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Abstracts

Shakespeare's Other Star Crossed Lovers:
A Study of Hamlet and Ophelia by Angela Butler
Angela shows how Shakespeare's classic tale of revenge can also be read as a tale of tragic love.

An Explanation of Emily Dickenson's
Explication of Immortality by Enrico Cunningham
Enrico looks at alliteration, word choice, and personification to describe how as well as what Emily Dickenson's famous poem means.

Who is Grendel? by Deanna Gunter
The judge of the Gainesville College Writing Contest says of this first place essay: "Deanna presents an insightful and informative argument. The essay was a pleasure to read."

Moral Decay in the Golden Age:
A Comparison of Oedipus and Antigone by Paul Hodo
Comparing Oedipus to Antigone, Paul builds up a persuasive argument for a social, as opposed to personal, fall.

Societal Implications in Conrad's
"An Outpost of Progress" by Sean Kinsey
The judge said of this award-winning essay: "Sean's essay is an interesting and informative discussion on Conrad's portrayal of the negative effects of society on human beings."

Mediocre or Genius: Fried Green Tomatoes
Adaptation from Novel to Screen by Daphne Moore
A comparison between a novel and its film version reveals, in this essay, some interesting ways film restricts and narrows a presentation.

William Blake's "London":
A Mirror of Jerusalem by Heather O'Donnell
Heather presents an original and interesting case for Blake's having used Ezekiel 9 as the subtext of his poem "London."

Hamlet: Historical Background and Modern Perspectives by Jean Waller
Of this second-place essay, the judge noted: "Indecision, procrastination, and rash action are familiar to all of us; Jean effectively points out the similarities between Hamlet's behavior and our own."
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contents
In William Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, one of the most intriguing elements is Hamlet's love affair with Ophelia. Many critics have questioned whether or not the feelings Hamlet has for Ophelia can actually be considered love. If Hamlet genuinely loves Ophelia, why does he treat her so monstrously? Is Hamlet's conduct towards Ophelia a reaction towards the actions of his mother? In response to these questions it is necessary to study the relationship, each encounter Hamlet has with Ophelia, and the feelings Hamlet has for his mother.

The first time Ophelia is mentioned in the play is when her brother, Laertes, is about to depart for France. Laertes warns Ophelia to stay away from Hamlet. He says that Hamlet's intentions for her are "...Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting, / The perfume and suppliance of a minute, / No more" (I.iii.8-10). Polonius, Ophelia's father, also warns her of the intentions of Hamlet and orders her to stay away from him and accept no messages from him. Both Laertes and Polonius know that Hamlet, being the Prince of Denmark, cannot choose his own bride; therefore, they warn her to stay away from him and not believe what he has said to her.
The next time Ophelia enters the play, she is in a terrified state; Hamlet has scared her so. After conversing with his father's ghost, Hamlet seeks out Ophelia. Hamlet appears to her with his jacket unbuttoned, stockings around his ankles, and hatless. His knees are knocking, and he has a pale countenance. Without saying a word, Hamlet takes Ophelia by the wrist. He releases a heavy, piteous sigh and lets go of her. He then walks out the door, all the time keeping his eyes on her. This is a plea for help. Hamlet is begging Ophelia for support up to the last possible moment. Ophelia, in Hamlet's eyes, is the only pure and honorable person about the court. He longs for her companionship as a respite from the oppressive founess of the place (Coles 64). Ophelia fails him. This is not the only time Ophelia will disappoint Hamlet.

John Dover Wilson says that Hamlet overhears Polonius' plan to "loose" Ophelia to him while Polonius and the King eavesdrop on the encounter (106). There is no other explanation for the hellish way in which Hamlet treats Ophelia upon their meeting. When Ophelia tries to return the things which Hamlet has given her, he denies ever having given her anything. This is explained by Blanche Coles when she says that

...there is an exchange of little tokens between the lovers, but of the large exchange of soul there is none, and Hamlet, in a bitter mood, can truthfully exclaim, 'I never gave you aught.' (126)

Hamlet was sincerely hoping for more than just something sexual out of the relationship. The fact that Ophelia has gone along with her father and the king in trying to trick Hamlet enrages him. Thus, we see Ophelia "...blackens her own character in her lover's eyes" (Wilson 131). Ophelia says that he is at home, but Hamlet knows different. Hamlet is so infuriated by this that he confronts her with being dishonest to her love by saying that "God has given you one face, and you make your/selves another" (III.i.145-146). Hamlet commands Ophelia to go to a nunnery. He vows to call down a curse upon her if she ever does marry. Ophelia thinks that it is only Hamlet's madness speaking. She feels somewhat to blame for this and thinks that Hamlet's cruel words to her are well deserved.

The next scene including Ophelia takes place when she is attending "The Mousetrap," the play-within-the-play. Hamlet treats Ophelia as if she were a prostitute. Ophelia, wondering what the play is about, asks, "Will 'a tell us what this show meant?" (III.ii.148). Hamlet
answers her as he would a harlot, "Ay, or any show that you will show him. Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means" (III.ii.149-151). Speaking of the prologue to "The Mousetrap," Ophelia says that it is brief. Hamlet sharply replies that it is as brief "[a]s a woman's love" (III.ii.158). Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia is justified in this scene because she betrayed his trust in her by going along with her father in the plan to discover Hamlet's madness.

When Ophelia returns to the stage, it is after Hamlet has accidentally killed her father and has been sent to England. Something is obviously wrong with her. Sadly it is revealed that Ophelia has gone mad. She sings idyllic songs about Hamlet and her father while distributing pretend flowers to the king, queen, and her brother. Ophelia's death closely follows this scene.

Hamlet returns to Denmark to find that a grave is being dug. He asks the grave-digger whose it is. They deftly avoid his questions. Presently the funeral procession approaches. Hamlet notices that the procession is incomplete, indicating that the death may have been suicide. As the bier approaches, Hamlet, in hiding, recognizes the body of Ophelia upon it. He is shocked and devastated. It is as if the only bright flame in his life has suddenly been extinguished. The queen declares that she had hoped Ophelia would have been Hamlet's bride. Coming forward, Hamlet declares his grief. Laertes and Hamlet begin to fight. Hamlet says, "I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers / Could not with all their quantity of love / Make up my sum" (V.i.271-273).

Why does Hamlet say that he "loved" Ophelia and not "loves" Ophelia? It is not because she herself is dead, but because he feels that love is dead to him. Why does he feel this way? This can be blamed almost entirely on his mother. The great tragedy of Hamlet and Ophelia's love is caused by Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. Gertrude married her dead husband's brother only weeks after the death of the first husband. This union gave Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, an avenue to the throne of Denmark. Rightfully, the throne belongs to Hamlet, "who was of age to assume it. Already Hamlet has enough on his mind to cause insanity. Gertrude's hasty marriage and blissful happiness has caused Hamlet to fall ". . . out of love with Love" (Wilson 101). In relation to his love for Ophelia, Hamlet accuses his mother of

... such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty.
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there. (III.iv.41-45)

Hamlet believes that all women are the same. He includes Ophelia when he addresses Gertrude with "Frailty, thy name is woman" (I.ii.46). Shakespeare also used this to foreshadow that Ophelia in some way will betray Hamlet.

There is no doubt that Hamlet loved Ophelia. Had Gertrude, Claudius, Polonius, and Laertes stayed where they belonged, the love of Hamlet and Ophelia would have blossomed into something wonderful. The young lovers would have been left at their game had Claudius not murdered his brother and married his wife, had Gertrude not married Claudius, and had Polonius and Laertes trusted Ophelia's judgement. Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia is typical of a lover scorned. He was caused pain because Ophelia was commanded to stay away from him. Therefore, he felt the need to cause her pain. He wanted her to feel the depth of his pain. He appeared to her in a state of disarray to put forth his need for help and for love with a series of sighs and gestures. Her failure to realize this cry for help motivated his actions toward her throughout the rest of the play. "Through a chain of misconception, due to nothing worse than narrowness of vision and over-readiness to comply with her father's commands" (Wilson 131), Ophelia destroys all of Hamlet's trust in her. Had she not allowed her father to use her in an attempt to entrap Hamlet, he would not have looked on her as a prostitute, throwing herself at him in order to receive information on the nature of his madness in return.

Hamlet and Ophelia are star-crossed lovers caught up in a world where destiny refuses to let them win. Ophelia hangs on her father's every word and neglects to realize Hamlet's true love for her. Hamlet is so set on revenge that he forgets his love for Ophelia and treats her cruelly. Both end up being crushed by the unrelenting hand of untimely death, never realizing love. "The rest is silence" (V.ii.358).
Works Cited


Because I could not stop for Death—
He kindly stopped for me—
The Carriage held but just Ourselves—
And Immortality.

We slowly drove—he knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility—

We passed the School, where Children stove
At Recess—in the Ring—
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain—
We passed the Setting Sun—

Or rather—He passed Us—
The Dews drew quivering and chill—
For only Gossamer, my Gown—
My Tippet—only Tulle—

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground—
The Roof was scarcely visible—
The Cornice—in the Ground—

Since then—'tis Centuries—and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity.
An Explication of Emily Dickinson's
Explanation of Immortality

Enrico Cunnington

In the poem "Because I could not stop for Death" by Emily Dickinson, there are many literary devices employed to simultaneously entertain the reader while giving insight into the author's purpose. Upon being read, the lines themselves along with each chosen word reveal Dickinson's own voice and constitute her artistic hallmark. Attitude, repeated consonants and vowel sounds, and the use of various tropes all relay her personal texture. In order to understand this literary work, one must understand the author who wrote it.

Emily Dickinson has more to offer about her background than isolation and her strong interest in nature. Her constant struggle between traditional Christian beliefs and her own personal convictions seems to be present in many of her poems. This particular work speaks of peace, calm, and the mystery of existence after death, but it lacks many beliefs held dear by Christians. For instance, the entire poem seems to insinuate that her soul is independent of a defined God or omniscient soul. Her journey into the unknown is very intimate, containing only death itself and immortality (3-4). This idea lacks the presence of a restful end where the existence of the Christian God allows for spiritual salvation. Her apprehension about committing to a belief in one God ensures her stand on a "natural God" or karma. The
use of words like "immortality," and "eternity" relay this perpetual cycle of existence. Word choice invokes a calm and contented feeling with death, and the description of death in line 8 as being "civil" only nurtures this idea. Although it is obvious there is no hope for Heaven in Dickinson's way of thinking, her death holds no regrets, fear, or pain which are often equated with the Christian Heaven. Without a doubt, it is through Dickinson's word choice that the reader can indirectly but effectively obtain a clear insight to her attitude.

Words chosen not only give meaning to attitude but to the work itself. The use of alliteration in line 12 gives a deeper meaning in retrospect. The "Setting Sun" refers to the twilight of her life, the beginning of a mysterious unknown, and unlike a fall of a curtain or a tolling bell, a sunset has soothing beauty. Because alliteration seems to have a quickening effect on the rhythm of the work, this line also relates to lines 21 and 22 ('Since then-'tis Centuries- and yet Feels shorter than the Day.') in that the day or a person's life draws quickly to an end. This small, but significant, use of alliteration unifies the poem with the author and her views on death as being something personal, mysterious, but not to be feared.

The extensive use of personification in this poem, specifically Death and Immortality, gives further meaning to the work. By giving living human qualities to death, Dickinson allows herself to express a usually morbid event as something as pleasant as a carriage ride. By making this "living death" the carriage driver, Dickinson has given the equalizing and domineering death a subservient title as the way to immortality. The personification of immortality not only reflects Dickinson's personal views as discussed earlier, but it also adds a sense of duality in immortality and death. By using personification, Dickinson is able to describe them in clear terms. Lines 5-8 reveal their "civilized" manner to the poet, and it is this almost social manner that is universal in the work.

The key to understanding this poem by Dickinson is to understand the poet. Once an understanding of beliefs is reached with respect to the writer, her beliefs can be clearly seen in her writing. To explicate her work is to study her life, and to find sense in her convictions is to find insight to oneself. In a world of isolation, physical pain, and anguish this poet found reprieve and an outlet to the world in her work. As a painter would use colors and details to produce a portrait, Dickinson uses literary devices to render her portrait in her art. This only proves that a superficial study of her work only ripples the vast sea of meaning awaiting fathoms below.
Who is Grendel?

_Deanna C. Gunter_

Some personalities have the power to repulse a reader. Some personalities evoke feelings of pity. Others are simply hilarious. John Gardner's novel, _Grendel_, offers a personality that does all these things. Gardner gives his main character, Grendel, the uncanny ability to evoke a wide variety of emotions from the readers of this novel. Within the complex persona of Grendel, a monstrous outcast of society, a wide variety of characteristics are at play. Grendel can be laughed at for his talent at acting as a dryly humorous commentator, other times sympathized with for his role as a pitiful, thoughtful child, and still feared because of his ability to be an extremely evil threat to mankind.

Grendel is first seen displaying his sense of humor in his observations of the natural world around him. He speaks of: "...brainless budding trees...brattling birds" (2). The alliteration between "brainless," "budding," and "brattling" has a comic element because of the awkwardness of repeating the letter "b" so many times within a sentence. Grendel also demonstrates his sense of humor in that he can even make an account of his eating of an old woman sound rather hilarious. He makes the comment: "She tasted of urine and spleen, which made me spit" (2). The fact that he mentions the taste of the person of whom he partook, as well as revealing the fact that he spit her out because she tasted bad,
makes the event sound almost trivial, almost funny, as if he has taken a bite of a moldy doughnut.

Grendel also demonstrates his capacity for humor in the way he deals with human beings. A fair example of this capacity lies in Grendel's description of an encounter with Unferth, a want-to-be hero that Grendel does not kill when given the opportunity, but rather makes into a laughingstock. Grendel says:

He lives on, bitter, feebly challenging my midnight raids from time to time . . . crazy with shame that he alone is always spared, and furiously jealous of the dead. I laugh when I see him. He throws himself at me, or he cunningly sneaks up from behind, sometimes in disguise—a goat, a dog, a sickly old woman—and I roll on the floor with laughter. So much for heroism. (78)

Grendel's description of Unferth makes this man appear silly and dim-witted, with the use of such phrases as "crazy with shame," "furiously jealous," and "throws himself at me." The description of how Unferth disguises himself, with Grendel knowing all along that it is Unferth under those disguises, brings to mind the hilarious stupidity of Unferth's childish plot to be killed by Grendel and become the "hero" that he is not. Another part of this description which inspires laughter is Grendel's account of his own laughter, a laughter that causes him to "roll on the floor". Grendel's laughter demonstrates both Unferth's comic dimensions and Grendel's sense of humor when responding to these comical antics.

The humorous side of Grendel's personality is also brought out clearly in the way that he deals with an unpromising relationship to King Hrothgar's people. Although Grendel describes the situation in this way: "I'd meant them no harm, but they'd attacked me again, as always" (68), he makes light of his status as an outcast by making up silly rhymes—three in all—which are as follows:

Pity poor Hrothgar,
Grendel's foe!
Pity poor Grendel,
O, O, O! (79)

Grendel is crazy,
O, O, O!
Thinks old Hrothgar
Makes it snow! (80)
Pity poor Grendar,
Hrothdel's foe!
Down goes the whirlpool:
Eek! No, no! (80)

Grendel's actions here seem to bring forth images of a small child who makes up senseless rhymes and amuses himself by mixing up letters to divert attention from life's normal patterns. Expressions such as "Eek! No, no!" display Grendel's humorous ability to mockingly feign fear of Hrothgar's people and make a potentially serious situation into a poetically comic one. Grendel even further demonstrates his ability to make a situation laughable in the way he describes his romantic inclinations toward Hrothgar's queen, Wealtheow:

I could see myself leaping from my high tree and running on all fours through the crowd to her, howling, whimpering, throwing myself down, drooling and groveling at her small, fur-booted feet. "Mercy!" I would howl. "Aargh! Burble!" I clamped my palms over my eyes and struggled not to laugh. (87)

Here, Grendel allows readers to picture him as a shaggy, stumbling fool acting like an idiot in the presence of the object of his affections. Grendel's choice of words such as "aargh" and "burble" serve as onomatopoetic devices which convey his witty use of language. The fact that Grendel is able to laugh at his own emotions as he is describing them helps to further demonstrate the witty side of his personality. Indeed, as Jerome Klinkowitz comments: "Gardner has him (Grendel) mug it up like a music-hall clown" (64). Here, Grendel's successful attempt at making a ham of himself is a clear example of his sense of humor.

All laughs aside, Grendel can also evoke in his audience sympathy toward his plight as an outcast in an "idiotic war" (1) against mankind. These feelings of sympathy toward the character most likely stem from his portrayal of himself as a sympathetic being. F. W. Bateson calls Grendel the "...most sympathetic character..." in the novel (151), and D. G. Compton goes on to say: "Grendel will beguile you" (151). Grendel begins to play on the reader's sympathies when he describes his lonely state of existence. It is indeed possible for readers to sense the extent of Grendel's loneliness when he describes his shadow as "...the only friend and comfort this world affords..." (3). He also speaks of his unsuccessful attempts to make friends with mankind, recollecting:
I staggered... toward the hall... groaning out, "Mercy! Peace!"... the people screamed... Drunken men rushed at me with battle-axes. I sank to my knees, crying, "Friend! Friend!" They hacked at me, yipping like dogs. (44)

Within this passage, Grendel makes it clear that he tries to befriend the human race, but they reject him. This rejection does not simply illustrate his loneliness, however. It also points to his most sympathetic conception of his role in the novel. As Allison Payne has pointed out:

He wishes so fervently for good to exist that he will be the evil that makes it possible; thus he accepts that he is the offspring of Cain and reveals himself to the warriors, calling for mercy and peace. But they attack him instantly..." (161)

Grendel's description of his isolation, of his connection to goodness, and of his willingness to endure persecution for the sake of the good can indeed play a large part in appealing to the humanitarian sympathies of his audience.

It is a common emotion of human beings to be tearful at times, and Grendel can very well invite his audience to pity and sympathize with him by mentioning the fact, through his retelling of past events, that he is indeed able to cry. He begins by traveling back to his childhood and telling of how he cries while his mother holds him against her. Still later, after hearing human poetry, Grendel describes himself as a "ridiculous hairy creature torn apart by poetry--crawling, whimpering, streaming tears..." (37). During one of the final scenes of Grendel's life, at battle with his conqueror, Beowulf, Grendel cries once more. He makes the reader aware of his pain by speaking of the event in this manner: "He has torn off my arm at the shoulder! Blood pours down where the limb was. I cry, I bawl like a baby" (151). Grendel's vivid description of the event, as well as his use of an exclamation when speaking of his dismembered arm, clearly relays to the reader feelings of pain and horror. His use of the phrase "like a baby" implies helplessness and invites the audience to feel pity.

Although humorous and pitiable at times, Grendel cannot seem to cover up the evil that lurks within him, which inevitably drives him to war against mankind. Helen B. Ellis and Warren U. Ober speak of how Grendel calls himself a "...pointless, ridiculous monster crouched in the shadows, stinking of dead men, murdered children, martyred cows" (49). The two critics later mention the title Grendel bestows upon himself: "...Grendel, Ruiner of Meadhalls, Wrecker of Kings..." (52), and speak of how
Grendel finally succumbs to the grim reality of his existence and his fate. Near the end of the novel, Grendel makes the comment: "Bloodlust and rage are my character" (107). In this, Grendel seems to be taking off the masks of humor and childishness and revealing his true nature to the audience. Aside from all the laughs and the pitiable solitude, Grendel truly is, in the final analysis, a monster.

As is seen in the personal narrative of his life, Grendel is a character capable of bringing about a wide range of reactions in readers. It is quite possible to be both amused and disgusted by him at the same time. He allows his audience to laugh with him, cry with him, and shrink in dread of him. An actor, a poet, a comedian, a child, an outcast, a terror: the mixture of these parts make up one very diverse character called Grendel.
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Moral Decay in the Golden Age:
A Comparison of Oedipus and Antigone

Paul Hodo

One might assume that every society has suffered in some way from the march of progress. Certainly America has sustained some loss of patriotism, morality, and religious conviction through the years. Apparently, the Golden Age of Greece was subject to a similar plight. It may have been Sophocles' intention to illustrate the decline of a "progressive" society through his Oedipus plays. When one contrasts the world of Oedipus the King with that of Antigone one finds startling differences in the behaviors displayed in both plays. More than twenty years bridge the setting of the two plays, and one finds that the passage of time has had a profound effect on the citizens of Thebes.

The general public is a worthy barometer to changing times and different moods. One may wish to assume the Chorus in Oedipus the King and in Antigone is comprised of the same individuals. The Chorus is the cream of Theban society and has access to the city's leadership, but the manner in which it approaches Creon varies greatly from the way it approached Oedipus. Throughout Oedipus the King, the Chorus acts as the voice of Thebes and often as Oedipus' conscience. It harbors a deep reverence for the gods, as is noted when it sings, "Great laws tower above us, reared on high, born for the brilliant vault of heaven . . ." (987). Oedipus, as the leader and hero of Thebes, is held in similar regard when the Chorus asks, "Oedipus . . . who bore you? Who of the nymphs, who seem to live forever, mated with Pan . . ." (944). The
Thebans have security in their gods and in their King. However, the mood of the Chorus in *Antigone* takes a marked turn. It declares, "Numberless wonders, terrible wonders, walk the world but none the match for man" (1017). The population has relaxed its reverence for the gods and aggrandized man. During Creon's discussion with Haemon, the Chorus' leader bends, craven, to the King's rationale, stating, "Unless old age has robbed us of our wits, you seem to [speak] the truth" (1027). Conversely, he takes Haemon's side, and he tells Creon to ". . . learn from him . . ." (1028). Apparently Thebans do not honor royalty as much as they fear it.

For the royalty in the plays, the passage of time proves to be degenerative. In the face of exquisite tragedy, Oedipus retains the greatest part of his heroism. He atones for his flaws and, thus humbled, goes into history a justified man, a great man. Creon, on the other hand, has lived in the shadow of greatness and has not flourished. Perhaps his most notable character flaw is a deep-seated resentment for Oedipus and Thebes's remembrance of him. In *Oedipus the King*, Creon is the soul of righteousness. When Oedipus accuses him, the Chorus leaps to his defense, demanding, "Respect him . . . He's been no fool in the past and now he's strong with the oath he swears to god" (982). In *Antigone*, the power of his office has corrupted him. When the Chorus' leader asks of the possibility of divine intervention in the burial of Polynices, Creon answers, "You say . . . why it's intolerable . . . say the gods could have the slightest concern for that corpse?" (1016) Creon, as Oedipus had, presumes to know the will of the gods.

The generation that separates *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone* exacts its toll on the title characters. While Oedipus is unmoved by death, Antigone seems to pursue it. Her tragic ancestry lays the foundation for her awful life. The Chorus notes, "Your life's in ruins child . . . I wonder . . . Do you pay for your father's terrible ordeal?" (1031) Antigone has certainly inherited her father's rashness, but not his ability to rise above the harsh penalties that accompany that rashness. While Oedipus rues only the horrors that his actions have visited upon innocents, Antigone is shackled in self-pity. She complains to the Chorus, "Why in the name of my father's gods, why can't you wait till I'm gone . . . must you abuse me to my face?" (1031) She sees herself "unmourned by friends [and] always a stranger" (1031).

*Oedipus the King* chronicles a hero of god-like bearing. *Antigone*, ultimately, offers no hero. Sophocles clearly believed that an assessment of values was crucial to his public. His plays are an indictment against the perils of progress and the laxity of morals over time.
Societal Implications In Conrad's
"An Outpost of Progress"

Sean Kinsey

All too often man finds himself flying through life unaware of the significance in anything beyond his own circumstances. It is here that man becomes the product of his environment. It is here that man becomes ineffectual to the world around him. He merely drifts through the routines that society has placed upon him. He goes through his simple tasks not out of any high sense of duty, but rather out of a comfortable numbness and the lack of anything better to do. He becomes a vessel adrift on the soothing, dulling waves of societal apathy with no direction and no clue as to where he is going. Joseph Conrad deals with this peculiar situation of civilized man in his short story "An Outpost of Progress."

In this story, the "civilized" characters of Kayerts and Carlier have become so accustomed to society's support that they are incapable of dealing with anything out of the ordinary. The presence of the coast people in their little outpost unbalances their world of regularity. They don't know what to do when the shot is heard in the middle of the night so they "... without admitting the fact to themselves, surrender all but the pretense of authority to the savage clerk [Makola]" (Wright 133). The "civilized" men turn it over to the "brute." Makola then handles the situation--albeit in a fashion that the "educated" pioneers can't approve of in good conscience. But this is Conrad's very point; Kayerts and Carlier only disapprove in word. They have no "real"
opinion of the matter. As Conrad notes, "Everybody shows a respectful deference to certain sounds that he and his fellows can make. But about feelings people really know nothing" (218). The two men speak only of Makola's wrongful action. But they are just as bad themselves. They decide to keep the ivory. And they decide to keep quiet about the whole thing.

The deprivation of the two "worldly" men is evidenced further in their inability to deal with literature from a critical viewpoint. Conrad said of Kayerts and Carlier that "there was a special significance in the fact that [they] were addicted to novels" (Bloom 37). The two men cannot see anything in the books beyond the words. Everything they read is taken at face value, as if it were all true, and "[a]ll these imaginary personages become subjects for gossip as if they had been living friends" (Conrad 212). As Hawthorn notes, "Carlier and Kayerts lack the ability to read literature critically, and this is directly related to their helplessness" (162). They don't see the duplicity of language in the novels, nor do they see it in their daily lives. Carlier exemplifies this when he says, "Frightful--the sufferings [of slavery]" (Conrad 218). He doesn't know what he's talking about. He has never been subjected to the whims of another individual--at least not in the sense of human slavery. His only master is the institution of society. The concept of bondage escapes him. Conrad says, "Nobody knows what suffering or sacrifice mean--except, perhaps the victor of the mysterious purpose of these illusions" (218, emphasis mine). When the two men read in a newspaper how glorious it is to be a pioneer, they immediately accept this "truth," and they feel very important. Carlier, for example, tells Kayerts, "In a hundred years there will perhaps be a town here... And then, chaps will read that two good fellows, Kayerts and Carlier, were the first civilized men to live in this very spot!" (Conrad 213) They take any form of literature--whether it's a novel or a newspaper--literally. They exercise thought neither on the writings nor in their lives.

Separated from a well-structured society, the "civilized" men can't even handle the proper allocation of condiments. The argument over the use of sugar perhaps best exemplifies the ultimate breakdown in their outpost of progress. Kayerts insists that their supply of sugar mustn't be disturbed; it is for medicinal purposes only. But Carlier is determined to have sugar in his coffee. Carlier howls, "If you don't bring out that sugar, I will shoot you at sight, like a dog" (Conrad 221). The civilized man has suddenly become most uncivilized. And Kayerts has suddenly been put out of the normal circumstances of his daily life,
and he can't handle this. Wright points out, "What has supported them heretofore has been the security of the social institutions and mores by which men pattern their lives without having very often to exercise independence of thought" (132). Carlier's threat unbalances Kayerts to such a degree that he inadvertently kills Carlier in the altercation. He then attempts to justify his action by thinking that "... men [die] every day in thousands; perhaps tens of thousands ... and that in the number, that one death could not possibly make any difference" (Conrad 223). As Harold Bloom notes, "The fraudulent machinery of social camouflage in which they had placed their unexamined faith has destroyed them" (38).

Conrad uses a number of symbols to represent the decline of the two "gentlemen." One critic notes, "The tropical African atmosphere could accentuate the disintegration of Kayerts and Carlier" (Wright 57). So, too, does the intense fog over the station represent the confusion that takes place there. The director must search through this fog to find the buried Carlier and the corpse of Kayerts hanging from the cross. The sun may be representative of the uncivilized jungle or just the absence of society. The hot sun that killed the first chief may also kill the next one--Kayerts. Makola warns Kayerts, "If you are so irritable in the sun, you will get fever and die--like the first chief" (Conrad 217). In the sense that the sun is the absence of society, it has killed all the "civilized" chiefs that have come to this outpost. Likewise, the river may represent the line to life. The river determines the men's destinies. The low river causes the delay of the boat carrying other "civilized" men. The low river also prevents Kayerts and Carlier from catching fish. In both cases the river contributes to the horrible outcome.

Ruth M. Stauffer said, "His [Conrad's] books are never joyous; they leave you always thoughtful, sometimes even depressed" (76). This is certainly the case in "An Outpost of Progress." Although the reader may not enter into the world of Kayerts and Carlier, he still can't help but to identify with them in some respects. He finds himself, not unlike the two characters, becoming a "... creature of civilization, living in reliance upon the safety of [his] surroundings" (Bloom 37). Conrad's tale should perhaps be taken as a warning to all of humanity. Man should guard himself against the mundane. He should not lose touch with the natural world from which he came. And, above all, he should not accept so readily the role which society attempts to force upon him. He should question himself as to what his role should be, and he should make an attempt to better the world--not merely go about his daily routines in a Kayerts-and-Carlier fashion.
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Mediocre or Genius: *Fried Green Tomatoes*
Adaptation from Novel to Screen

*Daphne Moore*

Change refers to alteration or the causing of something to be different. Difference surely results from the transformation into film of Fannie Flagg's *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*. The book is altered to conform with the time constraints placed on the cinematic version. These alterations, I feel, damage the story line. In view of this, I preferred the novel because I felt the movie diminished minor characters' importance by changing their involvement with the story.

Vesta Adcock, a member of Whistle Stop's first family, is a perfect example of this diminishment. A minor character, she is nevertheless important because of the humor she adds to the story. In the novel, Vesta is presented as the crazy woman at the Rose Terrace Nursing Home. Her only link to the other characters is that she, like protagonist Ninny Threadgoode, is from Whistle Stop. Vesta's character is mainly responsible for the comic relief at Rose Terrace. For example, at one point in the novel, she stands up on a table during breakfast at the nursing home and dances the hula (Flagg 283). She gets one of the male patients so excited that he has to be tranquilized and taken to his room. In the movie, however, her comic scenes do not occur. Vesta Adcock is introduced as the aunt to Evelyn's husband and is not associated with Whistle Stop in any way. Although Vesta's character is
not involved in the main story line of the novel, she is involved in the minor story lines at the nursing home. She therefore adds to the novel's enjoyment and might have made a welcome addition to the film.

Another character whose role is reduced in the movie is the prostitute Eva Bates. In the novel, Eva is revealed as Buddy Threadgoode's one true love. Because Buddy was so close to his sister Idgie, Idgie bonds with Eva for comfort after Buddy's death. However, in the movie the love between Buddy and Eva is written out of the script, and Ruth Jamison, who comes to live with Idgie, is presented as Buddy's true love. The only character in the movie to resemble Eva Bates is a no-name cocktail waitress at the bar Idgie frequents. She, however, has no significant part in the film version of the story. Eva Bates' addition to the movie would have given Idgie someone to confide in about her brother's death, instead of leaving her to suffer alone. Her addition would have also presented the audience with another side of femininity. In the movie, the viewer sees only the very feminine, proper idea of women, represented in the character Ruth, and the tomboyish, unladylike concept of women, represented in Idgie. Eva Bates, through her promiscuous behavior, would have added yet another aspect to the way women are presented. However, the movie neglects this opportunity and relies heavily on the characters Ruth and Idgie for its portrayal of women.

Perhaps the most significant role diminished in the movie's portrayal is that played by the African-American community. This community is skillfully characterized in the novel; however, it was all but absent from the film version. Artis, the African-American son of Big George, is a perfect example. His character is significant to parts of the story because of his jealousy of the white race. This jealousy becomes evident when he, at age ten, stabs his twin brother Jasper with a penknife, for what appears to be no reason. Later in an attempt to apologize for his actions, Artis tells his brother, "I know I shouldn'ta done it . . . but it felt so good, I jes couldn't stop" (Flagg 75-6). Artis feels jealous of his brother because, of the two, Jasper is the lighter black and is given certain advantages that Artis, in his blackness, will never receive. This jealousy is even more evident when he becomes involved with the murder of Ruth's ex-husband, Frank Bennett. While left to watch Frank's dead body, he pulls out his knife and stabs the body repeatedly. Artis takes pride in his accomplishment and refers to his deed as a secret; he had ". . . stabbed . . . [himself] a white man" (Flagg 363-67). In contrast, the movie does not have a character named Artis. When the murder scene takes place, it is a little African-American
girl who is involved with the murder cover-up and not a African-American boy. The African-American community was important to the book *Fried Green Tomatoes*, and Artis' character helped in the characterization of that community. The movie neglects this fact and lets *Fried Green Tomatoes* become largely a "white" story.

As stories, both movie and book were satisfying. However, Fannie Flagg's unique style and complex narrative cannot be captured on a movie screen. Her story is best appreciated in the medium for which it was intended: a book.
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London

I wander through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man, every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

William Blake
William Blake's "London": A Mirror of Jerusalem

Heather O'Donnell

The poem "London," written in 1794, was one of William Blake's most famous but most misread works. There are many interpretations that have been derived by critics and scholars; these have been amply justified. However, one such approach has not been as readily regarded as the others. It could easily be determined that Blake used Ezekiel 9 in the Old Testament of the Bible as a subtext for his poem "London." Upon studying both works, the attentive reader will find many similarities that support this suggestion.

To prove our thesis, we should begin with the author of the poem William Blake. Blake was a very religious man, literally a visionary. He claimed to have seen and dined with two prophets from the Old Testament, one of whom was Ezekiel. Even though he is renowned as a world-famous author and artist, he led a very simple life. As noted in the Encyclopedia Brittanica, Blake "... was called mad because he was single-minded and unworldly; he lived on the edge of poverty and died in neglect" (269). Even in the relatively prosperous times, Blake continuously fought to stay as low as he could in social class. He feared being corrupted by the higher or richer classes. From these details we can draw two very important pieces of information: Ezekiel, both the prophet and his book, was a source of inspiration for the poet, and Blake thought of the upper class as corrupt. Knowing
these two things about William Blake leads to a very interesting interpretation of the poem "London," which carries a suggested contempt of the upper class. Before venturing further into the theme of the poem, however, we must unravel the story behind Ezekiel 9.

The story of Ezekiel 9 can be very simply paraphrased. In the Old Testament of the Bible, God shows Ezekiel the prophet many things that will happen in the future. In chapter nine is his vision of Jerusalem, hundreds of years before Christ walks on the Earth. What he sees is a "... land ... full of blood and ... [a] city full of perverseness" (Ezek 9:9). Most of the citizens of Jerusalem have sinned greatly and are about to be severely punished. In the vision, a man with a writer's inkhorn is commanded by the Lord to go out among the people of the iniquitous city and to sort out the good from the evil. Since an inkhorn was used by writers of those days to carry their ink, this man called by God is most probably a writer. God tells him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst therof" (Ezek 9:4). The Lord has decided to destroy all of the unrighteous people of the city, and he instructs the man with the inkhorn to find the righteous and mark their foreheads with his ink. After this wanderer has accomplished that task, five other men will go through the city and slay all of the unrighteous people. The Lord has told these men that they are to slay all but those who carry the mark of righteousness. The Lord also tells them to begin their slaughter at his sanctuary, for even the church is corrupt. The writer does as he is told and "the residue of Israel" is destroyed (Ezek 9:8). Blake, of course, knew this story; and now that we too know it in full, we can dig down deeply into the poem to extrapolate the major theme and its connection to Ezekiel 9.

First, we start with the persona of this dreary poem. From the chapter in Ezekiel, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the wanderer or speaker of "London" is modeled on the man with the writer's inkhorn in chapter nine. Both are wandering the streets, seeing or seeking out citizens of the city. In the poem, the persona says, "I wander through each charter'd street, / ... And mark in every face I meet, / Marks of weakness, marks of woe" (551). The first use of the word mark means to observe or remark; however, the second mark means a visible indication of some kind. In the biblical story, the writer must first distinguish between the righteous and the unrighteous, so he must search every face. The wanderer in "London" is doing likewise. It would seem that Blake's work conveys the feelings the writer has and
whom and what he sees during this evil time.

Just as the persona and the wanderer are equated, so London emerges as a second Jerusalem. Northrop Frye noted in *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic* that Blake sees London as a "... symbol ... of the redeemable conscious life of the fallen world, a mixture of imagination and nature, like the biblical Jerusalem, a great dream of a heavenly city expanding out of a dirty and iniquitous earthly one" (432). Many other similarities between the two works suggest that Blake is equating London and Jerusalem in this way. In chapter nine, the Lord says to the writer, "... set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done. ..." (1036, italics mine). In the poem, both sigh and cry are also used to describe the state of two commoners in the city. In "London," the English capital is quite like the depraved Jerusalem of Ezekiel's vision. The speaker notes:

How the chimney sweep's cry,
Every black'ning church appalls;
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls. (551)

The chimney sweep and the soldier can be seen here as victims, victims of a lower class that can only cry and sigh because of the harsh rule of the "Palace," or the seat of government. As noted in *Modern Critical Views: William Blake*, "... the people, however culpable for weakness or lack of will, are the righteous, and only the State and State Church ... are the wicked" (7). The sighs and cries appall the church and government because the infantile outcries symbolize a defiance against the upper classes. The poem thus characterizes the rich or noble as evil, while the lower class struggles and fights to stay righteous under such a defiled rule. This interpretation is reasonable given Blake's own beliefs. As said before, Blake did not let himself get very high in the structure for fear he would be corrupted by the upper class. The critic David Aers says, "No one more powerfully than Blake himself fused pity and critical intelligence in writing about those engulfed in this social matrix, compelled to labor upon a crust of bread by soft mild arts, by manipulations of political economy and by more naked coercion" (262).

Finally, both Ezekiel's wanderer and Blake's persona must seek out iniquity, but they find different things. What the persona sees is a symbol of both good and evil. In the poem the persona sees a harlot carrying an iniquity that will pass on to future generations. The
persona, that is, the man with the inkhorn, understands the Lord's command because he knows that unless evil is destroyed, it will fester and grow as it is passed on. The harlot, however, is also a victim, probably more so than the sweeper and the soldier. The harlot obviously comes from the lower class since she must sell herself for money. By breaking the law of the Church and State, she is voicing her rebellion against the Palace. All the others could only sigh and cry, while she actually bridges the gap between the lower and upper classes. The poem says:

But most through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts the newborn infant's tear,
And blights with plagues, the marriage hearse. (551-552)

When she "... blasts the newborn infant's tear ...," she is standing up for the whole population of lower class citizens. In *Modern Critical Views*, it is stated that the harlot represents "Nature, not the human female, but the natural element in the human, male or female" (12). She is the only one who will stand up against the upper class and actually voice her renouncement of the upper class.

I believe that the similarities between William Blake's poem "London" and Ezekiel 9 are more than just coincidences. There is strong evidence that supports the theory that Blake used Ezekiel 9 as a subtext for his poem. I also believe to understand and identify with the persona of this poem, one must also understand and identify with the author. "London" seems to be a way Blake found to express his feelings of the society in London in 1794. It appears Blake's opinion of London in his time parallels the Lord's opinion of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's time. One can only guess whether or not Blake agrees with the Lord's punishment of the unrighteous. Here, we enter the realm of conjecture.
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The historical background of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be traced as far back as Scandinavian legend. It can be compared to the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, but the earliest recorded version of Hamlet's story is found in Saxo Grammaticus' *Historica Danica* (c. 1200). This story was later adopted by the French author Francois de Belleforest, in his *Histoires Tragiques* (1576). The earlier play displays the central motif, personalities, and situations found in Shakespeare's later play. Nevertheless, many very significant differences in the make-up of the two plays exist. In the Belleforest story, Hamlet stays in England for a year and marries an English bride before returning to Denmark (Boas 384). The earlier versions also do not include references to Christian ethics but are written from a pre-Christian perspective.

Another version, written and performed before Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is referred to as *Ur-Hamlet*, which dates prior to 1589. While no printed record of this work has survived, it is thought to be the work of Thomas Kyd. Kyd is best known for another tragedy with many of the same elements as *Hamlet*. Thus, when Shakespeare's *Hamlet* first appeared on stage, the audience was very familiar with the story. It was a story that was part of the historical tradition of the British people (Lowers 6).

Shakespeare, however, brought to the play new depth that
allows this almost four-hundred-year-old play pertinence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This depth is in the form of intellectual introspection, superior verse, and broader character development. Thus, Shakespeare’s version allows modern application of the basic messages in the story line (Lowers 9).

Although many themes found in Hamlet can be viewed from a modern perspective, perhaps one of the most interesting is the topic of inaction or procrastination. Some scholars say that most of the ills that Hamlet experienced could have been avoided by more decisive action (Lowers 9). Many arguments can be made both for and against this point of view. If Hamlet had taken his revenge on Claudius too swiftly, justice might not have been served. Hamlet would have been seen merely as a murderer, and the nature of his father’s death would not have been revealed or revenged.

From a contemporary viewpoint, Hamlet’s failure to come to closure and take some kind of action to revenge his father’s death parallels modern dilemmas. Social, economic, moral, and ecological problems plague us. We see injustice and corruption of monumental proportions. Our response is often outrage, anger, and resolution to make changes. We promise ourselves that we are going to do something about this "horrible" situation. Then comes the "rub." What should we do? When should we do something? How should we do whatever it is that we are going to do?

Our response then becomes very much like Hamlet’s. If we act too quickly or rashly, we might do more harm than good. Should we take part in that demonstration against the large company that is polluting the Oconee River? While we might agree completely with the philosophy of the group organizing the protest, we have to stop and think before we actually get involved. Perhaps, if we wait, the problem will solve itself. We could get arrested or be seen in a negative light by others because of our actions. We must face some of the same confusion that Hamlet faced in making our decision for action.

In another light, Hamlet seems to be an unrealistic dreamer who spouts grand words of justice but lacks the resolve to pursue that justice. This again corresponds to our responses to modern problems. In our intimate circle of family and friends, we expound on the solutions to the world’s problems but seldom find ourselves on the line for our convictions. We know how to "fix" things, but we never seem to do more than talk about it. Even a letter to the editor or to our representatives is too much to ask.

Then as with Hamlet, some issues that confront us are so
complex, so difficult to fathom, that we remain undecided until it is almost too late for any positive action. Then in our confusion and angst over our inaction, we may blunder as Hamlet did. Hamlet's struggle to revenge his father's death comes to a climax in Act III, Scenes III and IV. When Hamlet fails to kill Claudius while he is in the process of seeking penance, he later kills Polonius by mistake.

In our striving to do something about the many ills we see, we can, after much procrastination, act rashly. We can take the attitude that doing anything is better than doing nothing. We don't take time to evaluate the consequences of our actions because we feel guilty for our previous inaction. Then we might find our own "Polonius behind the arras." As with Hamlet, we find we have often created a greater woe than the one we were trying to correct.

Shakespeare's plays have stood the test of time in many instances. None has done so more than his tragedy Hamlet. Perhaps the very nature of tragedy can explain the pertinence, even today, of this play. It is no accident that the theme of the most enduring of all plays is tragic. The frailty of human nature and our inability to make the necessary moral determinations provide powerful themes because of the overriding truth of these concepts. We may not have to make moral decisions of the magnitude of Hamlet's but we are plagued with irresolution and fear just as he was when we face our ethical quandaries.

Thus, the enduring quality of Hamlet seems to be that even if we don't agree with the decision that he made, we can empathize with the decision making process through which he suffered. We endure the same indecision, procrastination, and rash behavior when making important decisions for action on the vital issues that face us. We might learn from Hamlet, or we might merely be comforted by the fact that we are not alone. Most probably, we will go ahead and muddle through doing things "our way" to the end.
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