing technologies even in the 1800s sought to calm consumers' fears of being overheard. Clear examples of our enduring desire for privacy are the invention of the telegraph and WhatsApp. The telegraph, invented in 1844, and WhatsApp, created in 2009, represent unprecedented advances in writing technology for their respective eras. The two technologies vary widely in cost over time (telegrams began as an expensive service, but WhatsApp has always been free or low-cost); ease of access (telegrams required visiting a telegraph office, while WhatsApp can be accessed from any phone or computer); and use (telegrams were chiefly used for business purposes, while WhatsApp is frequently used for personal communication).

Yet, the uniting feature of the two writing technologies is that they sought to fulfill their contemporaries' needs for both secure and

instantaneous messaging. Dennis Baron, author of *A Better Pencil: Readers, Writers, and the Digital Revolution*, hypothesized that the evolution of writing technologies is cyclical: each new technology has similar merits, detriments, and fundamental flaws to those that came before it. Telegraphs and WhatsApp are products of their ages, but their undeniably similar security risks and solutions reinforce Baron's hypothesis that writing technologies build off one another, creating cyclical patterns of technological issues that must be studied together in order to be understood alone. Studying their benefits and risks teaches current tech innovators that, while technology seeks to improve our lives, we will never feel truly secure with even the most innovative and modern security solutions.

The Telegraph

The telegraph represented a drastic increase in speed of communication. Samuel F. B. Morse sent the first successful telegraph in 1844, but control of telegraphic communication did not pass from the government to private industry until 1847 (Jepsen 97). In a pre-typewriter age, senders hand-wrote their messages on a form provided by the telegram company, then an in-house operator transmitted the message to another telegraph office via connected telegraph lines; there, the message was copied and saved for its recipient (Jepsen 98). In the early years of the telegraph, the service was incredibly expensive, reserved only for the rich or for particularly urgent communications (Standage 63). As time wore on and more telegraph companies began competing for consumers' hard-earned money, the cost went down, and the advent of the commercial typewriter in 1874 made it even faster and easier for telegraph employees, who were senders and receivers, to transcribe telegrams, removing the painstaking process of handwriting. Thus, everyday people gained more access to the first instant-messaging writing technology.

The telegraph seemed more secure than a traditional letter, since a letter could change hands a dozen times before reaching its recipient and easily fall under prying eyes or become lost altogether, but problems with the telegraph's privacy and security appeared immediately. Thomas McMullan notes that virtually anyone could tap into the telegraph line that transmitted Morse code between sender and receiver and "words could be snatched from you long after they'd left your vicinity." Thomas Jepsen points out that not only outside parties but the telegraph company's employees could pry into private messages:

It was recognized that opportunities for "eavesdropping" on the part of the operators sending the messages existed. A customer would typically write out a message on a paper blank, which was then handed to the operator for transmission. At the receiving end, the message would again be copied out onto a message blank as it was decoded. Thus, there existed an opportunity for an operator to obtain information that was only intended for the recipient. (98)

One way that telegraph companies resolved the wire-tapping issue was message encoding, a solution that writing technology developers built on through the ages. As Morse code became familiar to a broader audience, telegraph companies taught their operators to further encode messages with cyphers, preventing the interception of messages by outside parties (McMullan). The further encoding of messages certainly deterred some third-party message interceptors. However, it did nothing to stop the sharing of information via the cable workers who encoded and decoded messages. Several states, such as New York and Pennsylvania, passed laws in the 1850s that prohibited the unauthorized sharing of telegram content by operators, but this did little in practice to prevent the issue (Jepsen 99). Until the advent of private communication sent from one's home, the problem of untrustworthy intermediaries could not effectively be addressed by a technology that required skilled operators in order to function. The

issues of message interception and insecure sending platforms still plague modern writing technologies.

Although telegraph users were concerned with some of the same security issues as modern communicators, Americans of the 1800s were not perturbed by government interference in telegraph communications. Thomas Jepsen notes that, during the Civil War, Americans accepted the government's move to read all telegraph communication to monitor for Confederate discourse (101). Despite the concern over privacy from telegraph operators and wire-tappers, "intercepting telegrams was regarded as acceptable—when it was governments doing the intercepting, in the interests of national security" (Standage 121). The telegram, with its easily tapped wires and later interceptable radio signals, was not an optimal writing technology for keeping messages safe from the prying eyes of government officials. Luckily, the general public did not feel the need to seek that privacy. Other advancements in writing technology through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries focused on citizens' right to privacy from both the general public and the government.

WhatsApp

Over 150 years after Morse's first successful telegram, writing technology developers continue to battle privacy concerns in messaging. To solve some of the age-old issues the telegraph battled, Jan Koum founded WhatsApp Inc. on February 24, 2009 (Olson). WhatsApp was created to be a ground-breaking secure instant messaging app for an age where it seems that anyone can hack into anything. The app's price has fluctuated between \$1 and completely free since it became available for users to download to their mobile phones (Olson); the app is free to download as of March 9, 2020. WhatsApp's user interface appears similar to its competitors like Facebook Messenger and Kik, but its security features set it apart.

A fatal flaw for the telegraph, privacy from all third-party listeners is a major concern for modern consumers, and WhatsApp's

unique features seek to meet that need. Using end-to-end encryption software, the app claims that “your messages and calls are secured, so only you and the person you're communicating with can read or listen to them, and nobody in between, not even WhatsApp” (“WhatsApp Features”). The app also incorporates “forward secrecy,” which ensures that, if a user’s account is compromised, a fresh encryption key will be issued for each new message, preventing a hacker from easily decrypting an entire conversation using one key (Rastogi and Hendler 3). But ensuring this faultless security claim has proven to be difficult for WhatsApp.

Although WhatsApp’s default end-to-end encryption for all messages revolutionized private messaging apps, interference from both malware and well-intentioned security auditors has shown that users’ messages are not hack proof as advertised. In May 2019, a spyware company discovered a flaw in WhatsApp’s encryption system that allowed them to install surveillance software simply by calling WhatsApp users (Leetaru). WhatsApp fixed the flaw in question, but just two months later the cyber security company Symantec discovered that WhatsApp’s default external media storage allows other apps, including sinister malware, to manipulate users’ messages (Ng). WhatsApp issued an update to fix the problem, but its users are justifiably concerned about these security flaws that allowed third-party companies to access users’ messages. Kalev Leetaru points out that this is not an unprecedented security issue; WhatsApp simply cannot be as fool-proof as expensive security systems used by businesses or high-income individuals who are willing and able to pay for top-of-the-line protection, since it was made for everyday consumers:

The reality is that WhatsApp is still a consumer grade application. While any software may have vulnerabilities, the kinds of security reviews and rigorous testing that help ensure the security of military communications systems are simply not investments that companies are willing to make for free

consumer software like WhatsApp....Companies like Facebook need to be more upfront with their users to help them understand that these are still only consumer grade applications. (Lectaru)

Like the telegraph, WhatsApp is one of the most secure messaging platforms of its era, but a consumer-friendly price means compromises in security. WhatsApp is still incredibly popular, amassing over 200 million users in its first five years (Olson). Future writing technology innovators will determine whether WhatsApp keeps up with modern demands or becomes obsolete, just like the telegraph.

Writing Technologies in Comparison

Both the telegram and WhatsApp attempted to address the difficulty in messaging quickly and securely, and they achieved and failed at this task in similar ways, illustrating Baron's principle that writing technologies' chief complaints are age-enduring. In *A Better Pencil*, Baron examines the current technological revolution in light of past failed or obsolete writing technologies. He notes that "there must be an obvious advantage to typing a letter before people are willing to give up writing it by hand. Keyboarding a text must prove itself better than typing it, and economical to boot. And looking information up online should be quicker, and at least as reliable, as looking it up in the library" (xii). The obvious advantage that both the telegraph and WhatsApp offered was security. Telegrams changed hands fewer times than letters, and WhatsApp promised secure encryption to display messages only to senders and receivers. However, each technology failed in similar ways to prevent users' messages from being exposed to third-party readers. Both were vulnerable to eavesdropping by third parties: telegraphs through physical wiretapping and WhatsApp through malware unwittingly downloaded by users. Each solved this issue as well as it could within its material constraints; however, the simple nature of wired

communication is a vulnerable wire, and the nature of electronic communication is vulnerability to attacks from malicious software.

Both writing technologies also attempted to ensure the privacy of their users' messages via encryption, showing that both the problem and the solution are cyclical through ages of writing technology. Even as writing technology platforms become more sophisticated, Baron hypothesizes that users tend to explore ways to recreate old technologies using new methods (xii). If every instant messaging platform is simply a remix of an older writing technology, it follows that the same solution would be attempted for the same problem.

Despite our impression that WhatsApp is an inherently more secure writing technology than the telegraph, critics could still argue for the superiority of each technology within its time period. In Baron's words, "computers and the internet are neither the best developments in the history of writing nor the worst. They are simply the latest in a series of innovations in how we do things with words" (xv). Without studying both modern and early innovations in instant messaging, we cannot truly understand the indelible theme of writing technologies—they will never be as secure as we wish. Every innovation, from the latest iPhone to the newest Instagram update, will deliver compelling bells and whistles to users but own fundamentally similar flaws in security to its previous versions. However, this unending cycle should not be seen as a hopeless descriptor; instead, it is a call to become more educated consumers who choose to push for innovation rather than remaining complacently confident in the security of whatever seems new and shiny. We will never reach perfection, but we should never stop trying to shrink the gap between the level of security we have and the level we want to achieve. The only way to truly understand the security issues we have, and the ways we can strive to repair them, is to look to the problems and solutions of the past.

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CHINESE CHARACTER SIMPLIFICATION THROUGH THE LENS OF CORPUS PLANNING

by Isabel Eliassen

The simplification of Chinese characters undertaken during Mao Zedong's administration of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was one of the most impactful corpus planning decisions undertaken in the last century. Although Chinese already had a functional writing system composed of thousands of characters, Mao implemented a mass reform of Chinese orthography in order to improve literacy, communication, and administrative efficiency (Chow, 2009). However, not all Chinese language users accepted this system, resulting in two systems of writing—traditional characters are used in Taiwan and Hong Kong, while simplified characters are used in China, Singapore, and Malaysia (Chow, 2009). In addition to Chinese speakers in those countries, Mao's decision has also affected Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) students, who must now manage both systems. The two systems of characters remain a politicized and controversial subject to this day, as those who use traditional characters often claim their characters are the more beautiful, original form of the script. However, examining the process of simplification through the lens of corpus planning reveals that many of the opposing arguments stem from political bias and lack historical accuracy.

The widespread script simplification that occurred under Mao was actually not the first attempt to regulate written Chinese. In

handwritten Chinese, especially in calligraphy and cursive forms of the language, omission or combination of strokes may occur naturally (Wang, 2009). Many governments also attempted to regulate changes to Chinese orthography. Emperor Xuan of the Qin Dynasty tried to standardize some characters and was successful in a few cases but not all (Bokset, 2006). There was another attempt at language standardization during the Han dynasty, but little record of it remains (Bokset, 2006). While still ruling Mainland China, the government of the Republic of China (ROC), now governing Taiwan, designed a character simplification policy with the intention of improving literacy, but dissent from traditionalists within the government prevented the implementation of the reforms (Zhao, 2005). In contrast with failure of the ROC, the PRC successfully began using the new characters before it had even taken complete control of China, and by 1956, the PRC had published its first official list of adapted forms (Zhao, 2005).

The simplification of Chinese characters that happened in 1956 is a specific form of corpus planning called regraphization. Compared to alphabetic or syllabic writing systems such as English with its 26 letters, China's pictographic writing system presents a considerable challenge to literacy, as people may need to learn 2,000-8,000 different characters in order to read (Real Chinese, 2014). Furthermore, alphabetic and syllabic systems generally indicate pronunciation, while China's pictographic system does not. To aid literacy, Mao wanted to reduce the complexity of the most common characters, making them easier to both read and write. As the writing system underwent significant changes though a written form already existed, regraphization, or the "replacement or reform of an existing writing system," is the appropriate type of corpus planning through which to examine this change (Cooper, 1989).

Bokset (2006) describes the eight sources from which the new characters were drawn. Among these, the primary techniques for adjusting characters included using more basic forms that existed in

other styles of writing, such as ancient, cursive, and customary scripts. Therefore, many of the seemingly new characters actually came from ancient forms of writing and can be seen in texts written a thousand or more years ago (Wang, 2009). In fact, when China's Ministry of Education set out to publish lists of official characters, they intentionally avoided creating new forms, staying as close to older and original forms as possible while still making the characters easier to write and recognize (Bosket, 2006). Only a few years after the PRC was founded and began administering all of China, its Ministry of Education had published a list of 2,200 new characters, lowering the average number of strokes in a character from eighteen to ten (Zhao, 2005). Some characters were assigned simplified cursive forms intended to speed handwriting but not allowed in printed materials, though this concept was abandoned in a later revision (Bokset, 2006). Specified forms for handwriting would have meant less time spent writing, but this policy proved too complex to implement easily, as people already had to contend with learning 2,200 new forms. There were also attempts to create an alphabetic system to replace characters, but these efforts failed, likely because this change was too radical for widespread acceptance (Bokset, 2006). Even so, the orthographic reform required government officials, teachers, students, and others whose professions mandated literacy to learn 2,200 new characters, and while some of those characters resembled their traditional forms strongly, others bore little resemblance to their prior forms.

In addition to regraphization, the simplification of Chinese characters demonstrates another aspect of corpus planning: standardization. In this case, the standardization was focused on the written form of the language. As Cooper (1989) points out, it is much easier to standardize written forms of language than spoken forms, and Chinese is a prime example of this, as Chinese is actually a family of languages, most of which are not mutually intelligible (Zhao, 2005). This means that even today, not everyone in China can communicate through spoken word, but in general, those who

are literate can communicate through writing. For instance, within the four languages in the Northern Speech sub-group of the Chinese language, there is little to no mutual intelligibility between the spoken varieties, so a shared writing system is a better medium for communication (Zhao, 2005). Due to the variety of local languages, the government needed a universal system in order to effectively communicate with everyone in the country, and changing the orthography was considerably more feasible than changing speech. This was for two reasons: firstly, the written form of the language varied much less than the spoken form; secondly, only about 20% of people could read and write, whereas nearly the whole country knew how to speak at least one variety of the language (Plafker, 2001). The low literacy rate meant many people were not accustomed to the traditional form of the language in the first place, so they would not need to unlearn the old system, nor were they as invested in the old system as the literate. This helped smooth the transition from the traditional system to the modern one.

To accomplish this standardization, officials published a list of characters with multiple forms and specified which form would be kept as the standard and which variants of the character should be eliminated (Zhao, 2005). Mao felt the elimination of excess characters was another way to decrease the complexity of Chinese writing and help improve literacy (Bokset, 2006). Standardization is particularly helpful when local communities become more connected with each other, which was the case in China at this time; the PRC had only recently been established, and national coordination was still developing. Standardized communication across the country enabled the new government to effectively coordinate provinces and maintain control of its citizens so as to avoid the appearance of weakness. This standardization was not entirely successful, as there are still a number of regional characters used in China today that are not recognized outside the region of origin (Bokset, 2006). Regional variation, however, exists in all

languages, so this should not be considered a policy failure. Overall, standardizing the Chinese writing system meant that people physically distant from each other—government authorities in particular—could communicate more efficiently and avoid misunderstandings, improving the spread of information around the country.

Although Cooper (1989) points out that the technical aspects of corpus planning decisions are often less important than the social ones, in the case of characters, the line between the two is less clear. Because Chinese is pictographic, each character has a separate meaning and history, and many of the characters can be traced back thousands of years. While alphabetic and syllabic writing systems can also have rich histories, the meanings of words in such languages are not usually related to their written forms. However, Chinese characters can look similar to the thing they represent (or did in more ancient forms of the character), and many have sub-parts called radicals which indicate meaning as well. Thus, the character may indeed hint at its own meaning, unlike in alphabetic and syllabic systems. Because the grapheme and the meaning are related in Chinese, and because Chinese people are quite aware of the history and technical components of writing characters, the technical considerations have also become social considerations to some extent in this situation, making it a rather unusual case.

Due to the close ties between areas still using traditional characters and areas that use the new characters like China, Malaysia, and Singapore, it is often necessary for educated people to be fluent in both systems (Chow, 2009). While learning both systems is not challenging, it is interesting to note that for many professionals, the introduction of simplified characters achieved the opposite of its intention—it makes communication more complex, not more straightforward, because they must know two systems now. Aside from the educational impacts on CFL students, who must also learn both systems, the PRC's orthography reform has had significant

influence in the political realm as well. As with all policy decisions, character simplification had several unforeseen consequences that language planners at the time would likely have been unable to predict; fortunately, many of these were positive. For instance, recent brain scans have found that the ability to read can also affect a person's mental organization, even if literacy is not acquired until adulthood (Yang & Wang, 2018). Therefore, the PRC's literacy-related policies were likely very important to the mental development of many PRC citizens. Also, simplified characters are much easier for computers to read, making this change very important for computerized processing of the Chinese language (Zhao, 2005).

But perhaps the most interesting unintended consequence of this policy is the social tension between the societies still using traditional characters (especially Taiwan and Hong Kong) and those who have switched to the new system. One of the most commonly cited arguments against simplified characters is that they lack the historical and cultural background of traditional characters. However, after delving more deeply into the background of simplified characters, it is evident that these characters do in fact have a rich history. Analyzing this situation makes it evident that language is not merely a medium of communication; rather, language, unsurprisingly, also relates to identity and politics. In this case, Hong Kong and Taiwan, which have tensions with China, are using language as a way to differentiate themselves from China and claim superiority. Their beliefs of linguistic superiority come from assumptions that traditional characters are the true, original form of Chinese. However, the regraphization of Chinese characters also used historical forms, so Taiwan and Hong Kong's claims are not supported by evidence. Despite this, they continue in their opposition of the new system, using anti-PRC sentiment in Taiwan and Hong Kong to gain support and illustrating that political bias can affect people's perceptions of language. Language is closely intertwined with identity and therefore is an excellent tool for

political manipulation, but scholars can help combat this by appraising claims about language for accuracy to illuminate whether a concern is, at its core, linguistic or political.

¹ This does not include the languages of the non-Han ethnicities of China. Ethnic minorities represent 8% of China's population, and many have their own languages, of which very few are closely related to Mandarin (Zhao, 2005).

² 70% of Han Chinese fall into this language group (Zhao, 2005).

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“...AND YET YOU’VE DONE THE MOST FOR US.”:

THE REALITIES OF AGING IN *TOKYO STORY*

by *Cameron Fontes*

Her flat is modest, the building it’s in unremarkable and time-worn, even dingy, but still it is more welcoming and familiar than the homes of her dead husband’s siblings. Even as a widowed daughter-in-law, Noriko, played by Ozu regular Setsuko Hara, provides more support and companionship for her provincial in-laws than any of their own children, a reality which Ozu explores technically in the scene between Noriko and her mother-in-law, Tomi, as they prepare to sleep at Noriko’s apartment for the night. In this scene in *Tokyo Story*, Yasujiro Ozu utilizes camera placement, costuming, and set decoration specific to the traditions of Japanese culture and to his own aesthetic (as opposed to those of Classical Hollywood Cinema) to convey the inescapable guilt and sense of burden that come to those who care for an aging parent, even those with the best intentions and strongest relationships, like Noriko and Tomi.

This particular scene in Noriko’s apartment comes right after her in-laws return from a resort that their children sent them to so that they could relax (and so that their children wouldn’t have to worry about the couple interrupting their busy, urban lives). Shukishi, the father, decides to go out drinking with an old friend, while Tomi chooses to stay with Noriko for the night, so as not to further burden her son, Koichi, and his family by continuing to stay with them.

Before Ozu shows the inside of Noriko's apartment, he employs one of his transitional "pillow shots" to establish a new location in the hallway just outside her door. The hall is nearly empty and silent, save for one man who fans himself as he walks into his home. Bottles and buckets line various shelves that stand guard at each entryway, and the camera sits at tatami height, level with a tricycle that dominates the lower left corner of the frame (Still 1).



Still 1

In the next shot, Ozu cuts into Noriko's apartment where the camera sits again at tatami height, level with Noriko as she gives Tomi a back massage, their intimacy a direct contrast to the desolate hallway. The camera is placed beside them, so that the viewer watches the two women in profile, both dressed in traditional Japanese kimonos. From the camera's position facing away from the door, the viewer can see that Noriko's apartment is less askew than the hallway outside but not much more well-furnished. A neatly-organized bookshelf sits to one side of a window, and to the other side lies a desk and a chest of drawers. Both Noriko and Tomi's sleeping mats are on the ground, as well as Tomi's overnight bag, part of which is just visible in the bottom right-hand corner of the frame (Still 2).

*Still 2*

As Noriko rises after finishing Tomi's massage in the next shot, the camera jumps the line (but maintains tatami height) so that it is now on the opposite side of the two women, facing the door. From this placement, the cramped nature of Noriko's apartment is even clearer. There is barely room for another shelf to one side of the door, and any remaining boxes or containers are held on an overhead shelf spanning the length of the wall, but still Noriko has made room for her mother-in-law to be as comfortable as possible, sacrificing some of her own already limited space for rest. The camera still views the women in profile but is slightly wider than in the last shot (Still 3).

*Still 3*

After Noriko brings Tomi a tea tray and they decide to go to sleep, the camera more drastically changes position to directly in front of Tomi, so that she is much closer and talking directly to the lens (Still 4).

*Still 4*

While the women reflect on Noriko's relationship with Tomi's son and on Noriko's current status as a widow, Ozu chooses to change position from directly in front of Tomi to a wider shot in which she is slightly angled away from the camera, and in which Noriko's head

is turned so that only her side is visible, not her face, almost as though she's still unwilling to accept the reality of her husband's death (Still 5).



Still 5

Ozu then chooses to place the camera so that it directly faces Noriko as it did Tomi moments before (Still 6).



Still 6

The women's conversation continues for several moments while the camera rotates between these three positions (Tomi's close-up, wide shot on Tomi with Noriko's back to the camera, and Noriko's close-up). Noriko then stands again to turn off the light, and the camera returns to its earlier position facing the door in a wide shot. As Noriko lays in the dark listening to her mother-in-law cry in the last shot of the scene, the camera is placed on the opposite side of her in a close-up, lower than it has been throughout the rest of the sequence (Still 7), level with her in her own silent grief.



Still 7

Noriko and Tomi's simultaneous anguish at the end of the scene is reflected through Ozu's decision to dress both women in kimonos. This decision may not seem noteworthy at first, since several characters, especially women, wear traditional Japanese dress when they are at home in other scenes in the film. However, the characters' costumes take on added significance in this sequence when taken into account with the way the set is decorated. Compared to the other adult children's homes in the film, Noriko's is much smaller and sparser, and yet it is in this setting that Tomi is clearly the most comfortable during her time in Tokyo. Because Ozu chooses to confine Noriko's living space to one room, she is unable to send her

mother-in-law to another part of a house, as her siblings-in-law do. When it is time for Tomi to go to sleep, Noriko lies with her so that they are equal both spatially and figuratively. Noriko's decision to change from her modern work clothes into a kimono now serves as an act of solidarity with Tomi's traditional nature, yet another way that she is willing to give to her mother-in-law despite not having much to give in the first place.

The placement of the camera also reflects Noriko's solidarity with Tomi, most obviously through its nearly constant tatami height. Unlike in previous scenes in which the camera is sometimes placed at a greater height to capture a grandchild in a chair or an adult child going about their day, thereby elevating their youthful status, here the camera is firmly planted so that it is consistently level with Tomi, even when Noriko stands to get tea or turn out the light. The one notable exception to this rule is the last shot in the scene, in which the camera sits almost directly on the floor with Noriko, lowering the viewer into the depths of her guilt as she lies in her inability to fully comfort and care for a nearby, weeping Tomi. The fact that Ozu doesn't choose to lower the camera's height until this dramatic moment makes its effect all the more devastating.

Ozu also uses camera placement to reflect the tension between and within the characters. Normally, Ozu will place the camera in a scene so that the viewer eventually faces all four walls in the room behind characters in close-up as they have a conversation. In this scene, though, the camera only directly faces the wall with the door and the wall with the window. This is, of course, partly because there are only two people speaking and because the room is so small. However, film scholars David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson note that this technique also utilizes "spatial anchors which situate the audience in relation to the constantly shifting backgrounds" (56). Examples of spatial anchors in this scene are the door, which is always behind Noriko, and the window, which is always behind Tomi. In this instance, not only does Ozu's use of spatial anchors

serve to orient the viewer to the room, it also acts as an extension of the emotions contained within. The window behind Tomi foreshadows her impending escape into the afterlife and acts as a portal through which the atmosphere of her rural home wafts into Noriko's urban dwelling, while the door behind Noriko signifies her inability to escape from one day neglecting her elders as her siblings-in-law have, no matter how kind she is able to be in this moment.

While Bordwell and Thompson identify the use of spatial anchors as a specific hallmark of Ozu's work apart from the conventions of Classic Hollywood Cinema, it is nonetheless useful to make direct comparisons between *Tokyo Story* and Leo McCarey's 1937 American drama *Make Way for Tomorrow*, seeing as it was this film that screenwriter Kogo Noda saw and later used as the basis for *Tokyo Story*, which he co-wrote with Ozu. In his film, McCarey utilizes elements of costuming and cinematography from Ozu to illustrate a similar tension between a younger woman and her mother-in-law, albeit within a much tenser relationship dynamic. There is, in fact, a scene in this film that serves a similar dramatic function as the scene between Tomi and Noriko in *Tokyo Story*. This scene in *Make Way* is also between an aging mother and her daughter-in-law, although here the mother, Lucy, is living with her son and daughter-in-law long-term in their upscale New York apartment after her and her husband's home is foreclosed upon by the bank. In this scene, Lucy's daughter-in-law, Anita, who up until this point in the film has been sympathetic and helpful (much like Noriko), is fed up with her mother-in-law's bothersome behavior and begins to lecture her.

Instead of using clothing to illustrate a solidarity between the two women, McCarey instead uses makeup to accentuate their differences. This is especially interesting when considering the fact that Beulah Bondi, the actress who plays Lucy, was only about four years older than Fay Bainter, who plays Anita, at the time of filming. With this knowledge, one can imagine that Bainter (and the majority

of the audience that identifies with her character) sees not only a version of her own mother while pretending to scold a woman close to her age, but also of herself. This extra layer of the scene plays into what film writer Tag Gallagher describes as McCarey's ultimate goal in making the film: "that we share with characters the conflicting emotions that neither they nor we can reconcile. McCarey makes us complicit" ("*Make Way*"). In fact, Anita's actions in this scene are exemplary of the behavior in *Tokyo Story* that Noriko acknowledges she will one day exhibit, even if she doesn't want to. While Ozu gives his viewer a sense of dread of the fate that comes to all children, McCarey explicitly shows how this fate manifests itself even in the kindest of people.

Interestingly, the camerawork in this scene both mimics and departs from Ozu's in *Tokyo Story*. The departure is in McCarey's use of camera angles: the camera is angled up at Anita (Still 8) and down at Lucy (Still 9) during their conversation.



Still 8

*Still 9*

The similarity, though, is a striking one, especially for Hollywood at the time. As Anita and Lucy talk to each other, the camera is almost directly in front of them both, just as in the scene between Noriko and Tomi. Perhaps Ozu decided to adapt *Make Way for Tomorrow* with Noda because it already broke with the conventions of Old Hollywood Cinema in a time when those conventions were thriving. *Make Way* departs from the Hollywood norm not only in its camerawork, but especially in its bleak ending, which McCarey had to fight to keep from being whitewashed by the studio, and which is another shared feature with *Tokyo Story*.

American audiences were no doubt taken aback by Ozu's decidedly non-Western film techniques upon first viewing *Tokyo Story*, and echoes of his formal choices resound in later films by directors such as Terrence Malick and Richard Linklater. While many have attempted to classify Ozu's work as having a distinct and specific Japanese quality, still others suggest that there is a more nuanced and complex interplay in his films between the cultures (film and otherwise) of America and of Japan. Regardless, *Tokyo Story* serves as an achingly beautiful portrait of the strained relationship between aging parents and their children. Its setting is Japanese, but its conflict is universal. Modern filmmakers who choose to explore this conflict in their own work will have no choice but to refer back

to *Tokyo Story*, and one can only hope that their creations not only imitate but deepen Ozu's search for that elusive antidote to the inevitable pain that comes with age, or at least help to numb it.

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NO ONE MOURNS THE WICKED:
HOW THE DESCRIPTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF
GRENDEL'S MOTHER VARY IN DIFFERENT
TRANSLATIONS OF *BEOWULF*

by Jordan Fries

In *Beowulf*, once the title character fatally wounds Grendel, the monster terrorizing Heorot, he incurs the wrath of Grendel's mother, an unnamed woman who attacks Heorot to avenge her son's death. Three things happen within this particular passage: Grendel's mother enters Heorot, kills one of Hrothgar's beloved retainers, and then escapes the castle. Given that many Old English words possess multiple connotations, there are multiple translations of this passage, with each providing their own take on Grendel's mother. In E. Talbot Donaldson's translation, the primary focus of the passage is emphasizing the mother's actions over her motivations, given that there is limited use of descriptors and no mentions of Grendel. This allows the audience to interpret the narrative in black-and-white terms, with Grendel's mother being the villain and Beowulf being the hero. Kevin Crossley-Holland's translation, however, uses more descriptors and emphasizes her association with Grendel, giving the audience an opportunity to understand her motivations for the attack, making her role in the story as more of a vigilante. In each translation of the mother's attack, the audience can see each translator fits her into one of two standard female stereotypes, the

maternal figure or the hysterical villain, with Crossley-Holland showing sympathy for the character and Donaldson demonstrating an overall limited understanding of female rage.

The purpose of Grendel's mother's attack on Heorot was to avenge the death of her son; however, depending on the translation of the passage, her motivations may not always be entirely clear, which affects how she is perceived by the audience. In the opening of the passage, Donaldson begins with the line, "Then she came to Heorot" (23). This is a very straightforward interpretation of Grendel's mother's journey to Heorot, but, compared to Crossley-Holland's translation, the audience gets a very limited perspective of her emotional state. Crossley-Holland begins his passage with "And then Grendel's mother, / mournful and ravenous, resolved to go / on a grievous journey to avenge her son's death" (1276-1278). This interpretation paints a fuller picture of Grendel's mother, using descriptive adjectives, which give the reader an indication of her emotional state. Other words like "grievous," used to describe her journey to Heorot, indicate that, unlike Grendel, she takes no pleasure in attacking the thanes, but is rather taking revenge against the death of her kin, as was customary during the time *Beowulf* was written. Crossley-Holland even mentions Grendel in these opening lines, "to avenge her son's death," directly connecting his death to his mother's motivation. Compared with the limited information given in Donaldson's translation, Crossley-Holland allows the reader to understand what motivated Grendel's mother's violence.

In *Beowulf*, Grendel's mother is not given a detailed physical description, so the reader often needs to rely on key scenes in order to determine how she is perceived by other characters. In the case of these translations, the fear Grendel's mother invokes in the other characters can have two different interpretations: the thanes fear her because she is strong, or the thanes fear her because she is hysterical. In Crossley-Holland's translation of the text, when Grendel's mother begins to attack the thanes, the terror she inspires "equaled

the terror an Amazon inspires as opposed to a man” (1284-1285). Using the word “Amazon” here is an interesting word choice, since Amazons were not necessarily regarded as monsters in ancient mythology, but rather were admired or feared for their strength and battle prowess. Comparing Grendel’s mother’s wrath to that of an Amazon suggests that she demonstrates a great deal of physical strength when attacking Heorot. Despite being portrayed as a villain, her strength is not necessarily described in a negative way, but rather in a way makes her almost comparable to the thanes themselves. However, in Donaldson’s translation, this description is slightly different. The initial onslaught was described as “less terrible by just so much as is the strength of women, the war-terror of a wife, less than an armed man’s” (23). While phrases like “strength” and “war-terror” would suggest Grendel’s mother was a fearsome opponent, the sentence as a whole implies her inferiority to her male adversaries. The attack was even described as “less terrible” because of the lesser “strength of women.” Unlike Crossley-Holland’s translation, Donaldson implies that her being female makes her a lesser warrior compared to the thanes, giving the reader the impression that the attack was more of a tantrum as opposed to a formidable act of revenge. Donaldson even mentions that “she was in haste” (23), illustrating the lack of thought that went into this deadly tirade. This description undercuts Grendel’s mother’s motives for attacking Heorot and makes her actions more about her own emotional instability. Each translation offers different interpretations of the mother’s actions, with Crossley-Holland portraying her strength as powerful, making her seem almost impressive to the audience, and Donaldson portraying her strength as inferior, making her appear more unstable and villainous.

The most interesting scene within the passage is when Grendel’s mother reclaims Grendel’s severed arm and escapes Heorot. In Crossley-Holland’s translation of the text, the scene begins when “she seized her son’s / blood-cruled hand” (1302-1303), again

reinforcing her relationship with Grendel. The use of the word “son” is important throughout his translation because reaffirming her loss humanizes Grendel’s mother to the audience, making her actions appear less egregious. In Donaldson’s translations, Grendel’s arm was described as “the famed hand” (23), the word “famed” insinuating that the hand was precious to Heorot while also metaphorically disembodimenting the hand from Grendel. Giving the hand the appearance of a trophy, rather than a piece of her son, the mother’s actions appear selfish. By stealing back her son’s hand, she takes away the proof of Beowulf’s glory and strength, which is a particularly fitting retaliation in a reputation-based society, further mocking Beowulf and the thanes. Compared to Crossley-Holland, Donaldson’s translation makes Grendel’s mother appear pettier, as her actions to humiliate the thanes seem to be her primary motivation, instead of a necessary act of violence that happened to lessen Beowulf’s glory. This, again, paints Grendel’s mother in a more villainous light, as opposed to Crossley-Holland’s interpretation, which makes her a more sympathetic character.

Though each translation portrays Grendel’s mother as a female stereotype, Crossley-Holland’s translation of *Beowulf* paints the character of Grendel mother as less evil in his use of word choice and descriptors. Emphasizing her grief and the loss of her son makes her more human to the reader, leading the audience to question not only her role as a villain but Beowulf’s role as the hero. Donaldson’s translation paints a more black-and-white picture. His limited use of descriptors and emphasis on the mother’s actions rather than the motivation behind her anger makes her out to be the clear villain. Though the language of *Beowulf* remains the same, the variations of the modern English translations of the narrative can cause the readers to picture “evil” characters in a new light.

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Translator: Kevin Crossley-Holland *Beowulf. The Anglo-Saxon World: An Anthology*. Oxford UP, 1982, pp. 74-154. (1276-1306)

And then Grendel's mother,
 mournful and ravenous, resolved to go
 on a grievous journey to avenge her son's death.
 Thus she reached Heorot; Ring-Danes, snoring,
 were sprawled about the floor. The thanes suffered 1280
 a serious reverse as soon as Grendel's mother
 entered the hall. The terror she caused,
 compared to her son, equaled the terror
 an Amazon inspires as opposed to a man,
 when the ornamented sword, forged on the anvil, 1285
 the razor-sharp blade stained with blood,
 shears through the boar-crested helmets of the enemy.
 Then swords were snatched from benches, blades
 drawn from scabbards, many a broad shield
 was held firmly in the hall; none could don helmet 1290
 or spacious corslet—that horror caught them by surprise.
 The monster wanted to make off for the moors,
 fly for her life, as soon as she was found out.
 Firmly she grasped one of the thanes
 and made for the fens as fast as she could. 1295
 That man whom she murdered even as he slept
 was a brave shield-warrior, a well-known thane,
 most beloved by Hrothgar of all his hall retainers
 between the two seas. Beowulf was not there;
 the noble Geat had been allotted another lodging 1300
 after the giving of treasure earlier that evening.
 Heorot was in uproar; she seized her son's
 blood-crusted hand; anguish once again

had returned to the hall. What kind of bargain
 was that, in which both sides forfeited 1305
 the lives of friends?

Translator: E. Talbot Donaldson *Beowulf*, edited by Joseph F. Tuso, Norton, 1977. (p. 23)

Then she came to Heorot where the Ring-Danes slept throughout the hall. Then change came quickly to the earls there, when Grendel's mother made her way in. The attack was the less terrible by just so much as is the strength of women, the war-terror of a wife, less than an armed man's when a hard blade, forge-hammered, a sword shining with blood, good of its edge, cuts the stout boar on a helmet opposite. Then in the hall was hard-edged sword raised from the seat, many a broad shield lifted firmly in hand: none thought of helmet, of wide mail-shirt, when the terror seized him. She was in haste, would be gone out from there, protect her life after she was discovered. Swiftly she had taken fast hold on one of the nobles, then she went to the fen. He was one of the men between the seas most beloved of Hrothgar in the rank of retainer, a noble shield-warrior whom she destroyed at his rest, a man of great repute. Beowulf was not there, for earlier, after the treasuregiving, another lodging had been appointed for the renowned Geat. Outcry rose in Heorot: she had taken, in its gore, the famed hand. Care was renewed, come again on the dwelling. That was not a good bargain, that on both sides they had to pay with the lives of friends.

CATALYST FOR CHANGE:

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF CREATIVE WRITING ON
THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

by *Julianna Lowe*

Betty Friedan, in her transcendent book, *The Feminine Mystique*, defines feminism as the belief that “women can affect society, as well as be affected by it; that, in the end, a woman, as a man, has the power to choose” (xxv). Feminism is a controversial term, and a plethora of connotations are associated with the word, but when put simply, feminism is the theory that men and women are equal. As society celebrates the rising fourth wave, it must be remembered that the feminist movement first materialized in the late 1800s with “a focus on suffrage” (Rampton). After the first wave ended with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, feminism resurged in the 1960s, the limelight shining on “sexuality and reproductive rights” (Rampton). The second wave led directly to the third wave, which swelled in the 1990s, concentrating on “the notions of ‘universal womanhood,’ body, gender, sexuality and heteronormativity” (Rampton). Currently, the emerging fourth wave is bringing “[i]ssues that were central to the earliest phases of the women’s movement” to the forefront of “national and international attention,” such as sexuality and women’s health (Rampton). Feminism has evolved immensely from its birth, and it is a growth that can be accredited to the remarkable impact that creative writing continues to have on the movement.

Creative writing is defined as “a form of artistic expression [that] draws on the imagination to convey meaning through the use of imagery, narrative, and drama” (“Definition”). Creative writing manifests itself through various mediums, whether it be novels, short stories, poems, or beyond. Often, creative writing is perceived as a method of reflecting present realities, but this merely captures the power of creative writing. At its core, creative writing is “a disruptive force, breaking up our fictions about the world we live in and showing us new possibilities for the future” in a way that other forms of writing cannot (Pettersson). The pinnacle of creative writing’s potential is displayed in Shakespeare’s works, which introduced around 1,700 words to the English language, forever changing conversation, and pioneered a “frankness about sexuality” that opened the human mind (“How Shakespeare” 54). Creative writing welcomes all possibilities and exists in all realms of imagination—something that is sometimes restricted in non-fiction writing. In this way, creative writing enacts change, encourages the breaking of boundaries, and is the driving force behind social movements.

Behind every movement, there is a catalyst that supplies the cause with resilience and enthusiasm. For feminism, creative writing is that catalyst that reflects the spirit of the times, making it possible for feminist thought to develop and move forward. Forms of creative writing act as a vehicle for feminism to break boundaries and challenge its own agenda. Short stories like Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” allow for women to reflect on the systemic sexism within which society traps them. Sylvia Plath, with the publication of her novel *The Bell Jar*, diversifies the perception of living autonomously as a woman. Recently, collections of poetry like Rupi Kaur’s *Milk and Honey* are contributing to a cultural push to accept women as naturally equal to men. These three texts—from short story to novel to poetry—exhibit the variety of creative writing, and they aid in establishing different dynamics of the feminist

movement as it has moved through history. Creative writing allows for authors to imagine new possibilities, push for new societal norms, and create hope within readers, whereas non-creative writing often only reflects or embraces the sorrowful realities. For feminists, creative writing is a liberating gateway from the author's ideology to words on a page that drive societal change.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, one of the first creative writers to put feminist ideals on paper, published "The Yellow Wallpaper" in 1892. Although it was not "regarded as a classic in feminist literature" until well past its publication date, the short story has come to be "recognized as an early feminist indictment of Victorian patriarchy" ("Feminist"). In her work, Gilman depicts the introspective thoughts of a young woman struggling with her mental health as she is forced to waste away inside an unfamiliar house. The narrator describes her husband as "a physician of high standing" who persuades her family and friends that "really nothing [is] the matter with [her] but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency" (Gilman 308). Gilman creates this image of the narrator being silenced by her husband to demonstrate the backward culture that preaches a woman's inability to speak for herself. Not only does the narrator's husband assume control over her mental state, but her brother "says the same thing" (308). Gilman allows for the men in the young woman's life to render her powerless, putting a spotlight on the masculine tendency to rob women of the ability to use their voices. Although what the men claim about her mental condition is false, the narrator is unable to break away from their oppression, reflecting a harsh reality of womanhood.

In this way, Gilman's story mirrors feminism's adversity to combat oppression, "prove that women [are] human," and establish that women are not "incapable of a voice in her own existence" (Friedan 82). The young woman in Gilman's narrative reflects these ideas, conceding that her husband is suppressing her creativity, asking herself, "what is one to do?" (308). Although she understands

her true mental state, she also understands that her gender inherently robs her of the right to voice her truth. The inability of women to speak at the caliber that men do is an issue that has remained at the forefront of feminism for decades, something that Gilman reflects and even challenges within her sphere of creative writing. Her pieces “can be called cultural work, can enact social changes, can function as social action,” which is exemplary of creative writing’s impact on feminism (Fisher). Feminism moved from suffrage in the first wave to reproductive rights in the third wave, but Gilman’s demonstration of the invalidity of women’s words compared to men’s words is a reality that still exists.

Gilman illustrates the necessity of combating this challenge with feminism by entertaining the delusions of her narrator. As the narrator spends more time in the house, she notices “a woman stooping down and creeping about” behind the wallpaper, “as if she wanted to get out” (314). The narrator’s creativity continues to be silenced by the men, allowing for Gilman to push her further into obsession with the woman behind the wallpaper. The narrator theorizes about the woman, eventually concluding that the wallpaper “becomes bars...and the woman behind it is as plain as can be” (315). The more attention that the narrator gives to the woman underneath the wallpaper, the more she realizes that “she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so” (317). At the end of the story, the narrator says, “I’ve got out at last,” insinuating that the narrator was the woman trapped behind the wallpaper (320). Gilman creates this image of the wallpaper—bars, as the narrator sees them—as a symbol to the restriction that the young woman feels being stuck in the house, silenced by her husband and brother. The narrator imagines herself as a woman who creeps behind these bars, reflecting her feeling of being trapped in the house—perhaps because she was “absolutely forbidden” to write (308).

This oppression is not specific to the narrator in Gilman's story; it is applicable to all women. As written in *The Feminine Mystique*, there is a "voice within women that says: 'I want something more than my husband and my children and my home'" (Friedan 22). The feminist movement is fueled by the idea of women leading lives that are of value to themselves, not just to their husbands or children. It is built on the idea that women can and should belong to themselves or else they will be driven mad, which is what Gilman's narrator discovers in the end as she breaks free from the wallpaper.

Feminist forms of creative writing are often written this way, with a female narrator striving to live an autonomous life in a society that orders her to be contained to the private sphere, a theme that is exemplified in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*. Originally published in 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas, *The Bell Jar* has spent the last five decades or so evolving into "a cult favorite, a classroom staple, and a source of inspiration and solace for thousands of young people" (Temple). The novel follows young Esther Greenwood's descent into a depression that leads to her suicide attempt, followed by her journey to recovery. Plath's authorization of Esther's struggles encompasses the elements that build the feminist agenda. Since the movement began, feminists have "advocated for the dignity, intelligence, and basic human potential of the female sex," all of which are absent from Esther's life, sending her deeper into despair (Rampton).

The heaviest of Esther's burdens are outlined by second-wave leader Betty Friedan, who states in *The Feminine Mystique* that society has decided "a woman's place is in the home," "anatomy was her destiny," and "a woman could only exist by pleasing man" (82-83). These three expectations for women—to marry, bear children, and become a homemaker—are the root of Plath's creative rebellion against the patriarchy. Plath's character Esther deals with the internal conflict of "never want[ing] to get married" because she has no desire "to be the place an arrow shoots off from" (Plath 83). She

yearns for “change and excitement,” which would be the opposite of “getting up at seven and cooking him eggs and bacon and toast and coffee and dawdling about in my nightgown and curlers” (83-84). While Esther addresses the fact that she is expected to marry a man, have his children, and keep house, none of those things have a place in her heart. Although a product of Plath’s fabrication, Esther represents all women who struggle to exist within the boundaries of a man’s world.

Because Plath creates a character that is devastatingly impacted by the restraints society places upon her, the novel reflects and amplifies the imperative lessons of the feminist movements. Almost in the same way that feminists “knew that [they] did not want to be like [their] mothers,” *The Bell Jar* motivates women to escape the unhappiness that results from feminine stereotypes (Friedan 71). Society’s impending obligation for a woman to belong to a man and provide him with children is what forces Esther deeper into depression, which eventually leads to her suicide attempt. The more Esther tries to become the woman society expects her to be, the more she loses herself, even to the point that she “couldn’t see the point of getting up” because she “had nothing to look forward to” (Plath 117). Esther’s deterioration highlights the reality of the limits to female existence—strengthening the motivation within feminists to fight for an equal society for men and women.

With a focus on creating this equal society and pushing back against societal norms that “[reduce] women to objects of beauty dominated by a patriarchy that [seeks] to keep them in the home or in dull, low-paying jobs,” feminism is heavily impacted by *The Bell Jar*’s publication (Rampton). The inspiration for the second wave is attributed to the societal flaws Plath points out before Esther attempts suicide, but it also comes from the autonomous mentality that Esther adopts after she survives her suicide attempt. Esther, during her recovery, comments that she is “climbing to freedom, freedom from fear, freedom from marrying the wrong person,” all

because she is able to come to an important realization: “I was my own woman” (Plath 223). Esther’s ability to recognize her independence—to break away from oppressive expectations—allows her to find happiness, an impactful ingredient of *The Bell Jar*. Plath’s feminist ideals that illustrate her character’s ascent to sovereignty inspires women to live that life for themselves, as well as pass those ideas to future generations of women. As cited in Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, “the daughters who grew up with the rights the feminists had won could not go back to that old image of genteel nothingness...they were finally free to be what they chose to be,” a fact that measures the impact that creative writing pieces like *The Bell Jar* have on the feminist movement (107-108).

The Bell Jar, although essential to the feminist ideal of autonomy, is not the only source of creative writing that is essential in furthering the reimagination of the feminist agenda. As the third wave fades out and the fourth wave of feminism rises today, the movement “no longer just refers to the struggles of women; it is a clarion call for gender equity,” a dynamic growth that is reflected in recent adaptations of creative writing (Rampton). On the cusp of the third and fourth wave, feminism is becoming a movement that advocates for the complete equality of all genders—a transformation that can be attributed to the changes that creative writing has simultaneously undergone. The constant expansion of literature has given rise to new authors like Rupi Kaur, who is at the forefront of the evolution of creative writing with her poetry collection *Milk and Honey*, which sold over 2.5 million copies worldwide and was on the New York Times Best-Seller List for 77 weeks (Forbes).

Kaur’s collection of uniquely-structured poems reflects the attributions of current feminism, including the celebration of individualism and the argument “that gender and sexuality are fluid categories” (Ford 27). Along with this, the feminist movement also promotes that women do whatever they desire with their bodies. This idea has roots in the beginning of feminism, but the forceful

push for the appreciation of a woman's natural body is found in creative writing pieces like Kaur's poem "You Only Belong to Yourself." In this six-line poem, Kaur instills a desire to let women make their own decisions about their bodies. She writes, "removing all the hair off your body is okay," juxtaposing that by saying, "just as much as keeping all the hair on your body is okay" (Kaur 176). For about a century now, women have been expected to remove the hair from their legs and underarms to exemplify good hygiene. Although men also naturally grow hair in these regions, society does not expect a man to practice such disciplined hair removal. Kaur's poem points out this flaw in society and eloquently writes it into the public eye, making this inequality a central fighting point for feminists.

Staying true to feminism's core beliefs, Kaur also writes about self-identity as a woman. Feminists believe that "culture does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfill their potentialities as human beings," meaning that women do not have the capability to assume independence in society (Friedan 77). In agreement, Kaur published a poem that reads, "just being a woman calling myself a woman makes me utterly whole and complete" (169). Kaur expresses that women can just be women, and that can be enough. She defines women as "unafraid...of breaking," "soft," and "human," demanding that society see these traits as admirable (Kaur 169). She challenges the misogynistic preconceptions that "women's difference from men renders them inherently inferior" by authoring that women should be appreciated for their womanhood, even if they are stereotypically feminine (Ford 17). She uses her creative inclination to encourage the acceptance of women for all that they are, as opposed to rejecting women for all that they are not.

Closely following more ideas of the developing fourth wave of feminism, Kaur depicts the celebration of "individualism over artificial categories of identity, gender, and sexuality" (Ford 27).

While there is an expectation for women to get married, Kaur offers the possibility that there is more to a woman's life than marrying a man. She writes that her last name, which has not been taken from a man, "makes [her] a free woman" and "removes the shackles," reminding her that women are "equal to any man even though the state of this world screams" that women are less than men (Kaur 185). Her poetry claims that a woman can happily own herself, an ideology that the feminist movement has begun to work into society. With this idea of coverture, an ideology that "define[s] married couples as one entity represented in civil society by the husband" and restricts women from existing autonomously, feminists face the challenge of establishing women as individuals (Ford 15). Kaur's poetry showcases the advocacy of feminist writers to break this tie that binds women to men, an exemplary case of the impact of creative writing on the women's movement.

Creative writing has a way of "making us think about ourselves and the social and natural world in which we live, or entertaining us, or fascinating us with new takes on familiar matters and with its inventive way of approaching reality, or other such things" ("Definition"). While English is a tool for reflecting on reality, the power of novels, short stories, and poems utilize the true magic of the language. Through creative writing, boundaries are pushed, and traditions are challenged. Without the innovative ideas of novelists and poets, feminism would have never evolved into the advocacy that it is today. Just as Gilman's narrator is able to escape from the wallpaper, Esther Greenwood is able to recognize her self-worth, and Kaur is able to accept her natural beauty, creative writers are able to promote the individuality of women. As Friedan finishes *The Feminine Mystique*, she writes, "when women do not need to live through their husbands and children...they can finally see each other as they are" (456). As creative writing continues to expand the fundamentals of feminism, both men and women will come to realize that a woman can live a life of her own—and her life can be a happy one.

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THE POLITICAL GUN DEBATE:
TARGETING PRESUPPOSITIONS IN CONTRASTING
POLITICAL CARTOONS

by Sarah Lyons

In light of the American “gun debate,” many political cartoonists have catered their illustrations towards an audience with polarized presuppositions; however, this is not always the case. Mike Luckovich’s “Goodbye” political cartoon was introduced through Twitter in February 2018, in response to a shooting at Majorcy Stoneman Douglas High School on Valentine’s Day (Williams). The shooting in Florida took the lives of seventeen people (Grinberg), and added to the political conversation between “gun rights” and “gun control.” Adam Zyglis’ “Endless Cycle” appeals to a more specific audience than Luckovich’s. Released in May 2019 by the *Buffalo News* in New York, his political cartoon comments on the frequent mass shootings recently occurring across the states. While both Mike Luckovich’s “Goodbye” and Adam Zyglis’ “Endless Cycle” cartoons evoke sympathy in a potentially wide audience through an emotional female figure, Zyglis narrows his text’s appeal by implementing negative caricatures of gun advocates.

The contrast between these two cartoons begins with the setting. “Goodbye” appears to be in a household shared by a mother and son, and “Endless Cycle” only has a shaded grey background. Luckovich’s piece focuses on the daily scene of a mother saying goodbye to her son as he exits the door to head to school for the



Figure 1. Luckovich's "Goodbye"



Figure 2. Zylgis' "Endless Cycle"

day. She stands firmly, waving her hands and saying, "You're the best, kindest son ever. Always remember I love you" (Luckovich), with a tear rolling down her face. The male character's body is facing towards the door, but he is looking back at his mother to say, "Mom, I'm just going to school" (Luckovich). Zylgis' piece has three characters: a male titled "fanatics," a male titled "Congress," and a female embracing a tombstone that says, "More gun victims" (Zylgis). The fanatics character cradles a gun, the congressman is

holding a bag labelled “NRA \$\$\$,” and the woman is weeping (Zyglis). The male characters—who have similar facial expressions with their eyes closed and arms encircling the gun and money—are turned to the left and the female to the right.

One of the largest contrasts between the two political cartoons is how the issue is framed based on the exigence. The overarching issue being addressed in “Goodbye” is that parents do not feel like their children are safe when going to school—which should be a safe place for growing children to learn and gain knowledge. One strategy Luckovich uses is having the scene look very ordinary, allowing the audience to relate to the characters because they are likely to have experienced the same situation with their children. The mother is wearing pink slippers with a black cardigan, and the son is wearing a solid orange shirt with red sneakers. Both outfits could be, and are, worn by people every day. His dialogue shows the mother’s stress about sending her son off. Her commentary, saying, “You’re the best, kindest son ever. Always remember, I love you” (Luckovich) appears as a farewell to life, as if she has no control or choice over what happens to him following this moment. The audience, through relatability and sympathy, is able to recognize their own fears reflected in the characters’ situation. Because many viewers have children who attend school and could, unfortunately, be in a mass shooting, her perspective connects with a broader audience. The most effective strategy Luckovich utilizes is avoiding presuppositions that alienate “gun control” and “gun rights” readers. Instead, his political cartoon enters the political debate by commenting on the exigence that children are not safe whenever they go to school every day, and the presumption of American people experiencing hysteria, fear, and lack of control.

As “Goodbye” focuses on the fear-from-home exigence to the everyday American, “Endless Cycle” argues that the more defined exigence is how Congress is doing nothing to address the issue,

which ultimately falls towards a left-winged presupposition. The fanatic character and congressman have the same body position of being on their knees and facing left, and they also have very similar facial expressions with the items they are holding. These similarities establish an indirect parallel between the congressman and the fanatic, noting that they both value the items they are in possession of—the gun and money—more than the woman and situation they are facing away from. This is a presupposition the “gun control” side argues with, and Zyglis uses it to his advantage. Zyglis’ goal is to make the audience react with anger and frustration towards the Republican party for their interest in economic benefit instead of the lives of shooting victims and the dangerous situation at hand. The congressman’s obsession with the bag in his hand and his hand positioning is very similar to the fanatics with his weapon, which connects to the liberal presupposition that the people who side with “gun rights” are extremist, irrational, and obsessive over the issue. For gun owners, this may appear as a personal attack. Many audience members may be gun owners who hunt with a permit for meat seasonally, or perhaps they own weapons because it brings comfort; regardless, many gun owners are not “fanatics” who obsess over the weapons they own. This political cartoon may offend individuals as it feeds off negative cultural stereotypes of gun owners.

Additionally, both have a similar female character that appeals across all types of audiences. The female character in “Goodbye” is anxious about the potential loss of her son, although it has not occurred. The other female character in “Endless Cycle” is crying for a similar reason, in that she has lost someone and is grieving. This similarity is what interweaves both of the political cartoons. One female falls over a tombstone with tears falling from her face; another stands helplessly next to her son with tears rolling off her cheek. Both cartoons draw on the “disheartened mother or friend,” perhaps contributing to a common denominator of emotions of American people: disheartened and ignored. This character establishes a newer and more complex relatability between the

characters and audience. Even if the individual audience member is not a parent, at some point it is likely they have been a daughter, son, or sibling. This female character dives into the vulnerability of the domestic household cleverly, creating a larger opportunity for the rhetor to be heard.

Mike Luckovich's "Goodbye" and Adam Zyglis' "Endless Cycle" have many differences, including exigences, positions on presuppositions, and character body language; however, there are some commonalities between the pieces. Even though one cartoon is far more polarizing than the other, the female characters introduce and share the vulnerability, sensitivity, and humanness of the mass shootings and gun control topic. Zyglis and Luckovich utilize these common emotions to make a broader statement about the gun debate, seeking control, and initiating change. If political cartoons appeal to these common emotions about mass shooting situations and avoid caricatures based on reductive and polarizing stereotypes, the ability to evoke audience reaction and response will broaden and open more opportunities to see change in our society.

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VOLTAIRE & VIRTUE

by Dillon Miller

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

— George Herbert, “Virtue”

The question of virtue needs no introduction, yet it is a lofty goal that people have struggled to obtain through time immemorial. How does one become virtuous? People may ponder this question for millennia to come, but there are those thinkers who offer tangible solutions. The philosopher and satirist Voltaire is among these thinkers. Through satire, Voltaire paints a picture of a world ridden with philosophy and endless musings, and it is a world where absurdity abounds and virtue is all but ephemeral. In his novel *Candide*, Voltaire argues that philosophical speculation is not only useless, but that it also causes destruction and goes against the very definition of virtue. Through the behavior of Candide and Pangloss, Voltaire shows that action, not speculation, is required in the cultivation of virtue.

Voltaire, an Enlightenment thinker, would have been familiar with the classical definition of virtue which stems from Aristotle. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle wrote: “Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean

relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it" (Aristotle). In other words, virtue is a habit that man must cultivate. It does not arise from nature but rather is formed by conscious effort on the part of the person striving for it. Virtue, then, is an active condition of being. One must actively and purposefully strive for virtue as an attainable goal, not as a passive state of mind. Voltaire would take this definition, expound upon it for his own purposes, and eventually illustrate it in *Candide*.

In his own writings, Voltaire revised the Aristotelean idea of virtue to encompass the active condition of virtue in accordance with benefitting mankind. He writes in his *Philosophical Dictionary*: "A recluse will be sober, pious; he will be clad in hair-cloth; he will be a saint: but I shall not call him virtuous until he has done some act of virtue by which other men have profited" ("Virtue"). This development is an important distinction from Aristotle that is crucial to analyzing the character of Pangloss in *Candide*. According to Aristotle, "virtue ultimately means man exercising the faculty that makes him a good, purposeful man, which is the practice of good reason, reason being the faculty unique to mankind." Voltaire takes the individual nature of Aristotelean virtue and broadens it to apply to social relations. Benefitting mankind now becomes paramount to being a virtuous person; one can no longer live in pious solitude, causing no harm to the world. According to Voltaire, one is virtuous when one actively pursues the cultivation of habits and behaviors that benefit others and, ultimately, mankind and society.

In *Candide*, Pangloss stands in opposition to this modified definition of classical virtue by passively observing the chaos around him while prohibiting positive intervention from other characters. The most potent example of this assertion appears when James, the Anabaptist, falls into Lisbon harbor. Voltaire writes of Candide's reaction: "He wanted to throw himself into the sea after the Anabaptist, but the great philosopher, Pangloss, stopped him by

proving that Lisbon harbour was made on purpose for this Anabaptist to drown there” (33). Pangloss violates the primary tenets of both Aristotelean virtue and Voltaire’s idea of virtue here. To begin with, Pangloss does not take action upon his reasoning. He definitely reasons his position, but he does nothing to act upon it, disregarding the active condition of classical virtue. Furthermore, he stops Candide from taking action himself, cutting against the idea of virtue according to Voltaire. If virtue ultimately means benefitting and profiting mankind, then Pangloss actively acts *against* virtue by stopping Candide from saving James from drowning. Voltaire is using Pangloss as an example here of how philosophical speculation without action is not just useless but of how it can be destructive as well.

Shortly after this event in the novel, Voltaire gives another scenario in which Pangloss opposes virtue. When Candide and Pangloss arrive in Lisbon, an earthquake occurs, and Candide ends up trapped underneath some debris. He cries out for help, to which Pangloss answers: “‘This earthquake is nothing new,’ replied Pangloss... ‘The same causes produce the same effects’” (34). Later on the same page, Pangloss ignores the cries of help from Candide to “maintain it’s proved!” (34). Again, Pangloss remains passive here. He does not hesitate in reasoning his stance on the situation, but he fails to act on his reasoning, failing at Aristotle’s version of virtue.; however, unlike when Pangloss prevented Candide from taking action to benefit his fellow man, this time it is Pangloss himself who fails to act. Not only does he not act in accordance with his reasoning, but he fails to act in such a way as to benefit Candide, his fellow man. Once again, Pangloss is used by Voltaire to critique wistful, philosophical speculation. Readers can clearly deduce that Pangloss’ ridiculous reaction to his friend being trapped under rubble while refusing to help in favor of philosophical discourse is intended to be humorous, but underneath the absurdity of the situation lies a scathing critique. Voltaire’s intention with Pangloss is

to ultimately show that philosophical speculation without positive action towards mankind is useless, destructive, and conclusively unethical.

After exposing passive philosophizing for the waste of time that Voltaire believes it is, he ends the novel with a solution, a call to arms, so to speak. Voltaire calls for a return to classical virtue that falls in accordance with his modified Aristotelean definition; he makes the assertion that a fulfilling, virtuous life is one filled with practical work toward the benefit of mankind and society. After the characters decide to try and make life bearable by working on their farm, Voltaire mentions a seemingly inconspicuous factor: “No one refused to work, not even Brother Giroflée, who was a good carpenter, and thus became an honest man” (144). There are two things worth noting here. First, Brother Giroflée is one of the most dissatisfied members of this ragtag group. He was forced into the monastery by his parents, pays for the intimate services of Paquette the prostitute, and openly expresses his state of miserableness. Second, it is not a change of heart that causes Brother Giroflée to become an honest man: it is the becoming of a carpenter. By taking on a role that transforms an activity into something that benefits others, Brother Giroflée becomes an honest man. This fact is a reflection of Voltaire’s idea of virtue, and it goes to show that anyone can become virtuous through the cultivation of proper habits.

Despite this apparent happy ending, Pangloss has to get in a final word about his philosophy. After Pangloss imbibes yet another philosophical proof of optimism, Candide disregards him with the final line of the novel: “‘That’s true enough,’ said Candide; ‘but we must go and work in the garden’” (144). This is the moment in the very last line of the novel where Voltaire presents his final triumph over philosophical musings. Candide, who has been susceptible to Pangloss and his musings the entire novel, finally comes to his senses and realizes that purposeful, active, productive activity is what makes life worth living and virtuous. The return to the garden could also

symbolize the Garden of Eden, further illustrating the return to man's ideal state of virtue, but Voltaire, in an almost prophetic stroke, addresses this notion of symbolism on the second to last page of the novel. Pangloss brings up the Garden of Eden as proof that they must work in the garden. Martin stops Pangloss in his tracks, however, when he says they need to "work without arguing" (144). Voltaire is quite clear that even philosophizing about his philosophy of virtue is missing the point of his argument. In order to truly become a virtuous man must simply work for the betterment of society.

Voltaire is no stranger to the metaphorical bottomless pits of philosophy. Being an Enlightenment thinker himself, he was exposed to a variety of ideas, and he certainly formulated a few of his own. The picture we get through *Candide*, however, is a more down-to-earth Voltaire, a man who promotes the value of hard work and action rather than thought and passivity. It is almost as if Voltaire is exhibiting a degree of self-awareness of the potential mental cage his thoughts can create. *Candide* ultimately demonstrates to the reader that one could be the most logical thinker in the world, but until those thoughts are realized through action and benevolence, they are just that: thoughts. That seemingly unobtainable goal of virtue becomes much more doable through the writings of Voltaire, and if we take his advice, we may find ourselves cultivating our own garden and becoming virtuous.

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SHIFTING THE CONVERSATION:
THE CONFRONTATION OF COLONIAL STEREOTYPES
WITHIN *THINGS FALL APART*:

by McKenzie Morris

If colonial discourse reinforces the motivations for colonialism, and ultimately imperialism, postcolonial writers seek to attack this biased image that the literature of colonial discourse produces. These authors aim to debunk the stereotypical portrayal of native cultures and peoples that are found within archetypal European texts; one such author is Chinua Achebe. In his novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe confronts the stereotypes and prejudices within colonial discourse through his use of and emphasis on language, his utilization of a non-linear structure of writing, and his portrayal of the Igbo culture through the eyes of Okonkwo, specifically in regard to violence.

Language Usage and Emphasis

Achebe highlights the importance of language within anti-colonial conversation through his use of English as the primary language within his work and through his incorporation of words from the Igbo language. Achebe's purpose in writing is to refute colonial ideologies; in order to accomplish his purpose, he must speak to his particular audience. As a result, Achebe specifically chooses to write his novel in English, which is the national language of Nigeria as well as a world language. Achebe is, therefore, opening his realm of

influence and his overall audience to both the colonized and the colonizer. As the national language of Nigeria, English can directly speak to the colonized reader. It is worth noting that English is only considered to be the national language of Nigeria due to the colonization of this country; therefore, Achebe is writing to the postcolonial world, recognizing that English usage in Nigeria is due to the colonizer's impact on language through education. Additionally, since English is considered a world language, Achebe argues that "[t]he price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use" (62-63). Although English is a singular language, it has the ability to be molded and formed into whatever is needed by the author. Although Achebe is writing primarily in English, he makes it fit to the character of his work, the culture that he is portraying, which results in various metaphors, idioms, and overall phrasing to be used in place of the "typical" way of describing or depicting something in native English. In Achebe's case, he manipulates the English language to speak the way he wants it to, which can be seen in the fables and parables that are interlaced throughout the text, such as "[a] toad does not run in the daytime for nothing" (20) and "[a] child cannot pay for its mother's milk" (166). Native English speakers are then forced to reckon with this different form of English created by this African writer. Achebe reinforces that in order for his message, the weight of his African experience, to get across, his would have to be a "new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" (65).

Accordingly, Fanon asserts that "[t]o speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (8). Therefore, when Achebe speaks, he is, in a sense, grasping the Igbo language and carrying its culture, but he is also allowing the English language to carry the weight of the Igbo culture. Some critics of the use of English within African literature and anti-colonial discourse (e.g., Ngugi) may argue that this

use creates a continuum of mental domination of colonized peoples through the push of English literature. Ngugi wa Thiong'o specifically believes that African writers, by writing in English, are inhibiting the expression of their culture because the language of the colonizer is unable to fully represent their culture. However, one could refute this statement by arguing that Achebe is reclaiming the English language as a means for decolonizing the hearts and minds of the colonizer and for speaking to those whose national language is English (e.g. Nigerians). Consequently, Achebe's use of English reinforces his opposition towards colonialism by denying the colonial shadow over the language as a whole and claiming this language as a means of fully representing Nigerian and broadly African culture.

In addition, Achebe weaves specific words from the native Igbo language into his writing. Achebe's addition of Igbo language reveals the value of that culture through the use of their specific language. Ngugi contends that "[l]anguage, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture" (13). Achebe uses the Igbo language to portray the culture of the Igbo people more meaningfully, yet he uses English as a means of communicating to a diverse audience. The particular terms that Achebe chooses to use from the Igbo language (e.g. *isa-ifi*, *ogbanje*, *umunna*) are intentional in that they reinforce the culture of the Igbo people. For instance, Achebe writes, "[Ekwefi] believed deep inside her that Ezinma had come to stay....And this faith had been strengthened when a year or so ago a medicine man had dug up Ezinma's *iji-uwu*" (80). The term *iji-uwu* represents a particular type of stone that creates the connection between a changeling and the spirit world. The incorporation of this Igbo term causes the reader to consider the religious practices and superstitious components of the Igbo culture. It also demonstrates the impact that these cultural features have on the relationships within their society. When the reader comes upon these terms, they are forced to pause and reflect

on their meaning by looking in the glossary, leading to a deeper understanding of the Igbo culture. If the English language were the only language used, the reader would have no reason to take a breath and understand more fully the complexities of the Igbo culture. In addition, the terms Achebe primarily utilizes describe types of people in their society as well as religious, superstitious, and ceremonial aspects of their culture, which brings depth of meaning to these easily overlooked components of their society. Additionally, Ngugi states that language as culture is the “collective memory bank of a people’s experience in history...Culture is a product of the history which it in turn reflects” (15). Therefore, Achebe’s diction is used to carry the Igbo culture by showing the nuance of their terminology. Some terms do not have a direct translation or a simplistic description, so Achebe keeps the integrity of these ideas and aspects of their culture by employing these terms.

Non-Linear Structure of Writing

Within typical Western literature, there is a common order to a story—exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. This linear structure of writing parallels the mindset of the linearity of time as well as progress and social change. However, within *Things Fall Apart*, time and, consequently, progress and social change occur non-linearly; there is a complexity that exists within this work due to its seemingly circular motion. The reader is thus forced to sit with the rhythms of life. This cyclical narrative occurs intentionally to challenge the reader to shift his/her mindset on time and what progress looks like. Although this text moves in a pattern outside of the typical Western narrative, there is still evidence of progress and social change within the Igbo society. One particular instance focuses on a group of men as they recount common customs that previously surrounded the Week of Peace or still occur in neighboring clans. These customs include the following: being dragged across the village until one dies and throwing those who die

during this week into the Evil Forest. After describing these old or neighboring customs, they consider the reasons for change or emphasize the need for change in other clans (Achebe 31-32). The reevaluation and modification of culture emphasizes their ability to change and progress as a society, even if that occurs outside of the linear ideology of the Western world. Childs and Williams suggest the penetrating Western-ness of history that impacts the indigenous narratives of their own history, arguing that “‘Europe’ remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories... There is a peculiar way in which all those other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be called ‘the history of Europe’” (9). Achebe provides a prehistory in a moment of post-colonialism, a different theory of history outside of the European narrative; he accomplishes this through his non-linear structure of writing.

Igbo Culture Through Okonkwo

Western society has a record of both denying the existence of history in colonized places and destroying the cultures that make up that denied history; therefore, an important component of post-colonial work, which Achebe seeks to accomplish, is “the recovery or revaluing of indigenous histories” (Childs and Williams 8). This revaluing does not mean that these histories do not have an innate value. This simply means that, within the mindset of the Western world, there is not a value placement, leading to post-colonial discourse that seeks to reestablish value within those histories. The recognition of history and culture can be done through a stress on language, primarily the preservation of more remote languages, music, and contemporary literature.

Achebe employs the narrative style of free indirect discourse, which is a type of third-person narration that slips in and out of a character’s conscientiousness. Specifically, within *Things Fall Apart*, the thoughts, feelings, and words of Okonkwo are being filtered through the third-person narrator. For instance, one particular scene

follows Okonkwo's thoughts and feelings as he is waking from a restful night's sleep. While the narrator is the one speaking, Okonkwo's feelings, as well as his thoughts, are both humorous and aggravated as he thinks back to his childhood, remarking on the stories his mother told him as a child and saying how "it was as silly as all women's stories" (Achebe 75). Achebe uses this tactic to show the reader that they are, in a way, viewing this society through Okonkwo's eyes as well as through the eyes of the omniscient narrator. This dual-narrative point of view establishes the prominence and importance of Okonkwo as a character.

One primary feature of Okonkwo's characterization that is realized throughout the entirety of the novel is his disposition towards violence. In an attempt to reinforce his manliness and status, Okonkwo represses his emotions and isolates himself, which ultimately perpetuates and increases the extent to which Okonkwo acts out with violent, stubborn, and irrational behaviors. Continuously, Okonkwo's violence is manifested, resulting in a variety of actions from him that lead to his demise. The first signs of his violent tendencies are revealed when he beats his wife, which is typically justified in his society, during the Week of Peace (Achebe 29). This is a disgraceful and criminal action to take during this particular week in their society, so Okonkwo's actions against his society accentuate his violent propensities. These actions continue as Okonkwo, going against the advice of a handful of men in his village, joins a party of men picked to kill Ikemefuna, a young boy given to Okonkwo's clan to maintain peace between clans. Achebe writes, "Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut [Ikemefuna] down. He was afraid of being thought weak" (61). This instance of unnecessary violence can be paralleled with the murder of an English messenger at the conclusion of the novel: "Okonkwo's machete descended twice, and the man's head lay beside his uniformed body" (204). What follows is the climax of Okonkwo's violent tendencies: the violence he inflicts upon himself through suicide. To the District Commissioner, who enters the scene at the

conclusion of the novel, he sees Okonkwo's suicide as evidence of the need for European intervention within African society because of the "savagery" of the "primitive" African people.

Overarchingly, Okonkwo's violence acts as an antithesis to the peacefulness and restrained violence of the Igbo people who actively oppose war and violence at all costs. This system of organized and restrained violence as evidenced in their shift in violent customs mentioned before as well as their price of a life (i.e. Ikemefuna) in order to not go to war opposes the Western perception of the Igbo and more broadly African culture. Achebe uses this juxtaposition between Okonkwo as an embodiment of Western ideas of primitiveness and savagery and the restrained violence within African culture to demonstrate and draw out the false ideologies that exist within the Western narrative. African culture is not primitive culture; Achebe is fighting the "fixed concept of the Negro" (Fanon 23) that exists within colonial discourse.

All in all, Achebe—through the motif of language, his circular structure of writing, and Okonkwo's embodiment of violence in juxtaposition with his culture—provides a full and complete view of the Igbo culture, which ultimately speaks to the greater conversation regarding anti-colonialism. *Things Fall Apart* acts as a prequel to the literature within colonial discourse in order to proactively shift the mindset of the colonizer or the Western world.

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KEATS' NIGHTINGALE AND HARDY'S THRUSH:
BIRDS OF A FEATHER THAT DO NOT FLOCK
TOGETHER

by Carder Venable

Both the Victorian and Modern eras of British literature can be characterized by a loss of faith that the Romantic era proposed, a loss of faith in both in nature and in mankind. The works of each of these respective periods reflect the views and values of each era. Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush" is a Modernist response to the Romantic optimism offered in John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale"; while Hardy's reply offers little expectation of a bright future for the song of the poet, the poem's ending lines suggest "Some blessed Hope" still pervades the darkening dusk of the creative imagination in a changing modern age.

Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" remains as a prototypical Romantic poem, commenting on the role of nature in the poet's life and work. The crux of the poem suggests that the birdsong is nature's poetic language which it sings into the night air, representing the creative imagination of the poet. The poem shows this imagination's importance by encouraging sobriety and awareness with it, to "Not [be] charioted by Bacchus and his pards" (32). According to Keats, to be intellectually awake is to be close to nature and away from the troubling realities of the world; as the poem states, to "Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget / ...The

weariness, the fever, and the fret” (21, 23). Even though the poem at times acquires a somber tone, when taken in its entirety, Keats’ ode embraces the Wordsworthian optimism of the Romantic era of Great Britain, an outlook that provides hope to the future of the poetic voice. In a foremost example of this optimistic viewpoint, Wordsworth, in his poem “Lines Written in Early Spring,” claims his “faith that every flower / Enjoys the air it breathes” (11-12). Keats embraces this poetic doctrine in “Ode to a Nightingale” when he explains that even death cannot frighten him: “I have been half in love with easeful Death /...Now more than ever seems it rich to die, / To cease upon the midnight with no pain /...In such an ecstasy” (52-58). According to Keats, even death should not frighten the poet because of his confidence in the immortality of the poet’s song.

In contrast, Hardy’s “The Darkling Thrush,” written at the turn of the twentieth century, presents a more pessimistic vision of the poetic art. Hardy wrote the poem in 1899 on the brink of a new century and straddling two literary eras. Teetering on the edge of both the Victorian and Modern eras, the poem displays characteristics of the unrest and anxiety that is felt during times of literary and historic transition. Hardy even mentions this turn of the century when he says, “The land’s sharp features seemed to be / The Century’s corpse outleant” (9-10). Hardy sets the poem in the winter of the year, but this stylistic choice also alludes to the symbolic “winter” of the poet’s song, or the creative imagination of the Romantic period.

Understanding the similarities and differences between the nightingale and the thrush aid in determining the symbolic meaning embedded within each author’s choice. When looking at the two species of birds in an anatomic, objective manner, the nightingale is actually a type of thrush native to the Old World (“Nightingale”). Charles May, in an essay on the relationship between “Ode to a Nightingale” and “The Darkling Thrush,” comments on the correlation between the two birds: “The nightingale, of course, is a

species of thrush which has often had symbolic significance for poets because of its strange habit of singing only in darkness” (63). Both species, then, are songbirds in their own right. Because the nightingale is a songbird, Keats uses it as a source of poetic inspiration from nature, analogous to the lyre and Eolian Harp. As to why the nightingale and not another one of the hundreds of varieties of songbirds, the choice seems to be made by circumstance and of its ability to sing at nighttime, a time usually associated with silence. When describing Keats’ reasoning behind choosing the nightingale, Keats’ friend Charles Brown claims, “In the spring of 1819 a nightingale had built her nest near my house. Keats felt tranquil and continual joy in her song” (Greenblatt 927). The significance of the nightingale, therefore, is not in its specific species but in its ability to make music. It is this euphonious talent upon which Keats expands his poetic discourse.

With this in mind, Hardy is undoubtedly alluding to Keats’ Romantic-era poem regarding the same—or at least very similar—bird. Hardy uses the term “thrush” instead of “nightingale” to clearly define the disjunction between his time period and the Romantics that came before him, for the nightingale is closely associated with the Romantic movement. Shelley, in his “A Defense of Poetry,” comments on this close connection the Romantic poet has to the mystical nightingale, claiming, “A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds” (861). By rejecting the name “nightingale,” Hardy’s poem thereby rejects the presence of the Romantic movement in the Modern era of literature. Hardy instead opts for a more generic—and quite frankly bland—term for the bird, the “thrush.” The poem’s use of the word “darkling” in its title also alludes to Keats’ previous work. In “Ode to a Nightingale,” the speaker, to signify what time of day the poem takes place, states, “Darkling I listen” (51). Hardy chooses to use this particular word in the title of his poem; he does not merely title his poem “Ode to a Thrush.”

Including the word “darkling” in the title gives prominence to the sense of gloom that pervades the poem and reflects Hardy’s lament on the end of the Romantic period while simultaneously connecting his poem to his predecessor’s.

Keats, in the traditionally optimistic view of the romantics, definitively and unapologetically proclaims the immortality of the poetic imagination in “Ode to a Nightingale.” The poem muses upon the perpetual property of nature’s—and the poet’s—song, exclaiming:

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown: (61-64)

More literally speaking, because the nightingale is a songbird, it is not hunted for its meat. Throughout history, its song has saved its life; therefore, the bird’s song is in a way, immortal, passed down from one generation of birds to the next. Hardy’s “The Darkling Thrush” poses a more inconclusive stance on the immortality of nature and poetry. Indeed, there is an imbuing darkness throughout the poem, a darkness that points to both the death of a century and an end to creativity, and the speaker is not certain of the future of Keats’ “immortal Bird.” At the end of the century, the Wordsworthian optimism of the Romantic era is fading, and the speaker laments that “every spirit upon earth / seemed fervourless as [he]” (15-16).

Another feature of “Ode to a Nightingale” that Hardy uses ironically is its nighttime setting. In his ode, Keats romanticizes the role of night in the poetic art form; he uses it as a source of inspiration. When describing the luster of his nighttime experience, Keats states, “tender is the night / And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne” (35-36). For Keats, the darkness and quietness of nightfall is a decidedly imaginative time, a time where a bird “Sings of summer in full-throated ease” (10). Hardy, however, does not idealize the nighttime; moreover, the coming of evening only

heightens the angst and apprehension of the poem's mood. Unlike Keats, Hardy describes nightfall as "The weakening eye of day" where "tangled bine-stems scored the sky / Like strings of broken lyres" (4-6). In truth, Hardy is proposing the opposite of Keats: the night is not a time for poetic inspiration but a time of intellectual darkness. In fact, because the lyre is one of the key emblems of the Romantic literary movement, the poem's use of the term "broken lyres" implies that this movement and what it stands for is symbolically dying with the setting sun, reflecting Hardy's fears that Romanticism's dusk is approaching.

However dreary "The Darkling Thrush" appears to be throughout the first section of the poem, a ray of hope emerges with the arrival of the thrush. Its "full-hearted evensong" seems to break through the icy silence of the rest of the melancholy landscape (19). Even after such extensive doubts about the future of poetry, Hardy still hears nature's song echoing through a cold, distant world. The song of the poet lives on, even "When Frost [is] spectre-gray" and "The ancient pulse of germ and birth / [is] shrunken hard and dry" (2, 13-14). Does the bird—and the poet—sing in vain? According to Hardy, perhaps it does, but it carries on nonetheless, not knowing who might hear it or how much it might help.

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SPINNING STEREOTYPES: SHAHRAZAD'S STORYTELLING SKILLS IN "SINBAD THE SAILOR"

by *Adrianna Waters*

In *One Thousand and One Nights*, an Arabic text dating back to as far as the Eighth Century CE, Western readers come in contact with Shahrazad, who marries a vengeful king. Despite contemporary Western stereotypes associated with Middle Eastern women, Shahrazad, the narrator of the tales in *A Thousand and One Nights*, proves that she is neither submissive nor uneducated. Well-read and cunning, Shahrazad stands up for the thousands of women the king has murdered by volunteering to be his wife, even though her father's position as Chief Wazir has granted her immunity from the king's carnage. Prolonging her life—and the thousands of other women who would have been the king's next wives—Shahrazad piques the king's interest with tales that suggest morals and implications for the king's actions. As a result of her stories, the king has a change of heart, demonstrating Shahrazad's ability to use storytelling to defy expectations and create empathy. A master storyteller, Shahrazad relies on subtle yet persuasive narrative techniques in her storytelling, saving the lives of countless women, including herself, and proving her cunning and intelligence in the face of precarious pressure and harsh stereotypes both within and outside of the text. This essay examines one of the tales, "The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor," to show how Shahrazad uses her storytelling capabilities to draw subtle parallels between Sinbad's

excessive bloodlust and the king's own actions. In doing so, she weaves a morality tale that gradually convinces the king of the error of his ways.

When first encountering *A Thousand and One Nights*, Western readers bring their preconceived judgments regarding the Middle East, especially Middle Eastern women, and these stereotypes result from European society's need to categorize, or "other" the Orient. David Damrosch contends that when a host culture reads literature from outside their own culture, the culture represented in the literature can become "an image of radical otherness against which the home tradition can more clearly be defined" (201). Specifically examining this ideology in regards to the West and the East, Edward Said analyzed the effect of Orientalism on Western readers. One focus of orientalism is the Occident's—or West's—habit of "dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (124). One way that the Occident attempts to gain power over the Orient is by stereotyping them based on their own culture's idea of norms. Because it is not common in Western culture for women to be completely covered or kept separate from men—the image typically associated with Middle Eastern women—Western culture then assumes that Middle Eastern women are submissive. Orientalism accounts for the stereotypes modern Western readers place on Middle Eastern women, but Shahrazad defies these stereotypes, forcing readers to recognize Orientalism's effect on their interpretation of literature before they even read the text.

These views are not just held by modern readers; assumptions against Middle Eastern women are first expressed in the frame story, when Shahrazad's father incorrectly categorizes her and unsuccessfully tries to prevent her plan by using his own skills of storytelling. He tells Shahrazad that her plan to marry the king is "wide from wisdom and un-far from foolishness" and that she "lacketh experience in worldly matters" (Burton 13). When this does not persuade her, he tells her the blatant story of "The Tale of the

Bull and the Ass,” in which a persistent and disobedient wife is punished. Shahrazad “will not listen to his words” and threatens to marry the king without her father’s approval by telling the king that her father was “resolved to disappoint his lord” (Burton 20). Contrary to her father’s assumptions, the omniscient narrator who sets up Shahrazad’s tale says that she “had collected a thousand books” and was “wise and witty, well read and well bred” (Burton 13). The omniscient narrator’s commentary on Shahrazad allows readers to challenge the assumptions her father holds. Ironically, it is the male who adopts the stereotypes placed against women. Shahrazad’s father lacks the bravery to stand up to the king and the intelligence and storytelling skills to persuade his daughter, both things Shahrazad possesses.

In contrast, Shahrazad’s ambitious plan to sacrifice herself in hopes of saving women is an expression of her courage. Though the people “raised an outcry against [the king] and cursed him,” they do not appear to take a stand against him (Burton 11). In fact, they choose to outrun the problem by fleeing until there are not any women left for the king (Burton 13). This response is understandable because standing up to a king without resorting to the typical defenses of violence might seem impossible. Shahrazad, on the other hand, concocts a nonviolent plan based on storytelling and subtlety to “save both sides from destruction” (Burton 13). Thus, Shahrazad’s goal is not just to end the slaughter, but to find a way to make the king recognize his wrongdoings and stop the executions himself.

Many of Shahrazad’s tales have a hidden moral applicable to the king’s situation; in one tale, “The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor,” she draws parallel between Sinbad’s excessive bloodlust and the king’s vengeful killing of women. By telling the king fictional stories, Shahrazad provides enough distance for the king to recognize the wrongness of Sinbad’s actions and empathize with some of the characters. The king eventually realizes his actions

parallel Sinbad's, and his empathy extends outside the fiction to his own people. In the beginning of story, after meeting a porter who shares his same name, Sinbad the Sailor tells Sinbad the Porter about his seven voyages across the world. Sinbad has experienced troubles on each voyage, typically resulting in the violent deaths of the men around him; yet, after returning home from each voyage, Sinbad becomes restless for more adventure, and the continuation of these travels leads to a decline in Sinbad's morality.¹

Sinbad's excessive bloodlust reaches its highest point in his fourth voyage when he mercilessly robs graves, an indirect parallel to the king's killing of women. In the fourth voyage Sinbad has settled down in a culture that, after a husband or wife dies, the living spouse is buried alive alongside the surviving spouse. After his wife passes away, Sinbad is sent down with her to die in a cave. When the next widow is sent into the cave, he shows no hesitations in grabbing "the shin bone of a dead man" and killing her so he can take her food, water, and riches (Lyons 487). The first person Sinbad kills is a woman, alerting us to the similarities between Sinbad and the king. The parallel between Sinbad and the king continues when Sinbad's murders become more excessive and unnecessary. After finding a way out of the cave, Sinbad had the chance to redeem himself from his previous murders by leading subsequent surviving spouses out of the cave with him. Instead, he returns to the cave every day to "kill the survivor" and steal not only their food and water, but their extravagant items, such as clothing and jewelry (Lyons 488).

¹ Because of the multiple translations and editions of *A Thousand and One Nights*, "The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor" is actually an orphan story, meaning it is not included in the oldest Arabic versions of the manuscript, which date to the fifteenth century, but was added by Antoine Galland in his eighteenth century French translation (Irwin xi). However, for the purposes of literary analysis, the inclusion of the tale matches Shahrazad's purpose and demonstrates effective storytelling techniques.

Both the king and Sinbad's violence began with a somewhat justifiable emotion; the king is angry at his wife's infidelity while Sinbad is fearful of being buried alive. While the subsequent murders of the king's wife and the widow are still ghastly, readers understand why they happen. The true depravity occurs when both the king and Sinbad kill without a strong basis, demonstrating excessive violence. The king's execution of all women based on one woman's actions is sexist and horrific, and Sinbad's decision to kill rather than save the surviving spouses is immoral. At the end of night 554, this is emphasized by the fact that Sinbad's narration trails off with the use of ellipses: "things went on like this for some time. . ." (Lyons 488). This suggests that Sinbad has been killing people most days for a lengthy period of time, and though it is not as extreme as the king's daily executions for three years, it once again draws a comparison. Shahrazad does not directly tell us how long Sinbad waited or how many people he killed. The ambiguity makes the depravity of his actions more powerful and causes readers to feel uncomfortable and appalled, a reaction meant to be shared by the king.

Demonstrating the consequences of bloodlust may not have been enough to change the king's heart, so Shahrazad provides a story in Sinbad's final voyage in which the sailor is rewarded for listening to a moral message. After being captured by pirates and sold as a slave, Sinbad is ordered to kill elephants for their tusks "for two months, and not a day passed when [he] did not kill an elephant" (Lyons 515). This is a direct allusion to the king who marries and murders a woman every day. When the elephants approach Sinbad, they would be justified in hurting—or even killing—him since he has killed over 60 of their kind. However, instead of giving in to violence, they elect to take Sinbad to an elephant graveyard. Sinbad realizes that the elephants are teaching him a lesson "so that [he] should stop persecuting them, since [he] did it for the sole purpose of getting their tusks" (Lyons 516). The elephant's decision to

provide a moral lesson rather than react violently parallels Shahrazad's crusade to end the king's violence with storytelling.

When Sinbad's master finds out he can save lives and labor by collecting tusks from the graveyard without killing elephants, he "can't treat [Sinbad] as a slave any longer" (Lyons 516). Sinbad celebrates by going home and "devot[ing] [him]self entirely" to those he cares about (Lyons 518). Thus, Sinbad ends two immoral actions: the murder of the elephants and his perpetual voyaging that leads to these immoral actions. He is rewarded for each: his freedom and a content life with his family. With this, Shahrazad suggests that if the king listens to her subtle lessons, he too may be rewarded. Just as Sinbad is freed of being a literal slave, the king can be freed of being a slave to his anger and heartbreak. The allegory of the elephant graveyard is the most direct comparison to the king, and Shahrazad effectively uses the scenario to demonstrate the benefits of ceasing violence.

Shahrazad's storytelling does not disappoint, as she is successful in ending the king's executions and anger. Over the course of 1,001 nights, the king falls in love with Shahrazad, but he also repents of his wrongdoing, claiming, "never, whilst I live, shall I cease to blame myself for the past" (Burton 734). He also praises Shahrazad for her intelligence and storytelling abilities, thanking Allah for "appoint[ing] her a means for delivering His creatures from oppression and slaughter" (Burton 734). The king's change of heart and recognition of Shahrazad's skills demonstrate that storytelling and literature have the power to create empathy and enact change.

Through tales such as "The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor," Shahrazad uses her intelligence and storytelling skills to convince the king to end his slaughter of women. Her success proves two significant positions: the stereotype that Middle Eastern women are submissive is refuted by one of the oldest literary works in the Arabic language, and, more broadly, literature has the power to invoke empathy and social change. Shahrazad's tales are meant to

impact the king, but they also impact the readers. Even now, media leads us to believe that Middle Eastern women are submissive, uneducated, and in need of saving. Invoking the power of storytelling that is still impactful today, Shahrazad's centuries-old tale demonstrates that stereotypes, both past and present, should not define those who are different from us. We come into the text with our host culture's values and a sense of separation from the East. As we experience the multiple layers of storytelling spun by Shahrazad, we relate to and sympathize with her, chipping away at the barriers that cause us to view cultures outside our own as other.

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