Spring 2024

Otterbein Aegis Spring 2024

Otterbein Aegis
Otterbein University

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Spring 2024

Aegis 2023-24 Editorial Board

Front Cover: Nevaeh Ellis, *Black and White Still Life,* Oil on Canvas

Back Cover: Nevaeh Ellis, *Tree Trunk,* Digital

Aegis: The Otterbein Humanities Journal

Perhaps the first question readers will ask about *Aegis* is "What does it mean?"

The word "aegis" is Latin for "shield" but may be more specifically associated with Greek mythology, as it refers to the shield carried by Zeus, god of thunder. Made from the hide of the goat Amaltheia, the shield came to represent not only a practical tool of protection, but also a godly power. "As the Greeks prided themselves greatly on the rich and splendid ornaments of their shields, they supposed the aegis to be adorned in a style corresponding to the might and majesty of the father of the gods."[1] Myths have even suggested that the shield was worn by both the god Apollo and the goddess Athena, adding to the prestige of the shield throughout tales of mythology.[2]

Much like the myths and literary representations of Zeus's shield, Otterbein's journal, *Aegis*, seeks to transport readers into a deeper study of literature and humanities through the fields of history, philosophy, language, linguistics, literature, archeology, jurisprudence, ethics, comparative religion, and the history, theory, and criticism of the arts (in accordance with the National Endowment for the Humanities' [NEH] definition). Every year, *Aegis* includes a collection of undergraduate scholarly book reviews, essays, and interviews prepared and edited by Otterbein students.

Since its first edition in 2004, the journal has come a long way and has showcased the exemplary work that Otterbein students continue to produce. *Aegis* is a journal designed to catalyze a deeper critical appreciation of the humanities at Otterbein University and is published once every spring semester. It strives to advance the presence and values of the humanities on campus and beyond. An editorial board comprised of Otterbein students is responsible for selecting books, writing, and publishing book reviews, as well as revising any essay submissions to the journal and determining their suitability for *Aegis*.

The 2024 Editorial Board and its editors hope that readers will approach each piece in the journal with curiosity and wonder, just as they may have approached the Latin term "aegis" with such curiosity. *Aegis* is committed to nonsexist language and to wording free of hostile overtones. The Editorial Board, essay authors, and Otterbein faculty have worked hard to create a journal that showcases the humanities in a unique way. Please enjoy.

Submissions: Essay submissions should be 8-25 double-spaced pages. Use 12-point Times New Roman font with standard one-inch margins, and please number all pages. Use the MLA Manual Style for citations. Specific submission deadlines will be sent out to all Otterbein students in the early spring semester. Submissions are also accepted on a rolling basis. Submissions must be accompanied by an email or cover sheet noting the author's name and title of the essay. Electronic submissions are preferred. Please send any submissions to aegis@otterbein.edu.

Aegis is always looking for student volunteers to serve on the Editorial Board. To volunteer, submit an essay for review, or to ask questions, please send an email to aegis@otterbein.edu.

Endnotes

1 James Yates, "Aegis," University of Chicago, last modified April 13, 2018, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/ secondary/SMIGRA*/Aegis.html.

2 Ibid.

Features in the 2024 issue

Essays

Book Reviews **(Review Authors)**

Editors' Introduction

As this year's editors, we are pleased to present the campus community with the 2024, 20th year edition of *Aegis*: *The Otterbein Humanities Journal*. The essays that have been selected for this year's edition of *Aegis* exemplify the talent and commitment to academics that are continuously exhibited by students at Otterbein University. The topics covered explore deforestation, horror films, minimalism, and most popularly, the works of Stanley Kubrick. All of the essays in the journal meet the standards of rigorous research in the humanities, but more importantly, they are engaging pieces that work to address a variety of complex issues.

In "Dress as a Weapon: How the British Suffrage Movement Redefined Femininity," author and future editor, Olivia Sweet explains the suffrage movement through the eyes of British women, making note of their fashion and notable periodicals that amplified the movement. Neveah Ellis in "The Loneliness of Womanhood" explains loneliness through the horror film, *Carrie*, and gives it a feminist reading through scene analysis. In "*The Hole* and The New Minimalist Object," Isaac Jones grapples with the discourse and analysis behind *The Hole* by Hiroko Oyamada, where he explores the genre of minimalism, yet expresses with full vivid imagery the experience of reading the text. Gabe Whitnack explores Kubrick's themes of desire, disconcertion, and near divorce, tracking the undulating thread of intramarital discord, in "Understanding Desire in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*." Likewise, Madison Newman considers cycles of abuse through a similarly Kubrickian lens, in "Kubrick's Survivors: Breaking the Cycle of Violence in Stanley Kubrick's *Killer's Kiss* and *The Shining*." Aside from Kubrick, "The French Muslim Debate" by Elizabeth White considers the intersections and faux progressivism of French policy and its adverse effects on Muslim life. These essays represent some of the fine work being done by students in the humanities at Otterbein.

Also included in this edition of *Aegis* is a selection of book reviews written by the Editorial Board that reflect their intellectual interests and speak to their respective disciplines. The books reviewed in this year's edition include *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jennette McCurdy, a bittersweet autobiography, wrestling with the abuse of the entertainment industry and the scars that it leaves behind. Todd Kaneko's *The Dead Wrestler Elegies* which poetically explains the complexities of father-son relationships. *The Power of the Brush* by Hwisang Cho explains the innovation of Korean and the politics associated with the accessibility of language and political involvement. *The Art of Darkness: A Treasury of the Morbid, Melancholic, and Macabre* by S. Elizabeth considers, as the title suggests, an account of art that chills us to the bone, art that represents war, illness, famine, and those darker sides of human experience and psychology. However, as you will read, this book fails to deliver on its promises. *Case for Rage: Why Anger Is Essential to Anti-Racist Struggle* by Myisha Cherry centers rage in conversations of sociopolitical reformation especially in philosophical discourses though, can't seem to break new ground. Finally, *Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism* by Amanda Montell interrogates the workings of "cultish" mechanisms outside of liturgical contexts, the way a cult manifests in our everyday. These and other fiction and nonfiction titles are discussed in the following pages.

We'd like to thank all of this year's contributors for remaining appreciative of *Aegis* during this time and providing your insight, art, and passions to this journal.

Aegis is proud to belong to a strong scholarly community of students and faculty within the humanities at Otterbein University. The reviews, essays and interviews included within *Aegis* speak to Otterbein's commitment to that community. We hope that our readers find engaging, stimulating, and thought-provoking work throughout this year's edition.

Isaac Jones & Mitzi Cuaxico

Aegis Editorial Board 2024

Ayan Abdi is a senior pursuing a double major in Political Science and English with a concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in Legal Studies. She is planning on attending law school next fall. This is her second year with *Aegis*. She appreciates the space that *Aegis* creates for recognizing and celebrating the work of students and hopes that readers enjoy this edition!

Cami Borders is a sophomore Film Studies and History double major. This is her first year on the editorial board and has enjoyed it greatly. In her free time, Cami enjoys reading, watching movies, and sewing. She is very grateful for the opportunity to work on *Aegis* and hopes you enjoy it!

Mitzi Cuaxico is a senior Psychology and English major. Her interests include research and development of diverse literature and feminist studies. As co-editor of *Aegis*, she is excited to share the wonderful work of the talented authors of Otterbein University.

Nevaeh Ellis is a senior Studio Art/Art History and Visual Culture double major with a minor in Film Studies. This is her first year on the *Aegis* editorial board and she has enjoyed her experience immensely. In her time outside of classes, Nevaeh is working in the Community Affairs division with the City of Westerville, focusing mainly on graphic design. After graduating this Spring, Nevaeh plans on moving to New York City to pursue a career in design and gallery work.

Ellyse Gallagher is a sophomore majoring in AYA English education with a minor in Film Studies. She is a new member educator for Tau Delta sorority and works at the Courtright Memorial Library here on campus. This is Ellyse's second year with *Aegis*.

Marygrace Gorensek is a senior double major in Global Studies with a concentration in global histories and cultures and History with a minor in Race and Ethnic Studies. She's excited to explore the world in the future and broaden her perspectives. She also likes reading and was happy to read a book she might not have read.

Kate Hedrick is a first year Creative Writing major with minors in History and Religion. She is a staff member and copy editor for *Quiz & Quill* and a member of Fables on Tables, Otterbein's TTRPG club. This is her first year with *Aegis.*

Isaac Jones is a sophomore English major with concentrations in film studies, creative writing, and literary studies, with an additional major in WGSS. They are the coeditor of *Aegis,* the essay genre editor of *Quiz & Quill,* and are published in various editions of either. Their creative work is interested in formal and narrative experiments that draw attention to or make beautiful the small moments of our mundane realities. Their scholarship focuses on experiments in political and formal poetics in film and literature, interacting with discourses involving rest, enchantment, and identity. They hope you enjoy this edition of *Aegis*!

Lauren Mlynarek is a senior Psychology major and Philosophy minor. After graduating from Otterbein, she will continue her education in becoming a nurse. She looks forward to incorporating the elements of psychology and philosophy into her work. She hopes you find her book review to be delightful and inspiring to read, and hopes you too, will be inspired to write yourself. Thank you, *Aegis*, for this opportunity to share my passion. Well wishes to all.

Dalton Mosley is a junior double majoring in Creative Writing BFA and Film Studies with a minor in Journalism. This is his second year with *Aegis*, and in addition to participating here, he also serve as the Fiction Editor and Junior Managing Editor of *Quiz and Quill*, and Treasurer of Sigma Tau Delta. He is a writer, gamer, avid reader, and literary enthusiast who enjoys storytelling, and appreciates all the Arts and Humanities. He is grateful for the opportunity to have continued working with *Aegis.*

Emily Rogers is a junior Graphic Design major who just transferred to Otterbein from Columbus State. It is her first year working on *Aegis,* and she is also a part of Connecting Threads and Thriving Artists. She hopes that everyone enjoys reading the essays that the team worked so hard on!

Olivia Sweet is a junior History major with minors in Race & Ethnic studies and Museum Studies. She focuses her work on the history of fashion, costume, and textiles in economic, social, and political contexts. She aspires to work as a museum curator where she can continue to conduct research and share it with the world. She hopes that her work will inspire others to broaden their views of the discipline of history and find meaningful ways to engage with the past.

Claudia Smallwood is a senior Zoo and Conservation Science major with minors in Psychology, Biology, and Film Studies. She is involved on campus as the Vice President of Otterbein's Animal Conservation club. This is her first year serving on the *Aegis* editorial board, and she is grateful that she was given this opportunity. She hopes readers enjoy the publication and appreciate its showcase of the humanities.

Julia Tenbusch is a sophomore History, Sociology, and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies triple major, with minors in Philosophy and Race & Ethnic Studies. This is Julia's first year with *Aegis*, and they've had a lot of fun with it.

Dane Whip is a first year AYA Integrated Social Studies major with a minor in Religion. He is a member of Otterbein's Track and Field team. He enjoys learning about history, travelling, and being active.

Dress as a Weapon

How the British Sufferage Movement Redefined Femininity

By Olivia Sweet

Introduction

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the set of criteria that had defined femininity in the eyes of society - a society largely ruled and operated by men - was rewritten. While some women supported this 'formula for a lady', these women were very likely influenced by the men in their lives. Around the turn of the twentieth century, these social rules began to be challenged, largely in conjunction with the suffrage movement that was on the rise in Britain. The movement saw leagues of women all across England fighting and campaigning for not only the right to vote, but furthermore the right, ability, and freedom of self-expression and active participation in British society. In doing this, numerous preconceived notions of women and acceptable behaviors were turned on their heads. There is a particular correlation between the destruction of these misogynistic standards and the clothing reform that was taking place in late-Victorian to early-Edwardian England, as much of a woman's life was centered around style and appearance. The societal image of a suffragette[1] was that of an antithesis to traditional femininity, adopting certain 'masculine' qualities of appearance such as cutting their hair short or wearing men's clothing, the fear being that women were attempting to essentially become men and invade their social and political territory.[2] However, in reality, the basis of the suffrage movement and indeed the concept of female empowerment at the time was the desire to secure the ways in which women are different from men while maintaining equal legal and political rights, embracing femininity on their own terms. This paper will explore the ways in which the women of England used the powers and influence they did have to create massive progress in the overall feminist movement. Using fashion and the clothing industry as a conduit for their message, early twentieth-century British suffragettes effectively redefined femininity for the benefit of shifting women's place in society.

Perspectives

Several historians and academics have conducted and analyzed extensive research on the subjects of fashion and the British suffrage movement. One historian of note is Dr. Jihang Park, an author, researcher, and professor of history with a career spanning several institutions in both the United States and Korea. She has written and published numerous works analyzing various aspects of British history and society, including the suffrage movement. She claims that the modern world is ignorant of the reality of

1 The term "suffragette" has been removed from common use, replaced by "suffragist," a more inclusive term with less derogatory connotations. However, this paper is an analysis of historical events in which it is crucial to place the information presented in its original context. The term "suffragette" is only used in this paper to denote a real label placed upon a particular group of people in history, not to generalize women's rights activism.

2 Joel H Kaplan and Sheila Stowell, "The Suffrage Response," essay in *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes*, 152–84.

British suffragettes, narrowing her focus to studying the activists themselves rather than simply the event as a whole. As she has given particular attention to the qualities and behaviors of the British suffragettes, she would undoubtedly agree that fashion and definitions of femininity are critically linked to the success of the British suffrage movement. A major contributor to the clothing reform side of the conversation is Katrina Rolley. Rolley has published works discussing the ways that fashion interacts with different aspects of society and culture, and worked as a fashion historian consulting on countless media projects. She analyzes the ways in which a person's appearance affects how they are viewed in society and the implications of the sociological concepts of femininity and the 'ideal woman.' Her work details how a woman's identity was entirely based on the principles of fashion at the time, which she claims inadvertently laid the foundation for the suffragettes. It is her argument that fashion and feminism are connected to such a degree that one will never find one existing without the other. Rolley is one of the exceedingly few historians who have dedicated research specifically to the connection between clothing and the British suffrage movement. While historical dress and women's suffrage are thoroughly researched independently from each other, they are rarely formally synthesized in published works. Despite this, any historian who understands the history of feminism can acknowledge the connection.

Historical Context

As with any social justice movement, the feminist movement cannot be neatly consolidated into a particular era or time period, as it stretched across several generations. The concept of feminism first came into mainstream focus in the early to mid-nineteenth century, with the Seneca Falls convention in the United States taking place in 1848, though the origins of feminist theory can be traced as far back as to predate the United States entirely. This is supported in the works of early feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft in the mid-1700s. However, most historians determine the feminist movement to formally begin in the mid-nineteenth century, British feminists gaining traction in the 1860s. This rise in feminist thought coincided with the Victorian dress reform movement, which generally spanned from 1850 to the beginning of the first World War in 1914. The general consensus fueling the dress reform was that the clothing that a lady was expected to wear was a form of oppression. Women wanted to show the things they were capable of doing if given the chance, particularly if their clothing allowed it, demonstrated by women beginning to wear bloomers in 1851 to participate in athletic activities. The start of the dress reform movement was the early stages of British women beginning to challenge the traditional ideas of femininity as enforced by men. The backdrop for these changes was the suffrage movement. Suffrage was a cause that came as a result of the feminist movement as the women of England grew exceedingly more aggravated at their being held at an unequal station to that of men. The Reform Act of 1832 formally blocked women from actively participating in politics, closing a loophole that had existed in the former voting laws. Prior to 1832, a small number of British women had been able to vote given that they fit the criteria for voting eligibility: owning land. When this rule was written, gendered language was omitted since it was the standard that only men were able to own property. However, in some rare cases, following a landowner's death, the ownership was passed to a woman, most commonly the widow. As long as that woman could provide evidence of her legally possessing the land

she was perfectly eligible to cast her vote. The Reform Act of 1832 effectively resolved this oversight by explicitly stating that the vote was being given to middle-class men. It was after this and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 that the suffrage movement began to take shape. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, the women of Britain organized several public demonstrations pushing for equal political rights but were not taken seriously until the suffragettes formally organized. Indeed, the true start of the British suffrage movement can be accredited to outspoken activist Emmeline Pankhurst, who left the Labour Party in 1903 and formed the Women's Social and Political Union. Of the great number of suffrage societies in England, the WSPU was renowned as being the most radical, spearheading the tactic of 'militancy', until it was disbanded in 1918. Many of the British suffrage groups published their own pamphlets or periodicals, such as *Votes for Women* and *The Suffragette.* These publications were used as a forum for the women of England to communicate about the progress of the movement and organize action.[3] However, much of the activity of the movement had to pause as England became embroiled in the first World War from 1914 to 1918. It certainly did not dissipate, as the war brought additional fuel to the already prevalent political and social unrest. However, during wartime, the majority of women's attentions were focused on their families and sustaining the workforce. Once the war had ended the suffragettes resumed their campaigning using the state of post-war Britain to their political advantage. Parliament attempted to quiet the suffrage unions, shut down their publications, and stop their demonstrations, but they were unsuccessful. After several decades of fighting the government, the women of Britain were at last granted the right to vote in 1928.

Material

Joel H. Kaplan and Sheila Stowell's essay "The Suffrage Response" and Katrina Rolley's "Fashion, Femininity, and the Fight for the Vote" detail the beliefs and actions carried out by the British suffragettes in the early years of the twentieth century. At the time the societal connotation of the term 'feminist' meant masculine, despite clear evidence contradicting this belief. Feminists were thought to be women who dressed in poor style and desired to become men in a social and political sense. This viewpoint came in response to the Victorian dress reform that saw women's clothing beginning to adopt more traditionally "male" characteristics. Silhouettes were becoming less full, corsets were abandoned, and articles such as billycock hats and bodices reminiscent of men's suit jackets became standard female dress. In actuality, the goal of the suffrage movement was to obtain equal rights while securing their differences from men.[4] The adoption of more masculine clothing pieces was in fact an act of embracing femininity in the sense that it represented women defining what femininity is on their own terms. This meant that a woman's physical appearance became a canvas for political protest. The 'suffrage look' carried an air of both militancy and smart feminine modishness, accompanied by the eventual decision by suffrage societies to employ the use of distinctive colors. A woman dressing in such a style, especially in these colors, was a demonstration of her support for the cause.[5]

3 Christopher Breward, "Femininity and Consumption: The Problem of the Late Nineteenth-Century Fashion Journal," *Journal of Design History* 7, no. 2 (1994): 71–89.

4 Kaplan and Stowell, *Suffrage Response*, 152-84.

5 Katarina Roley, "Fashion, Femininity and the Fight for the Vote," *Art History* 13, no.1 (1990): 47.

It was through the strategic manipulation of fashion trends that the suffrage message was able to spread as wide as it did. It is also important to note that decisions made and actions taken by a corporation or company are guided by the habits of their consumers. As the consumer base of the clothing industry at the time was almost entirely comprised of women, the British suffragettes were able to effectively control the actions of certain clothing companies to fit their agenda. They stopped purchasing anything that did not fit the 'suffrage look', so pieces that did support this new definition of femininity became the only things being manufactured. As women desired to dress in the colors of their suffrage society, clothing companies mainly produced goods in said colors. Aware that most of their business was coming from supporters of the suffrage movement, many companies would take out ads in the suffrage publications such as *Votes for Women* and *The Suffragette.* These actions significantly aided in spreading the suffrage message. In 1912 the more radical suffragettes went as far as to smash the windows of popular clothing stores in London that advertised in their pamphlets, blaming them for the actions being taken by Parliament to quell the movement. After the women threatened to stop purchasing clothing produced by these retailers, they were essentially forced to oblige. This relationship between fashion retailers and suffrage supporters gave the feminists immense power and authority against their opponents. This was also an era that saw an increasing number of women joining the workforce, especially during and after the first World War. An article written by Jihang Park entitled "The British Suffrage Activists of 1913: An Analysis" displays in depth how the attitudes of British women experienced a shift in response to the first World War. As the article shows, prior to the war the suffrage societies were almost entirely comprised of wealthy, upper-class women who did not work.[6] This was largely due to the focus that these groups had on expressing femininity while working-class women felt they had to stifle it in order to work, dressing poorly and rejecting traditional femininity. It was believed that femininity had no place in the workforce. A working-class woman needed to be strong and independent, qualities that did not fit the previous societal definition of femininity.[7] That definition changed as the suffrage movement gained momentum immediately preceding and in the years after the war. It was now a signal of strength to embrace femininity and dress fashionably as a demonstration of female camaraderie as opposed to male ownership.

Conclusion

The late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries was a time of great political and social change in Britain as a response to the effects of the industrial revolution. One of many things to result from Britain's immense growth and expansion in the 1800s was an increase in political and social activism, particularly with the establishment of the Labour Party and suffrage societies such as the WSPU. This sparked an era of reform, especially for women, with the suffrage movement and the Victorian dress reform on the rise. Much of society feared that the women of England were attempting to become and replace the men, as they were demanding the rights that men had and adopting elements of traditionally 'masculine' style in their appearances. The assumption was that one could not both be a

6 Jihang Park, "The British Suffrage Activists of 1913: An Analysis," *Past & Present*, no. 120 (1988): 147–62

7 Margaret Maynard, "'A Dream of Fair Women': Revival Dress and the Formation of Late Victorian Images of Femininity," *Art History* 12, no. 3 (1989): 322–41.

suffragette and be feminine. This is because the preconceived definition of femininity was a misogynistic ideal the men of society used to keep women where they wanted them. The driving force of the suffrage movement was not to reject femininity, but rather to reclaim it as a female identity. They desired clothing to be more comfortable and allow for more movement not to do all the things that men can do, but to show all the things that women can do. Society as a whole needed the feminine voice. They took the one thing in society that was deemed inherently feminine - fashion - and turned it into a weapon for their cause. This proved that the capabilities possessed by women were not any lesser than those possessed by men, they simply were not being given the opportunities to utilize them. The suffrage movement aimed to do more than give women the right to vote, striving to show the world what it really means to be a woman. Femininity used to mean dressing, looking, moving, speaking, and acting a certain way to satisfy a man's image of an ideal woman. Now, because of the actions of the British suffragettes, being feminine means showing strength, perseverance, autonomy, and independence.

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Kubrick's Survivors

Breaking the Cycle of Violence in Stanley *Kubrick's Killer's* Kiss and *The Shining*

By Madison Newman

At first glance, there are very few similarities to be drawn between one of Kubrick's earliest films, *Killer's Kiss* (1955), and one of his most famous and influential films, *The Shining* (1980). The respective plot lines of a boxer's defense of his neighbor and sinister supernatural happenings at an isolated, wintered-over hotel do not immediately conjure a connection with one another. However, the connection between them becomes apparent when focusing on the experiences of the woman at the center of each of the films.

The female protagonists are each blatant examples of victims of intimate partner violence, their experiences within each plot exemplifying the long-examined and documented cycle of violence. With this in mind, Kubrick not only takes care to accurately represent the realistic experiences of victims of intimate partner violence trapped in the cycle of violence in both *Killer's Kiss* and *The Shining*, through the respective characters of Gloria Price (Irene Kane) and Wendy Torrence (Shelley Duvall), but also portrays them as women who are able to harness her own agency and break the cycle of violence. Kubrick's arguably progressive and informed attention paid to accurately representing intimate partner violence, as well as these films' empowerment and celebration of survivors who break away from the pattern and escape abuse, greatly complicates—even, to some extent, rejects—the widespread critical view of Kubrick and his films as misogynist.[1]

The Beginning of the Cycle of Violence: Tension-Building Phase

Amongst debates on which social, cultural, and environmental circumstances make intimate partner violence possible, its root cause and core goal remain the same: any form of domestic abuse is committed with the goal of exerting and maintaining power and control over someone else.[2] This truth is demonstrated at the forefront of both *Killer's Kiss* and *The Shining*, within Gloria's relationship with older gangster and dance club owner Vincent Rapallo (Frank Silvera) and Wendy's relationship with her husband Jack Torrence (Jack Nicholson).

Furthermore, multiple critics have argued against the application of this definition to Kubrick's films. For instance, Frank Manchel's essay "What About Jack?: Another Perspective on Family Relationships in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*" places the blame for Jack's abusive tendencies on oppressive patriarchal values and institutions, citing his inability to perform as the breadwinner for his family as the root cause for his abusive behavior (1995). A section of Dana Polan's essay "Materiality and Sociality in *Killer's Kiss*" offers the same reasoning for Rapallo, citing his older age

1 This critique of Kubrick and his films is popular amongst critics who discuss his work. One of the most famous essays professing this opinion is Sabine Planka's essay "Erotic, Silent, Dead: The concept of women in the films of Stanley Kubrick," in which she argues Kubrick's female characters are reduced to sexualized victims.

2 Paraphrased from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's 2021 article "Intimate Partner Violence: Prevention Strategies."

compared to the "young and beautiful" Gloria as suggesting social illegitimacy or bodily inadequacy that causes him to lash out (1996). However, Manchel's claims, as well as the claims of similarly inclined critics, do not hold up to the defined root cause of intimate partner violence. A society that upholds the patriarchal expectations for men to possess physical and financial strength does not inherently drive someone to commit abuse. Manchel's argument deflects blame for abusive actions away from the abuser, and onto nebulous environmental factors. This behavior committed by an abuser — blaming their violence on environmental stressors, often outside of either party's control — perfectly characterizes a tactic used by abusers in the first of three relevant phases in the cycle of violence,[3] the Tension-Building Phase. According to the Domestic Violence Hotline, the Tension-Building Phase is one in which the abuser's tactics are slowly becoming apparent. The abuser may exhibit tactics such as attempting to isolate the victim from loved ones, acting as if they "own" them, and blaming the victim for every small thing that irritates the abuser, regardless of whether or not they are responsible. As a result, the victim of abuse may feel hyper-vigilant and anxious, as if they must "walk on eggshells" in order to avoid the abuser's negative attention.

This phase of the cycle is blatantly seen at the beginning of both films, which further fortifies Kubrick's understanding of the realistic escalation patterns that intimate partner violence consists of. The most literal example of the Tension-Building Phase can be found in the very premise of *The Shining*; Jack elects to sequester Wendy and their young son Danny (Danny Lloyd) to the remote Overlook Hotel—an environment which the hotel's manager outright warns is extremely isolating—without consideration for his family's feelings on the matter. The harsh Colorado winter renders the family effectively snowed-in, adding the physical inability of escape.

The isolation seen in Gloria's case is less literal, however still very much present: despite her presumed job description at the dance club being to entertain all the clients, Rapallo insists he keep her company to himself, taking her away from the dance floor and back into his office. Kubrick further emphasizes Gloria's isolation with frequent shots of her alone in her apartment, the bars on the windows creating a carceral, trapped effect (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Gloria's window frame creates a carceral effect, *The Killing,* Stanley Kubrick

The abuser's control and ownership over their victim is also exemplified in these films. The first display of affection between Gloria and Rapallo sees him kissing and holding her in a way that is clearly driven by possessiveness, not genuine affection; he grasps the back of her head and holds her in place by the tops of her shoulders, an act more reminiscent of a wrestling hold than an embrace. Jack's exertion of control over Wendy is likewise apparent. Aside from being the self-appointed decision maker for the family without a care for Wendy's opinion, Kubrick represents this characteristic in more subtle cinematic ways. For instance, a scene in which

3 "The Cycle of Violence" was first coined by Dr. Lenore Walker in 1979 in her book *The Battered Woman*, and has since been modernized by the Domestic Violence Hotline. All cycle of violence information and phase definitions found in this paper are taken from the DV Hotline's resource, "What is the Cycle of Violence?" updated in 2022.

Wendy and Danny are playing outside in the hotel's hedge maze transitions via a slow vertical tracking shot to Jack overlooking figurines within a diorama of the maze in the hotel lobby. Kubrick utilizes this shot to demonstrate that Jack sees his wife and child as nothing more than these diminutive figurines—playthings, "laboratory rats" that he is tasked with "lord[ing] over" (Polan 1996).

Additionally, Jack exemplifies the tactic of an abuser casting undue blame onto their victim for their own irritants or misgivings. In his essay "All Roads Lead to the Abject: The Monstrous Feminine and Gender Boundaries in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*," critic Robert Kilker observes that "Jack accuses Wendy of 'fuck[ing] things up for [him],' attributing his financial and creative failures to her" (Kilker 58). While Wendy tries her best to offer encouragement to her husband regarding his pervasive case of writer's block, Jack verbally degrades her, adding that she "ruin[s] everything." He acts as if her words (and her presence) are actively the cause of his problems.

These abusive tactics cause intimate partner violence victims to display symptoms of anxiousness, the metaphorical feeling of needing to "walk on eggshells." This response can also be seen in Wendy and Gloria in response to their respective partners' escalations in abuse. Wendy becomes visibly more anxious throughout the film, the height of her anxiety occurring when she debates talking to Jack about leaving the hotel. Kubrick reinforces Wendy's nervousness by pairing her pacing around the bedroom talking through this scenario with a non-diegetic score reminiscent of an anxious heartbeat. Similarly, Gloria's anxiety with her situation can be seen as she walks back from the dance club, presumably after Rapallo has escalated his abuse in some unknown way. Her steps are small, hurried, and "robotic" (Polan 1996). While Dana Polan's aforementioned essay cites this movement as the result of Kubrick's ever-present interest in the juxtaposition of man and machine, viewed through the context of intimate partner violence, Gloria's mechanical gait instead suggests signs of abuse. Her hands are brought tightly up against her chest clasped together in a nervous, defensive position as she walks; she seems dissociated, another symptom of the anxiety "commonly experienced by victims/survivors of intimate partner violence" (Domestic Violence Hotline 2022).

Continuing the Cycle: Incident Phase and De-Escalation Phase

Eventually, the escalation of abuse within the Tension-Building Phase builds to a point that it explodes into an Incident. Incidents can manifest in the form of physical violence, but also in the form of sexual violence, verbal/emotional abuse, or psychological abuse. In both *Killer's Kiss* and *The Shining*, multiple Incidents occur over the course of the film. Incidents that Gloria experiences include mostly physical (and implied sexual) abuse, such as Rapallo's implied first assault in his office, as well as when he attacks her after her refusal of him in her apartment. Conversely, Wendy's Incident experiences include mostly verbal and emotional abuse, as she is subject to Jack's multiple verbal outbursts. Additionally, when speaking to Danny's pediatrician, Wendy refers to an Incident that occurred even before the film's opening, in which Jack lashed out at Danny and dislocated his shoulder. By this account, there is evidence that the cycle has been continuing within their relationship for some time, highlighting its inherent repetitive nature. The respective climaxes of both films are also Incidents, but they are labeled with a subclassification called the Inciting Incident. The Inciting Incident can be defined as the last Incident Phase that occurs (usually directly) before the victim decides to leave their abusive

environment. It is often an Incident that is more elevated in severity than Incidents of the past. The Inciting Incidents in both films are obvious—Gloria's kidnapping and being held hostage at the hands of Rapallo and his gang, and Jack's terrifyingly violent chase after Wendy and Danny armed with an ax. Kubrick again utilizes sound to underscore the severity of these Incidents by employing frantic, intense scores in scenes which exemplify an Incident.

If the Incident is not an Inciting Incident and the victim elects to stay with their abusive partner, the De-escalation (or "Cool Down") Phase will begin. During this phase, an abuser will often express great remorse for their actions, making promises that the abuse will never recur, and shower the victim in gifts and affection, all while suggesting that the Incident would have never occurred if the victim had not brought it on themselves. Once again, this phase is also perfectly exemplified in both films. Upon returning to Gloria's apartment after the first insinuated assault in his office, Rapallo repeatedly offers his apologies and confesses his love and admiration for her. Comparably, according to Wendy, Jack profusely apologized and promised that he would never lash out again, that he would "never touch another drop" (*The Shining* 17:21) of the alcohol that he claimed made him violent. In Jack's case, there is also a clear return to the tactic seen earlier in the Tension-Building Phase which casts blame onto the victim for causing their own abuse. He informs Wendy repeatedly in a myriad of ways that she herself is the root of Jack's problems, and therefore her abuse is deserved. As intimate partner violence worsens, the time periods between each phase tend to shorten more and more as the abuser becomes quicker and quicker to anger.

Breaking the Cycle

Directly after an Incident is when victims of intimate partner violence are most likely to leave their abusers.[4] Since the root of intimate partner violence's occurrence is the abuser's desire for power and control over their victim(s), in order to break the cycle of violence, a victim of abuse must reclaim their power and autonomy and make the difficult, often terrifying decision to leave for good. Kubrick understands the gravity of the situations of both Gloria and Wendy as victims of intimate partner violence, and accordingly empowers them in scenes that reflect both women's reclamation of agency, which results in both of them leaving their abusive situations behind for good.

One of the foremost ways that Kubrick explores these changing power dynamics is through mise-en-scene and camera angles. Throughout *The Shining,* Kubrick frames the chandeliers hanging throughout The Overlook as symbols of control and power, these specific chandeliers being circular and gold-lit, clearly suggesting a crown-like appearance. For most of the film, when the chandeliers are positioned over a specific body, Jack wears the crown (Fig. 2). Kubrick's choice in this framing is representative of Jack's control over Wendy and the power he holds—a societally-endorsed patriarchal power as the "man of the house," and also a violent and manipulative power as an abuser.

4 According to 2022 data compiled by the Domestic Violence Hotline.

Figure 2: Jack standing under chandeliers in the Overlook, *The Shining,* Stanley Kubrick

In the moment that Wendy finally musters enough courage to stand up to Jack, finally setting in motion her attempt to break the cycle once and for all, Kubrick represents her newfound resolve by awarding her both the literal and figurative "high ground." She works her way up the staircase as Jack degrades and threatens her, almost as if with every step, she is building courage and agency. However, he is ascending the steps too, symbolic of his effort to keep his power over her. Kubrick alternates between shots from both Wendy and Jack's p-o-v, resulting in Wendy being pictured using low angle shots and Jack being pictured using high angle shots (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4); by utilizing these camera angles, Kubrick gives Wendy power over Jack, making it seem as if he is almost dwarfed by her—a juxtaposition of the previously-mentioned scene in which she and Danny are dwarfed by him as he looks down on them in the maze. This power is solidified in the moments before she lands a critical hit on Jack with a baseball bat with a return of the aforementioned chandelier imagery; this time, the chandelier is positioned over her head instead of his (Fig. 3). Wendy now wears the crown, reclaiming her power and agency in this moment. When the bat connects with Jack's face, he is sent tumbling back down the stairs—all the way to the landing, where he lays unconscious with various injuries. He has lost his all-encompassing hold over his victims, while Wendy has gained even more power. This confidence allows her to take the action she was previously afraid to take; she drags Jack to the pantry, locks him in, and prepares to leave him (and her abusive situation) behind once and for all.

Figure 3: Wendy atop the stairs, defending herself from Jack, *The Shining,* Stanley Kubrick

Figure 4: Jack ascends the stairs while threatening Wendy, *The Shining,* Stanley Kubrick

Jack's physical injuries—the most obvious of which being his sprained ankle that causes a limp—are also representative of an abuser's injured ego that occurs when a victim of abuse dares to stand up to them. The suspenseful chase that constitutes the climax of *The Shining*, which ensues after Jack is let out of the pantry by past Overlook Hotel caretaker Delbert Grady's (Phillip Stone) ghost, reflects intimate partner violence victims' very real and paralyzing fear that the abuse will escalate if the victim retaliates or attempts to defend

themself, which is very often times the case. The very act of Grady letting Jack out of the pantry is reminiscent of the collective disbelief of intimate partner violence victims and the phenomenon of abusers being the target of defense and sympathy instead of abuse victims. Although Jack's freedom is needed to ignite the film's iconic climax, Grady specifically—another known abuser—unlocking the door could be interpreted as yet another feminist element that Kubrick includes in the film.

Meanwhile, Gloria's first effort to break the cycle of violence is much less dramatic—but still equally as vital and triumphant for her journey. When Rapallo all-but-forcefully enters her apartment, apologizing for wrongs he committed after the scene of them together in his office faded to black, Gloria is faced with a choice. She can keep living in the persistent cycle of violence, in which the Incident fades into the Reconciliation Phase, which consists of apologies and professions of love poured from the abuser until the victim is convinced to stay, at which point the cycle repeats (National Domestic Violence Hotline 2022). Or Gloria can choose to stand up to him—which she does. Just as Kubrick utilizes p-o-v shots in the scene in which Wendy finds her power on the staircase, he employs them here to cinematographically foreshadow Gloria finding her agency. She insults Rapallo, refusing his apology and condemning him a "smelly old man," the camera then quickly but jarringly breaking the 180 degree rule (Fig. 5). Just like Wendy's swing of the baseball bat crowned with the chandelier, the breaking of the 180 degree rule in this scene represents Gloria's reclamation of power. It occurs so suddenly that she almost commands Kubrick to break the rule, as if she is re-directing the scene for herself—an unmissable demonstration of her regained agency.

Figure 5: Kubrick breaks the 180 rule to achieve this shot of Gloria confronting Rapallo, *Killer's Kiss,* Stanley Kubrick

Although Gloria's active attempt to break the cycle of violence is put into motion with the breaking of the 180 degree rule, it can be argued that her journey to reclaim her agency begins earlier in the film. In fact, the first interaction between Gloria and the male protagonist of the film, her neighbor and near-retirement boxer Davey Gordon (Jamie Smith), is constituted by Gloria looking at him through the window across the courtyard of their apartment complex. Kubrick makes the conscious decision to have *her* look at *him* first; she has the agency to make the "first move" in this situation, representing a subversion of the male gaze that has been one of the key oppressing factors in Gloria's relationship with Rapallo.

Another piece of evidence pointing to Gloria's agency in *Killer's Kiss* lies within Gloria's rescue. Davey's plot-played saving of Gloria from Rapallo's clutches, film critic and essayist Dana Polan argues, is superficial compared to a deeper, underlying meaning to the ending of the film. Also in her previously referenced essay "Materiality and Sociality in *Killer's Kiss*," she states, "Davey's forward rush to the rescue is handled ordinarily, given no grandeur, no mythos… and [he] comes close to bungling the rescue" (Polan 92). In other words, Davey's rescue of Gloria is simply a plot device which Kubrick included to fulfill the expectations of a mid-1950s audience, a time period which strongly upheld

and glamorized the ideals of the American nuclear family, and by extension, female subservience and dependence in the role of housewife and mother. Instead, Gloria largely facilitates her own break-away from the cycle of violence, starting in earnest with her firm resistance against Rapallo exemplified by the aforementioned breaking of the 180 degree rule, and ending with her autonomous decision to join Davey at the train station.

The grand open spaces of the train station itself, the now-defunct Penn Station in New York City, could be interpreted as Kubrick's chosen juxtaposition of the trapped claustrophobia of the city. While this is true, the train station also represents a foreclosed method of escape. Both Davey and Gloria wish to escape the city, but the possibility for escape that the train station offers functions on two different levels for Gloria: it is an escape from her past abusive situation and her abuser himself, as well as a chance to start a healthier and safer life free from abuse—she is bound for both literal and figurative greener pastures when she chooses to join Davey on his aunt and uncle's farm. When all of these instances are considered, it becomes evident that Gloria herself is the agent of her own deliverance from abuse and is not the stereotypical damsel in distress that surface-level viewers may assume she is.

Just as Gloria's symbol of a broken cycle of violence is the train and Penn Station, Wendy's symbol is the SnowCat. Both abusers recognize the train station and the SnowCat respectively as a means of escape for their victims, which are both attempted to be dealt with to keep Gloria and Wendy under their respective control. Rapallo kidnaps Gloria and holds her hostage, keeping her from going to the train station, and Jack dismantles the SnowCat, Wendy and Danny's only safe opportunity to leave the hotel. Nonetheless, despite the efforts by both abusers to further threaten and isolate their victims, both women overcome these circumstances and are able to free themselves, effectively breaking the cycles of violence they were both trapped in.

In Conclusion

The critiques of Kubrick as a misogynist are prevalent amongst critics and scholars who study this filmmaker and his work; however, these critiques should not hold as much weight as they currently do as a characterization of Kubrick's films. Both *Killer's Kiss* and *The Shining*, films released nearly 30 years apart and representing completely different eras in Kubrick's filmmaking career, exemplify accurate representations of intimate partner violence and the cycle of violence defined by scholars in the domestic violence prevention field. The films also depict decidedly feminist themes of abuse victims surviving their abuse and breaking the cycle of violence by gathering the courage, resolve, and regained agency it takes to leave their respective abusive relationships. As for the abusers featured in the aforementioned films, they both are dead by the end of each film, both with (*Killer's Kiss* in 1955) and without (*The Shining* in 1980) the reinforcement of the Hays Code, which would command the death or otherwise vanquishing

of the antagonist; Kubrick expresses his thoughts on the evil of intimate partner violence by refusing to provide the abusers in both *Killer's Kiss* and *The Shining* with endings that spare their lives. Meanwhile, the women they abused and oppressed are given endings that propel them onwards, away from abuse and towards the empowered possibility to rebuild healthier, safer, and fulfilling lives.

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The French Muslim Debate

By Elizabeth White

A common topic of conversation around human rights is the ban on Muslim women's religious clothing in France. Women all over the world face discrimination and isolation due to their religion and most people have no idea how or why this is actually happening. The case study here will focus on the extremely common bans that are in place in the country of France, where it has been a consistent problem with no end in sight as of right now. The bans have come at different times over recent years, but they have managed to impact multiple aspects of everyday life, including work, school, and simply going out in public. The justification for the bans has deep historical roots, which further adds to the issue's complexity. This essay argues that these bans on religious clothes are a violation of several basic human rights, including the right to religion, the right to expression, and in some cases, the right to education. Part of this will involve looking at how these bans came to be, and what the different bans include. To understand more fully, the paper will look at different human rights regimes and, in the end, confirm that these bans violate certain fundamental human rights and propose a basic solution.

Historical Context

Before examining the issue at hand, it is vital to look at where the bans stem from in the history of France to better understand the situation. France has strived to have a secular culture and government, meaning that they want no indication that they favor one religion over another. The context of French secularism is complex but important to observe. It is argued that the move towards secularism began with the French Revolution in the late 18th century. Before this time, France had a long history of strong connections to the Catholic Church. Following the 1789 Revolution, though, the creation of the Declaration of Rights of Man determined that citizens of France should be allowed to express their religious views so long as it did not disrupt the public order, which was a move away from the Catholic culture that had dominated for so long (Bowen, 2008, p. 22). In 1795, the French government completely detached from supporting any religion, and in a move not unlike the issue that this paper will focus on, the government banned "exterior clothing… of any religion" (Bowen, 2008, p. 22).

In 1801, there was another shift when Napoleon came to an agreement with the Catholic church, called the Concordat. This act of peace meant that France recognized the church but limited the power it would have (Astier, 2004). Over the next century, the government seemed to move between religion and secularism. Yet many of the laws and actions of the government implied that they favored the church. One of the major indicators of this is the fact that the Catholic church still held control over much of primary education (Bowen, 2008, p. 23). There were multiple conflicts during this time, some of which were violent, including an 1871 uprising in Paris that led to the secularization of schools (Bowen, 2008, p. 24). In 1905, there was an official separation of the church and the state, which solidified

government non-alignment and neutrality. The setup of the law was meant to allow people to freely practice their religion without hostility from the French government (Hunter-Henin, 2012, p. 617). However, the state still believed that having religious symbols present in their schools or other public locations would go against their desire for secularism (Astier, 2004).

All of this comes together to exhibit how the current debates about Muslim religious clothes came to fruition. France had a long and complicated path to get to their contemporary secular culture, much of which was not discussed here. It is important to acknowledge that there have been restrictions on certain aspects of religions other than Islam, such as Christianity and Judaism, which exhibits that the secularism discussion does extend beyond Islamic issues. However, the situation looked at in this paper is especially notable because many Muslim women see the wearing of these garments as their religious responsibility, even if that is not a universal idea (Asad, 2006). This detail is what makes these bans disputed and brings in the question of how they do or do not violate certain human rights, specifically related to freedom of religion and freedom of expression.

Current Issue

Since the onset of secularization in France, there have been bans and restrictions on religious symbols in certain spaces. However, it was not until more recent decades that the debates truly started, especially as younger generations of Muslims began to identify more with their Muslim religious identity (Astier, 2004). France has the largest Muslim population in Europe, with an estimated five million Muslims (Schofield, 2023). Due to the long history of the bans, this paper will focus on more recent restrictions, starting with the 2004 law that banned religious symbols from French public schools. The law was set up in a religiously neutral way, but because of the debates that had begun to come up, many saw it as targeting Muslim headscarves (Bowen, 2008, p. 1). The decision from the French government meant that many girls were either forced to give up their education, considered to be a human right, or stop wearing headscarves, which many saw as part of their religious duty (Elver, 2012, p. 115). However, some supporters of the law see it as freeing these girls from the authority of the men in their lives, although wearing headscarves is more often a choice that Muslim girls make in France (Elver, 2012, p. 119-120). There is evidence that the ban had more profound impacts on those affected than may be present on the surface. These include isolation from peers, educational barriers, and certain risks around employment opportunities (Elver, 2012, p. 122). The 2004 law was one of the first of its kind and many similar bans have been implemented in the two decades since.

In 2011, France enacted another major ban on full-face veils in any public space, the first country to do so in Europe. The phrasing of the law does not explicitly mention the Islamic religion, instead stating that no clothing can be worn that is intended to cover the face. However, the law undeniably targets certain clothes often worn by Muslim women including the burqa and the niqab (Hunter-Henin, 2012, p. 615). Similar to the 2004 ban, the defenders of this veil ban bring up the topic of French secularism, but the 2011 ban is more widespread as it is not meant to be contained to just schools. When looking at this fact within the context of the 1905 separation of church and state, though, it is difficult to see secularism as an adequate justification for this ban. If people are barred from expressing certain aspects of their religious identity in any space outside

of their homes, that appears to not align with the religious neutrality that was outlined in the 1905 decree (Hunter-Henin, 2012, p. 623). Also, very simply, it violates the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion as the ban on these religious clothes in public restricts how and where these women can be in France. In some cases, those who wear any Muslim face veil have felt forced to remain in their homes for fear of prosecution ([Banning the niqab] violated two Muslim women's freedom of religion, 2018).

Another ban was almost implemented in 2022 when the French Senate voted that hijabs should not be worn while playing sports, further invading the lives of those who choose to wear the headwear. After the Senate passed the law, there was significant pushback, specifically from the athletes that would be negatively impacted if the ban was implemented. While the ban was eventually rejected by the National Assembly, Muslim athletes are not unaffected (Méheut, 2022). The French Football Federation banned the hijab, despite FIFA guidelines, and the French Basketball Federation banned them as well (Mella, 2023). The attempted ban also sparked many debates about the integration of Muslims in France as well as about what wearing hijabs during sports might represent (Méheut, 2022). While the full ban did not pass, France has banned their country's athletes from wearing hijabs in the 2024 Olympics, which will be held in Paris. The current Minister of Sports argued that the ban is meant to be in line with France's secularism, though the International Olympic Committee (IOC) views hijabs as more cultural than religious (Mella, 2023). The IOC has confirmed that this ban will not be universal in these Olympics, but this does not change that certain French athletes will either be ineligible to compete or forced to give up a part of their identity for a time. No other European country has these restrictions on their athletes, making this situation in France even more contested (Ntungwabona, 2023).

There continue to be new laws and bans on religious clothes in France, with a more targeted ban being implemented in the summer of 2023. This recent example prevents girls in French schools from wearing abayas, a long loose-fitting dress that women may choose to wear for modesty reasons (AFP, 2023). As with the previously discussed restrictions, the French government views the abaya as going against the secular culture, with the French Education Minister saying that a person's religion should not be obvious by looking at them. Some people view this new law as just an extension of the 2004 ban as this type of garment had been considered a "gray area" until this outright ban (AFP, 2023). As expected, there has already been pushback, particularly with groups of girls wearing abayas to school despite the ban. The girls who refused to change were forced home and threatened with further disciplinary action, thus negatively impacting their right to an education. Perspectives on the acceptance of the abaya ban vary, with many French politicians believing that the public agrees with the ban. However, more left-leaning politicians have spoken against the ban as well as several citizens, who have tried to take legal action (Schofield, 2023).

Human Rights Regime

One of the most well-known voices in the modern human rights regime is the United Nations (UN), which has addressed a few of the bans put in place by France. The issue at hand falls under multiple human rights issues, including women's rights, where it fits the UN's definition of indirect discrimination. In short, this means that while these bans are not directly targeting women, because the clothes that are being

banned are traditionally worn by women, it is still discrimination. Along with that, France has signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which is considered to be a leading treaty on human rights. While the bans put in place may not always be seen as a violation of the treaty, they do undeniably cause some forms of discrimination against certain women in France (Infographic: Human Rights of Women, 2019). Arguably these bans also violate other human rights laid out in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The two major examples of this come in Article 2 and Article 18 of the treaty. Article 2 states that citizens cannot be denied other human rights because of their religion or any other opinion. This connects with Article 18, which says that people have a right to freely practice and observe their religion both in public and in private, which these bans inherently violate.

That being said, the UN has directly spoken out against some of the bans in France. In 2018, the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that the 2011 ban on full-face veils was a violation of human rights. The Committee determined that the ban went against the freedom of religious expression and that the French government had provided no adequate reasoning for the ban to exist. They also determined that the ban "marginalized" women and that it did not protect them, as France tried to claim (Banning the Niqab, 2018). More recently, a spokesperson for the UN Human Rights Committee openly denounced France's decision to stop their athletes from wearing headscarves at the Olympics. They stated that they saw no reason that anyone should try to dictate what women wear, especially in this case as it does not impact health or safety (Ables, 2023). While the statement made was brief, it is nonetheless vital to acknowledge, because the UN is often seen as a leading figure of the human rights regime.

Under the regime, it is also important to look at Non-Governmental Organizations, such as the Human Rights Watch (HRW). This group has spoken out about multiple French religious bans over the years, starting with the 2004 ban in schools. They considered the ban to be unjustified and referred to international law, stating that the ban does not fall into any of the reasons that religious practices can be legally restricted. In response to France's argument of enforcing secularism, the HRW states that allowing these symbols in school demonstrates the diversity of religion in France, which, they argue, represents true nonalignment with any specific religion (Headscarf Ban Violates Religious Freedom, 2004). The HRW has also denounced the 2011 ban, talking about it alongside the women who are *forced* to wear these garments in other parts of the world, stating that both situations are examples of discrimination. The group argues that denying the right to wear these clothes is just as bad as forcing women to wear these clothes as, in their view, it should be the choice of the woman (Sunderland, 2012).

With all this being said, there is a reason that France has continued to uphold and implement these types of bans and that is because certain groups in the Human Rights regime have supported these decisions. The Council of Europe, a human rights group, and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) have upheld numerous bans put in place by France as well as similar bans in other countries. To start, in 2008, the court addressed the 2004 ban on religious symbols in school, looking at six students within multiple schools. Four of the students were Muslim and arrived wearing hijabs. While three of the girls began to wear hats instead of their headscarves, all of them were

eventually expelled from their schools. They went to the ECHR with multiple complaints, including violation of their freedom of religion, facing discrimination, and their right to education. However, in the end, the court ruled against the students on every complaint. The court believed that the French law *was* actively protecting the rights of citizens and maintaining public order and the secularism that France used to justify the law was consistent with the court's conventions. This belief was also used to reject the discrimination claim because since the law was written in a religiously neutral way, their expulsion could not be claimed to have been because of their religion. Similarly, the court deemed that the hats worn by the three girls were still a violation of French law because they were seen as an open statement of their religious beliefs. Finally, in addition to these justifications for expulsion, the ECHR stated that because they had other options for continuing their schooling, the expulsion of these students did not violate their right to an education. All of this combines to exhibit that the Council of Europe sees no human rights violations, offering a different perspective from the regime (Court Gives Several Decisions on Conspicuous Religious Symbols, 2009).

The ECHR has investigated other cases with France outside of this initial controversy, including the full-face veil ban. Within this case, in which the court also upheld the ban, an unnamed woman complained about not being able to wear her burqa and niqab, both of which she chose to wear without familial pressure. However, she also acknowledged that she chose not to wear it all the time and understood certain cases of not being allowed to wear it, such as in security checks. Overall, the woman was most concerned for her right to religious expression.

Within the court case, there were debates about the legitimacy of the situation, as the woman in question had not been prosecuted for wearing a veil; rather she saw herself at risk of *becoming* a victim. Similar to the last case, the French government argued that the ban was vital for their secular culture and for securing "public safety" (Case of [S.A.S] v. France, 2014). Unique to this law, they also argued that the face was vital to social interactions and therefore, covering the face would go against the French ideals of living as one. While the ECHR did acknowledge that the law impacted Muslim women more so than other citizens, they believed that all the reasons that the government of France put forward for this ban made it justified. Since the law was written in a religiously neutral way, the court did not see the law as discrimination because they had deemed that there was a legitimate aim and purpose for the law to exist (S.A.S, 2014).

Solution and Conclusion

Despite the arguments put forward by France for these laws to exist, it still seems clear that the bans that are in place that both directly and indirectly target Muslim women and their clothes violate multiple human rights. Not being allowed to wear religious clothing outside a private residence directly impacts the freedom of expression that is highly recognized as a universal right. Both the 2004 law and the 2023 ban on abayas threatened the right to an education, which is similarly recognized as a human right. Apart from the discussion on human rights, this issue also deals with aspects of identity. Even the religiously neutral laws seem to disproportionately impact Muslim women. At least in this region, women tend to wear these clothes out of personal choice and a sense of responsibility to their religion, despite the common belief that they are forced to wear the clothes by men. While secularism may be important to the French government,

it does not seem to be a valid reason for forcibly suppressing religious beliefs and the expression of those beliefs, especially since religion is often a significant part of personal identity.

It seems that the most obvious solution to this controversial issue is to simply offer Muslim women the choice of when and where to wear religious clothes such as hijabs, burqas, and abayas rather than dictate them. While to some degree it is understandable that the French government could see these garments as a threat to their secularism, it still does not seem justified to limit the rights of these women, especially since they do not pose a tangible and constant threat to the safety and security of society. In any type of society, there is a required give and take, and in secularism, it is improbable to not allow any open expression of any religion.

Even more, having a choice appears to be exactly what those affected want, as was displayed in the ECHR case described in the previous section, meaning that it is a solution that would likely satisfy those fighting the ban. Religion is often a personal choice and arguably, the way that one expresses their religion should also be a choice and should not be restricted by governments without just cause. While there can be brief exceptions, such as for security or identification purposes, it does not seem right otherwise for these women, or anyone else wearing a religious symbol, to be persecuted for exercising their right to expression. While this solution would require time and government support to be implemented, it appears to be the most direct way to stop the human rights violations that many believe happen when these types of religious bans exist.

Overall, the bans on Muslim religious clothing in France violate multiple different recognized human rights, primarily freedom of religion and freedom of expression. France has a dedication to having a secular culture, which is provided as the main purpose of the bans that are in place. Even so, in many views, they are still violating international law. The bans are more widespread than they may appear on the surface and while they are not always targeting Muslim women, they are unquestioningly more impacted by these restrictive laws than any other group.

The restrictions inhibit many women from participating in certain parts of normal life because the other option is to give up an aspect of their religious identity. While there are conflicting opinions within the human rights regime, there is still discrimination involved in this global studies issue, whether it is direct or not. In the end, the simplest way to address the controversy over these laws is to provide women with the choice of when and where they wear these religious garments with some clearly outlined exceptions, though this solution would take time and effort to implement. It would limit the current and future human rights violations that are being caused by these laws. The issue of religious clothing bans, particularly in France, is not simply black and white. When looking at the evidence, though, it is simple to see that there is a lack of probable cause and the laws that are currently in place are only isolating certain members of the French community when they should be able to live freely in their society.

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The Hole and The New Minimalist Object

By Isaac Jones

I first encountered *The Hole* by Hiroko Oyamada in the winding fiction section of Barnes and Noble. The pure white of its spine, the sleek sans-serif font, and Oyamada's name separated by a series of three slanted lines, was striking in its asceticism. The faint impression left by the spine is replicated in the cover, an image of grass that wraps the book and leaves little to be imagined, an impossibility to locate something meaningful or specific. The advertisement is simply grass, a refusal of character and of attraction, an image so accessible that it frustrates the novelty of a cover altogether. The cover acts as a mission statement for the novel in its evasion from attraction, the plaintive lushness in stark juxtaposition to the title elicits a search for hazardous epiphany, a search for the hole.

Let not the maxim "never judge a book by its cover," deter you from accounting for Oyamada's foreshadowing. As ubiquitous as the blades of grass, the flat tone of *The Hole*'s opening sentences provokes no sense of place. Asa is yet another avatar of refusal in a long laconic line of minimalist narrators unwilling to delve into feeling or extended history. She gestures at an internal world of perception and judgment but disallows engagement with it. Using the droning cicadas, blazing heat, a "Sensei," a gaggle of hallucinatory children, and the titular holes, Oyamada imagines a new vision for minimalism wherein gritty reality can be made manifest in the surreal. The novel, which sits at 92 pages, oscillates between Asa's inaction and her abrupt confrontations with the surreal. A real so real that it extends beyond what is possible. These narrative disruptions bleed into her mundane existence and begin to fracture her psyche in addition to the unity of *The Hole*'s ostensible passivity. This novel, in conversation with *Play It as It Lays* by Joan Didion and *Good Morning, Midnight* by Jean Rhys, triangulates minimalism as an aesthetic sensibility whose primary function is retreat. Their protagonists are recalcitrant as their precarity of experience would predicate. These are women in a post-traumatic stupor lodged between sexual oppression and social and economic disintegration. As a result, this essay will explore minimalism as a retreat from the horror of the real utilizing *The Hole* by Hiroko Oyamada.

Furthermore, I will assess Oyamada's minimal stylistic construction and her cultivation of a new formal outlet in the introduction of the surreal. Then I will track minimalism's genealogy and discourse in relation to Oyamada's novel utilizing Kim Herzinger's "Introduction: On the New Fiction" and the aforementioned novels, in addition to *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway. Then, I will begin to think through minimalism as a retreat first by defining that which one retreats from and followed by identifying the ways in which the narrative and novelistic structure retreat. Finally, I will consider surrealism as a new imaginative possibility, a potentially radical reformation of minimalism. In interrupting

the narratives and formal predispositions of the minimalist aesthetic, Oyamada reifies the movement as one in progress.

Minimalism

In minimalist discourse, the critical and authorial communities appeal to a cold and elliptical quality, a refusal to engage with feeling and climax. Minimalist writers employ an oblique syntax that seeks to flatten the events of their novels. According to Kim Herzinger, minimalism is defined as texts wherein there exists an "equanimity of surface, 'ordinary' subjects, recalcitrant narrators, and deadpan narratives, slightness of story, and characters who don't think out loud" (Herzinger 11). This definition, as agreed upon by the contributors to the 1985 edition of the *Mississippi Review*, insists on the refusal of depth; to be ordinary is to eschew the absurd, atypical, or spectacular, to be recalcitrant is to refuse engagement, and so on. All of these classifications and Homeric lists of keywords are qualified with withdrawal and mired in tonal and syntactical retreat.

The extent to which I find minimalism to be problematic is in its aestheticization. When the ellipses become code for laziness or exploitation of the moment the form is having. I share the concerns of the roundtable at Columbia featuring Madison Bell and Mary Gaitskill among others. "But the truly minimal and reductive element in this style of work is something beyond the questions of spareness of style and almost total reliance on dramatic action, scene and dialogue, to convey the content of the work" (Bell et al. 47). Whereas the soulless, generic quality of minimalism may be applied to the "dirty realists" of the 1980s, I am unconvinced that this description applies to the experimental work of Rhys, Didion, or Oyamada.

As Herzinger notes, these characters, who were once subjects of irony in post-modernist literature, become the focal points of these stories. The subject's actions and lives are mundane and often monotonous, overly specific at times. There is attention paid to the precision of gas station names or cans lining the highway, the invocation of an ordinary if ubiquitous affect. The still fragmented narrator continues to alienate the reader by omitting their pasts and interior worlds not because there is something they seek to obscure but often because the author has not imagined anything at all. In this way characters act as complete strangers whom we have the displeasure of watching. The difference between these "dirty realists" and their experimental forebears is in their constructions of this absence.

I do not find in Sasha, Maria, or Asa the kind of blankness displayed by these other narrators. These are women not without internal worlds like in the then-contemporary fiction these critics are seeking to chronicle but women on the retreat, women so oppressed by the claustrophobia of their conditions that little else is left for them to do. The differentiation is analogous to Stephen Koch's analysis of the relationship between Carver and Hemingway.

> "The contrast between Raymond Carver and his master Hemingway is that the voice which in Raymond Carver is the voice of American anonymity and placelessness and egolessness in Hemingway is exactly the opposite: the sense of the person brought to a particularly acute and intense sense of self and deliberateness and intensity of experience" (Bell et al. 52).

Thus, minimalism when enacted in a substantive and experimental capacity, as these female novelists employ, is a form whose primary concern is retreating from the horror of the real, and thus exposing the real's otherwise invisible horror.

As abstract as "horror of the real" may sound, there is precedent for this genre as I am defining it. In the essay, "A Few Words for Minimalism," John Barth lays out not only a taxonomy of minimalist form but the precipitating factors for its overthrow of the literary world. According to Barth, minimalism is a reaction to a series of sociopolitical factors. Firstly, and in the case of writers like Anne Beattie and Raymond Carver, minimalism is a response to an inability to fully encapsulate the trauma of an event like the Vietnam War. The operative word is inability, there are no words so why exert the effort? In this way, minimalism is not simply refusing or retreating from these collective traumas but perhaps serving an ethical purpose by seeking to show only what is immediate. "That has ever been the ground of inspiration, moral philosophical in character, of minimalism and its kissing-cousin realism in their many avatars over the centuries, in the fine arts and elsewhere: the feeling that the language (or whatever) has for whatever reasons become excessive, cluttered and corrupted, fancy, false" (Barth 73). The reflex of minimalism is often to offhandedly represent the precarity of life, to enable an impressionistic illustration without seeking to define or stake a position in anything because there is no language that applies. Whose words can capture a war, an energy crisis, or a socioeconomic collapse? A now infamous maxim of *Play It as It Lays* by Joan Didion is that "nothing applies" and where no words apply, what else is there for a narrative to do but retreat? What syntactical maneuver other than ellipses? The three dots of Jeanne Rhys and Hiroko Oyamada or the blank page of Joan Didion is a result of the battle between the signifier and the signified, when no word can apply to a war-ravaged Paris, or an America in the advent of the nuclear (family and existential reality) or Japan in the throes of social and economic stagnation. Thus, this claustrophobic environment forces a performance of retreat. It is an ethical and dramatic endeavor that sets minimalism apart from other fiction.

The Retreat

If minimalism is a sort of retreat from the real, then one's minimalist intervention can be appraised through the identification of those elements. In describing the narrative and formal construction of retreat I am necessarily describing minimalism. Therefore, I will begin by analyzing the text through this lens in *The Hole* by Hiroko Oyamada. The meandering description of the first pages introduces us to a narrator like the narrators found in either *Play It as It Lays* or *Good Morning, Midnight*. *The Hole* strikes a lifeless tone as it details the predicate for the story, without speculation or introspection on behalf of our narrator. There exists in minimalism a plurality of retreats. *The Hole* seeks to keep its readers at arm's length with Oyamada's formation of the retreat, utilizing a currency of intrepid passivity, a withering deadpan, fragmentation, and elision. Asa is not cool like Maria, quite the opposite whether from circumstance or an extensive infantilization, she is rendered aloof but does not perform as such. In Joan Didion's novel, Maria assumes the form of someone uninterested in the plights of the average person of the questions of mortality or of expectations of exertion. She retreats into this facade of terseness as a way to retreat from her grief. *The Hole* positions Asa as an intrepidly passive but not terse, aloof insofar as she is distant but not cold in either tone or action.

Furthermore, in *Good Morning, Midnight* Sasha moves from London to Paris to escape the ghosts of addiction, heartbreak, and abuse that linger around the rooms she occupies. Even here, however, it would seem she cannot escape. Wandering the streets of Paris provides some form of structure for her but when she leaves her room, she finds a cruel world laden with eyes that seem to burn holes in her. Either novel features a protagonist who finds retreat in passivity or in active self-destruction.

When Asa is alone in their new house, and before Tomiko, her mother-in-law, asks her to make the deposit at 7-Eleven, there is a cyclical nature to her activities. Untethered from her temp job in the city, Asa begins to languish in the sudden lack of organization. She has no money of her own, no car, no reason to leave or want for what lies beyond her home, the droning cicadas and blazing heat of the summer seem to swallow her when she leaves and preoccupies her even in the safety of her home. It becomes clear almost immediately that Asa feels completely dislocated, strung along by the mornings spent making breakfast and assembling lunch for Muneaki, between trips to the grocery store where she arrives early to beat the summer heat. Asa first finds a retreat in inaction, lounging and perusing the windows, watching her grandfather-in-law water the garden, but her sloth soon becomes a site of temporal tragedy.

> "I had to spend money to pass the time. People say housewives get free room and board and even time to nap, but the truth is napping was the most economical way to make it through the day. The hours moved slowly, but the time passed with staggering speed. Soon I lost all sense of time. I didn't have any appointments or deadlines. The days were slipping through my fingers" (Oyamada 23).

Asa is unmoored amidst time's forward march, feeling simultaneously fast and slow but always feeling bored. She delivers this line with a deadpan that reveals only the absolute truth of her statement.

Evidenced across the novel is Asa's deadpan delivery and unwillingness to introspect, or at the very least an aversion to inviting us in. The closest we come to Asa's internal world is in her consternation regarding the expectation of children. She feels as if this is the wrong time and place, but we are only left to infer her happiness or sadness on the subject. The unwillingness to reckon with the passage of time is indicative of her retreat.

A running theme in these novels is an attempt at structure or moreover a frivolous structure. That is to say, the structures chosen by the narrators of Rhys, Didion, and Oyamada are not often the kind of structures that are conducive to positive personal growth. In the latter half of the novel, there is an obvious disintegration in the fortitude of Asa's passivity. Restlessness begins to overtake her body and stagnation rings her neck like a yoke.

The endeavor of minimalism is for simplicity, for austerity featuring a propensity towards fatalism. The meandering prose, the abrupt and discursive sentences, and those ellipses that appear whether it be the three periods of Rhys and Oyamada or Didion's blank page, offer the means by which the narrative and novel structure can retreat. To offer such is to retreat from even a possibility of attraction as to attract is to engage and to engage is to reckon with what is present. Thus, flatness is required such that the novel can retreat. So often in these novels and in Oyamada's as

well, the goal is dissociation, to be a specter floating around the empty rooms and vacant streets of one's life as Asa floats around the austere spaces of her home and across the blazing concrete of this rural prefecture.

Claustrophobia: The Conditions of Retreat

A word to describe this genus of experimental minimalism and one I use often in my discussion of it is the role of claustrophobia. This claustrophobia manifests as a kind of oppressive reality, wherein, our narrators are assailed a plethora of precarities. When examining past minimalist novels, especially those post Hemingway, it becomes clear these novels exist in a space that Hemingway's does not. *A Farewell to Arms* follows an ambulance driver in the First World War who recounts his days with a terse and dispossessed voice. The sentences are short and pointed but mapped upon it is Hemingway's affective geography. While Rhys, Didion, and Oyamada are not necessarily excluded from these categorizations, these novels differ in the way their characters move through the world. Henry moves through the events of the war, in conversations with his superiors, and in his escape to Switzerland with an unflinching confidence, perhaps delusionally so (ironically a hubris its author also shares). Hemingway's differs from the novels to follow in his insistence on an auric machismo, a stoicism, a masculinist posture of aloofness. The novels of Rhys, Didion, and Oyamada inhabit a female dimension wherein the world is experienced differently in a kind of paranoia or claustrophobia manifesting under the pressure of expectations and in the appraising looks of their spectators. The role of women in these novels is not experienced in isolation but rather felt alongside the looming realities of their respective societies.

In the case of *Good Morning, Midnight,* a paranoia permeates the pages of the novel and Sasha's cyclical sadness becomes a game of telephone. Her diction is clear, we know she is sad. Everywhere feels public as if Sasha is always being watched. She shadowboxes with strangers refuting their judgements, resigning herself to a life spent in a spiral. "This damned room - it's saturated with the past.... It's all the rooms I've ever slept in, all the streets I've ever walked in. Now the whole thing moves in an ordered, undulating procession past my eyes. Rooms, streets, streets, rooms...." (Rhys 103). In this narration, we see that Sasha's life has entrapped her in a cycle where the bondage of the past, of womanhood, and of the economy disallows any form of mobility. The conclusion of Rhys' novel is fatalistic, an insistence that roads lead nowhere, and people are like hyenas.

The Hole finds claustrophobia in impermanence and the expectations of the domestic in relation to this impermanence. The domestic space is one that foundationally necessitates a kind of permanence. We are told that Asa has never felt this either in the city at her job, in the city in her home, or in languishing in her new space. She worked a temp job in the city, harder than the permanent employee. "I reported everything I could last time, and the amount was larger than what I was used to seeing, but it didn't bring me any joy" (Oyamada 13). Her station as a housewife is suffocating or claustrophobic because this is not her desire, to idle in complete inaction. Her friend from work envies her, explaining on multiple occasions how lucky Asa is to be free from work. However, this is not Asa's experience. "Even if I couldn't find a job, I had to do something. My body was getting heavier with every passing day… I was slipping and it was completely my fault" (Oyamada 46-47). The centipede in Japanese

culture is a symbol of stagnation and is often used throughout the novel in this symbolic capacity. The point is not that Asa is lazy or wishes to stagnate, only that her world is constituted of it, enforces it, causes her to be free from freedom. Alone she sits in her home day after day with no way to spend her time. There is no spring in this novel, no new life, only the heat of summer. Those that live in this rural prefecture are elderly and indicate this societal stagnation, wherein nothing grows, and everything seems to rot. The river smells and the grass is pungent, the summer air feels suffocating and everything is flattened by the environmental oppression. The pronounced status of this environment and the volume of words spent describing its overwhelm reveal the novel itself as stagnating, out of things to describe, lost in the disintegrating and interminable march of time.

Asa's womanhood is likewise a cause for claustrophobia. Her former coworker insists that she will have or want a baby and enjoy the domestic, but Asa is not convinced. She resigns herself to silence though the narration intimates that this was never her desire. "I don't know why, but she'd always been under the impression that I wanted a child as badly as she did" (Oyamada 11). Her neighbor Sera likewise seems to expect Asa to have a child, but Asa remains uninterested knowing that this is not the time nor place for a child. Between her overbearing mother-in-law and her distant, and at times petulant husband there is no environment of support, no permanent structure that would ensure her or her child's wellness. Yet, the weight of expectations lingers and intrudes. Tomiko in this novel represents a kind of archetypal woman. She is assertive in the domestic space but resigned in the professional, representing an unjust societal standard that is then applied to Asa. In this way, womanhood in this novel is constricting to the point of asphyxiation.

Claustrophobia is evinced not only in maneuvers of plot, Asa's thoughts and feelings, and the reticence of her actions, but in the way the novel's dialogue is organized. Oyamada weaponizes what is traditionally a novice mistake. By leaving the quote within the paragraph itself, she utilizes structure as a way to provoke in the reader sympathetic alienation. Dialogue here and throughout the novel is disorienting, and conversations between people feel uncomfortably compact. Their quotations are left within paragraphs creating tension between the reader and the structure of the text itself. The narrative does not often go out of its way to relay who is speaking and thus, the dialogue becomes hazy and imprecise. Who is speaking becomes a matter of discernment. One might imagine feeling disempowered like Asa.

In these author's narratives, the politics of minimalism reach the same conclusion. Asa is withdrawn because she has no power to assert herself. When opportunity for agency strikes, she follows a wild animal into a hole where she is trapped. The looming smokestacks and nuclear sites, the post-war malaise of Paris, the parsimonious text and feeling, the austerity and elision are all a consequence of precarious climates and vicious social marketplaces. It becomes a question of affordability, and these women cannot afford exertion if they want to survive. What lies beyond this parsimony is a chimera of expectations: of motherhood, of occupation, of participation, attenuated by a kind of social disintegration. Social disintegration as the cause of the claustrophobia and the retreat—the disintegration is the horror.

Surrealism As a New Object

Whereas past minimalists have sought to refuse the light to enter from the window as Biguenet affectionately words it, Oyamada has drawn the curtains and allows the ghastly yellow to filter in. Oyamada's formation of minimalism provides an opportunity to continue the exploration of the peripheral oppression of the everyday through surrealism. Surrealism in this novel takes the form of holes and a brother-in-law who chides her for falling into them, for following this unnamable animal as if she were Alice. The first hole she falls into is, "a trap made just for me" (Oyamada 31). This is the point at which the novel fractures and Asa begins to fall into restless disarray. The environment that seeks to suffocate her multiplies in intensity and she is only set further into the gyre. Oyamada's theorization of surrealism in this novel is a way to explore the real without naming it. That is, the tenets of minimalism to elide and subtract may be maintained while equally allocating a new resource to the minimalist novel. This is a much-needed evolution of minimalism. The fire, that the round table and many other critics refer to, this bonfire upon which 'the artful introspective maximalist novel' can finally be extinguished.

A hole means of stasis, a depression causing complete paralysis and enforced passivity. If retreat from the real, a shrinking away from the nuclear as in *Play it as it Lays,* from the remnants of the Parisian economic and social theaters as in *Good Morning, Midnight, and* the shared withdrawal from the role of woman, wife, or even human in all three of these novels, is minimalism definitionally then perhaps Oyamada is not a minimalist. The argument is perhaps that the surreal effectively transgresses accepted canon. When applying these definitions of minimalism and seeking to define what seeks not to be defined, we restrict the boundaries of this sensibility.

Furthermore, by initiating the surreal or the hyperreal Oyamada maintains the dichotomy between the real and the retreat. We locate the horrific real as the myriad conditions and oppressions Asa makes visible through disengagement. By disengaging, Asa creates a space between her and the causes of the pressure; thus, naming these pressures themselves. When we identify the real in this novel, we can witness its slow apotheosis to the state of hyperreality or surrealism. The surreal forces a confrontation with reality by making its symbolic representation inescapable to either Asa or the reader. Additionally, no more is being granted to the reader. There is still every aesthetic sense of minimalism. Perhaps, this even enhances the impressionistic and fragmented attitudes of the minimalist genre. The surreal forces a confrontation with reality that is inescapable. In this novel, the real is stagnation, therefore, providing a way to address the real, to repoliticize the genre. The hole and the novel itself are a kind of prison for a woman whose, at times, frustrating passivity is inevitable. What words can suffice for a woman whose entire existence feels temporary and unmoored? She is infantilized by her family and compared to Tomiko; she is expected to be something that she is not. Therefore, the holes provide a symbolic and literal sense of Asa's life. By the end of the novel, the holes are all around as a reminder that Asa cannot escape.

In this way, Oyamada is doing something new or at least something never explored in this capacity. Oftentimes, when thinking of experimental forms of minimalism, critics and authors alike

restrict the minimalist playbook to that of the real. That it must always reflect the mundane, the simple, the accessible because to reflect more is impossible and even at times unethical. However, this novel offers a version of surrealism representative of reality in a symbolic sense and provides just as little context, interiority, and voice as any other minimalist element or plot detour. Surrealism offers a new form of life to a genre whose heartbeat was monitored and observed to flatline by Madison Bell. "What we are doing here is composing the epitaph of this movement described as minimalism, which is now effectively over. I think the fad has ended, it's not likely to be revived at any significant level of intensity" (Bell et al. 6). This novel argues otherwise that minimalism follows the discontent of society and as a result, might never truly fade but evolve into more experimental territory with Oyamada as its forerunner.

Conclusion

The Hole by Hiroko Oyamada offers not simply another minimalist novel to reenact the novels of those who came before, diluting their form and lending credibility to the genre's dissenters. Her novel theorizes a new kind of minimalism holding firm to the genre's stylistic construction and narrative scale while innovating its presentation and perhaps even partially estranging the genre from its roots in realism. This essay has explored the ways in which *The Hole* formulates the retreat and its conditions, finding its modes and reasons for those withdrawn expressions to be in a wider conversation with other minimalist texts, primarily *Good Morning, Midnight*, and *Play It as It Lays*. In closing, Oyamada's novel locates minimalism to be an escape from the horror of the real while utilizing surrealism to be the most forceful and lucid confrontation with those same horrors. From aging to womanhood to social and economic disintegration, *The Hole* theorizes the minimalist novel as a direct response to the pitfalls of society, understanding that the holes are everywhere.

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The Loneliness of Womanhood

By Nevaeh Ellis

What is worse: being lonely for one's entire life, or- being lonely, getting a taste of what it's like to be loved, and having that ripped away only to find oneself lonelier than ever? Brian De Palma's 1976 horror film, *Carrie*, explores the loneliness of womanhood as a product of a patriarchal fear of women in power by using classic female tropes, editing techniques, and the horror genre itself. The 1970s was a time when filmmakers and audiences were craving change. As Geoff King puts it in "New Hollywood Cinema," "It is remembered as an era in which Hollywood produced a relatively high number of innovative films that seemed to go beyond the confines of conventional studio fare in terms of their content and style and their existence as products of a purely commercial or corporate system" (King 13). Many people felt like they were finally watching characters and stories they could identify with, and *Carrie* is one example. On the surface, it is a quintessential 70s film due to its extreme and experimental editing, as well as its depictions of violence and horror, but it goes deeper than that. At its core, *Carrie* fits the mold of a 70s film due to its experiments in content such as womanhood and the female experience told from the male gaze.

The opening scene of *Carrie* begins by putting the viewer into the role of the male gaze. The audience is shown a girl's locker room in a slow-motion pan, where some girls are nude, and most are smiling. There are even a few of them playfully hitting one another with their clothes, almost as if they were having a pillow fight. This sequence seems to be romanticizing girlhood, playing on the classic tropes of the ways males may believe women act around one another when they think no one is watching. Between the content and the use of the slow-motion technique, De Palma relies on the male gaze to take hold in this sequence. What is interesting, though, is that he turns this on its head.

By the end of the locker room scene, the camera ends up on Carrie (Sissy Spacek) herself as she showers. This sequence is made up of close-up shots of parts of her body that, again, appeal to the male gaze. However, in the middle of this sequence, the male gaze is instantly ripped away when Carrie gets her first period, and blood begins to drip down her leg and onto her hands. In a matter of seconds, the male gaze is gone. Any woman watching immediately identifies with Carrie, while most men would, at this point, feel the horror movie had officially begun. The girls in the locker room corner Carrie while throwing feminine hygiene products at her, expressing their hatred for their own periods, Carrie, and womanhood. Even her mother punishes her for getting her period, explaining that rather than representing womanhood, menstruation is women's punishment due to Eve's sin in the Bible.

Spacek's acting in the locker room scene and throughout the film is key to its effectiveness. In this opening scene, her body language and facial expressions are so extreme that they alone contribute greatly to the horror aspect of the film. At the beginning of the film, she almost seems like a fetus or a changeling, a being whose purpose is to become something different entirely.

With the coming of her first period comes new telekinetic powers that allow Carrie to move things with her mind, making her more powerful and more dangerous. The way Carrie is treated gets the audience to root for her while also becoming the base for her supernatural vengeance. Had the film been told from another perspective, the audience may have perceived Carrie as the antagonist, but because of the context and point of view provided, the audience ends up siding with Carrie quite easily. This opposition between Carrie's roles in the film could be compared to Robert De Niro's character, Travis Bickle, in Martin Scorsese's 1976 film *Taxi Driver*. In "Hollywood from Vietnam to Regan," Robin Wood talks a lot about how *Taxi Driver* has many characteristics that come from the Western and horror genres. Wood says, "We can see the film in relation to both the Western and the horror film. With the former, Travis is the gunfighter hero whose traditional function has always been to clean up the town; with the latter, he's a psychopath-monster produced by an indefensible society. The latter option appears fairly unambiguously dominant throughout most of the film, but the former is never totally eclipsed. The film cannot believe in the traditional figure of the charismatic individualistic hero, but it also cannot relinquish it because it has nothing to put in its place" (Wood 53). Both Carrie and Travis seem to make the audience question where their sympathies lie and why. These films ask if they are the protagonist because they are just inherently good, or if it is because there is no one else to replace them with. The difference, though, is that it could be argued that the fate of Carrie's classmates is their own doing. Had they not tormented Carrie, who knows what could have been? On the other hand, it was the oncoming of womanhood that brought Carrie her telekinetic powers. Perhaps it is womanhood itself that is the true root of this horror film.

The tie between these new abilities and her newfound womanhood is interesting. It suggests that womanhood comes with great power. As soon as Carrie becomes a woman, she gains more confidence, and things begin to look up for her. She is tired of being lonely and longs to be loved. The second half of the film is dedicated to Carrie trying to find the love she so desperately wants while leaving behind the only love she has ever known: her mother.

While Carrie seems to be interested in the idea of romantic love, she almost seems to crave the love of her peers more. Some similarities can be drawn between *Carrie* and Alan J. Pakula's 1971 neo-noir film, *Klute*, which explores ideas of womanhood and feminism through Jane Fonda's character, Bree Daniels, as she struggles with feelings of love for Klute. In "The Divided Woman: Bree Daniels in *Klute*," Diane Giddis says, "*Klute*, then, is the story of a woman and her battle not *for* love but *with* love - and, as such, would seem to have particular relevance for women today. Yet most of the critics have ignored this aspect of the film; while recognizing Bree's emotional odyssey as its main concern, they have largely interpreted it in moral terms - i.e., the "good" woman triumphs over the "bad"...When it occurs, this battle between opposing emotional forces is one of the most dramatic in a woman's life" (Giddis 199). Bree struggles with love because she feels she can either have power or love, but not both. And Giddis argues that this is a struggle that many, if not all, women face. While their objects of desire may differ, both Carrie and Bree go through emotional turmoil when in pursuit of their respective loves.

While Carrie begins the film emotionally lonely, she ends the film physically and completely alone. Unable to cope with the

destruction and pain her new powers and newfound womanhood brought on, Carrie loses control of her telekinesis and perishes, just like everyone else. Her power consumes her. The film depicts the horrors and loneliness that come along with womanhood through its content, while its form follows the traditional horror genre's techniques. Because the film is told mostly through the male gaze, it seems to be a film that is not so much sympathetic to the female struggle but is actively trying to prove the destruction that inevitably comes with being a woman, specifically a woman with power. Many men felt a certain fear with how many women were beginning to fight for their rights during the 1970s. This film pokes that bear and raises questions surrounding women and their place in society and relationships. *Carrie* ultimately ends with the character Sue, left alone, miserable, and powerless. Perhaps the message of this film should not be that powerful women are dangerous but rather that the patriarchal fear of women is itself the true danger.

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The Road Towards Sustainable Resource Management in the Brazilian Amazon and Beyond

By Abby Van Voorhis

The Amazon rainforest is the largest tropical rainforest in the world but rampant deforestation as a result of the exploitation of its abundant natural resources has caused the Amazon to get smaller and smaller every day. Deforestation in the Amazon has caused habitat destruction, soil degradation, alterations in the global water cycle, and increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that are contributing to local and global climate change. All of this is due to resource exploitative industries along with ineffective and inconsistent environmental policies across the various countries located in the Amazon. These industries and policies also have a direct impact on people living in the Amazon, especially Indigenous communities, whose livelihoods, cultures, and health are at risk due to the effects of deforestation. This essay argues that through cooperation and the creation of consistent and effective policies toward sustainable resource management, an end to deforestation is possible in the Amazon rainforest. By examining the drivers of deforestation, the history of governance towards this issue, and the need for regional cooperation and consistency across regional governance due to the Amazon's size, solutions can be found by understanding what has caused these issues and why prior solutions have and have not worked. Through learning from our mistakes and building upon our successes, there can be an end to deforestation in the Amazon.

The Amazon Rainforest

To understand the problems affecting the Amazon rainforest, you first have to understand the Amazon rainforest itself. The Amazon rainforest is a transboundary biome that reaches 6.7 million square kilometers (roughly 2.6 million square miles) across eight different countries and one territory in north-central South America (Hänggli et al. 1-2). As it is split between so many different countries, resource use and environmental policy in the Amazon varies greatly from country to country. The country that contains the largest portion of the Amazon is Brazil, with 62% of the rainforest within its borders. Brazil, therefore, will be the main focus of this paper. Despite its size, the Amazon is very interconnected. It is not just a collection of independent ecosystems, plants, and animals; it acts more as one body. What happens to one part of the rainforest will affect the rest (Ibid., 1-2).

As a rainforest, the Amazon has considerable effects on the climate, and due to its generous size, these effects are seen regionally and globally. This makes the

Amazon a crucial player in the global water cycle and in global atmospheric conditions (Ibid., 1-2). The Amazon also acts as a carbon sink, meaning it absorbs carbon from the atmosphere and produces oxygen. This has placed the Amazon on the frontlines in the fight against climate change (Garrett et al. 627). As the largest tropical rainforest, the Amazon is also one of the most biodiverse places in the world. The Amazon rainforest, river, and tributary system are home to over 10% of all known animals and plants of Earth (Hänggli et al. 1). The Amazon also has an incredibly diverse human population whose cultures and livelihoods are intertwined with the Amazon and its plentiful resources and have been managing them sustainably for thousands of years (Garret et al. 626-627). Due to deforestation and other forms of exploitative resource extraction, this vital biome is at risk of depletion to the point of no return and/or completely disappearing should these practices not stop.

Drivers of Deforestation

To bring an end to deforestation, you must understand what is causing it. The Amazon's history of resource exploitation can be traced back to the rubber trade when South America was colonized by Spain and Portugal. As South American states gained independence, resource exploitation did not stop. Through policies of industrialization, modernization, integration, and land productivity in the 1950s-1960s that were meant to boost economies, the modern drivers of deforestation were born (Ibid., 632). The largest driver of deforestation in Brazil today is agriculture and, more specifically, cattle ranching. The main reason cattle ranching is the largest driver is due to unsustainable pasture management. This leads to soil degradation to the point that the land is unusable. Instead of using sustainable pasture management practices and working to restore degraded soil (all of which is admittedly expensive), ranchers turn to buying up more land for cheap and then deforesting it to make new pastures. This creates a never-ending cycle of degradation and deforestation. Another agricultural driver of deforestation is the growing of commodity crops such as soy, corn, and palm oil. While it does not result in nearly as much deforestation as cattle ranching (mostly due to consistent and effective policies managing soy production in the 2000s), it still plays a role. Commodity crop production can even influence deforestation due to cattle ranching by displacing cattle pastures and pushing them further into the Amazon (Ibid., 629-630).

Other drivers of deforestation include mining and the construction infrastructure related to resource-exploitative industries, such as roads and dams. Both legal and illegal mining operations exist in the Amazon, with major ores of interest including gold, iron, niobium, and bauxite (Ibid., 633). Mining causes deforestation through the clearing of land for the mine itself and through the infrastructure it brings with it, such as buildings, roads, and settlements that often follow industry. The construction of roads to remote mining locations and other industries has been shown to increase deforestation rates in the areas around them by making these areas more accessible. These same issues are seen in the construction of hydropower dams built in many Amazonian tributaries (Hänggli et al. 6-7). Deforestation is not the only environmental issue mining brings with it. Mining operations often use toxic chemicals in their extractive processes, including the use of mercury. These chemicals and the toxic waste they produce are stored in earthen dams that often break. This results in health risks (sometimes fatal) for both humans and ecosystems, especially when these chemicals enter the water (Garrett

et al. 630-631). Mining operations are generally done by companies from countries outside of Brazil, most notably Canada (Fernandes et al. 2). Oil is another minor driver of deforestation, but while its direct footprint towards deforestation may be small, its effect on the greater climate through the burning of fossil fuels is far larger (Juhasz).

Indigenous communities are often hit the hardest by the effects of deforestation and other environmental issues. Their land is often encroached on by agriculture and mining operations. It is the resources they rely on that are exploited, destroyed, or turned hazardous, such as in the case of toxins from mining operations getting into fish populations that many rely on as a food source (Garrett et al. 630-631). Indigenous people are often on the frontlines of the fight against deforestation, leading protests and speaking out against various exploitative industries and companies. These environmental defenders are frequently threatened with violence and intimidation. In Brazil alone, there have been roughly 100 people killed as a result of land use issues since 2020 ("Amazon Summit").

Deforestation from all of these various drivers has resulted in biodiversity loss and soil degradation and has affected the Amazon's regional and global climate effects. As a result of deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions from cattle ranching, drought, and fires (exacerbated by the effects of deforestation), the Amazon is no longer a carbon sink. This means that the Amazon now produces more carbon than it absorbs, making it a carbon source and destroying a pivotal tool in the fight against climate change (Garrett et al. 627). Understanding what industries and issues are causing deforestation in the Amazon rainforest is imperative to the creation of effective policies toward ending deforestation. This knowledge allows policies to be specific and target the issue at the source.

History of Brazilian Governance Towards the Issue of Deforestation

The drivers of deforestation and their respective industries are greatly influenced by policy. By looking at Brazil and its history of deforestation we can look at what environmental policies and attitudes have hurt and helped the Amazon. The policies of modernization and integration that took place in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s were not only fueled by the drive for economic growth but also by a perceived security threat. Many Brazilian politicians and citizens then and now fear that Brazil's sovereignty over the Amazon is under threat. Either by invasion from foreign countries that want the resources for themselves or by intervention from international organizations in the name of climate protection and scientific interest. As a result, Brazil pushed for the development of the Amazon not only for the purpose of building a modern economy but also as a way to secure this sovereignty threat (Fernandes et al. 1-2).

This occupation of the Amazon intensified in the 1970s and 1980s, leading to rapid deforestation. It was at this time that land tenure policies were adopted that set rules regarding ownership of land to "productive" land users, mainly cattle ranching. These policies were used against Indigenous communities as their traditional use of the land was deemed "unprotective" to Brazil's attempt to modernize. These Indigenous lands were then titled over to cattle ranchers and turned into pastures (Garrett et al. 632). In 1988, the year Brazil's current constitution went into effect, another land titling policy went into effect that stated that land titles to Indigenous peoples' ancestral lands would not be granted if they were not physically present on the land on

the day of the adoption of the constitution. This means that if an Indigenous community was forcibly expelled from their ancestral land before that cutoff date, they had no grounds to try to obtain rights to that land. This once again benefited the agricultural sector, which, in turn, received the land title. Brazil's Supreme Court ruled against this policy in September 2023, opening the door for Indigenous peoples to dispute land titles and fight to get their land back. In response, an agribusiness-backed caucus has brought forward a motion to create legislation to reinstate the cutoff date policy, but the success of this motion is yet to be seen (Carvalho).

Deforestation rates started being measured in 1988, right before large-scale globalization and global demand for exports shot off during the 1990s and 2000s, resulting in a rapid increase in deforestation. The majority of this deforestation was a result of external demand, especially from trade partners like China, for Brazilian exports such as beef, soy, and various mined ores (Garrett et al. 632-633). Things started getting better with the election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as Brazil's President in 2003. Lula da Silva, also known simply as Lula, and his administration created a program, the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm), in 2004 which greatly reduced deforestation rates. This program helped create more conservation areas, increased enforcement of existing environmental policies as well as against illegal deforestation operations, and increased deforestation monitoring using satellites. Also, during Lula's time in office, a soy moratorium went into effect due to growing societal and organizational pressures against soy production companies. This moratorium, signed in 2006, was an agreement between the largest associations of soy producers stating that they would not buy, trade, or finance any soy grown in an area of the Amazon that was cleared after a determined cutoff date (July 2008). This pressure and agreement led to soy production-related deforestation decreasing from 30% to just 1% in under ten years (Ibid., 634-636). A similar agreement was attempted with the cattle ranching industry, but it was not nearly as effective due to the fact that the agreement was not as strict as the soy moratorium and that there were fewer participants in the agreement (Ibid., 634-636). These efforts reduced deforestation by 84% between 2004 and 2012 (Ibid., et al. 627).

Unfortunately, this progress did not last, and deforestation rates started to increase once again during the presidency of Lula's successor, Dilma Rousseff, who came into power in 2012. During the Rousseff administration, environmental protections and protected areas were reduced, as were punishments for illegal deforestation due to the influence of an agribusiness lobbyist group. Rousseff was impeached in 2016, and her vice president, Michael Temer, then came into power. Temer took the reversal of environmental protections and progress even further by drastically cutting and then freezing the budget of Brazil's Ministry of the Environment, while continuing to relax environmental protections. During this time, deforestation rates began to increase from the historic lows of the 2000s (Ibid., 637).

Things deteriorated further in 2018 with the election of Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro took Brazil's long-held fear over their sovereignty in the Amazon and ran with it. He claimed that the United Nations Paris Climate Agreement was an international plot that was meant to take the Amazon away from Brazil. He promised to remove Brazil from the agreement but was persuaded against it for fear of boycotts of Brazilian exports. Bolsonaro, while also denying climate

change, claimed that management of the Amazon and its resources were Brazilian territory, that they are an internal issue, and that Brazil may do with them as they see fit. This is seen in his promotion of mining operations and infrastructure construction within the Amazon and his hostility towards Indigenous peoples and their protected lands (Fernandes et al. 2). While Bolsonaro was ultimately convinced not to outright dissolve the Ministry for the Environment, he did render it completely powerless. He left positions necessary for basic functioning of the ministry vacant, which, along with the budget cuts and freezes done by his predecessor, left no government body able to oversee environmental protections and policy, basically allowing Bolsonaro a free-for-all when it came to the Amazon. Under Bolsonaro, deforestation rates increased severely (Garrett et al. 637).

In 2022, Lula was once again elected President of Brazil and took office in January of 2023. Though not even a year into his second round as president, Lula has made significant headway in reversing the destruction of his predecessors. Lula's government has committed itself to ending all deforestation by 2030. It is a very optimistic goal, especially with only seven years to accomplish it, but Lula's administration does at least seem to be heading in the right direction. Deforestation rates are down considerably compared to last year, and Lula has also overseen the creation of more protected Indigenous areas (Buschschlüter). He has begun repairing the damage done to the workings of the Ministry of the Environment done by his predecessors while also creating a new ministry, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, with an Indigenous woman as its director (Fernandes et al. 2). He has brought back the PPCDAm program from his first round as president, with revisions to shape it for Brazil's current needs. Among these include more protected areas as well as a system for the tracing of agricultural products to make sure they come from illegally deforested sources as well as to ensure ethicality ("Zero Deforestation").

Lula has also been more open to regional and global cooperation and has attended various global environmental summits. This includes a summit he held in the Brazilian city of Belém in August of 2023, where he and representatives from each of the other Amazonian countries discussed the creation of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization. This intergovernmental organization plans to create consistency in environmental protections across the entire Amazon ("Amazon Summit"). Unfortunately, the representatives were unable to come to a consensus on the goals of the organizations during the first meeting. However, the creation of this organization has created some hope for regional cooperation in the protection of the Amazon (Buschschlüter).

While miles ahead of his predecessors in his commitment to environmental protections, Lula does support the construction of hydropower dams in Amazonia tributaries as well as certain land policies that legitimized illegal land claims (Fernandes et al. 2). It is yet to be seen if Lula can keep his promises and reach the lofty goals he and his administration have set for themselves. However, in most aspects, they seem to be on the right track. Examining Brazil's history of environmental policy and the attitudes of various administrations towards environmental issues are important to understanding how deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon has gotten to its current state. It is also important that this history shows us what has brought deforestation rates down and what has caused them to rise, meaning we can use that knowledge in the creation of solutions.

Regional and Global Governance

As the Amazon is a deeply interconnected transboundary biome, it is also important to look at what problems are affecting the Amazon in other countries, as well as looking at what solutions are working. The other 38% of the Amazon is split between seven countries and one territory. Peru is home to 11%, Bolivia to 8%, and Colombia and Venezuela each have 6%. Ecuador, Guyana, and Suriname each have 2%, which leaves French Guiana with 1%. Like in Brazil, agriculture (on any scale) is the largest driver of deforestation in all of these countries except in Guyana and Suriname. In these two countries. mining takes first place (Hänggli et al. 1-6).

Like in Brazil, these countries have complicated histories of policy when it comes to environmental protection. However, also like Brazil, very recently, there has been a turn towards progress. A recent action of note took place in Ecuador in August of 2023 when Ecuadorians voted to end all current or future oil drilling operations in Ecuador's Yasuni National Park. They also voted to end all mining operations in the vulnerable Choco Andino forest. These actions protect vitally important and relatively untouched areas of the Amazon from deforestation and degradation. They also protect the various Indigenous communities living in voluntary isolation in this region (Juhasz).

Another regional action towards protection is the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, more commonly known as the Escazú Agreement. This agreement provides a framework for countries to protect the rights of citizens to access environmental information and to protest environmental destruction, as well as pressuring countries to follow through with getting justice for environmental defenders who have faced violence or have been killed. It has been praised for its relatively unambiguous language compared to other international treaties (Foster 25). The Escazú Agreement was born out of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (the Rio+20 Conference) in 2012, along with influence from Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Principe 10, in short, supports the inclusion and respect for minorities and vulnerable populations in discussions about environmental issues and for the protection of environmental defenders. While unable to commit to and come to an agreement on a global scale at the Rio+20 Conference, a group of 24 Latin American and Caribbean countries worked together (with support from the UN) for six years to create an agreement to commit them to this principle (Davila A. 66-71).

The Escazú Agreement was finalized in 2018 in Costa Rica and has since been signed by 23 countries and ratified by 15. Regarding the countries in the Amazon Basin, it has been signed by all except for Suriname and Venezuela (French Guiana as a French territory is not applicable here). It has been ratified by Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guyana ("Regional Agreement"). The Amazonian states where this agreement ratification will be most crucial are Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, which all have some of the highest rates of deforestation as well as the highest rates of violence towards environmental defenders. This agreement has been supported not only by the UN but also by almost 150 other organizations, including Human Rights Watch, which all have been pressuring governments and administrations to ratify it. There have been recent successes in this effort, with Colombia currently working on its last step towards ratification and Brazil's President Lula sending the agreement to

Brazil's Congress as its first step ("Amazon Summit").

Other UN actions in support of sustainability and against deforestation include the creation of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network's Science Panel for the Amazon, launched in 2020. This panel was created "to synthesize and communicate scientific knowledge about the Amazon, integrated with Indigenous and local knowledge, to accelerate solutions for sustainable and equitable development" ("Home"). The UN also supported Brazil after the success of Lula's original PPCDAm program back in 2004 and provided funding and resources through its Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD++) program (Garrett et al. 634-635). Lula's revised PPCDAm program has also garnered support from the World Wildlife Fund ("Zero Deforestation"). Due to the Amazon's large scale and global influence, it is important to understand the issues affecting the Amazon in countries other than Brazil and examine their successes and failures in ending deforestation. This is because consistency in environmental policy across all countries in the Amazon will be the key to ending deforestation, so taking into consideration the needs and issues of all areas of the Amazon will be essential to the success of possible solutions. It is also important to zoom out even more to the global scale and look at what solutions and resources can be brought in from systems of global governance such as the United Nations or through NGOs to aid in this cooperation.

Plan for Bringing an End to Deforestation

For Brazil and the other Amazonian countries to bring an end to deforestation and resource exploitation in the Amazon, they will need to create a system of strong and consistent governance at the state, regional, and global levels. Looking at the state level, and once again focusing on Brazil, the two most important actions will be rebuilding and funding the Ministry of the Environment and creating a new and stronger moratorium on cattle ranching. Without the Ministry of the Environment, any environmental protections and policies cannot be enacted, monitored, or enforced. Any other state-level act of governance towards the reduction of deforestation relies on rebuilding, restaffing, and providing adequate funding for this ministry.

Another crucial action will be the creation of a new and stronger moratorium on cattle ranching in the Amazon. Pressure on these ranching companies must come from the people, the state, NGOs, and globally. Through this pressure, a new moratorium agreement must come into being whilst looking at the last agreement's failures and the success of others, such as the soy moratorium. This agreement must contain the cooperation of far more participants than the last one, including the leaders in cattle ranching-related deforestation; it must also contain stricter rules and enforcement. As an incentive to join and follow through with this moratorium, a program that helps ranchers enact sustainable pasture management and soil restoration in existing pastures outside the Amazon would likely be very helpful. By taking away some of the financial burden (possibly with the support of the UN's REDD++ funding program) and by increasing pressure on these companies to end deforestation related to cattle ranching and to be more sustainable, this program could be very appealing. By getting ranchers to use less land, another program could be set up down the road (again, possibly with REDD++ funding) to buy back and reforest pasture lands in the Amazon. Lula's return and revision of the PPCDAm program will be very important in combating the illegal

side of the deforestation problem as well as bringing enforcement of environmental protections back to the Amazon after Bolsonaro's Amazon free-for-all.

An additional action towards protection against deforestation as well as towards the respect for Indigenous people and their sovereignty and rights to their lands would be the creation of more protected Indigenous lands. Through Lula's creation of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and the recent Supreme Court decision regarding the cutoff date, more protected Indigenous lands need to be created. It has been shown that the creation and protection of these areas not only bring down deforestation rates within its borders but also have a spillover effect of decreased deforestation in the surrounding areas (Hänggli et al. 9-10).

On the regional level, the most important action will be creating consistency in environmental protections and enforcement of these protections. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization is currently attempting to lay the foundation to do this. Getting eight countries and a French overseas territory to agree on what these protections will be and how they will be enforced will be an uphill battle, especially since they each have different economic and political situations outside of environmental issues. Partnering with scientists (the majority of whom are from Amazonian countries) and Indigenous leaders from the UN's Science Panel for the Amazon could be helpful in the creation of protections and agreements that are based on science, as well as respecting and protecting the human rights of Indigenous communities. This partnership with the UN could also help bring funding and resources to this organization whilst keeping the decision-making and general control in the hands of the Amazonian countries, hopefully curbing any fears of sovereignty issues. Fighting climate change and environmental issues on a regional scale could be helpful in pressuring countries to comply with the agreements because it is much more impactful to be pressured by your neighbor than by a country halfway around the world dealing with different issues. This setup could be a model to recreate around the world.

Another key step the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization needs to take would be the ratification of the Escazú Agreement by all of its members, an action supported by various NGOs, including Human Rights Watch ("Amazon Summit"). This would create consistency not just in environmental protections but also in protections for environmental defenders and transparency in environmental information. Other actions that the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization could take that could create greater consistency would be regional moratoriums against cattle ranching, agriculture, oil drilling, and mining in the Amazon. This would help keep industries from simply moving to countries where moratoriums are not in place to continue their exploitative practices.

On the global level, governance is very intertwined with state and regional actions through funding and support from institutions like the UN or from pressures from NGOs such as Human Rights Watch or the World Wildlife Fund. Other actions of global governance would be speaking out against companies that have a hand in the deforestation and environmental degradation of the Amazon and pressuring these companies to stop. This needs to be done in formal settings such as the UN with sanctions against companies who continue to contribute to deforestation. NGOs and citizens across various countries (particularly in the countries where these companies originate) need to pressure and boycott these companies.

On a broader scale, we (especially in the Global North) need to curb the patterns of overconsumption that are driving these industries into the Amazon. On all levels, local, regional, and global, there needs to be a shift in regimes or standards of institutions, processes, and norms. We need to move away from the regimes of anti-environmentalism and climate change denial that have plagued past governance and move towards regimes that are environmentally conscious and are working to reverse climate change. Just in the last year, progress has been made towards these new regimes with the elections of new administrations in various South American countries, but there is still a long road ahead in stabilizing these new regimes.

Conclusion

Through understanding the Amazon rainforest and by examining the drivers of deforestation and the history of environmental policies, we can see how they are intrinsically linked to one another and how ineffective policy drives deforestation. As seen in Brazil, a lack of policy and enforcement has caused increased deforestation rates in recent years. We can also recognize that the issue of deforestation and resource management in the Amazon rainforest is much greater than in any country and that without cooperation from all Amazonian countries, there will be no consistent nor truly effective policies. As has been established, different countries have different drivers of deforestation along with different economic and political situations, which, like Brazil, have contributed to the current state of each country's portion of the Amazon. Through learning from these histories, along with the successes and failures of past solutions, two main principles can be seen in determining whether a solution will work: consistency and cooperation. These two main principles are the foundation upon which all of the solutions put forth in the essay have been built. They can also be found in what has determined past successes and failures, such as the differing results of past soy and cattle moratoriums. So, it is by following these two concepts that a solution has the capacity to become successful. Through a dedication to creating systems of governance and regimes with consistency and cooperation at their core, an end to deforestation and a future of sustainable resource management in the Amazon rainforest is possible.

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Understanding Desire In Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*

By Gabe Whitnack

Despite the film's psychosexual melodramatics and ambiguous, dreamlike narrative, the opening scene of Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* depicts something mundane: a married couple getting ready for a Christmas party. At the beginning of a prolonged tracking shot, we first see Bill Harford (Tom Cruise) searching their bedroom for his wallet, eventually locating it on his bedside table thanks to some insight from his wife, Alice (Nicole Kidman). The shot continues as he pockets the wallet and enters the bathroom, and we now see a rushed Alice fussing with her hair while sitting on the toilet. Alice asks Bill how she looks, and he immediately responds, "perfect," without even looking at her.[1] In this opening moment, Kubrick is establishing an important dynamic present in Bill and Alice's relationship: his subconscious ignorance of her and by extension, the other women around him. We see another moment of ignorance as they begin to walk out of their apartment, with Bill asking Alice to remind him of the name of the babysitter they hired for that evening, information she had just told him moments before. Alice shrugs these oversights off with either a little joke (she responds: "you're not even looking!" to Bill in the bathroom) or without mentioning the transgression at all. These are all pretty small missteps from Bill, and certainly don't suggest that his and Alice's relationship is fraught in any significant way, but rather they point towards the ways in which Bill falls short in how he views and treats Alice, which is something that becomes incredibly important later on in the film. It's also very telling how ordinary and dispassionate the conversation sounds between him and Alice here, speaking to Bill's comfortability both in the current dynamics of their relationship and in his position at the top of the social hierarchy that is their apartment. We see more of Bill savoring this social role through his brief interaction with the babysitter as he and Alice are finally leaving the apartment, with him proudly mentioning that he'll hold a cab for the babysitter when they return from the party. Alice is seen taking some comfort in her social role as well, acting as a caring mother should when she talks to her young daughter, Helena (Madison Eginton), giving her permission to stay up late to watch a broadcast of *The Nutcracker* on TV.

The film's opening moments are filled with instances like this, with Bill and Alice saying one thing but meaning or feeling another, masking their desire to possess a certain social or economic position underneath seemingly innocuous conversation. For instance, even though Bill and Alice are shown to be financially well-

1 This moment also marks the first time we see Bill and Alice occupy the same frame, and their initial positioning even suggests Bill's superiority in this space, with Alice sitting down on the toilet as he stands above her and admires himself in the mirror.

off through Bill's profession as a doctor and Alice's ownership of the art pieces lining the walls of their spacious apartment, Bill's first lines in the film being him asking where his wallet is show that he's insecure about maintaining his economic status. This possession of hidden feelings is also equally true for Alice. As she's getting ready, she asks Bill how she looks multiple times, revealing that she's seeking admiration and validation from him, something she doesn't feel like she's currently receiving. The full details of the roles that Bill and Alice desire haven't been revealed to us at this point in the film, but in illustrating here that they both feel like they're missing out on *something*, we can now focus throughout the rest of the film on trying to see what's left unsaid, on what isn't there and why either Bill or Alice might want it. After all, *Eyes Wide Shut* isn't the film about sex that many of its critics in 1999 were looking for, it's a film about desire. In analyzing the role desire plays throughout the film and how it motivates the behavior of its characters, we can begin to understand Kubrick's venomous critiques of Bill's blindly aspirational financial desires and how they intertwine with his equally absurd reaction to finally learning of Alice's desires.

I. Christmas Party

When Bill and Alice finally arrive at the Christmas party that they have spent the film's opening getting ready for, both of their social roles change just as drastically as the physical spaces have changed. The apartment of the party's host, one of Bill's wealthy patients named Victor Ziegler (Sydney Pollack), is ornate and luxurious to an almost ridiculous degree. Its cavernous walls are blanketed in Christmas lights while lavish chandeliers hang from the ceiling, giving the entire space a warm and inviting glow. Needless to say, it's a lot more grandiose than Bill and Alice's apartment, and shows that Ziegler belongs to an even higher economic class than them. It's a class Bill is clearly far removed from,[2] but one that he desperately wants to be a part of. He betrays this desire through the reverent manner in which he talks to both Ziegler and his wife as he and Alice enter the party, and Ziegler's casual, welcoming small talk paired with the enticing glow of his apartment serves to capture the allure of this level of wealth for Bill. Later on during the party, Bill steps away from a suggestive conversation with two attractive models to attend to "something for Mr. Ziegler" without a word of protest, showing that furthering his ties to this financial class is his top priority above all else at this party, including sex. As he arrives upstairs to Ziegler's bathroom he is presented with Mandy (Julienne Davis), a sex worker who had overdosed just minutes before on a mix of cocaine and heroin during sex with Ziegler. After Bill gets Mandy successfully awake and stabilized, he admonishes her, telling her that she's "a very lucky girl" but she "can't keep doing this." This excessively chivalrous and concerned way in which he treats Mandy is a show, with Bill hoping that Ziegler will recognize Bill's intentional siding with him against the sex worker and potentially allow him access to the ultra-rich social circles in which he operates. As Bill begins to leave the bathroom, Ziegler pulls him aside and thanks him. He then tells Bill, "This is just between us," and we understand that Bill's friendship with Ziegler has been furthered. We see a subtle smile twitch in the corner of Bill's mouth.

Earlier on during the party, Bill and Alice intentionally separated from each other, with Bill going to talk to the aforementioned models and to catch up with an old friend: the party band's piano player, Nick

2 When Alice asks Bill if he knows anyone at the party, he responds: "not a soul".

Nightingale (Todd Field). As he goes off and does this, Alice heads to the bar. After taking a large drink from a glass of wine, she stands at the bar, facing outward towards the rest of the room, presenting herself to those in it and inviting conversation (Figure 1). Moments later, she's approached by Sandor Svast (Sky du Mont), a rich Hungarian socialite who seductively drinks the rest of her glass of wine and, upon learning Alice is married, offers to dance with her. During their dance, we get a better understanding of Alice's desires. She and Sandor talk about the relationship between marriage and deception, and she clearly revels both in the genuine attention she's receiving from him, as well as in actually feeling physically desired. The camera intoxicatingly spins around them, following their dance as their faces move closer and closer to each other. This enjoyment only goes so far, as she eventually comes to her senses and pulls away, saying: "I think I had a little too much champagne. I think I have to go find my husband now." Alice wants to feel loved and sexually desired by someone else, but knows that at a certain point, that someone else can really only be one person: her husband.

Figure 1: Alice at the party.

II. Confession

The night after the Christmas party, we see Bill and Alice have an extended conversation in their bedroom. Things begin innocently enough, with Bill and Alice smoking pot and discussing the happenings of the party the night before. Alice teasingly mentions the models Bill was with, and he responds by shrugging it off, mentioning Alice's dance with Sandor in an equally playful manner. As the conversation continues onward, it loses its initially erotic and sensual tone, instead becoming much more analytical. Alice's predominant desire at the beginning of the scene was to have sex with Bill (the idea of him going off and having sex with these models clearly arouses her), but as he continues to talk about her and women in general, it's clear that Alice is now more interested in delving into why he thinks and feels the way that he does. After Bill establishes that he would never cheat on Alice, she brings up the possibility of one of his female patients being attracted to him and he retorts back that women "basically don't think like that." Alice now sets out to prove him wrong, recounting in great detail a sexual fantasy she had regarding a naval officer sitting near their table while on vacation with Bill in Cape Cod. She talks about how her desire towards this naval officer burned so strongly that she was "ready to give up everything" and couldn't keep him off her mind the entire rest of that day after seeing him. The many close-up shots of Bill's face show his disbelief at hearing this, and his desire to explain his previous comments to Alice and sort things out is now replaced by a desire to pursue some sort of equilibrium between them. His comfortability in the dynamics of their marriage, and even in his masculinity, has been deeply shaken. He's been stripped of the power he thought he had, and he no longer feels sexually coveted. In contrast, Alice clearly feels shame at having felt this desire and explains how going through this experience made her realize both how much she loved Bill and how easily that love could go away, opening the door for him to meet her in a place of openness

and honesty about their feelings, no matter how taboo those feelings may seem. Bill isn't willing to meet her there. The phone rings, cutting off their conversation as Bill is informed that one of his patients has just passed away. So he runs off into the night to see the patient's family, to reconcile with what Alice has just told him, and to try to have some sort of fantastical sexual experience of his own - hoping it'll set things right.

III. Odyssey

During his cab ride over to his patient's apartment, Bill fantasizes about Alice having sex with the naval officer for the first time in the film. Kubrick elects to show us this fantasy, lit with the artificiality and desaturated color of a pornographic film. According to Cynthia Lucia in her essay entitled "Don't Ask Don't Tell: Masculine Evasion and Crisis in Stanley Kubrick's Eyes Wide Shut," this reading of the moment as being from Bill's psychological perspective, "also exposes [his] bourgeois sensibility and patriarchal unconscious through the content and style of his fantasies—Alice wears sexy stiletto heels, and the officer always is positioned as sexually dominant" (Lucia, 233). It's not that Bill doesn't desire Alice, it's that he's always desired an idealized, submissive version of her that isn't true to reality.

Arriving at another lavishly decorated apartment, Bill pays his respects to the deceased, Lou Nathanson (Kevin Connealy), another one of his wealthy clients like Ziegler that pays him extra to do house calls. The reverential way in which Bill places his hand upon Lou Nathanson's forehead implies a sense of subservience to him, showing that Bill is still pining for recognition and acceptance from this oligarchical class, even after all of the revelations that Alice's confession brought. After Bill is finished paying his respects, he converses with Lou's daughter, Marion (Marie Richardson), who suddenly and aggressively kisses Bill on the mouth. This is followed by a rambling confession of her love towards him and desire to run away with him and leave her fiancé behind.[3] This moment is made even more surreal by Kubrick's decision to use lighting predominantly coming from below to light her face, giving it a distorted, carnivalesque quality. Her confession is interrupted as her clueless fiancé arrives home, and Bill sees himself out. It's clear that the clueless fiancé and Marion's dynamic is meant to mirror Bill and Alice's, where we see another man like Bill who hasn't given a second thought to the idea that his wife may have some sort of desire that's unrelated to him.

After Bill leaves Marion's apartment, he's approached by another dominant woman soliciting him for sex, a young and respectable sex worker named Domino (Vinessa Shaw). This is another experience that clashes with Bill's initial view of women and their perceived lack of sexual desire or want to pursue said feelings. He's being made to directly confront contradictions to his views. He follows Domino into her apartment, and his previously held, dominant social role as a doctor is drastically changed. In their essay, "Carnivalesque and Grotesque Bodies in Eyes Wide Shut," Miriam Jordan and Julian Jason Haladyn talk about how Bill becomes a sort of patient to Domino in this scene, with her "[becoming] the professional who gives him advice" (Jordan and Haladyn, 191). Bill's desire to have sex with her is evident by his agreeing to go up to her apartment, but much like Alice and Sandor at Ziegler's party, this desire can only go as far as the theoretical or fantastical realm, where any attempt by another party to bring it completely into reality is stopped as Bill or

3 It's also notable that this is another moment that proves Bill's comment about women not being "like that" completely wrong.

Alice realize the presence of their marriage. The intercutting of Bill preparing to have sex with Domino with mundane scenes of Alice watching TV shows that thoughts of her still pervade Bill's mind as he shamefully kisses Domino, and it's equally telling that a phone call from Alice is what causes him to finally think things over and leave her apartment. This scene also exhibits Bill's continued desire to be perceived by others as being of a higher financial status, with him paying Domino $150 out of courtesy, despite her having performed no sexual acts for him, yet again interlinking his desire for sex with his desire for wealth.

As he leaves Domino's apartment, Bill is in a similar, albeit slightly more extreme, situation to the one Alice found herself in during the vacation in Cape Cod. He's felt this strong desire for someone other than his partner and the urge to physically act upon it, but in reflecting on his marriage, has decided not to. And yet, he doesn't abandon his pursuit of extramarital sex, go home to Alice and attempt to rekindle things between them, even though he's learned the same thing she did about the connective power of attempting to both communicate and reckon with these taboo desires alongside a partner. Something in Bill still hasn't made sense of what Alice has told him. His masculine insecurity is continuing to prevent him from coming to terms with the truth of her sexual desires without attempting to rival them with his own. His traditional, heterosexual masculinity also took a hit right before he met Domino, as a group of men harassed him on the street and called him homophobic slurs. And so, when he wanders aimlessly around, eventually finding the Sonata Jazz Cafe and talking to his piano-player friend Nick Nightingale, Bill is allured erotically and economically as Nick tells him about his next gig for the evening: a mysterious orgy with masked participants and unbelievably beautiful women. It's a chance to both right his traditional masculinity and assert his aspirations to reach an ultra-rich, oligarchic social circle. And it's a chance he'll take.

So after grabbing a tux, cloak and mask from a nearby clothing rental store, Bill takes a cab to Somerton, the massive, European-style manor where the orgy is occurring. During the cab ride, we see more visions of Alice and the naval officer having sex, her desire haunting Bill more than ever as he masochistically replays the scene over and over in his head to justify his increasingly desperate behavior. As he prepares to leave the cab to walk through the manor's gates, he rips a $100 bill in half, telling the driver: "if you wait for me… I'll pay you the other half plus the meter when I get back." This is another moment where Bill wants someone to perceive him as being of a high financial status, flippantly ripping a $100 bill and offering to pay the cab driver far more than required. The driver reluctantly agrees, and Bill leaves the car to be escorted into Somerton. As Bill enters the manor, he gives the doorman the password: "fidelio".

IV. Unmasking

The sequence at Somerton is the longest time we see Bill spend in a single location throughout the entire film, and yet it's the place he's the least equipped to operate in. Immediately, he's confronted with a more intense version of the class alienation he felt at Ziegler's Christmas party, now entering into an even more grandiose and luxurious space filled with even wealthier people. It's also an incredibly bizarre and terrifying space, one where we finally get to see the sinister nature of the level of wealth that Bill desires, and how those in possession of it feel no need to adhere to any accepted morals or standards of behavior. As he puts on his mask and walks into a large, chapel-like room, seeing a silent cabal of

men wearing masks depicting horrifyingly exaggerated facial expressions, you almost get the impression that Bill has now spent so much time wandering through Manhattan that he's stumbled into a completely different level of reality. But no, this is still Bill's reality, and we're seeing the logical endpoint of his financial aspirations and sexual desires. For the entire film, Bill has hoped that his numerous transactions of both romance and money were moving him upwards, but they really were pushing him closer and closer to the subterranean, towards the masked orgy at Somerton, where an entire faceless class of people indulge in the only things that make them feel anything anymore. His desires are rendered meaningless. This outrageous level of wealth and sexual pleasure that Bill has thought for the whole film would crystallize his identity and realign him with the world he knows are instead the very things with the power to remove him from it completely. Somerton isn't a place that he belongs in, it isn't a place where he'll find any redemption or real acceptance. He's still clueless about this, feeling welcomed and intrigued as a masked man nods his head knowingly at him.

As the ceremony continues on, masked women begin to pair off with masked men. Bill is paired with Mandy, the sex worker from Ziegler's Christmas party, and they kiss each other through their masks. Jordan and Haladyn provide a really fascinating reading of this moment as well, discussing how Marion kisses Bill with an open mouth, Domino kisses Bill with a closed one, and now Mandy is kissing him through a mask, showing that as Bill "progressively finds himself in ever more sexually charged environments, he ironically becomes increasingly distanced physically from the sexual activities that are unfolding around him" (Jordan and Haladyn, 191). To relate this idea back to desire, as Bill's lust for sex grows stronger and stronger, he moves farther and farther away from actually achieving it, and you can say the same thing about his wealth. The more he desires to be accepted into this ultra-wealthy social circle, the more he betrays that his behavior is all for show, and that he's not fit to be a part of it at all.

Mandy tries to tell him as much, warning Bill the second that they have a moment alone that, "you don't belong here," but he's not listening, his desire to receive the acceptance and sex that he thinks will help him make sense of things is too strong. So he wanders through Somerton, watching masked men as they watch other masked couples have sex. This behavior further illustrates how out of touch with accepted notions of desire this ultra-rich class is, where they receive more pleasure from standing by and coldly spectating sex acts rather than actually participating. Mandy reconnects with Bill and again reminds him to leave, advice that seems to finally get through to him. As he heads downstairs towards the front door, he's led by the doorman instead back into the large, chapel-like room where all of the masked men have seemingly returned to standing like they were before. But now, they're all looking directly at *him* (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Bill is found out.

We see Bill being essentially put on trial in front of all of the masked men, with a red-robed authority figure forcing him to remove his mask and in effect, dispel any notions that he belongs here. This slow deconstruction

and humiliation of Bill[4] has a similar emotional effect to the stripping of power that Alice induced through bringing up her fantasy of the naval officer, and his rejection from this wealthy social circle mirrors his feelings of rejection that he misinterprets from Alice. After Mandy offers to sacrifice herself in his place, Bill is spared and gets to return home, feeling just as powerless and unsure of himself as he did at the night's beginning. He's gained nothing. All he knows now is that desire is not meant to be followed to its logical end, it's something to be pursued in moderation and channeled through appropriate avenues. But now, embarrassed, confused and left with neither his desire for wealth nor his desire to one-up Alice's fantasies, knowing that, in actuality, these fantastical sexual encounters lack the fulfilling erotic intimacy that comes from a deep bond with someone, Bill's previous sense of self is effectively shattered.

V. We're Awake Now

The final hour of *Eyes Wide Shut* refracts Bill's previous desires back at him, exposing them for all their absurdity in the harsh light of day and opening the door for Bill to learn something from his experiences. He's made to see the cold, clinical reality behind what seemed so elusive and desirable the night before. For example, returning to the costume rental shop where he had borrowed the tux, mask and cloak reveals that the shop owner, Millich (Rade Šerbedžija), who the night before had chastised his underage daughter for consorting with two men, is now selling her body to them in the pursuit of more wealth. Millich says, regarding the men: "we have come to another arrangement." Later in the day, Bill also stops by the apartment of Domino, the respectable sex worker he'd met the night before, and learns that she has tested positive for HIV. In the words of Jordan and Haladyn, Bill is attempting to "go back to the scenes of each of his transgressions" and "make sense of the events he experienced, to bring them back into a perspective that would make him sure of his life again" (Jordan and Haladyn, 192).

The most significant way we see Bill participating in this behavior is in regards to his investigation of the ultra-wealthy secret society he had stumbled into at Somerton. This makes sense, as this was the most inexplicable aspect of his previous night, as well as the one containing the farthest-reaching implications. He spends the majority of the day looking for clues regarding both the location of the now-missing Nick Nightingale and the mysterious death of Marion, who had dramatically offered herself up for punishment in Bill's place at Somerton the night before, and has now turned up dead of a supposed overdose. Following his newfound desire[5] for truth to its logical end, Bill finds himself back at Ziegler's apartment. As their conversation moves past formalities, Ziegler first launches into a tirade, berating Bill for even having the gall to show up at Somerton. He then attempts to assuage him with seemingly reasonable explanations for things like Marion's death, but when Bill seems skeptical, Ziegler resorts to threatening him, his smug smile betraying the boundless invisible power at his disposal. Yet again, Bill's

4 At one point he is even told to remove his clothes, which would effectively weaponize against him the very same voyeuristic sexual desire he'd been feeling in replaying Alice's fantasies, one that goes no deeper than being "looked at".

5 This desire for truth might be new, but it's clearly rooted in the general desire for a sense of equilibrium and normalcy that Bill's been seeking ever since Alice's initial confession.

desire has led him to get in over his head, seemingly not having learned his lesson from the night before. Ziegler's threats, despite their externally friendly and patronizing tone, still seem to sink in, and Bill leaves the apartment shaken. Tim Krieder, in his essay "Introducing Sociology," says regarding this decision that Bill "accepts [Ziegler's] explanation, not because there's any evidence to confirm it, but because it's a convenient excuse to back down from the danger of any further investigation. He finally understands that he, too, no less than a hooker or a hired musician, is expendable" (Krieder, 294).

The mask waiting at home on Bill's pillow is what finally pushes him over the edge. This is certainly a warning much less friendly than Ziegler's veiled threats, but this warning also effectively relinquishes any of the desire left in Bill to pursue the truth regarding the ultra-wealthy society, and he instead confesses to Alice. He bursts into tears, promising Alice that he'll tell her everything between his choked sobs. Kubrick's choice to cut forward to a shot of Alice with bloodshot eyes, smoking a cigarette the following morning, leads us to believe he does.

The next and final scene of the film is just as complex and full of meaning as its opening, with Bill and Alice reflecting while Christmas shopping with their daughter on the lessons that Bill's learned from his surreal, psychological journey and how they can potentially apply them to improving their marriage going forward. Alice says to Bill that "we should be grateful. Grateful that we've managed to survive through all of our adventures, whether they were real or only a dream." Bill seems to hesitantly agree, still unsure of his newfound understanding of desire as something personal and meant to be processed alongside someone else rather than something strictly aspirational, meant to be chased alone until it's quenched. He may not know the truth of the ultra-rich society and what horrific things either they did or didn't do, but because of his brush with them, he now knows that he was looking for answers regarding Alice in all the wrong places, something that seems to be enough for the both of them, for now. Alice continues and says: "we're awake now and hopefully for a long time to come." Bill assuredly tells her: "forever," but Alice rejects this notion, understanding better than Bill the temporariness of any feelings of desire. This final interaction between Bill and Alice isn't perfect, and shows that they will definitely have to do more talking to do in the future, but it's clear that Kubrick wants us to see it as a step in the right direction, as the first moment of honest and realistic communication between a couple that have spent the entire rest of the film weighed down by their fantasies and desires.

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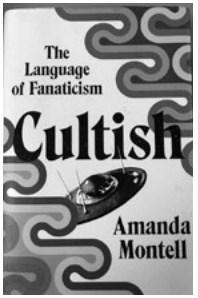


Book Review by Cami Borders

Cultish

Author: Amanda Montell
Publisher: Harper Wave, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2021

Cults are viewed as far-off groups of people who are secluded and delusional. Amanda Montell's book, *Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism*, seeks to debunk this image of cults and demonstrate the ways nearly everything utilizes the language of cults. *Cultish* was published in 2021 and is divided into six parts, each analyzing a different part of modern culture that possesses, well, 'cultish' characteristics in one way or another. Montell's objective through this book is to break down and explain what a cult really is, and the methods they use to attract people. She focuses on the ways cults use language to amass followings and keep their members isolated from the rest of society. Montell utilizes technical elements like organization, outside references, and tone throughout the book to support her analyses. These elements allow the book to be significantly more approachable to *all* audiences, regardless of their prior knowledge regarding cults, linguistics, and other topics Montell discusses.

Montell begins *Cultish* with an introductory section, detailing broad strokes of what she will discuss further, but also highlights what she will pay the most attention to across all the groups she analyzes, their language. It effectively serves as the introduction for the book's focal point, the language of cults. The introduction briefly ties the groups she discusses together, without giving away specific details she focuses on in later sections. The summary prior to discussing any one group allows Montell to establish a basic set of information regarding language, before highlighting how cults and other groups utilize language to their benefit. The following sections are organized in a very intuitive way as well. The second section shifts from discussing language on its own in broad terms to specific cult rhetoric used in two historically infamous cults. By using two well-known cults, Montell can easily discuss them at length, without needing to provide extensive background on either group (though she does provide substantial information for those unaware of what she is discussing). Montell uses two famous examples, too, because she can establish concrete examples of the lingual tactics that groups use to manipulate people. From the third section on, Montell discusses groups that are not classified as cults but use similar language as the ones she described earlier. The organization serves a purpose, where it consistently builds upon itself, starting with a vague overview, and slowly funneling into Montell's key point of the book, that 'cult' language is used extensively outside of what society would consider a cult. The second half of the book focuses on 'New Age' practices and how many aspects of our current society rely on cult-like language. Montell discusses what specifically attracts younger people to cult-adjacent groups, like multi-level marketing, Peloton, and social media as

a whole. She explains that like those who joined the infamous cults of the past, young people now feel they are lacking *something* in their life and seek out what they feel they do not have through these cult-like groups. Montell's organization allows for more thorough understanding, as well as a semi-chronological account of cults in the United States.

Montell uses extensive outside resources to further her arguments and support the information she provides. Most of the sources she uses can fall into one of two categories, interviews, and academic research. Many of the interviews Montell conducted and included in *Cultish* were with former members of the groups she discusses. The interviews introduce a much more personal and in-depth account of the cults she is discussing. Notably, she interviewed survivors of both Jonestown and Heaven's Gate. The extensive use of outside information Montell employs allows her to reach a more nuanced and holistic view of what cults are and the dangers they possess. The academic sources she uses provide support for arguments she proposes throughout the book in a substantial and interesting way. Montell integrates all sources in a way that enhances the text but does not complicate the message she is trying to convey.

Montell maintains a tone throughout *Cultish* that is casual, but informative. The language she writes with is easy to understand, and she contextualizes nearly all of the topics presented. Montell's goal in this text is to spread awareness about the language cults use to endanger people, thus the use of an approachable tone is paramount. Montell takes care to speak to the reader as if she were a friend having a conversation (with an impressive number of sources) with them. Montell also provides information surrounding every group she discusses, as well as plenty of other relevant information in a way that does not feel redundant for those who have already heard it but is also substantial enough to ensure her point is not lost. The general style Montell writes in allows for the content she presents to be approachable, but also holds expansive information on the argument she presents.

Cultish is a book that works to educate the general public about the linguistic tactics that cults and cult-like groups utilize to manipulate people. Amanda Montell discusses these groups and tactics at length, explaining the dangers, but also the benefits to how these groups use language. Montell uses technical aspects of her work to further her argument as well; her organization establishes and builds upon knowledge, she uses extensive outside research to add to her point, and she uses a casual tone that makes her argument and book approachable. These elements combine to support Montell's overall message.

Book Review by Ayan Abdi

Esmond and Ilia: An Unreliable Memoir

Author: Marina Warner

Publisher: New York Review Books, 2021

"As I moved among my ghosts and rummaged about in the past and tried to find my way back through the darkness that wraps them, these scents rose all around me - ... I knew it was an illusion" (Warner 285). Marina Warner's 'memoir' *Esmond and Ilia: An Unreliable Memoir* is ultimately a portrait of her parents that is made up of the bits and scraps Warner has collected from their lives. These small moments that Warner glimpses in adolescence stick with her and are not understood until much later. Her attempt to root out this story is inherently constrained. Warner writes primarily about her parents' lives, despite not being there to witness any of it. Her project is sustained by this declaration early in the book. Warner wants to "Hold up the lamp and itemize the things that you know because they belonged to them and through them became a part of you" (Warner 4). This is where her careful recollection begins.

Her father Esmond met her mother Ilia in Italy while he was serving as an officer in the British Army during the Second World War. They got married in 1944. It was quick, but Ilia was desperate to get away from her small, rural life, and Esmond was incredibly smitten. Esmond came from a wealthy family, Ilia was penniless, however, these cultural and social barriers didn't seem to matter much; Ilia was soon swept into a traditional and upper-class English family. However, this didn't last long. Esmond was not as wealthy as he appeared and through his Eton connections, he was able to convince W.H. Smith and Company, Booksellers to open an outlet in Cairo. Esmond and Ilia arrived in 1947. Marina was three years old.

At this time, Egypt was still an outpost of the British empire, and Warner combs through her father's letters and her mother's journals to conjure up what life was like in post-war Egypt. Warner examines her parents' lives and speculates about everything. Her own worries about experiencing colonial Egypt peek through. She worries that she "...bear[s] the stamp of colonial ambivalence, the creep and cringe of those exiled from the metropole, combined with the brutal superiority of the official class..." (Warner 215). This worry comes after pages of Warner's discussion on "fancy dress," which seems to be the earliest terms for cultural appropriation. Her argument falters because of her own experience with "dress up." Her father gifted her a sari as a child and once bought her mother a Chinese dragon robe. She often acted like a local girl as a child in Egypt. She says that "The servants of the empire, scattered over the world, loved dressing up – often masquerading as the locals" (Warner 200-201). She mentions Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's blackface scandal and in the same breath explains the traditions of the Carribean carnival where dancers and masqueraders wield whips like plantation overseers (Warner 201). This chapter encapsulates the tension between the legacy of colonial empires across the world

and those who existed right at the helm of independence within colonized countries. The attitudes of the people are connected to that legacy, and Warner is reflective of that notion.

Warner volleys between using an attached or removed voice as narrator. In some instances, she refers to her parents by name only. They feel like characters and not 'real' people. In fact, most of the book operates in this manner. She's sensitive and sympathetic, but never too involved. This sense of detachment is apparent when Warner begins to move away from her parents' story. She intercuts the book with asides that remain unconnected, and her repeated use of mythology and history digresses from the project at hand. At times, the non-linear quality feels off putting. The book operates in many different genres including literary, historical and mythical; the story is constructed from distant memories, family stories, documents and fictionalizations. This only adds to the convoluted nature of the memoir.

In 1952, Esmond's shop was burned down among the riots that allowed Egypt to gain its independence from Britian. The book builds up to this moment. The sight of the burned-out bookshop was Warner's first memory. This revelation places the rest of the book in a different light. The timeline between her parents' arrival and this moment is short, surprisingly so. Warner's digressions start to make sense. These speculations and asides exist to help widen the perspective of the reader. Her attempt at "rummaging through the darkness" can only ever evolve into what she presented in this memoir.

It's certainly not a book that I would recommend to everyone. It moves slowly and the fragmentary nature of Warner's writing might provoke some irritation; the payoff might not seem interesting enough to justify her strategy. It's undeniable that the book is a powerful recollection of her parents' lives, however, the items that Warner examines can only reveal so much. The book is restrained by nature and the only thing that prevails is speculation. In fact, without that, there would be nothing for Warner to examine or present.

Music Review by Isaac Jones

Fetch the Bolt Cutters

Author: Fiona Apple

Publisher: Sony Music Entertainment, 2020

Preface

I want to begin this review by saying that the decision to review this album was not made easily. In the last five years, there have been a number of albums through which we could understand our moment: its prismatic nature, its dread, and its possibilities. *Grae* by Moses Sumney considers the multiplicity of identity: intersections of blackness, queerness, and the 'ness' itself. It asks us to create new names, labels, spaces, which us "affect aliens" (to borrow from Sara Ahmed) can call home; can be from. Beyoncé's *Renaissance* reenacts a canon of dance from disco to ballroom and vogue of the 80s, house music and funk, to the Björkian avant-dance of the 90s. It is an exploration of identities, intersections, and celebration. It conjures nostalgia and reminds us that America has a problem—it is we who still dance. Phoebe Bridger's *Punisher* captured the dislocation and modalities of depression that defined the pandemic era American imagination. We reminisce on the all too specific stories of a nautical themed birthday party for someone dear—we would give them the moon if we could leave our homes. In addition to one little known, Taylor Alison Swift who released *folklore* and *evermore.* I am excited she is finally breaking into the mainstream. SZA, Sufjan Stevens, Caroline Polachek, ANOHNI and the Johnsons, Sudan Archives, Rosalia, Mdou Moctar, Yves Tumor, Soul Glo, St. Vincent, Black Midi, Squid, Black Country, New Road, Japanese Breakfast, Ichiko Aoba, and so many others, more than I can list, have created notable albums we have used to survive.

We have reached a juncture in history that recalls Audre Lorde's axiom: "so it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive." When I consider survival, and its blueprint, an album of experimental, emotional, and ordinary facture; sonic facsimile; born of a global cataclysm. I have only one album that I can point to that reminds us of our ability to liberate ourselves, to speak, and to survive. That album is Fiona Apple's *Fetch the Bolt Cutters*.

Review

"I spread like strawberries/ I climb like pees and beans/ I've been sucking it in so long/ That I'm busting at the seams." Apple's signature rasp seems to escape from barred teeth. "Heavy Balloon," is the ninth song on the record and an odd place to begin this review. I consider burgeoning, a bursting at the seams, the button that flies off of our coat as we expand, become more, become bigger, become "too much," our swell of 'ness' that becomes so great that we suppress it or lose ourselves to self. We have all been there, across the table from a particularly pugnacious relative, on the verge of tears in the bathroom of our workplaces, spiraling in our beds—wholly unwilling to ask for help despite the gyre. These feelings that for so long we have made subterranean that "grow relentless like the teeth of rat," and keep on gnawing, the holes we have dug for ourselves, and the bottom we have begun to feel comfortable in, must be released. She

asks us to make uncomfortable what has been made comfortable. She asks that we finally embrace what we keep at arm's length, liberate what we restrain, and jailbreak the self we confine. Each song on the record acts as a reprise of Apple's liberatory thesis.

We are greeted by the album with a playful beat, a game of pattycake, a rudimentary drum set, and the simple and repetitive plucking of bass strings. The first reference is Nina Simone's "Be My Husband" whose unadorned intro to 1965's *Pastel Blues* situates a similar intimate negotiation. This continuity is interrupted by an ascending piano arpeggio. Of course Simone's influence is all over this record, in the best way, but Apple's ability to transform what before seemed so ordinary is all her own. "I've waited many years/ every print I left upon the track has led me here," she sings, a kind of prologue to the events of the album's narrative. (Do note, when I say she, I do not mean Apple though this album is largely biographical, consider "she" imaginary or a metonym.) She wants someone to love her. She wants to feel necessary, to be picked up, to be desired, to be valued in lieu of historic devaluation. This is the place Fiona begins, in recollection, marching toward futurity.

On "Shamieka" she meets someone who avows her potential, this Shamieka, even as she attempts to conform to an illusion of conventionality, all to a rip roaring piano and persistent beat. On the titular "Fetch the Bolt Cutters," we slow as the song fragments itself and mends itself anew, with dogs barking and a panicked breath. Finally we see the first moment Fiona fetches the bolt cutters, so she can "run up that hill," a little Kate Bush nod if you like. For the first time we are granted a look into the processes of liberation and the fear therein. Liberation is not easy, but we liberate ourselves in order to survive. In the words of Angela Davis, "freedom is a constant struggle."

On "Under the Table," Apple begins in a register befitting a nursery rhyme. "I would beg to disagree, but/ begging disagrees with me," cooing over a mellotron. How this phrase has never been said before continues to elude me, proof of her prolific coinage. She details a dinner party at which she refuses to be stifled. The song climbs to its summit, ascending with the piano, as her doubled vocals bark out the song's aforementioned line. An open bass string whirs and a cascade of voices spell the denouement. There is a strong jazz sensibility as with earlier records, *When The Pawn…* or more closely *Idler Wheel…* but just as on *Idler Wheel* she refuses to make nice with expectations. It would not be Fiona Apple without moments of disorientation and sonic discursion. These overlapping voices, this cascade reminds us that this is Fiona Apple and there is nothing like Fiona Apple.

One might take from this review that there are no moments of climax, where the clouds part and a great light streams forth and there you are at the center, under god to the soundtrack of symphonic climax; it is no Albinoni's Adagio, no "Exit Music…" when Thom's voice explodes in volcanic insurgency, no swelling strings at the apotheosis of Bush's project on "Hello Earth," but to say it is without ecstasy is to be so disembodied that revelation and bliss must sound like angels. Some feminist thinkers would argue that this version of climax is a particularly masculinist organization, donning mythology, and sublimity. The ecstasy of Apple is in the rise of chests in a silent home, the creak of wood and thwarted tip toes, the barking dogs and the clatter of pots and pans. This is where commons, care, and a distinctly female perspective exist, in the everyday,

the ordinary, and in the oftentimes invisible. By bliss or ecstasy, I mean the ineffable, chance, and yet entirely typical moments that pattern like bricks the foundation of our lives.

These materials: claps, barks, howls—human and nonhuman, laughter, a fallen drumstick, and the consequences of accidie are the building blocks of this record. Hewn from these materials are the matters of our ordinary. When we listen to this record, we hear Apple's herculean effort to make beauty and perhaps even ecstasy from the ordinary. After all, art is the process of noticing, of making distinct. What could be more supernal than bringing feeling back to an area that has become so numb, sense back to spaces that have slowly been rendered imperceptible or boring.

In many ways this is a record by and for women. The song "Ladies" addresses ladies directly, making the feminist undercurrents explicit.

> "Ladies, ladies, ladies, ladies, take it easy/ When he leaves me, please be my guest/ To whatever I might've left in his kitchen cupboards/ In the back of his bathroom cabinets/ And oh yes, oh yes, oh yes/ There's a dress in the closet/ Don't get rid of it, you'd look good in it/ I didn't fit in it, it was never mine/ It belonged to the ex-wife of another ex of mine/ She left it behind with a note, one line, it said/ "I don't know if I'm coming across, but I'm really trying"/ She was very kind."

When Apple sings, the latter in a single desperate breath, she forces us to reckon with a history of women and stands in solidarity with those women. They share clothes, a dress, each leaving it to the next with a well-wishing note. She is naming a cycle such that she may break a cycle. To this point on "Relay," she considers life as a series of comings and goings, passing batons by choice or otherwise. "But I know it if I hate you for hating me/ I will have entered the endless race/ Evil is a relay sport/ When the one who's burned/ Turns to pass the torch." Thus, when Apple considers breaking cycles, she considers liberation in the same breath. Liberation to her is not just personal but a choice that puts you in conversation with a history of women, a history of liberators.

Fiona Apple's *Fetch the Bolt Cutters* is a manual, handbook, friend, common book of prayer, and manifesto for us all. It reminds us to be free for ourselves, our collective, and for those who chose freedom before us. It intervenes into the sound of our everyday life, it tells us our squeaking beds, the shuffle of feet across carpet, the clink of a glass of water on a wooden coffee table are sites of liberation. When we choose to fetch the bolt cutters, we choose to be free wherever we are; we choose love for ourselves and for the world. What we learn from Apple is that the two are much the same.

Book Review by Nevaeh Ellis

I'm Glad My Mom Died

Author: Jennette McCurdy

Publisher: Simon & Schuster, 2022

Content Warnings: Eating Disorders and Abuse

Why do we romanticize the dead? Why can't we be honest about them?

- Jennette McCurdy, *I'm Glad My Mom Died,* 302.

The title of this book makes it hard not to notice it, and the content does not disappoint. Author Jennette McCurdy tells all in her hilarious and heartbreaking 2022 memoir, *I'm Glad My Mom Died.* This book ranges on topics including McCurdy's journey as a child actress and Nickelodeon star, her struggle with eating disorders, and her abusive and toxic relationship with her late mother, Debra McCurdy. Jennette writes about the various stages of her life, and with a satirical tone, she paints a vivid picture of her story for the reader. Through the candid exploration of significant life events and the effective use of tone and writing style, McCurdy tells a powerful story of a young woman and her fight to take back control of her own life.

Jennette McCurdy starts narrating from the beginning of her career. She talks about how she began auditioning for acting roles at the young age of six. Her mother's dream was to be an actor herself, and when that did not work out, she decided she wanted her daughter to live that dream instead. McCurdy writes in her book, "The fragility of Mom's life is the center of mine" (McCurdy, 8). Jennette, wanting nothing but to please her mother, went for it and gave it everything she had. She writes about weekly extensive at-home makeovers meant to keep her looking "pretty" as her mother called it. She let her mom teach her and enforce what she called a "calorie-restrictive" diet to keep her looking thin and young. This diet consisted of eating very little and routinely weighing herself, sometimes five times a day. McCurdy talks extensively and thoroughly throughout the rest of her book about how her mother influenced her eating habits and led her down the path of developing an eating disorder.

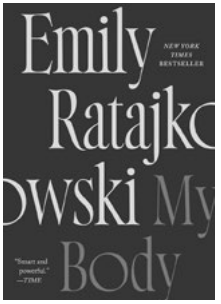
Eventually, she gets her big break: the role of Sam Puckett on the hit Nickelodeon TV show *iCarly.* From here, her fame takes off. Part of the appeal of her book is how honest McCurdy is when recounting her experiences with acting and how those experiences have affected her current relationship with acting. At one point, McCurdy is honest about her complicated and competitive relationship with one of her previous co-stars, Ariana Grande. However, she counteracts that relationship by recounting how close she and Miranda Cosgrove were and still are while shooting *iCarly*. McCurdy also explores the topic of "The Creator," whom she never outright names but could be the creator of *iCarly*, Dan Schneider. She goes into detail about how "The Creator" manipulated and abused the young actors while on set. Throughout the book, the reader can understand how

traumatizing McCurdy's time on set was for her and how it made someone apprehensive of acting and even come to hate the field altogether. But with her mother to appease, McCurdy continued acting.

Jennette McCurdy expresses discontent with her role in the show, explaining that people only see her as her character, Sam Puckett. When people recognize her on the street, they do not call her by her name; they say things like, "Hey! You're that Sam girl from *iCarly* who eats fried chicken and has a butter sock!" McCurdy touches on how this makes her feel and how she denies people's claims and keeps walking. McCurdy, who never really wanted to act anyway, is now forced to be this person she never felt she was in the first place, and through all of this, she is losing her grasp of her own identity. While discussing this topic, McCurdy writes, "Millions of people dream of being famous, and here I am with fame and hating it. I somehow feel entitled to my hatred since I was not the one who dreamed of being famous. Mom was. Mom pushed this on me. I'm allowed to hate someone else's dream, even if it's my reality" (McCurdy, 220). McCurdy never really wanted the life that she was living, and she only truly realized and accepted this after her mother passed away due to cancer.

Upon reflecting on her mother's life and how it intertwined with her own through months and years of therapy, Jennette McCurdy was able to realize and come to terms with the abuse that she suffered from as a child and well into her adult life. This realization was a hard one for her, as it would be for anyone. Not only was she struggling with the loss of her mother in an authentic and physical sense, but she was also coping with the loss of the mother she thought she had for most of her life. Had her mother not passed away, McCurdy may have still been living as a shell of herself. Angry and annoyed at the world but not knowing why, still struggling with her relationship with food and wondering how to stop it.

Once McCurdy was able to gain some perspective and do so on her own terms, she was finally able to become the version of herself she had been searching for all along, the version of herself that is a strong and independent woman. This is the version that has a healthy relationship with food and with her body, and the version of herself that is known as the author of a bestselling book rather than the meat-eating best friend. Jennette McCurdy's memoir *I'm Glad My Mom Died* is an honest, funny, relatable, and tragic story of a woman who is not glad her mother died but is glad for the opportunity that her mother's death provided for her, giving her space to become the person she always wanted to be: herself.



Book Review by Claudia Smallwood

My Body

Author: Emily Ratajkowski
Publisher: Metropolitan Books, 2021

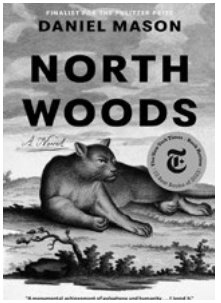
Emily Ratajkowski is a highly acclaimed model, actress, and influencer who first rose to rapid fame at the age of twenty-one, as she received both praise and disdain for the unapologetic display of her body. Throughout her breakout memoir *My Body,* Ratajkowski offers readers a collection of essays that aim to be read like a memoir. The essays follow chronological order, beginning in her childhood, where she first discovers the weight and pressure of femininity, learning to calculate her own beauty and equating it to a form of social power, an innate behavior that is learned in all young girls. She proceeds to take us through her teenage years, where she undergoes sexual abuse and trauma while simultaneously unearthing the patriarchy that exists today. Readers stand by as her teenage self comes to the realization that women are often pitted against one another, yet when they are seen collaborating, it is only for the pure satisfaction and titillation of men. As the essays delve into her adult life and lead up to the present day, it is evident that there is a consistent theme throughout. Ratajkowski is interested in the ability to have a choice in modern day feminism. She constantly reiterates that there is a sense of empowerment in capitalizing off one's self. This is something she refuses to be embarrassed about. *My Body* presents a personal exploration of this form of feminism while thinking about sexuality, power, and the culture's fetishization of beauty and the commodification of women.

Perhaps the most prevalent theme throughout the book is this idea of capitalism as a product of the patriarchy and how this relates to feminism. Ratajkowski understands that she has a commodifiable asset, giving her the ability to make a career out of her own body. She recognizes that feminism is about choice but given how nebulous and challenging free will already is, there are no clear sides to determine what is feminist and what is anti-feminist. Ratajkowski writes, "All women are objectified and sexualized to some degree, I figured, so I might as well do it on my own terms. I thought that there was power in my ability to choose to do so" (Ratajkowski, 5). While she says this, she also questions the validity of this sense of power that comes with sexuality. Is it *real* power if the person has no autonomy over how her body is perceived? Is it *real* power if she doesn't even have control over what happens to her own images? Is it *real* power if her position as a sex symbol has objectified and limited her? If her wealth, fame, and power are only a result of the male gaze, is she really reaching empowerment? These are all questions she raises herself, accurately portraying the complications of feminism and womanhood that derive from our culture.

Although Ratajkowski offers an exceptional depiction of the male gaze and how it has affected her, her book is lacking in the fact that the female gaze is rarely

explored. The only time it is mentioned is through her and her mother's eyes, as they both compare themselves to other women. She fails to examine how her own image and partaking in the industry may affect other women, or even adolescent girls. It is no secret that the image she has curated for media is bound to be harmful and unrealistic to other women. She mentions her disordered eating habits, and the lengths she goes to in maintaining an image that is idealistic to men. Yet, she fails to consider how the advertisement of a chimerical image could affect other women. Additionally, she does not address ways in which her industry enables racism, capitalism, and environmental destruction, despite this book being the perfect place to provide a critique of this. Sure, she explores how she has capitalized off her own image and how harmful capitalism is. However, she continues to participate, proving it difficult to ever grasp liberation away from the tight control of rich white men. If she is a willing participant, the cycle will continue, making it even more difficult to break or to reach full female empowerment. It is unclear whether Ratajkowski is interested in changing this system she has used to her advantage. However, it is apparent that she believes the system to be corrupt, but that maybe it is not her role to modify it.

Emily Ratajkowski's memoir, *My Body,* chronicles her experiences as a woman who grapples with her own beauty and objectification within the confines of a male-dominated world. She explores how young girls, whether consciously or unconsciously, are taught from an early age to cater to the male gaze as this results in a form of capital power. While men are taught that their power derives from their own resources and structural advantages, women are conditioned to seek male validation to secure a sense of power, or a place in the social hierarchy. She shares important critiques of the modeling industry, along with commentary on the gray areas between consent and sexual abuse. It is clear throughout Ratajkowski's work that she is left angry at how normalized the mistreatment of women has become, making *My Body* not only a thought-provoking read for young women but a call to action as well. Her work attempts to address how limited a woman's power truly is, something that the majority of women today can resonate with.



Book Review by Dane Whip

North Woods: A Novel

Author: Daniel Mason

Publisher: Random House, 2023

Daniel Mason's *North Woods* is an expertly crafted tale of the American heartland and the lives that have passed through it. It conveys imagery of a land long forgotten, yet not lost. Mason illustrates the ways in which the characters' setting, where nearly everything in the novel takes place, echoes throughout the novel and reminds the reader of things that were, while foreshadowing what will be.

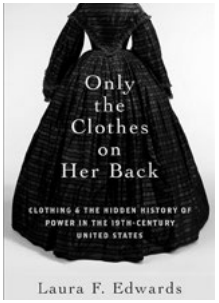
Daniel Mason perfectly embellishes the Massachusetts countryside with natural details mostly extinct from the land today. His knowledge of the native plants and animals is extraordinary, and without it the novel would have felt dry at times due to Mason's use of nature as a tool of time. Wolves signal the coming of winter, while goldenrod and lilies sound the spring (Mason 21). A consistent theme of the book is nature as a constant watchman, a custodian of the land. Under a hawk's watchful eye the seasons change, and lovers come and go. It is through a 'catamount' that we watch the once bountiful pasture of the yellow house fall under nature's reclaim (Mason 97). One may see animals, specifically the 'catamount', an Old-English based colonial term for cougar, as a sort of omniscient third person. They are prevalent in the background of the book, watching the house and its passersby. The catamount sees people live and die; he watches as a couple hides away, and mourns with the destruction of the forest. Obviously, the cougar is bound to time as we are, yet Mason uses it as a figure outside of time, multiple generations of catamounts living on the land, just the same as the humans. Nature is omniscient and omnipotent in *North Woods*. It is always beautiful and always wrathful, constantly reclaiming what we strip from it.

The theme of interconnectedness and interdependence is where the novel's collective story shines. The reader is taken through centuries of history on a single plot of land, and each character leaves you aching for them, with them, or some combination of the two. They come alive as we discover the past of the land along with them, consistently connecting the dots until the very last page. Mason manages to relate an age-old human phenomenon through a single New England house. It is an illustrious example of a story as old as civilization, that of unearthing the past and, whether intentionally or not, reliving lives of those before us. It is clear that Daniel Mason wrote this novel with the idea of threading together the past into one storyline. Somehow, through four hundred years and several owners, the tangled past of the house is made clear through expert storytelling.

Anyone harboring a passion, or simple curiosity really, for the past of America would benefit from *North Woods.* Through thoughtful and carefully crafted sentences, Mason guides us on a journey through time. Each periodic destination claims a new and

exciting perspective to apply to the constant of the story, the yellow house in the woods. Mason's use of developed characters and the connections between them offers the audience the feeling of knowing them. The intimacy the reader feels to the characters helps to immerse us in the world they are living in. It could be argued that some characters were forgotten due to the extreme development of the others, however I choose to believe that Mason intentionally does this. The reasoning behind this is that it would be impossible to have the same importance to the story for every character. Just as in real life, some are just passing through. Some characters are just in the background.

Mason's *North Woods* is a true gem of historical fiction. The Osgood sisters and their father are excellent main characters, if any can be called that in the novel. They remain the most constant individuals throughout the book, whose decisions influence generations to come (Mason 329). The book executes its main themes of time, destiny, and connection through imaginative language and exciting visuals. Vibrant characters, human and not, propel the novel through a time-traveling epic, leaving the reader fully engrossed and wondering how you read so much in a sitting. Daniel Mason has gifted readers with a generational story of the lives that pass us by, and the people who, though we never knew them, change our lives.



Book Review by Olivia Sweet

Only the Clothes on Her Back

Author: Laura Edwards

Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2022

It is well known that the most effective – and the most rewarding – way of studying any group of people is through their art forms. Ancient Egyptians tell of their theology through ornate sculpture, the lives and struggles of African Americans in the United States bleed through every note of Chicago jazz, and when studying groups of women, there is nothing more illuminating than the clothing they wear. Think about everything you wear in a day: the shirt your mother gave you, the pants you saved up to buy yourself, and the pajamas that make you feel safe at night. They may seem like simple pieces of cloth, but each of these things tells the world something about you. Every chapter of your life story sits humbly in your closet. For millennia, clothing has been a marker of identity and culture as well as class and profession, creating an endless visual index of humankind. *Only the Clothes on Her Back* brings the study of fashion and textile history to the forefront of numerous branches of academic discourse, acting as a detailed archive of the lives of ordinary women. It is an outstandingly profound and engaging resource for anyone looking for a new perspective on the true history and nature of the United States' economic, social, legal, and political systems.

The first thing to notice about Edwards' book is its unique structure. Reminiscent of literary vignettes, each chapter tells the story of a single item and its journey and connection with its owner, coupled with a corresponding conceptual topic (for example, the first chapter is titled "Polly's Yarn: Legal Principles"). The twelve chapters are then grouped into three sections: "Old Clothes in a New Country," "Protective Coverings in a Hostile World," and "Rags." This creates a sense of narrative that books written in this 'collection format' frequently lack. The chapters were clearly ordered with specific reasoning as each one flows into the next, despite each story being of a completely different person, place, and time. The reader is expected to take what they learn from each chapter along with them for the remainder of the book, collecting fragments of history to culminate in a punching conclusion, assertively titled "Just Material."

It is important to note that Edwards writes in a manner that may not be universally accessible to the average reader. Any person accustomed to reading works of historical scholarship would surely have no issues with comprehension, but casual readers may encounter some difficulty. There is also a great deal of terminology employed specific to studies of fashion history, so even experienced readers may benefit from a relative amount of preliminary research. Despite its complexity, Edwards' writing style is crucial to the overall effect of the book. She presents history as narrative, an approach which is somewhat controversial among historians. Where the old guard sees frivolity

and lack of professionalism, more progressive views of historiography mount narrative history as the most effective way to engage one's audience. This perspective is certainly supported by Edwards' book, as her use of narrative storytelling facilitates personal connections and emotional responses to the content. This aspect of Edwards' writing counters and diffuses the alienating quality of her advanced prose.

Keeping in consideration all that has been discussed thus far, *Only the Clothes on Her Back* is one of the greatest contemporary surveys of nineteenth-century American fashion. Laura Edwards presents a masterclass in interdisciplinary historiography that belongs on the shelves of students and scholars the world over, regardless of their field. She seamlessly connects fashion and textile studies to subjects commonly thought to be unrelated, including economics, criminology and justice studies, law, and sociology, beautifully illustrating the extensive scope of fashion history. She effectively grants legitimacy to the discipline that is so frequently unafforded, reserving a place for fashion historians among contemporary scholars. Furthermore, Edwards emphasizes the social and cultural implications of fashion in such a way that it brings fashion and textile studies into the purview of common knowledge. An invaluable resource for a multitude of subjects and their connection to fashion, *Only the Clothes on Her Back* is undoubtedly a must-read for any and all readers looking to broaden their perception of the world.

Book Review by Emily Rogers

The Art of Darkness:

A Treasury of the Morbid, Melancholic and Macabre (Volume 2)

Author: S. Elizabeth

Publisher: Frances Lincoln, 2022.

In the conversational book *The Art of Darkness: A Treasury of the Morbid, Melancholic, and Macabre,* writer and art enthusiast S. Elizabeth takes on a role similar to a tour guide at a gloomy art museum. Elizabeth walks readers through a collection of historical and contemporary artworks, describing the importance of preserving a record of the parts of history that are difficult to discuss with words. The book itself is split into four sections to guide readers through different topics. First, there is a section regarding representations of psychological disorders throughout time, which is followed by artistic representations of the physical effects of illnesses, injuries during war, and death. After that, the reader is greeted with representations of humanity's relationship with the natural world, and the journey ends with a collection of pieces showing mankind's relationship with supernatural creatures throughout time. Elizabeth weaves these sections together with short essays and descriptions of the images that are presented to the reader in a way that leans into that tour guide persona which makes the book enjoyable to read overall; however, the inconsistencies in Elizabeth's writing leave the experience of exploring these pages frustrating at times.

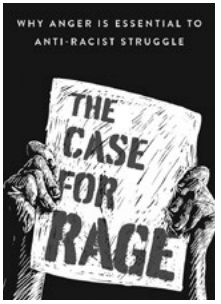
The issue of inconsistency pops up frequently when comparing how thoroughly Elizabeth describes the work of artists that one would probably already be familiar with before reading the book as opposed to the ambiguous descriptions Elizabeth leaves for less renowned artists. Well-known Western artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Edvard Munich, and Francisco Goya received several pages describing many of their works in depth from the author. Meanwhile, other lesser-known, contemporary artists from non-Western countries are often left with vague paragraphs summarizing the artist's entire body of work rather than discussing the importance of the specific piece that Elizabeth chose to include.

Take *Existential Crisis*, a painting by contemporary Cape Town artist Karen Cronje; the piece itself is embellished with smoke-like effects and makes the reader want to know what Cronje intended the work to be about. However, when your eyes finally move down the page and see that Elizabeth describes it as Cronje's, "interest in the 'stuff' of landscape," with little further elaboration as to what that means, it leaves a feeling of disappointment (58). This recurs throughout the rest of the book; in Wangechi Mutu's *Cancer of the Uterus*, a collage piece made with medical diagrams, Elizabeth ceases to mention that the specific piece depicted is part of a series (Elizabeth 83; Mutu). Again, in the essay describing Louise Bourgeois's *Maman* statue, the details behind the giant spider-like figure are disregarded as less than an afterthought and any information that is described is lightly paraphrased

from the Tate Art Institution in London (Elizabeth 150; Tate Modern). Once more, in Jose Clemente Orozco's mural *Departure of Quetzalcoatl*, Elizabeth neglects to describe the significance in the mythical battle scene portrayed to the viewers and instead focuses on the artist's life story as told by Biography.com (Elizabeth 190; Biography Editors). A reader will never know from one page to another if they will be met with an insightful analysis of a specific artwork, or if they will be met with a paraphrased Wikipedia article depicting the creator's overall life which can make the experience of reading this work disappointing.

The book itself is still engaging to read, though, and has an entertaining quality to it that could be enjoyed if the reader's intention is to analyze the images on their own or simply enjoy the visuals of what is in front of them. Elizabeth did a great job compiling together a variety of different pieces throughout multiple eras of art, categorizing them together by their respective subject matters, and generally creating a narrative that flows well together. The task of stitching together over 200 artworks in a cohesive way is a daunting one to take on, but Elizabeth's miniature essays between each of the sections make this flow surprisingly well. Elizabeth's continuous commentary on how most artwork is made as an attempt for people to leave their mark on the world, the line between making art to explain pain versus to exploit pain, and the balance between wanting one's own thoughts to be understood in words while also acknowledging that certain feelings cannot effectively be captured makes for a compelling narrative that leaves the reader wanting to continue reading despite some of the disappointing descriptions.

Along that line, Elizabeth's use of chronology as a tool to keep the reader engaged while guiding them through the collection is one of the main appeals as one goes through the book. Reading Elizabeth's inclusions of how Michele Tosini's painting *The Night* depicts a subject with breast cancer centuries before medical specialists put a name to the illness or how ghosts went from being represented during the medieval era in certain cultures as, "corpses that go about offering unsolicited advice," as opposed to the silent apparitions we think of today are the small details that hook you into this book (78, 202). There is always an undeniable fascination in looking at still frames in the progression of time, and Elizabeth's narration of this through artwork of the past and present turns this fascination into an experience to be shared with others. Though I may not see myself ever using this book as a source for a research project since it does not always appear to be dependable in the research it presents, it was still enjoyable to peruse through and contained some thought-provoking questions about how artwork plays a role in our history, our future, and our communication with one another.



Book Review by Julia Tenbusch

The Case for Rage:

Why Anger Is Essential to Anti-Racist Struggle

Author: Myisha Cherry

Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2021

Our world is one full of violence that has, more and more, affected us in our day-to-day lives. We see disparity everywhere we look, see division and strife and discrimination. Injustice has become more and more visible, especially in the wake of the 2020 Black Lives Matter Movement. We see subjugation, overt and subtle, across the globe: in Palestine, Sudan, Myanmar, China, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and at home. Because of the failure in the social order that allows atrocities to remain hidden as they were, especially during a time of undivided attention like the pandemic in the case of the police brutality revealed seemingly for the first time to a white middle and upper-class public, the dominant structures and institutions that perpetuate the exploitation and abuse of vulnerable populations. With constant confrontation of the injustices being committed across the world and around you, anger is an easy reaction, and perhaps the only one powerful enough to be appropriate for the severity of said injustices.

Myisha Cherry's *The Case for Rage* was a book pitched to me by my philosophy professor in response to my reaching out for books to review for this journal, as is my task as an editor. Its publication was extremely timely for its subject, making a case for rage in 2021, catching the attention of people who had been paying attention to or participating in the Black Lives Matter Movement, or who were just generally angry about the state of the world. It's marketed as a revolutionary intersection between philosophical and intersectional or Women's/Gender/Sexuality/Race studies thought, or perhaps that's just how it appeared to me based on my professor's glowing review of it. Over one hundred and seventy pages, Cherry outlines that anger has a place in the movement to end oppression and makes the movement to end oppression accessible to a wide audience of readers. Overall, Cherry creates a well-researched introduction to intersectional studies, and provides a fairly straightforward line of questioning to begin deconstructing normalized relationships between power, anger, and different identities.

From the position of philosophical thought, *The Case for Rage* is somewhat paradigm shifting, and confronts traditional ideas about the nature of anger. In Philosophy, a discipline that spans millennia, other emotions have long been viewed with a critical lens: happiness, fear, grief, and, yes, even anger. Where Cherry's line of questioning differs from traditional ideas about anger is in her championing of it as a tool to be used, as something appropriate, something to be leant into, something that could also be taxonomized and rationalized. Traditional philosophy largely revolves around ideas stemming from Stoicism – not feeling any emotions very strongly– and hedonism, or epicureanism–the idea that morality is built around maximizing

happiness and comfort. In both cases, anger is not appropriate, and even directly threatens a person's well-being.

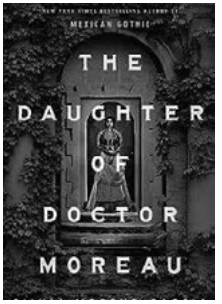
The idea that anger is something that can be controlled and, again, rationalized, would be, to a philosopher, radical: the general idea of anger in philosophy is that it is irrational, and, in the case of rage, which is what Cherry is truly upholding, uncontrollable or dangerous. There has been philosophical thought on anger prior to Cherry, but it has generally been limited by rationality and appropriateness. Cherry, though, creates criteria for anger philosophers, for elements of anger to be philosophized about, and for different types of anger, especially those related to racist ideologies and interactions. She creates camps of philosophers on anger, especially by the ways in which they theorize on anger: the "*concern distinction* camp…the *intent distinction* camp…[and] the *type distinction* camp" (Cherry 12-13). Each camp of philosophers is concerned with moralizing anger based on their specific distinction– respectively, why a person is angry, what a person wants to do with their anger, and if their anger is sudden and violent, or long-felt, rational, and seeking change (Cherry 12-13). Cherry draws on all of these ideas to create yet another type of anger philosophy: The *variation artist*, a person who can consider all aspects of these complexities of anger, and who uses that lens to distinguish different kinds of anti-racist anger. She identifies five separate types of anti-racist anger including Rogue Rage, Wipe Rage, Ressentiment Rage, Narcissistic Rage, and, chiefly, Lordean Rage, named after Audre Lorde. Cherry argues that Lordean Rage is the most appropriate form of anger of any introduced, as it is aimed at those who are complicit in racism and reinforcing racist institutions. It is transformative and world-building, long-held and rational, and must have a focus on solidarity, drawing on its namesake: "I am not free while any [other] is unfree" (Cherry 24). For all of the aforementioned descriptions, Lordean Rage fulfills all requirements set by the formerly ascribed philosophers on the morality of anger.

To a person well-versed in feminist theory, gender theory, sexuality theory, race theory, intersectionality theory, or a person who is well-read in the works of radicals of color, *The Case For Rage* may feel derivative: it at times seems more like a vehicle for carefully curated quotes from and paraphrasing of Lorde than anything groundbreaking in the aforementioned fields. The tone of the book also runs in opposition to other books and essays in the field, especially Lorde's own work; *The Case for Rage*, a book completely about the power of anger, is even keeled and methodical. It, to me, lacks energy or anger, which is good for a philosophical audience being introduced to the concept, but flies in the face of the culture of feminist and race studies, especially as it seems to present itself as a novel idea, rather than a repackaged, less angry commentary on Lorde's work and the work of her contemporaries. With an entire chapter on how to be a good "rage renegade" ("allyship" is a term that is "not without controversy" as it "implies that racial justice is a fight for the marginalized alone" (Cherry 120)), it is clear that the intended recipients of the book are exactly the discussed "rage renegades." The tips and tricks that Cherry offers contain pieces of wisdom which amount to "just because you are also angry at injustice does not mean you share the oppressive experiences of the oppressed," "don't assume that your anger about oppression is more important than the anger of those who are oppressed," "don't be performatively angry or assume that you're eternally morally correct," and "white saviorism is not helpful" (Cherry 122-138). These pieces of advice

make it clear to me that this book is aimed at those unfamiliar with the theory that goes into solidarity and, as a person familiar with it, rather inspired rage at the idea that such advice was radical. For those vulnerable populations whose subjugation is being discussed, I can imagine a similar anger at the way these privileged groups are being coddled and hand-held into understanding these incredibly basic ideas about respecting minorities.

My exasperation at the book and its advice was largely a result of mis-framing it, as it was meant to be an introduction to theories of solidarity, probably for those of a more philosophical background, or for the layperson. To those people, *The Case for Rage* may seem unprecedented and innovative, ushering in new perspectives and much food for thought.

To a person approaching this book from a background in Race or Intersectionality Studies, this book is not only a rehashing of foundational, basic ideas in the disciplines, but those ideas made palatable for people in dominant social groups oblivious to the privileges that they enjoy. This rather defangs the call to action but spreads neutered theory with Lorde's name attached to it regardless.



Book Review by Mitzi Cuaxico

The Daughter of Doctor Moreau

Author: Silvia Moreno-Garcia
Publisher: Del Rey, 2022

Magic meets science, or at least it tries to. Yet, the magic behind *The Daughter of Doctor Moreau* is not aesthetically magical; It hides horrors beyond the imaginable. Silvia Moreno-Garcia's novel, *The Daughter of Doctor Moreau*, accomplishes a loose retelling that is feminist, sexy, and entertaining, yet complex through its morally gray characters and its determination to educate its audience. *The Daughter of Doctor Moreau* goes beyond colonialism and its horrid consequences to the lands and people it affected, but instead includes it to make a commentary on the necessity to thrive in that environment to move in the *castas* system.

Moreno-Garcia implemented elements of the fantastic through the creation of Moreau's hybrids. Doctor Moreau, in order to save his beloved natural daughter, started and is leading the development of a new workforce, which will replace the Hacendado's mostly indigenous field workers in the Yucatán peninsula. Moreau and his daughter, Carlota, live in a hacienda at "the end of the world" (Moreno-Garcia 4), a natural, quiet, and almost biblical paradise by the name of Yaxaktun. It is in this paradise that the horrors of animal and human experimentation take place, yet the hybrids live under the illusion of mercy and divine intervention.

This novel, beginning in 1871 Mexico, opens up with the arrival of the new mayordomo (butler), a young British man with a lingering dark past with a knack for getting into risky situations. As this man, Montgomery, enters the scene, he begins a career of wrestling jaguars, "found" family, and some unwanted feelings for Moreau's daughter. The majority of the novel takes place in 1877, with Carlota becoming an adult woman, determined to remain at Yaxaktun, where her beloved family is. Carlota's family is founded on Moreau's creation of her siblings, Cachito and Lupe, two hybrids that, much like siblings, have differing wishes for their future.

However, Carlota's destiny would change when two young men appear at Yaxaktun, including the Hacendado's son, Eduardo Lizalde. This arrival would begin a world whirl romance, filled with passion, and manipulation that seeks to secure the future of Yaxaktun and its unprecedented inhabitants, inhabitants who are struggling physically to cope with the pain created by the genetic mutations. Moreno-Garcia writes, "Their bodies pain them. Their joints ache. Their sight grows poor quickly or they have growths over their skin" (Moreno-Garcia 238).

The creation of the hybrids defies the original tale in the way their creation does not make them monsters. Instead, humanity is the biggest monster of all. Moreno-Garcia's hybrids are not the villains; in fact, they are so personified that they are the most humane aspects of this tale: They want freedom, safety, a home, and bodily autonomy.

Carlota, too, is a reflection of these wishes. Her journey exemplifies the becoming-of-age story by propelling enough confidence to

discover her abilities and the truth behind her father's secrets and motivations. Carlota must gain through loss an identity that surpasses the title of Moreau's daughter, becoming a woman capable of becoming a new prophet and leading her family towards a brighter future. Moreno-Garcia writes, "I feel this way I may choose who I wish to be," Carlota said. "I've only ever been 'the doctor's daughter,' but I feel as if I may now be someone else and chart my path" (Moreno-Garcia 300).

It is no surprise that Silvia Moreno-Garcia would be implementing political criticism carefully crafted with historical context in mind. Moreno-Garcia declares the reality of indigenous communities in Yucatán. She brings into perspective the Spanish castas, and their relationship to the indigenous rebellions against the white and Mestizo overlords. Through the Lizaldes, full of bravado and entitlement, we delve deeper into the understanding of the BIPOC body as a commodity. Carlota and her hybrids, destined to be this commodity for the Lizaldes, must break through the chains that spiritually and medically bind them to their oppressors. Carlota narrates,

"I do believe in God. Maybe not the God whose face my father showed me, but a God. In doing what we've done here, in the needless cruelty of my father's experiments and the creation of the hybrids, we have sinned. I thought Yaxaktun a paradise, but it is not so. He shaped pain into flesh" (Moreno-Garcia 245).

As such, it's in Carlota's hands to dismantle the religion surrounding Moreau, fully disengaging with the lies he procured in his ambition to become a prophet of God. Moreno Garcia's take on the mad scientist is of a villain who fiercely loves his daughter, as she is his most incredible creation.

Readers of this novel will find themselves grappling with a love-and-hate relationship with every single one of their characters. From the stubborn and naïve Carlota to the gloomy and severely alcohol-dependent Montgomery, one will always find themselves caring and condemning these characters in their choices, wishing for them to progress beyond and find their truth. Audiences of this book can identify with the authenticity of having a controlling parent and how rebelling against it can feel like the hardest thing to do.

It is in the intersection of magic, found family, science, love, and lies that manufactures this great novel, substantially adding to the repertoire of great stories by Latine authors, amplifying the culture, and bringing awareness of our history surrounding colonial monsters. As such, Moreno-Garcia is a force of nature, a remarkable thinker of our time who supplements the hypothetical life of Mexican women in the past, connecting the fantastical and the horrific with the cultural richness of Mexicanidad. Moreno-Garcia's previous work, *Mexican Gothic*, also extends to the horror behind colonialism and eugenics. Still, *The Daughter of Doctor Moreau* goes beyond human genetics and further extends their characters' personalities, essence, and animalistic nature. It is in Moreno-Garcia's work that one can find oneself lost in the wonders of Yaxaktun, extending our imagination to the scientifically impossible and the miraculous yet creepy extent of human ambition.

Book Review by Kate Hedrick

The Dead Wrestler Elegies: Championship Edition

Author: Todd Kaneko

Publisher: New Michigan Press, 2023

Professional wrestling is, at its heart, a form of physical theater. Each wrestler is an actor, embodying a carefully constructed persona and making sure to maintain 'kayfabe', or the playing of their characters and the storylines they are involved in as real. Each fight is not a typical contest of strength but a purposefully choreographed story with a winner and loser already selected. When these larger-than-life characters clash with one another in the ring, their stories can evoke love, hatred, glorious triumph, and crushing defeat. Wrestling is a medium for storytelling, and these stories can touch people's lives just as any other work of fiction. For author W. Todd Kaneko, the exploits of these wrestlers are a means through which he makes sense of his own life's story.

In Kaneko's poetry collection *The Dead Wrestler Elegies: Championship Edition*, the pages are alive with the ghosts of people and stories from times long past. This encompasses both the tales of the titular dead wrestlers and the quieter, more intimate story of a son reckoning with the complex relationships he has with his deceased father and absent mother. Each elegy is accompanied by an illustration of the wrestler it pays tribute to, done in a style evocative of pages in a child's coloring book. Wrestling was a mainstay in Kaneko's childhood, an invaluable bonding force between him and his father. The relationship between father and son is the beating heart of the collection, and it is a heart that beats with all the complexities of love, grief, resentment, and regret.

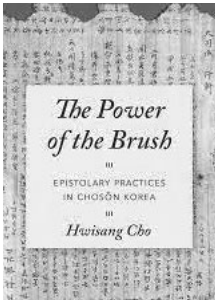
Fitting for a collection of self-described elegies, the poetry is deeply concerned with death and specifically, the impermanence and vulnerability of the body. Wrestling is an inherently violent physical affair and is one that wears down the bodies of those who participate until, inevitably, they are no more. In "Every Night, The Super Destroyer," Kaneko draws a parallel between the physical toll a wrestler's body endures and the weight of death and mortality. He describes a wrestling match as a "battle between puny mortals / and that faceless adversary on the other side / of the ring" (Kaneko 23). The "faceless adversary" can be read as death, something undefeatable, much like the Super Destroyer himself. In the poem's final stanza, Kaneko likens both himself and his father to a hapless wrestler held within the Destroyer's grip- "it is my father held in the grip of the masked man, / it is me held aloft by the face and slammed / heavy to the floor. We are all twisted / into terrible shapes before the final bell" (Kaneko 23). If all the world's a stage, the stage presented in this poem is one where we are forced to reckon with the inevitable curtain call that is death.

The tragedy of "Super Destroyer," however, is not merely death- it is the circumstances preceding it. Kaneko's father is twisted into terrible shapes not just by his

passing but by his alcoholism and the deep depression he entered well before it. Kaneko's chief fear is not death but being resigned to the same fate as his father, the perceived inevitability that he will repeat the cycle. In "The Missing Link Explains How to Be a Monster," he even says so directly: "Try not to grow up to be like your father. / End up exactly like your father" (Kaneko 58). In being doomed to become like his father, he is likewise doomed to become a monster.

In a world as masculine as professional wrestling, it is noteworthy Kaneko chooses to highlight female wrestlers and women in general as the true bastions of strength and social power, for good and for ill. In the poem "Behind Every Man Is Sensational Sherri," he highlights, "Back then, / my father believed in solitary men / free from the sway of a woman's fingers, / liberated from that storm of desire" (Kaneko 29). Men may inflict physical violence upon one another, but it is the women who have the power to influence and control men through the proverbial "storm of desire" they give rise to. This angle on feminine power is tied directly to Kaneko's view of his mother, who is portrayed as sadistic, taking pleasure in watching The Heel, the villain, defeat The Babyface, the young hero. In "How I Know Stanislaus Zbyszko," Kaneko writes, "The part of me that is my father understands / how a man is lured into butterfly clutches, / into chicken wings. The part of me that is / my mother praises dead animals, delights / at the shapes the butcher extracts from carcasses" (Kaneko 14). Kaneko's mother even deals the proverbial knife to his father's gut after she leaves him in the middle of the night, never to be heard from again. It is his mother who wields the power over the family and over her husband long after leaving. Kaneko's father would turn to drinking to ease his sorrow, an addiction that continued until his death. His mother is, in a way, the ultimate heel, utilizing her power to deal the finishing blow to his father. While his father is complicated, (as is his relationship with Kaneko) he is portrayed in a comparatively sympathetic light.

The Dead Wrestler Elegies: Championship Edition makes masterful use of an oft-unappreciated medium as a backdrop to tell a complex, deeply personal story about love, loss, and grief. The poetry bleeds with tactile imagery that speaks of both emotional and physical pain in ways the reader is almost able to feel within themselves. Even if a prospective reader is not interested in professional wrestling, the poetry sings with visceral feelings and musings on nostalgia, mortality, and the fallout that comes when our personal mythologies crumble to dust. It allows readers to sit in the same fallout that Kaneko experiences in the wake of his father's passing, and to find bittersweet solace in the heroes he once worshipped.



Book Review by Marygrace Gorensek

The Power of the Brush

Author: Hwisang Cho

Publisher: University of Washington Press, 2020

In *The Power of the Brush*, Hwisang Cho traces the origins of modern Korea's written language. As language changed from a more classical style only learned by the educated elite to a more common style that everyone could learn, more common folk could start to take part in the government and increase their influence in the political sphere. As more people started to have access to government affairs, the government fought back against some of the people who now were able to form small-scale political movements to bring attention to issues they felt were important. In essence, the book tracks the journey of the ways in which more people being able to understand a simple language expands political life from an elite group in society to all the people. One major example in the book is how alternative schools, called academies, benefitted from changes in language to become a more unified group of people that was able to take charge in the political sphere of society in ways previously unavailable.

The main theme of the book is how language is very much tied up with politics. A large portion of the movement began as academies were set up across Korea. As academies were being set up, most elites in the rural areas started to favor these schools over the state system the government controlled (Cho 102). The creation of academies arose along with the changing interpretations of Confucian philosophy, and "Combined with the divergence in interpretations of Confucian knowledge, the exponential increase of local academies shook Confucian literati loose from state supervision during the late Choson period" (Cho 102). In other words, the beginning of diverse Confucian philosophies contributed to the scholars gaining a greater sense of freedom and less control by state officials. They also started to gain control of specific areas as well as "The rise of local academies evinces the institutional attempt of countryside literati to create political independence and secure economic autonomy in their hometowns" (Cho 103). The biggest change in written language the book highlights is the shift from a formal style based on Chinese characters to one that became a distinct Korean vernacular.

Changes in written language contributed to the academies increasing their political presence and interacting with other elites through written letters, with Cho noting, "The new relationship between the state and rural literati could emerge in part because academy scholars creatively used letter writing for both communicative and noncommunicative purposes" (Cho 105). In fact, letters offered a hidden channel for political movements to gain traction among the greater populace. Cho mentions, "The major academic, social, and political changes in late sixteenth-

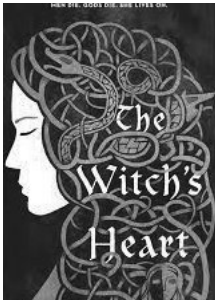
century Korea converged in letter writing—a practice too mundane to attract special attention" (108). Letter writing also allowed the blossoming academy movement the chance to connect and form a cohesive way of thinking across the country. As such, "T'oegye and his collaborators relied on exchanges of letters to iron out diverse problems that emerged in the local academy movement" (Cho 108). T'oegye, the scholar who started the academy movement, came to rely on letter writing to connect academies into one solidified movement rather than a patchwork of schools that had different ideas of Neo-Confucian ideology as "The extensive usage of letters cohesively integrated the human and discursive networks of the Choson scholarly community" (Cho 108). Creating one identical belief provides the opportunity to create a future political group that is able to mobilize and protest government decisions. Even after the government began to look for ways to restore its control over this growing group of political power, "... rural scholars doggedly appropriated academy networks to buttress their sway in both local societies and the national political arena" (Cho 144).

The changes in the era led those out in the countryside to strengthen their political power in the country, and "Once rural scholars began to raise their voices collectively, most scholar-officials remained reluctant to acknowledge these new political actors for fear of losing their sway over court debates" (Cho 145). Thus, people gaining political power leads to the elite losing their influence on the political landscape. These people gaining political influence were able to do so due to the changes in written language. Political processes were no longer tied up with the official scholars but now were spread out across the rest of society and gave others access to the courts. Moreover, language developments also allowed for changes in traditional ways of thinking, allowing a whole new variety of viewpoints to find their way into politics.

In addition to giving way for a new political faction to form, the changes in language practices also gave rise to joint memorials, which allowed people to organize protests and contribute their ideas to the discourse. These joint memorials allowed scholars on both sides of officialdom to contribute their thinking to the discourse of various rituals and norms created by state officials who set policies that sought to confirm their power and control over the population. These methods of protest were possible due to the continuing evolution of language, which taught a greater population across society. Rural literati had their own ways of expressing their thoughts on government and politics, and "The appropriation of well-developed local networks through diverse epistolary practices enabled them to participate in state discourses as legitimate political actors" (Cho 181).

This book explains how the changes in written language contributed to increased political activism. By shifting from a formal style to a more accessible writing taught to all regardless of class, it allowed rural elites to increase their influence over political affairs in the country and present their own petitions to the court. The main idea of the book is that politics and philosophy are connected to language practices. This goes beyond the story illustrated in the book. Everyone is affected by changes in language that reflect changes in culture. The most notable example is the change in various Latin-derived languages from exclusive male and female pronouns to neutral pronouns that are not based on gender. From another perspective, understanding how language is tied to politics and philosophy

can also explain why limiting access to education prevents people from learning for themselves about various ideologies and allows the dominant few in charge of society to hold power over people without much effort. Essentially, language is what allows people to communicate with one another and blocking access to select groups keeps the larger society from being able to express themselves.



Book Review by Ellyse Gallagher

The Witch's Heart: A Novel

Author: Genevieve Gornichec
Publisher: Ace, 2021

The Witch's Heart by Genevieve Gornichec tells the story of the witch Angrboda, her husband Loki, and their life together leading up to the end of the world, better known as Ragnarök. This novel takes a well-known story, used frequently in male dominated media (video games, superhero movies) and turns it into an empowering work of queer happiness and female empowerment. Throughout Norse mythology, Angrboda (meaning 'bringer of sorrows') is commonly known as "mother of monsters." While this title is used in the novel, Gornichec gives us insight into her relationship with her children, exploring the depths of motherhood, and tells us that she would rather die than hear her children be referred to as monsters.

Additionally, the author combines the story of Angrboda with that of Gullveig and Heid. The story of Gullveig is that she was burned by the gods three times and reborn just as many, becoming Heid. But rather than having her immediately become Heid, Gornichec authors the story so that Gullveig becomes Angrboda and then Heid. The story begins with Gullveig receiving her burnt heart from Loki Laufeyson, also referred to as "The Trickster." She then puts her heart back into her chest, donning the name Angrboda. Later in the story, after the witch's life is turned completely around, she takes up the name Heid (meaning bright), after being called this by villagers that she trades with.

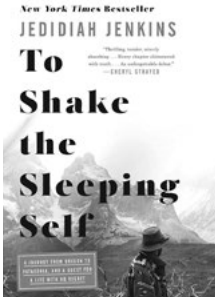
The book is divided into three sections, the first of which spans roughly half of the novel. It begins with Angrboda sitting alone, having just been burned three times by the Aesir; her heart still on the pyre in Asgard. Soon enough, Loki approaches with her heart in his pocket and proceeds to return it to the witch, who simply places it back into the cavern in her chest. The pair quickly become close, but Loki is a very inconsistent figure in Angrboda's life, traveling between her home in Ironwood and Asgard and leaving her alone for weeks, or even months, at a time. During this time, Angrboda befriends a mountain woman named Skadi, and it appears that the connection between the two women may be slightly more than friendship. The women grow closer and work together trading to help Angrboda survive the winter and she simultaneously becomes more involved with Loki. When Loki and Angrboda's relationship becomes physically intimate and the two decide to get married. Despite the marriage, the inconsistency of Loki's presence does not change. After their marriage, Angrboda realizes that she is pregnant with Loki's child. Upon her next visit, Skadi realizes Angrboda's pregnancy, inspiring within the mountain woman a great deal of hatred for her friend's absent husband. Angrboda faces difficulties during her pregnancy and when she gives birth, her daughter's legs are dead flesh. She loves her

child nonetheless, and has more children with Loki, who we find out has another wife back in Asgard. But the pair's following children are even stranger than the first. The children become the source of the book's main conflict, in addition to Loki's Asgardian wife, by creating a rift in their marriage that causes numerable problems for the couple and their loved ones.

Speaking very generally, I genuinely believe that this is a wonderful novel that can be enjoyed by readers at any level. While it does fall more into the category of young adult literature, the storyline is just as compelling for high level readers. As a future teacher, I think that this book is an incredible way to introduce diverse cultural mythologies into the classroom, especially considering that the most popular representation of Norse mythology among teens – Thor and Loki in various Marvel movies – are widely inaccurate to the original mythology. Beyond use in a classroom, this story offers a lot of insight into the experience of motherhood while navigating one's own personal struggle. With the addition of Loki's other wife, we are given an opportunity to read about separate ways women get to experience motherhood, yet neither one is presented to the audience as an inferior experience, simply a different one. The aspect of the storyline of motherhood in this novel that felt most important to me was that the story focused on a (mostly) single mother. The experience of single mothers is overlooked all too often in different forms of media, and this story highlights and uplifts that experience. Not only does it give space for the experience of a mother dealing with an absent father, but the experience of the children and the mother's support system as well.

Finally, this book offers an exceptionally good perspective on the female queer experience. While I will not give the specifics of how this becomes part of the plot, I will say that it was my personal favorite moment. The queer subtext is present throughout the entire storyline, but when it comes to a head, there is not a huge revelation moment where the characters "come out" to one another, it just happens. While there is obviously a space for characters in literature who have these kinds of "revelation moments," it is comforting to see characters whose queerness is just part of who they are, not the main focus of their character.

I would absolutely recommend this novel to anyone. It is a light read with some deep themes and a very thought-provoking storyline that is easily enjoyed by readers of all ages. Whether you have an interest in queer literature, women's literature, Norse mythology, or just an enjoyable book, you are sure to love *The Witch's Heart* just as much I do.



Book Review by Lauren Mlynarek

To Shake the Sleeping Self

Author: Jedidiah Jenkins

Publisher: Convergent Books, 2018

In 1979, *A Walk Across America* was written; a story of a man at the ripe age of 22 who, along with his dog, Cooper, set to walk from Alfred, New York to New Orleans, Louisiana. This man was Peter Jenkins, and in his book, he writes of his adventures, of all the people he had met and stayed with, as well as the spiritual epiphanies and the realizations that came with his journey. It may seem far-fetched to do such a thing in the modern era, but this is exactly what his son Jedidiah Jenkins does in his book *To Shake the Sleeping Self*.

Jedidiah was 30 when he came to realize the boring repetitiveness of life's everyday routine, often yearning for a way to escape and find more fulfillment in his life. Reminded by his father, Peter Jenkins, and his enlightening walk across America, he decides to embark in his father's footsteps, except, instead of on foot, he bikes. Though he did not have the company of a pet, he brought along his free-spirited friend Phillip, whom he calls Wenston. Impulsively, they embark on their journey slightly ill-prepared, but it makes it a test of their will and capabilities to adapt to the unexpected. Many of the ideas of life, its purpose, its past, and how we are here in the present as the person we are is what's to be discovered in Jedidiah's biking adventure. During the course of his journey, we'll see Jedidiah reminiscing on his spiritual journey with Christ, while also being plagued with the feeling of being unforgiven for being gay. Riding from Florence, Oregon to Punta Arenas, Patagonia, Jedidiah soaks in the beautiful artwork of God's creation, which is not only the beautifully diverse landscapes but the people as well. In our Western worldview, the idea of being Christian and gay is seemingly contradictory, but Jedidiah explains how he has come to accept both identities by the grace of God.

On his adventure with Wenston, they also learn to re-experience the fruitfulness of child-like adventures and being ignorant yet humble to new ideas and places. All the while having fun, they learn to embrace the small joys of life that had gone unnoticed and underappreciated in the repetitive life they were living back home. Jedidiah talks much about the need for connection through media and how phone addictions cause us to miss the real connections and memories we could be making now.

We as humans are constantly yearning for deep spiritual epiphanies and guidance we hear others have had. Especially now, we look back at older times when perhaps older writers like Kerouac, who adventured, became spiritually liberated, and found purpose in what they had made of their lives. It seemed that with Kerouac, Peter Jenkins, and Jedidiah, forcing yourself to take the chances of adventuring into the unknown is what leads to what we've always wanted to know. We have only come to know the things we know because we have tested and

experienced the once unknown. Nature is not the only resolving factor to reaching and knowing one's purpose in life. By following a way of living, we may come to that nirvana. For some, like Peter and Jedidiah, it was through Christ that they learned the morals and values of Jesus that led them to learning and answers. Interestingly, many times in the Bible, when someone was plagued by trouble, they would retreat into the wilderness for healing, to find wisdom and answers. So, if there is one thing to take away from this book, it's this: when life becomes stale, allow yourself to be put into a place of struggle, accept it through the nature of life or with spiritual intent, and draw yourself back to a child-like mind of ignorance and malleability. Recreate to the woods and trees, allow yourself to succumb to the elements of life.

"When you don't know what to do, you travel. You go out and see. You have to rattle the bed, shake yourself out." (Jenkins 7)

The Start of Something New