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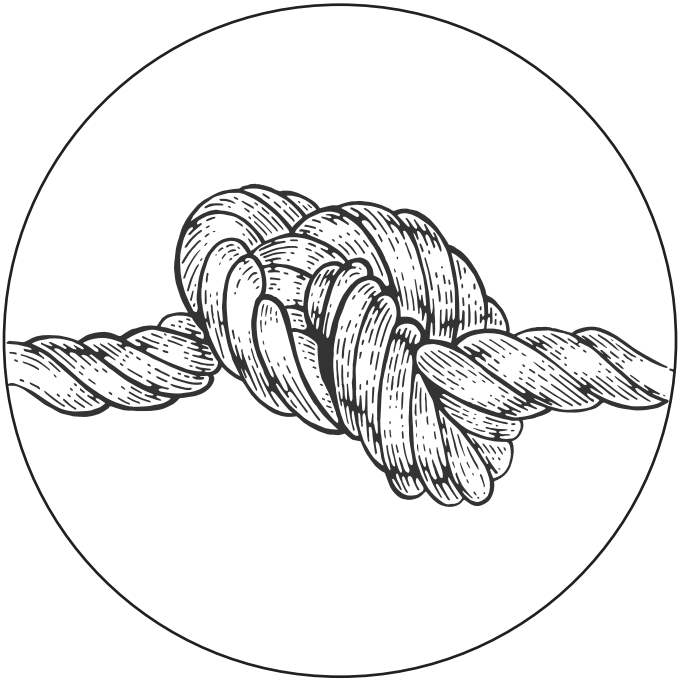

EDITORIAL

Editors' Note

Anne Hung & Teresa Sammut

We would like to acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the University of Victoria stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Volume 11 of *The Albatross* would not have been possible without the support of the UVic English community. We would like to thank everyone who submitted to the journal, all of our contributors, and the editorial staff, who have collaborated with authors virtually to produce the exceptional essays in this issue. Many thanks to Josiah Lamb for designing the cover this year, and UVic English alumna Emma Fanning, a previous designer for *The Albatross*, who aided in the layout process. We are grateful to Drs. Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge for their editing workshop and ongoing support, and Susan Doyle for her copy-editing course, which trained many of our copy editors. We would also like to thank previous managing editors of *The Albatross*, especially volume 8 managing editor, Michael Carelse, for his copy-editing workshop, and volume 9 and 10 co-managing editors, Sonja Pinto and Robert Steele, for their continued guidance.

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The COVID-19 pandemic created a multitude of challenges, and we would like to acknowledge the adaptability, resilience, and commitment of the editors and contributors who made the publication of this issue possible. We are proud to present seven undergraduate essays that exemplify the curiosity and insightfulness of the UVic English Department. It has been an honour to learn and grow with the *Albatross* team, and we hope that the journal continues to engage and inspire UVic students in the years to come.

Introduction

Anne Hung

The eleventh issue of *The Albatross* features seven critical works that exemplify the diverse interests and insights of our contributors. While the texts studied in these essays cross centuries, continents, and genres, all of the essays are in some way concerned with the role of the individual within a larger system. Jocelyn Diemer considers the role of the medieval wife in Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Wife of Bath's Prologue;" Josiah Lamb examines Satan's position in the hierarchies of Heaven and Earth in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Allegra Stevenson-Kaplan illustrates the complex role of maternal desire in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*; Autumn Doucette investigates the evolving status of gender roles in Victorian society, which is reflected in Sarah Stickney Ellis's *The Women of England* and Caroline Norton's *A Letter to the Queen*; Emily Frampton explores the empowering role of storytelling in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Scott Matthews studies the role of the domestic madwoman in establishing liminality in Gothic fiction, including Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*; and Brayden Tate interprets a young man's relationship with both retribution and the environment in Alissa York's *Fauna*. These essays are arranged chronologically by primary text to showcase the progression of discourse surrounding identity over time.

Our first two authors note the importance of allusion in each of the works they analyze. Examining scriptural allusions in "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," Jocelyn Diemer reframes Alison's character in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387–1400). Diemer suggests that Alison's "view of wifehood as a priestly role is supported by an interpretation of scripture that is both biblically sound and culturally radical" (16). Also focusing on a biblically informed text, Josiah Lamb investigates *Paradise Lost* (1667) and argues that John Milton's "use of concurrent scientific and classical

allusions stresses the differences between Satan and mankind" (23). Specifically, Lamb's essay focuses on Satan's shield as a symbol of his hubris and how Milton's references to Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* illuminate this symbol.

Moving into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, our next three essays explore how women's autonomy is affected by social discourse. Researching the stigmatization of maternal desire, Allegra Stevenson-Kaplan suggests that the protagonist Helen's "artwork comes to stand in metonymically for her desire and her sexuality" in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) (30). Stevenson-Kaplan argues that the extra-linguistic mode of art production allows Brontë to subvert the traditional courtship plot and reveal the persistence of female sexuality after childbirth. Investigating Sarah Stickney Ellis's *The Women of England* (1839) and Caroline Norton's *A Letter to the Queen* (1855), Autumn Doucette argues that these works of non-fiction "reveal the stratification and glorification of women's roles" in the nineteenth century (40). Doucette examines each writer's rhetoric to demonstrate the complexity of addressing the Woman Question alongside Victorian ideologies of emotion. Emily Frampton's essay considers how race, gender, and class work against Janie, the protagonist of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Ultimately, Frampton suggests that the novel's frame narrative allows Janie to escape these oppressive structures and form "an empathetic metafictional community bond" with the reader (49).

Our last two essays engage with literary and theological traditions to illuminate their texts. Scott Matthews considers the influence of American and British Gothic fiction on Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971). Matthews suggests that, through her use of the domestic madwoman trope and creation of a liminal setting, "Munro not only subtly informs her depiction of women but also differentiates the Southern Ontario Gothic genre from its American and British counterparts" (56). As Brayden Tate's essay suggests, Alissa York's *Fauna* (2010) "depicts the dangers

of understanding justice as retribution, personifying these dangers through the characters of Darius and his grandfather" (63). Engaging with the Christian conceptions of retribution—including their origins in Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo*—Tate argues that the satisfaction theory of atonement contextualizes and "animates the form and thematic content of *Fauna*" (63).

This collection of articles explores how individuals are influenced by external forces. The pandemic, climate crisis, and political unrest that have shaped this year have also reframed conversations surrounding identity, intersectionality, and justice. The critical contributions of our authors speak to the importance of these conversations in the twenty-first century and the role that literature has had in shaping the discourses of the past.

CRITICAL WORKS

The Sacred and the Mundane: Biblical Bread and Priestly Wifehood in "The Wife of Bath's Prologue"

Jocelyn Diemer

Abstract: This essay examines the bread imagery used by Alison, Chaucer's Wife of Bath, in her prologue as it relates to her defense of marriage. Drawing from a range of theological ideas about bread and virtue—including those of Alison's primary sources, Saint Jerome and the Apostle Paul—I argue that Alison's view of wifehood as a priestly role is supported by an interpretation of scripture that is both biblically sound and culturally radical.

To understand the significance of the Wife of Bath's theology, it is useful to briefly compare her with the other two female pilgrim-narrators in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387–1400). In his introduction to the *Tales*, John Hirsh writes that "Medieval religious women did not love Christ as a way to power … yet their devout practices could indeed evoke authority, and so influence many about them" (95). The Prioress and the Second Nun are models of this form of pious authority. Their tales and prologues promote the chastity, steadfastness, and innocence exemplified by the Virgin Mary and other female saints. However, Alison pushes back against Hirsh's assessment. As we will see, she draws her authority not from a devout cloistered lifestyle, but rather from a demonstrated understanding of the Bible combined with a worldly background as a married woman. Throughout her protracted prologue, she continually defends the spiritual legitimacy and autonomy of married women. She questions the demonized or idealized female caricatures presented by her fellow pilgrims and offers a

view of marriage and sexuality that is informed by her own lived experience as a five-time wife.

In her prologue, Alison's fundamental argumentative technique is to appropriate and reinterpret the theology of her scholarly male opponents to reinforce the "auctoritee" of her own lived experience (Chaucer 1). Among the most (in)famous of these opponents is Saint Jerome, whose fourth-century satirical treatise *Against Jovinianus* (ca. 393) defends the sanctity of celibacy against the assertion that marriage is equally virtuous. As its title suggests, the treatise responds to a monk named Jovinian, whose "proto-Protestant" and pro-matrimony pamphlet gained him a following in Rome, much to the chagrin of Jerome and his contemporaries in the Church (Smith 3). In his effort to refute Jovinian's claim, Jerome compares virginity to "the finest wheat flour," marriage to barley, and extramarital sexual intercourse to "cow-dung" before asking, "does it follow that the wheat will not have its peculiar purity, because such an [sic] one prefers barley to excrement?" (*A. J.* 11). In an equally sardonic response, Alison asserts that she does not envy virtuous "pured whete" virgins, because "with barly breed, Mark telle can, / Oure Lord Jesu refresshed many a man" (Chaucer 150–53). Imbued with Alison's characteristic pragmatism, this statement can easily be understood as an uneducated woman's clumsy attempt at exegesis. However, when considered in light of both the theological contexts of Jerome's argument and scriptural ideas about spiritual and physical "refresshement," Alison's thoughtful reinterpretation of her opponent's bread metaphor reveals her theology to be much more subtle—and biblically sound—than Chaucer's satirical tone would imply. Alison views wifehood as not only biblically ordained but as spiritually necessary. In her mind, the role of "wife" is a priestly one; a wife physically "refresshes" her husband so that he can be spiritually nourished by Christ.

Both Jerome's treatise and Alison's response are rooted in the marriage instructions outlined in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In Jerome's mind, Paul's allowance of

marriage "to avoid fornication" is simply "a concession to prevent worse evil" (*KJV*, 1 Cor. 7.2, *A. J.* 11). He argues that in the absence of sexual temptation, marriage would be unnecessary and should therefore be considered as a biblical compromise rather than as a model of ideal Christian life. Just like one might provide a starving person with barley bread to prevent them from eating excrement, Jerome argues, God has provided humans with the institution of marriage to prevent them from defiling themselves with sexual immorality. Furthermore, although *Against Jovinianus* does not connect this grain metaphor with a specific biblical passage, Jerome's apologetic "Letter 48" refers to the feeding of the five thousand in John 6 as well as to the institution of the Eucharist. Drawing from St. Ambrose's book *Concerning Widows*, Jerome contrasts the multitudes of (presumably unchaste) men given barley bread with the twelve (presumably chaste) Apostles who received the body of Christ.[1] Finally, Jerome asserts that, while God cares for married people, it is virgins who are held to the "prize of the high calling" ("Letter 48" 74).

Alison's response to Jerome is formulated as a simple reversal of her opponent's logic. She points to the feeding of the five thousand to prove that barley bread remains a satisfying meal, even if pure wheat bread might be more desirable. By acknowledging that "Crist was a maide," Alison adheres to Jerome's clear distinction between chastity and marriage, and, as Warren S. Smith points out, even "accepts the primacy of celibacy" (246). However, she also emphasizes the fact that Christ deemed it appropriate to feed thousands of his adherents with ordinary "barly breed,"[2] and that the crowd was "refresshed" after eating their supper (Chaucer 145–46). Thus, in the same way that the mundanity of the bread did not lessen the crowd's satisfaction, the commonness of marriage does not affect the salvation of those who marry.

1 See Matthew 26.26–28

2 At this point, Jesus had already demonstrated his ability to transform one type of food into another, more luxurious type of food (see the wedding at Cana in John 2.1–11).

Immediately after highlighting the significance of barley, Alison takes her argument a step further by indirectly connecting the feeding of the multitudes with sexual satisfaction. She vows to "persevere" in the face of her husband's sexual appetite, using her "instrument / as freely as [her] Makere hath it sent" (154–56). This link between carnality and divinity might easily be read as another sarcastic portrayal of female brashness on Chaucer's part, but Alison's understanding of the Bible once again grants her a sense of credibility in the face of Jerome's "wide-ranging recklessness" (Smith 244). In fact, Alison has synthesized Paul's command that married couples should not "defraud" one another at risk of falling into extramarital temptation and Jesus's chastisement of a crowd who sought him "not because [they] saw the miracles, but because [they] did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (1 Cor. 7.5, John 6.26). By fulfilling her husband's sexual needs, Alison is obeying Paul's command to keep her spouse from sin, but she is also preparing him to hear the word of Jesus without being distracted by metaphorical "loaves." In other words, she is the barley bread that keeps her husband from eating excrement, but she is also preparing him to receive the ultimate feast that is the body of Christ.

This connection between physical satisfaction and spiritual satisfaction has biblical precedent that far exceeds what is outlined in Alison's prologue. The Jewish Priestly Code includes instructions for the preparation of special loaves of bread, which were to be left in the Tabernacle or Temple as the "most holy … of the offerings of the Lord made by fire" (Lev. 24.1–9). Because the bread was consecrated, those who were not priests were prohibited from consuming it. However, the book of 1 Samuel describes David breaking this law while he is hiding from King Saul. Claiming to be working under the king's orders, David asks a priest named Ahimelech to give him five loaves of hallowed bread so that he and his (fabricated) company of men can eat. Ahimelech is hesitant, but after ascertaining that David and his men "have kept themselves at least from women," he gives up the bread (1 Sam. 21.1–6). In the Gospel of

Matthew, Jesus references this story to defend his disciples after they are caught picking and eating corn on the Sabbath—a day normally reserved for rest. By reminding the Pharisees that even David, a king anointed by God, broke the laws of the Tabernacle "when he was hungered"—and, less obviously, that David's hunger caused him to sin by lying to the priest—Jesus makes it clear that the realms of physical health and spiritual health are not entirely discrete (Mat. 12.1–8).

Of course, both the story of David and Ahimelech and Jesus's subsequent commentary are very specific in their discussions of bodily needs—in fact, according to Ahimelech, sexual immorality is the only form of uncleanliness that would prevent David from eating the consecrated bread. It would seem, then, that Alison's exegetical association between sexual desire and hunger is ambitious to the point of fallacy. However, it is important to remember that Alison is applying Jerome's interpretation of 1 Corinthians (which explicitly discusses sex) to Christ's actions and teachings. Indeed, Alison's genius lies in the fact that she does not refute Jerome's theology, but rather approaches it with a "down-to-earth practicality" that attempts to make virtue attainable to those women for whom celibacy is not an option (Smith 246). She uses Paul's theology to legitimize her own experiences and refers to the ultimate authority of Jesus to "look at things as they are in the experience of everyday life and not as they are in fancy or hope" (Smith 246). From this pragmatic, meaning-focused perspective, there is little difference between Christ authorizing David's consumption of the sacred bread and Paul authorizing the Corinthians's marital sexual intercourse; in simplest terms, both are instances in which physical purity (of the bread or of the body) is conditionally corrupted for the sake of spiritual purity.

This interplay of the sacred, the mundane, and the profane is even more remarkable when considered against the backdrop of late medieval attitudes towards the relationship between bread and holiness. As I have already stated, Alison's exegesis hinges on the fact that, despite being com-

mon, barley bread (or marriage) is a divinely sanctioned form of refreshment (or way of living). However, in medieval Europe, barley carried religious significance beyond being mentioned in John 6. In the fourteenth century, it was customary to exchange "soul-cakes" (which were miniature loaves, often made from barley or other inexpensive grains) on festival days in the hope that the recipient might be spiritually nourished and renewed by consuming the bread (Bayless 360). Therefore, when Alison proudly claims the "barly breed" label for herself and other wives, she is using Jerome's metaphor to reinforce the importance of marriage in providing both physical satisfaction and spiritual nourishment. Like most of Alison's theology, this idea finds scriptural precedent in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Concerning what he will later call "unequally yoked" marriages,[3] Paul writes that "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband" (1 Cor. 7.14). This statement implies that the marriage bond imports a certain level of spiritual unity upon a couple, once again confirming the legitimacy of Alison's portrait of marriage.

Ultimately, Alison's exegesis transcends the reactionary brashness often imposed upon her character to reveal an argument that is both intelligent and, for the most part, orthodox in its approach to scripture. She uses Jerome's barley metaphor to encompass a wide range of scriptural and historical ideas about bread, thereby formulating a compelling, yet still biblical, conception of marriage and virtue. By figuring wives as priests, Alison elevates women without deifying them and frames marriage as a physical and spiritual transaction that benefits the husband as much as it benefits the wife. She acknowledges the elitist view of celibacy held by Jerome and Ambrose but also appropriates their works to empower other women and foster fellowship with other wives. Furthermore, by focusing her attention on the mundane, Alison creates a picture of virtue that encourages participation from everyone, be they "pured whete"

3 See 2 Corinthians 6.14

or "barly breed." Situated within a group of tales that often force female characters and narrators to choose between virtue and pleasure, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue" offers women the radical opportunity to have both. Alison builds a gate in the wall of the Prioress and Second Nun's cloister and creates a space in the socio-religious fabric of *The Canterbury Tales* in which women can find both spiritual and physical satisfaction.

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"Never to Submit or Yield": Satan's Shield and Armour in *Paradise Lost*

Josiah Lamb

Abstract: In *Paradise Lost* (1667), John Milton emphasizes how Satan's power is not original but descends from God the Creator by using the moon as a metaphor for Satan's shield. This incorporation of scientific phenomena, specifically the references to Galileo and his work, strengthens the characterization of Satan as a lessened reflection of God. Milton continues to expand his characterization of Satan by alluding to the heroes and villains of classical epics; his use of concurrent scientific and classical allusions stresses the differences between Satan and mankind. Ultimately, Satan's characteristics are accentuated and intensified by a closer examination of his shield.

In *Paradise Lost* (1667), John Milton describes Satan's shield as "the broad circumference / Hung on his shoulders like the moon whose orb / Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views" (I 287–89). In this essay, I argue that Satan's shield serves as the central representation of Satan's defensive nature as well as his distance from God. Milton first demonstrates this relationship between Satan and his Creator through allusions to his contemporary Galileo; *Sidereus Nuncius*, which is directly referenced in *Paradise Lost*, presents Galileo's findings regarding the surface of the moon. This newfound knowledge is "woven into the Galileo images in Books 1 and 5 of *Paradise Lost* … [and] it provides, in Book 1, an analogy for Satan's battered shield" (Karkar 149–50). These references to Milton's coeval Galileo further enhance the celestial imagery Milton uses to describe Satan. In contrast to Milton's modern allusions, *Paradise Lost* is rampant with classical allusions that emphasize Satan's character. Milton positions the triumph of Satan in compar-

ison to other men by likening him to classical heroes, such as Achilles from Homer's *Iliad*. In contrast, Milton's descriptions of Satan's armour associate him with the villains from these same epics. The various allusions contained in Milton's description of Satan's armour enforce Satan's opposition to God. Examining Satan's shield more closely allows readers to see how Satan's position within different hierarchies in Heaven and on Earth in *Paradise Lost* symbolize Satan's lack of space within God's world. Satan's discomfort with this lack of belonging leads him to cling to defensive tactics, arms, and rhetoric. Satan's shield can be seen as a culmination of these defensive attributes that are only intensified by his differences from his Creator and mankind.

God is likened to the most powerful celestial body in our solar system: the sun. When Satan falls, he distances himself from God and experiences a loss of power. Milton emphasizes how Satan's power is not original but descends from God by using the moon as a metaphor for Satan's shield. The moon only reflects the sun and does not create its own light nor warmth. Satan's understanding of this descension of power is represented in Book IV when Satan addresses the sun as if it were God himself:

> O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
> That bring to my remembrance from what state
> I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere
> Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
> Warring in Heav'n against Heavn's' matchless King.
> (Milton IV 37–41)

Milton describes Hell—Satan's domain—as the "pris'n ordained / In utter darkness … / As far removed from God and light of Heav'n" (I 71–73). Satan cannot ignore the fact that he descended from God's light, but he can create his own domain in which God's existence penetrates less intensely—just as the moon appears independent but depends entirely on the sun to be seen.

A deeper understanding of the continued comparisons between Satan and astronomical phenomena intensifies the significance of Satan's shield as a "spotty globe" (Milton I 291). The repeated contrast of the distance between

Satan and the sun, which represents God, enforces that Satan is not a powerful separate being but a powerful dependent being. In Book III, Satan, disguised as a cherub, lands on the sun to talk with Uriel: "there lands the Fiend: a spot like which perhaps / Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb / Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw" (Milton III 588–90). When Galileo published his *Letters on Sunspots*, sunspots were not a new discovery; but, Galileo "discover[ed] that sunspots not only appeared and disappeared, they also changed shape, unlike stars and planets. Galileo believed sunspots to be made of some 'fluid substance,' 'situated upon or very close to the sun,' and compared them with clouds" (Karkar 149). Therefore, when Satan lands on the surface of the sun he becomes like a sunspot. The changing shapes of sunspots parallel Satan's ability to physically transform. Satan is metaphorically like a sunspot and his physical presence on the surface of the sun means that he is a sunspot: a blemish on the surface of the sun and not a separate astronomical body. In another of Galileo's writings, *Sidereus Nuncius*, the astronomer presents his findings regarding the surface of the moon: "The moon is not robed in a smooth and polished surface but is in fact rough and uneven, covered everywhere, just like the earth's surface, with huge prominences, deep valleys, and chasms" (qtd. in Karkar 149). These indentations are only visible through magnification, such as with a telescope. Although the telescope magnifies the perception of objects, it also enhances their defects. We can read into this effect a statement about Satan's character, as he tries to be perceived as more powerful than he truly is. Thus, when Milton compares Satan's spear with the tallest Norwegian pine (I 292–93) and his shield with "the moon" (I 287), Milton is undercutting descriptions of Satan's strength and might with descriptions of his extreme confidence and pride.

In the same passages that offer allusions to Galileo, there are also prominent and critical classical allusions that continue to enhance Satan's characterization. The classical allusions to Greek and Roman epics emphasize the contrast between Satan and mankind. One of the most prominent

classical allusions in *Paradise Lost* is to Aeneas from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Milton often invokes Aeneas in Satan's character by "repeatedly mapping Aeneas's words and actions onto … Satan" (Calloway 82). Although Satan's words may echo Aeneas's, the intent with which they are spoken signals the larger contrast between the two characters. When Aeneas addresses his troops after landing in Carthage he says, "*Talia voce refert, curisque ingentibus aeger Spem vultu simulat, permit altum corde dolorem* / With such words he replied, and, ill with heavy cares, he feigned hope in his countenance, he repressed anguish deep in his heart" (Virgil I 208–09). Satan echoes these lines when speaking to Beezlebub: for "so spake th' Apostate Angel, though in pain, / Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despare" (Milton I 125–26). Aeneas intends to rally his troops with his subsequent speech and give his men hope, whereas Satan is not addressing his troops but rather himself (Milton I 243–70). The contrast in their speeches reveals the contrast in their beliefs: Aeneas trusts the pagan gods and puts his faith in them saying, "*dabit his deus quoque finem* / to these things too shall the god give an end" (Virgil I 199), while Satan declares he will never repent to God and will "wage by force or guile eternal War / irreconcilable" (Milton I 121–22). Milton equates Satan and Aeneas through their political rhetoric but contrasts them by the motivation behind their speeches. Milton lauds Aeneas' piety by contrasting it with Satan's selfish and evil desires. These comparisons reveal that Satan's greatest sin is his refusal to repent, thereby exposing his fatal flaw: his hubris.

Milton continues to contrast Satan's character with classical epic heroes, such as the protagonists from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The description of Satan's shield bears reference to Achilles's "massive shield flashing far and wide / like a full round moon" (*Iliad* XIX 442–43). Milton later undoes this comparison by having Satan declare the exact opposite to what dead Achilles speaks to Odysseus in the underworld. Achilles tells Odysseus, "I'd rather be a hired hand back up on earth, / slaving away for some poor dirt farmer, / than lord it over all these withered dead" (*Odyssey*

XI 511–13). Achilles' words evoke Satan's words "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" (Milton I 263). Therefore, while Satan and Achilles may be similar in terms of their armour, their moral values are oppositional.

Milton's references to Aeneas and Achilles help readers distinguish Satan from the best of humankind, but classical allusions in *Paradise Lost* are not limited to Homer's heroes. Satan's shield likens him to Achilles, yet the same description also likens him to Achilles' nemesis Ajax. Milton describes Satan wearing his shield on his back just as Homer describes Ajax wearing his shield: "[Ajax] stood there a moment, stunned, / then swinging his seven-ply ox-hide shield behind him" (*Iliad* XI 639–40). While Ajax and Satan may wear their shields in a similar fashion, their retreat from the battlefield occurs for different reasons. Ajax flees because "Father Zeus on the heights forced Ajax to retreat" (*Iliad* XI 638). In contrast, "God does not force Satan to retreat but instead forces Satan to choose whether he will stay or run away" (Dobranski 499). Through his comparison of Ajax and Satan, Milton implies that Satan's "own self-destruction … was prompted by a similar sense of having been slighted and is similarly expressed through his association with emblems of traditional warfare" (Dobranski 499). Like Satan, Ajax overestimates the power of armour. The Greeks' reliance on armour in the Trojan War was their downfall, for they put faith in a physical object instead of their gods. This false faith parallels Satan's beliefs, as Satan also puts his trust in arms:

> Perhaps more valid arms,
> Weapons more violent when next we meet,
> May serve to better us and worse our foes
> Or equal what between us made the odds—
> In nature none. (Milton VI 438–42)

"Just as Ajax did not deserve Achilles' defensive weaponry … Satan, too, falls short of the glory that Achilles garnered" (Dobranski 499). Ajax's envy of Achilles' armour parallels Satan's desire to rival God's power. Both characters are misguided in their beliefs because armour was never the cause of the downfall of Ajax nor Satan; instead, their demise

came from their excessive envy and pride.

Satan's shield is a small but significant detail in *Paradise Lost*, but further examination of Milton's imagery rewards readers with an increased understanding of Satan's role of opposition. This imagery, as well as allusions to Milton's contemporary Galileo, expands upon the relationship between Satan and his Creator. The significance of the moon as a metaphor for Satan reflects how the moon's light is not original, just as Satan's power descends from God and is a weaker manifestation of light in comparison to the source—the sun. Descriptions of Satan and God are expanded by these cosmological comparisons within the poem. These references work alongside the classical allusions that liken Satan to heroes and villains from classical epics through their use of defensive weapons. These armours may be the same as those used by mankind in classical epics; yet, by examining how these same weapons contrast Satan from God, the distinction between Satan and mankind becomes more apparent. Satan belongs in his own category—not powerful enough to be considered a god, yet not heroic enough to be considered equal among men.

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"A Creature of My Own Imagination": Artistic, Maternal, and Sexual Desire in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

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Abstract: This paper examines how sublimated, repressed desires can be grasped through literary representations of artwork as an extra-linguistic mode of social intercourse in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). Engaging with previous scholarship that considers the role of maternal desire in the novel, I argue that Brontë subverts the traditional courtship plot by proposing dangerous ideas of maternal sexuality and desire that the text, radical as it may be, cannot entirely contain. Accordingly, Brontë's protagonist's artwork comes to stand in metonymically for her desire and her sexuality.

In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), Anne Brontë's protagonist, Helen Graham, meets her second husband when she is already a married woman and, crucially, already a mother. Here, Brontë subverts the traditional courtship plot through the introduction of a heroine who is in no way virginal, proposing dangerous ideas of maternal desire and sexuality that the text—radical as it may be—cannot overtly put into words. Far from reaffirming domestic ideologies, however, this maternal narrative demonstrates the complex status of desire in the maternal plot. Accordingly, Brontë invokes Helen's art to communicate sentiments—whether romantic, desirous, violent, or fearful—that she cannot freely commit to language. Rather than directly acknowledging the extent of Helen's passions, Brontë gestures toward their erotic nature through Helen's own descriptions of her artwork, as well as other characters' perceptions of and reactions to her art; as a result, Helen's artwork comes to

stand in metonymically for her desire and sexuality. Moreover, Brontë deliberately parallels scenes in which Helen's artwork forms the basis of her interactions with both the father of her child and her second husband, respectively, refusing to sublimate the sexual to the maternal and suggesting that Helen's desire and existence as a sexual being remain unchanged after the birth of her child.

Brontë's novel, like the 1839 Infant Custody Act and the broader child custody debates that raged at the time of its publication, raises the issue of sexual desire in mothers. Some critics, including Elizabeth Gruner and Kristin Le Veness, argue that motherhood, particularly when sexualized, is often cast as demonic in Victorian literature (Gruner 325, Le Veness 345); Gruner argues that, in *Tenant*, motherhood "is simply cleansed of its sexual aspects and recast in purely moral terms" (325). In other words, Brontë ultimately "sublimate[s] the sexual to the maternal, finally reinscribing domesticity as the only legitimate locus of woman's desire" (Gruner 319). However, Brontë complicates this standard courtship plot by introducing us to Helen much later in her life: Gilbert, Helen's second and final husband, first encounters her when she is already married and, most importantly, already a mother.

In fact, Helen's first words to her future husband—"Give me the child!" (52)—cement her in this maternal role from the moment of her introduction. Motherhood is "particularly problematic" when it comes to the traditional courtship plot, for, as Marianne Hirsch notes, "the multiplicity of 'women' is nowhere more obvious than for the figure of the mother, who is always both mother and daughter and often wife and/or lover as well" (qtd. in Gruner 12). Helen's tale of her first marriage, relayed through her diary to Gilbert Markham, allows Brontë to parallel and contrast the two disparate courtship plots, granting us access to Helen's sexuality before and after she becomes a mother.

As both a painter and a mother, Helen assumes the role of creative producer; however, as a Victorian woman and potential love interest, she is equally an aesthetic object. Helen's artistic production places her outside the "male

viewer/female object" binary (Clapp 14), frequently offering a physical buffer behind which Helen can hide from a suitor's gaze. It is equally true, however, that Helen's artwork often communicates her unspoken romantic and sexual desires. As Melissa Maunsell rightly points out, the Victorian "need to legislate tactile contact through etiquette" reveals larger anxieties about "the erotic potential inherent in such extralinguistic modes of communication" that "require discursive control" both in fiction and in life (43). Maunsell points to Foucault's Victorian repressive hypothesis: "because carnal indulgences," like non-procreative sex and women's sexual desires, were frequently "unspeakable," Victorians "sublimated and converted their more hedonic desires into socially acceptable discourses" (qtd. in Maunsell 45). Whereas Foucault focuses on language-based discourse and Maunsell focuses on physical touch, I assert that these sublimated, repressed desires can likewise be grasped through literary representations of artwork as an extra-linguistic mode of social intercourse.

During Helen's initial courtship with her first husband, Arthur Huntingdon, Helen's determination to reproduce Huntingdon's exact likeness makes the connection between art and courtship explicit, revealing the extent to which painting has become an expression of her desire. Although Helen is also pursued by both Mr. Boarham and Mr. Wilmot, Helen expresses her own desires by sketching Arthur Huntingdon's visage on the backs of other sketches: "There is one face I am always trying to paint or sketch, and always without success" (Brontë 131). Huntingdon's superficial charm and beauty compel Helen to attempt his face's reproduction several times. While these sketches remain in her possession covertly, they grant her a sense of power over her suitor, whom she dubs "a creature of my own imagination" (149). However, Huntingdon reverses this power dynamic at a dinner party when he discovers these tokens of Helen's infatuation: "I looked up, curious to see what it was, and, to my horror, beheld him complacently gazing at the back of the picture—It was his own face that I had sketched there and forgotten to rub out!" (151). Although

Helen "attempt[s] to snatch it from his hand," Huntingdon "prevent[s]" her forcibly and "gather[s] all the drawings to himself," examining them at his leisure, thrusting one under his coat, and "button[ing] his coat upon it with a delighted chuckle" (151). In this first and telling interaction with Helen's art, Huntingdon reacts with fervor and physical domination, illustrating his vanity and controlling impulses, as well as the bodily subtext of the scene. As Helen reflects upon this instance, she regards the incident as deeply humiliating—but only because Huntingdon turns out to be abusive and undeserving of her love, not because Helen's desire is something to be ashamed of. Here, Helen's art has been reduced to what Alisa Clapp refers to as "erotic stimulus" for an undeserving Huntingdon (12).

After Huntingdon takes control of his own image, and therefore the knowledge concerning Helen's secret desires, power is transferred from artist to subject by force. Shortly thereafter, Huntingdon attempts to recreate his previous conquest, snatching Helen's portfolio of work to "examine its contents" (Brontë 155). This time, Helen tries to fight back by placing her hand on the portfolio "to wrest it from him; but he maintained his hold … and just as [she] wrenched the portfolio from his hand, he deftly abstracted the greater part of its contents" (156). Therein, Huntingdon "gleeful[ly]" discovers "a complete miniature portrait" of himself (156). Once Helen retrieved the portrait, she recalls that "to show him how [she] valued it, [she] tore it in two, and threw it into the fire" (156). In this struggle for the upper hand, Huntingdon loses a symbol of his power and control, and Helen destroys the image that has made public her secret desire. This fraught exchange establishes Huntingdon's dismissive attitude toward Helen's art, and by extension her personhood, foreshadowing the later abuse that she endures at the hand of her first, unsuitable husband.

The next day, Huntingdon finds Helen in the library, working on a painting that she hopes will be her masterpiece. She describes the painting in her diary as follows:

> Upon this bough, that stood out in bold relief against the sombre firs, were seated an amorous

> pair of turtle doves, whose soft sad coloured plumage afforded a contrast of another nature; and beneath it, a young girl was kneeling … , her hands clasped, lips parted, and eyes intently gazing upward in pleased, yet earnest contemplation of those feathered lovers. (Brontë 154)

Huntingdon, "after attentively regarding" the painting "for a few seconds," dismissively assesses the painting as "Very pretty, i'faith! … and a very fitting study for a young lady" (Brontë 155). He devotes special attention to the young girl in the painting who sits observing a pair of turtledoves, stating, "I should fall in love with her, if I hadn't the artist before me" (155). Implicitly associating the beautiful young woman in the painting with the artist herself, and then sexualizing her, Huntingdon exclaims, "Sweet innocent! she's thinking there will come a time when she will be wooed and won like that pretty hen-dove, by as fond and fervent a lover" (155). Although Helen finds this hasty and surface-level analysis of her art insulting, an element of truth belies Huntingdon's interpretation: Helen paints this classical, romantic scene because she fleetingly finds Huntingdon's gaze—and her existence in his eyes as an aesthetic object—both flattering and titillating.

While Helen's artwork primarily belies the nature of her own desires, Brontë establishes that art can also stand in metonymically for the desire felt by her suitors. In the chapter entitled "Further Warnings," Brontë emphasizes the depiction of art as a tool of courtship when Huntingdon invites Helen to look at a painting by Vandyke as a ploy to get her away from Mr. Wilmot's unwanted attentions. Whereas Helen expresses eagerness to discuss the painting itself, Huntingdon quickly dismisses the painting in favour of "pressing [her hand]" and blatantly professing his love for her (143). Correspondingly, after Helen and Huntingdon are married, Helen fights off the advances of an unwanted suitor, wielding her palette knife as a weapon: "I never saw a man so terribly excited. He precipitated himself towards me. I snatched up my palette-knife and held it against him. This startled him: he stood and gazed at me in astonish-

ment; I dare say I looked as fierce and resolute as he" (305). Here we can see that, as Antonia Losano asserts, "scenes of painting," as well as other scenes concerning art, are "miniature cultural dramas" illustrating the role of women in society; such scenes become spaces within which writers can work "through issues of courtship, desire, and social gender roles" (16).

While scenes of painting involving Helen and Huntingdon establish the nature of Helen's sexual and romantic desire, scenes of painting involving Helen and Gilbert Markham, her second husband, suggest that Helen's existence as a sexual being remains unchanged despite the birth of her child. This is a controversial assertion on Brontë's part, as other contemporaneous courtship novels, and the Victorians at large, were often hesitant to cast the mother in a sexual light (Le Veness 346). Tellingly, Brontë frequently mirrors extradiegetic interactions between Huntingdon and Helen as recounted in Helen's diary with diegetic interactions between Helen and Gilbert, drawing parallels between Helen's first and second courtships. Huntingdon's comments about the female subject in Helen's "masterpiece" invite comparison to one made by Gilbert while watching Helen paint: "if I had but a pencil and a morsel of paper, I could make a lovelier sketch than hers, admitting I had the power to delineate faithfully what is before me" (Brontë 85). In these interactions involving Helen and Gilbert, the language of painting still articulates female desire; however, Helen has matured since her first failed relationship with Huntingdon (though she has fled his home, they are still legally married) and thus remains more subdued than her younger self.

Although Helen paints scenes of nature rather than loving miniature portraits during this phase of her life, desire nevertheless remains a product of her artistic endeavours. When a group of Gilbert's friends and family go together on a picnic to the seashore, Helen attempts to paint in solitude, but Gilbert feels himself "drawn by an irresistible attraction to that distant point where the fair artist sat and plied her solitary task and not long did [he] attempt to resist it"

(84). Watching her paint, Gilbert initially describes Helen as though she were an aesthetic object: "[She] sketched away in silence. But [he] could not help stealing a glance, now and then, from the splendid view at [their] feet to the elegant white hand that held the pencil, and the graceful neck and glossy raven curls that drooped over the paper" (85). Once again, Helen's body is conflated with her artwork, as her curls, dropping onto the paper, seem to become one with the scene she draws.

In a similar interaction, as Gilbert watches Helen sketch, he embarks upon an erotic evaluation of her body: "I stood and watched the progress of her pencil: it was a pleasure to behold it so dexterously guided by those fair and graceful fingers" (74). Crucially, Helen does not ignore Gilbert's presence this time: "erelong [Helen's fingers'] dexterity became impaired, they began to hesitate, to tremble slightly, and make false strokes, and, then, suddenly came to a pause, while their owner laughingly raised her face to [Gilbert's], and told [him] that her sketch did not profit by [his] superintendence" (74). When Helen "raise[s] her face" to Gilbert's, the intimation seems to be that a kiss might follow, rather than the dismissal that ensues; the trembling and hesitation imbue the scene with an erotic register, suggesting that Helen is equally affected by this tension. Helen's young son plays nearby throughout this exchange—an uncomfortable reminder of Helen's maternal status that may have imbued the scene with another layer of tension for Victorian readers.

A final illustration of Helen's artwork assuming the role of a proxy for desire comes when Gilbert watches Helen paint in the privacy of her own home. In this scene, Gilbert recalls how Helen "resumed her place beside the easel, not facing it exactly, but now and then glancing at the picture upon it while she conversed, and giving it an occasional touch with her brush, as if she found it impossible to wean her attention entirely from her occupation to place it upon her guests" (69). Helen deliberately focuses her attention on the easel, rather than Gilbert, much in the same way that the easel was "the first object that met [Gilbert's] eye" (69)

when he entered the room. Whereas the palette knife, as previously mentioned, was once used to put distance between Helen and an unwelcome suitor, the easel claims the attention that Gilbert feels should be focused upon himself and therefore becomes a proxy for Helen's admiring gaze. Dissuaded from staring at Helen by the physical barrier of the easel, and by Helen's unwavering sense of propriety, Gilbert turns his gaze toward the picture of Wildfell Hall that Helen is working on, surveying the picture "with a greater degree of admiration and delight than [he] cared to express" (69). At the same time, the artwork becomes an extension of Helen herself, absorbing the majority of Gilbert's own unspoken "admiration and delight" and therefore operating as an extra-linguistic mode of social intercourse. Helen, having told Gilbert in an earlier scene that she has "often wished in vain … for another's judgment to appeal to when [she] could scarcely trust the direction of [her] own eye and head" has made her desires known explicitly (86). As a result, this interaction establishes Gilbert as a partner who takes Helen's artwork seriously—and therefore as an appropriate sexual partner for her.

Ultimately, Helen's artwork comes to stand in metonymically as a proxy for her sexuality in both of the novel's courtship plots, and her artwork both conceals and reveals desires that cannot be articulated. Moreover, Brontë parallels scenes in which art forms the basis of Helen's interactions—first with the father of her child and then with her second husband—resulting in the implicit assertion that Helen's existence as a sexual being remains unchanged after the birth of her child. Accordingly, the undeniable presence of Helen's desire indicates Brontë's unwillingness to sublimate the sexual to the maternal, as well as her rejection of domesticity as the only legitimate locus of woman's desire.

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Rewriting the Woman Question: Female Writers and Victorian Ideologies of Emotion

Autumn Doucette

Abstract: This paper aims to untangle Victorian perspectives concerning the answer to the Woman Question as they pertain to broader understandings of ethical reasoning and emotion in nineteenth-century England. With careful consideration of the form, content, and style of Sarah Stickney Ellis's *The Women of England* (1839) and Caroline Norton's *A Letter to the Queen* (1855), this paper examines how Ellis and Norton reveal the stratification and glorification of women's roles in their writing while simultaneously contributing to a culture that devalues them. In this way, Ellis and Norton redefine the culture of, and attempt to answer, the Woman Question.

The Woman Question, more plainly stated as the question of women's ideal role in society, was one of the most divisive and disputed affairs of the nineteenth century. Discourses concerning the answer to this question often emphasized the widening division of labour within the public and private spheres, a distinction that was rapidly garnering attention alongside the rise of British industrialism. While both Sarah Stickney Ellis and Caroline Norton wrote with female readers in mind, their primary audiences differ in economic status and political power. Ellis's *The Women of England* (1839) is a conduct book—a detailed advice manual that aims to influence the lives of domestic middle-class women. Contrastingly, Norton's *A Letter to the Queen* (1855) takes a more direct approach to advocate for societal change: addressing Queen Victoria herself. While Ellis relies on the collective action of women to maintain the status quo, Norton seeks to persuade England's highest authority to advocate

for social reform. With careful consideration of the content, form, and style of Ellis's *The Women of England* and Norton's *A Letter to the Queen*, this paper will examine how Ellis and Norton enable the stratification and glorification of women's societal roles while simultaneously contributing to a culture that undermines and devalues them. Through their writing, Ellis and Norton redefine the culture of, and attempt to answer, the Woman Question.

Ellis and Norton wrote within a social framework that undoubtedly informed their respective texts. As a result of rising industrialist and capitalist systems, the separation between male and female labour widened, adding enormous pressure on men to become the sole breadwinners of their families. This division promoted the emergence of a cut-throat capitalist market defined by hegemonic hyper-masculinity that is "aggressive, ruthless, competitive, and adversarial" (Acker 29). Such a society values ruthlessness and individual success so heavily that the consequent value ascribed to traditionally feminine tenderness and warmth lessens. It is for this reason that many scholars regard the nineteenth century as the moment when "emotions [are] domesticated," as the feminine and motherly implications associated with emotion become widely acknowledged by women and men alike (Ablow 375). As the public sphere continues to be identified by its rationality and rivalry, the private sphere becomes more explicitly emotional and feminine—subjecting women to increasingly suffocating social and economic limitations. The pressure on men to provide creates a dynamic between husbands and their wives that relies on women to exist as their husbands' moral compasses. "The Angel in the House," a narrative poem by English poet Coventry Patmore, embodies this idea, fetishizing and glorifying the life of his wife, Emily, as the "ideal" Victorian housewife. This poem, and the predominant rhetoric of the nineteenth century, glamourizes the married woman as the moral guardian of the house and makes this position synonymous with a fulfilling and honourable life.

Despite painting Victorian women as morally superior, society barred them from most of the workforce, domes-

ticating their influence. Instead of working in the public sphere, women influenced society by regulating their husbands and sons, and these men, supposedly, would then guide society. The role of the female teacher visibly embodies this trickle-down morality, as knowledge flows from female teachers to male students. Because of the nature of this work, any direct praise or credibility a woman could amass for the betterment of society is erased—acclaim for her upstanding morality is quickly placed onto her husband, her sons, or the students she teaches. Gesa Stedman, author of *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture, and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, outlines the indirect ways that passion colours public and political life only by working its way into society through the "'fountainhead' downwards: through the influence of mothers" (Stedman 233). She further argues that women's emotional influence not only served to soften their husband's rough edges but also permitted the "cautious call" for teaching as a female occupation (Stedman 233). Though the door began to open for women occupying space in the public sector, they remained bound to feminine roles of nurturing, caretaking, and child-raising. A vital aspect of the Woman Question was to challenge how women might inhabit the public sector. While Victorian discourses on emotionality substantially limited women's involvement in the public sphere, they simultaneously created new spaces for it.

When analyzing these discourses, it is essential to consider the forms in which they are presented. As a conduct book, Sarah Stickney Ellis's *The Women of England* describes and glorifies middle-class women's domestic role, idealizing the separate-spheres ideology and helping to shape the glass ceilings inhibiting women that will later prove difficult to shatter. Though misogynistic, conduct books for women did not always exist with the sole intention of oppression. Ellis's *The Women of England* seeks to help Victorian women thrive in their domestic roles, reflecting a reactionary form of feminism that assumes compliance within the patriarchal system without the intention to reform it. The guidance presented within *The Women*

of England indicates the expectation of women to remain complicit within their sphere of domesticity, defining success as demonstrating the most personal influence possible within it: keeping their husbands' moral weaknesses under control.

The form of Ellis's domestic conduct book is compatible with the female-dominated private sphere. On the other hand, Caroline Norton's *A Letter to the Queen* employs the traditionally feminine form of writing—the letter—to enter the male-dominated sphere of political writing. The palatable language of letters translates into an available and accessible way for women to write in the Victorian period. Norton's letter provides her with space to critique controversial ideas and systems, namely England's laws concerning marriage rights and women's personhood, without immediately transgressing gender boundaries by appearing overly masculine upon first impression. In her letter, Norton opposes the lack of "legal existence" allocated to women alongside the implications this lack of autonomy—it forbade women from making wills, claiming their earnings, or filing for divorce (Norton 8–11). Using the form of the letter, Norton contrasts elements of femininity with more blunt and masculine diction. This masculine writing style allows her work, upon publication, to reach a legislative audience—one that might have chosen to discard her work as presumptuous had she decided to present it as a more formal legal document, such as an official pleading. Alongside this advantage, the epistolary genre also allows Norton to tailor her writing to suit a single subject: Queen Victoria. In addressing a powerful political figure directly, Norton clarifies her intention of direct and tangible change for Victorian women in England through the reform of martial laws. Norton's chosen form is a considerable aspect of what makes her letter so influential, as it concerns both the gendered implications of letter writing as well as her intended audience.

Like their forms, the content of Ellis and Norton's writing further indicates their stance on Victorian gender roles. In *The Women of England*, Ellis describes the "secret in-

fluence" women have in society as they relieve men from the responsibility of thinking and acting for themselves and leading them ethically through life (Ellis 411). She then notes that this work is often undervalued, particularly by women themselves, as they feel that they hold little influence over society. Ellis counters this assumption and explores the significance of women's natural moral superiority, arguing that Victorian businessmen require this moral assistance more than ever as the individualistic aspects of capitalist work rush to corrupt and contaminate them (413). Women, remaining in the domestic sphere, can abstain from this corruption. In the feminist anthology *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Women*, Carol Christ notes a similar concept, writing that "[r]eligious doubt and the viciously competitive atmosphere of business combined to threaten the stability of many traditional religious and moral values" (Christ 146). These values were then "relocated … in the home and in the woman who was its center" (Christ 146). The perceived inherent ability of women to remain unimpaired by the "pecuniary objects which too often constitute the chief end of man" allows them to retain this position of ethical righteousness, a skill which then influences and ultimately benefits men (Ellis 411). In her conduct book, Ellis aims to provide the framework upon which a Victorian woman can build a successful and fulfilling life: by remaining submissive and morally pure.

Conduct books such as *The Women of England* communicate to women that their work carries insurmountable influence over society, yet this work is awarded little formal recognition. Women's work is often done in darkness, exemplified in Ellis's description of a working husband returning home in the evening, confused by the moral dilemmas that he encounters throughout the workday, to be comforted by his wife and the remembrance of her upstanding morality and ethical reasoning (Ellis 413). He is said to stand "corrected before the clear eye of [women]" as she detects the "lurking evil" within him and then works to repair it (Ellis 412). The light of her work, her moral influence, is shone entirely onto her husband, remedying his troubles; howev-

er, the patriarchy downplays the importance of emotional labour and thus contradicts its apparent necessity in keeping society intact.

Distinguishing herself from Ellis, Norton clarifies her intent to reach other powerful political figures by publishing her work in 1855. Scholars credit Norton's focus in passing England's Marriage and Divorce act of 1857—an act that allowed both men and women to file for divorce, though only in cases of adultery, cruelty, or desertion (Savage 103). Norton's *A Letter to the Queen* outlines the sexist marriage laws that essentially defined women as secondary, subhuman citizens, limiting their control over their own lives and decisions. The Victorian woman held very little power politically and economically, lacking the ability to claim her earnings, defend herself in a divorce trial, or enter a contract, among other patriarchal laws (Norton 11–12). Norton condemns the legislative erasure of women's autonomy—married women were "non-existent" under the law and lost financial control over their assets (Norton 4). The law justifies the lack of economic and political power it granted to married women, in part because of the scientifically dubious claim that men are fundamentally independent and that women are fundamentally dependent (Steinbach 166). Regardless of the lack of scientific evidence to support this claim, the perceived natural dominance of the male gender was weaponized within Victorian England's legal system to assert authority over its women.

Similarly essential to the analysis of their influence are the styles of Ellis and Norton's writing. Ellis's *The Women of England* is noticeably descriptive, embellished, and emotional, exemplified within the book's metaphoric passages that confirm women's moral importance through comparison with the earth. In these passages, Ellis writes that women regularly nourish their husbands in their "lovely bosoms" and that this support is never-ending: she claims that even when the sun is "shrouded, and the showers forget to fall, and blighting winds go forth," women still open their "hidden fountains" and yield their resources to "invigorate, to cherish, and sustain" (Ellis 410). In emphasizing the beau-

tiful nature of women as they share their never-ending resources with those around them, Ellis reinforces the idea of inherent female morality as glamorous and attractive. She makes a careful comparison between women and the earth, choosing to highlight the innately nurturing and dependable nature of both. Thus, Ellis's romanticization of unwavering womanly support promotes the construction of subservient femininity as prestigious and rewarding. *The Women of England* does not seek to inspire women's resistance to their patriarchal society, but instead hopes to explain the innate beauty and utility that the patriarchy supports.

Unlike Ellis's poetic diction, Norton's writing style is factual, plain, and argumentative. Though presented in a traditionally feminine form, Norton's writing is masculine in style and serious in tone. She does not hesitate to draw attention to the inequity found within England's marriage laws, highlighting that "[as] her husband, he has a right to all that is hers: as his wife, she has no right to anything that is his" (Norton 13). This somber and masculine style allows her work to be taken seriously in a society that values masculinity over femininity and male voices over female ones. Her masculine writing style is especially apparent in her summary of England's marriage laws: "A married woman in England has no legal existence: her being is absorbed in that of her husband … An English wife cannot legally claim her own earnings … An English wife may not leave her husband's house" (Norton 8–10). Norton abstains from emotional appeals and first-person pronouns, instead focusing on the absurdity in the laws themselves. The contrasting stylistic choices throughout Ellis and Norton's works signal the different audiences and objectives of each piece: Ellis appeals to women searching for success within a patriarchal system, whereas Norton appeals to the politically powerful—those who uphold the system itself.

Supporting Norton's desire to establish legal change through her writing is her will to expose the hypocrisy encompassing the legal structure of Victorian England, notably the Queen's authority itself. Norton highlights "the grotesque anomaly which ordains that married women shall be

'non-existent' in a country governed by a female Sovereign," stressing that these marriage laws "cannot become 'the law of the land' without [Her] Majesty's assent" (Norton 4). The strong language in the phrase "grotesque anomaly" affirms Norton's frustration towards this injustice, a controversial emotion for a woman to express under Victorian social conventions as it contrasts the pleasant and agreeable demeanour expected of femininity. Norton does not embellish her intentions; instead, she contrasts the Queen's utmost authority with the subjugation of the rest of England's women. This efficient and stark language demonstrates women's capability in realms other than that of the intellectually unstimulating household and, as a result, advocates that women deserve personal rights on par with Victorian men.

Though education opened the door for female employment, most formal involvement in traditionally masculine fields (such as politics) remained inaccessible to women. If, as Ellis believes, England's integrity rests on the shoulders of its women, why would the power of inherent female morality not suffice as a reason to place women in positions of political power where their influence could theoretically have the furthest reach? Similarly, why would feminist complaints of ethical shortcomings not suffice as an adequate reason to reform the misogynistic marriage laws outlined by Norton? Why, to enact real change, must women present their arguments in the most apathetic way possible? If women's morality is as crucial for the development of wiser, better men—and therefore a wiser, better society—women in positions of political power should be similarly accepted. In reality, this remains untrue. The discrepancy between the idea of women as moral authorities and their actual ability to assert influence over ethical matters in the public sphere is immensely confining.

The form, content, and style of Norton and Ellis's writings embody how Victorian conceptions of emotion facilitated the stratification and glorification of gender roles, confining women to domestic tasks and limiting their involvement in the public sphere. Though Ellis argues, in *The Women of England,* that the inherent morality of women is

essential to the integrity of society, it remains undervalued as a commodity from which women can profit. This devaluation is exemplified through the straightforward and unembellished style of Norton's *A Letter to the Queen*, which maintains the narrative that the public sphere was only accessible to women by appearing as masculine as possible. In understanding how the Victorians both perceived and valued emotion, one can understand the patriarchal structure of nineteenth-century Britain alongside the widely shared schools of thought that allowed it to flourish. Ultimately, Victorian discourses on emotionality, placed within a capitalist and industrialist setting, capture not only the contentious nature of the Woman Question but also how these claims affected women themselves—shaping how women responded to and eventually challenged their socially prescribed roles. The pursuit of prosperity under a patriarchal system is demanding and ambiguous; authors akin to Ellis fell victim to the promise of domestic success, while others such as Norton provided the rhetorical framework for modern understandings of gender and gendered obligations.

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"They All Leaned Over While She Talked": Storytelling and Community in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Emily Frampton

Abstract: This essay explores the intersections of class, and gender in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) and explains how these oppressive structures work against Janie in her pursuit of truth and acceptance. By examining the social structures represented by each of Janie's husbands, I argue that Janie's dream becomes irreconcilable within her reality. Moreover, I suggest that her idealized dream becomes one that can only be achieved through storytelling, wherein Janie can form an empathetic metafictional community bond with an audience that might respond to and reciprocate her intense longing for acceptance.

The frame narrative within Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) reveals the constraints on Janie's dream of self-actualization through reciprocity. Janie's story centres around her relationships: her first with Logan Killicks, her second with Joe Starks, and her third with Tea Cake. The problems that arise with each of Janie's husbands—who come to represent the oppressive structures of class, race, and gender—suggest that Janie's dream is irreconcilable with her reality, as she cannot find the acceptance of community and self-fulfillment she desires through marriage. Her idealized dream becomes one that can only be achieved through storytelling, wherein Janie can imagine an audience that might respond to and reciprocate her intense longing for acceptance, in effect, forming a metafictional community with readers of the novel.

Janie's dream is awakened in her adolescence as she sits underneath a blossoming pear tree, watching the bees join with the leaf buds in "[love's] embrace" (Hurston 11). Janie describes this moment as the moment her "conscious life had commenced" (10). After Janie watches the bees interact with the pear blossoms, she decides that "this was a marriage!"—a physically ecstatic and reciprocal union between partners (11). Janie's desire for fulfillment (through reciprocity, sexual gratification, and community) becomes associated with this connection between the pear tree and the bees. In addition to the erotic imagery associated with Janie's burgeoning womanhood—the "snowy virginity of bloom" and the "creaming of every blossom"—there is a repeated need for intellectual discourse (10–11). Janie's young mind opens, and she feels bombarded by questions: "[W]here? When? How?" (11). She believes she finds the answer to these questions in the meaning of the word "marriage." Janie's awakening beneath the pear tree is the first instance wherein Janie's truth is associated with language and meaning. For young Janie, the abstract concept of marriage will import the true meaning of her dream: a sense of fulfillment symbolized by the union of the bees and the blossoms and an emerging need for intellectual discourse. However, Janie's desire for fulfillment in marriage turns to disillusion during her subsequent marriages.

Janie's husband Logan Killicks provides a critique of the social and economic hierarchy that constrains Janie's dream. Janie's marriage to Logan, as presented by Nanny, Janie's grandmother, is supposed to represent freedom from economic burden and protection from preying young men (Hurston 15). However, Nanny's vision of Janie's freedom conflicts with her own; Logan should bring Janie fulfillment, but he does not. Nanny dreams for Janie to be "sittin' on high" without having to worry about being used as a "work-ox and a brood sow"—free from physical and sexual labour (16). Janie accepts the union under the pretense that "she would love Logan after they were married," as marriage would "end [her] cosmic loneliness" (21). However, Janie's lack of physical interest in Logan quickly leaves her

disillusioned with marriage. Logan's financial stability does not bring Janie any fulfillment; this union inspires neither love nor community, and it does not answer her internal questions. Therefore, Janie becomes aware that marriage does not equate to love and does not fulfill her dream—she is confronted by the limitations of words as she realizes they do not coincide with their meaning. Although reconciled with the failures of language, Janie continues to search for acceptance and fulfillment, only now she realizes her dream exists outside of the bounds of traditional meaning. She yearns to express a "song forgotten in another existence and remembered again" (10). Janie begins to understand that her dream does not exist within the confines of her marriage and instead exists within her desire for storytelling and community, revealed in her marriage to Joe Starks.

Janie's second union, her marriage to Joe Starks, represents further constraints on her dream of acceptance within marriage. Joe's upper-middle-class status allows him to become "a big voice" within Eatonville, the coloured community he establishes (Hurston 28). Janie is drawn to Joe by his desire to foster community; but, despite her initial attraction, she is once more disillusioned as she realizes that Joe's ideal community depends on him acting as an authority figure rather than a member of the community. Joe's power within Eatonville further alienates Janie, as he often excludes her from public events, such as the burying of the mule and telling jokes on the porch of his store. Joe effectively denies Janie the ability to communicate and connect with the community through storytelling. This alienation from community storytelling is detrimental for Janie; as described in Amanda Bailey's article "Necessary Narration in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*," narrative opportunities "open up new forms of knowledge and new connections between individuals to one another and to society at large" (321). Janie cannot engage in these forms of storytelling, so she is unable to connect with the Eatonville community and her husband. Furthermore, the socioeconomic hierarchy imposed by Joe's capitalist advancements constrains Janie's dream, as she feels the weight of class demarcation hinders

her ability to achieve community and personal fulfillment. The community no longer accepts Janie due to her proximity to Joe, as she "slept with authority" and was therefore implicated in his classist regime (Hurston 47). Alienated from her community, she is objectified and fetishized, which aggrandizes Joe and subjugates Janie within a specific gendered role. "The spirit of the marriage left the bedroom and took to living in the parlor" where she had resigned herself to exist as another symbol of Joe's power (71). Hurston implies that economic division is antithetical to a sense of community, as it inhibits Janie from telling stories—barring her from her dream.

After Joe's death, Janie experiences partial fulfillment of her dream with her next husband Tea Cake while working on the muck in the Everglades. Janie is openly accepted and is allowed to partake in the community: she can "listen and laugh and even talk some herself if she wanted to," and she joins Tea Cake in hunting, fishing, and working (Hurston 134). Moreover, her union with Tea Cake is relatively devoid of rigid divisions of labour, unlike her previous marriages. However, the egalitarian illusion of the muck shatters upon the death of Tea Cake. When Janie is forced to kill Tea Cake after he is bitten by a rabid dog, her perceived community swiftly turns on her, calling for her execution. The men of the muck community take a staunchly gendered position against her, blaming her for Tea Cake's death and believing she had "took up with another man" and left him (186). Moreover, the men associate Janie with the white audience of the courtroom, claiming, "Well, long as she don't shoot no white man," she could get away with killing anyone (189); meanwhile, the white women listen to Janie's testimony: "they all [lean] over while she [talks]" and validate her innocence through their acceptance of her, while the muck community resents her (187). The trial represents the moment wherein Janie loses community acceptance. The egalitarian nature of the muck diverts along gendered lines; despite her previous imaginings of community, she is reduced to her identity as a woman—one who can be easily turned on and disposed of. Therefore, Janie's dream

is not realized on the muck either. Desolated, she returns to Eatonville, exiled from a community she had once thought inclusive, to join a community where she knows she will not be accepted.

Janie's dream is only realized in her reflections on the past and telling her story to her friend Pheoby upon her return to Eatonville. Janie's narrative retelling provides her with a final opportunity to find community. Literary scholar Tim Peoples explains that "Janie develops through the act of self-expression; her emergence into self-actualization is contingent on narrative" (187). The novel's central framing device is Janie's retelling of her story to Pheoby in order to achieve community acceptance as Janie views storytelling as the only way to achieve community connection. As Janie describes, storytelling is an act of the "oldest human longing—self revelation" (Hurston 7). Janie's dream is, therefore, expressed through storytelling: she conveys her own lived experiences through narration to create a mutual bond between the reader and storyteller. According to Nicole M. Morris Johnson, Pheoby is the necessary vessel for Janie's narrative as she represents a "liminal figure—an accepted member of the Eatonville community" who allows Janie the "most favorable chance for receiving the understanding that she desires" (87). By the end of Janie's narrative, Pheoby states that "[she] done growed ten feet higher from jus' listenin' tuh … Janie," exemplifying the change that Janie inspired within her (Hurston 192). Moreover, Pheoby's reaction to Janie's story demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between the bees and the pear blossoms from Janie's first dream. Janie experiences catharsis by telling her story, while Pheoby benefits from hearing it. The reciprocity associated with Janie's storytelling enables her to achieve acceptance from her listener.

It is this metafictional connection between audience/reader and storyteller/author that the novel focuses on in its conclusion. This relationship arouses questions regarding the empathetic connection between these groups; namely, can readers be trusted with the task of relaying and identifying with Janie's story, despite having not lived

it themselves? Although Janie claims, "you got tuh go there tuh know there" (Hurston 192), the novel's use of free indirect discourse creates the opportunity for readers to go there themselves—to form a bond and community with Janie. Bailey ponders Hurston's use of free indirect discourse and the community it inspires: it allows readers to "consider a life beyond [their] own experience … enough for [them] to feel that [they] are feeling with her," which is, "after all … what story-telling is all about" (326–27). Therefore, by using free indirect discourse, the novel facilitates an empathetic bond between author and reader. Janie "becomes a model for new ways of conceptualizing community" through storytelling and the "performance of personal narrative" (Morris Johnson 88). Pheoby, the reciprocator for Janie's narrative and a vessel for the reader, has "in a sense, lived that life and experienced that knowledge in a real way, even without 'going there' herself" (Bailey 331). By the novel's conclusion, Janie has found community in the promise of narrative retelling, rather than in Eatonville.

Their Eyes Were Watching God demonstrates the impact that stories have on their listeners and the possibilities of connection through storytelling. Janie forms an emphatic community bond through her narrative voice, releases the memories within her, and achieves her dream of mutual reciprocity: "the kiss of his memory made pictures of love and light against the wall. Here was peace" (Hurston 193). Janie's dream of community reciprocity is only realized within her moments of reflection through the retelling of her story. Janie uses her story to import a sense of community with her audience. Throughout the novel, Janie finds her dream constrained by socioeconomic, gendered, and racial structures. It is only through storytelling that she can escape these structures and dare to achieve fulfillment through narration and empathetic community bonds. Janie ends the novel experiencing the promise of mutual reciprocity, a desire aroused by her initial dream, through narrative storytelling.

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"Madeleine! That Madwoman!": Gothic Tropes in Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*

Scott Matthews

Abstract: While works of Southern Ontario Gothic fiction attempt to distinguish themselves from their American and British predecessors, they ultimately rely on tropes from the Gothic tradition. Alice Munro's novel *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971) invokes these Gothic tropes, including the flatly characterized domestic madwoman who is debased through a zoomorphic depiction. By first emphasizing the liminality of her quintessentially Canadian setting, Munro not only subtly informs her depiction of women but also differentiates the Southern Ontario Gothic genre from its American and British counterparts.

In Graeme Gibson's 1973 collection of interviews with Canadian authors, Timothy Findley coined the term "Southern Ontario Gothic" to categorize works of Canadian fiction that explore the "merciless forces of Perfectionism, Propriety, Presbyterianism, and Prudence" (Hepburn and Hurley). Alice Munro's *The Lives of Girls and Women* (1971) is the narrator-protagonist Del Jordan's account of growing up in Southern Ontario and is a notable example of this niche genre of Gothic fiction. While the genre seeks to distinguish itself from its American and British counterparts, several familiar Gothic tropes—including madness, spatial liminality, and confinement—are presented in Munro's novel. In the opening section titled "The Flats Road," the novel employs the Gothic trope of the domestic madwoman to reflect the liminality of the isolated setting. Thus, the novel reinforces the importance of the connection between character and setting in the Gothic tradition.

The novel portrays Del's Uncle Benny's home on the

Flats Road as a liminal space before presenting the Gothic trope of the domestic madwoman. The novel opens with a description of Uncle Benny's home, which is situated at the demarcation between wilderness and civilization: his home is "Away at the edge of the bush—the bush that turned into swamp, a mile further in" (Munro 4). Uncle Benny's home's proximity to the wilderness evokes Cynthia Sugars' assessment of early Canadian Gothic writings that present the Canadian frontier as filled with monstrosities and Gothic in its vast emptiness (Sugars 20). Munro further emphasizes this spatial ambiguity with the animals Uncle Benny keeps caged on his property. Between his house and the bush "were several pens in which he had always some captive animals—a half-tame golden ferret, a couple of wild mink, [and] a red fox whose leg had been torn in a trap" (Munro 4). Like the house that is situated in a space that is neither completely wild nor civilized, the descriptions of Uncle Benny's animals suggest they are neither wild nor domesticated: the ferret is "half-tame," the fox is only tame due to its debilitating injury, and the raccoons are "fond of chewing gum" (4). Munro also employs animalistic comparisons in the description of Uncle Benny, further blurring the distinction between wild and civilized in this setting: he has "fierce eyes, a delicate predatory face" (4), and he smells like "fish, furred animals, [and] swamp" (10). Both the human and animal inhabitants of the Flats Road are intimately connected to their semi-wild surroundings, and the bilateral anthropomorphic and zoomorphic descriptions reflect the spatial uncertainty of Uncle Benny's house.

Animalistic characterizations also inform the settings in literature from the Southern United States. In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), the motif of the animalistic human is invoked through Jem's description of Boo Radley: "Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were bloodstained" (13). Like Uncle Benny, Boo's ambiguous characterization as simultaneously human and animal underscores the moral ambiguity of Maycomb County; while the community presents

itself as morally upright, the town's deep-seated racial prejudices become evident over the course of Tom Robinson's trial. The question of miscegenation in American novelist William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) elicits a similar destabilizing effect in the fictional Yoknapatawhpha County by blurring the distinction between slaves, who are often reductively compared to animals, and white citizens. As in *Lives of Girls and Women*, the conflation between human and animal in these examples of Gothic fiction from the American South emphasizes the moral and spatial liminality of their settings.

While Benny's animalistic description demonstrates his connection to his liminal environment, the zoomorphic descriptions of Uncle Benny's wife, Madeleine, indicate her propensity for violence. When Benny invites Del and her brother Owen to discreetly meet Madeleine's infant daughter Diane, Owen is more interested in seeing Benny's ferret; conversely, Del is intrigued to see Madeleine, the newest addition to Uncle Benny's menagerie of captive beings. Del's mother eventually warns her children to not "go over there, never mind about the ferret, I don't want anybody maimed" (18). Rather than worry about the potential harm caused by the ferret, Del's mother zoomorphizes Benny's new wife by worrying she would leave her children "maimed." Sadly, Del's mother's warning becomes prophetic when it is later revealed that Madeleine is physically abusing her infant daughter. Del's father further dehumanizes Madeleine when he compares her to a "pack of wildcats" (19). These predatory descriptions of Madeleine follow other examples of Gothic fiction in which animalistic comparisons are used to subtly emphasize character traits. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Scout Finch's last name emphasizes her innocence while Mayella Ewell is described as a "steady-eyed cat with a twitchy tail" (Lee 181) to underscore her deceitfulness that will ultimately cost Tom Robinson his life. Furthermore, animal comparisons are often used in conjunction with spatial confinement to emphasize the Gothic horror within a domestic setting. For example, Bertha Mason, the "madwoman in the attic" from Charlotte Brontë's

Jane Eyre (1847), is compared to a wild animal when Jane first sees her:

> In the deep shade at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell; it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal. (Brontë 293)

Like Madeleine, Bertha Mason is zoomorphized while locked in her domestic setting. In these examples from American, British, and Southern Ontarian Gothic fiction, the presentation of the supposedly violent and animalistic female raises a question of infinite regression: are these individuals entrapped because of their supposed propensities to violence, or is their violence a result of their entrapment? The motif of the domestically caged female engages the initial presentation of the setting in which there is a seamless transition between humans and animals. Like the animals on Benny's property, the women confined to their domestic settings become both animalistic grotesqueries and figures of sympathy.

The novel also explicitly invokes the motif of the Gothic madwoman through Madeleine's initial introduction and subsequent concealment. After Uncle Benny asks for Del's help in answering a classified advertisement for a wife, he quickly receives a response from Madeleine's brother. Like Bertha Mason, who is presented to Mr. Rochester by her father and shipped away from her Jamaican home, Madeleine is commodified by her brother and similarly geographically displaced when she becomes Benny's reluctant bride. Benny fails to introduce his new wife to Del's family, and Madeleine remains confined to Uncle Benny's home, much like Bertha Mason at Thornfield Hall or Mayella Ewell in her family home "behind the town garbage dump" (Lee 170). Del's mother suggests to Benny, "you'll have to bring your bride to see us" (Munro 16), yet Benny's repetitive affirmations to this suggestion paradoxically indicate his intention to conceal Madeleine. Del recollects that "Uncle Benny said he would. He said yes he sure would. As soon as she got

herself together after the trip, yes, he sure would" (16). The repetitious affirmations are ominously negated in the next paragraph that begins, "But he didn't. There was no sign of Madeleine" (16). Like the entrapped and geographically displaced Bertha Mason, who is locked away in Thornfield Hall by Mr. Rochester, Madeleine is only tentatively introduced to Del and the reader when she arrives on the Flats Road.

Munro's novel also establishes the permeable barrier between truth and fiction on the Flats Road to allow for the further debasement of the Gothically caricatured madwoman. Like Bertha Mason, whose story is told by Mr. Rochester since she is afforded no lines of dialogue in *Jane Eyre* (Atherton), Madeleine's story becomes malleable when she is no longer present. After leaving Benny unexpectedly, the memory of Madeleine gradually changes from tragic to comedic in the minds of Del and her family. Del recalls that "After a while we would all just laugh, remembering Madeleine" (Munro 27). Although Madeleine's story involves the abuse of her infant child, the people of the Flats Road remember it "like a story" that "Uncle Benny could have made up" (27). The novel relies on the thin distinction between the grotesque and the intriguing that is quintessentially Gothic—the woman that once invoked fear in Del gradually becomes a laughable distant memory. Benny uses a similar strategy when Del's mother realizes that Diane's bruises were a result of parental abuse: Benny "started chuckling [and] he couldn't stop, it was like hiccoughs" (21). Rather than address the horror of Madeleine abusing her child, the family reconfigures the memory into a comic and, therefore, manageable memory by simply remembering her as "Madeleine! That madwoman!" (27).

The descriptions of the other female inhabitants of Flats Road further emphasize the gendered Gothic debasement of women as fictional motifs. While describing the Flats Road, Del discusses Irene Pollox, one of the "two idiots on the road" (8). Del remembers Irene as a threatening figure who would "hang over her gate crowing and flapping like a drunken rooster" (9). Del also recalls that Irene was ghostlike since she is "white-haired" with skin as "white as

goosefeathers" (9). The description of Irene relies on several of the same Gothic tropes that characterize Bertha Mason and Mayella Ewell: by placing Irene behind her "gate" she is spatially confined to her property, while the figurative comparison to a rooster is a zoomorphic debasement. Irene becomes a further embodiment of the Gothic madwoman who is reflective of the unsettling space she inhabits. She is simultaneously a person and animal, a spectre and human, and a victim and villain.

While Southern Ontario Gothic literature differentiates itself from its American and British predecessors through its reliance on the inimitable Canadian landscape, it simultaneously relies on familiar Gothic motifs, including the domestic madwoman and zoomorphic character descriptions. Despite these similarities, the novel uses the spatial liminality of the Flats Road to distinguish itself within the Gothic genre. Del's description of the Flats Road, in which the distinctions between wild/civilized and truth/fiction are permeable, demonstrates the essential connection between characters and their surroundings in this niche genre of Canadian fiction.

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Atonement and Its Discontents: A Genealogy of Retribution in Alissa York's *Fauna*

Brayden Tate

Abstract: This essay will connect the historical roots of the ideology of retribution to its manifestation and critique in Alissa York's *Fauna* (2010). While this ideology has its roots in Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo*, I will argue that the novel depicts the ongoing influence and potential dangers of this ideology, ultimately offering a vision of how to sublimate past wrongs without recourse to violence or retribution. This essay focuses on the character of Darius and the socio-historical origins of his beliefs and actions.

Alissa York's *Fauna* (2010) depicts the dangers of understanding justice as retribution, personifying these dangers through the characters of Darius and his grandfather. In the Western Christian tradition, retribution has historically been central to doctrinal and theological concerns. Beginning with Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo* ("Why a God Man" or "Why God Became a Man"), the Christian West has historically emphasized the satisfaction theory of atonement[1]—in short, the belief that God has been robbed of His glory through humanity's disobedience and requires retribution, which is satisfied by the death of Christ (Anselm 296–98). Fredrich Nietzsche famously analyzed the cultural legacy of this vision of justice as retribution,[2] but I will focus on how this legacy animates the form and thematic content of *Fauna* to offer a contextualized reading

1 Atonement: "The doctrine concerning the reconciliation of God and humankind, esp. as accomplished through the life, suffering, and death of Christ" ("atonement." *Collins Dictionary*).

2 See especially "Beyond Good and Evil" and "On the Genealogy of Morals."

of Darius and his grandfather's retributive understanding of justice. This attention to these theories is not to suggest York's direct engagement with them but to uncover the latent origins of some of the novel's thematic content. I will thus argue that *Fauna* is a novel interested in the continuing legacy of certain theological discourses and that it presents these discourses as subjects for critique and something to overcome.

Fauna positions Darius as a character deeply concerned with what he conceives as the social order and the psychological consequences of changes to it. Seeing himself as a vigilante, Darius believes he will restore the social order through the form of justice that dominates his understanding, retribution. Darius's retributive justice first appears in his first blog post about Toronto's coyote population: "They get in. And its [sic] our job to get them out" (York 37). By referring to the coyotes as "vermin" (38) and desiring to "wip[e] them out" (37), Darius depicts them as destructive to the social world of humanity that he believes takes precedence over, and is distinct from, the natural world. However, the novel uses analepsis to provide the harrowing context of Darius's beliefs. By providing this context, these flashbacks serve as protection against the demonization of Darius.

After the death of his mother, Darius moves in with his grandmother and fundamentalist grandfather, a traumatic part of his upbringing, which engenders his obsession with retribution. Before moving in with his grandparents, Darius had had little exposure to Christianity. This ignorance toward the faith would soon change. During the first dinner with his grandparents, Darius sets a fourth seat at the table for Jesus, "the younger man-not-man" (York 163). He also hears his grandfather pray for God to "protect [them] from the governments that would run [them] down like lambs to slaughter, and from all the Churches that make a mockery of [God's] holy name" (164). Most importantly, Darius hears the reason for the empty fourth seat: "to honour the sacrifice He made" (164). Therefore, through this dinner and the many that follow it, Darius is consistently made aware of

Jesus' crucifixion as a sacrifice propitiating God's retribution on sinful, disobedient humanity. Moreover, his grandfather tacitly likens the death of Darius's mother, Faye, to a substitutionary sacrifice that allows the boy to return to the house of his mother's childhood by "[God's] righteous and merciful hand" (164). Moments like these at the dinner table influence Darius's belief in the requirement of retribution to protect the social order (as he conceives it) from "all the wickedness of the world" (164).

Darius's experience of physical abuse through repeated beatings by his grandfather is another aspect of his upbringing that influences his sense of justice as retribution. Returning to Anselm, the satisfaction theory of atonement has gained many critiques since its inception; for example, by depicting God the Father as punishing His Son for the sake of others, the theory naturalizes abuse and retribution (Weaver 334–36). In *Fauna*, the imagination of Darius's grandfather is saturated by the satisfaction theory of atonement: when his honour is threatened by Darius's illegitimate conception, he seeks retribution through violence towards his innocent wife and grandson.

The abuse Darius receives inspires his curious interpretation of C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), which his grandmother reads to him in secret to avoid punishment from his grandfather and further feeds his retributive mind. For example, when his grandmother tells him that his mother used to enjoy having her name replace Lucy's, Darius asks if he can be Edmund (York 267–68). Darius's grandmother asks "Are you sure? He has a pretty rough time of it," to which Darius only nods (268). Darius's identification with Edmund whilst knowing "he has a pretty rough time of it" demonstrates his growing sense of retribution and, even, sadomasochism. In this essay, I will generally use "sadism" to refer to Darius's later desire to inflict pain, a desire caused by theologies of retribution and his abusive past, and "masochism" to refer to his growing enjoyment of receiving pain as a child. However, in this passage of the novel, both sadism and masochism are developing in Darius (hence my use of the portmanteau

"sadomasochism") because he enjoys the abuse inflicted on another person, a person he identifies himself with. For instance, "when Peter called his younger brother a poisonous little beast, Darius felt the injury keenly and shared in the dark fantasies it spawned" (York 270). In other words, Darius begins to pathologically enjoy the abuse committed against others and himself.[3]

Moreover, Darius has a difficult time believing that Edmund-Darius "was forgiven by them all" (272), but when he finds out that "Edmund-Darius was a traitor, and according to the deep magic, the White Witch was owed his blood," Darius "nodded and began believing again" (272). Connecting this passage to the subjects of retribution and abuse, Darius has an easier time believing that he is guilty and deserving of punishment than being forgiven and loved, a sign of masochism. When Aslan is effectively crucified in the story,[4] the story becomes real to him, "so real it threatened to drag Darius down and hold him under" (273), thus showing how his imagination is saturated with images of retribution and abuse to the point that he identifies with imaginative works when they present such content. Lastly, Darius is not satisfied when Aslan kills the White Witch because "there was bloodletting, but not the particular blood Darius longed for" (274). This dissatisfaction suggests that the violence is not violent enough for him or that, foreshadowing his grandfather's confrontation with the cougar, he wishes it was his grandfather's blood—sadism developing out of his masochism.

Darius's blog post decrying people "turning … the other cheek" (277) on the coyote "problem" and describing how he killed and mutilated a coyote presents his retributive sadism. By telling his readers "you will want to be there" (278) when the animals are dying from cyanide poisoning, Darius demonstrates his enjoyment in the suffering of oth-

3 Darius also partially embodies Freud's outlining of a triphasic progression to sadomasochistic fantasies produced by corporal punishment (see "A Child is Being Beaten").

4 For a detailed analysis of the connection of Aslan's death to Christian theories of atonement, see Brazier 296–303.

ers, especially when it fulfills his sense of retribution as justice. Also, by criticizing people "turning . . . the other cheek," he turns against Jesus's critique of retributive justice ("but if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also" *NRSV*, Matt. 5.38–39) and thus shows greater affinity for the passage Jesus refers to in His critique ("eye for eye, tooth for tooth" Lev. 24.20). In his response to this blog post, Stephen condemns Darius's actions and is bewildered that, even after all his violence, Darius is "not satisfied" (York 286). Stephen sees Darius's violent acts as an (ineffective) attempt to stop a "low-down feeling" of fear (286), but what Darius fears is surveillance—he "suggests to readers of his blog that watching is never benign: it is necessarily predatory and dangerous" (Dean 146). Given Darius's history of abuse and, related to this abuse, his constant paranoia of being watched, Stephen's observation is astute.

In the last flashback to Darius's childhood with his grandparents, there is a recounting of the event that led to the death of his grandmother and the solidification of his retributive sadomasochism. The novel initially presents the event as traumatic because it seems to depict the death of Darius's grandfather in a cougar attack. However, as the chapter unfolds, it is revealed that his grandfather survives the attack, while his grandmother perishes in her attempt to use the attack as an escape from her abusive husband, leaving Darius alone with his grandfather (York 360). Unlike the children in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, who close their eyes when Aslan is killed, Darius does not close his eyes while he watches the attack, revealing his fixation with sacrifice (York 355). When "the Mountie let slip exactly where Grandmother had died," Darius begins to see himself as "the chunk of meat you throw back over your shoulder while you're sprinting for the gate" (360). In other words, Darius sees himself as a sacrifice that allows for the "salvation" of others, the freedom of his mother and grandmother from his grandfather. This self-image solidifies Darius's pathological obsession with retributive sadomasochism.

In the novel's climax, Darius waits outside a coyote den and is confronted by a coyote. However, the coyote does not attack but actually "startles him by staying put" (367). This passivity subverts Darius's projection, caused by the trauma of his abuse, on the coyotes as vicious predators and his sense that he is guilty and deserving of punishment. This subversion destabilizes his understanding of the world, leaving him brooding over if he should shoot or "surprise everyone, including himself, and abandon the gun—leave it to rust away into nothing, rise up and run for his life" (368). For Darius, shooting would be to choose retribution and thus the side of his grandfather, while running would be to choose to "turn the other cheek" and thus the side of his mother and grandmother. At this impasse, Darius experiences a "new-born feebleness" (368) that leaves him unable to act out his retributive sadism and reminds him of his previous beatings in his grandparents' outhouse; he recalls "his belt-scarred buttocks … [and] there's an odour to the feeling, a sudden putrid waft" (368). However, since he is still psychically trapped in the framework of retribution as justice, Darius takes his own life. In other words, although Darius may no longer explicitly attach this framework to Christianity, he still operates as though he has only two choices: either the coyote dies, or he dies. Analogously, this dichotomy is related to the satisfaction theory of atonement where either Christ or the sinner must die to restore God's injured honour.

In the last chapter of *Fauna*, Guy and Edal run over a snapping turtle but do not kill it, a sublimation of the retributive sadism personified by Darius. While the turtle Letty and Edal ran over earlier in the novel is killed, this turtle "appears miraculously unharmed" (373). Moreover, in connection to our focus on Darius, this accident demonstrates the novel's argument for the non-necessity of (animal) sacrifice in order to create and maintain the social order. By resisting death, the turtle asserts itself and nature in the social world of humanity—not just as something to be sacrificed to maintain this world's order, as animals function for Darius, but as something integral to this world irrespective

of humanity. Therefore, the turtle's vitality embodies a critique of violent scapegoating as a solution to psychological and social chaos and thus a critique of Darius's retributive sadism.

In *Fauna*, Darius views coyotes as predatory threats. Ironically, in his fixation on coyotes as predators, Darius comes to embody the actions that he attributes to these animals. This essay has read these actions as rooted in the legacy of satisfaction theories of atonement, which flood his understanding of justice and fuel the abuse Darius received as a child. This essay has thus read *Fauna* as a novel attuned to the potential dangers of these theories, ultimately ending in a critique of this view of justice as retribution. In conclusion, *Fauna* offers a vision of how to sublimate past wrongs, eschewing recourse to violence or retribution.

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EDITORS & CONTRIBUTORS

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Meaghan Bate is a fourth-year English and Professional Writing student. She was born and raised on Vancouver Island and wrote her first "book" at age twelve, although it remains unpublished, unreleased, and unread. She enjoys reading CanLit and watching movie trailers. This is her second year as an editor for *The Albatross* and her final semester at UVic, and she is already nostalgic.

Colleen Bidner is in her third year at UVic, pursuing a double major in Writing and English. She often finds herself daydreaming, singing to herself, and writing while half asleep. Colleen is delighted to return as an editor and copy editor for her second year with *The Albatross*.

Emma Bishop is a fourth-year English major. She currently lives on Salt Spring Island. In her free time, she writes, draws, and reads. Her writing has been published in *The Martlet* and *British Columbia History Magazine*.

Willow Chapman is a third-year English major at UVic. She completed her first two years of study at Camosun College. This is Willow's first year editing for *The Albatross*; she has found reading her peers' work and getting to know the other *Albatross* editors engaging and fun. She is particularly interested in Victorian and Modern literature. In her free time, she enjoys listening to The Smiths and staring out of windows.

Jocelyn Diemer is a second-year English and Religious Studies student with an interest in the early modern period. She is also passionate about medieval female mystics, homosocial triangles, and Paul Bettany as Geoffrey Chaucer in the 2001 film *A Knight's Tale*. This was Jocelyn's first year working with *The Albatross*, and she looks forward to returning as an editor in the future.

Autumn Doucette is a third-year English major from Vernon, BC. Aside from writing academically, Autumn enjoys reading and writing poetry, weightlifting, and baking copious amounts of dessert for her friends. After her undergrad, she plans on pursuing a teaching degree and an MA in English Literature.

Emily Frampton is a fourth-year English major and History minor. This is her first year editing for *The Albatross* and her first year being published. Emily also manages communication for the English Students' Association, where she loves to engage with her fellow ESA members and other UVic English students. When not buried in course work, Emily enjoys reading sappy choose-your-own-adventure romances, hanging out with friends, and working with children.

Madison George-Berlet is a fourth-year English Honours major and a reader and writer of essays. This is her second year as a substantive editor for *The Albatross*. Madison is also the Student Representative for the UVic English Students' Association and enjoys reading, procrastinating, and watching far too many Jane Austen adaptations.

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Errin Johnston-Watson is a fourth-year English major and Professional Communication minor. This is her second year editing for *The Albatross* and, due to COVID-19, the first of four years that she has not been their photographer. Errin is the current President of the English Students' Association and spends most of her free time converting in-person events to digital ones. Errin is very excited to be a part of the journal and is looking forward to another great year.

Allegra Stevenson-Kaplan is a fourth-year English major in her final semester at UVic. Currently, she is a Poetry Editor for *The Warren Undergraduate Review*, the Director of Information for the UVic English Students' Association, and a Research Assistant for the *Crafting Communities* project. Her Honours graduating thesis concerns single mothers and the production of sympathy in Victorian fiction. When she's not writing essays, she can be found dream journaling or writing poetry in the Notes app on her phone.

Kira Keir is a third-year English major. As a passionate writer and freelance editor, she is thrilled to once again edit for *The Albatross*. She can often be found following her nose into tea shops and bakeries. Sadly, she, like many English

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Josiah Lamb is a fourth-year Honours English major with a minor in Greek and Roman Studies. This is her first year editing for *The Albatross* and she is excited to have helped design this year's cover. In September, she will be pursuing her MA in Early Modern Literature at King's College London. She has an *Odyssey* inspired tattoo and is hoping to add more once she finds the time and money.

Maya Linsley is a first-year English student at UVic. She is interested in history, literature, people, and all the various ways in which they intertwine. On the rare occasion when she isn't reading or writing, she enjoys going to ballet class, promoting the co-operative business model, and making films. She hopes to one day find herself wandering through the mystical hallways of the Haruki Murakami library in Tokyo.

Zoe Mathers is a second-year English major and Professional Communication minor. She is passionate about reading young adult novels and philosophical literature and writing stories influenced by mythologies from around the world.

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Dorothy Poon is a fourth-year Honours Sociology student with a minor in Professional Communication, and she is currently working on a research project involving immigrant integration in BC. This is her second year working with *The Albatross* team, and she is delighted to contribute once again to the academic journal. In her free time, Dorothy can be found working on a watercolour painting, reading a good novel at a cafe, or running by the beach.

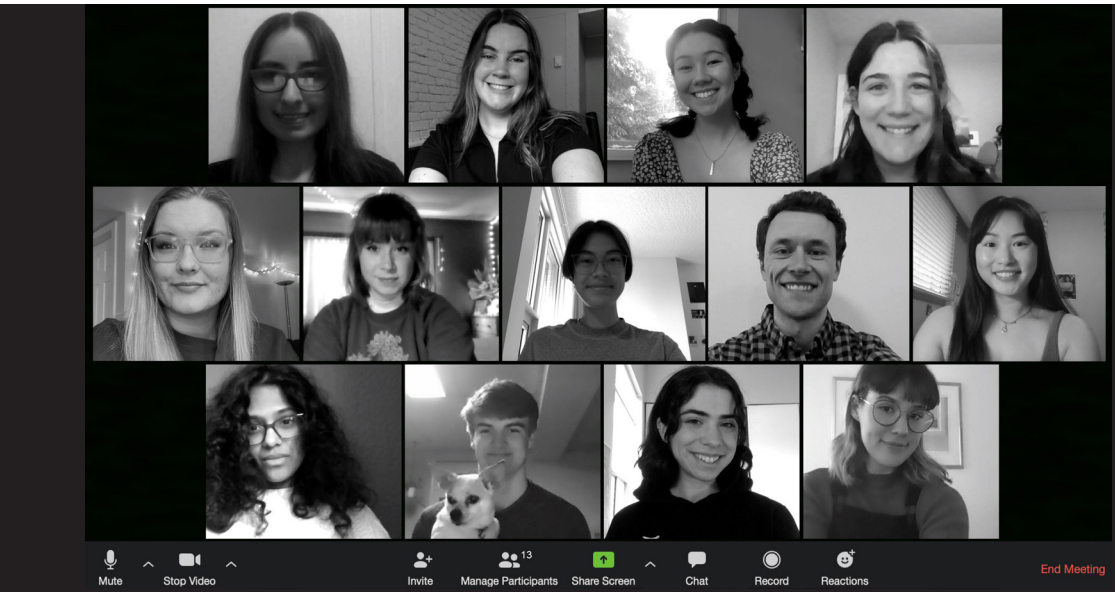
Amogha Lakshmi Halepuram Sridhar is a third-year English and History student and a Research Assistant at UVic. Her research interests include early modern theatre and adaptations, decolonial writing, and Modernist poetry.

Teresa Sammut is an English and Professional Communication student and is graduating this spring. She has enjoyed being part of *The Albatross* over the past two years—last year as an author and this year as deputy editor. She hopes to continue her love of publishing, reading, and writing in a future career in libraries and archives.

Brayden Tate is in the final year of his English Honours degree. This summer, he will write his Honours graduating essay on John Milton's peculiar relationship to the doctrine of transubstantiation. He finds this topic leads to interesting discussions about metaphysics, materiality, epistemology, and semiotics. Brayden's interests have been described as "arcane" and "esoteric," which, perhaps foolishly, he takes as a compliment.

Natalie van Nieuwkuyk is a fourth-year English Honours and Writing student who hopes to one day work as a children's librarian. When she's not reading or researching obscure topics, Natalie can be found caring for her indoor plants or re-watching the *Harry Potter* series. She has loved being a part of *The Albatross*' team this year, which has adapted brilliantly to Zoom and email correspondence, and she cannot wait for everyone to read this year's exciting publications!

THE ALBATROSS°



From left to right: Colleen Bidner, Emily Frampton, Anne Hung, Errin Johnston-Watson, Kira Keir, Josiah Lamb, Maya Linsley, Scott Matthews, Dorothy Poon, Amogha Lakshmi Halepuram Sridhar, Brayden Tate, Teresa Sammut, Natalie van Nieuwkuyk

Not pictured: Meaghan Bate, Emma Bishop, Willow Chapman, Jocelyn Diemer, Madison George-Berlet, Zoe Mathers