ART OF WRITING

2021-22 Essays

Berkeley

ART OF
WRITING

TOWNSEND
CENTER FOR THE
HUMANITIES

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Spring 2022

Table of Contents

To Our Readers,

Since the Art of Writing began in 2016, we have been publishing an annual anthology of student writings. Each semester, all Art of Writing students write separately in seminars of their choice. Rarely do they have the occasion to communicate with each other, to speak about their writing, reading, thinking, and experiences. The Art of Writing anthology allows students to read each other's work and to create a new community of writers, readers, and critics.

Art of Writing students: we invite you to reach out to one of your fellow writers to ponder together a sentence or two, a paragraph or three, a whole essay and its process of creation and composition.

We also share these writings with all of you in the Art of Writing community, some of whom we know and some of whom we hope to meet. All the pieces in this anthology were written by the 2021-2022 Art of Writing cohort—undergraduates who decided to spend a semester writing intensively in an intimate group of 20 or fewer, guided by a Professor and a Graduate Student Instructor.

The range of seminars offered by Art of Writing demonstrates our commitment to teaching writing across the Berkeley campus and across the divisions—History of Art (Professor Margaretta Lovell and Elizabeth Fair); Engineering (Professor Mark Bauer and Shiyin Lim); Cognitive Science (Professor David Presti and Patricia Kubala); Film and Media (Professor Emily West and Lida Zeitlin Wu); Rhetoric (Professor Ramona Naddaff and Maisie Wiltshire-Gordon); College Writing (Professor Patricia Steenland and Tulasi Johnson); and Art Practice (Professor Al-An deSouza and Kavena Hambira).

Not all students chose to publish their work, and many debated which of the many writings produced over the course of the semester they should include. All students would agree, however, that rarely as
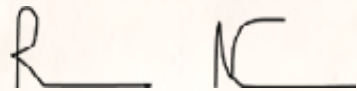
undergraduates are they afforded the occasion and time to commit themselves to the process of writing and thoughtful revision, the chance to experiment with a diversity of genres, the care and attention instructors offered so that they could discover and cultivate their own signature voice and style. Furthermore, while all seminars are intensive writing seminars, they simultaneously create the space for critical thinking, the informed and deep reflection that emerges from reading and analyzing the works of other writers and scholars.

Designer Lucy Andersen—returning to work with us a second time—has spent many hours creating this digital book, choosing the graphics and colors that reflect each seminar's themes, in a visual collaboration with these written works.

The Art of Writing team—Rebecca Egger, Jane Liaw, Alex Creighton, Antonio Lopez, and myself—thank the students for their dedication to, and joy in, the many arts of writing.

Sincerely,

Ramona Naddaff
Director, Art of Writing

Art of Writing Seminars

HISTART 192G

Berkeley's Built Environment: Two Residential Neighborhoods

Margaretta Lovell & Elizabeth Fair

Fall 2021

ENGIN 185

Beyond Data: Scientific Writing for Non-Scientific Audiences

Mark Bauer & Shiyin Lim

Fall 2021

COGSCI 190

Expanding a Science of Consciousness

David Presti & Patricia Kubala

Fall 2021

FILM 193

Intermediate Film Writing

Emily West & Lida Zeitlin Wu

Fall 2021

RHET 109

**The Poetics, Philosophy, and Politics
of 20th-and 21st-Century Families in America**

Ramona Naddaff & Maisie Wiltshire-Gordon

Spring 2022

COLWRIT 195

The American West: Myth, Wilderness, and Sacred Space

Patricia Steenland & Tulasi Johnson

Spring 2022

ART 160

Art Criticism for a Changing World

Al-An deSouza & Kavena Hambira

Spring 2022

HISTART 192G

Berkeley's Built Environment:

Two Residential Neighborhoods

Margaretta M Lovell & Elizabeth Fair

Berkeley's Built Environment

Margaretta Lovell & Elizabeth Fair

Students in this upper-division seminar investigated Berkeley's residential history with case studies of two distinct neighborhoods, one in the hills and one in the flats. They wrote every week, sharpening their research and analytical skills and drawing on primary sources including the built environment itself. The hills case study area includes Native American sites, a Southern Pacific Railroad tunnel, and topographically-sensitive platting designed with deeply theorized c. 1910 ideas generated by a group of activist progressive women about the relationship between settlement and topography, as well as houses designed by Berkeley's most distinguished architects. The residential section in the flats is an historically-non-White neighborhood that includes homes in which noted Black leaders including railroad porter Leon Marsh, newspaper man Thomas C. Fleming, politician William Byron Rumford, police officer Walter Gordon, and WPA artist Sargent Johnson lived. Students learned and wrote about redlining and protective covenants, about architectural styles, evolving transportations systems, and development patterns, about campaigns to establish native species of plants and allées of street trees and parks, as well as about the social history of Berkeley and its spaces.

We investigated the built environment of Berkeley as a collaborative long-term art/design project, the result of generations of inventiveness and repurposing inspired by a sense of community and consensus as well as by raw economic and social forces.

The project of the course was primarily to engage students ideveloping the skills to write a wide variety of different kinds of research/analysis essays. They practiced real-world persuasive writing, acquiring life skills while contributing to our pool of knowledge and a public sense of value in the crafting and 'reading' of streetscapes and neighborhoods. Also an exercise in Public Art History, the course culminated in a public Symposium/Webinar attended by over 200 people in which the students gave brief, sometimes stunning, reports on their individual research projects. One of these research essays caught the eye of an editor and is currently moving toward publication.

Families and Fine Lines:
The 900 Block of Shattuck Avenue

Lily Garcia

In the past, the land looked like a sea of green with grass swaying and cascading through-out the hillsides.[1] Occasionally, a grove of oaks or cluster of rock outcroppings would break the monotonous greenery. However, grass is what dominated the landscape. Humans were visitors, coming and going with the seasons.[2] They had no more perma-nence on the land than any gopher, grasshopper, or gust of wind. By the nineteenth century, humans' relationship with the hills shifted. Indigenous tribes were replaced by rancheros, who were eventually succeeded by Americans.[3] The two subsequent groups viewed the land as something which is owned and controlled, using it for livestock or as an investment. By the time the city of Berkeley became established, people had set down permanent roots in the form of buildings and transportation lines. As the population steadily grew, the city began incrementally expanding into what would become known as the Berkeley hills. The verdant sea of grass was no longer boundless. Humanity, with their roads, rail lines, and platting, was severing the hills both physically as well as on paper. The future 900 block of Shattuck Avenue would result from this drawing of lines. After researching the history of the neighborhood from 1800 to 1980, I discovered how the 900 block of Shattuck Avenue evolved as well as stayed the same over time.

The first house to be built on the block was 920 Shattuck Avenue in 1909.[4] F. Elmer Buckman was a twenty-seven-year-old contractor with a wife and two babies.[5] What inspired Elmer to be the first to buy a lot on this block is uncertain. Maybe he had been persuaded by a Mason-McDuffie promotional pamphlet or simply sensed as a native Californian that this area would be a good investment. Either way, he took the chance and got a mortgage. The architect Walter H. Ratcliff designed the home, and then Elmer built the house himself.[6] For a few months, the block was occupied exclusively by the pioneering Buckmans and their Brown Shingle. Their solitude would not be permanent, for approximately twenty-five houses were to be built on the block during the 1910s and 1920s. A majority of the houses built were two stories and included a private garage.[7]

1 Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, *Northbrae* (Berkeley, California: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 1994).

2 Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area 1769-1810* (California: Balle-na Press, 1995), 13.

3 Kellersberger, Julius, *Map of the Ranchos of Vincente & Domingo Peralta,* 1856, Map, UC Berkeley Earth Sciences & Map Library, https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/58709?ln=en#?c=0&m=0&s =0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=0%2C-2871%2C11587%2C13838.

4 Cappelletti, Fran, "Berkeley Building Permits 900 Block," Google Doc file (Berkeley, California: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 2021), 1.

5 U.S. Census Bureau, *1910 United States Federal Census,* Ancestry.com (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Adminis-tration, 1910), 2A, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/7884/images/31111_4327262-00403?ssrc=&backlabel=Re-turn&pId=940675.

6 Cappelletti, "Building Permits," 1.

7 Berkeley, Cal. Vol. 3. 354," (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1929), From Google Drive, *1929,* https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1JgOZUNTSMQ51fWGaRb4OkKBwB9cDV9hd.

Though the houses possessed very similar features, each was slightly different in shape. 929 was the most basic on the block. It was a perfect square on a perfectly straight rectangle lot.[8] 942, on the other hand, looked like a mutated Lego on a lot shaped like a pizza slice.[9] It was built in 1918 by Charles R. from the Mason-McDuffie company.[10] Meanwhile, 933 was unique due to its having its garage connected to the main dwelling. A local Swedish builder named Emil Person constructed the residence in 1925.[11] Finally, 953 was shaped like an electrical outlet.[12] A man named Harold Kellogg hired Cooley Manufacturing Company to build this specimen in 1919.[13] The different shapes of the houses highlight the rich character of the block. No house was identical to the one beside it. The various house shapes demonstrate the block's tolerance for architectural variety. They also emphasize how different architects and builders were used by the residents. The houses on the 900 block of Shattuck Avenue reflect a community that champions individualism and architectural creativity.

As the lots aged over the years, the residents of the 900 block of Shattuck Avenue also changed. By 1940, the Buckmans had moved on and been replaced by Professor George R. Potter and his family of five.[14] 964 Shattuck Avenue was originally owned in 1925 by C.J. Krieger.[15] It was the residence of seven people in 1930, with the head and owner of the household working as a manager.[16] Fast forward ten years and the house was owned by a forty-year-old cashier who lived there with his wife and two children.[17] The new residents reveal a pattern in the type of group being attracted to living on this block. Families with white-collar breadwinners are repeatedly the ones occupying the houses.

In the beginning, the land that would become the 900 block of Shattuck Avenue was a rolling green hillside. As new people brought their ideas and the population grew, the hills started to be viewed in a different light. Over time, the area transformed into a coveted residential neighborhood. The original owners who purchased the lots shaped the 900 block of Shattuck Avenue by establishing the foundational houses. Their personal choices of architect and builder led to architectural variety. For the most part, the houses did not alter drastically after they were built, highlighting how, though the residents may change frequently, the houses stay consistent.

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[8] "Berkeley, Cal. Vol. 3. 354," (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1950), From Google Drive, *1950*, https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1pB3j9SBzyMOz3xVlkWIBkQn9Du-sSjy1.

[9] "Berkeley, Cal," 1950.

[10] Cappelletti, 1.

[11] Cappelletti, 1; U.S. Census Bureau, *1930 United States Federal Census,* Ancestry.com (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930), 7B, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/6224/images/4532332_00077?usePUB=true&_phsrc=suw52&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=88627126.

[12] "Berkeley, Cal," 1950.

[13] Cappelletti, 1.

[14] U.S. Census Bureau, *1940 United States Federal Census,* Ancestry.com (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 4B, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/2442/images/m-t0627-00190-00210?ssrc=&backlabel=Return&pId=68855376.
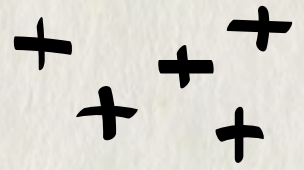
[15] Cappelletti, 2.

[16] U.S. Census Bureau, *1930*, 13B.

[17] U.S. Census Bureau, *1940*, 4B

A Walk in South Berkeley: San Pablo Park and Bob's Liquors

Matthew Gomberg

I started my route around the neighborhood and San Pablo Park by walking south on Mabel Street at 7:00 P.M. By the time I reached the park, it was dark out and the area was illuminated only by the massive flood lights that stood around the fields and courts. San Pablo Park saw more human activity than any other location in the neighborhood. There were approximately fifty people in the park. I arrived from the east and entered adjacent to a basketball court. I was struck by the quality of the court. The surface was not asphalt but a green and blue grippy material which lacked cracks or significant wear. The court was surrounded by a waist-high chain-link fence. The court nearest the walking path and east entrance was occupied by a young black man who was playing basketball alone. Behind this court a basketball game was being played by men who were older than the guy playing on his own. My attention was captured by a game of softball being played by two teams of men (Figure 1). All the men appeared over thirty, a few likely in their sixties. The teams were mostly white, but there were some hispanic players. Several of the players shared the same jersey which was navy blue with green numbering. The men cheered loudly when the game went their way. The enthusiasm and quasi-coordination of jerseys leads me to believe that the game was part of an adult softball league.

South of the baseball field is a set of tennis courts. Like the baseball field, they are well lit by flood lights. The tennis courts are composed of a material that looks like the green and blue surface of the basketball courts. Like the basketball courts, the tennis courts are in good condition and are surrounded by a chain-link fence. A set of bleachers stand opposite the courts and are constructed under a metal canopy. All the courts were occupied by tennis players. The age range was more expansive here than anywhere else I observed, from early twenties to sixties or seventies. Most groups were playing against each other, but one woman was receiving lessons from a coach. The gender composition was evenly split in appearance between men and women. Most players were asian, some were white or hispanic. These players were wearing brightly colored athletic clothing. In the northwest corner of the park a group of people who appeared to be hispanic and mixed gender, between the ages of twenty and fifty, were engaged in a training session. They had some equipment which appeared to be intended for boxing. Even in the corner of the park, the floodlights provided enough light to see easily.

San Pablo Park provides ample opportunity for residents of the surrounding neighborhood to engage in leisure activities and recreation. In this way, the neighborhood is not just the streets, sidewalks, houses and cars, but also the activities made possible by this

park. That so many people of working age would be using the park on a Monday evening is revealing. It indicates that at least some of the residents are able to avoid work or home duties on a weekday. The leagues, lessons, and training taking place show that the residents of this neighborhood have self-organized to create recreation for themselves. The quality and stellar condition of the facilities offer further evidence that this neighborhood's residents were able to receive ample resources for the construction and maintenance of this park. Whether through taxes, lobbying local government, voting, or a combination of these means, this neighborhood has been tailored to meet the desires of these specific residents. However, this is not the full story.

San Pablo Park, 2021. Photograph by author.

At the corner of Sacrament Street and Oregon Street, I met and talked to a man named Andrew (Figure 2). As the sun was setting on Bob's Liquor, and traffic steadily passed by, thirty-seven-year-old Berkeley resident Andrew told me about his story and the neighborhood. He wore a cap in the guise of a MAGA hat which read "Make Black Masculinity Great Again." In between asking me to take his picture (he saw the camera in my hands) and posing in front of a street sign, Andrew told me that his family was from New York and that they moved here when he was seven. He said that the economic crises of 2001 and 2008-09 hurt his family. While they were "struggling," he said that they had never encountered homelessness. He complained that potholes in the roads were not being fixed. And when asked about what he observed in the neighborhood during his life there, he said, "It's changed a lot." He noted that Bob's Liquor (not owned by Bob, he informed me) used to be a destination for prostitutes to solicit at. He talked about cars and anime

in one breath and police squads shooting civilians in another. He concluded by telling me that his generation had been somewhat priced out of the neighborhood.

Andrew, 2021. Photograph by author.

Shedding Light on Berkeley's Spanish Colonial Homes

Elizabeth Grubb

On my walks in Berkeley, comparing the many shingle-style bungalows and Spanish Colonial homes, I assumed that these two styles of homes had been built at different times—the Spanish Colonial homes following the shingle-style. My primary research indicated, rather, that the two styles were built concurrently. The purpose of my inquiry is to examine why the Spanish Colonial style came to be in Berkeley and its relationship to the Arts and Crafts movement, more typically associated with shingle-style. I will explain how Berkeley's academic environment, Mediterranean climate, and design ideals created conditions ripe for this style of architecture to thrive.

In California, the Spanish Colonial Revival style (also known as Mediterranean Revival, California Colonial, and Mission Revival) initially took inspiration from California's old Hispanic buildings.[1] Gaining traction at the start of the twentieth century, with enthusiasm from both local and national architecture publications like *The Sunset* and *The Craftsman,* respectively, the style reached its height between 1910 and 1930. Now it incorporates elements from Spain, Mexico, Italy, and North Africa. The distinctly Californian Mediterranean variant of the Spanish Colonial Revival was known for red tile roofs, stucco siding, colorful tile work, and lush patios and gardens, and it came to symbolize the Californian lifestyle.[2]

Edwin Lewis Snyder has been credited as one of the "pioneers in the use of the Spanish style."[3] Snyder graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1909 with a degree in architecture. He returned in the 1920s as a faculty member and opened up his own practice. The Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association estimates that he built at least 185 structures in the Berkeley area, many of which are Spanish Colonial Revival style. Snyder had a six-week sketching trip in Majorca and said that the "rugged shoreline of huge rocks topped by stone gave an effect quite like our Carmel coast."[4] Snyder built shingle-style homes and plenty of Bay Area First Tradition homes, but this sketching trip seemed to be formative, as he spent much of the 1920s and 1930s building Spanish Colonial structures.

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[1] Kenneth R. Trapp and Leslie Greene Bowman. *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California : Living the Good Life* 1st ed. Oakland, Calif: Oakland Museum, 1993.
[2] David Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 26, no. 2 (1967): 131–47, https://doi.org/10.2307/988417
[3] *Berkeley, the First Seventy-Five Years*. Berkeley, Calif: Gillick Press, 1941.
[4] Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. "The BAHA Newsletter: Winter-Spring 2011." http://berkeleyheritage.com/newsletter/137.winter-spring2011.pdf.

Snyder's Berkeley work includes residential homes, commercial buildings, and even Berkeley's YMCA (Figure 1).[5] His residential work includes both modest bungalows and spectacular Hillside mansions. 1149 Euclid Avenue is a prime example of a fine home in the style (Figure 2). The romantic hillside home is constructed with rough, white stucco, glimpsed through dense foliage. Instead of the iconic tile, this roof is made of reddish-brown shingles that match the redwoods surrounding the home. The home looks like an elegant combination of Mediterranean Revival and Arts and Crafts.

Snyder may have been influenced by John Galen Howard, Chair of the Department of Architecture and then Director of the School of Architecture at Berkeley while Snyder was studying and teaching there.[6] In the 1880s, on what might be the earliest documented instance of architects studying California's early Hispanic buildings, Howard went on a sketching trip with a couple of colleagues to look at adobe homes and Franciscan missions in Southern California.[7] He was apparently fascinated by the simple forms, rough textures, and warm colors he witnessed, and like Snyder, he noted many similarities in climate between Berkeley and Italy and Greece. Howard went on to create some of U.C. Berkeley's most iconic buildings, several of which boast bright red, tiled roofs on top of a Greco-Roman style, including Doe Library.[8] The home he constructed for himself drew inspiration from shingle-style homes and Mediterranean vernacular. Notable features include a tiled roof, stucco exterior, and well-thought-out integration between the outdoors and indoors.

Influenced by climate, the Mediterranean style seeks to unify the indoors and outdoors harmoniously by considering all aspects of the landscape—shape, light, and colors.[9] These design considerations remind me of the principles of Hillside Club, founded in 1900 by Berkeley women dedicated to promoting the Berkeley hills in a manner sensitive to the environment.[10] Bay Area architects included the garden as a natural extension of the home. Charles Keeler, an early President of the Hillside Club, even said that "hillside architecture is landscape gardening around a few rooms for use in a case of rain."[11] Similarly, the Mediterranean vernacular popularized gardens and patios. Keeler himself owned a studio designed in the Spanish colonial style that was open-beamed, stucco-clad, and decorated with Arts and Crafts-style decor leaning heavily on California's Hispanic past.[12]

[5] Carolyn Jones, "Edwin Lewis Snyder-- Architect" (The Grubb Co Realtor), accessed November 15, 2021, http://www.carolynjonesreal-estate.com/images/avalon/Edwin-Lewis-Snyder.pdf.

[6] Lowell, Waverly, Elizabeth Byrne, and Betsy Frederick-Rothwell. *Design on the Edge: a Century of Teaching Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, 1903-2003* Berkeley, Calif: College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, 2009.

[7] Winter, Robert. *Toward a Simpler Way of Life: the Arts & Crafts Architects of California*, 1997.

[8] "John Galen Howard's 'City of Learning' - UC Berkeley," accessed December 6, 2021, https://www.berkeley.edu/news/multimedia/2003/03/jgh/index.shtml.

[9] "A Detailed Overview on the Evolution of Mediterranean Architecture," *Historyplex* (blog), June 13, 2009, https://historyplex.com/mediterranean-architecture.

[10] "Hillside Club," Hillside Club, accessed November 30, 2021, https://bhcweb.wixsite.com/hillsideclub/aboutandhistory.

[11] *Hillside Club Yearbook 1906-7*, via Marc Treib, "William Wilson Wurster: The Feeling of Function," in *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*, ed. Marc Treib (San Francisco and Berkeley: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and University of California Press: 1995), 17.

[12] Trapp and Bowman.

Between the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement—beauty, simplicity, and utility—and the romantic ideas of California's coast and golden hillsides, the Spanish Colonial Revival fits right into the local ideology.[13] Spanish Colonial architecture was embraced by the Arts and Crafts movement but, I would argue, was not necessarily a byproduct of it. I have concluded that it is not a coincidence that the Spanish Colonial Revival style emerged in Berkeley. My research points to the UC Berkeley campus, the Mediterranean climate, and the Hillside Club building principles as an answer to my puzzle. With John Galen Howard on campus and a general atmosphere supportive of Mediterranean romanticism, it makes sense that Snyder went on to create so many structures in the Spanish mode. Moreover, having a climate like that of the Mediterranean seems to have been an important factor in the architectural style's development in Berkeley. With a focus on nature, simplicity, and handmade craftsmanship, it figures that the style would be absorbed into the Arts and Crafts vernacular, already popular in Berkeley.

Figure 1: Former YMCA building built by Snyder. (Photograph by LoopNet, 2134 Shattuck Avenue, n.d., https://www.loopnet.com/property/2134-Allston-Way-Berkeley-CA-94704/06001-057%2020300 0300/)

Edwin Lewis Snyder, 1149 Euclid Avenue. Photograph by author, 2021.

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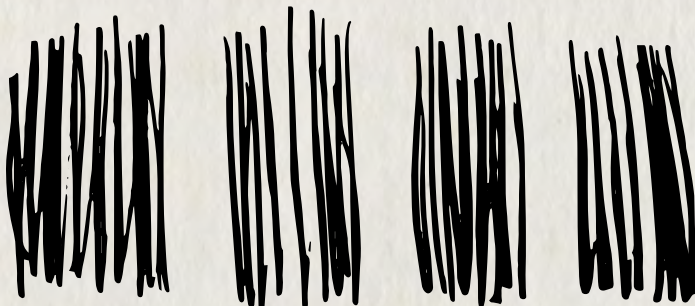
[13] Trapp and Bowman.

A Dive into the Census: Shattuck Avenue in North Berkeley

Kat Davenport

Census documents from the first half of the twentieth century reveal a North Berkeley neighborhood with now-different sensibilities about who can own homes, when to move houses, renting versus owning, lodgers, occupations that can support a family, the importance of education, and multigenerational dwellings.
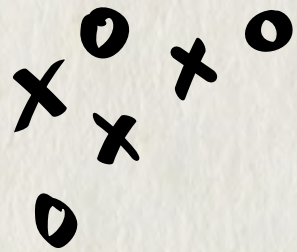
Heads of households on Shattuck Avenue between 1910 and 1940 have an assortment of white- and blue-collar jobs, and they are often the primary source of household income. Recorded occupations include water plumber, civil and electrical engineer, contractor, salesman, teamster, truck driver, machinist, and draughtsman. Despite the variation in expected salaries, seven of the fifteen households surveyed over three census years on this street were paying off a mortgage and supporting children, spouses, or elderly family members on a single wage-earner's salary. Often, these jobs did not require extensive education, either. No respondent over the age of eighteen said "yes" to having attended school for the houses surveyed in 1910 and 1920. Excluding some jobs, engineering in particular, most heads of household providing for a family would not have needed to graduate high school to work. The affordability of a house for someone without extensive education or a white-collar job—particularly someone who is supporting multiple other family members—is very distinct from how home ownership operates today. In the first half of the twentieth century, this was a middle-class neighborhood with reasonably affordable if not extravagant homes.

The eight households surveyed who did not have a sole breadwinner providing for expenses generated an income in various other ways. The widow Edith Tibbits of 1035 Shattuck Avenue, fifty-four, had lived at that address since at least 1910, first with her husband and a lodger in 1910, then her husband and son in 1920, and by herself in 1940. She was able to live alone without working because her mortgage had been previously paid off, and she was spending savings from her late husband's business or receiving support from her son. Lodgers were also a not uncommon means of augmenting household incomes, especially before—or after—married couples had children. Some houses would be made up of one primary homeowner and up to five lodgers, or a small family and one or two lodgers—a mix of owning and renting property that is not commonly found today. Lodgers were generally working men, single or away from their wives because of work. For instance, the soldier Henry Wright was at 1011 Shattuck in 1910, though some houses with more lodgers had married couples (but rarely children). Women working before marriage could also augment a household's income or create savings for later in

life. At 1009 Shattuck Avenue, the two daughters of widow Mabel Whitcomb, Cynthia and Emma, were respectively a public school teacher and a secretary for the municipal government in 1940. After having children, however, no women found work outside of the home, and biases in the way census data was collected prevented any record of how many hours a week and weeks a year they worked, despite their likely doing a large amount of labor to maintain their homes.

1035 Shattuck Avenue. The Gunderman Group (https://thegundermangroup.com/property/1035-shattuck-avenue-berkeley/)

As the neighborhood was established very quickly by developers and settled at high speed, most occupants of houses in 1910 were married couples in their twenties or thirties with young lodgers or widows and their teenaged and twentysomething children. In 1920 and 1940, there is the impression of an aging neighborhood as families stayed in the homes they had settled into, even as their children grew up and moved out. This in unlike the present day, where a person will often move homes to start a family after one's children have moved out. Edith Tibbits and Mabel Whitcomb both continuously occupied their homes for all 30 years surveyed, and by 1940 two septuagenarians were heads of household, with only one new family with young children moving into a surveyed house. Part of the reason why it was easier to stay in a single house longer without needing to upsize or downsize were the expectations that lodgers could live with married couples not imminently expecting children, and that after finishing their education and finding work, children would continue to live with their parents until they were married (and

sometimes after marriage). In 1920, the daughter and son-in-law of Charles Andrews lived with him, his wife, and his son, both working for the U.S. Navy, potentially saving money to buy their own home and start a family. The presence of parents-in-law, grown siblings, parents, and other older family members in an otherwise nuclear household was also more common.

The fact of residents' long tenures falls in line with the neighborhood's primarily being made up of homeowners, rather than renters, with only one renting household among the fifteen surveyed. Most mortgages took at least ten years to pay off, and almost all households moving into the neighborhood started with a mortgage rather than outright ownership.

The neighborhood was exclusively white into 1940, a fact that cannot be explained as coincidence. Between a lack of opportunities for non-western immigrants and Americans of color to access the education and jobs that would have allowed them to afford a house in the area, the common use of discriminatory housing policies such as restrictive covenants, and unspoken social codes that confined people of color to particular areas of cities, the valuable investment that is housing in Neighborhood H remained exclusive to white, English-speaking, middle-class Americans whose parents had been born in America or a Commonwealth country.

Tony Tuohy and His Teardrop

Annabelle Long

The block surrounded by Shattuck Avenue and Eunice and Walnut Streets is shaped like a squared-off teardrop, a little arrow pointing north. Its rectangular bottom edge has been carved out since before the block was a block. The Morgan Dingee map, printed in 1892, shows the block-to-be as a little scalene triangle in Anthony Tuohy's property, the northern two-thirds of it unformed in land owned by the Pacific Improvement Co. Two years earlier, Tuohy had been sued to quiet down his property, and he'd also gone to court to take back his land, which he argued had been unlawfully seized by the Peralta brothers who owned land nearby.[1] He demanded his land back and $250 in restitution, and if the 1892 map is any indication, he was successful. Five years later, in 1897, he appeared in court twice more, once charged with public drunkenness and once charged with dodging the bill for an expensive breakfast in San Francisco.[2] He sold the land less than a month after his second court date that year, maybe a consequence of piled-up legal fees and residual debt from a failed gold-mining excursion to Alaska the summer before.[3] While the owner of the block seemed to regularly face trouble, the land has seen relatively little trouble since he sold it.

By 1909, the triangle had been divided up into several blocks. The McClure & Green map labels the southern half of it "The Highlands" and several blocks to the east are the only traces of the troubled Tony Tuohy: a block labeled "Tuohy's Addition" and another set of blocks labeled "Tuohy's Second Addition." Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1911 show it divided up into twenty-seven lots. Three developers were primarily responsible for the houses on the block: J.F. Greenhood, August Peterson, and John Hudson Thomas. All three were prolific developers in early 20th-century Berkeley. Greenhood most often used a Mr. Wilson as his designer and a Mr. Kitley as his builder, but you wouldn't be able to tell from looking at 1129 and 1127 Shattuck, both of which were developed by Wilson and Kitley in Greenhood's name. 1127 is a small beige house with white trim, and 1129 is a larger, brown-shingled house with graceful navy eaves. The two houses were both built in 1911, and they stand side-by-side, looking more like friends than the siblings that they are. 1129 Shattuck more closely resembles August Peterson's 1912 development next door at 1135 Shattuck. 1135 is a blocky, brown-shingled house more remarkable for its flora than its design. In the springtime, the house and its sun-faded trellises are obscured by the winding vines and delicate flowers of a wisteria plant, and for the rest of the year, when the little purple flowers are metamorphizing in their pods, the house looks rather barren, the gnarled vine of the would-be flowers twisting around its porch and balcony.

[1] "Dashes Here and There," *The Mail,* April 5, 1890, page 1; "Wants His Property," *Oakland Tribune,* May 9, 1890, page 8.
[2] "Two Young Swells in the Police Court: Tony Tuohy and Ed Jerome in the Jail at Oakland," *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 24, 1897, page 7; "Young Mister Tuohy Was Shy of Dollars: Dodged a Breakfast Bill," *San Francisco Chronicle,* February 12, 1897, page 7.
[3] "Release of Agreement," *Oakland Tribune,* May 21, 1898, page 11; "40 Years Ago," Visalia Times-Delta, March 10, 1937, page 10.

Currently, the block is zoned R-1H—single family housing, hillside. This has historically been the case, and as the pre-1917 single family homes on the block would indicate, single family dwellings were the norm on the block even before they were the law. Families apparently lived and grew together in their mismatched houses, watching the city of Berkeley come to life down the street. The block has grown and changed with time—the weeping flowers of the wisteria plants needed some time to grow, and zebra print needed to come into vogue before gracing an otherwise unremarkable mailbox—but in some ways, the story of the block has remained relatively constant. Since Shattuck Avenue and Eunice and Walnut Streets were platted, since the teardrop block gained its upper half, the block has been a home to natural designs, community-oriented residents, and a variety of beautiful greenery. Where North Berkeley was once a community—if one can even describe nature that way—of rolling hills, jagged rock formations, and oak trees, it has been and is now a community of well-meaning, well-off neighbors, united by their likely distaste for cookie-cutter community plans and their interest in living somewhere quiet, private, and serene. Removed by just a few blocks from the hustle of the southern parts of Shattuck, the block at Shattuck and Eunice has served as a headquarters for all those wishes, even in the historical shadow and literal developmental footprint of a rowdy, troublemaking, dining-and-dashing developer.

Berkeley and the Great Migration: Three Families As East Bay History

Miranda Loyer

I have found that Berkeley's history can perhaps best be told from the perspective of the black families that moved to the city during the Great Migration. These families offer a unique and fairly comprehensive look into key shaping forces in Berkeley's past such as the railroad, World War II, and American race relations in the first half of the 20th century. To explore this idea, I followed three black families I found in the US Census who moved to Berkeley, as well as the parallels between their personal journeys and the greater journey of Berkeley. One story is excerpted here.

First we must understand the Great Migration, the movement of 6 million black people out of the south and into the northern, midwestern, and western states.[1] The rise of racial violence and the presence of Jim Crow laws pushed black people in the south to leave, while the possibilities of better jobs and housing pulled them to come to the Bay area.[2] The first and second waves of the Great Migration generally revolved around the two world wars, primarily because of the availability of industrial jobs pertaining to the war industry.[3] Cities like San Francisco and Oakland were popular destinations for these migrants, and Berkeley, being nearby and also undergoing major development, received its own small amount of migrants.

Elonzo Spears was born in Texas to a Mexican mother and a black father in June, 1897.[4] By the age of 13, Elonzo, his mother, and his two siblings had already relocated to Oakland as part of the first wave of the Great Migration.[5] The family took in two boarders, one of whom would move in with Elonzo again later in life.[6] Elonzo had been around the railroad industry since he was a boy. His older brother, Henry, and the two boarders who lived with the family in 1910 were all either cooks or waiters for the railroad.[7] Elonzo himself is first listed working as a porter for the Southern Pacific railroad at age 17 in 1914, and he continued working as a cook aboard Southern Pacific's steamer division for decades.[8] The railroads in Berkeley weren't just an important part of Elonzo's life, they were one of the most important shaping factors in the history of the city. They were also

[1] "The Great Migration (1910-1970)." National Archives and Records Administration. National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed December 5, 2021. https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/migrations/great-migration.
[2] "The Great Migration (1910-1970)."
[3] "The Great Migration (1910-1970)."
[4] 1910 *United States Federal Census* [database online] via Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.
[5] 1910 *United States Federal Census*
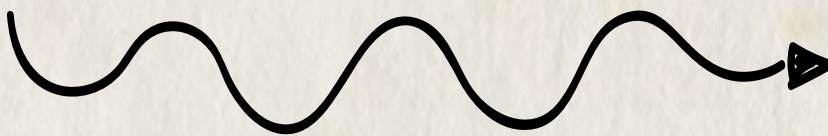[6] 1910 *United States Federal Census*
[7] 1910 *United States Federal Census*.
[8] *California, U.S., Railroad Employment Records, 1862-1950* [database on-line], via Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

instrumental in the development of the black middle class. Lawrence P. Crouchett states that the job of porter "carried prestige in the black community, in part because these men wore the symbols of white-collar jobs—a necktie, white shirt, shined shoes—and because they interacted directly with the wealthy and powerful individuals who traveled on the railroads."[9] African Americans flocked to Oakland and eventually Berkeley to work these jobs and settle down. Notably, Aimee Carrington was the only female porter I have found across my research.[10]

In 1924, Elonzo married Esther Leona Hawkins, a 21-year-old woman who had also made the journey from the American south to the East Bay, from Louisiana.[11] The couple moved into their Acton Street bungalow sometime between 1925 and 1928 and remained there throughout the late 1950s.[12] Esther, like Elonzo, took on a very common position for black women of this time: domestic worker.[13] When we think of feminism, particularly second-wave feminism, we think of women finally being able to work, but for many black women the privilege was in not having to work. Black women were on the front lines of domestic work in America as housekeepers and maids for white families.[14] In Berkeley, it is impossible to scroll very far across census records of black women without stumbling upon this position. On September 27, 1931, Esther gave birth to the couple's son, Elonzo James Spears, Jr., who sadly passed six days later.[15] The two do not appear to have had any more children. Life did go on, however, and the couple at different points welcomed both Henderson Davis, the boarder who had lived with Elonzo when he was a child, and Esther's mother.[16] The Spears were living and breathing the shaping factors that made Berkeley into the place it is today.

[9] Lawrence P. Crouchett, *Visions Toward Tomorrow: The History of the East Bay Afro-American Community, 1852-1977.* (African American Museum and Library, 1989), 10.
[10] *1940 United States Federal Census* [database online], via Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2011, 20.
[11] *1940 United States Federal Census.*
[12] *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database online], via Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2011.
[13] *1940 United States Federal Census*, 20..
[14] Phyllis Palmer, "Black Domestics During the Depression." National Archives and Records Administration. National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed December 11, 2021. https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1997/summer/domestics-in-the-depression.
[15] *California Birth Index, 1905-1995* [database on-line], via Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005.
[16] *1930 United States Federal Census; 1940 United States Federal Census.*

Combining Text and Image

Arman Ramezani

Seeing Berkeley's tendency to place community parks in residential areas, rather than retail areas, made me want to learn more about these surrounding homes—particularly on the role the parks served prior to the erection of these homes. For this reason, I focused on the development of homes on Walnut Street, both next to and slightly north of Live Oak Park.

Looking at the *Oakland and Vicinity* map by William Dingee Real Estate in 1892, we are only able to see multiple, block-wide tracts in the region around the park. Unfortunately, these maps don't actually tell you if homes existed on the tracts. To figure out when the homes were actually constructed, photos can be a more useful resource since they depict the landscape and what it was actually used for.

I had success in finding images close to Live Oak Park. The first image shows the "O'Toole House," which is now located close to Berryman and Shattuck. This lies on the right side of the park. The image shows the area in 1877, and there seems to be very little construction. Although the image does not have a very wide range of vision, it is clear that there were very few homes in the region. Moreover, it seems as though people had massive lots and relatively small homes. Additionally, the image shows that the mountains behind the home have no structures on them. To discover more about the area, I turned to the Sanborn fire insurance maps to see the density of homes on the street.

The first Sanborn map I found dates to May of 1894, 17 years after the image mentioned above, and it reaches the streets right below but not adjacent to Live Oak Park. Of the seven homes built on the tract built there by 1894, three were on Walnut street! Still, there were not many erect homes in the region, and tracts averaged 2-8 homes, leaving lots of untouched space. One thing I found interesting was that many of the homes were built on the horizontal streets, such as Rose and Vine. Streets like Shattuck and Walnut may have been bumpier or steeper than the vertical streets. I was able to find another image of the O'Toole house in the 1890s, where the home has been renovated and the landscape made lavish. The region surrounding the home within the parcel appears densely filled with various trees, but there is a drastic cutoff where the parcel borders end. This tells me that prior to the initial construction of the O'Toole house, the whole region was a forest, flush with trees. Some time after the home was built, there was a mass cutdown of the trees in the area, probably for lumber purposes to build more homes. Overall, I have gathered that despite the presence of several homes in the area by the 1890s, infrastructure and large-scale development had not yet occurred.

O'Toole House, now Live Oak Park (Berryman & Shattuck Streets), 1877. Berkeley Historical Society.

The next resource I used is the Sanborn fire insurance map from 1911. It shows a tremendous volume of new homes on Walnut. The home count on Walnut adjacent to Live Oak Park has increased to over 20 on these combined parcels, significantly more than the record from 1894 (fewer than 10 homes). Moreover, the map shows some kind of structure on the right side of Live Oak Park, which suggests that it may have been used for recreation by this time. Overall, it seems as though the erection of homes in the area increased exponentially in the decade before this map was made. Although I could not find any clear images of the Live Oak Park region from this time, the photo of the construction of Marin Circle from 1913 shows an increase in homes in some parts of the adjoining neighborhood. In the image, the homes seem to vary in size significantly, though they all have a relatively similar design. The image also shows some development up onto the mountain, which was not seen in the image from 1894.

The final time period I explored was the late 1920s, using the Sanborn map from 1929. It appears that the tracts are fully divided into parcels and there is very little empty

space left—the start of the final stage of residential planning. From here on, most of the changes are on the property level and infrastructure level. Overall, combining the photos and the Sanborn maps gave me a great idea of the process of the residential development on Walnut street. I used the Sanborn maps to understand the level of density and construction in the region, and I looked to the photos to give me an idea of how many homes were actually built in the area and what portion of the tracts were still undivided space. In other words, the maps showed me what was actually being constructed, while the images gave me a feeling of how it might have looked.

Marin Circle under construction, 1913. Berkeley Historical Society.

Flowers Plucked From Berkeley: The Story of a Japanese American Nursery

Annie Ren

West Berkeley on an overcast day is spectacularly ordinary, and passersby are unlikely to spare a lingering glance or a curious thought at the taupe housing complexes that blend into the landscape rather successfully. But something endures in that space, hinting at a tumultuous past as unique as the history of this neighborhood. It is an invisible legacy demanding to be visible again.

House number 1534, on the northeastern corner of the West Berkeley block delineated by Oregon, Russell, California, and Sacramento streets, was first rented by Buichi Mayama, a middle-aged Japanese nurseryman who immigrated to Berkeley in 1890. He, his wife Niobe, his daughter Schizue, and his fellow workmen together laid the groundworks for their nursery business with nine greenhouses spanning many lots of land adjacent to their house on the eastern side.[1] Records prove that the two story apartment complexes on the corners of Oregon and Russell Street today were once sunlit buildings made with wood, reinforced with steel, and topped with a glass roof.[2] These greenhouses were once occupied by diverse species of flora imported from Japan, thriving in Berkeley's Mediterranean climate.

By the time of the 1930 U.S. Census, the nursery belonged to the Fujii family. The brothers, Kakichi and Maruo, were its last Japanese proprietors before the fate of Japanese Americans was permanently altered. Kakichi and Maruo were both in their thirties, married with many children.[3]

The business was full steam ahead. In a "garden book" they published in 1932, the Fujii Nursery Co. lists a broad offering of a hundred varieties of field-growing plants, flowers, trees, seeds, fertilizers, and gardening tools.[4] The descriptions demonstrate a thorough understanding of horticulture and local climatology. The Fujii family members no doubt found a sense of belonging in the Berkeley neighborhood. On the same block, many Japanese homeowners also worked in the flower or garden business, including Nabora Morita (with whose family the Fujii family was particularly close), and they were active

[1] United States Census Bureau, US Federal Census of 1910, Enumeration District 63, accessed October 25, 2021
[2] "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Berkeley, Alameda County, California, 1911, Vol. 2," Sanborn Map Company, Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00419_003/>, accessed December 12, 2021, page 171.
[3] United States Census Bureau, US Federal Census of 1930, Enumeration District 280, accessed October 25, 2021
[4] "Fujii Nursery Co. Perennial Annual Rose Bush Garden Book" 1932, from Henry G. Gilbert Nursery Seed Trade Catalog Collection, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Library, accessed December 10, 2021.

Photograph of Maruo, Noriko, and Kakichi Fujii. Original Caption: Kakichi and Maruo Fujii family photographs from the Flower Market album, 1940; California Flower Market collection, MS 6000; California Historical Society.

goers to the Higashi Honganji Temple down the street at 1524 Oregon Street.[5] According to Karen Fujii, the granddaughter of Maruo Fujii, Kakichi and Maruo kept true to their Japanese heritage and never bothered to be fluent in English. However, they each adopted plain, single-syllable names, Fred and John, as they communicated with their non-Japanese-speaking neighbors. And evidently, their notable adjustment to American society was well received by the neighborhood. In 1936, when Kakichi Fujii donated a thousand flowering cherry trees to beautify the city of Berkeley, the mayor of Berkeley at the time, Edward N. Ament, stated that Fujii's name "will long be remembered for this generous, friendly gesture."[6] So why was Fujii's name not carved onto a plaque or plastered on a street sign in commemoration? Why, instead, was his name on the register of the Gila River internment camp just 6 years later?

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[5] Karen Fujii, phone conversation, December 12, 2021; United States Census Bureau, US Federal Census of 1940, Enumeration District 96, October 25, 2021
[6] "1000 Flowering Trees To Beautify City of Berkeley", Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

President Franklin Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066, on February 19, 1942, resulted in the forced evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people of Japanese heritage. Berkeley's Japanese population of 1,319—859 of whom were American-born—were given up to 10 days to pack their belongings and take what they could carry. Property and equipment were sold at staggeringly low prices. Those who found caretakers were troubled by bad contracts and low accountability. Since evacuation was right before Mother's Day, the day which "accounted for one-fifth of annual flower sales," many grown stocks were unable to see profits.[7] This particular industry is emblematic of how property and value was appropriated and destroyed by those who, whether purposefully or incidentally, capitalized on the flight of their neighbors during desperate times. Maruo, Kakichi, and their children spent their internment in the camps Gila Rivers and later Tule Lake.

According to 1948 Sanborn maps, the nursery was once again renamed from the original "B. Mayama Nursery" and "Fujii Nursery" into "Victory Nursery."[8] Victory gardens were a part of an active war effort to simultaneously increase agricultural production and patriotism. But seeing this change must have felt like betrayal for the Fujii family, as well as for the rest of the Japanese population in Berkeley who returned. Instead of both returning to Berkeley, the Fujii brothers split up. Kakichi, as the oldest son, took his family back to Japan to take care of the family estate. Maruo Fujii and his family relocated to Richmond, California, to continue their nursery business with the help of friends and fellow nurserymen.[9]

The Fujii nursery was never restored to the family, and their West Berkeley neighborhood has changed beyond recognition, both physically and demographically. Karen Fujii said that her grandparents didn't talk much about the camps, and this story has mostly been lost to their family. It is about time that it is recovered and commemorated. Regardless of what history chooses to record versus ignore, the Fujii family's entrepreneurial spirit, strong sense of community-building, generosity towards their neighbors, hard work and resiliency in the face of an insurmountable calamity are characteristic of the immigrants who built West Berkeley.

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[7] Kashima, Tetsuden. "Economic Loss." In Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 117–34. University of Washington Press, 1997. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvcwnm2s.10>.

[8] "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Berkeley, Alameda County, California, 1948, Vol. 2," Sanborn Map Company, Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00419_003/>, accessed December 12, 2021, page 171.

[9]   Karen Fujii conversation.

The Walk in North Berkeley: Recreation, Community, Historical Sites and Environment

Yaoxing Yi

On Saturday at three o' clock, the southernmost part of this journey began at Live Oak Park. Topographically, Live Oak Park consists mainly of three different areas designated by elevation: Area 1, Live Oak Community Center, mostly flat; Area 2, wooden bridge and the shallow stream under it, a miniature basin; and Area 3, the green open-space field, also flat. Each of these areas has distinct features that primarily define their purposes as well as certain groups of people they serve. The characteristics of Area 1 are motion and youth. In Area 1, the majority of people I observed were groups or pairs of adolescents and young adults, as this place has large, rusty courts for intense outdoor physical activities. There were several teenagers of multiple ethnicities playing basketball and sweating together in the sunshine on this idle weekend afternoon. Sports can sometimes go beyond the role of verbal languages in communication.

In contrast to the dynamic picture of Area 1, Area 2 is a quiet place of stillness. The flow of time seems to have slowed down or even frozen, as if it were stuck in the past. There is a lonely, antique wooden bridge across the stream, which is rocky on both the bottom basin and other sides as the result of alluvial deposition possibly caused by fluvial erosion in earlier history. Sadly, the only friends of the old bridge are a number of trees whose flirty roots have an intimacy with columns of the bridge. Let's proceed to the other side of the bridge, Area 3. Here, I saw squirrels, ravens, pet dogs and other birds in that lazy, warm afternoon. There is no barrier between these animals and human beings around. Such a peaceful, interspecies relationship indicates not only a mutual trust among different species, but more importantly the efforts that the city of Berkeley has taken for environment protection. It also implied that local Berkeleyans value interacting with nature. When it comes to the human beings in Area 3, the disparity of age groups signifies universal popularity. From trios of youngsters to pairs of senior couples, I saw most folks in casual, outdoor outfits, and they were sitting and mingling within a relaxing atmosphere. What makes such a park attractive to people and animals? Plants! Besides soft, comfortable layers of grass, trees play a crucial role in conditioning air quality, humidity and temperature to an optimal level, providing organic sunshade to avoid prolonged exposure to ultraviolet radiation, and giving a sense of serenity by blocking some urban noises. The giant, sturdy oak tree on the center of the greens is absolutely the focal point of this park. Pedestrians can easily feel the dense history of such a juggernaut through observation of its intersecting, aggressive arrays of fibers as well as its numerous branches sprouting with acorns.

Walking up the slope to Indian Rock Park, I noticed houses stuck closely together. Judging by their extraordinarily rich surrounding vegetation, either domestic or wild, these areas looked like parts of an island that was isolated from the urban area—suburban leftovers of urbanization in Berkeley. Moreover, it is evident that horticultural arts are popular. I saw various styles of garden designs, including retro, modern, and contemporary. Blossoms and fruit trees are pretty common there. Also, a special fragrance can be smelled in the air, a mixture of the pungent scents from certain trees' fallen leaves and the sweet aroma of fruits.

Indian Rock is like a model for topographic study as it contains multiple structural forms: craters, cracks, caves (alleys), valleys, troughs, bulges and more. Certainly, these forms are vestiges of geological activities in ancient times. The crude, arid surface conditions make the Indian Rock extremely suitable for casual rock-climbing, and young adults with children can be seen playing together over there. However, both ascent and descent are not easy for someone who is not agile enough to maneuver through those stones. This is a similar experience to climbing at the Mortar Rock Park, but the Mortar Rock is slightly steeper and higher, requiring extra careful movements for safety. Interestingly, below the Mortar Rock, there is a sign about some plants nearby that Native Americans used to sustain their hunting and gathering in the past. Some nuts of these plants can still be found on the ground in the present day. Generally speaking, Indian Rock Park and the Mortar Rock Park are both impressive, important historical sites like Live Oak Park. My walk consisted of four major elements of recreation, community, historical sites and environment, all interrelated with each other.

A Block on the Edge of a New Berkeley

Maxwell Zinkievich

Before the turn of the 20th century, there was very little developed land located in the area north of the western-lying Eunice Street. Prior to the early 1910's the portion of land that we will come to recognize as one of the most carefully curated neighborhoods in Berkeley was largely kept within vast tracts of open land. Only a small area north of Berryman street, land under the ownership of Anthony Touhy, showed development.[1] It is here that the first stretch of Eunice Street creeps out from the base of the Berkeley hills and begins to make its march westwards. While small developments occurred, nothing substantial would be constructed here until many years after this map was charted. In addition to this, those occupying structures in this land would have left the surrounding land in their parcel relatively untouched, with very little old tree growth occurring below Eunice Street. The streets of Walnut and Shattuck seem to end abruptly after this small grouping of developments, creating an east-west line that denotes the farthest reaches of Berkeley at the time.[2] This area will become a unique case study in the expansion of Berkeley in the early 20th century.

Following the acquisition of the land by Mason McDuffie and its eventual incorporation into the city of Berkeley in the early 1910's, this land starts to be diligently marketed and transformed into an upscale neighborhood. 1911 Sanborn fire insurance maps show an exciting case study in this artificial line: the block that is defined as north of Eunice Street and encircled by Shattuck and Walnut. This block is almost perfectly bisected by the line that separates the Mason McDuffie-operated Northbrae and the southern "Old Berkeley." North of the large school building the beginnings of land parcels are shown at a substantial angle to the older plots. This area marks the beginnings of a shift that can be clearly seen to even an greater extent deeper into Northbrae. In this early map, the lines denoting the lots of land that were under the Tuohy tract are quite large, and the lines themselves feel more free-form and suggestive than those drawn to take advantage of every square foot by the McDuffie company. Trees now line Walnut and Shattuck, which prior to the McDuffie acquisition had ended abruptly. This dividing line,[3] while it must have been blindingly obvious at the time, has gradually faded from prominence as this block has been absorbed further and further into the style of Northbrae.

By the time of the 1929 Sanborn maps, the block had been fully realized with residential structures. The unoccupied areas on the Tuohy side of the line have been cut up into lots that match those of the northern side of the block. Many of the structures on the

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[1] Ignoring, of course, the Peralta Park area which stood west of the block that will be explored.
[2] This line is shown in green on the included figure.
[3] Not to be mistaken for the fault line that runs directly through this block, as shown by the 1974 seismic survey of Berkeley.

southern side remain the same as they were in 1911 with small alterations and additions. This is also the time that the large structure which existed in the 1911 map was first labeled as a "Private School."[4]

1911 Berkeley Sanborn Map : Page 20

North of this line is McDuffie Developed, South is "Old Berkeley"

"Charter Line" → 1906 McClure Berkeley Map Corroborated by the 1910 McClure Map 1911 Mason McDuffie map shows this line expand into Northbrae
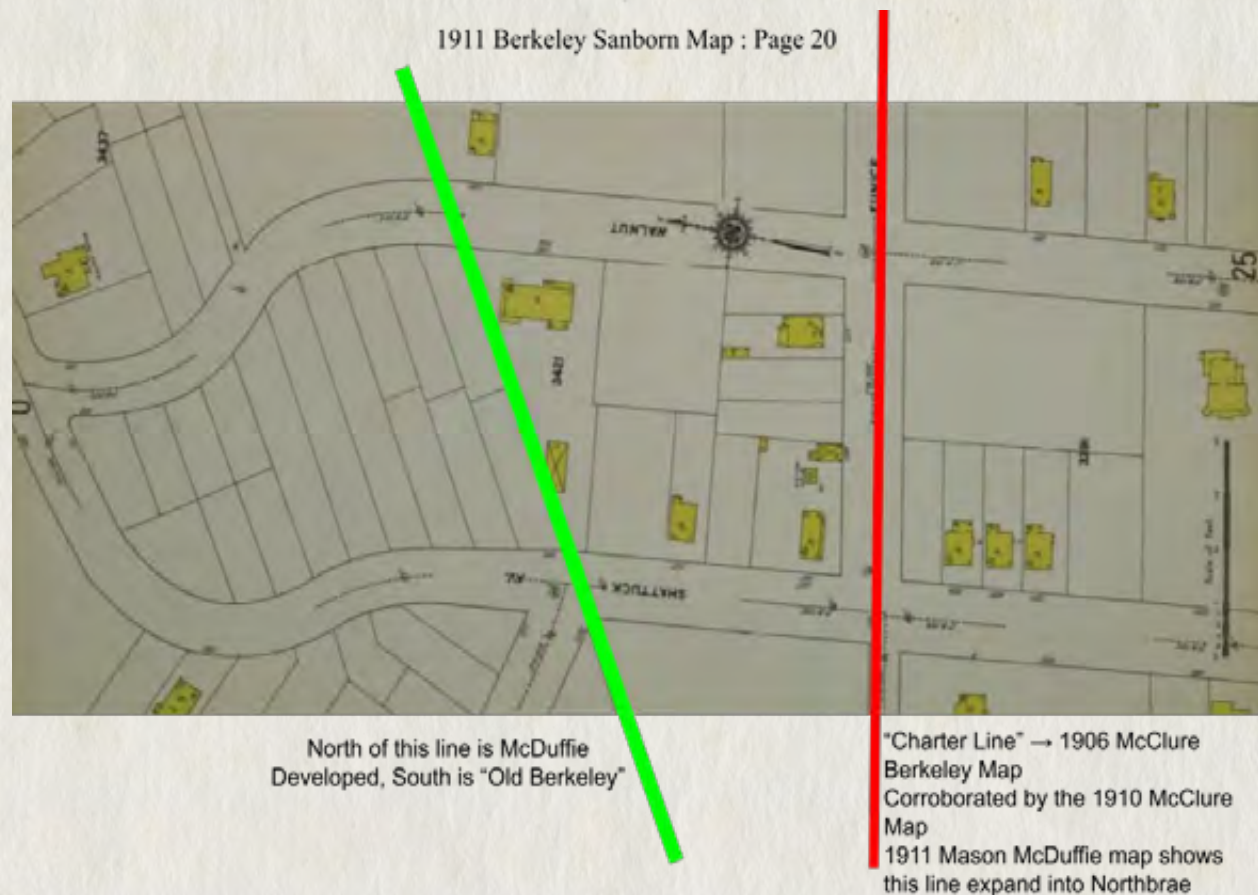
During this primary stage of the block's existence and expansion, many new people moved into the area. The majority of the people living on this block who recorded themselves as tradespeople also attested to the fact that they worked for themselves or in their own shop or practice. Take, for instance, Robert Annis, who lived at 1147 Shattuck from at least 1910 till at least 1920 and who listed himself as a "Master Plumber." Robert would not have been worrying himself with the day-to-day of fixing sinks and unclogging drains, but rather running a plumbing company that would have most likely been assisting in the building of new homes and developments further up the Berkeley hillside. Several families on the block employed house-workers who lived with them and assisted in the upkeep of the house and grounds.

With the release of the 1950 Sanborn maps, we get a view of a neighborhood that is no longer in a stage of growth, but rather stability. Many of the houses are the same size

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[4] This campus is still active to this day, being operated under the name "Children's Community Center" and claiming almost a century in legacy

as they were in 1929, with few exceptions. Census documents from the decade previous show a story similar to that of the 1920 census but for one major difference: some of the newer families were headed by white professionals, including office workers and salesmen.

This block not only shows the developmental changes that occurred in Northbrae during its development, but it also situates those changes alongside older developments that harken back to a Berkeley before McDuffie. This block is a testament to the power wielded by the McDuffie company and those with the means to afford to live here over the transformative years of this part of the city.
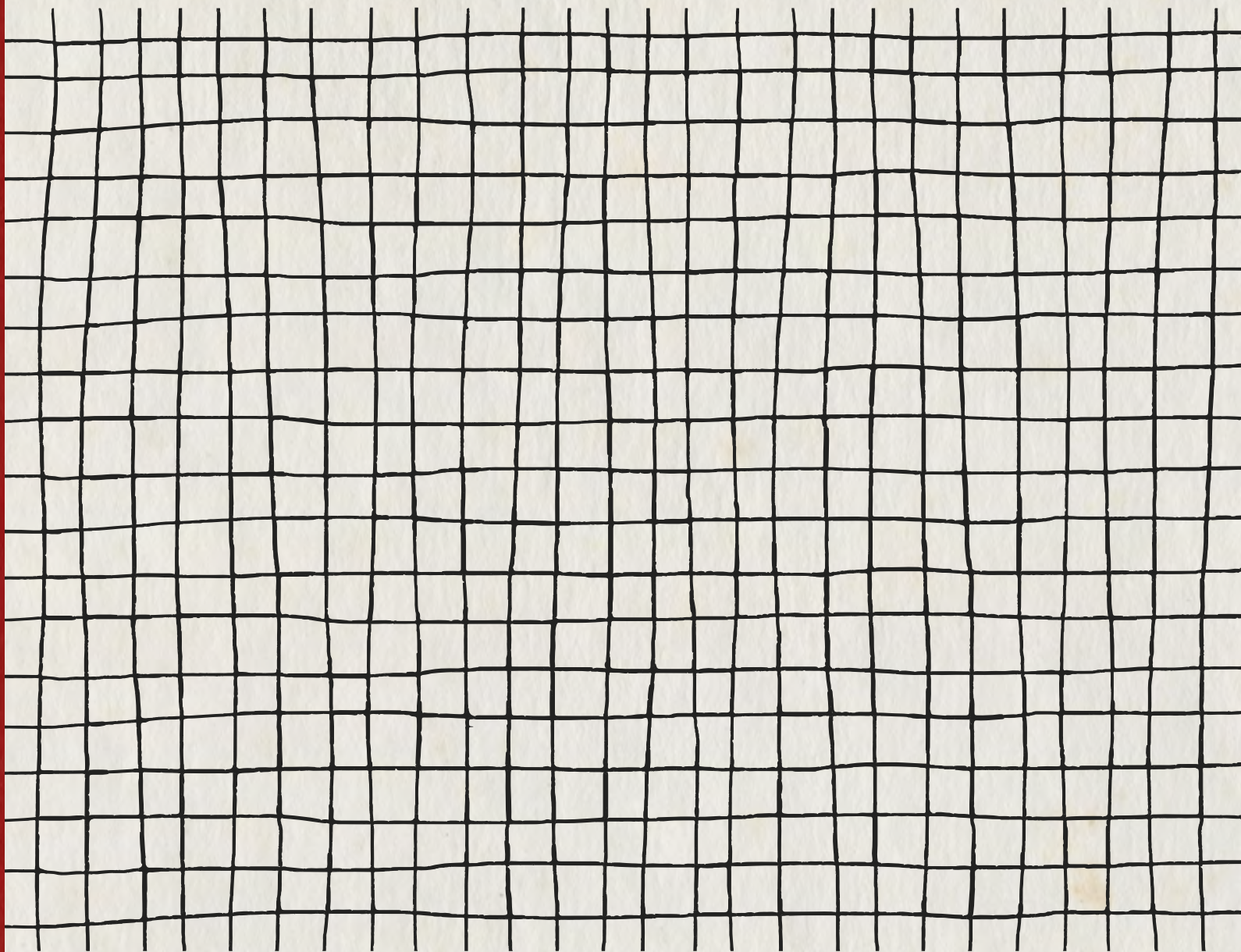
ENGIN 185

Beyond Data:

Scientific Writing
for Non-Scientific Audiences

Mark Brenner & *Shiyin Lim*

Beyond Data

Mark Bauer & Shiyin Lim

The past two years have shown that the need for clear science writing is greater than ever. This period has also underscored that the challenge of communicating scientific principles and findings lies not simply in the complexity of those ideas, but in audiences' willingness and ability to listen. How, then, can science writers offer compelling narratives about scientific and technological impacts amid the din of competing interests and outright misinformation? In this environment, science writing needs to be not just clear but persuasive, and that requires writers to mobilize strategies that go well beyond the usual imperative to report and contextualize data.

Beyond Data: Scientific Writing for Non-Scientific Audiences sought to develop a toolkit for writers hoping to convince decision-makers about the need to incorporate research findings into their planning, as well as to convince a broad audience of non-scientists about the importance of acting on those findings. From mask mandates to climate policy, we considered not only how to make our points effectively, but also how to account for other, often conflicting interests that audiences weigh when thinking about how to prioritize scientific findings.

The papers collected here leverage our many readings and discussions about the need to present compelling detail while, at the same time, mobilizing the concerns that motivate readers most. Whether by making the case for developing certain technologies further or reconsidering the role of specific psychiatric tools in criminal justice contexts, these papers illustrate the benefits of opening up seemingly narrow conversations to engage generalist audiences in topics that can impact them profoundly.
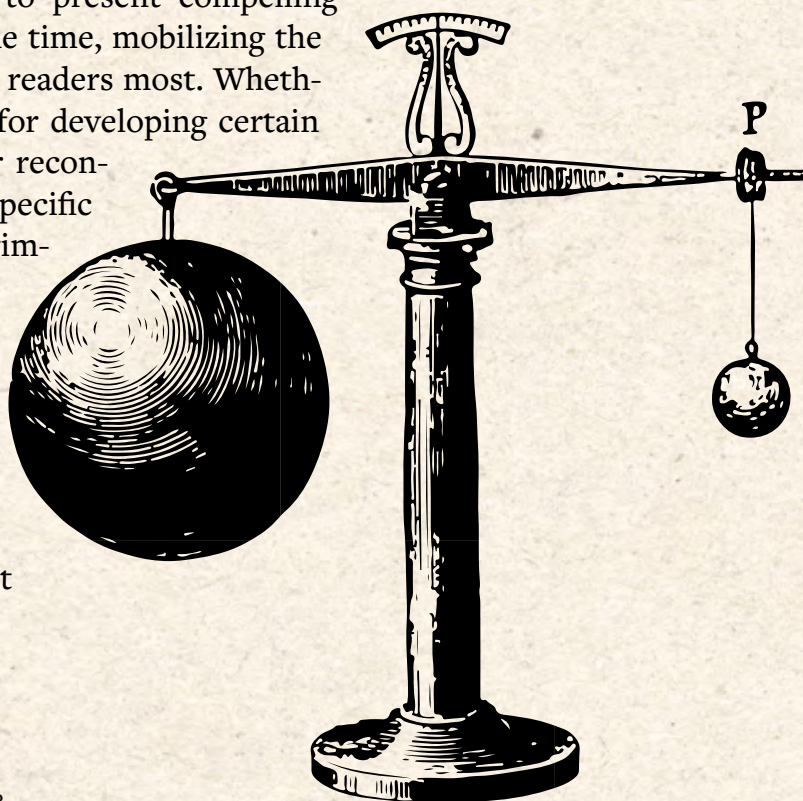
The Path of Least Resistance

Roderigo Blanco Arce

The ever-growing transportation industry is responsible for nearly a third of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, more than those of any other economic sector in the country (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2021, "Facts"). And with more vehicles entering the scene every day, emissions are expected to continue to grow at a fast pace. Since nearly all the transportation industry's emissions are caused by the combustion of fossil fuels that powers cars, trucks, and planes, reducing the fuel burnt by these vehicles is crucial for meeting the industry's increasing demands in a sustainable way (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2021, "Sources"). Although lower emissions can be achieved through the electrification of vehicles and the use of alternate fuels, which generate fewer emissions than traditionally powered vehicles, these alternatives are compromised by the low range that they offer. Therefore, improvements to vehicles' efficiency through aerodynamic optimization are key to enabling a sustainable future and must be prioritized and funded accordingly.

One way of reducing the emissions that vehicles generate is by directly addressing the source of such emissions: fossil fuels burnt by the engines to make power. Investors such as Bill Gates have focused on funding the development of electric vehicles that don't burn fuel and in turn have much lower emissions than traditional vehicles. They also advocate for the development of alternative fuels (such as biofuels) to power vehicles without generating as much emissions as fossil fuels do (Gates 2020). Without a doubt the adoption of these technologies is essential for the sustainable development of the transportation industry, but changing the power supply of all the vehicles in the world is not an easy task. One of the main drawbacks of these green technologies is the low efficiency that they offer. Vehicles powered by electricity experience range reductions when compared to their traditional fossil fuel counterparts (United States Department of Energy, 2021). As for other fuel alternatives, the technology is still too underdeveloped to be used as a viable alternative to fossil fuels (Gates, 2020). Green technologies, as promising as they might be, are not ready to replace fossil fuels yet since they can't fulfill our very high transportation demands. However, waiting for the development of these technologies might not be our only option. When you don't have enough power in an engine to move a vehicle, you could either try to increase its power or you could alter the vehicle so that less power is required to get it moving. Think about it this way: to move a piano, you would have to call a couple of very strong friends to help you; but if the piano had wheels, you could move it yourself! We shouldn't be focused only on developing and funding new engines and batteries to increase vehicles' range, but also on making the vehicles themselves easier to move.

Making vehicles that require less power to move isn't easy. After all, a lot of thought has already been put into making them as efficient as possible. So where could we improve? Aerodynamic efficiency, often overlooked by designers, might be the key to solving this problem. All moving objects on Earth generate drag as they bump into tiny air particles that push back on the object, just as air pushes back on your hand when you stick it out of a moving car's window. These tiny collisions add up to a huge force, and the vehicles' engines must work extra hard to overcome that force and move the vehicle forward, burning more fuel in the process and generating more greenhouse gas emissions. This force is in fact so large that it is responsible for 60% of cars' fuel consumption (McNamara, et al. 2018, 1). Think about that next time you fill up your car: more than half of the money you spend is being used solely to fight air! This is why Formula 1 teams (arguably the pinnacle of motor racing) spend most of their multi-million-dollar budgets on aerodynamic developments for their cars and have often stated that differences in aerodynamic behavior are what make for most of the differences in performance on the track (BBC Sport, 2019). Dominant cars are not winning because of their engines but because of their carefully designed aerodynamics.

As with wheels on a piano, aerodynamic optimization makes vehicles easier to move because their engines don't need to produce as much power. By not wasting energy fighting air, current generation vehicles would burn less fuel (generating less emissions), and vehicles powered by green technologies would experience increases in range without having to further develop their batteries or alternative fuels. Furthermore, there are huge gains to be made in this sector, as aerodynamic optimization has often been overlooked by designers of commercial vehicles. This has even led to mocking on social media, after wind tunnel simulations showed that cows are more aerodynamically efficient than a Jeep Wrangler (McCarter, 2021). That's right, the aerodynamics of one of the most iconic vehicles of all time pales in comparison to that of these goofy four-legged animals. But we can surely do better than that, as recent advances in the field show that higher aerodynamic efficiency can be gained through relatively simple modifications to vehicles' shapes, as well as through their positioning relative to other vehicles. This means that we can definitely make cars that have less drag than cattle. Most importantly, the efficiency improvements that can be gained by reducing drag are enormous and have profound effects on the transition to sustainability in the transportation industry.

One means researchers have found to significantly reduce drag and fuel consumption is through simple modifications to vehicles' shapes. In 2018 a group of researchers showed that a car could reduce its drag by up to 80% if an inflatable tail with a special shape was appended to the back of the car (McNamara et al. 2018, 10). Cars adopting this funny-looking tail would immediately have a lower fuel consumption and generate less emissions—all without any modifications to the engines or fuel. In 2020, another group of researchers, focused on planes, made several experiments with different wing shapes and found one that could generate extremely low drag, while still being able to make the

plane fly as usual (Coder and Somers 2020, 3-6). The drag reduction was so significant that these wings single-handedly lowered the plane's fuel consumption by nearly half (Coder and Somers 2020, 10). These findings highlight the enormous efficiency gains that can be obtained through aerodynamic optimization. They also showcase how big the environmental impact of more efficient vehicles can be on its own, as emissions caused by vehicles' engines could be reduced by more than half if this technology were adopted.

Another ingenious way of reducing a vehicle's drag—without modifying its shape—is by making formations of multiple vehicles in which the vehicle in the front shields those in the back from the air. Birds figured this out a while ago—we can often see them flying in V-shaped formations to shield each other from the air and conserve energy (Liu and Stumpf 2018, 853). Although this is not beneficial to the bird in front, it's very helpful for those behind it, as they can hide behind their partners and avoid wasting energy by bumping into air particles. While observing these coordinated flying squadrons, it's only natural to wonder what would happen if airplanes did a similar thing, working together to reduce drag and their fuel consumption. Researchers concluded that the drag planes generate could be reduced up to 60% by positioning various planes in a formation like that of birds (Liu and Stumpf 2018, 858). Naturally, the same principle can be applied to road vehicles, lining them up closely together on highways. Researchers found that when Semi-trucks are lined up in formation, the trailing semi-trucks could reduce their drag by nearly half (Robertson et al. 2019, 11). This drag-decreasing method results in vast improvements in efficiency, and as with planes flying in formations, does not impact their geometry or cargo capacity.

These findings show that investing into the development of more aerodynamically efficient vehicles is crucial for the transition to a sustainable future, as both current- and future-generation vehicles can benefit from it. The increase in range that electric vehicles could experience from aerodynamic optimization would make them viable for a lot of users, without the need to wait for new and more efficient batteries to be developed. This means that electric vehicles that didn't have the sufficient range to take you camping during the weekend might be able to do so without the further development of batteries. The same holds true for vehicles that cannot be electrified, such as airplanes and semi-trucks, as they could adopt the use of biofuels sooner despite their limitations in range. Moreover, aerodynamic efficiency can also benefit traditional fossil fuel-powered vehicles, as the engine would burn less fuel to move the vehicle. Having a car that burns less fuel is great for the environment, as fewer emissions are produced, and it's also great for your wallet.

Having green vehicles with larger ranges and traditional vehicles that produce less emissions is a win-win scenario. Not only would it make green vehicles more viable by addressing their limitations, but it would make the transition to sustainability a lot

smoother, allowing for a gradual replacement of fossil fuel-powered vehicles. If current vehicles can reduce their emissions, they can be in operation for a longer time. People who can't afford to buy a new car would still be able to contribute to the fight against climate change by making slight modifications to their current vehicles, such as installing an inflatable tail to the back of their cars. The same holds true for airlines and companies that use semi-trucks. They could modify their current vehicles, reducing the initial investment needed to start contributing to the change towards sustainability, and buying time to gradually update their fleets to green vehicles. Unlike the development of batteries and alternative fuels, both future and current vehicles can benefit from aerodynamic optimization and lower their emissions, which makes it a critical asset to the fight against climate change.

The transportation industry is rapidly growing, and because of its already enormous contributions to climate change, it must find a way of growing in a sustainable manner. Designers and manufacturers must address the amount of emissions generated by the combustion of fossil fuel that powers their vehicles. Although this can be done through the adoption of green technologies that generate much lower emissions than their traditionally powered counterparts, these alternatives are not yet sufficiently efficient to be generally adopted. If we neglect the optimization of current vehicles, these solutions are destined to be only viable in a long-term, as we would have to wait for the technology to be developed and replace most of today's vehicles with their greener alternatives. To accelerate the transition to sustainability, we must therefore invest in aerodynamic optimization. Through reducing the energy lost to fighting air, green vehicles would be more efficient and thus easier to adopt by consumers. Moreover, current vehicles could lower their fuel consumption and consequently their emissions. This means that those who are capable of updating their vehicles could do so without experiencing the negative effects associated with current green technologies, and those who cannot buy new vehicles could still contribute to the fight against climate change by lowering the fuel consumption and emissions of their vehicles. The development and incorporation of aerodynamic optimization in the transportation industry is crucial for ensuring a sustainable future, and therefore it must be prioritized accordingly by investors and developers.

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The Psychopath in Court: Robert Hare's PCL-R and its Place in Legal Proceedings

Sangyeon Lee

Forensic psychologist Robert Hare believes psychopathy to be the "single most important clinical construct in the criminal justice system" (Hare, 1998). In 1991, he published what would become the most common assessment tool for psychopathy, the Psychopathy Checklist - Revised (PCL-R). The simple, 20-item checklist invites trained mental health professionals to observe the behavior and personality of a potential psychopath and assign scores to each item. If the total score is greater than a threshold, the individual is classified as a psychopath. As if to echo Hare's belief in the importance of psychopathy in the criminal justice system, shortly after its creation, the PCL-R found its way into the fields of criminal justice and law. Despite being over thirty years old now, the PCL-R has seen an ever-growing popularity as evidence in legal cases, with an emphasis on using the test to predict recidivism. In 2001, nine reported US cases used the PCL-R in some way; in 2011, the number had grown exponentially to 87 cases (DeMatteo et al., 2014). In California, all inmates sentenced to life with parole must be evaluated using the PCL-R in parole hearings; in Texas, a psychopathy assessment such as the PCL-R is required for the civil commitment process in Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) cases. More and more legal processes are requesting a PCL-R evaluation to determine if a criminal is dangerous to society or not.

Yet in the past thirty years, few people in the courtroom have questioned the validity of the PCL-R as an assessment tool for psychopathy and the significance of the resulting assessment, a fact that has begun raising concerns among psychologists in recent years. It is "very alarming," says psychiatrist Willem Martens, "that Hare's opinions are widely accepted and applied in the forensic psychiatric world" (Martens, 2008). Indeed, a closer look at the PCL-R and statistical analyses of its effectiveness suggest that perhaps we jumped the gun on adopting the checklist into the legal system. Charmed by its simplicity and the convenience of the label "psychopath," the courtroom eagerly bases its judgements on an unreliable tool and a personality disorder only loosely linked to criminal tendencies.

First, let us take a closer look at the PCL-R. Each of the twenty items is a "symptom" of psychopathy, whether it be a personality trait, behavioral trait, or something in the subject's history. The items include traits such as "glibness/superficial charm," "irresponsibility," "lack of remorse or guilt," and "criminal versatility." The evaluator is to assign each item a score ranging from zero to two, where zero means "item does not apply" and two means "item applies definitely." Once scoring is complete, the item scores are summed, and if the total score is greater than 30 out of 40, we are looking at a psychopath.

Even at first glance, there is a clear problem with the PCL-R as a diagnostic tool: most of the traits described in the items are purely qualitative, and scoring is left up to the subjectivity of the evaluator. "When evaluators use a measure in research or in practice, we expect scores on the measure to reflect characteristics of the people being evaluated, not characteristics of the evaluators or evaluation context," say Boccaccini, Turner, and Murrie, who attempted to compare PCL-R scores for the same subjects from different evaluators (Boccaccini et al., 2008). Using PCL-R scores reported from the aforementioned Texas SVP cases, the researchers discovered that "PCL-R scores from two evaluators in SVP cases reveal more disagreement than we would expect on the basis of published research," with an intraclass correlation of 0.40 to 0.47, which is considered to represent poor to fair correlation (Boccaccini et al., 2008).

Furthermore, the researchers found that "about 30% of the variance in PCL-R total scores can be attributed to differences among evaluators, even on the same side of the case" (Boccaccini et al., 2008). If evaluators are on opposite sides of the case, an additional 20% of the variance in scores is attributed to *adversarial allegiance*, a common phenomenon in legal proceedings where the evaluators' affiliation (prosecution or defense) biases their decision-making. This means that, if two evaluators on opposite sides of a case evaluate the same subject using the PCL-R, their scores are likely to be poorly correlated, with 50% of the variance in their scores caused by factors completely unrelated to the subject's true standing on the PCL-R. This discovery is especially troubling considering that, among 76 reported state cases between 1991 and 2004 in which PCL-R evidence appeared, the prosecution introduced the PCL-R evidence in 49 cases and the defense in only 13 cases (DeMatteo et al., 2014). Any possible variance in PCL-R score would be invisible if only one side presented a score, and a highly biased evaluation for psychopathy may go uncontested.

More voices in the psychology community raise concerns about the weight given to PCL-R scores in legal proceedings, especially in parole cases where the primary focus is estimating the recidivism risk of a past offender. The PCL-R is not a risk assessment tool, yet in many cases it is used as one. DeMatteo et al. observed that "PCL-R scores were treated by examiners as almost isomorphic with recidivism risk," and that generally, "the examiners' global risk conclusions tended to correspond very highly with how psychopathic they viewed the defendant to be" (DeMatteo et al., 2014). Even without considering the inherent subjectivity and biases that go into a PCL-R score, or the fact that *psychopath* is certainly not synonymous with criminal, predicting recidivism purely based on the PCL-R score is shortsighted. The twenty items in the PCL-R are divided into two factors: Factor 1, which includes personality traits classically associated with the psychopath such as charm, narcissism, and apathy; and Factor 2, which includes lifestyle and antisocial behavior such as juvenile delinquency, poor self-control, and irresponsibility. Researchers suggest that there can be two different types of PCL-R-classified psychopaths: those who possess a majority of Factor 1 traits, who are emotionally stable

and able to follow societal rules, and those who possess a majority of Factor 2 traits, who tend to be reckless, antisocial, and more prone to criminal behavior. "Factors 1 and 2 are only moderately positively correlated," Gonzalez-Tapia, et al., explain in a literature review on the legal treatment of psychopaths. "Moreover, only Factor 2 [...] would predict future delinquent and antisocial behavior" (Gonzalez-Tapia et al., 2017). The total PCL-R score does not communicate this subtlety, and without further consulting the evaluator, the criminal justice system is unable to differentiate Factor 1-dominant individuals, who are arguably less prone to recidivism, from Factor 2-dominant individuals with a similar PCL-R score.

Forensic psychologist Glenn Walters conducted a statistical analysis of PCL-R scores in repeat offenders and found that the portion of the PCL-R that was helpful in predicting recidivism was even smaller than what Gonzalez-Tapia, et al., suggested. Only five items (classified as "Facet 4" or "antisocial" traits) on the twenty-item list seemed to predict recidivism reasonably well: poor behavioral control, early behavioral problems, juvenile delinquency, revocation of conditional release, and criminal versatility (Walters, 2012). Four out of these five traits concern the subject's history, leading Walters to the conclusion that "without Facet 4 (antisocial), the PCL-R may not be particularly effective in predicting general and violent recidivism," and even with Facet 4, "the PCL-R may not be able to predict above and beyond the contributions of easily obtained and readily available measures like age and criminal history" (Walters, 2012). The fact that three-quarters of the PCL-R is occupied by traits that fail to effectively predict criminal recidivism demonstrates that the total PCL-R score is far from a reliable reference for determining recidivism risk, especially when the vast majority of reported cases lack any information about Factor and Facet breakdowns of the total score (DeMatteo et al., 2014). In fact, Walters's analysis shows that although some psychopathic traits do correlate to crime and repeat offenses, psychopathy as a whole may not be a particularly relevant predictor of criminal behavior or recidivism compared to other factors such as criminal history.

The PCL-R is a tool that is widely used but poorly understood. It neatly packages everything that is socially, morally, and legally wrong about a criminal into a checklist. It spits out a number that few people in the courtroom dare to question, which only works to keep the PCL-R deeply rooted as a staple tool of the criminal justice system. According to DeMatteo, et al., the introduction of the PCL-R as evidence was only challenged in 13 out of 87 reported cases and was successfully excluded in only two cases (DeMatteo et al., 2014).

All this is a little baffling when the PCL-R is not an official diagnosis of any condition, nor a tool specifically designed to assess the risk of a criminal. It is a set of criteria, proposed by an independent psychologist, for a personality disorder that scientists still understand very little about. Research is still sparse and inconclusive on the relationship between psychopathy and criminal tendencies, so it is unclear if a psychopathy

assessment is even as valuable to legal proceedings as we believe. Even if psychopathy did effectively predict criminal offenses and recidivism, the PCL-R has several short-comings in its objectivity and reliability, shortcomings that may have dire consequences in the criminal justice system where the punishment or release of individuals hangs in the balance.

With all these shortcomings in mind, what role should the PCL-R play in court, if any? In 2016, Robert Hare himself, nearly thirty years after first publishing the PCL-R, wrote an article discussing its use, misuse, and potential issues in the legal system. In it, he reminds the reader that the PCL-R was primarily developed as a tool for measuring the clinical construct of psychopathy, not for measuring criminal risk. However, Hare argues that the PCL-R can still make valuable contributions to discussions around crim-inal cases. For example, although Factor 1 items are not nearly as effective in predicting recidivism as Factor 2 items, Hare points to literature that suggests Factor 1 traits have a high correlation with behavior such as inpatient violence, sexual violence, and time to dropout from therapy (Hare, 2016), which may be more relevant than recidivism risk in certain cases. Hare emphasizes that the utility of the PCL-R "depends on what is being predicted and the appropriateness and sophistication of the methods used to analyse the data" (Hare, 2016), highlighting the need for the criminal justice system to move away from the tradition of using uncontested and unexplained PCL-R scores and toward a more informed and intentional use of relevant parts of the PCL-R.

Like all measurement tools in behavioral psychology, the PCL-R has strengths and lim-itations, and it is inevitably tied to the subjectivity of the evaluator. In order for the PCL-R to become a more meaningful tool in the lawyer's toolkit, and to ensure the tool is being used justly and ethically, it is crucial that those in the criminal justice system understand the fine mechanisms behind the simple numerical score that the PCL-R gen-erates. Use of the PCL-R as evidence in the courtroom should be accompanied by, at the very least, a Factor and Facet breakdown of the score and a detailed testimony by a trained forensic psychologist, and the court should put PCL-R evidence under the same rigorous scrutiny as all other evidence vulnerable to subjectivity. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the latest research on criminal psychopathy and its assessment must continue to verify and challenge the methods being used in the criminal justice system. Only when we have a thorough understanding of the complex relationship between abnormal psychology and crime will the court be able to preserve both the rights of the defendant and the safety of the public.

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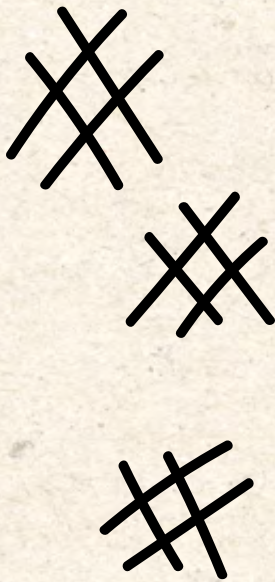
Private Space Exploration: More Than Just a Billionaire's Playground

Troy Tsubota

On July 11, 2021, billionaire Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group, flew on a spaceplane built by his spaceflight company, Virgin Galactic. Nine days later, billionaire Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, flew on a rocket built by his spaceflight company, Blue Origin. Three months later, billionaire Jared Isaacman, founder of Shift4 Payments, flew on a rocket built by billionaire Elon Musk's spaceflight company, SpaceX.

These billionaire spaceflights took the Internet by storm. Some remarked on how great these missions were for the expansion of space travel to the civilian population. Netflix even released a series titled "Countdown: Inspiration4 Mission to Space," underscoring the SpaceX mission's significance. Others did not feel the same way. They criticized the billionaires for wasting their money on elitist joyrides. Nothing feels more ridiculous and out-of-touch than Bezos, upon completing his launch to space in a cowboy hat, thanking "every Amazon employee and every Amazon customer" because they "paid for all of this" (Chang 2021). Was that what the money was for?

Most would agree that billionaires are not contributing back to society as much as they should be, especially with all the problems in the world today, such as climate change, hunger, and poverty. Many would even agree that billionaires should not exist in the first place—our economic system should not make them possible. However, these discussions deviate from the more focused issue: is space travel a worthwhile use of billionaires' money? It is evident that spaceflight companies—such as those run by Musk, Bezos, and Branson—do contribute positively to American society and are worth the investment. Putting aside the outlandish publicity stunts, private spaceflight improves quality of life on Earth, increases civilian access to space, and inspires the next generation to push the boundaries of modern technology.

Historically, the debate over space exploration was not about billionaires. It was concerned with a more fundamental question: why explore space? In 1966, NASA took up 4.4% of the federal budget for the Apollo program that put Neil Armstrong on the Moon (NASA 2016, 1). Spaceflight spending, like war spending, became hard to justify for those who struggled to get by each day. Today, we face many of the same problems—poverty, hunger, disease—yet spaceflight continues. We face new problems as well, such as climate change. Spaceflight seems like the antithesis to climate change mitigation; a rocket spewing out thousands of tons of carbon fuel in minutes does not look very climate friendly.

However, this choice between solving world problems and going to space is not a choice that needs to be made. Both can happen together. The government and billionaires have the money to fund both spaceflight and social programs. Furthermore, spaceflight contributes to practical applications here on Earth. For example, the smartphone camera came from NASA when they wanted to build a small and lightweight camera designed for the extreme space environment (Sivolella, 13). Today, the International Space Station continues to produce remarkable science, including research on water filtration, chronic disease, and natural disasters (Johnson). Pursuing space exploration will improve quality of life on Earth.

This can feel like a weak justification. Why would indirect technological progress from human spaceflight be better for society than simply studying these technologies directly? First, spaceflight is a powerful motivator and presents new challenges that may not have been thought of on Earth. For example, the modern silicon computer chip grew out of the need for faster and lighter computers in the Apollo program. Astronauts could not have landed on the Moon otherwise (Ceruzzi). Second, spaceflight offers solutions that are impossible from the ground, including GPS, global Internet, and weather data, just to name a few applications (Sivolella, 11).

The benefits extend beyond technology. For international relations, projects such as the International Space Station and the upcoming Artemis lunar landing program strengthen diplomatic relationships (Global Future Council on Space, 9). For the environment, asteroid mining and in-orbit manufacturing could greatly reduce the pressure on Earth's natural resources (Sivolella, 194). For the economy, businesses that take advantage of the benefits of space travel can contribute to economic growth (Global Future Council on Space, 13).

One issue is worth discussing in more detail: climate change. Rockets contribute to carbon emissions; that is indisputable. However, according to a paper by researchers at the University of New South Wales in Australia, little is known about the extent of rockets' carbon impact (Dallas et al., 1). At the same time, space exploration provides room for climate progress: hundreds of satellites currently help measure global climate change, allowing us to target our response (Global Future Council on Space, 5). It is hard to say which outweighs the other, so more research is necessary before a conclusion can be reached.

Privatization of space and space tourism complicate the question of space exploration even further. In the past, NASA was the primary pioneer of space exploration. The few NASA-selected astronauts had exclusive access to space. Today, we live in the "NewSpace" era, in which private spaceflight companies pop up everywhere and billionaires take highly publicized space joyrides with other civilians. Many will recognize that spaceflight may be a societal good, but they believe billionaires should not be the ones in charge.

Lucianne Walkowicz, columnist for *Scientific American,* believes that spaceflight will remain an elitist activity (Walkowicz). Billionaires have nothing else to do with their money and seem to treat rockets as exclusive toys, not as a means to improve the human race (Walkowicz). However, this claim is not supported. These spaceflight companies were founded long before these billionaires held the wealth they have today. Virgin Galactic was founded in 2004. SpaceX was founded in 2002. And Blue Origin was founded in 2000, more than twenty years ago, when Amazon was not the household name it is today.

Furthermore, the three billionaire spaceflights reveal an opposite trend from what Walkowicz states: spaceflight has become more accessible for a more diverse group. On Virgin Galactic's mission, Sirisha Bandla became the second Indian American to go to space (Walkowicz). On SpaceX's mission, professor Sian Proctor became the first black woman to pilot a spaceflight (Walkowicz). Proctor joined Hayley Arceneaux, a female cancer survivor (Walkowicz). The Blue Origin mission had arguably the most notable passenger: Wally Funk, a former member of the Mercury 13 who became the oldest person to go to space (Walkowicz). The Mercury 13 was a group of aspiring female astronaut candidates in the 1960s who, due to NASA's gender restrictions, never got to leave the launchpad—until now (NASA 2008). Walkowicz may be right—these people may have only been brought on for diversity points—but there is no way to tell what the future holds. We should not immediately discount the progress being made.

Private spaceflight has also catalyzed the development of new spaceflight technologies much faster than the government has. In 2015, SpaceX demonstrated rocket reusability, once considered near impossible (Chang 2015). Since then, they have reused dozens of rockets with high success rates, bringing the cost of space travel down and reducing its environmental impact (Sheetz). Now, rocket reusability is considered industry standard, and companies like Blue Origin and Rocket Lab are attempting to reuse their rockets as well (Sheetz). Different engine technologies with improved efficiency have also been achieved by SpaceX and Rocket Lab (SpaceX, Rocket Lab). These advancements are important in providing context for what we see today: these billionaire missions did not come out of nowhere. Scientists and engineers in these private companies have worked for decades to create better technologies for more efficient and accessible space travel. The publicity stunts and media frenzy fail to capture this.

This is, in essence, the next Space Race: private companies competing, breeding faster technological progress. Compare this to NASA. One of NASA's current projects, the Space Launch System, is a rocket designed for interplanetary travel which began development in 2011. It has been criticized for its bloated budget, repeated delays, and lack of reusability, even by NASA's own Inspector General (NASA 2020). The Space Launch System has not left the ground, while private companies have engineered at remarkable speeds. NASA even recognizes this change in the industry. They now conduct contests for

private spaceflight companies to enter to win money, whether by sending astronauts to the International Space Station or by landing humans back on the Moon (Heiney, Potter).

This does not mean private companies are better than NASA. NASA has a place in the realm of scientific research and credibility that no private company can match. However, in addition to a lack of competition, NASA is limited in funding because Congress decides its budget, and the budget today is not the same as it was in 1966. Thus, no matter how many astronaut applications NASA receives, it can only accept a few. On the other hand, private companies have consistent goals through changing administrations and can raise money independently, allowing greater flexibility. Increased civilian access to space can only be made possible with private companies.

So the question remains: why go to space, and why should private companies be in charge? The support for private space travel is clear. With it, we can improve life on Earth and expand civilian spaceflight opportunities at a faster pace than before. To Professor Ryan Gunderson of Miami University, however, these reasons do not mean anything. In an academic article titled "In search of plan(et) B: Irrational rationality, capitalist realism, and space colonization," Gunderson argues that all reasons for space travel are inherently capitalistic (Gunderson et al., 1). Without capitalism, we would not need to worry about preserving humanity or expanding the economy (Gunderson et al., 2). Unfortunately, Gunderson fails to discuss the quality-of-life benefits space travel provides.

Additionally, there is one intangible reason for space travel that trumps anything else: the pursuit of the unknown. Much of human history revolves around humans exploring the globe and discovering new places. Space is the natural next step. For some, watching the development of space travel happen before their eyes gives them a purpose. This isn't just anecdotal; data from the National Science Foundation reveals that the number of aerospace engineering degrees granted each year doubled between 2002 and 2012, a greater percentage change than every other type of engineering (National Science Foundation). You don't need to know economic theory to see that space travel inspires. If nothing else, this inspiration alone is worth it.

I am not saying that Richard Branson, Jeff Bezos, and Elon Musk are vindicated just because their spaceflight companies can have positive societal impacts. Nor am I suggesting that US wealth inequality can be ignored as long as billionaires inspire kids to pursue engineering. Rather, I hope that these publicity stunts do not cause the public to disregard the benefits of private space exploration, from improving everyday technologies to turning civilian space travel into a reality. I also hope they do not detract from the scientists and engineers who have put in decades of hard work to achieve those monumental goals. And I hope they do not discourage budding scientists and engineers from pushing humanity to the stars.

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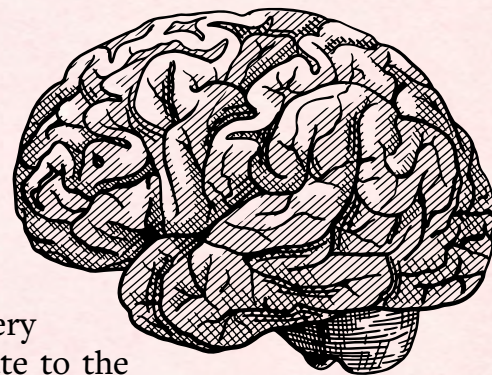
Expanding a Science of Consciousness

David E. Presti & *Patricia A Kubala*

Expanding a Science of Consciousness

David Presti & Patricia Kubala

All we know comes to us via our consciousness—our experience or awareness of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. However, it remains a deep mystery how physical processes of our brain and body relate to the subjective experience of the mind.

In this course, we—an anthropology PhD student and a professor of neurobiology and psychology—invite students to embark on an investigation of consciousness that explores territory beyond the metaphysical framework of physicalism (or materialism) that currently dominates contemporary science.

This framework holds that consciousness must be completely reducible or explicable in terms of local material processes in the brain and body. However, it is our opinion that for investigations of the mind-body relation to reach a place of truly expanded insight, revolutionary new developments in our scientific and epistemological approaches are required.

To that end, we explore spaces of inquiry that take seriously occurrences that sit at or beyond the limits of explicability within contemporary science. These include near-death and veridical out-of-body experiences, certain phenomena associated with states of consciousness occasioned by psychoactive plants and chemicals, and pervasive yet inexplicable placebo (expectation, belief) effects in medicine.

In addition, we reflect on how, in the modern West, we arrived at this narrow materialist understanding of consciousness. We turn to different religious and epistemological traditions, as well as decolonial formulations of consciousness put forth by writers and activists, to help us shift and expand our perspective beyond the limits of the materialist framework.

Importantly, we also explore the ways in which broadening a scientific approach to the human mind necessarily involves expanding dialogue with religious and spiritual traditions. This can be viewed as but one nexus between the sciences and the humanities that bears strongly upon this subject. We address how such an expanded approach to a science of mind—deepening an understanding of who we humans are in relation to the rest of what we call the physical universe—informs how we act in the world.

Finally, we also ask: How do particular ways of using language constrain or shape our understanding of consciousness? And what forms of speech and writing might help us think about consciousness beyond the narrow limits imposed by materialism?
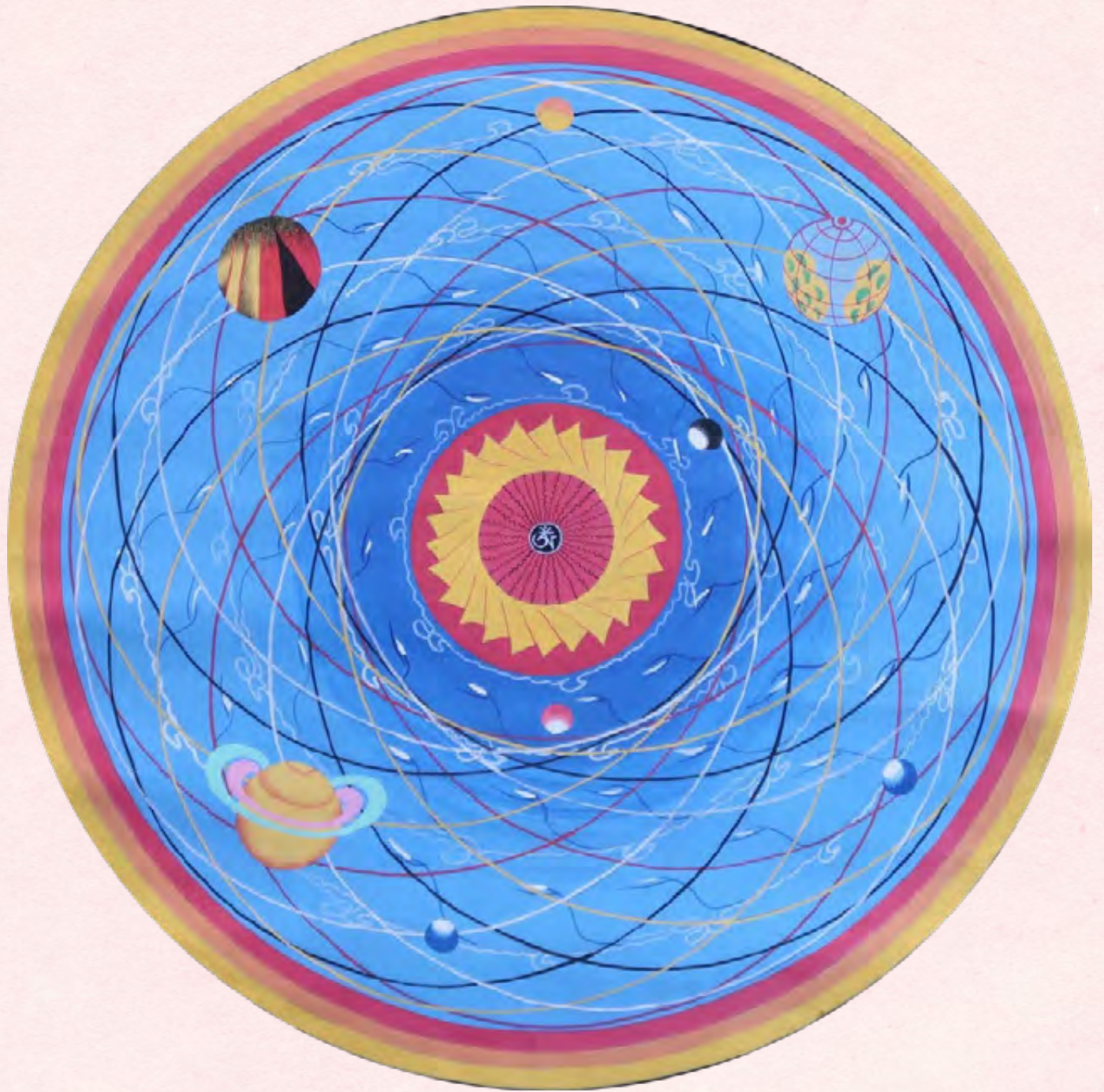
Cosmic Birthday Gift: Reflections on Surfing the Expectation-Experience Loop

Akash Kulgod

> *As historically constituted personalities, we may indeed reside in the prison-house of language. But all manner of sunbeams and birdsong and gut hunches leak through the barred windows of our talk. These phenomena not only touch us but perturb our language as well, even as those languages possess us at least as much as we possess them. The world is full of constructions, but it is full of encounters too, and the vibrant margins wherein we meet these Others shape and sometimes shatter those languages, concepts, and identities that, equally inevitably, map and manufacture the frameworks within which we make do.* (Erik Davis, *High Weirdness*, p. 20)

I turned 21 on the 21st of January, 2021, at a Vipassana center amidst austere farmland in the outskirts of Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. Teetering on the verge of leaving, I found myself trudging toward the post-tea meditation session with a dull sense of doom. Why the dread? I was helplessly anticipating the inevitable appearance of a sharp and throbbing pain in my knee that had been tormenting me since the second day of the retreat.

Minutes into the sit, I had my first glimpse of the mystical as my conscious awareness embarked on a brief foray into a pure white light. The immersion eroded the traditional subject-object dichotomy of my corporeal self, and I was bathed in a profound feeling of awe that left me distanced from the pain and evaporated my notions of flight.

My experience was a textbook example of a mystical experience, infused with the four hallmarks of ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity, as described by William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. I received the experience without an active intention to seek it, and it lasted for about half an hour. It had an illuminative quality that afforded "insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect" (James, 1902, p. 295). Finally, though I have attempted to provide a sketch, the true nature of the experience was ineffable—it defies expression.

Textbook indeed.

The timing of the experience was also remarkable. It occurred exactly when I most desperately needed it, *a cosmic birthday gift* that ensured I stayed for the entirety of the retreat, a 10-day affair I had envisioned (rather grandiosely I will admit) as a rite of passage into adulthood. It was all quite beautifully, absurdly, poetically perfect.

Too perfect.

*

If I didn't know better, this would present as a nice piece of fiction. Except I do know better; it's completely true. Perhaps, as the 'collector of coincidences' Charles Fort would say, there is only "the hyphenated state of truth-fiction" (Kripal, 2010, p. 98).

I narrate this story because I believe it contains the seed of a generative paradoxical loop that informs and mediates the complex relationship of consciousness and language. In this essay, I will interrogate the nature of this loop by focusing on Erik Davis's brilliant and evocative quote from *High Weirdness* on the "prison-house of language" and attempt to relate it to my own experience (Davis, 2019, p. 26).

> *As historically constituted personalities, we may indeed reside in the prison-house of language.*

Davis begins with an acknowledgement of the constructivist nature of our experience. In a way, this is a Whorfian stance that posits that our ability to make sense of the world's "kaleidoscopic flux of impressions" is largely (if not wholly) reliant on the organization of "the linguistic system in our minds" (Kay & Kempton, 1984). Our expectations become our experience.

> *But all manner of sunbeams and birdsong and gut hunches leak through the barred windows of our talk.*

But it's always either a *Yes, and* or a *Yes, but*.

Davis notes how experience can become and change and shatter our expectations. No matter how tightly wound the bars, light and song and the intangible will find a way. In other words, there will always be experiences—embodied experiences—that elude our symbolic alchemy, states of being that have no way of being condensed. As James says elegantly, "One must have musical ears to know the value of a symphony; one must have been in love one's self to understand a lover's state of mind" (James, 1902, p. 295). Love, music, the visceral intuition borne by the gut: it is precisely these raw, felt experiences that remain embalmed in impenetrable qualia that form the moats that breach our expectation-cloaked beings. The mystical will illuminate, and the weird will find its way out of the box and into the mind through the conduits of our living, breathing, loving bodies.

These phenomena not only touch us but perturb our language as well, even as those languages possess us at least as much as we possess them.

So goes the generative paradoxical loop of experience-expectation. Yes, our languages are the enclosures of all our meaning. And our embodied meaning is what forges our languages and symbols.

The world is full of constructions, but it is full of encounters too, and the vibrant margins wherein we meet these Others shape and sometimes shatter those languages, concepts, and identities that, equally inevitably, map and manufacture the frameworks within which we make do.

By trying to describe my meditative mystical experience, I not only rendered an effable version of the ineffable, but in some sense contributed to the very existence of an ontology of the ineffable. This, Jeff Kripal might say, is explained by the paranormal event not simply being a physical event but also being a meaning event and one that involves *"the irruption of meaning in the physical world via the radical collapse of the subject-object structure itself"* (Kripal, 2010, p. 25).

The expectation-experience loop flows both ways.

What is the sound of one hand clapping in a forest with no one around to hear?

*

The loopy nature of reality need not send us into a spiral. As long as we refuse to stodgily stand rooted in dogmatic belief and avoid the desperate grasping for explanations, and instead choose to embrace radical acceptance and relish in acts of defiant expression, we remain anchored to our emancipatory agency. This is because of the metaphysical potency of expression that lies, as Kripal notes, in its unique epistemology of being *"a self-conscious knowing that recognizes its own construction and its own relativity and so opens itself up to further evolution"* (Kripal, 2010, p. 116).

To *let go* and then to *emerge*.

Through the process of *passively* accepting mystical gifts and *actively* expressing creative riffs, we can twist, break, or subvert the cage of the experience-expectation loop. Our concepts and identities no longer remain shackled to a mindless, self-reinforcing process of input-output-input but are instead laid open to the vagaries of our qualia-drenched existence in an embodied Self-evolving action of revelation-expression.

Harkening back to Nietzsche's account, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, of the human condition as a taut rope stretched between the ape of the past and the Superman of the future (Nietzsche, 2001), Davis notes the striking similarity of Nietzsche's "spiritual acrobats" or "philosophers of the future" and modernity's "psychonauts" (Davis, 2019, p. 35). Davis ascribes, as a common ground between these "spiritual acrobats" and "psychonauts," their creative ability to play with gravity and create novel meaning without the need for foundations, through acts of groundless affirmation in the face of transience and fragility.

The surfing of altered states, coupled with the Self-creating reflexive gain of the experience-expectation loop, allows us to realize Fort's rousing call of ceasing to be "written by the paranormal" and instead to "become our own authors of the paranormal' so we "can expand" (Kripal, 2010, p. 143).

*

This has all been well and good. However, it would be wise to end with this line from the Kena Upanishad (Olivelle, 1998):

> which one cannot express by speech
> by which speech itself is expressed
> learn that that alone is brahman
> and not what they here venerate.

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Dear Mom: Let's Have a Conversation About Consciousness

Ashley Reed

Dear Mom,

As your daughter, I owe my presence on this planet to you. You were already juggling the challenges of being a young mom with a toddler son when you conceived me, yet you graciously decided to welcome me to Earth, chaos and all. I could thank you endlessly for giving me embodied consciousness. Although I can never entirely reciprocate how you have provided for me, in exchange I would like to propose new ways for you to conceptualize your own conscious experience.

I will try to take a holistic approach to consciousness and explore how it can be both modest and magnificent. I believe that honing in on the vast existence of consciousness can provide you with a better quality of life, released from anxiety and the qualms of consumerism. As a young parent, you sacrificed the leisure, education, and self-exploration that can be afforded to one in their twenties. While I am indebted to this compromise you made, I feel that you never had the opportunity to consider a reality outside of the pressures of the present. Our excursion together on this planet is limited, meaning we have little time to explore our current state of consciousness and should waste no time in doing so. I hope that together we can gaze beyond our shared physical plane and find alternative meanings outside of it.

Scholars, religious figures, wise folks, and of course little old me grapple with how to define consciousness. It's convoluted, subjective, and perplexing. To help illustrate the abstract nature of consciousness, I will offer a poem I wrote:

> *Consciousness is a cloud, it drifts and transforms.*
> *It appears full and spongy, but as you approach its grandiose volume,*
> *it dissipates as vapor.*
> *Consciousness is like a bubble, it bounces and floats.*
> *It reflects its surroundings with joy and wonder but upon grasping it, it bursts in a pop.*
> *Consciousness is like mycelium, it spreads and adapts.*
> *It is interconnected in a vast system, but the dense network is beneath our visual field.*
> *Consciousness is all of these things and none of these things.*
> *Consciousness touches every part of our reality, yet spans so far beyond our presence.*
> *Consciousness is beyond the human, beyond you and me, yet consciousness is both you and me.*

I am you and you are me, and because of you I can see my own reality.
Together we are drifting on a plane of inexplicable understanding, on an excursion to
discover the wonders of Consciousness.

So that was probably perplexing. How can consciousness be everything and nothing at the same time? Consciousness has been described in a multitude of ways. In a materialist sense, consciousness "emerges from the properties and organization of neurons in the brain" (Miller, 2005, p. 79), but it has also been said that "consciousness is beyond brain and neurons" (Gagliano, 2017, p. 2). What is considered in both opposing views is that consciousness can be understood as the experience of "awareness or sentience" (Presti, 2019, p. 1). My personal definition of consciousness is that it is a cognizant response to stimuli. Every aspect of our world, from plants to our universe at large, is conversing with our environment in informed ways. As this occurs, we can see how consciousness unfolds.

Yet how will unraveling this concept ultimately benefit you and me? When we recognize that consciousness emerges in examples from the miniscule to the monumental, we can see ourselves as being a part of an interrelated system. I believe that having conscious conversations to recognize the mysteries in our reality can help us become less hyper-focused on aspects of the world that do not serve us. We can question our place in reality with awe and wonder and become less fixated on the anxiety-inducing details of life. So many lives are spent being a cog in the never-ending wheel of working a capitalist job. Then companies use those efforts to fuel consumerist desires despite individuals feeling like empty vessels as the day recoils. Mom, I know you also experience this pattern of behavior and feeling. If the capitalist construct is what you contribute most of your energy towards, you are limited from reaching your fullest potential while being obscured from how special this world can be. I feel that opening your consciousness can help you view the world with a more expansive lens and provide you with a better sense of self.

Consciousness can be ascribed to an extremely micro-level perspective; even a plant is considered to have awareness. If we define awareness as the processes of decision-making based on learned interactions from our environment as well as the capacity to recount memories and predictions from the past, then plants are intelligent. A plant such as the common garden pea has "associative learning" as it grows based on the knowledge of its previous beneficial patterns of experience (Gagliano, 2017, p. 2). Plants can respond to stimuli in unique ways, and through environmental conditioning they can learn to adapt to threats. For example, some plants can identify the sounds of a predator and then expedite chemical cues to better protect themselves from hazards (Gagliano, 2017).

I know you struggle with anxiety daily, and the incalculable potentials can be plaguing.

However, as a conscious individual you also have the ability to learn from the exposure of threats, and if something triggers you, you can adapt to the scenario. Think of a time when you have felt hesitant or scared. You felt this resistance due to fear of the unknown; you did not have a rehearsed set of patterns to anticipate the scenario. During the growth process of a plant, a leaf may get chomped, or a root may get yanked, but this does not put a halt on the process of self-expansion. I believe that if you imagined yourself as a plant, vulnerable to risk but with the incessant desire to grow, you could battle the day-to-day grooves of anxiety and open yourself up more to the world. In this way you would develop a stronger sense of awareness and experience and be more in touch with yourself.

Consciousness can also be seen through a macro-level perspective. The universe is in a constant state of evolution and expansion, with dark matter accelerating at a rapid pace (Seife, 2005). What dark energy is, its purpose, and how it behaves and responds to stimuli are still mysteries (Seife, 2005). Yet it is in a constant state of movement and expansion. If a plant is considered to have awareness, then must the universe have some consciousness too? This isn't something that can be directly confirmed. However, when you consider that consciousness can exist in different modalities, such as being present within us but also in plants, the universe and its adapting dark matter is conscious. Dark matter is in a continual interaction with stimuli and is behaving with the universe in this very moment. To think of dark matter as conscious forces us to confront the concept that we may be teeny facets in the calculation of life itself. This acknowledgment is not meant to depress you, scare you, or reject the larger meanings and feelings you have as an individual. Instead, it should be thought of as an avenue for enlightenment. You may be inclined to worry less about confining yourself to the demands of capitalism, working a job that ceases to inspire you, and utilizing those funds to purchase objects of little meaning. I want you to see how objects and structures that matter greatly in the physical world can lack true significance outside of it.

Our reality can appear exorbitant and minuscule at the same time. I and others in this world are still on a quest to discover the affordances of an expanded consciousness. I invite you to take my hand, connect with me, and converse with me so we can unfold these mysteries together.

Love you for eternity,
Ashley Reed

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The Virtual Shadow-Self

Chaya Bakshi

Welcome to the Chai With Chaya podcast. My name is Chaya, and in this episode we explore early founder of psychology Carl Jung's concept of the shadow self and how our virtual worlds, like social media, reflect deep parts of consciousness that we suppress.

From gestural to vocal and textual to now computer-mediated communication, humanity continues to evolve the means through which information is exchanged. Rather than traveling overseas to communicate with a loved one, a simple tap on a touchscreen device provides you with immediate access to the receiver of your message. Whether it is through an Instagram DM, iMessage text, TikTok video, tweet, or Snapchat story, humans are able to interact virtually anywhere at any time of day. How convenient!

The truth is that a lot of our participation in virtual worlds, such as social media, is completely unconscious. And where there is unconsciousness, there is the shadow self.

Early psychology analyst Carl Jung came up with the term "shadow" to represent the deepest unconscious aspects of the mind that are repressed but continue to show up in daily circumstances, dreams, relationships, and/or other projections. The shadow self is simply another term for the personal unconscious mind, which consists of thoughts, emotions, and experiences that have been repressed by the conscious mind of an individual. To be repressed does not mean that they are lost. To be repressed means that they have not yet been dealt with and therefore continue to exist unconsciously because awareness has not been brought to the repeating thought, emotion, or experience.

So how does the shadow self manifest in virtual worlds? Have you ever posted something for attention? Or do you post just to keep up a facade to feel in control? Do you feel jealous or competitive with others? Do you ever feel insecure or unworthy after stalking other profiles?

All these feelings brought to the surface are opportunities to shine light on the shadow, to separate oneself from the darkness through sole awareness of feeling. The shadow-self continues to follow you, growing larger every time you refuse to face and engage with unsettling emotions or desires. Carl Jung says, "If [the shadow] is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected and is liable to burst forth in a moment of unawareness." Disharmony between the unconscious and conscious mind gives rise to conflicting emotions, and this in turn results in reactivity and compulsion, where the shadow-self takes over the creative expression of emotions.
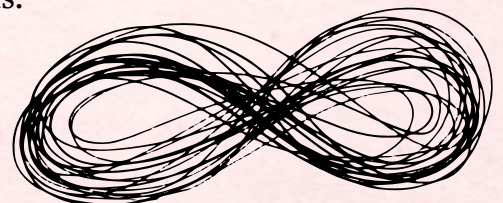
Just as the initiative of social media companies is to get you scrolling for as long as you can, stealing your attention away from the present moment, your shadow-self wants to remain in the dark. Your shadow-self wants to keep you away from the present moment because that is where there is access to light. Your shadow side thrives and profits off your unconscious behaviors.

We must understand that we are not victims of our technological tools; they have no control over us if we are willing to admit that our use of them is destructive. By having the courage to identify and face this belief, we are able to bring the unconscious to the surface and work with the shadow self. Instead of becoming a victim to it, we sit with the thought, the feeling, the discomfort, and we allow it to express itself. And social media is an outlet that provides the opportunity to become aware of and work with the shadow self. Just as a still body of water reflects all that is on the surface, observe your emotions as they are. Don't let harsh waves, caused by intense winds, fool you into thinking you are the emotion. Practice recognizing your emotions through your use of social media, and allow the stillness of your mind to transmute the shadow self from darkness to light.

The Dark Side of Mindfulness: Tracing Back to the Buddhist Traditions

Luoyi Huang

I. Introduction

Luoyi: Welcome, consciousness explorers! I am Luoyi Huang.

In a course on "Neuropsychology of Happiness" at UC Berkeley, students are encouraged to practice a list of evidence-based techniques to enhance their overall happiness. Glancing through these techniques, it is stunning that about a quarter of them are related to mindfulness. In their monthly practice reports, students have shared that they have experienced substantial improvements in their regulation of emotions and stress management. These mindfulness techniques have evolved and have been applied in clinical settings to treat physiological and psychological distresses. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs are among the most popular mindfulness-based interventions focusing on stress reduction across the nation. Having done much research on MBSR as a Zen Buddhist teacher, in addition to serving as a board member of the Consciousness, Mindfulness and Compassion International Association, Purser (2015) enrolled himself in a local MBSR program to obtain firsthand personal experience. However, rather than the expected reduction in stress and relief in negative emotions, he experienced some other effects.

Purser: After my intensive research and investigation on MBSR in Western culture, I have learned the vast benefits it holds. As I get to know more about other participants in the program, they are here to alleviate their distress from "divorces, bereavements, [...] chronic pain, and [other] malaise," and the program has been working well for them (Purser, 2015, p.7). However, as I sat down and meditated, instead of focusing on the present moment following the instructor's guide, my mind started to wander with memories flashing back, and ruminations began to happen. As the program continued, such uneasiness became even worse instead of gradually being resolved.

Luoyi: Purser shared his conflicted feelings in his account. On one hand, as someone who studies different mindfulness-based interventions, including the MBSR, he is aware of the potential benefits of such programs, and his observation from other participants in the program supported his previous research. On the other hand, he is dealing with a wandering mind and a feeling of uneasiness. Looking into the scientific literature, this kind of adverse experience is unexpected and rarely discussed. Therefore, in this episode on "Expanding a Science of Consciousness," we will hold our hands together to venture into the dark side of mindfulness. The concepts of "dark side" and "adverse ef-

fects" refer to the negative, unwanted, challenging experiences elicited during mindfulness meditation practice or while attending mindfulness-based intervention programs.

Luoyi: What do we know about the dark side of mindfulness? The widely practiced mindfulness techniques, including mindfulness meditation and mindfulness-based interventions, are derived from the Buddhist tradition. Thus, what insights does the Buddhist tradition offer us regarding the adverse effects of mindfulness? In addition, perhaps most importantly, how would expanding our exploration of mindfulness to the dark side contribute to our understanding of our consciousness? Because the goal of psychotherapy is to alleviate symptoms and restore personal well-being, our current mindset toward mindfulness is confined to the omnipotent illusion created by the health-promotion trend. In recent years, its dark side has been gradually unraveled. Paired with more historical records and awareness of the dark side, the Buddhist tradition provides constructive insight for our Western secular community in the journey of portraying the whole picture and writing the full story of mindfulness.

Today, we will not only investigate the dark side of mindfulness from the current research in the scientific literature, but more importantly, we will trace the Buddhist traditions back to the origin of mindfulness. As we delve into this overlooked realm, we will expand the scope of our thoughts and address the proposed questions step by step. We will begin by critically analyzing the development of mindfulness with our guest speaker, Anna Lutkajtis. Then, we will use an astounding event documented in multiple Buddhist discourses as a lens to trace back to the Buddhist tradition's awareness and perspective of the dark side of mindfulness. In the end, we will step back and examine the significant role the dark side of mindfulness plays in our expansion of the science of consciousness.

II. The Dark Side, Overlooked
Luoyi: Ever since the discovery of meditation's impressive impact on the human mind, research on mindfulness has mainly been focused on its benefits to our cognition, regulation of emotion, and general mental wellbeing. Since the 1970s, as cases of difficult experiences during mindfulness practice have emerged, clinical psychology has begun to notice possible adverse effects. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have expressed their initial concern by incorporating some adverse effects of meditation into the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSMs) (Van Dam et al., 2018). Despite the attention from agencies like APA and NIH, little research has been conducted into revealing the dark side (Lindahl et al., 2017), and the image of mindfulness practices remains largely positive in popular media (Lutkajtis, 2018).

Only recently have concerns with regards to the dark side of mindfulness been remarkably raised; since then, as more research has been conducted, the scientific literature on the adverse effects of mindfulness has begun to expand (Hanley et al., 2016; Lindahl et

al., 2017). The overwhelming focus on the prosperity of mindfulness and this noticeable delay in our awareness of its adversities reveals our tendency to celebrate sound and suppress the negative. This confined mindset impinges on our exploration of a multidimensional understanding of mindfulness.

Anna Lutkajtis is a researcher focusing on mysticism and the healing power of altered forms of consciousness. Today, we have Lukaitis join the first part of our discussion on the dark side of mindfulness, inviting her to share her relevant research on what has changed in terms of mindfulness in the western secular context.

Luoyi: In your analysis and review of current scientific studies on mindfulness, you pointed out that its adverse effects have been vastly overlooked in our western secular context. You then make an exciting connection between this dark side and the developmental progress of mindfulness. Could you please share more about your research with the audience?

Lutkajtis: Thank you for the introduction and the remark on my research. In my study, I proposed that the Western secular tradition views mindfulness as a tool of psychotherapy or individual improvement instead of a pursuit of enlightenment held by the Buddhist tradition (Lutkajtis, 2018). This shift facilitated the clinical uses of mindfulness yet contributed to the limited understanding of mindfulness being a panacea and narrowed down the scope of scientific research on mindfulness.

Luoyi: Like what you just mentioned, there has been a dramatic deviation from the Buddhist tradition in the goal of secular forms of meditation. To my observation, most research on the rising dark side of mindfulness is mainly conducted in clinical settings. Thus, it seems your review takes a different approach. Do you mind sharing what made you trace back to the Buddhist tradition when considering the dark side of mindfulness?

Lutkajtis: Good question. I think that we have to trace back to the beginning of the mainstream development of mindfulness in the Western secular world. When mindfulness techniques were first introduced to the West, the Western meditation teachers had training from both contemporary sciences and Eastern religions like Buddhism (Lutkajtis, 2018). However, as mindfulness in the West starts its rigorous progress, psychologists seem to have lost the nuanced nature of mindfulness and have begun to focus purely on the immense benefits they brought to the clinical field.

Luoyi: Thank you so much for joining us today. Your in-depth analysis on this topic indeed opens up our current understanding and introduces a brand new direction for thinking about the dark side of mindfulness.

As Lutkajtis said, this transition in viewpoint, a shift in attitude, explains what underlies

our path to understanding mindfulness fully. With this idea in mind, let's dive into Buddhist doctrine to trace back to earlier understandings of the dark side of mindfulness.

III. Buddhist Awareness of the Adverse Effects

Luoyi: Lutkajtis' thought-provoking analysis regarding the status quo of research on the dark side of mindfulness offers us a new direction: to seek the root of mindfulness, the Buddhist tradition. *Dukkha,* suffering, is a central theme in the fundamental Buddhist canon (Anālayo, 2019; Hanley et al., 2016; Lindahl et al., 2017). This theme is further elaborated in the Four Noble Truths: suffering is in our existence; the cause of suffering traces to our desires; suffering is possible to end; through the Eightfold Path one can end the suffering (Hanley et al., 2016). Part of the Eightfold Path is mindfulness, so in the Buddhist tradition, mindfulness is viewed as an approach leading to freedom from *dukkha* rather than a central cornerstone (Hanley et al., 2016). This notion of mindfulness has been preserved in the clinical field in the form of mindfulness meditations and mindfulness-based interventions. Here, the goal of mindfulness seems to be similar to how the Western secular community views it; that is, it helps us alleviate suffering and distress. Yet nuance in the concepts and historical awareness of adverse effects has gradually faded.

Before analyzing what has been neglected through the process by which mindfulness has gradually spread out in the Western community, I will introduce you to an astounding event revealing the dark side of mindfulness. This accident has been documented and recorded in the textual monastic discipline as well as in multiple Buddhist discourses. Although details vary in different accounts, the core details and the message it tries to convey remain consistent (Analayo, 2014).

Analayo: As illustrated in these records, the Buddha once told the monks that meditation in the absence of beauty would bring them "great fruit and great benefit" (Analayo, 2014, p.12). The monks then did accordingly and contemplated the absence of beauty. However, unexpectedly, these monastics developed enormous aversion toward their own bodies and subsequently killed themselves.

Luoyi: This instance undoubtedly reveals how devastating the adverse effects of mindfulness can be. As the narration of Analayo continues to unravel, we learn of actions that could have been taken to forestall this mass suicide among the monks.

Analayo: Having noticed this accident, Buddha consulted with the venerable minister Ananda to determine the reasons and figure out preventive actions. They extrapolate that Buddha's message to the monks was delivered vaguely and without step-by-step guidance and instruction. The monks could not "abide in a subtle abiding" and make peace with the arisen stillness and leave the suffering unperturbed (Analayo, 2014, p.14).

Therefore, assisted by Ananda, the Buddha proposed this practice on the absence of beauty with detailed instructions, which successfully prevented similar incidents from happening.

Luoyi: This documented mass suicide among monks during their mindfulness practice indeed alerts Buddhist practitioners to how risky the misinterpretation of mindfulness practices can be. Moreover, it also discloses possible interventions: the amendment of Buddha's instructions helps redirect the monks to regain the balance of mindfulness practice and prevents dangerous, unbalanced practices that come from unclear recommendations. Discourses within the tradition and the scrutiny from later practitioners on this collective adversity provide us an excellent lesson and, at the same time, also manifest the Buddhist philosophy concerning the dark side of mindfulness. Furthermore, with these insights, we grasp not only how the Buddhist tradition resolves these adversities, but also how it establishes caution towards mindfulness practices on the path toward enlightenment.

Beyond this particular practice of contemplating the absence of beauty, reflection on the complicated nature of mindfulness, especially its dark side, is also noted across various branches of the Buddhist tradition. Lindahl and their colleagues (2017) have concluded that the dark side of mindfulness practice has been documented in narratives of Tibetan, Zen, Mahayana, and Theravada Buddhist tradition: stages and experiences like "meditation sickness" and "corruptions of insights" have been noted. In Analayo's (2014) narration, the Buddha offered detailed guidelines in order to prevent the precedent instance from reoccurring. Likewise, among these traditions, mentors and instructors are there to inform practitioners about possible negativity and then guide them through the darkness. In other words, with its new recognition and understanding of the dark side, the Buddhist tradition has identified systematic approaches that deal with these adversities. Moreover, according to the Buddhist principle centering *dukkha*, the tradition has developed its own way of reframing the dark side.

Through both the Buddhist accounts of the dark side of mindfulness and the interpretation offered by following Buddhist practitioners and scholars (Analayo, 2014; Lindahl et al., 2017), we can understand the nuanced concept underlying the dark side of mindfulness within the Buddhist tradition. As mentioned before, *dukkha,* suffering, centers the Four Noble Truth and the Eightfold Path in Buddhist principle (Hanley et al., 2016). Thus, intrinsically in line with the early Buddhist canon, mindfulness practices are inevitably not always pleasurable (Anālayo, 2019). Despite the simplified explanation of mindfulness practices as vehicles to free practitioners from *dukkha,* on a deeper level, the purpose of mindfulness is to expose the dukkha within oneself accurately and to endow one with the ability to view it at peace. As practice continues, one can gradually make peace with these defilements and eventually end the *dukkha* and obtain enlighten-

ment. That is to say, mindfulness offers a chance for an entity to reflect the repressed and dissociated parts of their consciousness. Therefore, given this understated nature of mindfulness under the Western secular frame of mind, we should be cautious while treating the gradually revealed dark side of mindfulness.

Recall, from Lutkajtis' review on the change of focus, that as mindfulness transforms from enlightenment to psychotherapy, the surface interpretation of mindfulness, of escaping ourselves from suffering, permeates. Nevertheless, the nature of mindfulness—the whole story, the inevitable unpleasantness, the unveiling of the dark side of oneself—is what the Western secular community truly needs to consider. Admittedly, the worldviews of Buddhism and of Western secular society are inherently different. For example, the Buddhist pursuit of non-self does not fit well into today's Western therapeutic paradigm (Lutkajtis, 2018). It does not benefit psychologists and researchers to replicate every fine detail in the Buddhist tradition to the secular world. Instead, we should think twice before we boast about the effectiveness of mindfulness. In addition, we should abandon the restricted scope of our minds.

IV. The Dark Side, the Shadow, and the Evil

Luoyi: In previous sections, we have learned the nature of mindfulness in the Buddhist tradition and its implication to the Western secular community. Now, I invite you to take a step back and view the dark side in terms of the big picture of the multifaceted mindfulness experience. The discussion on the dark side in the literature on consciousness is not limited to adverse effects in mindfulness.

As different religions and philosophical schools investigate the heart of human nature, they treat the dark side in different ways. In his lecture on "The Sick Soul," William James (2002) discusses how healthy-mindedness is praised and how evil gets rejected in most religious and philosophical contexts. James criticizes this view by arguing that the evil parts "may after all, be the best key to life's significance, and possibly the only openers of our eyes to the deepest levels of truth" (James, 2002, p. 130). Likewise, in her speech, Ann Shulgin makes clear the significance of the dark side in unearthing the truth of our conscious being, the socially undesirable part of ourselves we have repressed deeply into our unconsciousness:

> "If you have a desire to grow spiritually, [...] [and] if you want to achieve some kind of personal clarity, [...] you cannot go into that journey without dealing with your shadow, because spiritual growth, interior clarity, and individuation mean becoming whole, integrating all parts of yourself, accepting all parts of your nature acknowledging their existence and learning to do so without negative judgments" (Sandbagger News, 2019).

Luoyi: Here, Shulgin reveals that the shadow is an indispensable part of our humanity, without which we cannot obtain spiritual clarity. This investigation by James and Shulgin, as well as the nature of mindfulness in the Buddhist tradition that we discussed earlier, calls on health-mindedness experts within Western secular culture to look into the disguised and avoided part of our human nature.

With these considerations of the good and the bad, the bright and dark, the suffering and the enlightenment, at this last part of our podcast, we invite a fellow consciousness-explorer, Chaya Bakshi, to share her insights on the power of duality and the contrasting pole.

Luoyi: Chaya, you shared something really insightful about the contrasting duality of matters in one of your weekly posts. Keeping the contrasting duality between bright and dark in mind, could you please share your thoughts on the dark side of mindfulness?

Chaya: When reading the lectures of James, I was struck by the contrast between the good and the bad. I believe that "all contrast brings more clarity. [...] By tuning into the polar opposite of what your external situations are offering, you can pick up a new perspective and therefore [a] new reality of life" (Bakshi, 2021). This idea can also be seen in what we have discussed on the dark side of mindfulness. As interdisciplinary research rises, the Western secular community gradually uncovers the dark side that has been overlooked. I am optimistic about such movements, and I believe that this will contribute to a new, broadened perspective on mindfulness and, more importantly, to our understanding of human consciousness.

Luoyi: Like what Chaya has shared, our focus on the pure benefits of mindfulness has restricted our understanding of the mindfulness experience. Yet by investigating the dark side of mindfulness, we complete the duality and move closer to the true nature of mindfulness in the Western secular context. These days, under the new trend of exploring the dark side of mindfulness, organizations like the Cheetah House began to emerge. This organization connects insights from Buddhist practitioners with researchers in the Western scientific context to investigate the dark side of mindfulness and aim to support those who have experienced adverse effects (*Resources for Meditators-in-Distress,* n.d.). The emergence of this kind of institution indeed helps the general public by identifying vulnerabilities and providing a support system aimed at improving overall wellness. More importantly, the Cheetah House offers a significant breakthrough by including multiple perspectives to depict the complete picture of mindfulness. Thus, such efforts provide us a well-rounded understanding of mindfulness and, thereby, expand our mindset toward considering the duality of things.

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Ritual Music Practices in Psychedelic Traditions Examined as Consequences of Underlying Frameworks of Consciousness

Syed Rahim

Psychedelics have received renewed interest in the United States as research has indicated these substances hold much potential for improving mental health. These substances are significant because of how radically they are capable of transforming people's outlooks on life due to their ability to induce profound mystical experiences. Psychedelics have been used around the world by innumerable indigenous cultures for thousands of years, and during that time traditions of music practice accompanying the ritual use have also been developed. The Western tradition of psychedelics use has also developed its own practice of music, and these practices are the result of scientifically-backed approaches that adhere to the standards of medical science. Is there a difference between traditional approaches and the Western approach? If so, what is the difference, and what is the cause for the difference? The answers to those questions trace all the way back to those cultures' beliefs in the nature of reality. This paper will aim to analyze cultural practices within the context of these frameworks in order to look at the bigger picture of how these different beliefs shape the outcomes of their use.

Two frameworks of consciousness will be examined here, and it should be noted that they are generalized for the purposes of this paper despite being more nuanced in actuality. The first believes in only the physical, observable world as all that exists. The second believes in the existence of a world beyond the physical that can be communicated with. The parties of the first will be referred to as "physicalists," and the parties of the second as "shamanists." Furthermore, the only shamanist tradition that will be examined in this essay refers to that of the indigenous Amazonian *ayahuasqueros,* who practice *vegetalismo.* The differences within these two parties account for innumerable divergent ideas. The concept of healing, for example, and the way that healing is carried out looks like "psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy" for the physicalists and "ritual plant-healing ceremony" for the shamanists. The employment of music within those two contexts is very different, and though it may not be apparent on a surface level, further analysis illustrates the way that the manifestation of physicalism in music-delivery design makes some fundamental declarations about the purpose of healing with psychedelic drugs.

Music in a traditional plant-healing culture
Shamanism is tied to psychedelic practices around the world and has been for millennia. Once such shamanist culture—the indigenous plant healing culture of *vegetalismo*—is

practiced in the Peruvian Amazon by *curanderos,* who are traditional healers. These curanderos use songs called *icaros* to heal their patients. Icaros take on many different functions. They are "employed in healing contexts—preparation of remedies, healing sessions—, in special activities or occasions—fishing or hunting for certain animals, bewitching, farewells, and in ayahuasca rituals." Icaros have a deep, rooted connection to the environments they spring from:

> The icaros seem to synthesize the cosmological syncretism of mestizo curanderismo. They are conferred magical properties to influence or countereffect the influence of visible and invisible others, material and spiritual realities; their texts allude to plants, animals, and spirits that have power and symbolism and/or are embedded in mythic conceptions, but also refer sometimes to biblical passages, Christian symbols, or are adaptations of Christian prayers and chants; they often involve native language mixed with Spanish, or are sung entirely in indigenous language (mostly Quichua) or Spanish. (Bustos, 2008, p. 19)

Shamans—the curanderos—are not only transmitters of icaros, but synthesists as well, weaving into song the cultural and social fabric around them. They take a very active role in creation *and* delivery, and they themselves are as much products of their environment as the icaros they produce. For that reason, their own reputations as healers are important to the healing process itself. Bustos writes:

> Luna (1986) states that the closeness that these kinds of healers develop with their clients has therapeutic value in itself, being a kind of psychological hygiene even for healthy people: they host their clients at their home, are interested in their emotional and financial problems, and tell them stories that entertain and inform them. Jacques Mabit (1996) adds that the social legitimacy, and thus the trust in the healer's capabilities, relies upon his successes, personal story, and lineage, known in his own community. (Bustos, 2008, p. 15)

The power of the curandero comes from his or her ability to communicate with a spirit realm and relay the messages of those spirits to the individuals seeking treatment. Icaros are the musical manifestations of these messages:

> Through chanting, the curandero is believed to communicate with the spirit realm, and to mediate the healing. The singing voice as embodied song could be seen as a dynamic relational bridge among curandero, clients, spirits, the here-and-now, and the living syncretic cosmology which aims to be all embracing, concrete and magic at the same time (Bustos, 2005). Singing seems to capture the essence of the integral health beliefs in vegetalismo. (Bustos, 2008, p. 19)
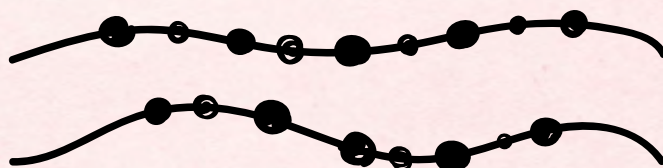
From a social and cultural perspective, the power of the icaros can be understood by examining their function in the greater context of vegetalismo and Peruvian Amazonian society:

> Vegetalistas address the physical, psychosomatic, and psychosocial healing requests of a vast urban poor and rural population that still harbors strong indigenous elements (Giove, 1993; Luna, 1984, 1992; Luna & Amaringo, 1991; Mabit, 1993; Zuloaga, 1997). They may be playing a key cultural role: bridging, giving meaning, and integrating different cultural beliefs, thus constituting a referent for groups experiencing acculturation trauma (Andritzky, 1989; Winkelman, 2007b). (Bustos, 2008, p. 14)

The research indicates that all the elements of healing—the curandero, the icaro, the specific way the icaro is delivered—are all interconnected and add to the total healing outcome. The intention behind the action of blowing smoke, for example, carries real value and meaning.

> The verb icarar and the noun icarada employed by the mestizo curanderos indicate, respectively, the ritual act and situation of singing or whistling an icaro on a person, substance, or object. The goal is to invest them with a specific power or property–protection, healing, cleanness, vigor...In that way, as Townsley (2001) suggests, the "blowing" effect of the song can be speculatively seen as clearing out and following a straight path to infuse something with the desired intention, an act of shamanic power. (Bustos, 2008, p. 11)

In summation, all aspects of this plant healing practice—vegetalismo, curanderos, and icaros, to name a few—are interconnected and inextricably linked to the total healing outcome. The cultural artifacts of the environment are deeply embedded in the rituals that accompany healing. Bustos demonstrates that icaros have their own meanings that are informed by the shared symbology that surrounds the healer and the person being healed. There is an underlying cosmology that informs this belief, and that cosmology informs the practice just as much as the practices inform the cosmology. The most pertinent characteristics are the following: a) the belief in a spirit world with which communication is possible and meaningful; b) the presence of a healer who is capable of communicating with that spirit world; c) the personal feelings of the individual receiving treatment toward the healer, which is dependent on that healer's reputation and trustworthiness; d) the singing of songs and the proper tailoring of those songs to the individual receiving treatment; e) the whole of the ritual practice being followed.

In adopting a similar approach to music in Western psychedelic therapy—where music is also personalized to the individual—how many of these practices can be transmitted?

And what is the role of physicalism in limiting these traditions from being carried over? The next segment of this paper will discuss how music has been employed in psychedelics in the Western medical context.

Music and physicalism in psychedelic therapy
The standard for the Western practice of music use in psychedelic therapy was described in the Summer 1972 issue of the *Journal of Music Therapy*. In "The Use of Music in Psychedelic (LSD) Psychotherapy," researchers Helen L. Bonny and Walter N. Pahnke identified six distinct phases in the experience once LSD was administered. These phases, ranging from pre-onset to re-entry, are to be complemented by music with "appropriate" characteristics, like positivity or tranquility. The aim of this method is to elicit a peak experience that falls in line with the overall trajectory of psychedelic peak therapy, another Western tradition of therapeutic psychedelics use:

> Psychedelic peak therapy emphasizes the skillful use of LSD to produce an intense, positive experience. Underlying this treatment approach is the hypothesis that the occurrence of such an experience may produce within the patient the greatest life-changing, and most enduring results. (Bonny & Pahnke, 1972, p. 69)

What separates the physicalist tradition of psychedelic healing from others is its detachment from the philosophies historically underpinning these substances. That is a logical extension of the framework of Western medicine, which deals exclusively in objective, data-driven processes. The medicalization of these substances divorces them from the subjective and unquantifiable experiences that they induce, and even further divorces them from any non-Western, non-physicalist philosophical frameworks used to understand them. Bonny et. al. identify the following as some peak characteristics: "A sense of unity or oneness"; "Transcendence of time and space"; and "Meaningfulness of psychological and/or philosophical insight." These are not goals of the experience as much as they are qualities that signal that the proper psychical outcome—a "peak experience"—has been achieved. To put it another way, the mystical experience serves as a means to an end rather than as an end itself.

The predetermined list of music choices reflects this "means to an end" approach. Psychedelic therapists are advised to make their best judgments in song selection, and in this way, they resemble shamans who deliver music made especially for that individual. However, these are all songs that exist already, imbued with no greater meaning than the associations they come into the session with (e.g., classical music for deep reflection; pop music for easy listening). Bonny, et. al., suggest songs that span the range from Bach and Beethoven to The Beatles and Peter, Paul and Mary. Not only does this assume that the listener is familiar with this music, but it also assumes that the listener will have an emotional connection to it. Classical music continues to be the music of choice in psychedelic therapy, though research conducted on the efficacy of different musical genres

in psychedelic therapy indicates that overtone-based music tended to induce higher mystical experience scores than did classical music.

> Participants (N = 10) received psilocybin (20–30 mg/70 kg) in two sessions, each with a different musical genre (Western classical versus overtone-based), with the order counterbalanced. Participants chose one genre for a third session (30 mg/70 kg). Mystical experiences scores tended to be higher in overtone-based sessions than in Western classical sessions. Six of ten participants chose the over tone-based music for a third session. (Strickland et. al., 2020, p. 472)

Research on the efficacy of overtone-based music—gongs, bells, Tibetan singing bowls—indicates a more tolerant attitude toward non-Western approaches, and though more research needs to be done on how different genres actually effect change, physicalists and shamanists will agree that the personalization of the musical experience is of utmost importance.

But what is impossible for physicalists to accept is the framework that explains why icaros exist, because to do so would acknowledge the existence of a world beyond empirical observation. Therefore, the limits of physicalism in adopting the practices of traditional plant healing cultures make themselves clear when the underlying frameworks behind the actions are questioned. At present, the limitation that makes itself clear to us is that physicalism currently cannot substantiate the claim that there really is a spirit world out there to communicate with. It cannot recognize if communication with that world is beneficial to the health of the patient, not solely due to the biological effects of experiencing perceived communication, but also because the communication was real. For that reason, the practices of Western psychedelic therapy operate on the assumption that the spirit world is not real.

Personalization of music can be approached from an entirely physicalist standpoint and produce outcomes similar to those of the practices of curanderos, and because it is outcome-driven, the two traditions of healing could be regarded as providing equivalent value when results are good. But is that a reasonable conclusion to come to if the philosophies underlying the practices are so fundamentally different? Does belief in the philosophy itself change the final outcome of the healing process? To determine what exactly are the underlying beliefs and assumptions that drive psychedelic therapy in the West, the methods of Western psychedelics companies can be analyzed. The next segment of this paper will discuss different companies innovating music personalization in psychedelic therapy.

Companies and their new approaches

Dotting the landscape of Western psychedelic therapy are a few companies exploring new and innovative ways of delivering music during a trip. Most of these companies

are start-ups, and they show promise in dealing with treatment-resistant mental health disorders. A few commonalities emerge across these different companies, each with its own insights into the Western medical psyche.

Field Trip Health

Field Trip Health is a psychedelics health company that specializes in ketamine-assisted therapy. Trip is an app developed by Field Trip Health to provide direction to individuals who may be using psychedelics independently. Co-founder and executive chairman Ronan Levy, describing the company, says, "I like to say we're like Home Depot for self-exploration. You can do it, we can help" (Rhodes, 2020). This attitude is drastically different from ones in shamanist cultures; shamans spend years learning the best practices for ritual healing. Does this mean Levy's attitude is necessarily worse? North American drug culture is heavily influenced by its prohibitive drug policies, so it makes sense that psychedelics users and practitioners would have to take a DIY approach. Underground recreational use is a cornerstone of American psychedelia. That may explain partly why a personalized approach is much more acceptable and easily adopted.

Still, this does not paint the whole picture. This approach is emphasized as being heavily backed by science because of a fundamental feature of Western society: an acceptance of the scientific method. This acceptance owes less to the features of any one nation than to the cultural exertion of physicalism on Western society as a whole, which over the years has produced the practices of double-blind placebo trials, significance hypothesis testing, Cronbach's alpha, and other such rituals. The knowledge that these practices are followed lends trust to the performers of healing in Western society in the same way that knowing the reputation of a shaman lends trust to him or her. The force of physicalism has meant that performance of these practices assures they are backed by science. In other words, they do not challenge assumptions of reality and are therefore real and valid.

LUCID and Wavepaths

LUCID is a Digital Health company focused on the intersection of music, neuroscience and mental health. What is their approach, and how does it work? From the whitepaper:

> By validating each playlist through an affective AI which is trained on thousands of brains, patients are provided with an outcome-driven music experience to ac company their psychedelic-assisted therapy. [...] Through our custom-built APIs, we offer hyper-personalized music experiences for psychedelic-assisted therapy. Using client biometrics and clinician feedback, the music experience will tailor itself in real-time for the individual's session. This allows for adjustments based on the client's changing mood in-session and responds to their live progress as monitored by the clinician. (*Comparison of LUCID's Digital Music Therapy to Generic Functional Music,* 2021)
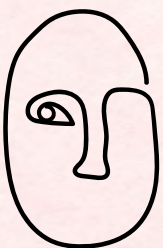
Like LUCID, Wavepaths is a company that also creates specialized music for individuals undergoing psychedelic therapy. Mendel Kaelen, founder and CEO, is also a researcher who has conducted some of the first research on the effects of music in psychedelic therapy. It can be reasonably argued that he is the individual powering the movement toward personalized music delivery in psychedelic therapy. The Wavepaths approach will be the focus of this essay because this approach is the best encapsulation of physicalism in Western psychedelics medicine and because Wavepaths is the leader in delivering AI-personalized music for psychedelic therapy.

How does the Wavepaths approach encapsulate physicalism? The role of the shaman can only be overlooked if the underlying framework of belief does not align with what the shaman believes. In indigenous communities, the shaman's power comes from his or her real ability to communicate with a spirit world. In the West, the shaman's power is in his or her ability to induce a healing outcome from the phenomenological experience of being healed, which involves the *perceived* communication with a spirit world.

I do not believe these companies and the individuals behind them are aiming to replace shamans or shamanism, and this paper is not a rebuke of these corporations or people *per se*. Making that claim would mean deeming invalid their belief in physicalism and its relevance to this field. Rather, the purpose of this essay is to emphasize that there are implications to carrying on a traditional practice–or building a new one based on it– without also recognizing the philosophies from which that practice originates. If these companies believe in the value of music in psychedelic therapy and want to look at the way music has traditionally been used in a psychedelic ritual context as proof of this value, then they must understand that picking and choosing certain elements has the potential to produce entirely new outcomes which may not be desirable to those in the mix. At the heart of this discussion, I want to focus on the AI-generated robot as a Western replacement of the indigenous shaman. The next segment of this paper will discuss some of the implications of this example in greater detail.

Where physicalism and shamanism meet
There are some important commonalities between these two frameworks in their practices of musical healing. In both contexts, personalization of the music delivered is an extension of thoughtful care and attention. There is no doubt room for this intentionality in both traditions of healing. Bustos says the following in an interview with a person who received treatment from a curandero:

> Whenever there was a perception of intentionality involved in the healing, the singing was experienced as exclusively and intimately tailor-made. L offered the most explicit example of this constituent: And then it was when this icaro came, that [maestro Juan] sang to me . . . he opened the door for me, he sang it for me,

that is, it wasn't for anyone else. I guess, another person may not have even listened to it, or didn't consider it, or was there and said: ah, a new icaro! But . . . it was like if he had taken my shoulder and would have whispered to me, like: take it, this is for you, work, connect, open up . . . And it was demolishing, because as it was, it entered where it had to. (Bustos, 2008, p. 107)

This effect may not necessarily be due solely to the fact that the personalized song came from an individual who made it especially for them. The success of Wavepaths indicates that the final product being personalized is the most important part. Perhaps this is because, in the context of Western medical culture, the advancement of science and technology in medicine is synonymous with safety and trust, so that music personalized by an AI-generated algorithm is, to many, preferable to being under the control of a human. If that is the case, then it is a demonstration that the physicalist approach takes into account cultural beliefs and ritual dogmas in the same way vegetalismo does.

Both traditions run into the same problem, and that is how to bridge the gap between healer and patient. Curanderos rely on their experience not only to sing the music properly, but also to know when to change to different songs. Bustos writes that "the repertoire of icaros of a curandero usually varies between 30 and 200, depending upon his or her years of experience and number of diets" (Bustos, 2008, p. 19). However, an inexperienced curandero may not be able to accurately detect what song the individual needs at the time, and that person may suffer as a result. Likewise, the Western tradition of using predetermined playlists in psychedelic therapy would have the patient running into the same problem, and the inexperienced therapist may also not be able to detect subtle changes in the patient's comfort or know what music to switch to.

Where physicalism and shamanism diverge
Why is it important to discuss where these two traditions clash? It is a matter of dealing with the cognitive dissonance that comes from carrying out practices without a belief in the forces that underlie them. Western psychedelics therapy must contend with the fact that medicalization necessitates detachment from traditional plant healing philosophies, which are the same philosophies that have accompanied the use of these substances for thousands of years. There is an absurd kind of paradox at play here. These psychedelic substances produce effects that challenge the frameworks of reality that are upheld by science, and yet they must adhere to what science believes is real in order to be true. The beliefs around psychedelic substances must, under that kind of limitation, bend themselves to accommodate not challenging—at least, not obviously challenging—certain contrary beliefs. The practices acceptable within the Western context must be declared as valid ways of achieving a specific outcome. What that actual outcome is may be realized to be different only upon closer inspection.

The false prophet and the empty prophet

Assuming the perspective of the shamanist, what prior condition of life necessitates the need for a shaman in ritual healing? First, that the shaman is capable of communicating with a spirit world; and second, that this individual has received the proper training to communicate with this world safely. What action does the shaman carry out? The singing of songs through which healing is facilitated. The shaman could be lying, and for personal gain only claiming to be in communion with spirits. Still, healing is carried out because of the participant's beliefs in the true ability of the shaman to communicate with natural spirits, the true existence of otherworldly forces who have knowledge to communicate, and the rituals of the healing process truly facilitating this healing exchange. To the physicalist, healing is contingent not on the condition of truth—real communication—but on belief. For that reason, the shaman can be replaced, because the only true function of the shaman is to deliver personalized music to the individual. This is true because science has proven the impact of music on the brain. The healing outcomes are understood to be the result of music's impact on the brain, not in the music as a manifestation of something greater. The shaman in this framework is a false prophet, and his or her belief in being able to communicate with otherworldly forces is a misunderstood biological phenomenon. The physicalist can then replace the shaman and the same outcome will seemingly be achieved.

What does this say about psychedelic therapy practice? The implication is that the facilitator of truth is not a channel but a mirror. There doesn't need to be an intermediary between you and the universe; all you need is a pathway to find it within yourself. Using an AI to generate music is a declaration that AI *can* be used in this way, because all value comes from the power of the music itself and the environment it is delivered in. How does the music do this? Where does this power come from? Under a physicalist framework, there are a lot of potential answers to these questions that cannot be substantiated. The default mode of operation with these substances is to work without these answers. Yet, these substances are the very things that push people toward non-physicalist explanations. Physicalist psychedelics practitioners must work around these frameworks, and the AI-generated, real-time feedback musical machine is one such workaround. However similar these workarounds may look in comparison to non-physicalist practices, they are not the same. The shaman may be a false prophet, but the AI is an empty one—not because it will not lie, but because it cannot; not because it does or does not believe in something, but because it is incapable of believing in anything.

The superiority of one approach over the other is subjective; I do not believe a judgment can be made at this time. What should be avoided is the hazy mixing of the two without careful consideration. The Western tradition of psychedelics must contend with a history of subjugation and marginalization of the peoples who have held these substances to be sacred, and it must acknowledge that part of physicalism's dominance in scientific thought is a consequence of Western attitudes of racial superiority, entangled with im-

perialism and genocide. Shorter's demonstration of Hegel's thoughts on the spirit used in relation to mass killings of indigenous Americans exemplifies this fact:

> Hegel's reformulation triangulated the meaning of "spirit" as having historical consciousness, rather than being solely a term for irrationality. People with geist/spirit could exercise reason; though conversely, those people closest to nature lived in a mystical/spiritual world and lacked souls and the ability to reason. (Shorter, 2016, p. 4)

Here, we have an example of reason being named superior to mysticism; Hegel validates the former while demeaning the latter. If institutional racism is never addressed, and that racism upholds standards of physicalism, then how will physicalism ever make room for the mystical properties of these substances? Western psychedelic therapy must confront these issues so that research on these substances and the paradigm shifts they may induce are not self-sabotaged. Such self-sabotage could result from trying to explain non-physicalist phenomena from a physicalist perspective.

Conclusion
The practice of psychedelic therapy takes an approach that places Western standards of medicine on substances that defy Western frameworks of consciousness. This paper posits that these standards are a product of the exertion of physicalism on the institutionalized practice of medicine. Furthermore, there seems to be no room under physicalism for medicine to introduce non-physicalist frameworks within the healing process. Thus, practices of healing are developed to provide the benefits of psychedelics while not challenging the boundaries of physicalism. These practices of healing may emulate the traditions of non-physicalist cultures, such as personalizing the music that is delivered while undergoing psychedelic rituals. But they also have another side to them: they declare that they are the proper ways to induce the mystical experiences that mark the successful use of psychedelics. While physicalism can explain the biology behind these substances' effects on human brains, it currently lacks the ability to accommodate a philosophical framework that is as all-encompassing as those of shamanistic cultures. If this issue is not addressed, the progress that these substances could create for human health and the future of science may never be realized.

Akash Kulgod, in a discussion post concerning the writings of eminent American psychologist William James, writes:

> Assertion by negation is an important theme in James' account of mysticism. The first hallmark of the mystical is its ineffability - the inability to express it to an other. Yet, this negation appears to hide something deeper within, as the following quote exemplifies...In some sense, I am reminded of our discussion with Kripal and his proclamation that in their pursuit of both expressing and inhabit-

ing Truth, the best authors must necessarily break the language. (Kulgod, 2021)

How does analytic philosophy—a Western tradition which is based on language—contend with a defining feature of mystical experiences, which is ineffability? Kulgod's observation highlights the type of discussion that needs to be had, one that challenges the barriers of what we consider to be the ways of knowing things to be true. The path to reconciliation has partly been laid, and it will be the product of a collaboration between scientists and philosophers of physicalist and non-physicalist traditions. In "Collaborative dialogue between Buddhism and science: A contribution to expanding a science of consciousness," professor of neuroscience David Presti writes:

I argue that one element of expanding a science of consciousness is appreciation of the interdependent co-creation or enfolding of mind and world. Addressing this interdependence is an aspect of the collaborative engagement of the traditions of Buddhism and science—a project that is exploring how complementary worldviews and analytic procedures might further the development of an expanded science of mind. (Presti, 2020, p. 341)

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# Intermediate
Film Writing

Emily West &

Intermediate Film Writing

Emily West & Lida Zeitlin Wu

Writing about moving-image media poses peculiar challenges—and offers distinct pleasures—for students in disciplines across the university. This course challenged students to develop the vocabulary and skills to do so with clarity and confidence.

Our community of practice used small, collaborative writing pods as a space to confront the challenges of academic writing, provide individual and peer feedback, and witness growth. Film majors joined other Cal students in the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences, as well as visiting students from international universities. Small- and large-group discussions tended toward honest reflection about bad habits and blind spots—but also the triumph of a good turn of phrase or a hard-won thesis statement. As the semester progressed, we bonded over the struggle of unlearning old strategies and learning new ones. At the end of our time together, students expressed pleasure in a sense of finally feeling smarter than the films themselves and able to see around the techniques they used to the cultural work they were performing.

Weekly writing assignments offered occasions to explore film vocabulary, practice new choices of style and voice, and compose three different types of essay: the sequence analysis, analytical essay, and critical essay. At times, our focus was as narrow as one sentence or one paragraph. This narrow lens forced students and instructors alike to be extremely selective about choices that might ordinarily not give us pause. This allowed us to notice hitherto unseen predilections: preference for passive voice or neglect of the artful topic sentence, for instance. Attention to these unconscious habits, and their stubborn persistence, brought us to new metacognitive conversations about what practice does for us, how we learn, and how we change. At the end of the semester, students shared a sense of pride in their efforts and, from diction to the grand sweep of an argument, new awareness of what attending to one's writing really means.
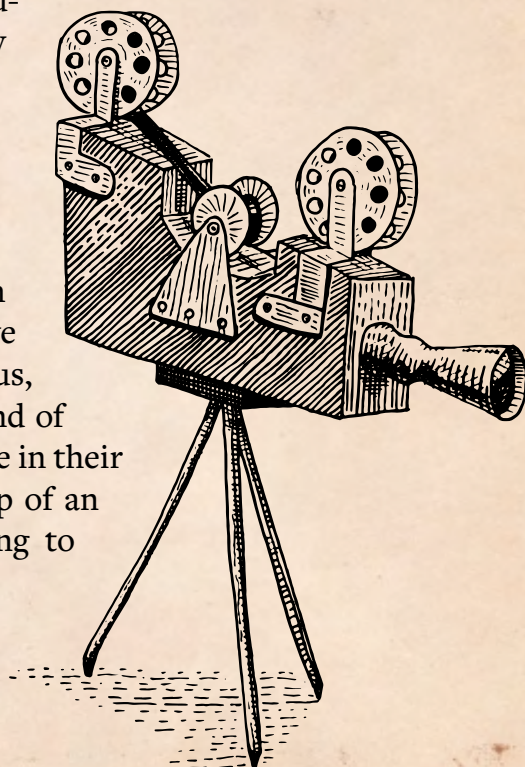
"It's a Suit, It's Me": Mechanical Personhood in *Iron Man*

Miri Choi

"Visionary, genius, American patriot," says a meta-diegetic advertisement at the beginning of *Iron Man* (Jon Favreau, 2008), describing its protagonist, Tony Stark. Throughout the film's birth-of-a-hero narrative, Stark earns himself one more label: Iron Man, a superhero in his self-manufactured metallic bodysuit powered by the best of his company's military technology. Allowing Stark to blast through space at will and withstand bullets, the suit wraps the "visionary," "genius," and "American patriot" in shiny red-and-gold armor, exhibiting his figure as a man of fantasies. One of the fantasies most visible in the film is that of the empowering mechanical body, made invincible through its pairing with human genius. This fantasy of enablement is what Despina Kakoudaki calls the "ego-enhancing use of advanced gadgetry" (77) as she contextualizes *Iron Man* within a lineage of texts featuring fictional mechanical persons. Kakoudaki's reading of the Iron Man suit as an enabling gadget that allows the man inside to transcend his organic body surely identifies one fantasy about the mechanical body, but it fails to address another ideological fantasy at work. To untangle this other fantasy, I intend to extend Kakoudaki's examination of the "ego-enhancing" mechanical gadget with my reading of *Iron Man*. Specifically, I aim to complicate her interpretation of the "user-tool" relationship between Tony Stark and his super-suit. Instead of simply liberating Stark's mind from organic physical limits, the suit merges with Stark both materially and psychologically and therefore troubles the boundary that separates the human user from his mechanical instrument. When he flies through the sky in his mechanical body, Stark does not transcend his body as he is no longer himself, purely; the fantasy of Iron Man is less about "transcendence" or "ego-enhancement" and more about transformation and ego-synthesis.

Kakoudaki's *Anatomy of a Robot: Literature, Cinema and the Cultural Work of Artificial People* offers a discursive analysis of the artificial person as part of a "transhistorical discursive continuum" (2) within which organic persons form, project, and modify their understanding of their own organic personhood. In her second chapter, "The Mechanical Body," Kakoudaki posits the fictional mechanical body in literature and film as an allegorical figure that reveals the way viewers perceive the organic body in relation to machinery through fantasies of "embodied mechanicity," or the integration of organism and mechanism in one body (70). Explaining this merger of seemingly incompatible systems, she identifies fantasies of "mechanicity" that we use to define, and project onto, artificial bodies—particularly those of control and autonomy. An example of this embodied mechanicity fantasy is that of absolute, "top-down" command structures that imagine an ideal user-tool relationship in which the integration of the human user and their mechanical

apparatus allows for "perfect" coordination while still maintaining a secure separation between the two entities so that "the user's sovereignty is not threatened or undermined … [and] the tool is removable and distinct" (77). This fantasy of "merely enabling" technology motivates a particular trend in narrative depictions of artificial bodies: that of "ego-enhancing" gadgetry.

Taking the example of Tony Stark's super-suit in *Iron Man*, Kakoudaki analyzes how the suit's spectacular, fully-controlled mechanical body allows his "mind" to engage in an operation unmediated by physical limits: "[W]hen Stark flies through space he both inhabits his body and leaves it behind, as the enveloping machine facilitates a dream of transcendence, allowing pure will and desire to interact with the material world" (77). Here, Kakoudaki presents a model of "top-down embodied mechanicity" in which the mechanical suit liberates and purifies its "sovereign" human user's intellect. I intervene in this model by pointing out how it assumes that the human mind precedes, and thus remains unaltered by, the physical synthesis of organic and mechanical bodies. Contrasting this assumption, a close reading of the film's depiction of Stark and/in his suit reveals that a psychological merger of organic and mechanical "minds" accompanies this bodily synthesis.

Depicting Stark's first login to his Iron Man interface, the camera switches in and out of Stark's organic perspective to demonstrate how his "human" mind expands to, and merges with, the mechanical mindscape of the computer. In a point-of-view shot, the camera imitates Stark's field of vision as his suited right arm grabs his mask and pulls it closer. "Jarvis, are you there?" Stark calls out to his home computer operating system, to which it immediately responds, "At your service, sir." With this signal, the dark inside of the mask covers the entire frame, revealing a glimpse of the digitally-curated interface beyond its narrow rectangular eyeholes. Then, the camera cuts to a frontal close-up shot of Stark's eyes, slowly zooming out to reveal his entire face as layers of light, teal-colored displays cover it. The next shot places the camera back in Stark's now fully integrated field of vision, using handheld pans to show the parking garage while the teal displays pop up in a dashboard-like design to locate and analyze the objects. In this set of transitions, the camera switches between the mutually exchanged "gazes" of Stark and the garage, serving as a mediating screen that stands between them, as the digital interface layered on the surface of the mechanical mask. It then uses this position to merge these two visual fields into a single field of consciousness: an embodied mechanical mindscape, an *inter-face*, that is both organic and machine-like but never distinctively one or the other. The organism-mechanism integration occurs not only at the material level, as Kakoudaki suggests in her argument about *Iron Man*'s mechanical body, but also at the psychological level of personhood.

The next series of shots further develops this integration of—and thus blurring of

boundaries between—the user-controller and the mechanical apparatus as it narrates Stark's and Jarvis' collaborative "check-up" on the suit. Kakoudaki reads the two characters' relationship as one in which one agent erases the other: "Even the software agent that manages the super-suit's programming disappears at some point, to display Stark's face" (77). This analysis supports her claim that Stark's "top-down" command over his technology abstracts the material presence of his organic—and eventually his mechanical—body. Indeed, the back-and-forth exchange of orders and reports in this scene seems to suggest that Stark, the "mastermind," assumes absolute agency while Jarvis, the operating system of his suit, merely carries out his order in the rear. For example, in dialogue alone, Stark appears to take the executive position while Jarvis' lines consist almost solely of responses to his order: "Do a check on control services." / "As you wish." However, the images over which this vocal narration occurs confuse, contradict, and trouble the seemingly vertical and distinguished relationship between Stark and Jarvis by presenting perspectives that do not "match" the speaker. At the final stage of the check-up, the camera cuts to an exterior examination of the suit that, in a montage of rotating shots, showcases its tightening adjustments to Stark's body. When the check-up is over and the suit—with Stark in it—is fully animate, the camera films it in a frontal full-body shot, approaching its mechanical mask-face. Over this shot, Jarvis reports on its completed operation: "Test complete. Preparing to power down and begin diagnostics." Here, the frontal angle of the shot, the camera movement that emphasizes the mask-face, and the slight, nod-like tilt of the head draw an image-audio association in which it *seems* that the suit—and the person inside it—is the speaker of the line. This association then begs the question of who is inside the suit: Stark, whose face occupies the headspace of the suit; or Jarvis, whose voice attaches with its face? Which "mind" does the suit speak for?

Instead of answering this question, the film develops this ambiguity of *which person represents the suit* into a sense of entwinement where, co-embodying the suit, Stark and Jarvis occupy a single integrated personhood. (To acknowledge and emphasize this integration, I will refer to this synthesized mechanical person as *SuitStark*.) When Stark orders it to "do a weather and ATC check [and] start listening in on ground control," implying his intention of a trial flight, Jarvis responds with hesitation ("Sir, there are still terabytes of calculations needed before an actual flight is...") before Stark cuts it off with a witty dismissal: "Sometimes you got to run before you can walk." The camera then switches to a full-body shot of SuitStark posing for take-off, as Stark's voice counts down: "Ready? In three, two, one." Here, Stark's dialogue interrupts Jarvis' to reinforce Stark's will to fly out, then assumes instant compliance by allowing no room for another response. Such an arrangement of dialogue alone seems to attribute a sense of exclusive and absolute control over the suit's operation to Stark, foregrounding his desire over the mechanical and material processes of its execution. Then, again, the images over which this exchange occurs suggest otherwise. Accompanying Jarvis' initial reply to Stark's command is a point-of-view shot of the garage that embodies Stark's digitally-enhanced field of vision.

The displays in the frame already show a map of aircraft traffic, directly countering Jarvis' verbal reluctance. Even before Stark reinforces his command, the data is already available to him on his screen—almost simultaneously with his initial order. Stark's immediate count-down and take-off posture after his order, then, represents less of a "top-down" command-execution process between Stark and Jarvis. Rather, it alludes to the merger of the two entities through which command and execution happen at the same time by SuitStark's synthesized mind. Therefore, in a way, Kakoudaki's use of the word "disappearance" in her description of Stark and Jarvis' relationship is accurate. Jarvis indeed "disappears" from the film's display of the Iron Man fantasy; only, so does Stark, as this disappearance connotes blending rather than replacement.

When Jarvis and its mechanical mind does disappear and Stark's organic consciousness replaces it, Iron Man faces a crisis. This complicates Kakoudaki's description of SuitStark's operation as one in which "[Stark's] enveloping machine facilitates a dream of transcendence, allowing pure will and desire to interact with the material world" (77)—an analysis that relies upon the premise of a pre-existing organic ego awaiting liberation by the mechanical apparatus. Surely, in one way, the film depicts SuitStark's blasting flight above his Malibu mansion in a hyper-sensational account of the suit's exceptional power, fueling the fantasy of machine-enabled "transcendence" where the mind finally breaks free from the limits of the organic body. Filming SuitStark's first moments in the sky after "take-off," the camera chaotically intercuts tracking shots of SuitStark in his untraceably swift motion (his figure moves in clashing directions with the camera and thus often exits the frame, emphasizing this untraceability); wobbly close-up shots of Stark's face in his constantly rotating head display; and similarly shaky point-of-view shots. An upbeat musical score with string orchestra and electric guitar fills the audioscape along with jet-like sound effects of the suit and Stark's euphoric breathy exclamations. By canceling out "external" noise here, the film appears to isolate Stark's bodily senses to interact with nothing other than the suit—as if, as Kakoudaki interprets, Stark leaves behind his organic field of sensation in experiencing the flight.

However, when read in relation to the following set of shots, this isolation of Stark's sensation within the suit only represents Stark's temporary "adjustment" into, and integration with, the suit. In this way, the sequence questions the fantasy of mind-body "transcendence" that it appears to feed. After a point-of-view shot of SuitStark's digital dashboard shows his interface's "horizon lock," the camera stabilizes its angles and movements, now keeping SuitStark's entire body safely within its frame while still utilizing tilts—only smoother—to preserve a visual sense of dynamism. Stark's heavy breathing and exclamations stop, replaced with his casual, ordinary voice: "Handles like a dream." The roaring engine noise tunes down to make way for the beeping noises of SuitStark's digital interface. Close-up shots of Stark's face inside his mechanical head disappear; instead, when SuitStark flies above a carousel, the film crosscuts his dashboard point-of-view shots

of the carousel with an external medium shot of his mechanical mask/face. Here, in a shot-reverse-shot arrangement, the film replaces Stark's organic face—and reaction to his mid-air sensations—with the mechanically integrated one of SuitStark. Through this transition, the sequence emphasizes the significance of SuitStark's synthesized organic-mechanical mind—even more so than the body—in completing *Iron Man*'s fantasy of embodied mechanicity.

This emphasis peaks when Stark, in his "purely organic" material/intellectual presence, departs from his mechanical subjectivity to interact alone with the machine body in the face of the "icing problem." Here, the integrated mind of SuitStark asserts its significance through its brief absence as it splits into separate entities of Stark / (inanimate) suit. As SuitStark reaches an altitude too high and freezes, a medium shot of the suit's upper body shows a white layer of frost forming on its surface. Following a quick cut to its flare-blasting feet tripping out, the camera zooms into its mask in a close-up as the bright blue light in its eye-holes flickers off. Drawing a direct visual contrast with the fast-paced tracking shots of SuitStark's flight, a static long shot follows Stark/suit's mid-air halt and immediate fall in a slower downward pan. Then, a point-of-view shot shows Stark's field of vision, now pitch-black, with only the unidentifiably quick flashes of the outside world visible beyond the eye holes. At this moment, the musical score stops along with the mechanical noise of the suit, foregrounding Stark's scream and the hollow swish of the air as the only sounds in the audioscape. Here, the film removes the material presence of the suit, leaving Stark's organic sight and hearing as the only mode of registering—in an extremely limited capacity—the state of his mechanical body. Furthermore, the dissonance between the frantically spinning body of Stark/suit and the indifferent camera peering down at its receding figure emphasizes the bodily sensation of the fall, as the intercut tracking shots did with the flight—only this time horrifying instead of exciting. Jarvis' psychological presence abandons Stark as well: "We iced up, Jarvis! Deploy flaps!" Stark cries out, but he receives no answer. "Jarvis?" Stark pleads once again after another moment of silence. "Come on, we got to break the ice!" Here, the gaps of "silence" in between each of Stark's calls foreground Jarvis' absence—a stark contrast with the check-up scene in the garage in which, through Stark's breakless dialogues, Jarvis' unresponsiveness connoted no *need* for a response rather than no response.

In the end, SuitStark's return saves Stark's organic and mechanical bodies from destruction. Stark manually breaks the ice on the surface of the suit by reaching down to his thigh and turning the knob to deploy the flaps. The sound of the ice shattering immediately follows as the camera switches to a frontal close-up shot of the mask/face "back on" with a blue light flashing through its eye holes, signaling its power-on with an engine noise elevating in volume. Over a spinning aerial shot of the night city, a series of digital displays appear to rebuild the virtual dashboard. The suit once again shoots up, regaining speed and blasting bright flares from its feet; the upbeat soundtrack resumes; a close-up shot of

Stark's *inter-face* returns as he exclaims in victorious joy. From a simple cause-and-effect layout of events alone, it may seem that the film foregrounds Stark's "purely" human self as the ultimate hero, a user totally independent from his mechanical apparatus; that, at the end of the day, it is Stark's "human" wit and control over his suit that makes Iron Man's operation possible. However, the formal "restoration of order" in the sequence suggests otherwise as it showcases SuitStark's return through its sequential and meticulous reintroduction of shot compositions, angles, and arrangements that characterized SuitStark's meshed coordination of organic and mechanical personhood.

No wonder, then, Stark's merely being inside his suit is not enough to define Iron Man. Flying back from his first combat, SuitStark engages in a mid-air chase with American military aircrafts that, after detecting his unidentifiable figure, proceed to destroy him. In an urgent phone call to his friend, Colonel Rhodes, Stark pleads for the pursuit to stop by revealing that their unidentified aerial object is, in fact, himself: "Hi, Rhodey, it's me." Instead of registering instantly, this line leads to an exchange of misunderstandings and clarifications. Finally, Stark yells, "This is not a piece of equipment. I'm in it. It's a suit. It's me!" It is only after this exclamation that Rhodes understands what Stark means by his initial line—that, because Stark is in it, the suit is essentially different from an inanimate object; and that this *not-an-object* is Stark himself. In such a linguistic identification of Stark with (and *as*) the suit, the film verbally demonstrates an integration of user and tool; of organic and mechanical selfhood. Iron Man's superhero fantasy roots in this integration of personhood, as its appeal of exceptional mechanical power and human brilliance in faultless coordination works not through "top-down" control and absolute governance—a structure inherently heterogeneous—but of singularization; of total synthesis both in body and mind. In this way, when Stark announces his superhero identity at the end of the film ("I am Iron Man"), he does not merely "transcend" his past organic self into a man managing an empowering suit; rather, he *transforms* into his suit to become *Iron Man*—a self not just armored in iron but *made* of metal. He embodies the machine; the machine embodies him.

It's So Annoying! The Complicated Feminism of *Aquamarine*

Amaris L'Heureux

Aquamarine's release in 2006 marked a new chapter in retellings of the classic *Little Mermaid* tale. Its pointed decision to change the ending from relying on heterosexual male love to save the day to the platonic love between girls seems to mark the film as an explicitly feminist retelling. Scholars such as Athena Bellas have praised the film for revising the traditional narrative of "silent objectification" in service of male affection, instead offering "another way of doing girlhood that is contrary to hegemonic femininity" (Bellas 217). Instead of the mermaid's voice being literally taken away, in *Aquamarine* she retains it and uses it to confidently express herself in spite of what others tell her to do. Bellas draws attention to the film's critical awareness of "heteronormative scripts and rituals," represented in the film through the teen beauty magazines that the human girls use in an attempt to educate the mermaid on how to attract a boy (Bellas 199). Bellas ultimately argues that the film is critical of these hegemonic scripts and progressively offers alternatives by highlighting the fulfilling value of female friendships over heterosexual coupling.

In my own analysis, I will identify many areas in which the film subverts the gendered conventions of cinematic visuals outlined by Laura Mulvey, particularly involving the film's lead male character, Raymond, who occupies the typically female position of to-be-looked-at. With all this alluring evidence one may be tempted, like Bellas and myself, to look optimistically at the elements of feminism that *Aquamarine* puts forth and evaluate the film as a feminist triumph. However, in doing so, one would be turning a blind eye to the representation of two characters: Cecilia and Aquamarine. In acknowledging the film's treatment of them, one must also acknowledge the effort that Aquamarine puts into ultimately containing the female power that it occasionally lets loose. Upon preliminary examination, *Aquamarine* makes an attempt to overturn the conventions of the male gaze, reversing the male-female power dynamics of narrative agency and to-be-looked-at-ness. At the same time, as illustrated by Bellas, *Aquamarine* appears to "act against adult masculine authority" and "find ways to expand the field of girlhood" (Bellas 221). However, the film ultimately falls short of true feminist subversiveness on both counts because of its treatment of Aquamarine and Cecilia, who operate as both a method to neutralize the threat of gendered power reversal and continue to reinforce a right and wrong way of doing girlhood.

In her book, *Fairy Tales on the Teen Screen: Rituals of Girlhood,* Athena Bellas examines *Aquamarine*, comparing the film's representation of girlhood to that of its fairy-tale

origin, Anderson's *The Little Mermaid,* and arguing that *Aquamarine* is much more progressively feminist than its predecessors. Bellas recognizes that the mermaid narrative has long been examined in relationship to "the narrative of the girl's rite of passage," acknowledging scholarship that has described the narrative as one in which "the mermaid is confronted with the process of transforming into the role of 'girl' when she arrives on land, negotiating what it means to take up this position" (Bellas 189). The unique position of the mermaid entering the human world ignorant of what it means to perform cultural codes of femininity forces the recognition of these codes and a reaction of acceptance or critique of these constructs. Bellas establishes that in the original Anderson story, "the [mermaid] heroine's process of feminine transformation requires the obliteration of self [...] in order to gain entry to dry land and gain the love of a man" (Bellas 198). The mermaid must literally give up her authentic mermaid identity and her voice, performing a mode of girlhood that follows "heteronormative scripts," submitting herself to silent objectification, existing only to be looked at, in a quest for heterosexual male validation (Bellas 199).

In contrast, Bellas argues that in *Aquamarine*'s revision the mermaid "rebels against the heteronormative scripts and rituals that the culture compels her to adopt and internalise" (Bellas 199). Aqua (I will be referring to the character of Aquamarine by her nickname, "Aqua," to avoid confusion with the film's title) keeps her voice, and though the girls she meets on land attempt to educate her on teen beauty magazines' "heteronormative scripts and rituals" that will win her male validation, she responds to them critically, drawing attention to their constructedness (Bellas 199). Bellas ultimately claims that *Aquamarine* succeeds in rejecting "status quo constructions" of girlhood and that the girls "collectively act against adult masculine authority" and "find ways to expand the field of girlhood as they chart flexible feminine adolescent identities and voices" (Bellas 221). The "adult masculine authority" that they rebel against is Aqua's father, and the methods of expansion include poking fun at female behavioral expectations that they find in teen magazines, Hailey's tomboyishness, and Aqua's outspoken confidence. I agree with Bellas that this representation is certainly a more flexible way of "doing girlhood" than what is offered in the original Anderson tale. However, I ultimately find that *Aquamarine*'s representation of "doing girlhood" is far less radical than Bellas hopes; the film still enforces a clear "right" and "wrong" way of doing girlhood that is in line with culturally sanctioned expressions of femininity.

I will begin by challenging Bellas' interpretation of the girls' (Aqua, Hailey, and Claire) reactions to cultural expectations around girlhood as critical. While I do see the film as paying lip service to criticism of these heteronormative codes, this is as far as the criticism goes. A crucial scene in which the girls interact with the culturally dominant "heteronormative scripts and rituals" is when they teach Aqua about teen beauty magazines. The film breaking into a montage as the girls read through piles and piles of

these magazines in Claire's room (Bellas 199). Bellas reads the "extreme close-ups on the heroines' eyes as they move across the page" as "promote[ing] a spectatorial position of an active, scanning, critical" (Bellas 205). She interprets this depiction of the girls reading as positioning them as critical consumers of the magazine's content. Bellas supports this reading with Aqua's exclamation after reading, "how do you remember all this? You have to be flirty but demure, devoted but not desperate, available but elusive? It's so annoying!" However, in the context of the film's later scenes, it appears that "It's so annoying!" is as far as the film's criticism will go. Even Aqua doesn't fully commit to her critical comment, seconds later admitting, "Yet strangely addictive." Immediately after consuming dozens of teen magazines, the girls go to the street fair so that Aqua can meet up with Raymond. They then immediately apply the social scripts that they learnt from the magazines. Aqua, the most "critical," seems to quote them verbatim, suggesting, "how about if we do what Liz D. from Skokie suggests? The 'Laugh and Pass,' casually walk past him...laughing." The frantically scanning eyes from the earlier scene now seem to denote the total and rapid internalization of the magazine's information rather than a critical gaze. Not only do the other girls immediately agree that this is a good idea, but the film narrative does as well. The tactics from the magazines work; Raymond takes notice of Aqua, and they have a wonderful romantic date. While Aqua's outsider-perspective reactions to heteronormative femininity pay lip service to critical ideas, the film ultimately rewards the girls' devotion to following the advice that "focus[es] exclusively on girlhood as an identity centered on the codes of feminine desirability and heterosexual romance," or as Claire and Hailey often refer to it, "boy bagging technology" (Bellas 203).

In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Laura Mulvey outlines the problematically gendered way in which mainstream film makes itself visually pleasurable. She identifies this as arising from the two contradictory methods of producing visual pleasure: "the first, scopophilia, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight," while "the second, developed through narcissism and the constitution of the ego, comes from identification with the image seen" (Mulvey 9). The contradiction is dealt through a patriarchal division of visual labor: "pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female" (Mulvey 10). What this translates to is female characters typically occupying the position of spectacle. They are pleasurable objects to-be-looked-at, not driving the narrative but instead occasionally halting in, specifically to indulge moments of to-be-looked-at, "freeze[ing] the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (Mulvey 11). The male characters, on the other hand, are typically the film's protagonists. They drive the narrative, act with agency; they are the ones the film positions the viewer to identify with. And it is through this Freudian ego identification with the male in power that the viewer derives pleasure, sharing in the hero's triumphs. The production of visual pleasure upholds masculinity, but Mulvey notes the fragileness of this masculinity. By placing women as the object of

visual pleasure there is a paradoxical risk. In the Freudian sense, her lack of penis awakens male castration anxiety and hence displeasure. Therefore, in order to alleviate this anxiety, the threat must be dealt with by the film in one of two ways. The first is sadistic devaluation, making the woman a "guilty object," whom the film may choose to either punish or forgive/rescue. In both cases the agency does not lie with the guilty woman, and she is at the mercy of the male, ego-driven narrative (Mulvey 15). The second method is fetishistic over-valuation in which the woman is so idealized and sexualized that she is dehumanized and exists purely as an erotic object. *Aquamarine* attempts an interesting gender reversal of the power dynamics of the male gaze involving the male character of Raymond, however it ultimately contains that reversal by nullifying the female threats of Cecilia and Aqua through sadistic devaluation and fetishistic overvaluation respectively.

The film introduces Cecilia in a way that both antagonizes and disavows her way of "doing girlhood" while also highlighting her opposition to being made a passive object. The scene begins with a shot of Hailey in profile in a medium close-up that showcases her quick change in facial expression, from relaxed to concerned, before she seriously announces, "Incoming." The camera cuts to Claire, who responds by craning her neck to look and letting out a distressed sigh. The film establishes that Cecilia is an imposing threat even before it reveals her, the phrase "incoming" reminiscent of the arrival of a military attack rather than a teen at the beach, and the girls' beach umbrella resembling a defensive barricade. The film ominously sets up this antagonism and then performs the big reveal, cutting to a medium shot of Cecilia, front and center, flanked by three other girls, descending the wooden stairs onto the beach. All four girls are wearing beach clothing, bikinis and various degrees of cover-ups, the flashy pink tones, fashionable sunglasses, and sparkling earrings highlighting the anticipated threat as "girly" in a clearly constructed way. Though all four sport jewelry and accessories, Cecilia is the only one wearing a necklace, and its glitter and exorbitant size emphasizes Cecilia's appearance as self-adorned and constructed for the purpose of commanding attention to her. As they walk down the stairs, Cecilia stops, bringing the others to an abrupt halt as well. Her control over their movements signifies her assertiveness and position of power. She then looks forward and lowers her sunglasses, more directly focusing her gaze as she says "Hello, hottie." This prompts the girl closest to her to also lower her sunglasses and gaze directly at the object of Cecilia's desire, Raymond. The film places Cecilia in a position of power, dictating who is to be looked at, causing those around her, and even the camera, which cuts to Raymond's muscled back, to join in the gaze. This juxtaposition strips Raymond of the power to look. His back is turned, and he can display no eyes to return the voyeuristic and desiring gaze of Cecilia. After sexualizing Raymond by referring to him as a "hottie" and placing him under her desiring gaze, Cecilia struts confidently forward, followed by her friends. The camera also follows her lead, and she appears to direct its movement, pushing it forward. The camera continues to cut back to Raymond from Cecilia's point of view before cutting back to her. She now stops, pursing her lips in

a smug anticipatory fashion, and begins theatrically pulling at the strings tying together her thin coverup. Her eyes are locked with the camera, meeting and appearing to invite its gaze, having placed herself in the literal center of attention, a friend on each side of her framing her symmetrically and turning to look at her body as she uncovers it. After just having Cecilia objectify a man, Raymond, the film stages an attempt to objectify and look at Cecilia. However, she rejects total passive subjection and looks back. The camera then cuts back to the surrogate audience of Claire and Hailey who react "Woah," before returning to the front and center. Cecilia, who opens her mouth in a triumphant and gleeful smile, struts towards the camera, filling up more of the frame with her tan bikini body as Hailey frustratedly asks, "Did they get...bigger?"—the implication being that she is referring to Cecilia's breasts. In this scene, Cecilia dictates the sexual gaze, first designating Raymond and then herself as object. While she does make her entrance as a sexualized body, she has taken part in the construction, created intentionally by the outfit and accessories that she manipulated to make her grand entrance. Cecilia is established as a figure who confidently expresses her girlhood as a force of power, expressing delight in commanding the gaze of others. Cecilia's expression of desire to be looked at offers an alternative to traditionally passive objectification. Cecilia is looked at, but she invites the look and looks back; she is an active subject. Cecilia is clearly offering an alternative to the submissive and silenced mode of girlhood offered in the original Anderson story, but the film demonizes her way of doing girlhood because it also involves an awareness and attempt at control over her sexuality.

Despite the challenge that Cecilia appears to pose to a patriarchal male gaze, Cecilia's threat is neutralized through "sadistic devaluation" (Mulvey 15). As established earlier, this is done by making the female character into a "guilty object" on which the male characters choose to either enact punishment or rescue (Mulvey 15). Cecilia is the antagonist of the film, and there are two key moments in which she is punished by male characters for her guilty actions. The first is at a pool party where she tells a boy that Claire, who is traumatized by water, wants to be thrown in the pool. This mean-spirited prank is meant to stop Claire from revealing another of Cecilia's lies. If Cecilia's guilt weren't established by this alone, Claire's terrified screaming followed by a close up of her soft crying when she is finally put down evokes pity and establishes Cecilia's guilt clearly. Raymond asks Cecilia why she would scare Claire like that, to which Cecilia replies that Claire just wanted attention. Raymond responds, scathingly, "No, that's your job, isn't it, Cecilia?" curling his lip in disgust before shaking his head and walking off. What's particularly telling about this scene is the emphasis on attention. It is not her cruel action that is punished but her desire to direct attention. The second punishment of Cecilia is more dramatic. After her plot to reveal that Aqua is a mermaid fails, her father punishes her on live TV. Her humiliation is total, and she is left frantically sobbing as her father demands her car keys, telling her, "while you're walking to school every day, you can try and figure out why it is you need so much attention!" Again, the emphasis is not on her deceit, but

on her desire to command attention. Despite attempts by Cecilia to exert agency and be an active subject of others' attention, this is what the film ultimately punishes and humiliates her for.

The film has one potentially subversive revision of the gendered cinematic gaze, and it is communicated through the character of Raymond. He appears to be the archetype of the male gaze: a lifeguard whose role is literally both to look at and act with agency upon those who cannot. However, within the film's form and narrative his position is radically different. His gaze is never the one with which the viewer is to identify; he is the object most to-be-looked-at. As Mulvey quotes Boetticher in *Visual Pleasure*, "What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. [...] The love or fear [that] she inspires in the hero [...] makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance" (Mulvey 12). In *Aquamarine* it's the man, Raymond, who occupies this position of "the heroine." The female protagonist, Aqua, first sees Raymond from the elevated position of a balcony, looking down at the beach and its occupants. Immediately after declaring that "I want it [love]," she looks down and her eyes appear to catch sight of something before the camera cuts to the windsurfing Raymond. The film subjects Raymond to a series of shots that gratuitously showcase his body, athleticism, and to-be-looked-at-ness. The shots have a voyeuristic quality; Raymond is unaware he is being watched as he runs out of the water, shirtless; the slow-motion effect of the shot halts the narrative and allows the viewer (and Aqua) to look at his body with pleasure for as long as possible. In this moment and others, such as a scene where he leaps from a balcony in a series of slow motion and repeated shots, his "visual presence tends to work against the development of the story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation," as does a woman's presence in traditional narrative cinema (Mulvey 11). After this display Aqua declares that "Raymond is the one I love." Raymond has had no agency in or even knowledge of Aqua's decision, which drives the plot of the rest of the film; it is only what *he* "provokes," what *he* "represents," an object of Aqua's desire (Mulvey 12). Raymond has not exhibited any qualities to Aqua other than to exist as an object of her visual pleasure, yet this is all he is necessary for in this position. In himself, "the woman [the man] has not the slightest importance" (Mulvey 12). In response to labeling this reversal as progressively feminist, one might make the completely valid argument that the gender reversal of patriarchal power dynamics does little to address the deeper issue of objectification and rather permits continued visual subjugation. Even ignoring this, Aquamarine manages to fall short of completely reversing gendered visual power dynamics through its sadistic devaluation of Cecilia and over-valuation of Aqua.

In contrast to Cecilia, Aqua's way of doing girlhood acts as the film's gold standard. Like Cecilia, she is outspoken and attempts to shape her own destiny, rebelling against her father and running away from home. However, one key difference between Aqua

and Cecilia is in their self-consciousness of their own sex appeal. Cecilia takes full control in constructing her sexuality, choreographing the display of her body. Adorned in make-up and accessories, she takes effort to exert agency over her being perceived as a sexual subject. Aqua, on the other hand, is both naïve and sexy, beautiful without trying. This is obvious from her first arrival on land; Claire and Hailey hear a sound coming from the pool shed and frantically pull open the doors, revealing the human Aqua inside. Aqua has just made an entrance as theatrical as Cecilia's—and a much more scandalous one. Aqua's not wearing a revealing bikini; she's wearing nothing at all. However, the difference is that she is not playing an active role in the presentation of her sexuality. She has not chosen to be nude; it is simply a consequence of her transformation into a human. She does not flaunt her body but appears ignorant of its appeal. Her hair covers her breasts, and she excitedly shows Clare and Hailey her butt, not recognizing its sexual association, innocently calling it "cute" and adding that "I can sit on it!" The film sexualizes Aquamarine to the same extent as Cecilia, the difference being that Aqua is much less aware of her sexual appeal. The first piece of clothing that Aqua wears is Hailey's long-sleeved t-shirt, and in a show of innocence, she puts the shirt on "incorrectly." But before the girls can correct her, Aqua has tied the sleeves, turning it into an incredibly flattering minidress. In contrast to the countless outfits and accessories that Cecilia uses to construct her appearance, Aqua is beautiful in a simple t-shirt that she didn't even choose—it just happened to be around. This is all incredibly misleading, as the film itself is a carefully orchestrated construction and there is nothing natural or effortless about Aqua's appearance or wardrobe. However, by putting Aqua forward as an object of pleasurable spectacle, viewers are meant to be amazed by her ability to look stunning in a matter of seconds. In presenting Aqua as both effortlessly and innocently sexy, in opposition to Cecilia, whose sexuality is something she works to construct and exert control over, *Aquamarine* perpetuates the longstanding idea that women are most appealing when they are both sexualized and innocent, that a woman in control of her sexuality is less desirable. This contributes to a culture in which women cannot knowingly say yes to being sexualized, and if a woman cannot say yes, then a no must be interpreted as a yes—in short, a rape culture. A film that idolizes a way of doing girlhood that withholds girls' agency over their own sexuality is not as much of a feminist film as one might hope.

As exemplified by Aqua's response to the teen magazines, Bellas observes that Aqua "does not fully understand the way human language works, particularly when it comes to the 'language of love' and the cultural rituals of heterosexual dating," something highlighted throughout the film (Bellas 201). In an interaction where Aqua's naivety is played for laughs, she approaches Raymond for the first time, asking him, "Do you love me?" The camera frames her in close-up as she looks up at him smiling coquettishly. There is a cut to Raymond in close up who sputters, spraying water forward letting out a confused "uhm" for a few seconds before admitting incredulously, "No, but I think you're

hot." The shot-reverse-shot is complete with a close up of Aqua as he repeats, "You're really hot," her open mouth and furrowed brows communicating shock and irritation at his response. Voices from a car call out for Raymond, prompting him to depart, saying, "Well, uh, I'll see you later." Aqua makes her own departure, disappointment made visible in her small steps and audible as she dejectedly asks Claire and Hailey, "He doesn't love me? How can he not love me?" They ask Aqua what he said, to which she replies "He said I was hot, but how would he know? Do I feel hot to you?" The girls laugh at Aqua's confusion, never explaining to her what he meant. Bellas reads this as an interaction where "Aquamarine refuses to accept this ritual objectification and categorisation of her body. In this moment of disobedience and opposition to this language, Aquamarine is claiming her agency" (Bellas 202). Bellas sees Aqua's disgust and lack of satisfaction with Raymond's complement as a rejection of it and his sexual evaluation of her. The only issue with this reading is that Aqua is never aware of what Raymond actually meant and so is never able to react against "this ritual objectification." Her "opposition" is to her mistaken belief that Raymond was referring to her temperature, not his evaluation of her attractiveness. Aqua is unable to claim agency over language because she remains ignorant of its meaning. Furthermore, Aqua's being ignorant and even skeptical of the "heteronormative scripts and rituals" of the human world doesn't really end up mattering in terms of her hetero-romantic success. She doesn't resist the scripts or find success in her own alternative way; instead, in spite of her ignorance, she fits into them perfectly. Aqua doesn't have to know what "hot" means to be hot. She doesn't have to study beauty magazines to style herself in a cute minidress. Aqua can just "be herself" because her self is a conventionally attractive, blond, skinny, fashionable and vivacious teen girl. By having Aqua be both ignorant of and fit perfectly with the conventional model of girlhood, the film naturalizes this model. Girls should just "be themselves" because they should just happen to be the same as the hegemonic ideal.

Returning to Aqua's position in the gendered power dynamics of the cinematic gaze, it's crucial to address her mermaid form, which through "fetishistic scopophilia" neutralizes any threat that her presence might pose (Mulvey 15). As discussed above, Aqua's success at winning male affection via her looks and fashion sense can be relegated simply to examples of her being turned into a passive subject of visual pleasure. However, keeping in mind the attempt at reversing the gendered power-dynamics of the gaze through Raymond, it is possible to view Aqua as also occupying the role of "ego mirror" (Mulvey 13). Rather than receiving pleasure from her as a passive erotic object, the viewer experiences pleasure via identifying with her and sharing in the pleasure of her success at performing femininity (making cute outfits and getting the guy). When Aqua appears on screen as a mermaid the threat that she poses to masculinity dissipates as she becomes an overvalued object of erotic desire. As a mermaid, Aqua not only becomes literally inhuman, but she also becomes a fantastic visual spectacle, and the viewer can no longer identify with her perspective. Instead, identification shifts to the nearest human. For

example, when Claire and Hailey first meet Aqua, the viewer shares with them in being mesmerized by Aqua's spectacular sparkling tail which often occupies the foreground of shots. In focus and on display, shots of her tail are constantly intercut with shots of the girls simply looking at it, transfixed. In a particularly narrative-halting moment of spectacle, Aqua leaps into the air performing a backflip, framed so that she passes her full body and tail across the front of the camera. Aqua takes note that she is a spectacle, stating smugly, "You're staring at my tail." Hailey admits, "Well, yeah, I was," to which Aqua asks, "Do you...want to touch it?" Aqua's mermaid body is occupying the realm of fetishized object. It has been removed from the realm of real woman. The viewer derives pleasure from experiencing it visually, and the suggestion of desiring to possess it further through touching is made explicit through Hailey's admission. As if she could not be made a more inhumanly "perfect product," Aqua shares that "mermaids speak every language known to man, fish, crustacean, and several varieties of sea fowl" (Mulvey 16). Aqua's mermaid form remains an object of scopophilic visual pleasure throughout the film, alleviating any female threat to masculinity by placing her outside of the category of woman.

Finally, it's time to turn back to the narrative element that nominated this film as a feminist retelling to begin with: the ending. The most substantial departure from the original mermaid tale is at the end of the film. The true love that saves the day is not that of the heterosexual romance, but that of female friendship. While the film's narrative suggests that for Aqua, the love of female friendships triumphs over heterosexual romance, the film's form isn't so convincing. The film's climax is intense, featuring the three girls clinging to a buoy as a magical storm caused by Aqua's father threatens to pull her out to sea. In tears, the girls offer to spend their wish on Aqua, so that she can stay. Aqua asks, "Why would you do that for me?" to which Claire replies after some thought, "because we love you, Aqua." Immediately the storm vanishes and all is well, because the girls have proved to Aqua's father that love exists. Now that this heartwarming display is over, it appears that the film is ready to return to the romance. Raymond enters the frame, paddling toward Aqua, prompting Claire and Hailey to begin swimming away and visually enforcing the idea that there is only room for one of these relationships at a time. As soon as Raymond approaches, the emotional weight of the girls' bond dissipates like the storm moments earlier. They promptly leave her with not even a goodbye hug. The last thing that Claire says is "we want a full report!" referring to what will happen between Aqua and Raymond. Even for the girls, the romance is the superseding concern. Once Raymond arrives, Aqua slides onto his rescue board, spectacular mermaid tail on display. Aquamarine shyly tells him that she hopes that he's not mad, having just discovered that she's a mermaid, to which he replies "No! No, I'm not...I'm not mad. Surprised, definitely." Raymond then complements her tail shyly, prompting Aqua to squeal with delight. After nervously stuttering over his words, Raymond makes his intentions clear, telling Aqua, "I'm not sure how to ask a mermaid out, but I'd like to see you again."

Raymond asks if she could meet him in Fiji, which Aqua agrees to, smiling and nodding ecstatically before Raymond begins to lean in for a kiss. The camera frames them both in close up, kissing passionately for a few seconds before cutting to a wide shot of the two of them kissing on the rescue board as two dolphins leap into the air behind the couple, forming the top of a heart. While the film narrative pushes the idea that Aqua's female friendships are her most important relationships, the last shot of her is one of fairy tale heterosexual romance. In the end, what's most important is that she gets the guy.

Aquamarine embarks on an ambitious retelling of the classic little mermaid tale, and though it makes some interesting strides towards feminist revisions, it ultimately contains the feminine power that it begins to let loose and ends with the romanticization of heterosexuality that it set out to subvert.

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Ways of Seeing: *The Social Network* and Digital/Human Surveillance

Rhiannon Patapoff

David Fincher's 2010 drama, *The Social Network*, revels in the intricacies of our contemporary digital age. The story follows the tumultuous creation of the massive technological conglomerate Facebook through the actions of its head founder, Mark Zuckerberg, in the early 2000s. Composed in a dual-timeline format, the film tracks both the early formation of the company by the young Zuckerberg and his peers as well as the later lawsuits which resulted from the company's expansion. Both the diegesis of *The Social Network* and the real story of Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook are dependent upon the actions and choices of highly intelligent yet morally complicated men, who, over the course of the film's progression, appear to represent the very technological apparatus they created in their reliance on tactics of exploitation, deceit, and hoarding of personal information. In this work, I will argue that *The Social Network* constructs Facebook as a technological prosthetic extension of its main male characters, making their human personalities take on the qualities of the digital industry they themselves inaugurated, most notably behaviors of constant surveillance and exploitation of intimacy.

The film introduces Sean Parker in a way that aligns the audience with his male perspective, naturalizing the act of surveillance by placing it in his control and melding it with his youthful personality and the space of intimacy the scene takes place within. In his first moments on screen, the film alludes to Sean's youthful sexuality, depicting the repercussions of the morning after sleeping with a girl. He awakens to a girl climbing over him to get out of bed, opening their interaction with, "Sorry. I'm late for biochem." Sean remains in bed as the girl walks across the room, and the camera soon adopts his perspective, assuming the same angle of his physical orientation in the bedroom. The shot is positioned such that Sean's head is laying on the bed, and he gazes over the girl's body, starting at the back of her *Stanford*-embossed underwear and lifting upward until practically the whole backside of her body is visible. Here, Sean's gaze maintains a patriarchal power dynamic as he assumes control over the way the girl is perceived by the spectator. Once she gets out of bed, Sean remains lying down rustled in her comforter, exhibiting an entitlement to her space in her absence. The angle of the shot captures him from the girl's relative direction but is too low and close up to be her point of view from across the room. These shots confirm the film's alignment with the male gaze in refusing to take on a perspective that could be allied with the girl's. In this sense, the scene's construction of power stems from Sean and his act of looking and observing: as he looks at the girl, and she is unable to look back, he simulates the aptitude of technological platforms to maintain constant surveillance over subjects. In forcing the spectator to also adopt his power of looking, they, too, become subjects of Sean's entitled surveillance.
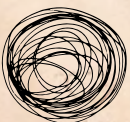
Through Sean's exchange of dialogue with the girl he slept with, his mode of looking transfers to a direct act of manipulation and exploitation. He effectively embraces the very nature and tactics of Facebook itself. Their dialogue is charged with predatory tension, but it passes as acceptable because it is disguised and thus naturalized as flirtatious banter. The girl doesn't think that Sean had even tried to remember her name, but he proves her wrong by interrupting her complaints and listing personal details she confided in him the previous night. "You don't remember my name, do you?" the girl prods after she walks across the room to face Sean. "Is it Stanford?" he quips back. "I should just kick your ass..." the girl goes on, flustered, before Sean interrupts her complaints with, "Amelia Ritter, but you prefer Amy. You're from Orinda, your father's in commercial real estate and your mother's ten years sober." Rather than simply communicating to Amy that he did, in fact, know her name, he felt compelled to utilize the vast amount of information he had been given access to in order to fortify his connection with her. The film paints this exchange, on its surface level, as Sean attempting to charm Amy in his attention to and knowledge of her personal anecdotes. However, at a deeper level, Sean's regurgitation of Amy's intimate personal information, even information with the potential to be deemed sensitive, is his way of exploiting her as a subject of his surveillance. His intrigue in her personal life denotes curiosity to the point of invasiveness, exemplifying the misuse of resources that many internet applications such as Facebook utilize for gain. The film is foregrounding the real-world complications of the digital age in toxic male characters, effectively emphasizing the larger systems of exploitation and objectification that both the male species and information technologies have historically perpetuated. It is the effects of these ancient institutionalized structures, such as patriarchy, which have allowed for the domination of newer forms of objection and exploitation as represented by these companies like Facebook.

A discarding of human benevolence in favor of intellectual and technological prowess and industrial superiority is a pertinent theme of *The Social Network*'s narrative, particularly in the scene in which Eduardo recounts his contract with the expanding Facebook corporation. This scene exemplifies the capacity of human invasiveness at the hands of Mark Zuckerberg's character, whose visual demonstration of constant surveillance alludes to his technological extension. The scene's heavy use of shallow focus isolates certain characters in contrast to one another, which enhances the theme of exploitation of individuality both within the diegetic legal trial and in the larger scope of real-world social media platforms. To orient our scene, Eduardo meets with two executives to discuss his contract and his shares in the company – the trio converses in a glass conference room looking out at the bustling Facebook office. The film briefly interrupts its simple shot-reverse-shot format of the three men twice when adopting Eduardo's own gaze out into the middle of the office, once with mention of Mark and once with mention of Sean. With mention of Mark Zuckerberg and his shares in the company, the camera cuts to adopt Eduardo's perspective, gazing at Mark through the glass. The same shift in

perspective occurs at the mention of Sean Parker's name, capturing the glare of the glass and the obstruction of the blinds as Eduardo peers outward. The tone of this meeting is relatively lighthearted in its banter and discussion of an unbelievable amount of money and is relatively equitable in its physical framing of individuals by maintaining level shots throughout. No two characters are ever depicted as looking down at the other, signaling no noticeable disdain or superiority. However, when shooting the men through the glass of the transparent office, the images are captured through a barrier which obstructs any physical contact between the individuals. Instead of discussing the details of the contract alongside the individuals involved, Sean and Mark are condensed into nothing but projections of data. Additionally, their bodies, shot through the glass, visualize their existence as digital extensions only visible because someone peers at them through a glared screen, but always able to peer back at their subject. In combining their physical representations with their conflation to monetary data, the film emphasizes the human-digital extension embraced by these two men.

The scene cuts through time to take us back to the "present day" lawsuits, undermining the sentiment of mutuality exhibited throughout the earlier part of this sequence. Instead, the following sequence relies on shifting camera focus to communicate an array of emotions and grievances. Once the film drops us back into the intensely charged deposition, the shot angles and camera focus no longer follow the prior formula of static medium shots. As Eduardo begins to delve into his argument, the camera frames him in a medium close-up facing away from everyone else present, alluding to his own moment of recollection of the events we had just seen play out on screen. His lawyer is out of focus sitting by his side, and Mark and his own law team sit across the table. Mark is entirely blurred in the background, but never out of sight as he rests just over Eduardo's shoulder, literalizing the structure of surveillance within the visual frame. Eduardo, in this sense, cannot seem to exist outside Mark's own existence. The film constructs the two characters as partners, but they are unable to be separated even following their conflict. The camera cuts to Mark across the table in a medium close-up profile shot; his lawyers sit next to him further away from the camera, always at his side for support. However, he is the only one in focus, asserting his dominance both through the focus and through his positioning in front of his peers. We cut once again from just behind Mark's head and over his shoulder at Eduardo, who slowly turns in his chair to face Mark head on. Eduardo is isolated from any other full body as he pleads to Mark, "I was your only friend," but Mark's blurred figure refuses to leave Eduardo alone. The film purposefully inserts Mark into Eduardo's emotional bargain, never allowing him the space to function either independently of him, or allowing the two to share a frame in an equitable manner. Mark, figurehead of the larger Facebook corporation, cannot bear to grant Eduardo an ounce of autonomy outside of Mark's own making. Though the film spotlights Eduardo as an individual in his moments of the camera's focus, Mark's overbearing presence taints any moment of Eduardo's independence. The details of the

deposition begin to come together once we realize that Eduardo's Facebook shares have been immensely diluted. In this instance, the film's narrative and the technical elements converge to expose Facebook's prioritization of information and capital over individual livelihoods, asserting Mark's invasiveness and exploitation over his close personal relationships and similar actions taken by his own company.

Directly following Eduardo's deposition, the film further exemplifies Mark's technological evolution alongside his own company by contrasting his personality in the initial stages of the company's development with his demeanor in the aftermath of Facebook's expansion. Eduardo reflects on a moment in the past following his departure from California where he and Mark reminisce on how far they have come. The scene is stark in its cut away from Eduardo's dialogue, with Mark finishing his sentence into the sequence Eduardo refers to in his deposition. This sequence begins on Mark's face looking toward Eduardo who is out of frame. As Mark speaks, the shot cuts to a close of up Eduardo taking a sip of beer, both smiling in their congruent successes and absent any intrusion by Mark's figure as in the prior scene from the future. We cut back to Mark as Eduardo walks into his frame, the two now equally splitting the screen. As the two smirk, drink, and reflect back on their earliest days creating the Facebook platform, their side profiles converse as equals without the intrusion of one lurking in the background of the other. Here, Mark's evolution into an extension of the technologies of his own creation is ever-present through the contrast with his earlier personality. His younger self is untarnished by the later facets of his own digital interface, and therefore those around him do not fall subject to his surveillance (let alone his potential for exploitation). The sharp cut away from his constant silent lurking, reminiscent of modern computers, into a mutual, lively conversation without any exploitation of a close friendship, illuminates the film's portrayal of a technological corruption by which Mark and Sean extend upon.

The Social Network's characterization of two of its main male figures is a testament to the powers of massive modern technological entities. The film's formal elements, including depth of field, sharp edits, and alignment with certain gazes, assist in communicating the overbearing presence of digital platforms like Facebook as well as the individuals who created those platforms. Sean Parker and Mark Zuckerberg exhibit diegetic behaviors that make clear the association between their human selves and the omnipresence of data, surveillance, and collection of information, extending the capabilities of digital interfaces through their human operations. Facebook, through the film's illustration, does not simply exist on the screens of users but has come to be infused into the foundations of humanity.
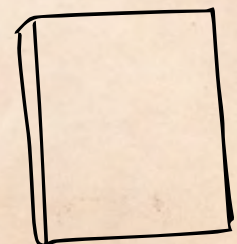
RHET 109

The Poetics, Philosophy, and Politics of 20th- and 21st-Century Families in America

The Poetics, Philosophy, and Politics of 20th- and 21st-Century Families in America

Ramona Naddaff & Maisie Wiltshire-Gordon

"They fill you with the faults they had," Philip Larkin writes of the family in his poem "This Be the Verse." The so-called "American" family comes in many shapes, forms and sizes—as do theories and fiction about it. There are short stories, novels, poems, memoirs, graphic novels, television shows, to mention but a few sites where narratives and images, descriptions and expressions, praise and blame, about the family happen. Philosophers, psychoanalysts, and political theorists concern themselves also with ways to configure families within their conceptual frameworks such that they reinforce and/or subvert normative claims and values, and construct relations between family and state, public and private spheres.

This course explores the multiple rhetorical representations of the family in 20th- and 21st-century America. Through readings from history, philosophy, literary criticism, gender theory and sociology, we examine critically how the nuclear family (in particular) shapes and misshapes, forms and deforms identities and aspirations, relationships and attachments, values and loyalties. We begin with Freud and Marx & Engels and continue through Jamaica Kincaid, Deborah Levy, and Maggie Nelson. We explore the nonfiction of Robert Kolker's *Hidden Valley Road*, Andrew Solomon's *Far From the Tree*, and W. Thomas Boyce's *The Dandelion and the Orchid*; we encounter novels from Toni Morrison (*God Help the Child*), Justin Torres (*We the Animals*), and Ocean Vuong (*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*). Through each of these perspectives, voices, and literary forms, we see the pervasive effect of the family as it shapes both authors and their texts.

No Time for Memories:
An Analysis of Chronology in
Justin Torres' *We The Animals*

Olivia Buchbinder

Justin Torres's *We The Animals* is a novel grounded in no particular time. While the novel gives the reader a clear sense of place—lying in a basement, sitting in the backseat of a car, floating in a lake—there is no clear chronological order or uniform passing of time. Lacking an orthodox chronological order, Torres comments on how one experiences time within one's memories.

Torres captures the feeling of an event rather than its exact chronological order. Torres expands and condenses moments depending on how they impact the narrator's journey from being a boy to being a young man. When the narrator recalls his seventh birthday, the boy's mother says to him, "When they ask how old you are, and you say 'I'm six plus one, or two, or more,' you'll be telling them that no matter

Figure 1. Clarence H. White, "Model in New York Studio," c.1915.
In the public domain from the National Gallery of Art.

how old you are, you are your Ma's baby boy" (Torres, 16). The narrator does not get older each year; instead, his new age is knitted together with the time before it. There is no demarcation, so he is always tied back to being six years old. This emotional experience of age is more significant than the narrator's chronological age, so each memory

feels inextricable from the next, and the emotional experience of the period of time is what becomes most important to document.

Torres uses ambiguous time to make the character's age seem ambiguous, too. The narrator sits with his brothers on a curve, and they beg passers to buy them things only sold to adults. "We planted ourselves on the concrete and held out our fistfuls of change and asked strangers to buy us troll things—cigarettes or beer or whiskey—but no one would" (Torres, 27). Because the kids are asking for cigarettes instead of bubblegum, their childhood dependence is blended with their oddly mature shopping list. Torres blurs the distinction between the narrator's childhood and adulthood, making it a gradual rather than an instantaneous identity shift.

The gradual transition of the author from a boy into a young man is displayed through his relationship to his father. The father (Paps) gives the narrator and his brothers a bath: "Paps scrubbed us rough with a soapy washcloth" (44). Rather than describe the washcloth as rough and soapy, the word "rough" describes both the way the father is bathing the narrator and the narrator's adopting roughness himself. This continues the novel's theme of aging not as the passage of chronological time but as a gradual emotional callusing.

In *We the Animals,* Torres does not organize the story in strict chronological order. Instead, the author plays with the passage of time, expanding and contracting each moment. He does not string together memories in a neat line, but instead wraps each back around into one big knot. Torres captures the ambiguity, chaos, and confusion memories hold and thus challenges the reader to think about the past through a new narrative.

Thursday is an Invisible Horse— Tomorrow Never Knows

Sophia Fox

Maggie Nelson writes, *"It often happens that we count our days as if the act of measurement made us some kind of promise. But really this is like hoisting a harness onto an invisible horse."*

The band stands on stage playing music, for me. Electric bubbles of sound skip around the room, and I become determined to pop each one on my hip bone. The guitar is shrilling until it is elastic stretching, and I pull it until my shoulders go gooey. The noise is happening, it exists just like my body—actual, perceivable, concrete. But a blushing bald man in a black blazer is too fixated on invisible horses to acquiesce. "It's a Thursday," he tells me. He says this over and over to me throughout the night. He tells me my energy is that of a "sold-out Saturday night."

A day is a man-made notion, one that is convenient and functional, as it provides a sense of structure. It is a medium that allows us to conceptualize existence into succinct, digestible chunks that have narrative logic. Units of time only become relevant because we know that one day our being will cease to be.

And I really love to think about the fleeting essence of my reality. A few weeks ago, I was driving south on Highway 1 through Big Sur. Bumblebee yellow sourgrass sprinkled the shrubby canyon highway-side, smack-dab over the perpetually shimmering ocean. And I realized that I myself had bled into the scene and was a turning cog within the magnificence. I laughed the whole time as I cried.

And I knew that it was only beautiful because it would all end. My song would end, the sun would go down, and I would arrive at my destination. So I befriended time then, in all its temporary glow.

But when one begins to insist that a Thursday comes with regulations, with requirements for my behavior—that is when it becomes comically blatant to me that Thursday is an illusion. Cycles of the visibility of sunlight depending on where I am physically located exist, sure. But a Thursday? A Thursday promises me nothing, and I refuse to make promises to Thursday.

What if I were to sit in the bottom of a deep well, like Toru Okada in Murakami's *Wind-up Bird Chronicles*, and have nothing but myself to interact with—no ability to distinguish

between day and night, no agenda to abide by? What does "Thursday" mean to me then?

What if I told you, on that Thursday, I turned the theater's creaky staircases into a play-ground, as I skipped up and down them like a pinball? That I carefully traced portals in the air with my pinky finger and wiggled inside them? I invite you, sir, to just try to succumb to impulse, and I promise I won't tell Thursday. Because I need to tell you, and it is best I tell you now—while I can—that *Tomorrow Never Knows, Tomorrow Never Knows, Tomorrow Never Knows.*

"God and the Mother"

Jameson McKenna

I believe in God the same way I believe in my mother.

Much like the catholic guilt ingrained in my subconscious, I can hear my mother's voice narrating my every decision. "What Would Sarah Do?" (a lesser known but not less important variation of the "What Would Jesus Do" mantra) is the bumper sticker clinging to my self-worth even after a million trips through the car wash.

In *God Help the Child*, Toni Morrison constructed a novel in which the driver of the plot is a secondary character. Like the God mentioned in the title, Sweetness, the main character's mother, is the one who seems to hold all the power. How she raised her child, Bride, and the way she sees her daughter's blackness, have a direct impact on the narrative.

Sweetness is an Old Testament God. She is brutal, unforgiving, and does not outwardly love her child. When Bride was young her mother wouldn't touch her. Bride explains, "distaste was all over her face when I was little and she had to bathe me. [...] I used to pray she would slap my face or spank me just to feel her touch. [...] She had ways to punish me without touching the skin she hated" (Morrison, 31). Sweetness's refusing to touch her daughter's black skin leaves Bride yearning for love, not entirely caring who she gets it from. Keeping with the trope for children of abuse, Bride's search for love is unsuccessful because she is too focused on her past.

At the end of the novel Sweetness reflects on her relationship with her daughter and admits that it is strained. Yet she deflects blame for her actions by invoking God's will. Many people use God as a way to deflect blame or claim superiority while making harmful claims toward outgroups. Throughout history, from the crusades to present-day anti-LGBTQ legislation, the invocation of God's name gives people the ability to have a hostile opinion without having to claim it as their own. Sweetness does not ask for forgiveness because she has Christianity on her side. In her mind every parent makes mistakes and her mistakes are her daughter's cross to bear.

Morrison's novel asks the reader to question what we expect our parents to leave us with. Sweetness is unloving and emotionally absent from Bride's life. My mother is neither of these things, yet for some reason, I feel as if I can relate to Bride as a daughter. Daughters will subconsciously follow their mothers' design like it is written in the Bible. Bride wants her mother's acceptance, and for a time would do anything to get it.

My mother is my ideal of beauty: strength without apology and an unwavering understanding of her self-worth. I want to be beautiful in my mother's eyes because I want the type of beauty she knows she has. Bride did not want her mother's beauty but rather the beauty she knew her mother did not see in her. The difference here speaks to the impact a mother can have on their child. Do you want to love yourself or do you want to love who you believe to be lovable? Is everyone's self-worth impacted by their mother? If so, what will my daughters be?

No matter the answer: God help the child.
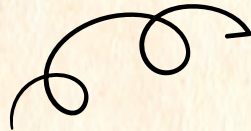
"Sundays"

Emily Peng

My father spent his weekdays at work and his weekends working. But every Sunday he'd dedicate to cooking us a special lunch. At the crack of dawn, he'd sit shirtless on the sofa, carefully scrutinizing a list of recipes. I've never gotten up early enough to help him, but I imagine he'd slowly stroll to the marketplace alone on the morning streets. I'd always wake up to the thick scent of soy sauce and spices leaking from our kitchen—a smell I've grown to associate with my father standing jubilantly in his frilly pink apron, concentrated on a sizzling pan of his creation. He took great pride in his dishes: his *"world-class"* green beans, stir-fried with garlic and pepper; the lotus root and pork soup which was *"better than any restaurant"*; the spicy tofu fried rice that was *"a fine art form."* Despite this bravado, each time a Sunday meal was served my father would sit at the head of the table and wait. He'd watch us take our first bites with a deep and overwhelming hopefulness. My mother would proclaim her approval by loudly boasting, *"this is delicious!"* And I would proclaim mine by eating bite after bite. At this, my father would smile, lighting up the room with his childishly sweet grin.

Once my father spent an entire day cooking, preparing a rich potato stew, crunchy garlic green beans, and a fish seeped tenderly in ginger sauce. The fish was a new dish, he said. He told us that he couldn't take any credit since he'd found the recipe online, but the glint in his eyes told us that he did. My mom took the first bite. *"This is delicious,"* she shouted, *"it tastes better than any restaurant!"* My dad turned to watch me, his eyes full of hope. The beginnings of a smile were already written on his face. But I pushed the bowl away. There was a clinking of chopsticks as I left the table. *"I had a big breakfast,"* I said. *"Anyways, I have to run to school to turn in a project."* My dad's face fell as he sat there, desolately staring at the creation he had been so proud of moments ago.

Instead, I sat shivering on a bench outside our apartment. The rancid scent of that fish and ginger was stuck to the winter's wind. Gruesome and pungent, I could smell it underneath the thickness of my fogging breath. It overwhelmed me, paralyzing me with an inescapable fear. As I took shaky breaths in, I began to hear my mother's voice, first cruel, then breaking. *"You're a shit father and a shit person! You're too hard on us! You've always been too hard on us!"* I heard my father's taunts, then the enormity of his disappointment. *"I work hard for this family! I push her because she can handle it! At least we both aren't lazy like you! You're a disappointment! And you wonder why I found someone else..."* It was not the threats of divorce or screams of another woman, but the sound of a fist meeting the wall that jolted me from my paralysis. There in the cold, I wanted to yell, to tell him that I'd seen the texts and heard my mother's cries. I wanted to screech, to

scream the words, *"you're not my dad anymore. I hate you"*—and mean it. But more than anything, I wanted to kneel, to beg my father to un-break our home.

That next morning, my dad announced that he was trying a new recipe for dinner. *"But it's Monday,"* I said, *"you have work."* Smiling sadly, he said that work was nothing when compared to making me a delicious meal. Besides, he claimed, he'd been planning to try this dish for weeks now and just couldn't wait anymore.

How I wished then to reclaim our Sundays. Redefine the memory of my father, standing happily in his pink apron, as the thick scent of soup and soy sauce. How I wished to go back to when the apartment was warm as we crowded around the dining table. My father brought out each dish, looking cocky and nervous. My mother took the first bite, loudly proclaiming, *"very delicious!"* I bent down, carelessly tasting my father's creation. How I wished to relive this second before my father smiled his childishly goofy grin, the hope and insecurity still flooding his eyes. How I wished to see it and remember how I had loved him—loving him not because he needed me to, because he has given me everything, because he is human. Once, long ago, I loved my father simply because he is mine.

How I wish that was still enough.

"Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* Is a Gift"

Mimi Pinson

Who, me?

Toni Morrison dedicates her final novel, *God Help the Child*, with a sentimental "For You." This story of memory and transition begins with Sweetness, a light-skinned mother who resents and abuses her daughter for having "blue-black" skin. Years later, the daughter becomes Bride, a successful and gorgeous fashion executive at twenty-three years old. Destabilized after her boyfriend leaves her, Bride must confront the people and traumas from her past as her body becomes increasingly childlike. The specter of childhood trauma looms over every character as Morrison calls upon different narrators connected to Bride. Narrators include Bride's ex-boyfriend, her mother, and a mysterious former teacher—each possessing their own wounds and positions in persistent cycles of abuse. Morrison holds no punches in depicting child abuse, violence, and racism to explore what it is we pass down to children.

In *God Help the Child*, Morrison's sharpest observations concern the commodification of Bride's body in her pursuit of success, especially as a Black woman. Bride cultivates a profitable image from her beauty and accentuates her dark complexion with an entirely white wardrobe. In a way, she cashes in on her objectification. As her stylist tells it, "Black sells. It's the hottest commodity in the civilized world" (Morrison 36). An object of envy and desire, she becomes the product for consumption. A crescendo of food terms inaugurates a new Bride—licorice, chocolate syrup, whipped cream on chocolate soufflé, hand-dipped bonbons. Bride makes her skin not just palatable but delicious to those who consume her.

Despite a command of prose, Morrison struggles to represent young adulthood in the 21st century. At times, the outlandish dialogue brings me joy: "The dude splits, you feel like cow flop, you try to get your mojo back, but it's a bust, right?" (41). Never completely wrong, Morrison just writes the California fakeness too fake, the meaningless jargon too meaningless. Still, Morrison manages to identify a key mechanic underlying social media. Without mentioning a single app, Morrison writes Bride as a walking Instagram aesthetic. Both person and product, she is the consistent, constructed feed that sells individuality. What insights could Morrison have provided had she understood Twitter ratios?

Regardless, facility with modern slang is not why we read Morrison (and I would never have expected Toni Morrison to traverse the *Urban Dictionary*. I detest elder abuse.) Across her different narrators, Morrison illustrates an unexpected response to trauma: manufacturing an untraumatized self through egocentric rumination. To put it bluntly, the characters' self-centeredness hinders their growth. This coping mechanism finds an analogy in a scene where Bride flips through radio stations: "Nina Simone was too aggressive, making Bride think of something other than herself. She switched to soft jazz [...]" (78). Of which "herself" is Bride thinking? The muzak product she cultivates, or the Young, Gifted, and Black woman she is?

In this self-absorbed setting, Morrison's dedication "For You" rings in my head. Giving the novel to the second-person perspective, Morrison frees a text stuck in first- and third-person perspectives. Self-centered characters comfortably languish in their first-person perspectives. Little progress is made in the third. The second person offers an alternative of emerging from the self to heal—a gift to help both parent and child. Just so, Bride escapes her body horror with attention to a new person, a child, a "you." Are Bride's traumas resolved? Probably not. Will the child live free from harm? Probably not. Still, hope for the child pulls Bride outside of her muzak-self. Morrison offers no simple formula to overcome trauma. She only offers the book. (For you.)

"Rancho Road"

Dani Savo

<u>**Moonlit asphalt.**</u> Scattered echoes in the corners of rearview mirrors and weathered fenders. The cracks remain so the shine can get in. The wind guides the shadows in dance as her breeze playfully kisses my skin. I'm not the same person I was before now that I've commenced to bud. It is here I am home, where I can see myself in the shadows, in the forgetting. The music stops. She is still.

There are eyes that are not my own. These eyes want me silent as I take flight, as my face softens and chest buds, staring so loud I can hear what they see. They see a freak, afterbirth, some thing never to speak of how forbidden fruit tastes when it wasn't grown for her, how her healing bloom spits in their faces simply by being visible. To them I'm not really woman, and now never man. To them, I'm nothing.

They tell me that my tears are stolen, that I'm fucked, that faggots bleed purple, especially when they're all alone in the dark. These others bleed, too. They are also thieves, but they say I'm nothing like them. They say I'm sick. As if I need fixing.

I talk to a giant at night. I call him "Buddy," but he can't tell me if he would like another name. He just listens. I speak in sighs, exhalations, long pauses away from looking at anything else but him. I focus on Buddy, sometimes for several seconds, but I never stop to stare. I know what that feels like. I've stopped all day masquerading as a million faces but my own, so I can be easier on everyone else's eyes. But Buddy knows that when I close my eyes and really look at him, these eyes are mine.

These eyes are mine.

The day people are frightened of me. They shield their children as I pass, look straight ahead as I draw near, and never meet my gaze. I don the mask that says "I don't care," but I do. I want to be one of them, among them, to be normal, pure. I want to belong— but sometimes I wonder if the moon would be as bright, if Buddy would listen so well, if I would be seeing what I see now if I had this belonging I seem to crave. If I had a belonging that is not my own.

I stare at what is beyond, collected in the entirety of these things, both day and night, in time infinitum. I stare at what's there in everything, the whirring particles of air you can see if you squint hard enough, the rustling of dried leaves on cold asphalt around nine p.m., the indigo shading beyond the cracks in palm leaves, car outlines, and the frays of my own soul. It is through and upon this asphalt, this earth, that I belong. That's where I am home—where I can rest, for now.

"Icarian Games"

Anthony Spica

Born in the year 2000, I am the youngest of all my siblings and cousins. I have two older sisters who would dress me in their dance costumes and with whom I would play pretend. I wanted to be like them, though I didn't necessarily want to be queer. I certainly didn't possess the word for it then. For many years, I was also the smallest in size. This meant playing what we called "Peter Pan," where my eldest sister would place her feet on my stomach and her hands in mine to loft me in the air. To fly. In many ways, being the youngest in a family is like being a Peter Pan-esque figure. There is a duality present in both the constant reminder to others of their own youth and the realization of time passed. *I remember when... It feels like just yesterday... Look at how...* Which summer was it that my sisters could no longer pick me up even in the shallow end of a pool? Perhaps I have a perspective that they never will after watching them lose their interest to swim in the ocean and play hide-and-seek. My eagerness soon met with "no," with an air of being too old. It seems adults only play games when they are drunk enough. It seems adults are only able to reconnect with their inner child when under the influence or inebriated. Kids are just like tiny drunk adults, suggesting not only that intoxication can be associated with innocence and youth, but that a certain level of composure, of "maturity," is what qualifies adulthood.

"Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child:* Experimenting with New Form or Selling an Outline?"

Aaron Wang

In 2014, Nobel Prize Laureate Toni Morrison published her last novel, *God Help the Child.* This wasn't the original title, as the author had originally planned to name it *The Wrath of the Children.* In fact, she hated the title of her newest novel despite the implicit homage she had given, voluntary or not, to the famous jazz song by Billie Holiday. Through a switching of focalizations, Morrison dissects the lives of Bride, Booker, Sweetness, Brooklyn, Sofia, and Rain, rendering her work an experimental exploration of childhood trauma. The book unfolds with the characters' struggles with past trauma, all of which took place in their childhood; one could call the book a list of trigger warnings. According to Morrison, "this book isn't about anger, it's about what adults have done to them (children) and how they tried to get through it and over it and around it and how it affected them."

As meaningful as the purpose of the book sounds, it is questionable whether the novel is executed in a satisfactory fashion. *God Help the Child* feels like one of those postmodern art pieces that museums exhibit—think the banana with tape, for example. It feels like *something* when I chew on it, but the harder I chew the more the sugar of the gum runs out, leaving it a plain piece of rubber. There are so many places where the novel hinges on a fantastic play of word or plot, but then Morrison proceeds to miss the point. Perhaps my sheer dissatisfaction could be phrased by my disappointment in realizing that this book increasingly resembles an outline. There is a great skeleton, but it lacks the flesh that would give it spirit. Some would defend the acclaimed novelist's attempt by saying that the sense of sheer sketchiness is exactly what the author is trying to achieve. By intentionally leaving out the details of each character's mental activities, Morrison renders her story an allegorical myth. The readers are, then, able to focus more on the story as a fable unfolding a moral, rather than as a page-turner to read for fun. While this theory may seem convincing to some skeptical readers, it falls short in that there is a sheer difference between playing with cartoonish effects and being lazy. The absurdity level is not there yet, leaving the work at an awkward in-between.

Yet you will find yourself asking: Is the value of a work solely based on relatability? Can we really discredit Morrison's last novel just because it is executed poorly, despite all the good intentions? Hannah Arendt talks about the beauty of artworks in terms

of a universalizing power that unites people; there is something magical about good artworks that inspire the spirit of human beings to agree upon their true beauty. Works that are purely conceptual lose their meanings because their artistry is grounded in human conventions or a subversion thereof. In this case, *God Help the Child* falls short of connecting individuals. Though it marks a creative attempt at mythologizing a modern city story, it's easy to lose interest in its storytelling. It is that one seemingly purposeful postmodern art piece at the exhibition: thought-provoking and thought-provoking only. While this comment could have been a compliment for some other authors, one expects so much more from Toni Morrison.

"Letter to Ocean Vuong"

Julie Anne Simbulan

Hello Ocean Vuong!

I hope you're doing well. I just finished reading your wonderful book, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. With that name alone, an image pops into my head regarding how precious our moments are and how important it is to savor every piece of the puzzle of life. Each puzzle is a mystery but is necessary to complete the final picture. There was one passage that stuck out to me. I felt like this passage communicated a certain universality of the immigrant experience through not only observing your own experience, but also reflecting how I saw my own experiences. It was not only the content that portrayed this image, but also the stylistic choices you have skillfully used.

It's a very sentimental piece, and I am drawn to how you switch back and forth between the present and distant memory. You write, "as a girl, you watched, from a banana grove, your schoolhouse collapse after an American napalm raid." It is such an interesting dynamic, the idea that you are standing in a commonplace grocery store, but specific things bring you back to a bloody memory of a war that was long ago. It becomes apparent that despite being temporary, those moments seep into the present and affect how you look at objects that are meant to be neutral. It is as if you are stuck between two worlds, "our Vietnamese a time capsule, a mark of where your education ended." They are worlds that are so far apart yet that touch each other in a multi-dimensional fashion. Your connection to your mother's old life is a combination of the familial relation as well as the encapsulation of language. It's a very strategic and specific image that you create.

I feel as if your mother had many things to say and many things she wanted to do, but she ignored the demands from her own body because she knew it was best for you and your needs. Your mother strikes me as the common trope of the immigrant mother who is stoic and seemingly unfeeling, and who provides love in the form of giving. It feels as if the emotional connection is not there between the child and the mother because the mother's trauma is still untouched. All the child can do is accept the gifts that are given and read those gestures as an I love you.

I am drawn to your writing most especially because of how you end your passages. It feels as if we are stopped in the middle of the thought, and it leaves me wanting more. Multiple questions come up in my head with that last sentence. Was she happy? Is she pleased with this dynamic? Was she happy when she had to leave all these sorts of trivial-seeming things to her child who knew nothing about the world except the tiny moments of vulnerability that his mother showed him?

Well, I leave it to you to answer these questions of mine. I really enjoyed reading the book, and I hold your words in my pocket to consume for later. Reading it is like the feeling you get when you find an old photo album cleaning the house, and you can't help but drop everything and read it just to experience what is left of the memories and moments that were so prominent in your upbringing.

Yours,
Julie Anne Simbulan

"To Treat or Not To Treat"

Christine Tunnell

The Hippocratic Oath is a promise made by physicians to do no further harm. But how do medical professionals ensure they are not causing further harm? This question is even more prevalent in psychiatry, where quantitative tests do not exist to make diagnoses. Psychiatry utilizes subjective measurements to guide diagnoses and treatments. In this field, the patient must be willing to be vulnerable with their physician. The physician must also have strong interpretation and reasoning skills to provide an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan. If a patient fails to connect with their physician, then their diagnosis may be skewed. Obviously, I am no physician or mental health professional, nor do I seek to undermine those diagnosed with mental illness. Rather, I am focused on questioning social standards and conceptions of normality and how that could potentially lead to a mental health misdiagnosis and insufficient treatment plans.

The state of being "normal" is what Andrew Solomon would describe as a vertical identity in his book, *Far From the Tree.* On the other hand, Solomon states that those with horizontal identities are often *"treated as flaws"* (Solomon). Unfortunately, those with horizontal struggles usually just need extra support to be functional members of society. Since horizontal traits are perceived as burdensome, medical professionals seek to suppress these traits to help patients return to a state of "normal." But do treatments exist to relieve society of a burden, or do treatments exist to relieve the patient of symptoms? Sure, treatments make a patient "normal" in societal expectations, but at what cost?

Currently, a physician measures the patient's self-reported symptoms with the DSM-5, a descriptive manual for the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. While this manual is a helpful guide for medical professionals, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) argues that mental health professionals are focusing too much on patients' self-reported symptoms and not enough on patients' psychosocial environments. This has led to an overdiagnosis of mental illness. The NIH recommends physicians focus on the psychosocial environment to reliably measure each patient's circumstances and struggles. This would provide a more reliable diagnosis and narrow down more successful treatment options. A consequence of overdiagnosis is that patients are subjected to the stigma of a horizontal identity. As Solomon states,

> [T]he idea of normality claimed to ensure the physical vigor and the moral cleanliness of the social body; it promised to eliminate defective individuals, degenerate and bastardized populations. (Solomon)

When a medical professional diagnoses a patient, the patient is thrust into a world where

individuals are burdened with trying to fit into societal norms. Individuals may turn their diagnoses into identities, perceiving themselves as inadequate compared to their peers. Overdiagnosis isolates and ostracizes individuals, often worsening mental symptoms. Additionally, overdiagnosis may lead to overmedication, which may subdue the entire person—symptoms and personality—leaving the patient a shell of themselves.

Diagnoses based on not fitting into the culturally accepted norm may lead to misdiagnosis and over-medication. While physicians practice good intent, overreliance on subjective measurement is perhaps causing more harm than good. Overdiagnosis perpetuates treating certain traits as burdens in society. While many benefit from psychiatric medication, many also suffer debilitating side effects. Over-medicating does not encourage healthy coping skills or healthy psychosocial environments to thrive in. The current treatment model seeks to adjust people to a culturally accepted normal. Unfortunately, this model may change the person it treats, causing further harm to the individual's mental wellbeing.

"In (My Own) Time"

Adam Brownell and Hollie Chiao

Interpersonal communication =
Intrapersonal communication = ( )

Walking in the rain from Kai's family's house to the car, he takes off his jacket
and places it gently around Clair's shoulders.

KAI
I'd bet they like you.

Walking around the passenger side of the car, he reaches for the door before
changing his mind and grabbing Clair's hand instead.

No, I'm sure they liked you.
(For the first hour, before you finished the flask you thought you were hiding so well.)

CLAIR
Yeah, parents love me.
(Tequila, it works every time.)

Kai softens his grip on Clair's hand, guides her into the passenger's seat,
and walks to the driver's side.

The two are suspended in silence, and the keys are left unturned in the ignition.
Listening to the soft percussive tapping of rain on the metal roof, Kai releases a drawn out,
nearly inaudible exhale. Clair begins to hum.

CLAIR
(I fucking hate silence.)

Clair pulls down and flips up the vanity mirror to check her reflection.

You know how privileged you are to have the perfect family?

Pulling out her mascara from her purse, she begins to fix and reapply her makeup.

Imagine our kid with those long lashes your mother has, with your dad's almond shape.
And with your...hazel eyes. Who do you get those from anyway?

Kai turns the keys and takes the car out of park.

KAI
Yeah, that's interesting.

(That's deeper than either of us knows.
All I have to give our child are more questions than answers, and finding out
would be nothing but cold calls and loose—no, dead ends.)

He places his hand on her thigh and turns to face her, but her gaze is still preoccupied.

KAI
I want that too.

CLAIR
Glad we're on the same page.

BOTH
(Are we?)

CLAIR
(I...don't think I know how much you really meant that. I can't tell.)
Kai, what are you thinking about?

KAI
Nothing, really, besides the...our future and all the work I have to get done today....
(That made no sense.)
What are you thinking about?

CLAIR
I think I'm pregnant....
(I know I'm pregnant.)

KAI
Wait—

---

*The two are at the kitchen table. Clair quickly stands up from her seat,
letting the chair clatter backwards from the force.*

CLAIR
You were, and I quote, "happy beyond belief" just three weeks ago.

KAI
(When do people ever say that, besides moments you're stunned mute?)
Clair, like I said, I was. Or at least I thought I was—

CLAIR
What did you think was going to happen, after all those times I said "Let's make a fuck-ing baby?" Or when we dreamt about how our kids would look? Or where we would raise them?

KAI
You know that I still have years of school, years of working ahead before I'm ready to take on anything else. I didn't think that you were ready either, since you just started your new job and—

CLAIR
My dad was managing Voy when my sisters and I were born. My mom was on the track team at Duke. They were busy, but they did it, and here I am. What are you really saying about me? Who are you t—

Kai, waiting for the follow through of Clair's final blow, is shocked to be meeting Clair at the cliff's edge. Pulling his eyes from the floor, he notices that her face is now glowing red.

KAI
Clair...

BOTH
(I can't do this without you.)

The two are at the same dining table, staring at different walls in silence. It's been minutes since either of them spoke.

CLAIR
Why didn't you tell me about being adopted sooner?

KAI
It just never came up...

(It's because everything about us felt too soon.)

He gets up from his seat and turns around toward the kitchen.
Shifting her body in the seat perpendicular to his, Clair turns to face him.

CLAIR
No. Come back. Why didn't you tell me, really?

KAI
Because everything about us felt too soon.

CLAIR
What does that even mean?

KAI
You left your last boyfriend a week after we met. I fell for you two weeks later.
That's when you moved in. I don't remember ever not talking about kids.
Now here we are, with a future kid on the table.

CLAIR
I've...never stopped to think about our timeline before, or time in general.

KAI
A lot of the time, I can't help but stop. It can be really inconvenient.

CLAIR
(What is he talking abou—)
What do you mean?

KAI
I don't even know how to speak to what I mean. It's just not even a part of my own
memory. But whatever did happen, it keeps me up at night and robs me of my day.
Sometimes when I don't respond, it's because I'm just not here.

CLAIR
Wow. I don't know what to say, but thank you for trusting me.

KAI
I wish I had more to give you.

CLAIR

On your own time. In the meantime, I need a drink.

She walks to the fridge with a Moscow Mule in mind,
but accidentally overpours once she has the bottle in hand.

Aaand I guess I'll have it neat.

Standing by the table now, she takes a small sip and makes a face.
She hates the taste of alcohol.

This is disgusting.

Kai looks up at the glass while Clair looks down at it in silence, reminding themselves
independently of the danger drinking poses to pregnancy.

CLAIR

I feel like I'd be giving our baby too much....There's too much drinking and violence
involved with me and my family. It's just who I am. And I don't think I'm fit to be
my—I mean a—mom.

Her eyes fall and begin to well. Kai takes the drink from her hand and sets it down
on the floor. He stands and picks her up to set her down on the dining table.

KAI

Look at me.

Their eyes meet for what feels like the very first time.

You are not just your biological family. If that were the case, I'd be...nonexistent?

A damp laugh escapes from Clair's chest. She opens her arms, and they embrace,
rising and falling with each other's breath.

CLAIR

I still want you to father my child.

Kai's breath is caught halfway through an inhale, which Clair feels.

CLAIR

Listen. Just not now. And not necessarily a child of my parents' family. I've never
thought about it before this moment, but I think I'll want to adopt one day.

Kai smiles widely, which she returns.

KAI

I was getting ready to support any decision you choose to make with your own body,
but this...this I endorse whole-heartedly.

*They haven't broken eye contact yet—there is so much more to see in each
other with each passing moment.*

CLAIR

I think I really love the you I'm coming to know. But what if over the years
you learn things about me that you...

*Her voice and her thoughts trail off, which Kai recognizes.
Taking her two hands in his, he kisses them.*

KAI

I love you too, Clair. We have all the time in our world.

The American West:

Myth, Wilderness, and Sacred Space

Pamela Greenland &

The American West

Patricia Steenland & Tulasi Johnson

The American West: a place instantly recognizable to movie viewers across the globe through iconic landscapes such as Monument Valley. Against this landscape, stories of individual heroism play out in often violent struggle. But the actual lived history of these iconic places is usually invisible, not only to the movie viewer but also within American culture in general.

This semester we sought to explore that "invisible" history by studying the Alabama Hills, an Eastern Sierra landscape used since the beginning of the film industry as a location for Westerns and other films, in connection with the lived experience of the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone, the people who have been there since time immemorial and who still dwell there.

Through writing we sought to analyze the power of old narratives that persist, as well as to build new ways of reckoning with American history. Can we imagine together a broader and richer—and more accurate—American identity? Throughout the semester, students explored this question through personal reflections, two short essays, and a final research project for which they had the option to use a visual format to present their research.
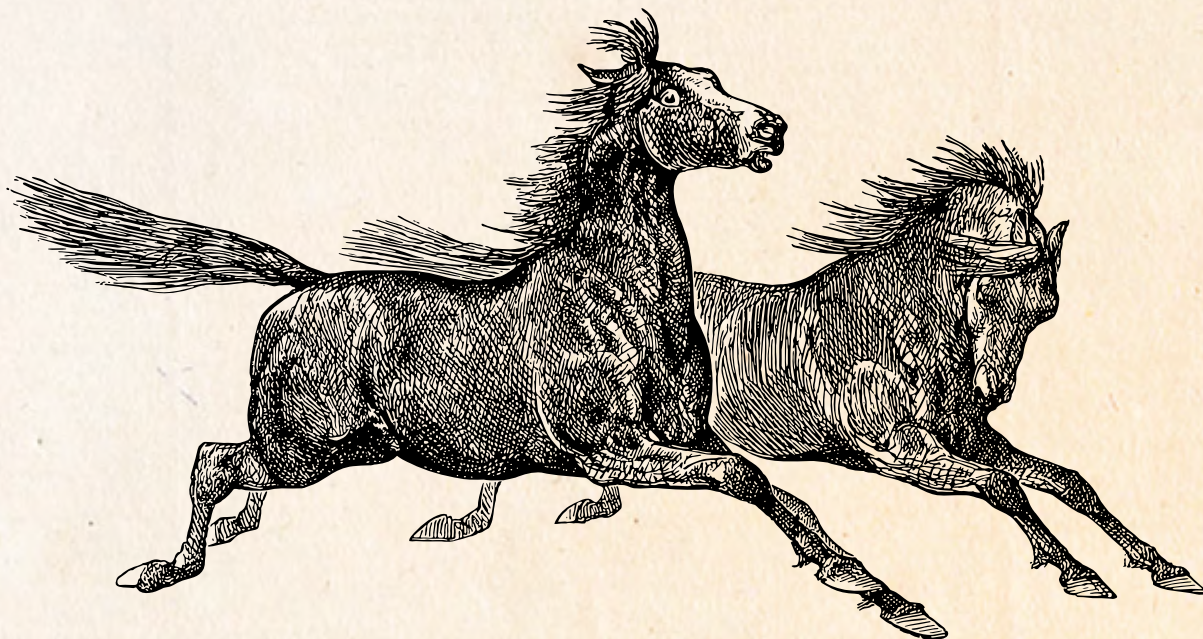
Redefining Wilderness in the American West

Grace Olechowski

Born and raised on the East Coast, my initial notions of the western United States were of surreal places and immense stretches of land that one visits, has a transformative experience in, and leaves to return to society changed in some unseen way. The West was a mystic place to me and did not feel quite real, especially when contrasted with my daily experiences growing up in Annapolis, Maryland. Local Annapolitans have been camping either once in their lives or in their backyards. The only mountains are those in picture frames in office buildings, and the furthest horizon one can see is driving across the city bridge and seeing sailboats a few miles in the distance on the Chesapeake Bay. I could not fathom spaces in this world where one could look out at the landscape, or up at the sky, and not have a structure obstruct one's vision prior to reaching the inevitable end of sight: the curvature of the Earth.

Instead of touting its landscape, Annapolis parades its colonial history. Intentionally retaining an 18th-century architectural style, the brick-cobbled streets and old harbors are full of gift shops, boat tours, and museums showing how Annapolis was a major political, social, and economic player in colonial America. In comparison, I grew up primarily characterizing the West by its vast lands and geographical feats. I understood the West's history to be the time-worn layers of sediment in rock canyons in Arizona or the ancient tree rings that patiently skyrocketed Sequoias in California. Not only did this pristine natural image create a fantasy in my mind about the West, but this prolonged western natural history seemed to be in stark contrast to Annapolis' much shorter historical narrative full of people and politics. Unbeknownst to me, I had not yet realized that the American West holds an older, deeply human history attributed to people who have habitually inhabited the West since ancient times.

Moving to San Diego upon college graduation gave me the opportunity to test out my surreal vision of the West. When work became a grind and I grew tired of being constantly surrounded by people, I would strike out on my own and explore the western land around me in my free time. Accustomed to the compactness of the East Coast, I was struck by the sheer number of hours I spent behind the wheel of my truck. I was a modern traveling nomad, constantly driving through seemingly endless land. Indeed, driving along long western highways such as I-80 or I-15, one can observe vast expanses of sheer landscape for hours, with hundreds of miles between towns. Traffic is a surreal concept, horizons are endless, and people seem scarce.

It was the beauty of the land around me and the solitude in which I interacted with it that made me fall in love with the American West. In a certain sense, I did experience some of the surrealism that I first associated with the West. I had experiences that I would classify as transformative, experiences that were unachievable in my congested Annapolis hometown. Camping completely alone, sleeping on mesas or between desert willow trees, savoring the Milky Way views and the sounds of frigid mountain streams: these solitary experiences were wild and precious to me. Yet though I felt physically and mentally grounded when I visited these western places, my experiences were still partly affirming the nature-based fantasy I had first associated with the West. I always returned to bustling San Diego and resumed "real life" after these trips into self-defined wilderness. My escapes into the land increasingly solidified my perceptions of nature and of myself as separate beings. My job, friends, and human interactions remained in San Diego, while the lands several hours outside the city remained symbols of nature and solitude from people. Though my physical knowledge and experience of the western land had developed beyond my initial East Coast notions, I had not yet comprehended the human history woven into the western lands I had grown to love.

My initial fantasies of western lands were borne out of deeply rooted and institution- alized American narratives of the West. Movies and books depict the transitory and carefree nature of the desert nightlife of Las Vegas, the immensity and limitlessness of the majestic Rocky Mountains, and the soaring stretches of deep purple canyons and red mesas of Utah, among many other places. As depicted in different American media, such as film and writing, the West is a place for people to live life to the extreme before returning to daily routines. The West is represented as a reversion to the wild.

However, there is the need for a new scrutiny of the definition of western wilderness, comprising a critical look into the American writing and films that first defined the word as well as a modern reckoning with the term in the context of extensive human habitation in the West. In understanding this human history of the American West, I and American culture more broadly can understand western lands more fully and consider more holis- tically the evolution of America's institutionalized concept of western wilderness.

Wilderness, as described by the Wilderness Act of 1964, is defined as "in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape [...] as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Aided by this assertion that the absence of man is founda- tional to wilderness, American writings, films, and culture have ingrained the image of western lands as areas to simultaneously visit and revere.

It could be argued that the 1964 definition of wilderness was directly or indirectly influ- enced by the writings of prominent American figures such as historian Frederick Turner

and naturalist John Muir. In his 1893 text, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Turner simultaneously describes the western lands, yet unsettled by white pioneers, as both "free land" and "Indian country." His writing amplifies the concept of western vacancy, and the associated capacity to conquer the land, while minimizing the habitation of the land by the native population. Because he classifies this land as "free," Turner also insinuates that there is a lawlessness about the land and that there is no current civilization domesticating the wilderness with structure and law.

Similarly, Muir reinforces Turner's perception of the West as unexplored wilderness in "My First Summer in the Sierra," a collection of his observations during a hike in 1869. Remarking on the bareness of the landscape as a result of avalanches, Muir writes, "It seems strange at first sight that trees that had been allowed to grow for a century or more undisturbed should in their old age be thus swished away at a stroke." As he focuses his writing on the pristine physical beauty of the mountains, he simultaneously minimizes the presence of the native population he meets during his hike by calling them "dirty" and disassociating them from the land they inhabit. Muir's assertion that the landscape is undisturbed in its current state, coupled with his disdain for the indigenous peoples of the Sierra, further solidifies the American concept that the West is a wilderness of untouched and uninhabited beauty, unmarred by human interactions. Muir's writings eliminate the activities of local indigenous populations and promote reverence for the "undisturbed" land, invoking a sense of surrealism associated with seemingly unoccupied western wilderness. Scrutinizing his writings, one gathers that Muir shamefully felt himself separate from the land in a way that the indigenous people never were. Perhaps his hatred of the locals reflects an insecurity about his own inability to live fully on the land. Much as he may have tried to postulate otherwise, Muir was still a visitor on the land that he loved.

Muir's writings also invoke a sense of a spiritual awakening when traversing the West. He lyrically and intricately details the flora and terrain around him, and he describes how his interaction with the landscape transforms him into a higher self. He finds peace with his solitary experience with the landscape, and the beauty around him nourishes his own feelings of enlightenment. Muir's ability to create a fantasy vision of the West, while also promoting the ability of the land to connect with one's deeper self, engenders a complicated relationship between his writings and modern readers. Though many, including myself, resonate with his praise for the land and its accompanying personal spirituality, there must be an understanding amongst readers that Muir degrades and diminishes the existence of the local people who inhabited and handled that very land.

Classic Hollywood Western films, such as *The Searchers* (1956) and *Comanche Station* (1960), are historic examples of how the American western concept of wilderness became entrenched in media and culture. The Monument Valley landscape camera shots used in The Searchers directly align with the model of wilderness as uninhabited.

In one of the first scenes, John Wayne is perfectly silhouetted in the doorframe, with the camera showcasing the vast and barren desert landscape behind him. In this scene, the land is void of existence except for the lone man. There are tremors of remoteness and unpredictability about the land, perfectly fitting the illustration of a wilderness. Furthermore, the scene immediately asserts the lawlessness of the West. Clearly the movie will revolve around this man, his rules, and his action as he interacts with the land stretched behind him. Importantly, the theme of nomadism is threaded throughout the entire film. The native people in the film are constantly on horseback, traversing the landscape and never settling in one place. John Wayne and his sidekick are consistently moving from one place to another throughout the film following the indigenous captors. The native peoples are not depicted as permanently settled within the land; to do so would clash with the idea that the Western wilderness was an untouched and inhabitable area. This roaming lifestyle of the West foreshadows the 1964 Wilderness Act's phrase "[...] where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Similar to The Searchers, the first scene of Comanche Station depicts comparable themes of wilderness, self-law, and nomadism. Randolph Scott is seen riding along canyon valleys, silhouetted against ridges in the Alabama Hills. He is devoid of company and moving along the uninhabited landscape, supporting the notion that man in wilderness is transitory. His solitary status invokes a sense of law taken into his own hands. The film ends as it begins, with Randolph Scott riding into the vast, lonely landscape by himself. The similarities in movement between the first and last scenes underpin the idea that there is no human permanence to the landscape, leaving the viewer with the impression that Randolph Scott will forever traverse the wild western lands alone.

Both historical and modern-day western films, literature, and television continue to label the West as a transitory and beautifully desolate wilderness. The American idea of "moving out West," whether to escape population growth, to avoid city politics, or to become closer to the land, is still an established and acted-upon theory. Built upon the fantasies of pristine nature and escapism, the West is a place associated with avoiding humanity, whether it be a permanent move or a day's hike. According to the predominant social view, only in larger western cities, such as Denver and Salt Lake City, or in National Parks, do crowds of people in the West become commonplace. Instagram influencers are the latest to portray the romanticized concept of the western wilderness. A perfectly placed picture in Yosemite, Alabama Hills, or the Nevada desert showcasing the landscape while hiding the many tourists reinforces the surreal idea that the West is wild and untouched. Modern American culture remains entrenched in this classification of wilderness as an untamed place where man's presence does not linger.

Despite this ingrained notion, history and research provide empirical evidence that indigenous people have inhabited western land for centuries. These ancient people, as well as their modern descendants, are deeply culturally rooted within the land. M. Kat
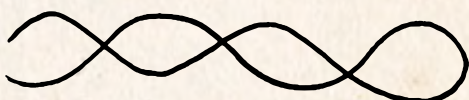
Anderson's description of native environmental practices in "Native American Land-Use Practices and Ecological Impacts" depicts the indigenous people's critical manipulation of the land in Owen's Valley in California. In using techniques such as intentional agricultural methods and fire management practices, their handling of the land has been critical in creating ecological diversity, sustaining water sources, and properly stewarding the land. Additionally, in "Agriculture Among the Paiute," researchers present focused and strong evidence to affirm that indigenous populations in Owen's Valley have been dynamically and successfully managing the land they have lived on for centuries. Furthermore, modern descendants of ancient inhabitants in western lands such as Owen's Valley, and the histories they carry with them, are the strongest and most obvious confirmation that these lands are teeming with a deep and continuing human presence. Unlike Muir and many modern-day visitors to these lands, the local indigenous populations are not nomadic in the West; they are deeply rooted in their land. This sustained human presence conflicts with the notion that the West is void of human influence. The permanent settlement, cultural origination, and well-established handling of land by indigenous populations stand in stark contrast to the western wilderness as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 and as depicted in thousands of American media products. The active interaction with the land by local inhabitants directly contrasts with both Turner's assertion that the western lands were "free land" and Muir's claim that western lands were undisturbed and pristine. Confronted with the evidence that western lands are and have historically been cultivated by people, it is erroneous to continue endorsing the view that these lands comply with the classical and institutionalized definition of uninhabited, transitory western wilderness.

With this realization in the forefront, I reconsider how I classify my relationship with the American West. I previously classified my weekend or week-long escapes to remote areas, such as Lone Pine, St. George, Anza Borrego, Ocotillo, or Glen Canyon, as less touched by humans and therefore wilder and more worthy of being experienced. When I first thought of the word "wilderness," I thought of my closest experiences with what I considered wilderness: finding my own nook of land in one of these desert and mountainous places, enjoying starry nights sleeping outside, letting my dogs run wild, and interacting with no other humans. However, not only did ancient and modern indigenous populations permanently inhabit the very same lands I considered as "escapes from people," but these native populations have been cultivating the land to support their sustainable lifestyles for centuries.

I find myself reconciling my experiences in the West most notably in examining my relationship with Muir's writings. Like Muir, I recognize the physical beauty of the land. Like Muir, I still feel a sense of surrealism and a higher sense of self when I am in these lands. I believe this feeling persists because, like Muir, I remain a visitor on these lands. Much as I feel connected with the land, I am a nomad in these places. Though these western lands do not fit into the context of defined wilderness, there is a connection to nature

and landscape that unmistakably exists within these places. Lone Pine, for example, is still no Annapolis; both are inhabited by and deeply rooted with people. However, there is a special sense of land and space and spirit that resides in the Eastern Sierra mountain range that I do not feel in Annapolis. In these mountains and rock formations, I feel aligned with Muir in his sense of the achievement of a higher self in the West. I resonate with the spiritual transformation that results from spending solitary time in the beauty of the landscape.

However, my reconsideration of my experiences changes with the knowledge that these lands are culturally, historically, and presently rooted in human presence and influence. Muir asserted that the land must be undisturbed and treated as deserted to be pristinely beautiful. However, instead of ignoring the habitation of the land by people as Muir did, I believe the beauty of these lands is enhanced by the knowledge that the land was lovingly crafted and conserved by ancient (and current) human hands. To know that people loved the land and worked to augment its beauty creates a richer, more meaning-ful physical landscape.

One could infer that Muir felt vulnerable about his nomadism on the land and envious of the indigenous' people's lifestyle immersed in the land he loved. However, I believe the comparison of native populations' permanence within their ancient land with a visitor's travels is neither a suitable nor necessary analogy. The two experiences are different, and I do not feel I have to compare my understandings of the land to achieve a sense of connectedness with the West. Instead, the acknowledgement of indigenous permanence leads to increased respect for and appreciation of the land. I feel humbled and grateful to the local population for the opportunity to embrace nomadism in a place that has a living human history.

Muir's denial of human existence in the land was essential for him to have achieved the peaceful experiences he craved. However, achieving self-discovery by finding solitude in the land becomes even more enriching with an acknowledgement of people who also find peace and spirituality within the land. Awareness that places such as Owen's Valley have an ancient and still living human presence does not soil my experience, as it did for Muir; it enhances my experience. I gratefully share my solitary experiences with an entire history of people who love the same land that gives me the sense of serenity and stillness that I need in my life from time to time. While I still find the space to be alone in the West, there is now no sense of loneliness.

Conservation and Native Practices

Taylor Shimono

What is Conservation?

According to the National Geographic Society, conservation is "the act of protecting Earth's natural resources for current and future generations." It emphasizes the "sustainable use of nature" rather than its preservation, allowing humans to live off of the land without causing environmental devastation ("Conservation"). This refers to a variety of efforts, ranging from shifting away from plastic use to preventing deforestation and soil degradation. It can refer to something as simple as composting napkins to something as complex as building dense housing along transit corridors to increase public transit ridership levels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

What is Conservation Important?

Conservation of our planet has become increasingly important as our world continues to develop, placing increasingly heavy burdens on our environment. The World Wildlife Foundation has reported an overall decline in global vertebrate population size of 60% between 1970 and 2014, the main cause of which is "habitat degradation and loss" ("Living Planet" 73). According to NASA, Earth's surface temperature has risen by an average 2°F annually since the 19th century, with the most dramatic rises occurring in the last 40 years ("Climate Change Evidence"). The consequences of continuing our current use of natural resources will be devastating to our entire population.
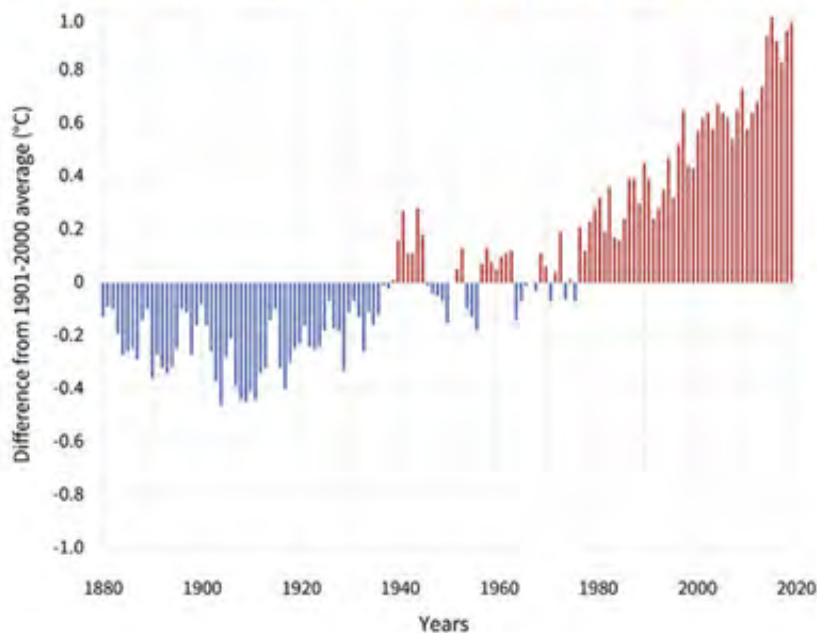
Graph from NOAA Climate.gov (Lindsey and Dahlmann). This data plots the difference from the 1901-2000 average temperature (in Celsius) against the year, since 1880. Since 1980, there has been a dramatic increase in average temperature over time.

So now, the Bigger Question is...What Can We Do?

For centuries, indigenous tribes have carefully cultivated their lands to support their populations. Their respect for natural resources has allowed sustained survival with minimal environmental degradation. In fact, their positive impact on the landscape was so great that researchers have cited negative effects associated with the arrival of white Americans and the removal of natives.

"There is currently an ecological 'vacuum,' or disequilibrium, in the Sierra resulting from the departure of Native American influences. The recent decline in biotic diversity, species extirpation and endangerment, human encroachment into fire-type plant communities, and greatly increased risk of catastrophic fires are but symptoms of this disequilibrium" (Anderson 187).
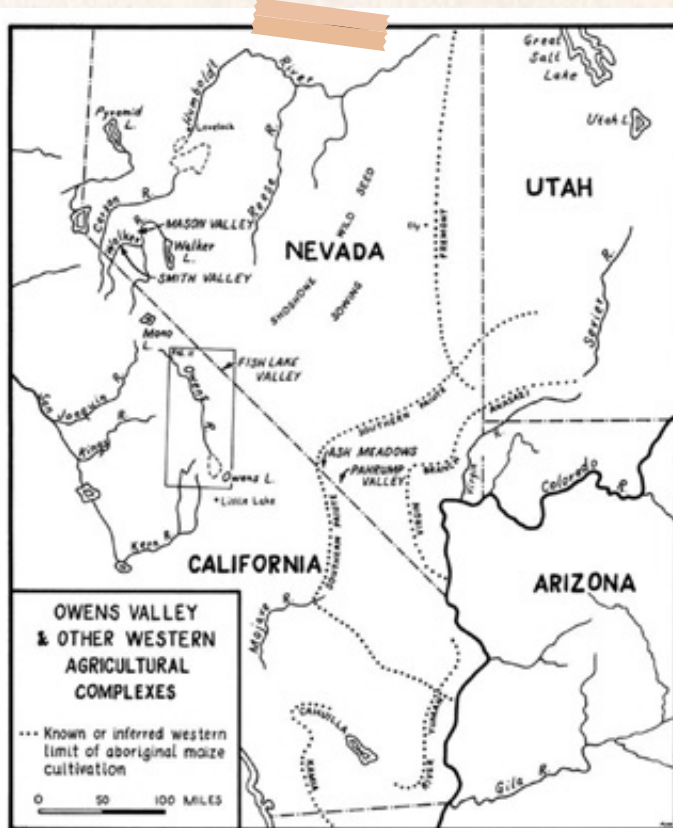

Image from Lawton et al. This drawing depicts the limits of maize cultivation in the Owens Valley. To anyone who has visited this arid region, that a culture could survive here is a remarkable feat of environmental engineering.

The positive impact that native peoples had on the environment should be a lesson to us as we approach the verge of complete environmental devastation. Read on to learn about several case studies in which the presence of native voices may have saved ecosystems from disaster.

The Story of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout

For centuries, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe revered the Lahontan cutthroat trout, or cui-ui in their language. The fish were bountiful in Pyramid Lake, traditionally called "Kooyooe Pa'a Panunadu" (Rodriguez). Cui-ui were a major source of food for the tribe "and were the focus of many gatherings held to honor the fish and to learn oral history, traditional practices, and cultural resources from elders of the tribe" (Wolterbeek). Moreover, the cultural history of these fish is far from gone. One member of the cui-ui tucutta (Paiute) tribe remarked that the early months of the pandemic was especially hard on the elderly members of the tribe, who were forced to drive "45 minutes to Reno only to find empty or sparse

shelves in grocery stores" (Rodriguez). To protect the at-risk members of the community, several younger people began bringing the elderly freshly-caught cui-ui from the lake. With the continued relationship between the cui-ui tucutta and their namesake fish, it is difficult to believe that there was a 30-year-long period in which these fish were completely extinct in the lake.

The decline of the cui-ui population in Pyramid Lake began with the creation of the U.S. Reclamation Service, formed under the Reclamation Act of 1902. It was commissioned by President Theodore Roosevelt to "commit the Federal Government to construct permanent works - dams, reservoirs, and canals - to irrigate arid lands in the West." Although white farmers had already "created an irrigation district and built an extensive drainage system," many of these systems caused flooding, excessive runoff, or otherwise misused their limited water resources (Discover our Shared...). This act officially marked the start of organized American intervention and control over the management of land in the western United States.

To some, the creation of the U.S. Reclamation Service can be seen as ironic given the rich history of irrigation in the area. According to one of the earliest ethnographies created on the Owens Valley Paiute, the tribe had created extensive irrigation networks that brought water to farm plots that ranged in size from 2 to 6 square miles (Steward 247). In Paiute society, irrigation was so important that the tuvaiju' was an elected position each spring to lead irrigation efforts for that season (Steward 247). In the face of incredibly harsh conditions, these people demonstrated their mastery of the craft. When settlers encroached on these people's lands, they completely ignored the irrigation systems that were in place and relied upon their own minimal knowledge of farming to create systems that would prove to be complete failures.

After its completion, the Derby Dam and others like it ultimately proved successful in its goal of increasing access to water in the West. Today, these projects "provide agricultural, household, and industrial water to about one-third of the population of the American West" ("THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION"). However, the ecological impacts of the Derby Dam have ultimately failed to meet the standards of conservation that are so crucial for the survival of our species today. One of these effects is highlighted in the extreme drop in water levels of Pyramid Lake. In 1967, just 65 years after the creation of the U.S. Reclamation Service, Pyramid Lake "reached its lowest level on record - more than 87 feet lower than it was in 1906." In addition, the "Derby Diversion Dam was one of several significant factors that led, in 1940, to population extinction of the Pyramid Lake Lahontan Cutthroat Trout" (Discover our Shared...). This occurred primarily due to a decreased flow rate in the Truckee River below the dam, which "reduced river spawning to the area below the dam," meaning that the usual spawning of trout could not occur in Pyramid Lake (Sigler et al 4). Although the United States government accomplished its goal of bringing water to the West, it fell far short of conserving this precious resource.

Derby Dam Farmer's Screen

After the Lahontan cutthroat trout was thought to be completely extinct, a new population of genetically-identical trout was discovered and introduced into Pyramid Lake in the 1970s (Discover our Shared…). While this worked to replenish the population, the fish were introduced regularly and did not have a robust enough population to sustain itself. To combat this problem, a screen was engineered to allow the fish to follow their natural route through the Truckee River and bypass the dam on their way to Pyramid Lake.
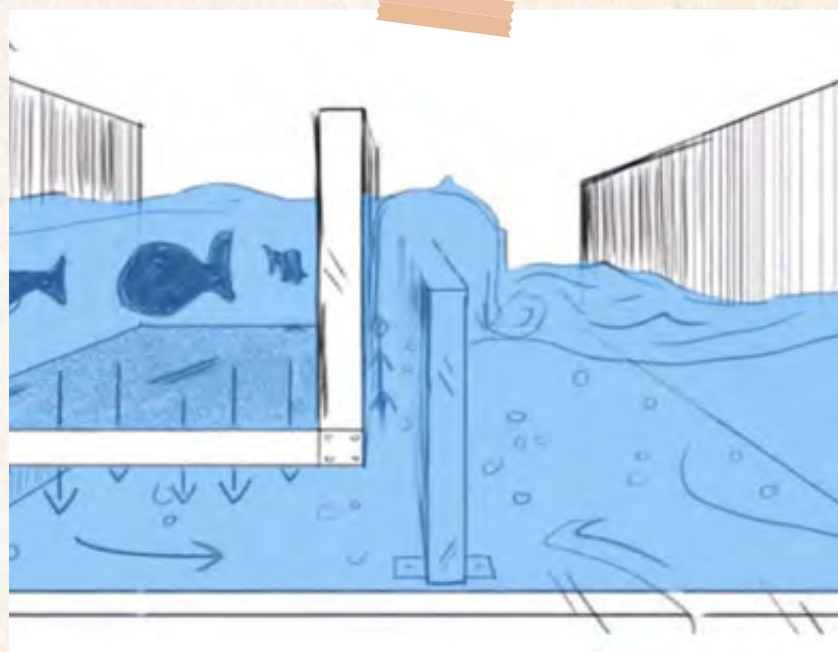
Image from "Derby Dam." Diagram depicting the design principles of the Derby Dam Farmer's Screen.

This $34 million dollar project was completed in late 2020 and was celebrated by "U.S. and tribal officials alike," allowing a "threatened trout species to return to some of its native spawning grounds for the first time in more than a century" (Sonner). Although it is too early to rule on the overall outcome of the project, things are looking up for conservation of land around the Derby Dam.

Today, Pyramid Lake is once again home to the cui-ui and the rich cultural traditions that surround it. Without the constant push for improvements from the Native community, this project may not have been completed and the Lahontan cutthroat trout may never have returned (Sonner). Although the environmental devastation of Pyramid Lake may be behind us, its inhabitants continue to be strong proponents of conservancy.

In late 2021, Autumn Harry became the first Paiute woman licensed to give guided fly-fishing trips on Pyramid Lake at just 29 years old (Rodriguez). Though an impressive feat on its own, Harry is using this as a steppingstone toward her larger goal of spreading advocacy for the preservation of Native lands and increased conservation efforts. While on trips with customers who are often not familiar with the history of the land, Harry tries "to spread awareness about her community, the history of the lake and concerns that the rapid development in Reno and Sparks could lead to lower water levels" (Rodriguez). With the help of people like Harry, our world will become a more livable home to all of its inhabitants.

Wolves of Yellowstone National Park

Over the past few decades, the reintroduction of the gray wolf into Yellowstone National Park has received a great deal of attention from the media. From ecologists to artists, many people in the United States have heard some mention of the incredible recovery of the wolf population in the region and the innumerable benefits it has brought to the ecosystem. However, few fully understand why these actions were necessary in the first place.

Image from Rappaport Clark, 2020.

Gray wolves have lived alongside humans in the western United States for centuries, earning respect from all who bore witness to their power and grace. However, when Americans expanded westward into these regions, they were unhappy with these creatures for wreaking havoc upon their livestock. These groups began lobbying the government for removal of grazing fees for herds on federal lands where major predators, like wolves and coyotes, ran rampant. Hearing these concerns, the Forest Service and the Biological Survey released "publications that described approved and familiar methods of shooting, trapping, poisoning, the development of den hunting, and wire-fencing to manage predation" between 1905 and 1907 (Hawthorne 1). After these groups began instructing people on ways to kill wolves, Congress approved a $125,000 appropriation for demonstrations and experiments relating to the control of predators in federal lands (Hawthorne 1). This set off mass killings of wolves that led to their complete extinction in Yellowstone by 1926 ("The History of Wolves in Yellowstone"). Although these actions may have allowed farmers to fearlessly grow livestock in the region, the devastation to the entire ecosystem was unprecedented.

Ecological Impacts

To the ignorant livestock-raiser, wolves are nothing more than a nuisance to their livelihoods. They kill helpless sheep, pigs, and cows, making their owners upset. So why not get rid of the wolves and make humans' lives simpler?

As it turns out, the wolves of Yellowstone did a lot more than kill livestock. When wolves were present as apex predators, they competed with coyotes for food sources, keeping the coyote population low. In addition, they helped control the number of elk present

in the region. Without wolves, elk became extremely overpopulated and overgrazed the land. This meant that more trees, like aspen and willow, were being destroyed before they could reach maturity. Songbirds left the area and beavers could no longer build dams. Without beaver dams, the banks of creeks began to erode and further limit the number of willow trees that could grow. This allowed more sunlight to hit the water and raise water temperatures so much that endemic cold-water fish could no longer live in the region (Rappaport Clark).

The forced removal of one pesky species resulted in the collapse of an entire ecosystem in one of our nation's most beloved outdoor spaces.

As time passed, Americans began to realize that something was wrong with nature in Yellowstone. In 1974, the gray wolf was placed on the endangered species list for the first of many times ("WOLVES & PEOPLE"). For decades before this, Native Americans in the region protested the slaughter of wolves from their homeland. With each passing moment of inaction, these voices continued to grow louder. In 1993, Dick Baldes, "a wildlife biologist and enrolled member of the Shoshone Tribe," spoke out in favor of the reintroduction of gray wolves into Yellowstone alongside the National Wildlife Federation. Among strong ecological arguments, Baldes presented a touching demonstration of the importance of wolves in indigenous culture. In the legends of the Shoshone, "by watching the wolves, the hunters learned to take advantage of the antelope's natural curiosity. A wolf hunting an antelope would wag its tail to attract the attention of the antelope and lure it closer. Shoshone Indians, too, learned to tie a piece of buckskin to a stick to get the antelope close enough to shoot with a bow and arrow" (Reed). Finally, in 1995, 31 gray wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park ("The History of Wolves in Yellowstone").
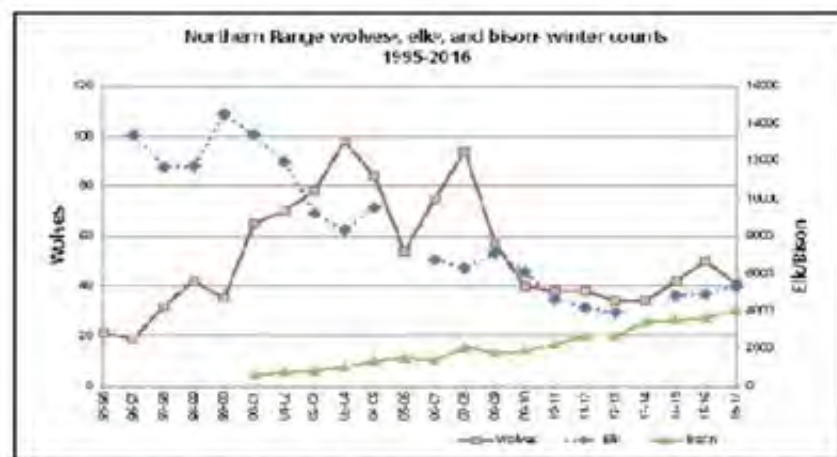
Graph courtesy of the National Parks Service, "Yellowstone Wolf Project Report 2016 (U.S. National Park Service)." The reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone has helped control the number of elk in the region and allow return of bison that share the elks' food sources.

Culture and Conservation

Dick Baldes, mentioned above for his advocacy for the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone, summarized the longtime relationship between Native peoples and the wolves that surrounded them:

> "If [Native Americans] had the same philosophy about wolves that most – but not all – ranchers have, then the wolves would have been eliminated a long time ago. Wolves competed against them, but instead of wiping them out, they learned from them and made them part of their culture" (Reed).

For indigenous peoples in the Yellowstone area, wolves were not an uncommon sight. With such a profound impact on the environment, it is unsurprising that these creatures wove their way into the religions of the area. These tribes "credited wolves with an array of powers from the creation of tribes to the ability to heal the sick. For example, the Arikara believed a wolfman spirit made the Great Plains for them and for other animals. The Cheyenne credited wolves with teaching them how to survive by hunting" (Ferris et al). This relationship with the wolf inspired natives to respect its presence in nature and has continued to inspire natives to voice their concerns about the removal of these animals. As a result of their advocacy efforts, American Indians have earned a reputation for themselves as the "first environmentalists" (Ambler).

The cultural significance of the wolf is not unique to Indian cultures. Its importance "spans the gamut from the spiritual to the moral, from the aesthetic to the recreational" (Ferris et al). When policymakers were first juggling the idea of reintroducing wolves to Yellowstone, they debated the economic impacts of increased tourism compared to harm to the agriculture industry of the region. Before any wolves were released, "FWS studies projected that interest in seeing wolves [would] attract more visitors to Yellowstone National Park and eventually bring up to an additional $23 million annually to the local economy" (Ferris et al). In practice, "wolf ecotourism brings in $35 million annually" (Rappaport Clark). For urban Americans, just as for centuries-old Natives, the wolf holds a special place in our societies.

Since the reintroduction of wolves, Yellowstone has seen a return to balance in its ecosystem. Elk populations are under control, flora is blooming, and countless other species of fish and birds have returned to the area (Rappaport Clark). Despite the remarkable progress that has been made toward restoration of the environment, the story of the wolves of Yellowstone is far from over. In a 2016 update on the Yellowstone wolf restoration project, the National Parks Service explained that "wolves were [removed from the endangered species list] in 2009, but were then relisted in 2010, delisted again in 2011, delisted in Wyoming in 2012, then listed again in Wyoming in 2014" (Yellowstone Wolf Project Report 2016). In 2017, a Native American advocacy group submitted a
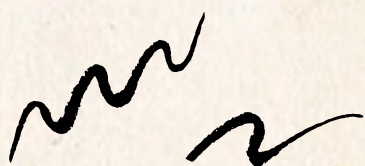
request "to the Wyoming Fish and Game Department seek[ing] a temporary suspension of wolf hunting altogether and 31-mile no-hunting 'sacred resource protection safety zone' along the outskirts of the 2.2 million-acre park in northwest Wyoming" ("Wyoming tribes propose wolf hunt buffer zone"). If we have learned anything from our past mistakes, it's that uncontrolled hunting can cause harm to every living being in that ecosystem. In future years, Native policies on wildlife management must be acknowledged and utilized if we are to maintain a sustainable Earth.

Looking Forward

In the story of the Lahontan cutthroat trout, our world has seen a happy ending. Although human design nearly erased a species from existence in under a century, it was also able to correct this mistake in an incredible feat of ecological engineering. For millennia, Paiute people were able to irrigate their crops and support large populations in this same region. When white Americans entered the area, they brushed past this knowledge in favor of their own "superior" engineering. After much help from tribal officials in collaboration with the U.S. government and a hefty $34 million investment, the Lahontan cutthroat trout was allowed to live on.

With the gray wolves in Yellowstone, our problem was much more direct. Americans in the region simply did not like the wolves and convinced the national government to appropriate funding for their removal. Before long, the entire ecosystem was pushed out of its careful balance. After almost 70 years of extinction of wolves in the Yellowstone area, people from many different Native American tribes were finally able to convince the American government of the need for the reintroduction of wolves to the region. This argument came from deep cultural connections to the species in addition to ecological arguments and understanding of the careful equilibrium that must be maintained in nature. Once the wolf population came back in 1995, the stabilization of the environment occurred rapidly. Thanks to the many indigenous voices of the region, policymakers revised their stances on this issue that is crucial to the conservation of our land.

Despite the concrete evidence that the removal of wolves from Yellowstone has profound negative impacts on the entire area, some policymakers have begun to change their stance on these animals in recent years. The state of Wyoming has repeatedly moved wolves on and off of the endangered species list, allowing hunting of the animals in any time when they have been delisted. Realizing that they cannot trust the government to protect nature, several tribes in the area have taken this responsibility upon themselves. In 2017, a Native American advocacy group sent a request to the Wyoming Fish and Game Department asking for "a temporary suspension of wolf hunting altogether and 31-mile no-hunting 'sacred resource protection safety zone' along the outskirts" of Yellowstone National Park ("Wyoming tribes propose wolf hunt buffer zone"). After years of being ignored by the United States government, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe

has cited Wyoming's failure to adhere to mandates to "manage resources in the best interest of the public" and "not allow special-interest groups to suggest or affect policy change" as motivation for their powerful actions. This mobilization toward creating a sustainable future demonstrates the need for collaboration between the United States and Native American leaders to benefit everyone in our societies.

While we are undoubtedly lucky to be able to call Pyramid Lake a success story, there should not have been a story to begin with. The indigenous people of the American West are truly masters of conservation and managed their land without issues like those caused by the Derby Dam for thousands of years. If we are to create a more sustainable world, we must foster a healthy relationship between natives and the American systems of government that are in place today. When natives voiced their concerns about having water stolen from their beloved Pyramid Lake before the construction of Derby Dam, they were heard by nobody ("The War of Ghosts" 3). Listening to these concerns may have prevented this near disaster from happening altogether. Together, we can work to apply all of our wisdom to new projects that will shape our world.

A more sustainable future begins with a shift toward inclusion of the voices that were present long before our own.

The American West: Indigenous Peoples and Distorted Histories

Jake Hendries

When one thinks of the nineteenth-century American West, the image that emerges is one largely founded upon three abstract terms: frontier, wilderness, and cowboys. Ideas of the nineteenth-century American West are typified by wide-open landscapes, remote wilderness, and the lone gunfighting cowboy. These images are in no small way intertwined with the cultural phenomenon of rugged, American individualism. The relationship between these images and those portrayed in American western films is no coincidence. Yet the problems and origins of these concepts, as well as the way they contribute to the American cultural understanding of the West, extend much further into the past. In understanding the cultural conception of the American West, one discovers that what connects the images of the frontier, wilderness, and cowboy is their dependence upon reductive and revisionist portrayals of Native Americans and their histories.

The idea of an American frontier can be traced back to 1893, with Frederick Jackson Turner. In "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Turner depicts the "Great West" as a unique and essential facet of American development. Turner goes on to argue that "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advancement of American settlement westward, explain American development" (1). Throughout this essay, Turner defines the American frontier as a kind of visible line which divides the land which belongs to white settlers from land yet to be settled. In Turner's conception, this frontier, or "the meeting point between savagery and civilization," is a uniquely American phenomenon, something never present in the development of European civilizations. For Turner, the uniqueness of American history and the way the nation developed lies in this visible and definite division between civilization and the yet-to-be-settled "frontier."

However, Turner's contribution to the idea of the American West restricts American history and development to the actions of white settlers, describing the land belonging to Native Americans as free for the white man's taking. Furthermore, despite Turner's failures in presenting Native Americans as the rightful owners and inhabitants of the land, or as a complex and intricate civilization with thousands of years of culture and history, he nonetheless argues for their significance to the unique development of white American civilization. Turner writes:

> The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts

him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick, he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. (2)

In effect, Turner simultaneously manages to include Native Americans in American history and appropriate their ways of life as he sees fit. In Turner's presentation of the frontier, then, what he fails to acknowledge and include becomes just as important as what he does include. Turner does not mention anything about Native American agricultural practices; their systems of government or leadership; their music, culture, or art. Instead, all Turner portrays is a one-dimensional image of Native Americans, their appearance from a distance. He takes only what is useful for his argument regarding the uniqueness of American development, i.e., the details which can best serve his points about the superiority of white American settlers. The reductive and surface-level qualities of Turner's portrayal of Native Americans, as well as what he chooses to include in what he calls a uniquely American history, set the precedent for the problematic historical distortion of Native Americans in conceptions of the nineteenth-century West.

In a vein similar to Turner's frontier thesis, the idea of an American wilderness is found in John Muir's 1911 essay, "My First Summer in the Sierra." Throughout his depiction, Muir presents the Sierras as a beautiful location brimming with wildlife, covered with trees and forestry and utterly remote from civilization – until he reveals the presence of Native Americans. When describing the nature of the Sierras, Muir speaks very positively about his experience: "In this fine company sauntering enchanted, taking no heed of time, I at length entered the gate of the pass, and the huge rocks began to close around me in all their mysterious impressiveness" (218). When speaking of the wilderness, Muir finds himself enthralled with both the wildlife and the wilderness itself. Muir's depiction captures the idea that the wilderness offers a sublime experience for the visitor, and he portrays its image as a near-spiritual experience.

Yet when Muir turns his attention to the Native Americans, he cannot include them as part of this wilderness despite their being the native inhabitants of the place in which he is only visiting. Immediately following his observations about the "mysterious impressiveness" of the Sierras, Muir writes:

Just then I was startled by a lot of queer, hairy, muffled creatures coming shuffling, shambling, wallowing toward me as if they had no bones in their bodies. Had I discovered them while they were yet a good way off, I should have tried to avoid them. What a picture they made contrasted with the others I had just been

admiring...How glad I was to get away from the gray, grim crowd and see them vanish down the trail! Yet it seems sad to feel such desperate repulsion from one's fellow beings, however degraded. To prefer the society of squirrels and wood chucks to that of our own species must surely be unnatural" (218-219).

As in Turner's description, Muir's depiction of the Native Americans dehumanizes them despite their being part of that which he is attempting to describe. Strangely enough, Muir's ironic comment that preferring the company of animals is "unnatural" fails to recognize that it is unnatural for that exact reason: the Native Americans are as intertwined in the wilderness as the very wildlife he describes. While Muir seems to be blissing out on his personal visit to the wilderness, he fails to understand or portray the Native Americans as human beings despite their having as long and complicated a history as the land itself. Once again, Muir and Turner echo one another. Native Americans are portrayed to exist in a limited and reduced form, entrenching the idea that Native Americans do not belong in the white man's vision of the wilderness. Muir only includes the Native Americans in order to reiterate the point that the indigenous peoples residing in their own land are somehow pervasive or damaging to the white man's ambitions.

In Turner's and Muir's white-centric conceptions of the frontier and the wilderness, Native Americans are crucial elements, but only in the sense that they must be portrayed inaccurately and partially. In other words, the presentation of Native Americans as one-dimensional and uncivilized becomes a crucial role in ideas of the West. The actual history and facts about Native American life cannot be included, yet the stereotypical and problematic images of them must. This contradiction between at once including and excluding Native Americans in American history sets the precedent for their portrayals in American westerns, wherein they are depicted only as a plot device for the white man to overcome. Anything going beyond a surface-level presentation of their histories and ways of life is excluded.

Turner's and Muir's depictions of the American frontier, and their doctored presentations of Native Americans and wilderness, directly influence the representations of cowboys within American films. The depictions, in turn, become the foundation for the quintessential image of the American cowboy. In Turner and Muir's portrayals, Native Americans become a smear upon the wilderness, some sort of accident to be erased or blended in to their historical canvases. The precedent they established for the presentation of Native Americans as obstacles rather than humans gets taken to extremes in American western films. Native Americans are there simply to advance the powerful image of the white cowboy, who effectively wields his gun in order to become a legendary hero for serving them justice. In this way, the filmic portrayal of American cowboys seeking justice through violence against Native Americans runs directly parallel to Turner's and Muir's exclusion and dehumanization of Native Americans in their writing.

A perfect example of this dehumanization can be seen in *The Searchers*, a film in which John Wayne plays Ethan Edwards, a Civil War veteran who vows to return his family members after they've been kidnapped by Comanches. Though the film essentially revolves around Ethan Edwards's seeking violence and revenge against the Comanche, one scene in particular demonstrates the abstract concepts of the frontier and the wilderness that comprise the problematic and widespread cultural notions of the nineteenth-century American West. At 29:54, the scene opens with an establishing long shot of the surrounding area, a wide and expansive valley remote from Ethan Edwards and his horse-riding search party. Here, one observes precisely the image of what Turner describes as the frontier, the expansive wilderness, and the lone white cowboy, whom the land supposedly belongs to and is guarded by. The image here is a powerful visual representation of the role of the frontier as it presents the land as free or wild and there for the white man's taking. Of course, the exclusion of Native Americans in the beginning of the scene contributes to this image. Their initial exclusion makes their sudden appearance deliver the intended effect: to portray them as a bump in the road, something Edwards must overcome in order to reclaim the land. Native Americans are not present in the free and open land until they need to serve the role of an obstacle.

Once the Native Americans do appear, a lone Comanche on horseback emerges from over a ridge. The search party quickly notices and prepares to draw weapons. The film immediately gives the impression that since the Natives are imposing themselves on the land, there needs to be a conflict of some sort; they do not belong and must be removed. The effect of seeing the sudden emergence of the Comanche emphasizes their role in the film. They are what opposes both Ethan Edwards, the cowboy, and his allegedly free land, the frontier. Drawing a parallel back to Turner, one finds that Native Americans are included only to further the idea of the frontier.

Following the emergence of the Comanche, the shot zooms in on the Comanche leader, who gives a signal and is suddenly joined by his own search party of similar size. A contrasting shot follows, this time with the Comanche party riding in the same direction as Ethan's, over the same landscape, as if to have emerged from nowhere. The contradiction here lies in the way that, despite the land's supposedly being associated with Ethan Edwards, the Comanche have emerged from it and are seemingly intertwined with it. Immediately after this shot, another Comanche party comes from the opposite direction as if to close in on Ethan's search party. Followed by an extreme long shot of Ethan's group being surrounded by the Comanche, a chase and a gun fight ensue between the two groups, with Ethan's and the white men's gunslinging prowess ultimately forcing the remaining Comanche to flee.

In effect, the sequence of cuts in this scene from *The Searchers* visually encapsulates the problems in conceptions of the wilderness, the cowboy, and the frontier, demonstrating the contradictory inclusion and exclusion of Native Americans in portrayals of the

American West. As in Muir's depiction, the land appears empty and remote until the Comanche arrive, and there is a clear distinction drawn between white and native men. As in Turner's frontier thesis, there also exists the portrayal of western land as free, essentially presenting native Americans as obstacles to the development of American civilization rather than as a unique and intricate part of the land.

Although *The Searchers* is irrefutably a film about a "cowboy" seeking justice against native Americans, Muir's and Turner's conceptions of the wilderness and the frontier are still very much present and central to the film's portrayal of them. *The Searchers,* and western movies like *The Searchers,* no doubt helped create the cultural idea of the cowboy as an American figure for rugged individualism and vigilante justice, while simultaneously ignoring the presence of native Americans or else displaying them as an uncivilized obstacle in the white man's efforts to further American society and civilization. Once again, Native Americans in the history of the American West exist only in the ways that best serve the white-centric conception of the American West: the ideas of the frontier, the wilderness, and the cowboy–not in any historical, cultural, factual, or otherwise realistic manner.

Ultimately, when viewing *The Searchers* and reflecting upon cultural conceptions of the American nineteenth-century, I can't help but think of the movies I watched with my dad growing up. Although we stayed away from John Wayne films, my dad and I watched plenty of Clint Eastwood movies, especially the so-called spaghetti westerns. But the fact that I cannot recall what the representation of native Americans was like in those films, or whether they were even in them, is representative of their treatment in American history. Moreover, I know how influential the portrayal of the American cowboy as a gunslinging symbol of individualism was to my perception of nineteenth-century America. Culturally, the image of the cowboy overshadows that of the Native American in most general conceptions of the West, almost entirely due to the way Native Americans have been misrepresented and misunderstood.

I had no idea how deep the myth of the cowboy pervaded American culture, and exactly how much of it depended upon the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of Native Americans throughout history. The films I watched with my dad as a child, and how they influenced my understanding of the West, show that these myths are still very much present and influential in our culture. Even in the twenty-first century, there exists this lingering problem of including Native Americans in our histories and conceptions beyond the stereotypical myths that we've grown to be so familiar with. What we must contemplate and deal with now are the repercussions of silencing and misrepresenting an ancient and complex civilization of human beings for centuries.

ART 160

Art Criticism for a Changing World

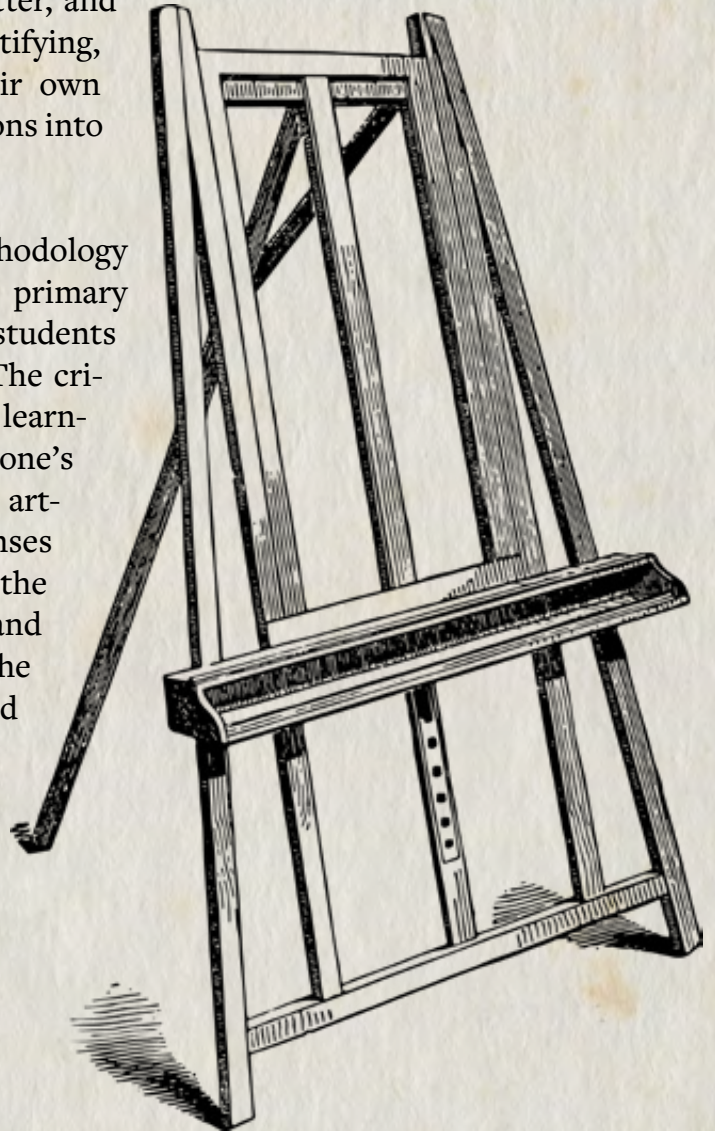# Art Criticism for a Changing World

Al-An deSouza & Kavena Hambira

This class focused on various approaches to writing about art in the context of key questions and debates that have re-emerged forcefully, particularly around racial and gender equity and justice, political divisions, climate change, and imagining different outcomes for the foreseeable future. We considered what roles art can play in such times and what kinds of art criticism are needed to investigate and address those roles.

The course emphasis was on art as encountered by individual and collective viewers in the present and what art means in our current world. The course considered multiple approaches to thinking and writing about art. Students were introduced to different research strategies from art history, critical theory, and popular culture. We considered different terminologies used for discussing art, questions of who speaks, whose voice is heard, objectivity and subjectivity, what one can speak about, how to address "controversial" or "difficult" subject matter, and so on. Students practiced identifying, translating, and articulating their own experiences, emotions, and opinions into language.

The course drew upon the methodology of the art critique, which is the primary pedagogical form with which art students engage the work of their peers. The critique's various functions include learning to externalize and articulate one's own embodied responses to an artwork and to situate those responses in relation to one's peers and to the various discourses that produce and attribute meaning from art. The class adopted the critique method of "thinking together," building in support models of co-editing and small-group discussions.

We visited museums and galleries, writing from the direct experience of close

and sustained looking. The final assignment was a class presentation on a selected artist, followed by a thousand-word essay on that artist. Some of the essays here are extracts from those longer essays; others were written in direct response to gallery visits.

Some questions that informed how students approached their writing: Are you writing for a general viewer or a specialized viewer? To what extent do you write from and with a "personal," subjective voice, or do you maintain a tone of objectivity? What are the stakes of those approaches? How might a review inform viewers about the work, help viewers interpret the work, or see and understand something about the work that they might otherwise miss? Methods considered include describing your own experience of the work as an example for the viewer; providing a political understanding, a different view, or even an opposing view; pointing out omissions and offering counter-readings, e.g., about race, or gender, or sexuality, or class, as these might be evidenced within the work.

BAMPFA: Lines of Thought

Abyssinia Iriejah-Akña Gibson
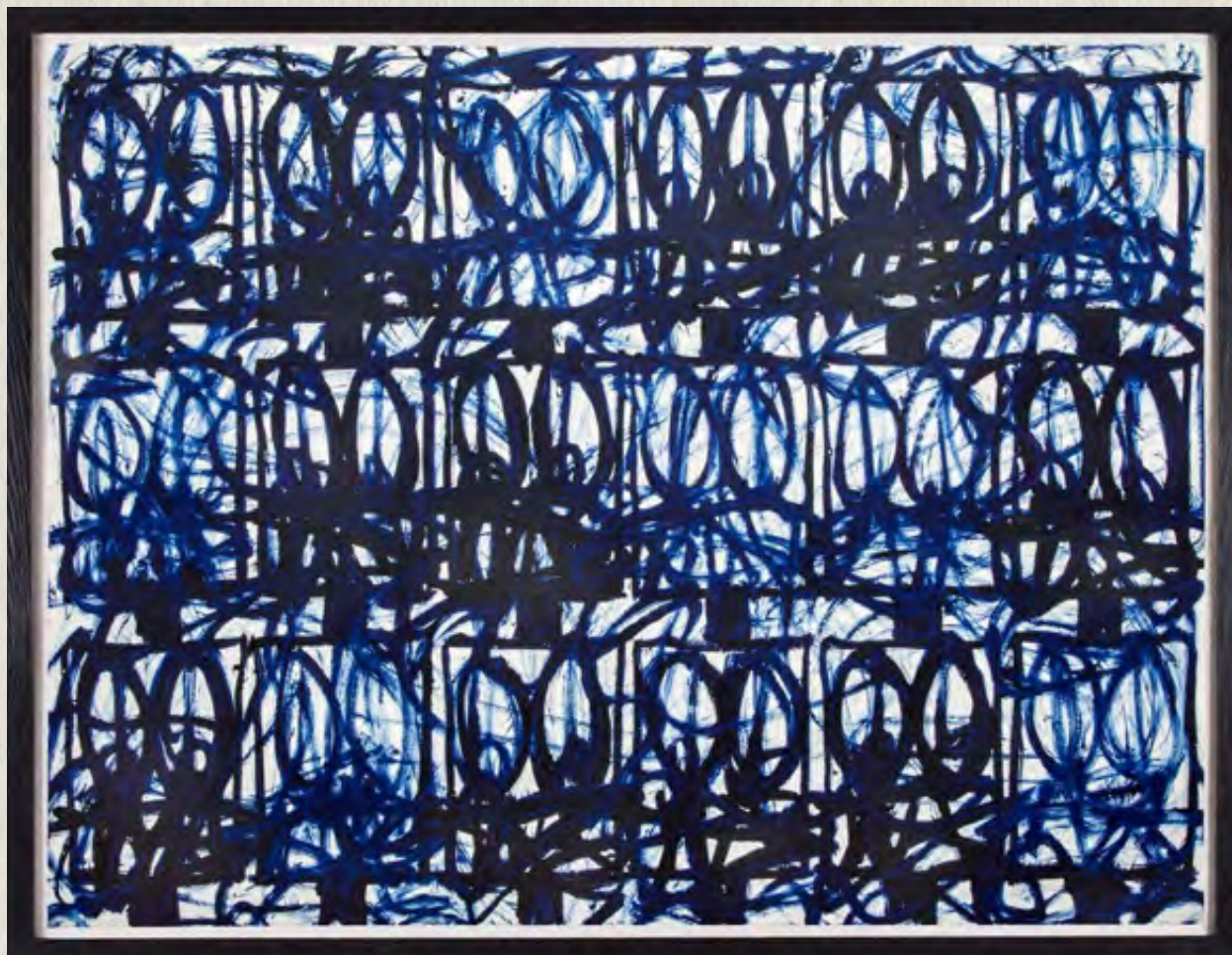
Rashid Johnson, *Untitled Anxious Bruise Drawing.* 2021. Oil on cotton rag

When viewing the *Lines of Thought* exhibition at Berkeley Art Museum, it was difficult for me to take my eyes off *Untitled Anxious Bruise Drawing,* an oil on cotton rag piece by Rashid Johnson. The work is filled with erratic, bold black lines scribbled over a pattern that repeats, and two prominent, oval shapes placed tightly next to each other, each box alternating between a deep blue and a lighter blue. At first, I viewed the markings present in the work as human figures standing next to each other; however, as I stared for a moment, the figures changed, and I saw them less as figures and more as markings conveying an artistic "anxiousness." Stepping back a few feet to view the work as a whole, it becomes extremely chaotic and a bit overwhelming. I'm not sure where to focus, but yearn to analyze the eighteen deeply-colored boxes present around each of the repeating patterns. The description of the work made it clear that this "highly gestural, almost scribbled face" was indeed representing anxiety connecting to the pain and violence "suffered by Black bodies."

Hans Hofmann, *The Clash*. 1964. Oil on Canvas

The Clash by Hans Hofmann immediately communicated its lifelike qualities, my focus goes immediately to the large area of bright red paint that consumes the piece. Red can convey internal structures and composition of the human body in combination with the state of the artist's mind and how he connects what he's been through to his mark-making practice. Red does not communicate a joyful feeling, but a somber one, possibly alluding to the violence perpetuated by the Nazi regime in Germany and how it was difficult for Hoffman to leave his home. An array of colors is smeared in narrow streaks over the large red space, including shades of blue, orange, yellow, and pink which can communicate the human condition and the process of aging. The warm colors represent the happy moments in one's life, and the deep blue tones convey a point of toil. When viewing the canvas as a whole, all these colors placed on top of the large red spot further convey the lifelike qualities of the piece. It was striking to learn that Hofmann was eighty-four when he completed *The Clash*. His many years of experience are apparent through his classic, bold brush strokes and "push-pull" technique. It can be viewed as a layout of how the brain after years of aging operates and processes its thoughts and emotions; it is interesting how the process can change.

Vespers: Nature x Humanity: Oxman Architexts, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Adrian Garcia

Intricate and unknowable creatures, or creations, beautiful and threatening, lay displayed safely behind glass. In separate, brightly lit compartments, these alien specimens can be more closely inspected. Glowing luminously, suspended in midair, they seem to move, slowly, like graceful jellyfish. Some are soft and rounded, with shapely, wave-like limbs or extensions; others, spiny or adorned with spiky horns as if sculpted entirely from brier patch. The more time I spend with each specimen, the less I know or think I know what they might be. They don't seem to be simply ornate, nor do they seem to hold any practical purpose. Neither tool nor décor, I'm left to find out what their purpose is.

They appear to possess a helmet-like shape. They may be delicate reproductions of a warrior's mask from some unknown tribe, or maybe imagined masks or helmets for a fictitious alien population. Truly mysterious, these sculptures fascinate and frustrate me as I continue my investigation of them. Imagining the world they have come from, I form a picture of the beings that wear them. If they are indeed masks, they don't appear to have discernable protective design qualities, so their purpose would be strictly ornate—for special occasions like parades or national holidays (if alien nations have national holidays, that is). Otherwise, maybe they serve the same purpose on the alien world as they do here in this gallery: to beautify and mystify the public space. Perfectly silent and still, they somehow command lengthy attention not only from myself but from the others in this gallery. As our society slips further into a digital, mechanical, and robotic world, I imagine the future world to be equipped with gear and accessories that would have utilitarian purposes and appear similar to these that float before me.

Reading from the walls like an anthropologist, I learn about these alien artifacts. Imagined and realized by multidisciplinary visionary, Neri Oxman, along with the Mediated Matter Group, these creations are simultaneously art, research, and prototype. They are prototypes for sustainable, earth-conscious and still aesthetically pleasing materials for the infrastructure of our future world. They experiment with combining inorganic materials with organic materials, such as melanin, a naturally occurring pigment found in everything from skin to hair to eyes, and even in feathers and wings. Neri and the Mediated Group hoped with this endeavor to synthesize the pigment so that it could be generated at will and utilized to sustain us on earth, with all its resources diminishing rapidly. This project, with all its life-sustaining potential, is poetically derived from death—a death

mask, to be more specific. These haunting masks are haunting for a reason. They represent the solidification of a person's final breath before succumbing to death, the unification of a concept steeped in spirituality and science and realized as a hybrid synthetic material that can be worn by a human and by a building. Emphasizing the moniker of "universal pigment," they could potentially even allow a human to detect harmful toxins in the environment and a building to adapt in real time to the climate changing around it. Neri and the Mediated Group have reminded us that we do not have to choose sides. Art would not be what it is without science, and science gets so much better-looking with art. Left and right hemispheres can apparently work copacetically. As it turns out, the result is also hauntingly beautiful.
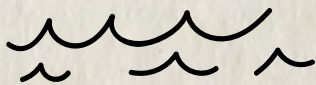
Transcending Time

Andromeda

Eniola Fakile, *Mom*, 2022. Installation: mixed media, paper, plastic, cloth; dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the reviewer.

The *Optimal Conditions* exhibit is about transcending time and space, creating a distortion that makes the viewer's thoughts shift while looking at the art pieces and performances.

A mixed-media array of pink and colorful statue-like pieces, titled *Mom*, by Eniola Fakile, caught my eye. This part of the exhibit really matches the theme of transcending time. Linking the Victorian era, 1830s-1900s, and the modern era, it feels as if you are in both a 19th-century ballroom and a new-age teenager's room. The next piece that caught my eye was a dress, near the front center. The items it is made of help create a corset-looking piece, which reminds me of a Victorian style. The items seem to be things that one could find in a junk drawer around the house, hence the modern aspect I saw when I walked into the exhibit.

The other statue figures are posed across the room as if in the middle of a party. One is a completely green creature just off to the side. Another is sitting down with one leg sticking out made of a multitude of items such as an old shirt and pants, with flowers and leaves blooming out of the holes where the head and arms should be. On the wall is an outline of a man made of colorful pastel balls with colorful butterflies sticking out. In the corner is the body of a mannequin wearing a dress made with cigarettes with tattered cloth for arms. One thing that all these figures have in common is the fact that they are made of found items. This is where I think the prefix *trans-*, "across," can have a double meaning. The objects are *trans*formed to make new statues while also *trans*porting time and space by using semi-common items to create a scene that is neither the past,

the present, nor the future but a merging of different periods. This installation is going across time while also carrying across a feeling of whimsy with its use of transformed items.

You will have to go through all the statues and actually work your way around the piece to see every detail. In the center is a curled outline of a body emitting blue light. It makes me question where the title, Mom, comes from. A lot of the items seem to be found in a home, especially the older-looking pieces of clothing. The way the body is curled up, in the center surrounded by these items, makes it seem like the items around the body are a source of comfort. For a lot of people, a mother is someone who brings them comfort.

This section of the exhibit was a great way to start off the journey through the rest of the gallery because it helped set the tone. This installation is very whimsical; all the statues are like their own person. The clothing they wear or the items they are made of give them their own personality. You have to interact with the pieces and come close, but not too close, to see what each statue is made of. Then, in this maze of people-like creatures, you see a curled-up outline of a person seemingly resting on a bed made of lights. This person felt more like the person seeking comfort than the mother who gives it. It really felt like I was looking into a world that was familiar and has happened before but at the same time has not. A true, unique experience.

Nature X Humanity, and Tauba Auerbach, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA)

Avitha Nigam

The other day, I got the opportunity to visit the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Exhibits at SFMOMA feature installations in a variety of mediums and styles ranging from the representational to the downright unconventional, which would satisfy any art-loving museum-goer. Unfortunately, that isn't me.

For the last few months I've been lucky enough to view several art galleries and exhibits for the purpose of collecting my thoughts on them and formulating reviews, but after each one I've been left with the same internal assessment: I don't like modern art.

Visiting galleries has stopped being fun. I've seen too many large canvases of colors and giant shapes and scribbles. I've seen the Andy Warhols. I've seen the Lichtensteins. I've seen hundreds of social commentary pieces. I've seen strange objects suspended in the air, and I've seen abstract installations on the floor. I wanted something pretty, captivating, and new—something I'd never seen before.

Oddly enough, in the last leg of my visit to SFMOMA, I got just that. The exhibit was on the 4th floor and titled "Nature X Humanity by Oxman Architects." It began with a towering sculpture reminiscent of two folded butterfly wings that look to be made of glass given how they reflect light. From there, the exhibition was split into two rooms, one on each side, one painted black and the other white. The works took on unconventional shapes and forms, making use of colors and materials that grabbed the eye. A big theme of the work seemed to be perspective and optical illusion, the pieces changing from the angle they were viewed from and presenting still forms that gave the perception of growth and movement. The pieces looked more as though they belonged in The Museum of Natural Sciences than in an art gallery.

The works by Tauba Auerbach included transparent sculptures that played with layers to exploit the refraction of light, suspended organic forms, canvas presentations of cells under a microscope, assortments of various paperweights, journals, calendars, and records, TV static illusions, something that looked to be a giant wooden organ, an installation of water being pulled between strings, another of light melting a form, and a whole array of images that served to trick your brain and mess with your head.

Traversing the space had me feeling like a little kid, rushing to see what was next and lingering on every piece to see what else I could get out of it. I wanted to walk around them, to tilt my body to see them at different angles. Many of them even left me having to wrestle with my strong desire to extend my hand to touch them and savor the texture. I can honestly say that the Oxman's *Nature X Humanity* and Auerbach's exhibits managed to get me excited about art, opening my mind to the possibilities of what art could be and making it fun again.

Words as Art for Activism: Barbara Kruger's *Thinking of ~~you~~. I mean ~~me~~. I mean you,* Art Institute of Chicago Exhibition

Corey Hegel

Barbara Kruger, Thinking of ~~you~~. I mean ~~me~~. I mean you.

Barbara Kruger uses text as art to make personal statements on a range of economic and political topics including identity, self-indulgence, and the negative aspects of capitalism, dominant culture, and society. Kruger's exhibition showcases her method of using simple, thought-provoking texts that she appropriated from various sources. Stylized in different fonts, sizes, and colors, she makes bold declarations to question societal norms. Kruger's prints and other media montage black and white photos as the background to her selected phrases and poems.

Using geometric layouts, as in Untitled (Forever) (fig. 1), 2017, Kruger uses depth and optical illusion to frame the word "YOU." Beneath, a poem reads, "YOU ARE HERE, LOOKING THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, BARELY SEEING THE UNSEEN, THE INVISIBLE, THE BARELY THERE. YOU ARE WHOEVER YOU ARE. WHEREVER YOU ARE. ETCHED IN MEMORY, UNTIL YOU, THE LOOKER, IS GONE. UNSEEN. NO MORE. YOU TOO." The words are presented as though viewed through the convex lens of a magnifying glass, with its oval frame at the end of a room surrounded by other words along three walls and the floor. The wall on the right side of the room lists different phrases related to war, including war time, war crime, war games, gang war, civil war, holy war, trade war, cold war, race war. Reading these words, it is hard not to ask ourselves why we "war" over everything. Diversity in race and faith should be celebrated. The practice of trade between countries to share the world's resources should be one of cooperation and not war. The last phrase split into two lines is "WAR FOR ME - TO BECOME YOU." Kruger is challenging society to be more empathetic and to embrace each other's

differences. The left wall comments, "IN THE END, YOU'VE HAD YOUR CHANCE," "IN THE END, NOTHING MATTERS," "IN THE END, YOU DISAPPEAR," "IN THE END, LIES PREVAIL," "IN THE END, HOPE IS LOST." This is Kruger's critique of our self-centered, superficial society where we chase money and power at any cost. In the end, we will all disappear and be "gone."
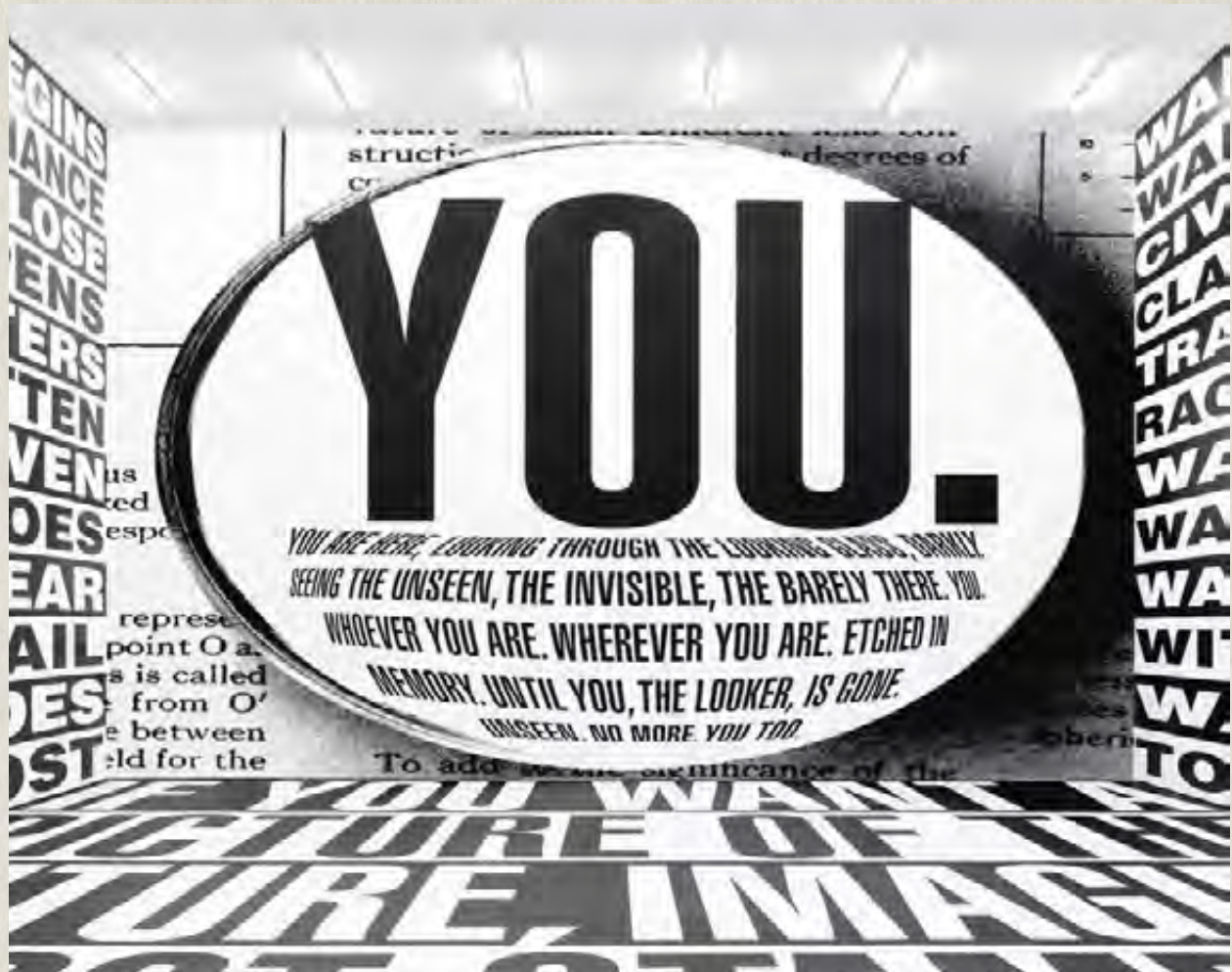

Fig. 1: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Forever)*, 2017

Image and text together have consistently been used for communication. Kruger's art is a modern twist wherein she uses text as art to communicate her points of view. Just because something has become normalized, it does not mean that it is equitable or ethical. Seeing the pieces in Kruger's exhibit raised questions about my own existence, self-image, how I am perceived, how I perceive others, and whether I really need all the materialistic things that I desire. How far would I go for things that I desire? And if I obtained that desire, would it fulfill me? Would it be something I can take with me after

I am no longer on this earth? Barbara Kruger's work is more relevant than ever in today's culture of social media and news outlets where appearances are valued over substance and where misinformation is believed by mainstream culture. Selfishness and avarice have led us to where we are today, on the brink of extinction due to global warming and of another world war, possibly our last.

Fig. 2: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Who owns what?)*, 1991/2012

Review: Spiritual Mountains: The Art of Wesley Tongson

Emily Nguyen

Wesley Tongson, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia at age 15, found solace in painting. At BAMPFA's *Spiritual Mountains* exhibition, viewers are enveloped in his atemporal meditations of color and ink and transported into alternate modes of being through large landscape paintings.

In *Untitled,* 2012, globular and elastic mountains appear both solid and vaporous, connected by smooth trails of ink curving like gentle wind around the body. Several mountains arch their spines and curve their bellies to reach for other island-like masses of ink. The dark black ink against the white paper delicately balances two extremes as Tongson's hand mimics the generative powers of the earth in building up and carving out changes in elevation. The rhythmic swirls of the brush breathe life into both the mountains and the space outside of them. Every aspect of the painting is alive and in motion, as if any aspect of reality could easily give rise to any other because all is contained in one energy common to each brushstroke. The mountains are not grounded in the earth but instead exist in an imagined mindscape. This suggests human thought and conduct may align themselves with mountains and air, which are one substance. Small houses are featured on the top of some mountains, suggesting the harmonious relationship of humans to the natural world.

In *Slope,* 1990, the viewer is engulfed by a large rock or mountaintop which dominates the composition and reaches near the top of the page at a diagonal, allowing for a small strip of softly-clouded blue sky to peek through at the top left corner. The texture of the stone is represented by thousands of unique splotches where pigment gathers with small spaces, piecemeal variations in color, and fuzzy lines just dense and spikey enough at the edges to convey the coarseness of rock. The intimate distance between viewer and rock, as if one is directly next to or on the mountains and looking up at its jagged peaks, positions them in a process of becoming one with the rock rather than watching the mountain from afar. The pointed mountaintops yearn for the sky just as people strive to reach toward the heavens through slow and deliberate processes which build the spirit.

In *Untitled,* 2000, ghostly mountain peaks fade in and out through washes of color which blend seamlessly into one another while retaining clear hues of pink, green, yellow, blue, orange, gray, and purple. The mountains rise vertically to touch the sky while color drips horizontally, and white veins of gathered black pigment add scratchy texture to smooth feeling tones. One mountain peak, slightly off-center, reaches above the confines of the

page to enlightenment, intertwining with the notion of spiritual purity and imploring the viewer to investigate their own hazy, ephemeral memories for lessons which have the potential to uplift the soul.

Lineage, Landscape

Isaac Bates-Vinueza

Western art has long been fascinated by the solitary genius: a man who works alone, and who appears to pull as if from thin air a new and original kind of beauty. His work is always praised for this originality, and like the man, it often seems to have no precursor. But this story is never quite true. If there's something original about an artist's work, there must also be something derivative. Art is, inevitably, tradition.

Seeing an artist's work within a tradition does not, as some might think, diminish its originality, but instead enhances it. Such is the case with the work of Wesley Tongson, a subtle and revelatory painter from Hong Kong. Eleven of his paintings have recently been gifted to the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, and you can now view them alongside the work of many of his greatest influences, like Zhang Daqian, Shitao, and Pablo Picasso, in an exhibition called *Spiritual Mountains.*

Like many of his teachers, Tongson is foremost a landscape painter. He paints many mountains and trees, sometimes using a brush to display explosive streaks of color and other times smearing black paint across the canvas with his hands and fingers, all in a style reminiscent of the other Chinese masterworks in the exhibition. The mountain in *Untitled* from *The Mountains of Heaven* series stands firm against a milky yellow sky similar to the milky watercolor blue of Zhang Daqian's *Scholar with a Qin Zuher in a Misty Landscape.* Tongson has also adapted the sweeping verticality evident in Liu Guosong's *Landscape.* Just as the swoops of Guosong's *Landscape* rock the eye back and forth, up the to the peak of the mountain, so do the swirls of Tongson's wide *Untitled,* from the *Spiritual Mountain* series, pull the eye up and around the inky peaks, inspiring a feeling of near vertiginous motion.

Tongson's brilliance, though, shines most clearly in the way he abstracts these masters' principles to new and surprising ends. *Slope,* for example, is a work of shocking, almost pure steepness. A dramatic gray slope takes up nearly the entire frame. A slit of vibrant sky peeks out just slightly from the top corner, one of the only representational hints given by the canvas. Tongson's expanded sense of abstraction, especially in his color works, captures both the imposing magnificence and sublime quiet of his subjects. His mountains feel taller and look more striking as a result, even as their shape recedes against the splashes of color.

Placing these works within the tradition of 20th-century Chinese masters only magnifies Tongson's originality. *The Spiritual Mountains* exhibit makes this connection explicit, noting at one point the importance of imitation in traditional Chinese painting. The

Tongson exhibit is concurrent with another exhibition, *Lines of Thought,* which collects the works of many American and European abstract expressionists. The two exhibits bear a striking similarity in color and expression, but Tongson's exhibit, which lies on the bottom floor of BAMPFA, draws out a deeper connection between its artists that feels spiritual. Perhaps this is the spirituality that swirls around Tongson's solitary mountains. Peering up at that point where the peak meets the horizon, where heaven is joined to the earth, you feel a sense of lift. From this vantage point, looking up is not so different from looking back and from being lifted into the sky.

Photographs of the Subliminal: *Image Gardeners,* McEvoy Foundation for the Arts
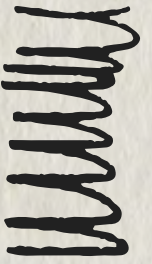
Madisyn Schweitzer

When considering one's encounter with photographic modes, what conjectures and conversations are brought to light to decipher the work at hand? Exploring what it means to build conclusions about another human being through an image, the *Image Gardeners* exhibition in the McEvoy Foundation for the Arts gallery curates a unique showing of photographic portraiture via the lens of women- and non-binary-identifying artists. Through a collection of varying works, ranging in size, color, application, and content, ideas of the self and identity are contested. The themes at play in the show's black and white representations of women generate conversations around duality and environment, as well as around feminine perspectives within our society.

Melanie Schiff's *Double, Double* (2016) first appears as a standard photographic profile of a female figure situated in a field of flowers. The piece is riddled with subliminal messages that generate impactful connotations, reaching farther than its physical attributes. Analyzing the rendering of the entire image, there is an intentional distortion that shifts and blurs the subject, creating the appearance of a double-exposed and moving image through physical adjustment or digital manipulation. Connecting to the concept of female duality, this artistic decision speaks to the expectations women face in being "multiples" simply to exist in society. As the subject is photographed nude, her exposed body becomes symbolic of separating oneself from external labels and perceptions. She is allowed to breathe within her own anatomy and self-expressed identity. Presented in such an organically innate form, the woman's body is removed from carnalized perceptions of feminine physiques and is instead given agency and power through bareness. As onlookers, we become witnesses to this action of revelation and are empowered in our own views.

Utilizing a similar approach to subliminal messaging, Susan Meiselas uses photographic alteration to convey notions about her space within the world. In a work titled Self-portrait (1971), the artist photographs herself within a mundane room seated in a wooden chair. What makes this work stand out is her manipulation of double-exposure techniques to appear transient. Through this ghost-like presence, she evokes feelings of being both present and absent, and she shows her pensive view of the world around her through an austere lens. Relating the work to her encounters with those coming into and out of her life, Meiselas takes a seat as the observer, interacting with those viewing the

work in the gallery space. Confronting the audience with her stoic glare, she incorporates the viewer into the piece.

Reflecting on the vulnerability within these works, I question the conventions of my own image. As a woman who is constantly observed, I think about what becomes of my audience's perceptions in dictating my identity and who I am when in the presence of myself, especially in my most susceptible state.

Yinka Shonibare

Saira Brown

Contemporary Nigerian-British artist Yinka Shonibare works with fabric and manne-quins. Throughout his career, Shonibare has felt extremely connected to both Nigerian and British cultures and has been interested in implementing attributes of both into his artwork. He is also interested in globalism and class, examining the ways that materials travel and the impact other countries have on his artwork. Many of his pieces encompass the colonial relationship between Europe and Africa and our perceptions of the conti-nents. Ideas such as education, class, and international relations are explored through installation pieces of manikins in animated poses.

Shonibare was born in London, then moved to Lagos, Nigeria, where he spent his child-hood and adolescence. When it was time for him to enter university, he was allowed to move back to London to study fine art. During his time there, Shonibare developed an illness that caused damage to his spinal cord. This event resulted in one side of his body being paralyzed. After taking some time to recover, he returned to finish school. He took many of his life experiences and put them into his work. Shonibare thought about traditional European paintings and wanted to challenge their themes. Through his back-ground and experience, Shonibare aims to make his audience rethink history.

In Shonibare's *Age of Enlightenment* collection, he focuses on creating British scenes. In one piece, Adam Smith places a sculpture in a scene with items that are typically asso-ciated with Europe, including a vintage bookshelf and a figure reaching for a book. The figure is dressed in brightly-patterned African wax print, stockings, and a pair of dress shoes. According to Shonibare, though the wax print is African inspired, its production in Europe is also a major part of his work. Though it is an African print, it is in fact pro-duced in the Netherlands. When looking more closely at the piece, the viewer can also see that the hands-on headless manikins are brown. *Jean le Rond d'Alembert* is another piece in this collection, having the same traits as the first piece with the addition of a pair of walking crutches. The crutches are another addition for Shonibare and reflect his personal experience of having a disability. *Immanuel Kant* is another mannikin instal-lation, referring to the philosopher who was known for his theories of ethics and the value of human lives even as he was also notoriously known for his dismissal of African advancement and culture. This piece could be perceived as ironic since this philosopher of ethics, wearing African cloth, also belongs to a nation that directly contradicts those ethics. In addition to putting this Kant figure into African wax print, he is enforcing Africa's existence within Europe. This series puts Africa in the space of Enlightenment because the continent is not acknowledged that way historically.

Indira Allegra, *TEXERE: The Shape of Loss Is a Tapestry,* Minnesota Street Projects, Gallery 106.

Vivianne Champagne

Indira Allegra, *TEXERE: The Shape of Loss Is a Tapestry,* Minnesota Street Projects, Gallery 106.

Indira Allegra works in performance and installation, a kind of art that typically explores the poetics of sites and objects. They are highly interested in animism, interiority, and rituals, and in the idea of memorials around us.

In *TEXERE,* Allegra creates an emotionally deep and provoking experience as the viewer walks through the exhibit and soaks in the cold, soft glow of the six tapestries. You get a feeling that the tapestries are trying to tell you something, but that something is disappearing. It's a beautifully chilling sensation. Each tapestry touches on a different type of loss, emitting slightly varying color tones or expressions. As the viewer walks

through the digital array of distorted messages, the generous amount of space between tapestries emanates a sense of loneliness, coupled with the silence of the space. Allegra effectively captures the essence of loss and what it means to lose important moments of your life, which are represented by the dark and empty room.

Each screen glows with hues of blue, orange, and brown, displayed in short color strips and resembling bar codes or a shredded magazine. Within the bars of pigments, there are bits and pieces of broken white text, giving way to hints of messages that the viewer can't fully catch. These strips of words and blurred pictures effectively represent emotional or physical erosion as the viewer struggles to read the assemblage of visual information hanging from the ceiling.

Two of the six tapestries are double-sided, creating eight total screens that portray a range from ordinary and casual losses to more serious and meaningful ones. Hanging in the middle of the room, four screens represent the losses of forests to wildfires, respect for someone who once helped, the experience of a child as a baby now that they are older, and a sense of home. On the right side of the room, a screen depicts the loss of a loved one to cancer, while on the back wall, another screen depicts the loss of sleep. Along the left side, two screens portray respectively the loss of a loved one to a virus and the loss of a ring. These each allude to larger themes. The wildfire tapestry alludes to climate change, and the child tapestry alludes to tribulations of growing and the loss of innocence as you get older. There are references to COVID-19, divorce, exhaustion, and more, with each one speaking about the impactful experiences in our lives.

This electronic weaving of patterns, text, and images builds a space rooted in everyday human experience, while also acting as a living community memorial by allowing viewers to contribute to the tapestries through a collaborative web platform, *TEXERE*. Observers can pick a category of loss that most resonates with them and share media or text that relates to it. *TEXERE* then combines and weaves those media into the thread within the chosen tapestry. This builds a sense of collective perception surrounding the idea of loss, making this experience more deeply intertwined among participants.
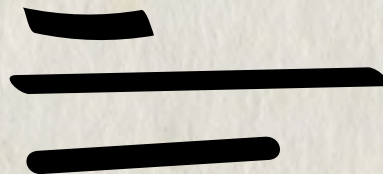
Mika Tajima at SFMoMA

Shinnosuke Yasuda

Mika Tajima, *Human Synth (Los Angeles)*, 2019

At the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, I discovered Mika Tajima's *Human Synth (Los Angeles)*, 2019, a video visualizing people's activities in Los Angeles based on Twitter API (a user data set provided by Twitter). Purplish white smoke, created by computer graphics, rises up from the bottom edge of the screen.

As an artist, I felt sympathetic toward this work. I created and exhibited a similar media artwork about six months ago. The similarity lies in the fact that I collected data on the movements of people in the local community and used a game engine to transform those movements into computer graphics to reflect the data. What I found remarkable about her work was the use of Twitter API, the representation of people's movements as smoke, and the choice of Los Angeles as the target community.

I agree with the choice of Twitter API. Most social media provide an API (application

programming interface), disclosing some of the data on user behavior. I assume that the number of tweets posted with the position information of Los Angeles is reflected in the amount of smoke. This is well used in measuring regional and topical excitement in real time. In my opinion, Twitter is the social media platform most closely aligned with people's brains. It provides the briefest system after we are eager to share something and before tweeting it.

I also found it interesting that the excitement of the community was expressed through smoke. The images were projected by a projector on a screen suspended in midair in the exhibition room. The smoke rising from the bottom edge made me imagine that something was burning in the space under the screen. Since the work was exhibited on the upper floors of the museum, I could imagine the heat from the people in the city rising as if there was fire beneath the building.

The narrowing of the data set to Los Angeles is effective. When targeting a specific area for a work, it is important to consider how broad the coverage should be. If the scope is too narrow, the artist will not be able to gather enough data to present it as a work of art, and if it is too broad, the concept of locality will be lost. The artist has set herself the task of cutting up society according to its location on the map, and the city of Los Angeles is an area symbolic enough to be cut up.

Datasets such as the one used in this work, which can be retrieved from APIs provided by social media, make it easy to input social trends into a work of art. As people's means of communication shift more toward the digital side, more diverse data will be compiled, further promoting the diversity of media art.

On Marina Abramovic

Belle Yao

Besides her constant experimentation with physical limitations, what else does Marina Abramovic express through her practice? The content of Abramovic's artworks is often relatively straightforward, enabling the audience to take part in the performance or even take control of her body. But the form of her performance remains an essential part of the overall "conversation" that needs to be explored. Abramovic has given several performances before *Rhythm 0*, 1974. In her earliest work, *Rhythm 10*, 1973, she performed a ritualistic Russian game by stabbing knives between her fingers until she missed and cut herself. What was striking about this first performance was that Abramovic recorded the first play with a tape recorder until she had used up all 20 prepared knives, which means she cut herself 20 times. Then she played back the recording of the first play and tried to reenact the same cut at the same time with the recorded sound.

Abramovic claims that this act of cutting and recutting is essentially "unifying time past and time present." Abramovic also made a statement in this first performance by saying that when the audience stood silent watching her, "[t]he sense of danger in the room had united the onlookers and me at that moment: the here and now, and nowhere else." The underpinning idea of unification with the audience has been made present ever since her first performance, but what is also important here is the vital connotation of time.

Besides the physical unification with the audience, Abramovic also unifies time past and time present with the viewers. In her 2010 MOMA performance, *The Artist Is Present*, Abramovic sat at one side of a table for a cumulative 730 hours, inviting viewers to sit across from her silently. This performance caused a huge sensation and received significant publicity due to the groundbreaking performance of silent confrontations between the artist and the audience. Understanding the chosen path throughout Abramovic's career, the concept of unification through performance has played a vital role in the artist's work, but time seems to be another conceptual imperative in Abramovic's performances. Most of Abramovic's works are distinctly long in duration, including 2010's *The Artist Is Present*, where she sat immobile for hours each day. If the content of Abramovic's work always seems to confront the human body's limitations, then the artist conducts such confrontations by stretching out the length of the performance, engaging not just with the audience but also with perceptions of time. When viewers' engagement deepens as time passes, their perceptions of time slow down, fostering a perpetual experience of the present moment. If the content of Abramovic's work confronts the pain and physical limitation of the human body, then the form of the work might be an invitation to a deeper engagement wherein the viewers and Abramovic herself can unite into a single organism, experiencing those confrontations as a whole.

Who is Maurizio Cattelan?
A Search for Identity

Hannah M. Brooks

Maurizio Cattelan is all about breaking down barriers. He does not toe lines, he transgresses them. His pranks, as they are often referred to, tend to destroy both conventions and conceptions in one punch line. His works often go far beyond the pale of observable objects into a performative liminal space where the viewer is just as much a part of the creative process as the "artist" himself. Yet Cattelan denies that he is even that. He frequently eschews identification and categorization for the variety of media he engages with, refusing to be pinned down by semantic differences. The artist doth protest too much, methinks—especially when these pieces secure multi-million-dollar price tags. The man-formally-known-as-artist's argument is diluted further when considering he has publicly retired from the art world, only to remerge again for what one can only assume is for publicity purposes. For how can one quit a position one has never held? How, then, should the audience regard the "art" of a repeatedly self-denouncing artist?

Cattelan makes frequent allusions to modernist schools of philosophy and linguistics, expressing himself through deconstruction and play. Artists associated with dematerialization have positioned themselves, much like Cattelan, as conceptualists who have had their work fabricated by others. These works explore the death of the author while also engaging in criticism against institutions, searching for alternatives to the market. Along with dematerialization, Cattelan engages in deconstruction. For Baudrillard, the leading theorist of hyperrealism, the media in particular characterize the world via accepted readings of history, which are subject to change with emerging information. Moreover, if this is the nature of reality, it is also the nature of ourselves. Cattelan's work leads one to ask: Is there really a self to be located, or has genuine truth been marred by a "reality" of almost limitless interpretations?

The 2001 sculpture, *We Are the Revolution*, portrays a shrunken visage of Cattelan hanging from a rack. This work bears a resemblance to Joseph Beuys, who famously said, "every man is an artist"—a sentiment antithetical to Cattelan's own motto of "I am not an artist." This suggestion echoes Magritte's declaration, "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." Upon further examination, might this suggest that the exhibited is not even a man, or better still that he is whatever the audience identifies? Is the artist renouncing personhood in favor of a public perception? Is there any way of simply unveiling the truth of the soul? Can one find these answers in an era of self-promotion, online personas, and endless streams of opinions? Many of the questions posed above, as well as the multitude of others posed by Cattelan's work, are unanswerable or at least ongoing. Maybe that is why his works elicit such a range of responses and to some degree seem to lack inherent truth or straightforward meaning. The greatest "lesson" to be learned from Cattelan, then, may be that we need to consider further—but always in good humor.

Mona Kuhn in *Image Gardeners*

Katherin Velazquez

In the *Image Gardeners* exhibition, the chromogenic print *Reflecting*, 2006, by Mona Kuhn consists of three grounds. In the foreground are two doors opened inward into the build-ing. They have a white exterior and clear windows and lead out to a backyard patio. The middle ground is the backyard patio with wooden floors where a human-shaped figure sits on a chair with one leg crossed over another. One arm is resting on the chair while the other arm is near their head, as if they are touching their face. They have short, dark hair. They seem not to have any clothes or shoes. The background is the green space of the back yard, with five visible tall trees, all lined next to each other. Beside the trees is a red object like a piece of furniture or wagon. The entire print is out of focus and blurry, but the daylight setting makes it easier to make out the shapes and details. Since *Reflecting* blurs everything, one can't see the person's details, meaning they can't be fully perceived.

I connected with *Reflecting t*hrough my own story of finding my identity. As a non-binary person, I have questioned what pronouns to use, from she/her to they/them to he/him. Although I prefer they/them, I can skew from being feminine or masculine-presenting through what I wear or how I feel on a given day, so I do not mind being referred to as she/her or he/him. Also, *Reflecting* resonates with me because I do not want to be perceived as gendered; one can't fully see the person in the photograph; therefore, one can't know their gender. Overall, the print evokes a state of reflection, just like the title, because I question whether I would be happy if I could not be fully perceived like the person in the picture. I would be free of the judgment others put onto me. The person in the picture is not free of people putting their feelings and reflections onto them. People interpret art through emotional responses, whether positive, negative, or even neutral. The person in the image is free of people objectifying their body. No one can sexualize them or see them clearly enough to make out anything.

Reflecting contrasts Susan Sontag's 1966 idea that photography is a "voracious way of see-ing," similar to the idea that photography is also an individual creative vision. Breaking down the quote, "voracious" means unflattering greediness, but in this case it conveys an individual leading the creative decisions. *Reflecting* contrasts Sontag's belief in pho-tography by cultivating the self, which means it is a uniquely independent work by Mona Kuhn. A correlation between the words in Sontag's theoretical "way of seeing," Kuhn makes the photograph by making sure no one can see the self, refusing a greediness of the self.

Keith Haring

Shelby Falahat

Keith Haring developed his artistic persona in non-traditional spaces, specifically in New York City's downtown streets, subway stations, clubs, and former dance halls. Utilizing subway stations as his "laboratory," Haring challenged the "profitable approach of creating art." Intent on making art accessible to diverse audiences, Haring spread awareness of the AIDS epidemic and of ending Apartheid, in addition to promoting LGBTQ+ rights. His distinctive visual language emerged from playful imagery, such as the barking dog or the radiant baby. Primary colors elucidate the power of simplicity whilst advocating for change. Diagnosed with AIDS in 1988, Haring's work reflects emotional, nurturing connections.

Untitled, 1989

Untitled, 1989, showcases two figures sharing an intimate moment. As the figure on the left experiences grief and/or discomfort, the figure on the right offers comfort, support, and affection. Made in a public arena, the piece depicts a contactless, non-verbal connection between strangers. The two figures can be viewed as the same sex, and by leaving the sex and identity of the two figures unclear, Haring demonstrates that gender does not determine human connection. The only color is a vibrant red heart, creating a thought-provoking yet safe atmosphere. Red is associated with love and violence; the most joyful, yet miserable forms of human emotion. One may argue that the piece corresponds to acceptance and gender fluidity; others may perceive the piece as an ode to the LGBTQ+ community. By creating pieces that interact with a variety of individuals from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities, Haring promotes inclusion rather than social limitation.

Similarly, Haring demonstrates the importance of unification in another, *Untitled*, 1989. The figures themselves are a vibrant red and are intertwined by a heart, evincing how internal love can be utilized to comfort others. Haring commonly repeats the heart, although utilizing it in contrasting circumstances, allowing different interpretations and interactions. Abstract lines project off the figures as released energy, to be potentially absorbed by the viewer.

Passionate to make art accessible to the public at a relatively low cost, Haring created a Pop Shop in Soho to exhibit T-shirts, posters, and other items. Showcasing his art to a variety of audiences persists in mainstream fashion trends.

Urban Outfitters utilizes Haring's pieces in their 2022 collection. The "ambient baby" replicated on clothing becomes a universally recognized visual language of the 20th century. The flower-like figures are characterized by expressions of joy and confusion. Purchasing the items may stem from pure enjoyment; however, one may argue that the pieces promote self-reflection, as well as allowing the consumer to make indirect connections within their communities. Clothing is a form of personal expression, yet how it makes one feel is often overlooked. As Urban Outfitters is a popular, reasonably inexpensive brand, Haring's work can interact with consumers who may not purchase the item based on the artist but due to their personal relationship to the piece itself. An inexpensive piece does not reduce the value of the work but can rather enhance its emotional value. Keith Haring has altered the manner in which art circulates, influencing how contemporary artists produce art.
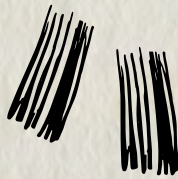

Untitled, 1989

Urban Outfitters INC. 2022 male retail items

Citations

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An Encounter

Tanya Lozano

The car stopped near the drop-off section at the airport. I glanced out the window and paused for a few seconds before opening the door. The winter fog consumed the window as I grasped the reality before me. I could feel the heaviness of his stare as he waited patiently for my face to encounter his. His eyes were big, and there was a deep, smooth space between his eyelids and eyebrows. It reminded me of how tirelessly I would try to make space between mine in order to apply eyeshadow; but no matter what I did, it would never sit right with my small, downward eyes. I wondered if it was the shape and length of my eyes, or the fact that I was terrible at applying eyeshadow. No matter how many times I practiced, I would always end up smudging it all off. The number of disappointments I went through never stopped me from retrying.

As he stared into my eyes, I saw the corners of his mouth kindly lift up. I smiled back. The warmth of his smiles always caused a sense of calmness inside my chest, like the first sip of coffee in the morning or the smell of candles after a long day of cleaning. We walked out of the car and everything took on a faster pace. His mother gave us a quick, tight hug and I smelled coconut aroma infusing her skin. In the background, I heard the car engine as she drove off, wishing us a happy vacation. As we walked through the automatic doors of the airport, my heartbeat rose, and suddenly there were lines scribbled across my mind. Every time I stepped into an airport my mind would take me back to scenes from *La Bamba* when Richie Valenzuela hesitated to step into that night's airplane–his only ticket back home. Yes, I'll admit I was silly for letting these thoughts cross my mind, but I couldn't help it. I had a pessimistic Mother. She always thought about negative outcomes before letting positivity sneak into her mind. Her fears slowly became mine. She had never been a bad mother. On the contrary, she gave her love wholeheartedly, always putting her children first. In her childhood, she had witnessed and experienced many horrendous, traumatizing things. In the past I resented inheriting her fears and traumas; today, I no longer hold negative feelings toward the damage. Instead, I overcome the fears day by day and I feel at the same time that I'm able to help my mother heal.

He knew the state I would fall into at airports. My fear of flying combined with social anxiety caused him to hold my hand so tightly that sometimes, after he'd let go, the nerves in my hands would ache for minutes. I needed this though. The amount of people in the airport always caused numbness in my hands and legs, and I needed someone by my side to provide comfort. He didn't let go of my hand until my name was called at the café. I felt the sweat between my fingers as I grabbed the warm cup with my name written in bold letters. I giggled as I walked back to him; somehow, the barista had written my name correctly. I kept being cheery on our way to our station. The coffee and hints

of vanilla had a way of enhancing my happiness. When we got there, I felt a stir in my soul. I opened my eyes and murky clouds arose, primordial. I looked to my left, and as he enjoyed the last bit of his snack, I sat beyond exhaustion. I followed, shadow-like, as reality finally washed over me.
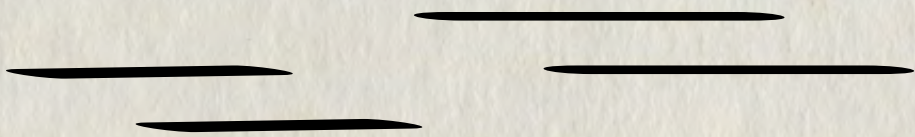
"Congratulations class of 2021!"

Ishwari Patankar

That statement concluded a prominent chapter of my life. The entire day of June 15, 2021, was a roller-coaster of emotions. It began with me, extremely tired, getting ready at 6 am, and my mom driving me to my friend's house. Step by step, my friend applied foundation, concealer, eyeshadow, highlighter, and at last mascara. At 7 am, I scurried back home, rushing to fit into my tight black, formal dress. In the final step of my special look, I gently slipped my arms into my shiny, reflective red gown. Slowly but surely, I shoved 14 bobby pins into my head, attaching my plain red cap. I made it down the stairs in my glossy nude heels without tripping, my mother and father in awe. I could see the tears rolling out of my mom's eyes and onto her dress. Without hesitation, my mother clenched me tighter than ever. Gently pulling away, she pulled out her old, memory-filled iPhone 6. Standing at the front door, I posed and beamed, putting on an act of pure happiness whilst mentally battling myself harder than I could have ever imagined.

Shortly after, my friends and I had a little reunion in the driveway. The four of us squeezed in the back, making our last drive to our high school parking lot. These felt like the shortest 15 minutes of my life.

There it was: the glam stage. One by one, in alphabetical order, my classmates and I stood up. We created the most discombobulated single-file line I had ever seen. My heels created fine, square imprints into the wet grass field. I proceeded wobbly. My body tingled as I heard the crowd roaring for us. The never-ending clapping became muddled in the back of my head. I could hear my inside voice repeating, "this is it, I cannot believe this is it."

Collectively, we sat through what felt like an eternity; about a dozen people gave heart-felt speeches. After a lengthy 90 minutes, I lined back into a mini-single-file.

"Ishwari Patankar."

It was my turn. My heels clicked onto the cement ramp. Once again, my palms were sweaty. Shaking, I pulled myself together for the next few seconds; I grabbed the thick, engraved red diploma as the cameramen snapped a photograph of my principal and me. I could hear my father yelling my name. My thoughts: empty. Back in my seat, I stared blankly into the seamlessly clear blue sky. It was over. I had officially graduated.

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