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At no other time in my life has the freedom to write as I wish become more precious to me than now. With our country in conflict and the oppression of others so prominent in the daily news, I'd like to take this opportunity to urge us all to embrace the civil liberties we enjoy as Americans. I hope that we never underestimate the lack of restrictions that enable us to write freely and enjoy the essays in this year’s publication.

Once again, I would like to express our appreciation to Dr. Bob Croft, whose guidance, encouragement, and expertise shine through not only in the work of his students but in the production of *Hoi Polloi* as well. In addition, I wish to commend the entire English Department and the Student Editorial Board for their hard work and dedication. Many thanks also deservedly go to Dr. Russell Greer, from Texas Woman’s University, for the task of judging this year’s Gainesville College Writing Contest, and to Lody Iza for the art work adorning this year’s cover.

Any Gainesville College students interested in submitting essays to future editions of this publication should contact their English professors or Dr. Croft, the *Hoi Polloi* faculty advisor, for more information.

Please note that, unless otherwise noted, all citations for quotations in the text refer to *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, fifth edition, edited by Michael Meyer.

Rebecca Nix
Editor
What did you ask? Why do we ride? It's been a long while since I was asked that—except by family, of course, and what they really want to know is why don't I quit. If you really want to find out, you'll need to put down that notepad. Don't worry, you'll remember plenty of it. I don't think I'd be going too far to say you won't ever forget this.

You don't think much of us, do you? I'd bet you don't think much of this place either. I guess it really isn't much, just an old metal fence and a few chutes, but we think a lot of it. Inside the rust and faded paint are plenty of memories and things best forgotten, much pain and many victories, hundreds of heartaches and headaches, a lot of life... and sometimes, a little of death. If these fences and chutes could speak, you would be able to listen to stories for days on end. They can't, but the folks here can: the cowboys and chute workers, the fans and stock contractors, the friends and families of those who risk so much for a chance at winning. Listen to them—that will be a good time to use your notepad. Before you do that, however, you need a little perspective.

Follow me to the chute over here. That's right; I'm not ready to ride. This gear is for you. Calm down, now—there's no need to panic. The only real gear you need is the spurs, but I'd strongly advise a vest. The spurs are easy to strap on—just wedge that wire underneath your heel and fasten the strap over your foot. Walking with them is slightly more difficult. They seem to be a visible creation of willpower, something that lends confidence and security. The weight's easy to get used to, and it's reassuring, at least a little bit. Now, put on the vest. It's heavy for a vest too, but that's only because you aren't used to a protective vest. It seems a bit stiff—and I guess it is—but you'll forget you're even wearing it soon enough.

Now your ride isn't up yet, but don't watch that guy—it will only make you more nervous. Watch the bulls instead. That one there, the one with one drooping horn and the sleepy eye, is yours. He's a big animal. I would guess he weighs about 2,200 pounds, but that means he'll be a bit slower than some of the
others. That gray color—the way he reminds you of an Appaloosa horse—is uncommon but not very rare. There’s much more to him than that, though. He’s slow, but strong—you can see the power in those haunches and shoulders, and the impression I got the first time I rode him was that he had more in him than he was showing to anyone.

It’s your turn to ride now. Climb up onto the chute, and I’ll pull your rope. This is the point I want you to pay strict attention to because you’re going to remember it for the rest of your life. Seeing as how you’re going to remember it, you might as well gather as many details for that memory as you can. Yes, the rope is a good place to start, and yes, it’s my rope. I know you’re not very eager to thank me right now, but don’t worry about that. It’s about 10, maybe 12 feet long, made of braided nylon, and about halfway along its length is a handle with leather grips. That grip has pine resin on it, and so does that thin leather glove that you’re wearing, which is why it feels somewhat sticky. On one side is the handle, the rope is flat, and the other has a loop tied into it. It has a good, strong feel to it—maybe any rope does, or maybe the fact that the rope has more experience than you makes the difference. I’m not superstitious—not as much as most anyway—but I still agree that sometimes you can feel something in an object like that. A rope that hasn’t been tried just doesn’t have the same feeling somehow.

You’re going to hate the man down there on the ground—the one with the line on his hand. He’s the one who will open that chute and let you out into the arena strapped to 2,200 pounds of pissed-off USDA. He’s an older fellow, and like most, he probably rode in his younger years before he became too old or got injured too badly. He does this same thing 50, maybe 100 times a night, but he never seems to get bored. You’ll see why soon. Yes, he does look sad—it’s for the same reason. Those clowns behind him are going to be your best friends, though. Their job is to get in between you and that bull, once you’re off. They’re good at it, and they like it—as important as that little arena is to us, it belongs to them, and they know it. Standing there, they look like little baseball outfielders awaiting a hit, but actually they are more like noblemen or knights-errant patrolling their realms.

Now, settle down on the bull. Grab that handle in your right hand—I’m going to pull it up until you tell me it’s tight enough. Good, now lay the rope into your hand, around your wrist, and into your hand again. Once you’re satisfied with your grip, move up so that you’re almost sitting on your hand. You’re right; the bull is tensing up; he knows what’s coming even better than you do. Now nod your head as soon as you’re ready.

You can hear the slight creak of the gate as it opens, impossibly loud, but don’t pay any attention to it. As soon as he has room, the bull moves, gathering his legs underneath him as he draws in a breath and then leaping high into the air,
moving with more power than could be imagined and lashing out at the sky with both heels before whipping into a tight circle to the left. As soon as he reaches the apex of his leap, you can feel yourself slipping, your body moving away from your hand and from the bull in a moment of raw panic. When he turns, you have no chance and leave the beast's back, seeming to hang in the air for a long time before you actually strike the ground, one of those clowns in between you and the bull. The clown isn't necessary—the bull turns obediently and walks to the gate.

Give me your hand, and I'll help you over the fence here—a fence with one more story to tell, if only it could. Are you sore? That's only to be expected; you'll get over it. But you're shaking all over, and you know why. You've got your answer now. That fire that's still running through your veins won't ever go away, although it'll settle down to coals soon enough.

You look like a skeptic to me. You're going to try to make those coals flare up on your own first—by looking in strange beds or bottles, by traveling to different cities or countries, by picking fights or picking up—but it won't be long before you come back to the place you depend on for it. When that happens, you can borrow my gear again.
Throughout history, parent-child relationships have at times been strained, awkward, and difficult. Among the more notably tense relationships is the bond between fathers and daughters. Michael Ondaatje’s poem “To a Sad Daughter” conveys a father’s reflections about his relationship with his teenage daughter and his advice to her on the approaching life journey upon which she is about to embark. By contrast, “Daddy,” by Sylvia Plath, expresses a daughter’s complete and utter terror of a frightening yet false image of her dead father. Both works communicate struggles and obstacles encountered in father-daughter relationships as told from two distinct points of view.

In “To a Sad Daughter,” Ondaatje describes a father-daughter relationship from the father’s perspective. At the beginning, the persona introduces us to his daughter by revealing his surprise over her tomboyish ways. Instead of posters of teenage heartthrobs, “hockey pictures gaze down at [her]” (1-2) from the walls of her bedroom. She idealizes not the fairy princess but “belligerent goalies” (4), and “cuts and wounds” (6) are of particular interest to her. She reads “the sports page” (9) and is transfixed by accounts of injuries and “assaults” (11). As well as the obvious gender switch, the warlike imagery allows us a glimpse of the father’s point of view concerning his maturing daughter. The violent sports references depict the daughter as the persona sees her, poised to enter into the fierce melee of life. The “track suit” (3) symbolizes her entrance into the race for success and happiness. The “[broken]... ankles” (10) represent the pain she will both bestow and receive as she charges into the world of adulthood. The idea that his daughter would become a warrior has never crossed his thoughts, but he knows she will need to be so in her life as an adult. This awareness becomes poignantly evident in the first stanza.

Although delighted with his daughter’s atypical manners, the father realizes that their relationship is fraught with complexities and frustrations. “When [he] thought of daughters / [he] wasn’t expecting” (12-13) a tomboy, and yet he prefers it this way. He is amused by the fact that it requires “hours” (23) of
coaxing to convince her to watch the classic romance *Casablanca*, yet she is “moved by *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*” (24-25). He likes all of her “faults” (15), including the “purple moods” (16) in which “[she] retreat[s] from everyone / to sit in bed under a quilt” (17-18); the father is able to trace his own habits, eccentricities, and preferences in his daughter’s behavior. He is also aware of the difficulties of communication in their relationship; for instance, “when [he] say[s] ‘like’ / [he] mean[s] ‘love’ / but that embarrasses [his daughter]” (19-20). The inability to communicate and the need to do so are simultaneously a gulf and a bond between them, a gulf that must be bridged and a bond that must be strengthened. Overall, the first two stanzas impart the father’s reaction to his daughter: complete surprise and delight.

The third, fourth, and fifth stanzas hold an allusion to Homer’s *The Odyssey*; the persona tells his daughter that “one day [he’ll] come swimming / beside [her] ship or someone will” (26-27) as Ino the sea nymph landed on Odysseus’s small hand-built raft and saved him from perishing in the tempest-tossed sea. The reference underlines the persona’s growing awareness of his daughter as a traveler like Odysseus—in search of identity and a return to the family plot from which we all spring. He is also sensitive to the dangers and opportunities all such voyages provide, urging his daughter to “listen” (29) to others, reasoning that if she shuts her ears “only nothing happens” (30) and “[she] will never change” (30). This, too, likens his daughter to the prototypical Greek hero who alone among his crew listened to the Sirens’ singing. The father hopes that she, like Odysseus, will live the fully-explored life of an explorer of unknown realms—external and internal. He continues by saying, “I don’t care if you risk / your life... / You can enter [the] caves and castles... / Just / don’t be fooled by anyone but yourself” (31-36), a final reference to Odyssean guile that allowed him to fool all but be true to himself. The persona’s words reflect his desire to let his daughter go out to test her wings, experience the world, and realize her full potential. The next two stanzas find the father dealing with the painful fact that he is being displaced from his starring role in his daughter’s life. Just as the opening describes the daughter with the interests of a son, so this section depicts the father in a feminine role. He says he would rather be her “closest friend / than [her] father” (39-40), noting that sometimes he “ache[s] with a loss” (46) while she is “busy / discovering [her] friends” (44-45). In this passage, the father is much like Penelope, Odysseus’s wife, as he waits at home with no available course of action. The persona also expresses his regret over occasionally retreating into his own “purple world” (49), thereby losing contact with his daughter for a time. But like Penelope, he is helpless to aid her: it is his task to wait and remain faithful.
In stanzas six and seven, the father deals with his daughter’s release and his loss. He mentions an afternoon when “forsythia bloomed outside the window / and sun spilled over [his daughter] / like a thick yellow miracle” (54-56); this enchanting imagery suggests beauty and birth, vitality and youth. Additionally, “another planet” (57) is seemingly “coaxing [her] out of the house” (58) on to new adventures. He exclaims over “all those possible words” (59) that lie in wait for her, yet she is “busy with mathematics” (60) and the minutiae of life while the fleeting poetry of life passes her by. The father reveals that “[he] cannot look at forsythia now / without loss, or joy for [her]” (61-62) as “[she] steps delicately / into the wide world” (63-64). Although he is losing her to the fulfillment of her goals and aspirations, he says her “real prize will be / the frantic search” (65-66). Therefore, the road to her accomplishments is what really counts in life. He tells her to “want everything” (67), to set no limits on her talents, and to “break going out not in” (68), to give it her all and go for it. Finally, there is a hint of protectiveness as the father declares that he will “sell [his] arms for [her], / hold [her] secrets forever” (70-71).

The father’s hopes for a gentler than expected maturation process and death are expressed in the last stanza. Implicit in this discussion is the painful awareness that the daughter is blooming in the parent’s death. He notes that he is “without answers” (74) concerning death, “except that each / one we know is / in our blood” (75-77). The “graves” (78) are not representative of the person buried beneath the earth; it is the “memory [that] is permanent” (79). He cautions her not to fear losing him to death; she should not imagine the cold headstone is her father. She should rather remember the man himself and the many memories they had together. The father mentions “the afternoon’s / yellow suburban annunciation” (81-82), a symbol of birth, beauty, and hope, and reasons that the “goalie / in his frightening mask” (82-83)—both the enemies that await his daughter on her voyage and the death he will soon face—may not be so bad as they both feared after all. We leave on much the same note as we began. Like his daughter, parenting is not what he “expected” (13), but he hopes he will “like this more” (14) as well.

In contrast to this gentle, hopeful peace, the title of Sylvia Plath’s poem at once conveys the impression that a child is speaking; thus the reader is in no way prepared for the true connotations of the term “Daddy.” At the beginning, the persona compares her father to a “black shoe / In which [she has] lived like a foot” (2-3). Like the shoe, the father’s image is a restrictive one for the daughter, who “for thirty years” (4) has never seen the light and “[has] barely [dared] to breath or Achoo” (5). She goes on further to say that she has “had to kill [him]” (6) because [he] died before [she] had time” (7) to know him. She has buried his memory along with the frustration over the lost relationship; hence she has been
forced to create a father figure. This Daddy is “marble-heavy” (8), cold and hard, unbreakable and unyielding, distant and unapproachable; he is a “ghastly statue” (9), a grim phantom who haunts her every thought and gesture. The fact that he is “big as a Frisco seal” (10) suggests that her conception of her father is greatly overblown and that the memory of her father does not match the real man he was. She has lost him beyond death, although “[she] used to pray to recover [him]” (14) until the monster she created began to consume her.

More metaphors appear in the next lines. The persona alludes to a “Polish Town” (16), herself, that is “scraped flat by the roller” (17), a tank symbolizing her father. She also compares her father to a Nazi, saying that “[she] thought every German was [he]” (29). Along that vein, she herself is a Jew in a concentration camp, “Dachau, Auschwitz, [and] Belsen” (33), “stuck in a barb wire snare” (26). She is a victim of her father, as the Jews were victims of the Nazis. With her “tongue stuck in [her] jaw” (25), she is vulnerable, inarticulate, and powerless against the dark forces of the Nazi father figure. With “[her] Taroc pack” (39) for fortune telling, the persona is also a gypsy, another of the many victims of Nazi brutality; she feels wild, outcast, and homeless, an eternal wanderer with no emotional base or roots. She admits she has “always been scared of [him]” (41) with his “neat mustache” (43) and “Aryan eye” (44). As a Nazi, he represents privilege, power, order, logic, and efficiency. On the other hand, she is the Jew—smelly, messy, disorganized, incomparable, inferior—and the gypsy—wandering, displaced, but also mystical, intuitive, representative of a reasoning removed from scientific logic.

After this magnificent evocation of oppression, finally she begins to realize that the father she has feared for so long is actually an image that she conjured herself. Her problem is the early death and absence of her true father, so she is forced to create one of her own. The father figure is “not God but a swastika” (46), not a deity but a constructed image that was “so black no sky could squeak through” (47), a false image that left her in the throes of a shadowy obsession. She notes that “every woman adores a Fascist” (48) in that women like to portray themselves as victims; she encouraged the monster image in that sense to make her life easier and bearable. She is in fact attracted to the strength of “the brute” (49), that strength which women do not possess. “The boot in the face” (49), even though it assisted her in some ways, drained her strength as she tried to come to grips with the monster. She at last refers to a more realistic picture of her father in which “[he] stand[s] at the blackboard” (51), a professor with a cleft chin who represents “a devil” (54), a “black man who / Bit [her] pretty red heart in two” (55-56) and who destroyed her not by hate but by love.

The illustration of the broken heart signifies a change from passivity to suffering. Her suffering began at “ten when they buried [him]” (57). She describes
her suicide attempt at age twenty when she “tried to die / And get ... back to [him]” (58-59). “But they pulled [her] out of the sack” (61), back to the land of the living, “and they stuck [her] back together with glue” (62), a shattered, broken creature. Afterward, she “made a model” (64) of her father, “a man in black with a Meinkampf look” (65), purposely repulsive so she does not feel the urge to return to it, to cope with the agony of living. The persona understands now why she created the father figure and has now shut the “black [telephone] off at the root” (69) to stifle the image that has frightened her for so long. To eliminate the rest of her suffering, she figuratively kills both the true and false fathers. “If I’ve killed one man, I’ve killed two” (71), she tells us, both “the vampire” (72) father figure who drained her life of energy and preyed on her night and day, and the real one she never knew. She implies toward the end that her family and friends, “the villagers” (77), were aware all along of the false image of “Daddy,” which she carried with her, obsessed, and suffered over. She has broken free and now knows the truth; she is done with the “bastard” (80) father who tormented her for so long, and gains true peace of mind in the process. As she tells us, she is “through” (80)—finished with self-delusion.

“To a Sad Daughter” expresses a father’s joy over his daughter, sorrow over their separation, and hopes that life may be easy on her. “Daddy” communicates a daughter’s fear of the frightening image that she has created to represent her dead father and the realization and eradication of the beast from her mind. Although written from opposite perspectives, both poems convey the tensions and frustrations that abound in father-daughter relationships. In both works, the contemplation of the relationship also leads to a confrontation with death, in one as a possibility, the other as a fact; finally, the reflections and conclusions stated by both lead to greater understanding of self.
In the beginning, the legendary children of the Garden are tempted by the promise of the knowledge of both good and evil. The serpent offers independence from simple faith in God by way of the occult knowledge only God holds. Thus, in Western literature, the substance of evil is often seen as interwoven within the very nature of the human heart. Nathaniel Hawthorne examines the esoteric self in two stories that, while superficially similar, have substantial differences. The protagonist in “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” innocently stumbles upon the evil that resides within him, while the title character of “Young Goodman Brown” actively seeks wickedness and finds it omnipresent. In both of the stories, the protagonists seek some combination of freedom and knowledge, and in each story the price of attainment is expulsion from a former paradigmatic home.

Robin Molineux is a “youth of barely eighteen years...[who is] country-bred...[on] his first visit to town” (Hawthorne, “My Kinsman” 3). He has taken leave of his rural home upon a quest to make his worldly way under the auspice of his uncle, Major Molineux. Thus we find him “taking, all innocently, a long and crucial first step into psychic independence” (Colacurcio, “The Matter” 198), though as of yet, “in seeking the economic and social assistance of his worldly uncle, Robin is...searching out...[a] surrogate for the ministerial father he has left behind” (198). Furthermore, Robin seeks to expand his horizons and increase his freedom “without the loss of social identity which complete self-reliance inevitably entails” (198). Therefore the reader rightly fears that Robin “may get somewhat more than he shrewdly bargains for” (198).

Spying a man uttering “sepulchral intonation[s]” (Hawthorne, “My Kinsman” 4) as he walks, Robin entreats the gentleman. But upon this, his first polite request as to whereabouts of the Major, Robin is abruptly threatened with “the stocks” (5) and met with an “ill-mannered roar of laughter” (5) from the open door of a nearby shop. Taken aback, but being a “shrewd youth” (5)—as Hawthorne so frequently mocks—Robin leaps to the erroneous conclusions that the man “lacks...breeding” (5) and that the laughter was induced, of course,
because Robin “[chose] such a guide” (5). He could not be more wrong: Colacurcio believes that this “country representative (5) is an important political leader of the opposition, perhaps even the Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Indeed the “sepulchral hems” (8) remind one of sounds made to silence a crowd in preparation for speech—and even more telling—at the final mob scene, the “old citizen” (16) witnesses the “parade” not from the crowd, but from above—from the balcony (as the Speaker would). This observation reinforces Colacurcio’s conclusion that Robin erroneously thinks that “society is an immutably ordered hierarchy of the high and the low in which the Major occupies an unquestioned position” (Lee 23). Several further such inquiries by Robin are met with either threats or malicious mirth, for the only password he knows is the old one, the currently ill favored loyalist one—“Molineux.” Therefore Robin is immediately recognized as not being “from the country” (Hawthorne, “My Kinsman” 6) in the conspiratorial sense.

Distraught, Robin winds his way through the streets of the strange city, attempts to avoid the man of the “sepulchral hems” (8) and notices the distinct “smell of tar” (5) that wafts through the town. Something else, of course, is in the air this night, something of which the reader is vaguely aware, having been clued in by Hawthorne as to the “inflammation of the popular mind” (3) that accompanied the first stirrings of revolution in colonial America. Of all this, the naive youth is not cognizant, though the reader is further led to this conclusion when Robin at last finds a response to his question from a patriot in Native American warpaint. Ironically, this anarchic individual, whose visage has the appearance of “two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness” (11), is the first “honest man” (10) Robin encounters. When threatened by the emerging beast in Robin, the fiend “steps back into the moonlight, unmuffles his own face and stares full into that of Robin, [telling him,] ‘Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by’” (10). The careful reader may at this point conclude that something involving revolution, patriots, tar, and the loyalist Major Molineux is about to transpire. The innocent youth Robin, however, remains in the dark.

Robin does indeed find Major Molineux at the indicated place, but at the center of a passing mob in “tar-and-feathery dignity” (16). The leader of the procession, whose appearance is that of “war personified” (15), halts the wicked parade where Robin can have the clearest view. All eyes are upon Robin as he meets the gaze of his tortured uncle in a look of mutual recognition. The “tremendous ridicule affects [Robin] with . . . mental inebriety” (16) and, as laughter rises from the crowd, “broken in the midst by two deep sepulchral hems” (16). Robin, inebriated by the mob and perhaps not a little afraid for his own safety, laughs loudest of them all. The hysterical nature of Robin’s outburst and the “tumult of the mob implies the annihilation of all rationality and order” (Lee
Robin’s former world is turned on its end and, in part, his mad laughter is “an involuntary recognition of infinite absurdity” (24). This interpretation is supported, and a biblical context added, when the moonbeam that “dared to rest upon the opened page of the great bible” (Hawthorne, “My Kinsman” 12) emanates from the very moon that now carelessly observes the revolutionary rum riot below and passively notes that “old Earth is frolicsome to-night!” (17). The indifference of the vast universe to the moral struggles of man is an anarchical and almost heretical statement by Hawthorne. All these events lead one to surmise that Robin’s participation in the riot “reenacts mankind’s Original Rebellion” (Colacurcio, “The Matter” 205) against the Father—humankind’s first allegorical step into a universe that lacks the rigid and unchanging order of Eden. This event also marks the death of Robin’s innocence, there at the church surrounded by “graves” (Hawthorne, “My Kinsman” 12) and accompanied by the “sepulchral hems” (12). It marks also the full emergence of the shrewd knave within, and faced with the epiphany of the essentially amoral and chaotic nature of his heart, Robin can no more board the ferry (an oblique reference to the River Styx) and return to his former home than the children of God can return to the Garden. But Robin has gained self-knowledge; he is now “a shrewd youth [who] may rise in the world, without the help of ... Major Molineux” (17). In the final analysis, Robin has found what he had sought, as evidenced by his own earlier statement that “I have the name of being a shrewd youth [and] thought it high time to begin the world” (13). And so he begins a new life, with the bitter knowledge of both good and evil and without the need of a benefactor/god. Robin’s initiation is announced with a “wild shriek of bitter and convulsive laughter that announces the object of its derision is ourselves” (Ringe 154).

In contrast to Robin, who naively awakens a knavish sprite, young Goodman Brown purposefully embarks on a journey of self-admitted “evil purpose” (Hawthorne, “Young” 66). He leaves his “Faith ... with the pink ribbons” (65) at home. “Faith,” of course, is both his wife of three months and his newly confirmed faith in the Lord. Darrel Abel considers the ribbons “badges of feminine innocence” (qtd. in Levy 122), while for Hyatt Waggoner, “they signalize Brown’s immature faith” (qtd. in Levy 122). A combination of these views may be more efficacious to a truer understanding, as Brown’s superficial and innocent understanding of his faith (and Faith) “with the pink ribbons” couldn’t be more obvious. His treatment and summary dismissal of “Poor little Faith” (Hawthorne, “Young” 65) is blithely condescending to both the woman and what she symbolizes in the story.

Brown’s fantasy trip—and I see no reason to consider it more than an internal subjective fantasy—has an interesting duality that should be noted. Goodman Brown’s guide for the evening, “The Devil” (68), informs Brown as to
the truly cruel deeds of his pious forbears, deeds committed in service to their faith, oddly enough. Brown’s grandfather “lashed the Quaker woman through the streets of Salem” (67), and Brown’s father “set fire to an Indian village” (67), burning out the godless heathens. Though Brown does not believe the veracity of his companion, these actions are presented in such a manner as to suggest that they are true historical events. But Brown is later able to “take cognizance” (69) of the more fantastic and obviously dream-like manifestations (such as the Black Mass); thus Hawthorne employs “a technique of ‘realistic’ as well as allegorical narrative” (Levy 123). What one might make of this dichotomy is that the reality of Goodman Brown’s Puritan life, a simple world of good and evil, has inspired Brown to conjure a wicked scene to match the insipidly simplistic and puritanical distortion of the world Brown has hitherto embraced. It is certainly no accident that the setting of this story is Salem Village shortly before the infamous witch trials, where the contagion of imagined devilry sent many—innocent of the ridiculous charges—to their deaths. Hawthorne’s gist is that “the truth conveyed in the dream . . . is also a truth of waking experience” (Levy 116).

In Goodman Brown’s dreamscape black Sabbath, his two fantastic worlds collide to reveal a striking similarity that further establishes the previous argument. One may note the “hymn . . . a familiar one” (Hawthorne, “Young” 72) and a rock that could either be “an altar or a pulpit” (72), while the “four blazing pines . . . [are] like candles at a meeting” (72). Goodman Brown notes the presence of “a grave and dark clad company” (72) (Puritans?), while the evil one himself “bore no slight similitude . . . to some grave divine of New England churches” (73). The point Hawthorne seems to make in all this is that both the black Sabbath and the overblown fire and brimstone of “Sabbath day” (67) are ridiculous distortions at the poles of a continuum that is merely humanity itself. Because the Puritan Calvinists’ repressed “imaginations are controlled by their dark inner beings, they project a vision of madness and terror” (Ringe 161). Goodman Brown, at first believing himself to be among the elect, is fluidly shaken from his shallow faith and crosses easily to the other distorted extreme: “Come, devil; for to thee the world is given” (Hawthorne, “Young” 71).

At the mirror-image Sabbath, Brown is welcomed to “the communion of [his] race” (73) and is instructed to look upon the congregants, “all whom ye have reverenced from youth. Ye deemed them holier than [yourselves], and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness” (73). Here Hawthorne seems to illustrate that human beings all possess both good and evil and are, in spirit at least, present at both the “light” and the “dark” celebrations. But Hawthorne goes further: Goodman Brown is shocked to note that at the wicked Sabbath, all are welcome in a true “communion of [the] race” (73), where “the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints”
Brown is “dismayed . . . [to find] saints and sinners . . . mixed together” (Colacurcio, “Visible” 389), as such a scene contradicts his “initial assumption that the orderly divisions of the Puritan community embody moral reality” (389).

At the baptism, Brown and his Faith are invited to understand the “deep mystery of sin” (Hawthorne, “Young” 74). Brown glances at his “pale [Faith]” (74) and realizes that he (or they) have not the strength to withstand the truth of “what they [would disclose] and what they [would see]” (74). Brown is unable to stand naked before his faith and the world, unable to look upon the true mystery of his own sin and the actuality of his previous world. He is thus barred both from completing his enlightening initiation and from returning to his previous “more than tolerably naive [self]” (Colacurcio, “Visible” 389). “Indeed,” continues Colacurcio, “Brown’s final (exorcised) state may be worst of all” (402).

Though both Goodman Brown and Robin Molineux are brought to their respective ends by a different impetus, each must grapple with the evil implicit in human nature. Robin seems to encounter a true evil: the evil of war, the evil of the mob which is indeed aroused within his own breast. When he finds that he is capable of such evil, he is banished from his home, Eden, and must make his way without a god-like benefactor. Goodman Brown, conversely, seeks out the reflection of simplistic piety and finds instead a simplistic wickedness. He is, of course, unable to face his own true nature outside of his naive schema of good and evil and so must resort to his previous world view, foolishly proud that he did not commit that most final crime of satanic baptism. Thus, with both despair and pride, young Goodman Brown lives out his days. In both stories, Hawthorne seems to imply that, in order for human beings to deal appropriately with evil, they must first transcend the childish notion that the world (of which the human heart is made) is divisible into such distinct, and arbitrarily human, halves. With his laughter, Robin transcends; the dour and humorless Puritan Brown, however, does not. According to Hawthorne, perhaps one must recognize the absurdity of human existence in order to be truly free.
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Napster.com--Friend or Foe?
Rebekka Litz

Although such corporations as the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) oppose Napster, it remains a revolutionizing institution, allowing users to trade music files directly instead of through a central server, and it should not be shut down. In the past year, Napster has been involved in several lawsuits, not only with the RIAA, but also with such musical artists as Metallica and Dr. Dre. These groups have charged Napster with copyright infringement, saying that by allowing users to trade music files without giving the artists a royalty for the song, it directly violates copyright laws. Napster’s lawyers, however, are fighting the charge, claiming that mp3 exchanges are protected by law, as long as the uses are noncommercial (Eliscu 35). Despite the legal battles, Napster has become increasingly popular, as more people realize the countless benefits of its service.

Unlike TV and radio, which play only the most popular songs, Napster gives users access to literally thousands of mp3’s, exposing listeners to a much wider variety of music. From rap to country, electronica to rock, virtually any desired song can be downloaded from Napster’s site. Most users love the selection Napster gives them. As one fan comments, “I live in a town with shit for a radio, and I want to check it out” (qtd. in “Napster” 160). This variety also gives new or underground artists, whose songs may not be popular enough to get radio play, a better chance at success. Declares Napster’s creator Shawn Fanning, “What we want is to give new artists a chance to be heard . . . I think Napster will help musicians get the exposure they need to survive” (qtd. in Sheffield 42). The RIAA claims to have the musicians’ best interests at heart and argues that producing new acts costs money. Claims EMI’s Jay Samit, “If piracy is not kept in check, no one will be investing those millions and you’ll see the industry disappear, which means less quality music and fewer artists able to make a living making music” (qtd. in Foege 160). However, the industry’s current method has never worked well for many artists. Rock musician Courtney Love comments: “Recording artists have essentially been giving their music away for free under the
old system, so new technology that exposes our music to a larger audience can only be a good thing” (qtd. in Foege 162).

Another benefit of Napster’s system is that listeners are able to preview a CD before purchasing it. Alec Foege, of *Spin* magazine, points out that “Since the CD era began, the LP has increasingly become a few good songs packed between loads of filler” (160). In a time when most of us have felt the bitter sting of paying inflated prices for a CD that is just not worth it, previewing the CD seems not only ingenious, but also absolutely necessary. The RIAA is afraid that if music is available for free, people will stop buying CD’s altogether. However, a recent poll conducted by *Rolling Stone* shows otherwise. Ninety percent of those polled still buy as many CD’s as they did before Napster, and thirty-six percent have bought more. In addition, eighty-three percent said yes when asked if they would still buy a CD even if they could download it for free off the Internet (Goodman 45). In fact, most Napster fans seem to share the same sentiment as one user who explained: “I try to download only music that I want to pre-audition before buying” (qtd. in “Napster” 160).

One benefit that should appeal to most musicians is that Napster is helping to create a wider fan base for the artists. John Perry Barlow, a former lyricist for the Grateful Dead, believes that “copying is the best thing you can do to spread the economic value of information . . . . If people are distributing my work, as they are on Napster, I don’t regard that as theft, I regard it as advertising” (qtd. in Goodman 45). Other artists have expressed similar views. Says Dexter Holland, lead singer of the rock band The Offspring, “We happen to be of the school of thought that it’s nice to have more, not less, fans” (qtd. in Spitz 56). Some artists, however, think that being able to download a song for free off the Internet will put them out of business. They fear that their CD’s won’t meet their sale quota by the deadline and that the record label will revoke their contracts. While this fear is justifiable, as yet CD sales have not gone down. In fact, adds *Rolling Stone*’s Fred Goodman, “Three of the most popular artists on Napster--Eminem, ‘N Sync, and Britney Spears--have sold record setting numbers in 2000” (42).

As technology becomes more advanced, the music industry will undoubtedly go through many changes. Eventually, we may even end up waving goodbye to marketed CD’s altogether. However, just because something is different does not mean it should not be allowed to happen. Napster has paved the way for more sites that offer free, easily obtained mp3’s. It has emerged to become a revolutionary figure for online music distribution, and it should be allowed to expand and grow with our ever-changing technology.
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Love is an exciting subject in literature as well as in life. “Ind Aff” by Fay Weldon and “Eveline” by James Joyce are two stories that tell of two different kinds of love. Both end in a break up. However, for one young woman, the ending of the relationship is a liberation; for the other, the break up is clearly a loss.

Professor Peter Piper, from “Ind Aff: or Out of Love in Sarajevo,” is not in love with the narrator but using her to alleviate his doubts about his power, virility, and vigor as he enters middle age. He demonstrates his power over the narrator by putting off making the decision “between his wife and [the narrator] as his permanent life partner” (154) for a year. Professor Piper also “liked to be in [the narrator’s] head” (157) to demonstrate his controlling powers over her. To resolve his questions about his virility, Peter has chosen a young student and refers to moving in with her as “shacking up” (154), a reference to a totally sexual relationship without emotions. Their favorite way to consume meals is to “buy bread, cheese, sausage, wine, and go off somewhere in [their] hired car, into the woods or the hills, and picnic and make love” (154). This is another example of Professor Piper’s attempt to overcome his virility problems. The age difference, “he [is] forty-six and [the narrator is] twenty-five” (155), also suggests his concern over his sexual potency and his use of the narrator to confirm to himself that he is still a vigorous man.

For her part, the narrator is also using the professor to win competitions to boost her self-esteem and to correct the intellectual weaknesses she thinks she has. The narrator constantly competes with her sister and Professor Peter Piper’s wife. When speaking of her sister, the narrator describes her as “the superior human variety kind . . . vividly pretty, bright and competent . . . she can even cook” (155). At the end of this elaborate description, the narrator proclaims that she “gave up competing yonks ago” (155), which is not true since she still is competing, as is evident in her description of her sister Clare, who had married “a Harvard professor of economics seconded to the United Nations” (155) whom
she describes as a “weedy academic” (155). In competition with her sister, the narrator is involved with a professor, who is a superior man, a “muscular academic” (155). Clearly, while she cannot best Clare in the areas of intellect {“[Clare] had her first degree at twenty” (155)} or beauty {[Clare had] a heavy curtain of vibrant red hair, which she only part[ed] for effect” (155)}, she, nevertheless, can hook the better husband. The same need to win and prove herself shows up in her relation to Mrs. Piper. The narrator describes herself as being “cool and thin and informed . . . eager and anxious for social and political instruction in Sarajevo . . . and . . . lissome” (154), while Mrs. Piper is “sweaty and only [likes] telly . . . [spits] in the face of knowledge . . . [and smells] permanently of chlorine” (154). Again, the competition, which the narrator is “winning hands down” (154), makes her feel superior. Besides worrying about her inadequacies when compared to other women, the protagonist also feels she is not intellectually accomplished. Her fancied intellectual weaknesses are apparent when the professor tells her that she “had a good mind but not a first-class mind and somehow [she] didn’t take it as an insult. [She] had a feeling first-class minds weren’t good in bed” (153). Another example of these intellectual weaknesses is her declaration that he is “supervising [her] thesis . . . [and she] is dependent on him for [her] academic future” (153).

When the narrator decides to leave the professor, she takes responsibility for her actions and experiences a liberation. Throughout the story it is suggested to the reader that neither of the two actually loves the other. The narrator, on the other hand, does not realize this until she and the professor are sitting in the restaurant and she experiences “the true, the real pain of Ind Aff” (157) as she smiles at the young attractive waiter. Another example of this realization and one of responsibility comes when the narrator tells Peter that she is thinking of her love for him “and about the archduke’s assassination . . . to cover the kind of tremble in [her] head as [she] came to [her] senses” (157). She takes responsibility for her actions by deciding to end the relationship so as not to cause an upheaval in their lives. The lives in question are not only theirs but also those of Mrs. Piper and her children and the narrator’s children who have yet to be born. Since the narrator has her own passport and traveler’s checks because “Peter felt it was less confusing if [they] each paid [their] own way” (158), she stands up, collects her things, says she is going home, and proceeds to “[kiss] the top of [Peter’s] head, where it [is] balding” (158). Her liberation becomes clear when the narrator realizes how silly she is to “confuse mere passing academic ambition with love [and] to try and outdo [her] sister Clare” (158). She proceeds to complete her thesis, which Professor Piper tries to get refused, and in the end she realizes that she does have “a first-class mind after all” (158).
On the other hand, in the story “Eveline,” a young woman is faced with a difficult choice between leaving her home and everything familiar, even though she is caught in a changing environment, and running away towards a new life. Eveline’s environment is familiar to her, but “a man from Belfast bought the field [she used to play in] and built houses in it--not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs” (512). Her changing environment is also evident when she speaks of her father who in the past “was not so bad” (512) as he is now. Somehow Eveline “[knows] it [is his violence] that [has] given her the palpitations” (513). As she thinks about the decision she has to make, she looks around her house and realizes that “she [has] shelter and food; she [has] those whom she [has] known all her life about her” (512). But if she is to leave, she “would be married” (513). Eveline would then be treated with respect and “not be treated as her mother had been” (513).

Eveline’s attraction to Frank grows from the appeal of escape and the temptation of a new life. Escaping her father is important: “she sometimes [feels] herself [to be] in danger of her father’s violence” (513). Every Saturday night there is an argument over money, and her father accuses her of “squander[ing] the money, that she [has] no head, that he [isn’t] going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and much more” (513). Eventually, her father would give her the money and “ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday’s dinner” (513). Escaping this physical and emotional abuse is not the only aspect that is appealing to Eveline. Escaping the slums of Dublin would be reason enough. Frank is also “very kind, manly, [and] open hearted” (513). He offers escape to a new country, home and way of life. Eveline knows that she does not love him and is “pleasantly confused” (513) when “he [sings] about the lass that loves a sailor” (513). At first, it had been exciting to have a beau “and then she had begun to like him” (513). This is highly suggestive of not loving but using. Eveline also has a great fear of Frank. She knows nothing of him but of his travels and “tales of distant countries” (513). Her father also makes a remark about “know[ing] these sailor chaps” (514) and forbids Eveline to meet with Frank.

In the end, Eveline’s conscience keeps her in the morass of Dublin. The longer Eveline sits postponing leaving for the station, the more she remembers from her past. She can hear a street organ playing, and it reminds her “of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could” (514). Here is an example of the obligation that Eveline feels towards her family and home. Eveline can hear clearly her mother’s voice “saying constantly with foolish insistence: Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!” (514). This Gaelic phrase means “the end of pleasure is pain.” Although Eveline fears that if she goes for pleasure, she will be worse off, she is also frightened that if she does not
go, she will end up like her mother and die in pain. Eveline stands up and can think of nothing but escape. She and Frank stand in "the swaying crowd" (514) at the North Wall. The swaying of the crowd suggests her indecision about leaving. As the time comes near to board, she becomes frantic. Eveline cannot go with Frank; she feels that "he would drown her" (515). Her fear may result from the loss of her family, maybe of her status as a decent woman, or simply fear of pleasure. As Frank rushes to the ship, he calls for her to follow, but Eveline only looks at him, "her eyes [giving] him no sign of love or farewell or recognition" (515). She ends up losing courage and embracing Dublin because of fear and her sense of obligation. This is a loss for the helplessly passive Eveline, who, even though she wants to leave, chooses not to make her life better, instead merely settling for what she has.

Both "Ind Aff: or Out of Love in Sarajevo" and "Eveline" are stories of love and how that love is abandoned. In "Ind Aff," the narrator mistakes academic ambition for love, realizes her mistake, and achieves a liberation. In "Eveline," the character experiences a loss. Even though Eveline knows she does not love Frank, she cannot bring herself to better her life and leave her obligations to her family behind. Thus, one woman's rejection leads to her becoming a stronger person while another woman's rejection leads to an erasure of her identity and a life of passivity.
Have you ever peeked around the corner while your mother wrapped gifts? Have you ever cheated just a little while counting for hide-and-go-seek? If you fit, just by chance, these last questions, then maybe you would appreciate a certain work from Norman Rockwell's collection. As a matter of fact, you might have experienced an identical situation. Norman Rockwell's talent, as shown in his painting *Saying Grace*, captures American life in its entirety with grace and beauty.

To start with, this painting presents a story to the audience that nearly everyone can share. An older lady with gray hair and pretty flowers on her hat sits and prays alongside a younger boy with blond hair, head bowed, and fervently concentrating before they eat. All around the restaurant everyone looks on as these two bless their food. The two older boys at the same table stare while smoking their cigarettes and reading the newspaper. The older boy with blond, slick hair, and blue shirt almost looks disgusted or perhaps too grown up for that stuff. Beside the young boy praying sits another young man with short, dark black hair, sympathizing more than criticizing. This moment captured by Norman Rockwell displays a time in which prayer may not have had the same meaning as it did before. Perhaps it has lost its grip on most people, or perhaps the man holding the cigar and newspaper looks and realizes that people are still praying. You can almost feel the thickness in the air and smell the mixed aroma from the dining foods. Norman Rockwell gives life to this painting.

*Saying Grace* gives the impression of a perfect picture. The brown, burning cigar seems so real but in no way steals the moment from any other object in the painting. Pleasantly, the smoke spirals to the ceiling from the boy's cigarette, curves and twists so genuinely that you can almost smell it. On top of the old, wooden dining table sits a perfect pair of glass shakers along with perfect, seeded jam and white grains of sugar. Just outside, the rain falls onto the foggy streets full of cars, and a train flies by. In fact, each different speck of wood from the brown dining chairs seems to flaunt its splinters. The black and gold paint,
aging and peeling on the restaurant’s window, shines from the glare of light. Away from the focus of the painting lies an old newspaper with fine, black and white writing so realistic that the observer wouldn’t think of it as a painting.

Just like a perfect picture, the colors for this painting display perfection. The brown and off-white shading for the tiles fits perfectly with the stained brown chairs and dining tables. For some reason, red always seems to stand out, and Rockwell knows the best place to put this color. On the brim of an old hat sits just a sparkle of red, while all four people at the table sit on red cushioned chairs. The silver platter holding the white salt and black pepper anticipates the dominance of the red jam sitting beside them. On the other hand, all the dishes grasp the shaded white, and this arrangement unifies the pale and light brown walls for the background. Around the older woman’s neck lies a faultless white scarf; nearby the boy wears an immaculate white shirt. Perhaps this color sets them apart to coincide with their prayers.

Finally, *Saying Grace* excellently illustrates a time in nearly all Americans’ lives. Whether you are praying or staring, life certainly paints a beautiful picture for everyone. Hopefully, this beautiful picture will continue to mean a great deal to others.
In China, a four-thousand-year-old nation with over 1.2 billion people, many traditions exist but have been challenged by the onslaught of Western culture that began invading the Asian continent after the Cold War. Acclaimed author Bi Shumin deftly provides a noteworthy insight on the changes occurring in China with the story “Broken Transformers,” which tells of a working class Chinese couple who must help their young son cope with the loss of an expensive broken toy. The mother attempts to bring up her son according to ancient Chinese tradition, but the invading Western culture threatens to undermine her confidence in the proven formula. Through this conflict, Bi presents a childhood trauma that illuminates not simply parental failure but also cataclysmic cultural change.

Bi Shumin is one of the most acclaimed contemporary Chinese women authors of the modern period. Born in 1952, she spent 11 years in the Chinese army on the plateau in northern Tibet. Her experiences in the army provide ample material for her literary works, including her first published story, “The Kunlun Mountain Dies Young,” which appeared in the literary magazine Kunlun in 1987. Twenty years in the medical field also give Bi a compassionate but objective perspective on issues such as hospice care, life and death, drug use and rehabilitation. Her novel, The Red Prescription, investigates the problems in society that lead to drug use. Since 1987, she has published five short story collections and novelettes, three collections of prose, and four collections of essays. Bi often addresses issues concerning contemporary social life by describing economic matters in relation to city life and analyzing newly arising social problems. Also of note are tales that describe the changes in society and perception of values caused by sweeping economic reform, among which are “The Purple-Patterned Curtain,” about the dramatic life of a baby-sitter, and “Broken Transformers” (He 59-61).

To understand the story of “Broken Transformers,” one must have a working knowledge of Confucianism. In ancient times, when China experienced
a period of intense civil unrest and war, the main dilemma concerned how social order could be maintained. Two solutions suggested were the use of force, advocated by the so-called Realists, and the application of love, proposed by the Mohists. China’s well-known sage, Confucius, dismissed both of these ideas in favor of a process that was based on education: tradition passed down from parent to child.

K’ung fu Tzu, commonly known today as Confucius, lived from 551 to 479 B.C., a period of widespread moral laxity also known as the Chou dynasty. The plight of the common people was especially desperate, as the wars raged between feudal lords, and even peace brought no security. Confucius sought to alleviate the suffering of the commoners, as he himself was born “without rank and in humble circumstances” (qtd. in Creel 1). Confucius believed that it was natural for men to cooperate, and rulers should strive to promote the welfare and happiness of his people. He realized that this natural state would never exist in the hands of the hereditary rulers currently on the throne, so he endeavored to persuade the rulers to leave administrative functions to “virtuous, capable, and properly trained” ministers (Creel 2). Confucius himself sought to educate young men to fill the positions. He saw that the goal of education was to bring about good government by creating not only an efficient administrator but also an ideal man. Yet this transformation did not occur overnight; Confucius advocated not a spontaneous but a more deliberate method of teaching, such that the teaching became second nature.

Among the various virtues praised by Confucius, the supreme virtue is jen, or goodness and magnanimity. Jen is also associated with benevolence, love, man-to-manness, self-respect, and humanity toward others. The superior man who practices jen is known as chun-tzu, an adequate, poised being who asks not what he can get from others, but what he can do to accommodate them. A chun-tzu (“the ruler’s son” in Chinese) possesses true nobility and is also the antithesis of the petty, low, small-minded person, the hsiao jen. In modern terms, a chun-tzu is analogous to a gentleman (Creel 77-78). To achieve jen and become a chun-tzu, one must learn and abide by li, synonymous with propriety and the way things should be done. The social virtues designated by li include filial submission, brotherliness, righteousness, good faith, and loyalty. It is the father’s duty to teach li, or the “norms of proper social behavior,” to the members of his household (Wright 7). Those who exemplified the qualities of li were recognized by public feasts, monuments, and other rewards. Li also refers to the six human relationships based upon the Confucian virtue of xiao, or filial piety, referring to the “religious respect that children owe their parents” (Ross). In each relationship, the superior member must exhibit benevolence and care for the subordinate member, while the subordinate has the duty of obedience. For
example, the parent is required to love the child in order to be reverential. The
parent’s role may involve being affectionate but also ensuring that the child
properly represents or brings honor to the family. Since it is assumed that the
parent provides full and adequate support, the child lacks for nothing and asks for
nothing; this behavior falls into the category of reverence. Another of the
relationships pertinent to this story is the one between husband and wife: in this
bond, a Confucian husband must be good, while the wife must listen. Clearly,
obedience is contingent upon the superior member’s fulfillment of his duties in the
relationship. The true Confucian definition of obedience is to do what is right;
therefore, a truly obedient child is one who refuses to obey any parental orders to
do what is wrong (Ross).

In Confucianism, the life is spent in self-cultivation toward the ultimate
goal of becoming a chun-tzu, the fulfilled human being, by perpetually improving
the qualities of sympathy and empathy. As the spirit rises, self-interests begin to
fade as concerns for the group replace the previous self-consciousness. Further
ascension eventually leads to the better person, which in turn makes for a better
family. A better family directs the way to a better society, and a better society
makes for a better world.

The family in “Broken Transformers” is initially a traditional family in the
Confucian way. They are poor but able to make ends meet by saving and being
thrifty. Children, however, generally are not economical when it comes to
attractive toys. The child in the story is engrossed by expensive toys called
Transformers from the well-known television show. The mother, seeing her son’s
self-sacrificing expression as he turns to take a last look at the desired toy, makes
a sacrifice of her own by purchasing the toy for her son instead of buying yarn for
much-needed garments for herself: “I strode back to the counter and impulsively
took possession of the smallest Transformer money could buy” (Bi 611). The
mother is clearly loving, as evidenced not only by her sacrifice but her willingness
to deal with her husband, who has “always maintained that [she] spoiled the child”
(611). The child, who knows of his family’s financial problems, is reverential
toward his mother as he tells her, “I don’t want a Transformer” (610) and
attempts to lead her out of the store to prevent any second thoughts from shaking
his resolve. While the parent-child relationship at this point appears intact, slight
tremors in the husband-wife relationship are plainly evident.

The Transformer, however, is already working its magic. The mother
knows not “how to express [her] gratitude” (Bi 610) when her son makes his
unselfish declaration: “He sounded like an adult, the logic of his argument
certainly exceeded anything I might have come up with and it occurred to me that
in comparison with our boy, who was ... a model student at school, my husband
and I were selfish” (611). This line refers back to Confucian conception of an
education aimed at the "cultivation of character" (Creel 129). The mother admires her son’s attempt to assert how unaffected he is by the toy, yet she feels guilty about denying him the plaything as any other loving mother would. She is, however, allowing her love to compromise tradition and bring in the Western concept of self-satisfaction. Although to the mother the Transformer symbolizes “appreciation for [her son’s] understanding” and expresses “our mutual love” (Bi 611), it also signals a disruption in the Confucian relationships. For instance, the mother’s sacrifice for her son reverses the bond between the old and the young because the elder is tending to the child rather than vice versa. Additionally, the husband and wife relationship becomes strained because the wife does not listen to the husband regarding the toy’s purchase. The mother justifies the toy by claiming that it symbolizes her love for her son. According to the boy, the “Transformer fights for justice and freedom with iron will” (611). Yet the story suggests that the toy really represents the growing influence of Western ideas that signal changes in the very stable culture that the family depends on.

The Transformer generates alterations and a challenge for this family, a challenge that proves hard for them to meet. In the end, two broken toys embody two different paths available to the boy. The old, proven way is the Confucian way, which emphasizes the importance of empathy and group solidarity: when Fatty breaks his toy, the boy responds with magnanimity. Although he struggles with the decision, the boy does the right thing: his mother notes approvingly, “Magnanimity is something that no amount of money can buy . . . my son had absorbed the moral principles I had instilled in him over the years” (Bi 612). Going back to the Confucian virtues, the boy has truly developed jen and fulfilled his part of the friend-friend and parent-child relationship. The family who follows the Western model of wealth and self-interest practices the new course: when the son breaks the wealthy girl’s toy, the girl’s family demands payment and does not respond magnanimously.

Although deeply influenced by Confucianism himself, Mao Zedong aimed to abolish traditional Chinese culture, which was seen as an impediment to China’s modernization (Ouyang). Here in “Broken Transformers,” the painful transition between the old and new that began under Mao emerges in the two parallel situations that develop quite differently and raise the question of which solution is the better response to the broken toy. The mother cannot give her son an answer because she is still deeply Confucian but trying to change without sufficient knowledge of the Western method. When he asks for an explanation, she does not enforce the Confucian way because it is no longer the only option; the Western culture is difficult for her to relate to because she does not fully comprehend it. She tells the boy, “There are many ways of solving a problem. Problems are like Transformers: they can either be a robot, a plane or a car . . .
Understand?” (Bi 614). She loves her son and does her best to help him but is floundering herself in a maze of confusion. The mother and child are lost in the conflict: free from tradition, they drift into anarchy and disorder. The Transformer symbolizes this uncertainty: it is now “too delicate to touch” and “[can] no longer change shapes” (613). Moreover, the Transformer represents the social codes that are transforming raw human material to conform to society’s rules.

With tradition shattered and no adequate substitute in sight, social harmony dissolves as people resort to the use of force. When the father finds out about the toy’s unfortunate demise, he attempts to strike his son, but the mother blocks his hand. Stunned that his mother has received the blow in his stead, the son begins to cry “as if it had been he who had been hit” (Bi 615). The husband and wife’s relationship falls with the introduction of violence as the child’s obedience is no longer required with the father’s failure to care for the child. Later, the son offers his mother a gift of green wool for her much-needed scarf. When she asks where the funds came from to pay for the gift, the son replies that he requested the money from Fatty “the way those other people asked us for it” (616). His mother becomes furious: “It was impossible that he could have done something like that. He had always been so obedient” (616). She slaps him for the first time but “felt certain that [it] would not be the last” (616). The parent-child tie here is also broken. As a result of the retraction of forgiveness, Fatty never returns, and the friendship disintegrates. By the end of “Broken Transformers,” we have a picture of a society that, like the Transformers, has broken down entirely with no new model of social coherence clearly emerging.

Confucian doctrine stresses the importance of virtue, magnanimity, and tradition, coupled with the strict maintenance of the six basic relationships. In contrast, self-satisfaction, individual interests, and property and monetary concerns anchor Western philosophy. Bi Shumin paints a vivid portrait of a world caught between this old and new system, one struggling to change. The two broken Transformers symbolize the two methods of approaching life, Western and Confucian, as illustrated in this story. Social codes are, after all, only instruments for transforming the human animal into a social creature. For the boy, neither toy works, much like the two contrasting codes of value which they represent. The Transformers and the ethical systems hold no meaning for the son who “never touch[es]” (Bi 616) either toy or code again. As a result, the son is set adrift without guidance of any form and the transformation is broken. The failure of the boy’s transformation bodes ill for the uneasy transformation of a society attempting to change and accommodate Western innovations while retaining identity and tradition.
Works Cited


It is no secret that men and women generally have differing views concerning sex. Although in recent years these stereotypes have changed greatly, historically men are seen as focusing on sex as a physical endeavor while women focus on the emotional aspects of it. Perhaps these differences of opinion explain why sex is one of the oldest topics for discussion in human history. Interestingly enough, while in the locker room football players joke about sex and girls whisper intimate secrets into their friends' ears over the telephone, just around the corner sex is being intensely studied and scrutinized in laboratories, classrooms, and therapy sessions. What exactly is sex, and how does it tie in with love? How correct is the stereotypical male position, that love is merely a biochemical reaction, which leads to sex and ultimately the preservation of the species? How accurate is the stereotypical romantic female view—that sex is something deeper that cannot be put into a test tube? Two poems, "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell and "A Fine, a Private Place" by Diane Ackerman, provide two opposing views on sex. In "To His Coy Mistress," the male persona is frustrated and feels he must sleep with a certain woman because life is too short to waste time flirting. This poem is based on three basic ideas: *Tempus Fugit*, or "Time Flies," *Memento Mori*, "Be mindful of death," and "Carpe Diem," "Seize the day," and the persona makes an eloquent argument that "There is no time like the present." In "A Fine, a Private Place," we are told a story of a sexual encounter under the ocean. In this poem it is often difficult to tell whether the point of view is male or female, but overall the poem has a definite soft, feminine feel. This poem is the female's intentional rebuttal to Marvell's viewpoint. One poem expresses the time-tested, stereotypical male point of view while the response is a female point of view that actually incorporates both male and female stances.

Even the title of "To His Coy Mistress" suggests that the persona wants something, and he wants it immediately. The first stanza is an implementation
of the *Tempus Fugit* theme: "we don't have enough time." "Coy" implies that "His Mistress" is flirty, sly, and mischievous; these are frustrating attributes to a man who is literally dying to sleep with one who possesses them. The poem begins with direct references to *Tempus Fugit*: "Had we but world enough, and time / This coyness, lady, were no crime" (Marvell 1-2). He sets the tone for the poem here: that life is too short to "dawdle." In a rather brutally honest way, he is saying, "Let's get down to business!" This "cut to the chase" mentality concerning sex is often associated with men, and indeed the persona here represents that conventional view. The entire poem is fast paced, as famed poet T.S. Eliot notes: "We notice the high speed, the succession of concentrated images, each magnifying the original fancy" (Eliot, *Critical* 365). The persona likes his fast-paced world and sets up his argument by saying that eternity would not be a good thing, much like a leisurely Sunday afternoon that never seems to end. He is trying to make eternity sound monotonous and dull; he goes to great lengths to prove his point. He sarcastically states that he would "Love [her] ten years before the flood, and [she] should, if [she] please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews" (Marvell 8-10). He goes on to tell her how he would spend "An hundred years . . . to praise thine eyes . . . two hundred to adore each breast . . . thirty thousand to the rest" (13-16). He tells her these things knowing full well that spending that much time courting her would get old for both of them really fast, and he wants her to agree with him. He knows that women generally like to be adored and this exaggeration is his way of telling her that because of the shortness of time, excessive adoration isn't necessary. He is right in his assertion that life is short, but to use this line to try to convince a woman to have sex with him suggests a certain desperation on his part.

The man's words and actions exhibit another facet of the stereotypical male view of sex: that one must relentlessly pursue sexual conquests in order to "add more notches to his six-shooter." This crude mindset is hard to understand, especially for a female reader; scholar Bernard Duyfhuizen writes: "Clearly a female reader of 'To His Coy Mistress' might have trouble identifying with the poem's speaker; therefore, her first response would be to identify with the listener-in-the-poem, the eternally silent Coy Mistress" (731). Duyfhuizen goes on to say that a female reader "is likely to be angered by this poem, by her marginalization in an argument that seeks to overpower the core of her being" (731). Women typically do not agree with adding notches to guns, so it should come as no surprise that a female poet wrote a response to "To His Coy Mistress." Diane Ackerman is no stranger to differing views from men and women; in her own book, *A Natural History of Love* she states:
These days we expect men to be more sensitive, vulnerable, loving, sympathetic, and supportive; to be less competitive, territorial, and violent; to be monogamous and to share the child rearing fifty-fifty. Actually, what we’re asking is that men be more like women, and for some that’s a tall order. Their biology protests You’re joking, right? I’m not programmed for this. (154)

Clearly, Ackerman would take issue with the persona in “To His Coy Mistress.” So, over three centuries after Andrew Marvell completed “To His Coy Mistress,” she completed “A Fine, a Private Place,” a direct rebuttal to Marvell’s poem. Even the title, “A Fine, a Private Place,” is a jab at “To His Coy Mistress.” It actually comes from line 31 of Marvell’s poem in which the persona is describing the grave, as well as the female body, as a “private place” (Marvell 31), thus associating the female body with mortality. “A Fine, a Private Place” begins with images of life below the surface of the ocean, and this setting immediately implies a slow pace that corresponds to Marvell’s opening stanza, but contrasts with it in that the slowness is actually seductive and desirable. The images of “long sea fingers parted like beads hitched in the door of an opium den” (Ackerman, “Fine” 3-6) give the impression of a hazy, smoky, dreamlike place that is as far from reality as a land where we have “world enough and time.” But again, this place is appealing in its very dreamlike quality, unlike Marvell’s invocations of nature as “Deserts of vast eternity” (24), which are boring and stagnant. Ackerman’s images of nature are there by design and make up part of the dreamlike “under the blue horizon” (Ackerman 2) landscape she evokes. As Julie Gleason Alford notes in The Dictionary of Literary Biography, “Nature often produces a sensual quality in Ackerman’s love poems” (6). Here is the female perspective at work: incorporate everything into love. The surreal underwater image in “A Fine, a Private Place” is a far cry from the one the man in “To His Coy Mistress” describes. This undersea dreamland, coupled with the slowness of the ocean, conveys a good feeling that something special is going to happen. In response to Marvell’s focus on the inevitability of time and death, this character is saying, “We have forever!” To the persona in “To His Coy Mistress,” this stance is absurd and the woman who voices it is not sensual, but coy.

Beyond the opening contrast, the emotion the two poems evoke also showcases the male/female divide. In only a few lines does the persona even use the word “love” in “To His Coy Mistress,” and even when he does he uses it in a hollow kind of way. In one line previously mentioned, while amidst his sarcastic monologue about how dreary eternity would be, he tells her that “[he] would / Love [her] ten years before the flood” (Marvell 8-9). In fact, all of the
times he mentions love he is telling her how "he would love her," such as when mentioning that his "vegetable love" (11) might grow if only they were to live forever. He never once tells her that he \textit{does} love her; he is apparently not interested in the concept of love at all. Obviously, he does not realize that this type of rhetoric is not what most women want to hear. He even stoops so low as to say he would not "love [her] at a lower rate" (20), a statement that she could take as a compliment--that he would "rate" her highly--or as a stinging barb--a comparison to a prostitute. The rest of the poem indicates that he does not mean it as a compliment, for all of his emotion is purely physical lust. This view is supported by the fact that he spends a great deal of time describing how exhilarating a night with him would be. He describes the two potential partners as "amorous birds of prey" (38) and uses this image to conjure an exciting idea of two birds clashing in sexual ecstasy high above the earth. Then he goes on to describe the climax of the encounter: "Let us roll all our strength and all / Our sweetness up into one ball, / And tear our pleasures with rough strife" (41-43). This violent image, not unlike a rape, is his vision of a shattering orgasm; it verges on being destructive and is truly an act of conquest. He spends a great deal of time talking about superficial feelings, but none talking about authentic ones that women typically identify with. He obviously does not love his mistress at all; he simply wants her to quench his immediate sexual thirst. He gives no indication of what might transpire \textit{after} the proposed encounter.

Unlike "To His Coy Mistress," there is much more love in "A Fine, a Private Place." The woman clearly states that she and her partner "made love" (Ackerman, "Fine" 20). At one point she is so overcome with passion she can’t believe something so wonderful can be happening: she thinks to herself, "Who was this [I] love?" (50). After the climactic moment, they are still intimate; the male partner checks his lover to see if she is "okay" (76), a small but significant act that tells her that he cares about her, even after the moment of intense physical pleasure has passed. However, the most pronounced indicator that it was love being made lies in the memories of it. The poet spends a great deal of time making this point clear. The woman recalls the event with fondness: "Later, she thought often of that blue boudoir, pillow-soft and filled with cascading light . . . She could still see the mosaics that were fish . . . still feel the ocean inside and out, turning her evolution around" (90-105). These memories are sacred to her because the act is real and lasting, not a five-second muscle spasm that is forgotten after it is over. The memories freeze the moment in time and she can relive it any time she pleases. As the poet goes on to say, "She thought of it miles and fathoms away, often, at odd moments"
(106-08). In this respect, the act is eternal; and perhaps this is the strongest contrast to the view expressed in "To His Coy Mistress," where the argument for immediate sex is that nothing in our lives is eternal.

In contrast to "A Fine, a Private Place," there is no imagery of a living memory in "To His Coy Mistress." The only condition close to eternity is rather ugly: death. Marvell describes time as a "winged chariot" (22), whose swift passage lends a sense of urgency to life. Only in death do we experience eternity: as a "desert" (24) where "[his Mistress's] beauty shall no more be found" (25). He likens her body to a "marble vault" (26), thus evoking her coldness in a simile that associates it with death and with the theme of Momento Mori, a morbid argument to enjoy life "while it is still warm." In this eternity consisting of only the grave, her "Coyness" (2) will do her no good. This imagery is not something a woman would probably find pleasing. As Rosalie L. Colie observes, "There is no shred of flower imagery in this poem. Rosebuds are not gathered; the lady does not put on her foliage, is never seen in a prospect of flowers—rather, surreally, she stands against a background of desert sand stretching to infinity" (304). The persona woos his mistress with a skull in hand, and a warning that without her submission to him, only "worms shall try / That long preserved virginity" (Marvell 27-28). He evokes a phallic symbol of decay to try to brutally convey to her that she will "lose it" sooner or later, even if she must wait until she is no longer alive. He likens her body as well as the grave to "a fine, a private place" (31) that will be breached, eventually. Alluding to death one last time in the final stanza, he states, "Though we cannot make our sun / Stand still, yet we will make him run" (45-46). He wants to reiterate that precisely because death is imminent, they should "have fun while life lasts," or more plainly stated, Carpe Diem. The imminence of death is what makes sex so passionate and paradoxically so enjoyable.

Perhaps one difference that is more subtle than life/death or love/lust contrasts in the poems is the state of the relationship. One poem describes what the persona wants to transpire—expectation; the other describes what does transpire—fulfillment. The persona in "To His Coy Mistress" can be likened to a squirrel feverishly trying to gather and stash all his acorns before the winter comes. His tone is frustrated; he spends stanza after stanza trying to convince this woman to sleep with him. He is so afraid that death is going to catch him before he has "his moment"; he reiterates this quite well by saying, "But at my back I always hear / Time’s winged chariot hurrying near" (Marvell 21-22). He seems irritated that his desire has not yet been satisfied.
On the other hand, in "A Fine, a Private Place" the persona has the luxury of knowing that her fantasy has already been fulfilled; there is no hint of anticipation at the end of this poem, only contentment. After the act is finished she says, "He led [her] to safety ... back towards the boat's even keel" (Ackerman, "Fine" 80,83). Although the woman is returning to reality and leaving dreamland, the latter part of the line suggests that she is very pleased with the outcome. This highly feminine tone is gentle and serene, even more so than in the beginning of the poem. Again, the statement, "She thought of it miles away" (106), comes to mind and tells us that the sacred act that occurred under the surface of the sea is alive in her mind and heart. She ends her thought by "sinking her teeth into the cleft of a voluptuous peach" (113-15). A symbol of sexuality, the peach reminds us of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," where the persona, J. Alfred Prufrock, is afraid to ask a woman out. By the time we reach the end of his tale we discover that his confidence is so shattered that he is even afraid to "eat a peach" (Eliot, "Love Song" 122). The persona in "A Fine, a Private Place" does not have this dilemma at all. She has no problem eating peaches: she is enjoying her life and truly is living. This is a stark contrast to the persona in "To His Coy Mistress," who feels that life is a finite existence to be endured between brief moments of pleasure, thus explaining why he is so eager to reach those fleeting moments. Instead of having an encounter that lingers in the memory and has the power to remake their world, this view, as Colie also states, "promises nothing beyond that day except the night of endless sleep to which all mortals must go down" (304). If this is truly the mindset of the persona, then it is no surprise that he wants to get all he can out of life before it ends. After reading "To His Coy Mistress" and "A Fine, a Private Place," we can see that the characters in the two poems are in very different stages of a relationship. One has uncharted waters ahead of him that he longs to sail while the other knows that she has accomplished her goal and now can reflect on it; this view may explain her relaxed, calm, and content demeanor.

Clearly, the poems are at polar extremes in their depiction of sex, and since one is a female's response to the portrayal of male love in the other, they offer compelling testimony as to how the two genders can view the sexual act so differently. One conveys that it is merely a vehicle to pleasure and must be exercised "before the music stops." This stereotypical male feels that once it is over it is truly over and that he is obliged to enjoy it while it lasts. He gives no hints that sex means anything more to him than a few seconds of utopia. This age-old stereotype of the male point of view is one that women usually find appalling but which is ancient and intrinsic to the human species. Even
Ackerman herself states, “An ironic footnote is that, as men become the New-Age sensitive guys women want, some women are less able to find them attractive because they strike too many feminine chords. I find this amusing because it reminds me that we’re dealing with ancient hungers, ancient drives, and trying to adapt them to a society for which they weren’t designed” (Ackerman, *Natural History* 28). Apparently she understands the position of the persona in “To His Coy Mistress” even if she might find it somewhat distasteful. Even so, in “A Fine, a Private Place” she presents an alternative view: a female character who may desire a New Age man. The poem incorporates both male and female perspectives of sexual desire and fulfillment, and in this way it achieves balance that “To His Coy Mistress” does not even attempt. This balance is obtained by equal emphasis being placed on the physical aspect as well as the emotional. “To His Coy Mistress” focuses only on the physical and thus is limited to just the male perspective. “In A Fine, a Private Place” the character conveys a very practical female perspective: that sex is a part of something greater, and in an odd way, permanent. It is something larger than ourselves, intangible, and very enjoyable. She knows that when it is real she can carry it with her forever and that it will never die. We may live with a constant reminder of death, but when we seize the day, we also enshrine it in a land of eternity: memory.
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In the Greek play *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles, the titular character had to suffer much pain because of his reliance on his own intelligence. As Friedrich Nietzsche once noted, “Sophocles understood the most sorrowful figure of the Greek stage, the unfortunate Oedipus, as the noble human being who, in spite of his wisdom, is destined to error and misery” (417). He killed his father, married his mother, brought a plague on Thebes, and fathered children who were his own siblings. His own hand delivered both the physical and emotional pain Oedipus suffered. After realizing this fact, Oedipus changes from a man of arrogant, demanding, self-centered intelligence into a humble, compassionate man of wisdom. The metamorphosis from intelligence to wisdom allows healing and salvation for Thebes and Oedipus the man.

In *Sophocles: A Study of Heroic Humanism*, Cedric H. Whitman notes, “Greek popular wisdom had it that if a man were careful and prudent, he would avoid trouble. Of all men, Oedipus should have succeeded, but of all men he particularly did not” (122). Although he possesses all the tools necessary, Oedipus is unable to escape trouble due to severe character flaws. He begins the play with a perfect example of his arrogance, one of his many problem areas, by saying, “Here I am myself—you all know me, the world knows my fame: I am Oedipus” (Sophocles 7-9). William Nickerson Bates observes in *Sophocles: Poet and Dramatist* that having solved the Sphinx’s riddle, Oedipus “[shows] that he [has] ability beyond that of other men, and now he is besought to use his powers to relieve his people” (41). Oedipus believes nothing is beyond his comprehension or intellectual power: “You pray to the gods? Let me grant your prayers” (Sophocles 245). Both of these events show that Oedipus believes his intellect made him who he is and that it will not fail him. His quick temper is another of Oedipus’ difficulties as a leader and a man. When two different men, Tiresias and the shepherd, try to keep Oedipus from learning the truth about his lineage, his response is explosive. He uses a fiercely intense verbal attack on Tiresias,
demanding, “You won’t talk? Nothing moves you? Out with it, once and for all!” (382-83). The most telling event of his acrimonious demeanor is the irate cross-examination of the old shepherd. Oedipus shows his willingness to torture the man by commanding the soldiers to “twist his arms back, quickly!” (1268). Both of these men attempt to hold back information only to protect Oedipus, but because of his arrogance and lack of emotional control Oedipus goads them into revealing what they know.

The irony of the juxtaposition of the blind Tiresias, who knows the truth, and the sighted Oedipus, who either cannot or will not see what is happening, is shown when Tiresias attempts to spare Oedipus from the truth. The confrontation intensifies when Oedipus insults Tiresias for being blind and accuses him of being a party to the murder. Tiresias responds by telling Oedipus that the murderer is none other than Oedipus himself: “You are the curse, the corruption of the land” (401). In his refusal to believe Tiresias, Oedipus invents his own version of the truth—Tiresias and Creon are conspiring against him—and turns on Tiresias. With the city enduring a curse of the plague, cattle dying, crops failing, and women dying in labor or their babies being stillborn, the people’s desperation set the perfect stage for a coup d’etat. Whitman writes, “Oedipus, as is characteristic of him, puts two and two together very quickly, and wants to know immediately whether Creon or he, Tiresias, thought up this plan” (131). Whitman argues that Oedipus’ harsh reaction to Creon and Tiresias is merely the prudent reaction of his intellectual mind. Yet, it gets him nowhere. Furthermore, this reasoning does not intellectually explain or excuse his treatment of the shepherd. In fact, had he been more rational and less volatile in his encounter with Laius, this whole situation possibly could have been avoided. Pietro Pucci writes in Oedipus and the Fabrication of the Father:

There is nothing but enthusiasm in [Oedipus’s] voice as he cries: “I will kill them all.” Oedipus, morally unconstrained, responds to violence with double violence, and boasts of his prowess, insisting on the quickness of action and the power of his hands. But no glory or song follows his deed. He never cared to know who this man might be. On the contrary, he has buried this violent encounter in his memory (116-17).

Although the reader is privy to Oedipus’s faults, the city sees him as beyond reproach, clothed in royalty as the best of men. In reality he is still a flawed imperfect man, as symbolized by his limp and evidenced by the character imperfections he exhibits throughout the play. These imperfections are overshadowed, however, when Oedipus learns his identity through a painful self-revelation. Oedipus knows the prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother. He tried to avoid it by leaving Corinth, but that very action triggered the
fulfillment of the prophecy. Although Oedipus is uncertain of his Corinthian or Theban citizenship, Whitman attests, “It is not the confusion of Oedipus which leads him to the terrible secret, but his clarity” (140). After learning from the shepherd the truth about who he is and what he has done, Oedipus realizes that he does not have the power to control everything or solve every problem with his intelligence. According to William Nickerson Bates, “Oedipus had accomplished great feats and won great renown and now he has encountered utter ruin. The intellect that had brought Oedipus such fame had led to his downfall. It was he who saved them in their direst need, and now he has brought upon them great sadness” (54). The gods may have fate for him, but he ultimately controls his direction by deciding how to react to that fate. When he sees the truth, Oedipus feels he stands “revealed at last—cursed by birth, cursed in marriage, cursed in the lives I cut down with these hands!” (1309-11). He quickly lets everyone know that it was his decision to take his eyesight: “But the hand that struck my eyes was mine, mine alone—no one else—I did it to myself!” (1470-72). Whitman declares that “There is no divine interference in the play; ‘Apollo knows the future, but does not create it’” (72). He also writes, “The action of the play itself, therefore, is motivated by the free will of the hero, which culminates in the act of self­blinding” (141). Alister Cameron echoes these sentiments in The Identity of Oedipus the King:

In any event, it means some removal of the gods from the world, and therefore some denial of them as active personalities. That is the state of affairs between god and man implied, it seems to me, in another statement about the play, to the effect that here Apollo simply predicts, and that thereafter Oedipus’s fate is entirely in his own hands. (78-79)

The mental pain of not “seeing” the truth prompts Oedipus to inflict physical pain on himself. He tears Jocasta’s broaches off her robes and gouges his eyes out, declaring that he will “see no more the pain [he] suffered, all the pain [he] caused!” (Sophocles 1406-07). This painful experience is a step toward developing true wisdom as the Greeks understood it. Wisdom requires more than cleverness or intelligence. Wisdom involves an understanding of oneself, one’s limitations, human nature, and the human dilemma; it is born of suffering. Oedipus has gone through all these steps in a very short time. His reaction is the first real sign of heroism in the play. Instead of giving up or passing the blame, he takes responsibility and changes into a man of wisdom.

Oedipus shows his change in character by exhibiting new traits of humility and patience. He refuses to seek Creon’s assistance in his request for exile or death, for he sees that he has “wronged [Creon] in every way” (Sophocles 1556). He is, in his words, “wrong, so wrong” (1557). This statement reveals a tremendous change from earlier in the play when Oedipus refuses to acknowledge
he may be wrong. Creon then asks, “What if you’re wholly wrong?” (703), but Oedipus only replies, “No matter—I must rule” (704). He also develops patience, which is tested when Creon mockingly states, “I assume, even you will obey the gods’ decrees” (1582). Instead of getting angry, Oedipus simply replies that he will obey. The earlier Oedipus would have been upset by the remark, but this new understanding allows Oedipus to respond instead of react to the verbal jab.

In spite of the change in Oedipus, those who once saw greatness now see grief. Early in the play, the priest calls Oedipus “[the] king of the land, our greatest power!” (Sophocles 16), and after Oedipus’s revelation and Jocasta’s suicide, the messenger states, “All the griefs in the world that you can name, all are theirs forever” (1421-22). The Chorus, which once looked on with pity, now, recalling Oedipus’s glory, ponder: “Who could behold his greatness without envy?” (1682), but after losing his sight the messenger warns, “You are about to see a sight, a horror even his mortal enemy would pity” (1432-33). The irony of the play is presented in the difference between Oedipus and Creon at the end. Oedipus, once blind to intangibles like truth, empathy and compassion, now is blind to the physical world. In losing his sight, Oedipus has gained self-knowledge, saved himself, and rescued the city of Thebes from danger for a second time. Yet the people see him as falling from greatness to misery: “count no man happy till he dies, free of pain at last” (1685). Similarly, Creon has now gone from third in command to leader and has not only taken the throne, but some of Oedipus’s former faults. When Oedipus is speaking with the Chorus about his decision to take his eyesight, Creon interrupts so he can get Oedipus into the palace: “This is obscene” (1567). Creon also shows his arrogance as the daughters are taken from Oedipus: “Still the king, master of all things? No more: here your power ends. None of your power follows you through life” (1676-78). Creon is reacting as a man, judging by appearance rather than substance, looking now at Oedipus as Oedipus once looked at Tiresias, unable to see the truth. During Oedipus’s transformation, his physical being loses the glory and beauty of royalty; however, along with self-knowledge, he has gained patience, empathy, and humility. Oedipus is now much more than he appears to be: he is a man who has learned wisdom through his eye-opening encounter with the truth.

Oedipus the King shows that people are capable of making free will choices that influence the course of their lives. The gods may have fate laid out for a person, but the direction he or she takes is up to the individual. Whitman supports this view by stating, “The Olympians have not willed [Oedipus’s] fall; they have foretold it” (141). After discovering his identity, Oedipus chooses wisely to accept the responsibility of his actions: his newfound wisdom saves Thebes and himself. Through the struggle for truth, Oedipus discovers the beginning of wisdom, which as the Greeks would say, is to “Know thyself.”
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There have always been characters that have stood out among others for the different qualities that made them appear almost god-like in many ways. These people have come to be known as epic heroes. An example of this type of character is Odysseus from Homer’s *The Odyssey*. On the other hand, characters who lack these qualities have been awarded the title of anti-hero. An example of an anti-hero is J. Alfred Prufrock from T.S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” illustrates how modern man has developed from an epic hero like Odysseus, to an anti-hero such as J. Alfred Prufrock.

As described in *The Odyssey*, the world of the epic hero of old was astoundingly wondrous in comparison to the environment of today’s common man found in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” Men were explorers, journeying to the uttermost extremities of the world to find treasure, unknown lands and people, and adventure. Ship building was a necessity for the men to carry out these tasks, and so it was no surprise that Odysseus, when given a “brazen axe head” (243), “adze” (246), and a forest of “pine . . . alder, [and] poplar” (248), was able to construct a ship like a “master shipwright” (248). His ship completed, Odysseus sailed to islands of rich bounty inhabited by kings and queens, lands whose only occupants were dreadful monsters like the Cyclopes. On his passage home, Odysseus enjoyed numerous adventures.

In stark contrast is the world represented in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” In a city put together of “one-night cheap hotels” (6), “half-deserted streets” (4), “muttering retreats” (5), and “streets that follow like a tedious argument of insidious intent” (8), adventure, excitement, and heroism need not be found. In fact, the world of J. Alfred Prufrock is summed up as being quite dead, like “a patient etherized upon a table” (3). As illustrated in the first ten lines of Eliot’s poem, the environment of J. Alfred Prufrock is a far cry from the world of Odysseus and the epic hero in days gone by.
Another important aspect of the epic hero was his persistence. A man on a journey in the days of ancient Greece had to maintain his mental focus on the prize of his labor, as did Odysseus in the story by Homer. The goal of Odysseus was to once again embrace his wife, son, and the familiar sights of his homeland, Ithaca. To this hope he stayed true, in spite of the various obstacles that he faced in the process. Apparently, the anti-hero of today’s common man has also lost this invaluable trait, as evidenced by Prufrock. In contrast to the persistence of Odysseus, J. Alfred Prufrock lets fear, doubt, and indecision take the place of persistence and rob him of what he so badly wants. As opposed to Odysseus’s goal of reaching home again by traveling treacherous seas and meeting formidable obstacles, Prufrock’s goal is simply to ask an admired woman out on a date, an act that he ironically compares to “disturbing the universe” (46). Instead of merely asking the woman a simple question, Prufrock goes around inside his head in circles of mindless garble; he thinks to himself, “Do I dare?” (38), and “In a minute there is time / For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse” (47-48). In addition to his hesitancy, Prufrock is a very passive man. Eliot does a beautiful job of symbolically representing Prufrock as a street cat with a back covered in “soot” (19), drinking from “pools that stand in drains” (18), and “seeing that it was a soft October night, / Curl[ing] once about the house, and [falling] asleep” (21-22). Such images emphasize Prufrock’s sexual passivity with their references to napping. Fear also plays a key role in keeping Prufrock from being persistent in attaining the prize he desires, because he thinks the women simply view him as an insect “pinned and wriggling on the wall” (58) instead of an actual human being. In line 86, Prufrock actually says he “was afraid” of women. Prufrock obviously lacks the persistence befitting an epic hero and ends up giving in to fear; he never actually asks the woman out, hence failing in his “quest.”

Obviously, an epic hero had to have an enormous amount of self-confidence. When thrown into the heat of battle on the front lines of the army, or fighting a monster one hundred times his size, the epic hero did not have time to worry if his toga made his hips look fat, or if his sandals were out of style. The only thing that mattered to him was winning the battle and spilling as much of his enemy’s blood as possible. When Odysseus found himself in a challenging situation, he always dealt with it heroically. One such instance was when Odysseus became shipwrecked and awoke to find himself completely naked on a strange island, with the sounds of frolicking young women in the background. Odysseus did not hide behind a bush and weave a cloak of fig leaves, as did Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Instead, he simply grabbed an olive leaf to cover himself up and walked toward the people he heard.
By contrast, J. Alfred Prufrock was concerned with even the most minuscule details of his physical appearance when he faced challenges. Prufrock had “a bald spot in the middle of [his] hair” (40), and he was afraid that the ladies would comment, “How his hair is growing thin!” (44). Obviously, the thing he feared the most was ridicule of his physical appearance. Later in the poem, after Prufrock has been defeated in the battle to win the woman, we see that he is still concerned with his physical appearance, and still obsessed with conforming to the current trends in fashion; Prufrock states, “I grow old . . . I grow old . . . / I shall wear the bottom of my trousers rolled” (120-21). He worries, “Shall I part my hair behind?” and plans to “wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach” (122-23). In comparison to Odysseus, who we see has a more than adequate supply of self-confidence, Prufrock has no self-esteem. Hence Prufrock is defeated by fear of others’ impressions of his physical appearance, while Odysseus’s self-confidence enables him to conquer obstacles without fear of others’ impressions.

After reading The Odyssey by Homer and “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T.S. Eliot, we can clearly see two very different characters: Odysseus and J. Alfred Prufrock. Odysseus lives in a land of adventure, amazement, wonder, and excitement. Persistent and dedicated to finishing his quests and winning his battles, he exudes an aura of self-confidence to everyone, and personifies all aspects of the epic hero of old. In contrast, Prufrock lives in a dead world, void of adventure and excitement. A passive gentleman who gives in to his fears and doubts instead of being persistent to the end, he has no self-confidence; in short, J. Alfred Prufrock personifies everything that makes up an anti-hero. In “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” T.S. Eliot illustrates how modern man has devolved. We can no longer produce epic heroes like Odysseus; we have become a race of anti-heroes like J. Alfred Prufrock.
Renowned for her novels of social satire, irony, and comic romance, Jane Austen altered English literature with her depictions of unconventional women in a predominantly masculine era. Yet, in all work previous to *Persuasion*, the young heroines are defined and made vitally fresh through Jane Austen’s bright irony. The third dimension of all Austen’s characters was based in her irony, or nothing at all (Mudrick 181). However, among the likes of discerning Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price, the heroine of Jane Austen’s final novel, *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot, ascends to an unprecedented level of emotional depth. A woman of many years in age compared to her young predecessors, Anne exists three dimensionally without the benefit of Austen’s witty irony, as Anne proves to be the most mature and emotionally electric of Austen’s heroines.

Anne Elliot is merely mentioned in the first chapter of *Persuasion*, her presence nominal, and it is several more chapters before she emerges into vibrant life within the pages. Instead, Austen paints for the reader a picture of Anne’s family, and the undernourishing world she inhabits (Wiltshire 76). Sir Walter and Elizabeth Elliot exist entirely, and quite happily, in “a world of pure ceremony, of form without content” (Lauber 100). Both are pictured as so tremendously self-absorbed that the existence of other people, aside from themselves and those of higher social rank, ceases to be relevant. Austen pictures Sir Walter as definitively vain, so much so that he becomes almost the living, breathing personification of the word, and Elizabeth revels in a near caricature of aristocratic snobbery. Austen makes quite clear the idea that Sir Walter and Elizabeth view the two younger Elliot girls as extremely inferior. Mary had obtained some meager amount of importance, as she had married rather well for her stature, but Anne, who, “with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must’ve placed her high with any people of real understanding, was nobody with either father or sister: her word had no weight; her convenience was to give way” (7). Anne, unlike father or sisters, “operates on a plane of pure feeling, and deep true emotion, where all things run deeper than skin or silk” (Lauber 100).
Anne’s personality is quickly compared to that of her dead mother’s, the late Lady Elliot, whom Austen described as “an excellent woman, sensible and amiable” (6). In her life, Lady Elliot maintained equilibrium in Kellynch Hall, balancing out Sir Walter’s excesses with good sense and tempered grace. To be sure, Lady Russell, Lady Elliot’s long time family confidant and Anne’s godmother, favors Anne for her tender warmth and alluring sweet nature that is so reminiscent of her dead mother (7). Anne shoulders excessive abuse and cold disregard from her father and sister, yet Austen does not picture her as resentful or even jaded by her family’s emotional sterility. She accepts her father and sister for what they are, expressing no grudge or ill will against them (Pinion 127).

When the matter of the family’s increasing debt is introduced, Austen reinforces the idea of Sir Walter’s pride and inane sense of superiority. He refuses all plans with any economic restrictions, including a plan Anne advises that would have cleared the Elliots of debt within a matter of a few years. Sir Walter’s self-image would bear no such insult, and he opts, instead, to lease out the family estate, Kellynch Hall, and relocate the family to a cheaper abode in Bath. For all of Anne’s compassion and good sense, her weakness of will is demonstrated here. She abhors the arrangement of moving to Bath, yet she complies with her father’s wishes without even an inward thought of rebellion. She considers it only right and much simpler for everyone if she submits without regard for her own wants. In instances such as these Anne seems, to the reader, to be an acquiescent ghost of a woman.

With the leasing of Kellynch Hall to Admiral Croft and his wife, Sophia, Austen introduces the defining persona of Anne Elliot’s life. Upon the Crofts’ introduction, it is revealed that before her marriage Sophia Croft was actually Sophia Wentworth, the sister of Captain Fredrick Wentworth, the one and only lover of Anne’s life. As the story goes, Anne, at nineteen, met a dashing young Wentworth, who was a promising, but still un-wealthy navy man: “Half the sum of attraction, on either side, might have been enough, for he had nothing to do, and she had hardly anybody to love” (27). The depth of their love inspired them both to the idea of marriage; however, both Anne’s father and Lady Russell advised against the engagement. Sir Walter was actually insulted by Wentworth’s inferior social rank and lack of fortune, while Lady Russell saw the lack of wealth as a cross Anne would come to suffer under. Lady Russell assured Anne that the insecurity of Wentworth’s position was a terrible risk, and her lack of dowry would bring him to resent her when money became scarce:

[Anne] was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing—indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success and not deserving it . . . had she not imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own, she could have hardly given him up. The belief of being prudent,
and self-denying principally for his advantage, was her chief consolation, under the misery of parting. (Austen 29)

Anne’s conclusion of her engagement to Wentworth was born of the pressure of other’s opinions and desires; however, Anne also acted with Wentworth’s happiness in mind. Being truly convinced that she would become an unlovable burden to him, she saw no other way to avert that disaster than letting him go. This choice is one of the crucial actions of Anne’s life, as she is essentially betraying and turning away her true love due to the words of others. After Wentworth’s painful exit from her life, Anne felt the weightiness of her choice in crushing totality. Those regrets and her unfading love clouded her youth, causing her beauty and spirits to wither as long-lasting consequence. Now, at twenty-seven, Anne understands her foolishness better than she had at nineteen. She does not blame Lady Russell for her influence, but she now fully believes that it is more fitting and proper to follow one’s own heart and pursue love rather than forfeit it in the name of economics or popular opinion. She turns away one suitor, and encourages no other after Wentworth, almost as if she were in mourning for him, and her regret is never ending: “She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel to an unnatural beginning” (31). It is here Anne’s distinction among Austen’s heroines is first apparent in the novel. Anne’s regret is retrospective; she looks back on it over a period of eight years, pondering it and analyzing the lessons learned. She is given time enough by Austen to actually become jaded and scarred by love, rather than simply pricked or blindsided.

Upon Wentworth’s re-entry into her life, Anne’s sort of suspended existence ends, and the heart of the story is revealed. Anne’s devotion to Wentworth is the beating pulse of the novel; and Anne pursues it with yearning, unrelenting sensitivity. Her desires are like crystal in her first thought of him (Mudrick 183):

Anne . . . left the room, to seek the comfort of cool air for her flushed cheeks; and as she walked along a favorite grove, said, with a gentle sigh, “a few months more, and he, perhaps, may be walking here.” (Austen 26)

After the quitting of Kellynch Hall, Anne, rather than traveling to Bath with her father and sister, proceeds to her sister’s home in Uppercross. This action begins a sequence of events that releases Anne from the “physical and emotional stasis” in which she lived for eight years (Lauber 99). At Uppercross Cottage, Anne’s true spirit and much discussed sweetness first shine through. In comparison to the cold ceremony of Kellynch, Uppercross Cottage appears to be a pulsating hive of earthy emotion. The Musgroves are a family of rising country gentry, and their world is one of good-hearted, but not overly sensitive or refined comfort and warmth, a world where Anne is greatly valued, if not appreciated
Immediately, Anne falls into the role of mediator and respected good authority by all the adults at Uppercross, who make her appear to be the only adult among many large, unruly children (100). She often hears the complaints and mediates the squabbles between everyone at Uppercross, affecting peace among the Musgroves. She proves to be the most capable and sensible of adults at Uppercross when her young nephew badly injures himself in a fall:

Anne had everything to do at once—the apothecary to send for—the father to have pursued and informed—the mother to support and keep from hysterics—the servants to control—the youngest child to banish and the poor, suffering one to attend and soothe. (Austen 54)

After this, it falls to Anne to care for the child, as Mary is impatient and lacking in maternal interest in him. Anne, however, takes great pleasure in attending to her injured nephew (Churchyard).

At Uppercross, Anne finds she is allowed to indulge her personal interests without censure or rebuke. She plays piano each evening, while the others talk and sing:

She knew that when she played she was giving pleasure only to herself; but this was no new sensation: excepting one short period of her life, she had never, since the age of fourteen, since the loss of her dear mother, known the happiness of being listened to, or encouraged by any just appreciation or real taste. (Austen 47)

Thoughts of this nature illustrate Anne’s level of consciousness. She recognizes her solitariness of life by recalling her mother’s death and alluding vaguely to the loss of Wentworth. The second loss seems to inscribe the pain of the first even more deeply, infusing it with still more pain, and more longing (Wiltshire 77).

Anne’s present existence has “painful underpinnings to the past; appreciation of her playing at the Musgroves.” These bring “recollections of her mother’s unbiased, sweet love, and Wentworth’s amazing affection. Yet, those struck chords of emotional loss are not dwelt upon long by Anne, as with any actual, sensitive person; the thoughts are merely single instruments in a massive, rich orchestra of feelings. It is the simple existence of the subtext to her thought and emotions that give meaning to the reflection” (77).

In the same time frame in which Anne’s nephew is injured, Captain Wentworth himself strides boldly back into her life. Wentworth becomes the divining rod of Anne’s life. His re-entrance awakens in her new and old emotions, and causes her to reorganize her heart. At first, however, she avoids his presence completely, uneasy at seeing him again after so long and with so much bad air between them. She uses her injured nephew as an excuse to avoid visiting Wentworth when he calls on old Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove. Anne wonders whether
he would wish to see her at all, and after her sister and brother-in-law return from meeting Wentworth, Anne feels he wishes to avoid her altogether:

Anne understood it. He wished to avoid seeing her. He had enquired after her, she found, slightly, as might suit a former slight acquaintance, seeming to acknowledge such as she had acknowledged, actuated, perhaps, by the same view of escaping introduction when they were to meet. (Austen 60)

When Wentworth finally does come into contact with Anne, she finds herself struggling against the requirement to be “rational” or “sensible.” But she finds herself succumbing more to nervous agitation and unaccountable excitement: “She resolved to be feeling less . . . Alas! With all her reasonings, she found, that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing” (61). Thus, Anne Elliot is a much more “physiological-moral” persona than Austen had ever created before, as all her reasonings are countered by overwhelmingly uncontrollable physical reactions; blushes and chills she is powerless against, even in her desire to be staid in their wake (Wiltshire 77). However, of course, Wentworth appears to feel quite differently, as he comments on how unfavorably changed Anne is. Anne grapples with this knowledge gallantly, but it strikes her hard that he thinks so ill of her. Wentworth tells his sister that he means to marry soon, and that “‘anybody between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking. A little beauty, and a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy, and I am a lost man . . . a strong mind, with sweetness of manner,’ made the first and the last of the description.” (Austen 62-63). This resolution brings about a growing affection between Wentworth and Louisa Musgrove, which Anne observes with wrenching pain. Anne is assured time and again that Wentworth will soon wed Louisa, even overhearing a conversation between the two supposed lovers in which Wentworth describes to Louisa the evils of being easily persuaded: “It is the worst evil of too yielding and indecisive character, that no influence over it can be depended on . . . let those who would be happy be firm” (Austen 88). Anne takes this conversation as a personal allusion and rebuke against herself, and she is sure Wentworth has forgotten her.

With the party’s decision to travel to Lyme to visit the Harvilles comes the most vital point in the novel and Anne’s situation. By the time Anne arrives in Lyme, she has already begun a reanimation of sorts. With Wentworth’s reentry, she has been made to face old and new demons, such as pain, regret, desire and jealousy, thus growing stronger, and more emotionally expressive again. While in Lyme, Anne finds herself suddenly attractive to a number of men she is a relative stranger to. She takes interest in the bereaved Captain Benwick, in consoling and conversing with him and relieving “feelings glad to burst their usual
restraints” (Austen 100). The following morning, the greatest lift to Anne’s spirits occurs, when a complete stranger admires her silently on the street:

Anne’s face caught his eyes, and he looked at her with a degree of earnest admiration, which she could not be insensible of... it was evident that the gentleman admired her exceedingly. Captain Wentworth looked round at her instantly in a way which showed his noticing of it. He gave her a momentary glance—a glance of brightness, which seemed to say, “that man is struck with you--and even I, at this moment, see something of Anne Elliot again.” (104)

Of course, the said stranger turns out to be none other than the Elliot heir apparent, William Walter Elliot. However, the point of the matter is the simple exchange between Anne and Wentworth, the surprise and no small amount of envy on Wentworth’s part as he recognizes that Anne is at least as lovely as she ever was. For Anne, such attentions come as a boost in energy, making her socially and emotionally more robust. Slowly, Austen is peeling away Anne’s protective shields that have developed over the years to reveal the new woman underneath.

With Louisa’s accident on the Cobb, the world truly changes for Anne. The accident is strangely similar to the fall Anne’s nephew takes earlier in the novel; only it is on a grander, more urgent scale, and now there are appreciating eyes that take notice of her deeds (Wiltshire 80). The moment Louisa hits the ground hysterics on all levels set in, and the one sensible voice in the crowd is Anne:

“Is there no one to help me?” were the first words that burst from Captain Wentworth, in a tone of despair, as if all his own strength were gone... Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied, to Henrietta, still tried, at intervals, to suggest comfort to the others, tried to quiet Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. Both seemed to look at her for directions. “Anne, Anne,” cried Charles, “what is to be done next?” Captain Wentworth’s eyes were also turned toward her. (Austen 110)

As tragic as this disaster is, it establishes Anne as substantial and reliable, more so than Wentworth had given her credit for. It seems his views of her strength have changed entirely when Anne next hears her name spoken by him. Upon trying to decide who ought to remain in Lyme and nurse Louisa, Wentworth blurts out, “If Anne will stay, no one so proper, so capable as Anne!” (114). His warmth overwhelms her, and she concedes to his desires without question, as much from personal preference as from want to please him. She stands in a new light for Wentworth, and even though she does not stay with Louisa, at Mary’s insistence, her fortitude has been established, as has the newness to a physicality
that she had not possessed before. The end of volume one constitutes a turning point in Anne and Wentworth’s relationship, as well as a turning point for Anne’s personality.

The second volume of the novel, set in Bath, is the conclusion of Anne’s journey. She is no longer as submissive to her family, and she expresses her distaste for their snobbery openly when she chooses Mrs. Smith’s company over Lady Dalrymple’s. She begins stating her opinions to those who would care, and morphing into a vibrant extrovert compared to the shadow she had been (Wiltshire 80). Austen occupies Anne’s life, from this point on, with the attentions of Mr. Elliot and seeming jealousies of Captain Wentworth. Mr. Elliot’s pursual of her strikes within Anne no small amount of suspicion, as she is wary of his sudden reappearance in her family’s life. But it is not until Mrs. Smith reveals Mr. Elliot’s true nature that Anne dispenses with all interest in him, and the true conclusion to the novel begins.

The scene at the White Hart Inn is the culmination of all Anne has achieved. There she displays all her inherent abilities of self-possession, self-assurance and grace, all her newfound confidence in her own voice and convictions. She begins a discussion with Captain Harville about the differences in the quality of love between men and women, the depth of constancy between the two. Captain Wentworth sits within earshot, although the reader forgets this detail in the midst of the conversation. Anne suddenly expresses a voice and a passion that she did not seem to possess previously, and when Captain Harville attempts to convince Anne that men are more constant and heartfelt in their love, she releases upon him a tidal wave of ardent words that releases all the emotions and energies she has kept reined in throughout the novel (Wiltshire 88). She tells him, “We [women] certainly do not forget you, so soon as you forget us. It is our fate, perhaps rather than our merit” (Austen 228). This conversation grows in enthusiasm, and soon it is clear that Captain Wentworth has heard a great deal of the conversation, yet Anne continues, revealing where both her beliefs and her faithful love stands. She says:

“I believe you equal to every important exertion, and to every domestic forbearance, so long as—if I may be allowed the expression, so long as you have an object. I mean while the woman lives, and lives for you. All the privilege I claim for my own sex . . . it is that of loving longest, when existence or hope is gone” (231).

These words inspire Captain Wentworth to put his rage and resentment aside, and to give in to the love that he still harbors for her. Thus occurs one of the most romantic conclusions to a novel ever written.

This scene revels in its emotional significance, and it is unique in Jane Austen’s work; in none of her other novels does the reader perceive such a level
of genuine personal growth and maturity in a character. Anne’s perfection is that she exists and succeeds amidst the turmoil of her own intense emotions, and she does all this as a woman who has no doubt as to what her desires are, and what the price of reaching for or denying those desires is (Wiltshire 83).

Jane Austen created in Anne Elliot a genuine heroine whose maturity and love reached far deeper depths than any of Austen’s heroines had before. Anne is unlike Elizabeth Bennet and Emma, who did not grow, except in our aggregating perception of them, bit by bit, through the perspective of the author’s irony; unlike Fanny Price and Elinor, who had not even this ironically stimulated growth—Anne has grown altogether and truly, out of the constrictions of her group, out of her timidity, out of the defiant need for wit and self-assertion, out of the author’s tight, ironic feminine world. (Mudrick 184)

Anne Elliot needs no irony to prove her strength of mind or soul to the world, as her ripeness of character and sensitivity of feeling set her apart with great effect.
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The Tragedy of “True Love”  
Tracy Wade

There are many different types of love and certainly several different ways for two people to be “in love.” In Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, love is definitely complex and represents itself in several different forms. Upon reading Henry Alonzo Myers’s critique of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* titled “Tragedy and Comedy,” I am compelled to agree with his thoughts about the levels of love shown between the characters of the play. He cleverly states in his work that love is represented on three levels: “the level of common sense, the level of nonsense, and the level of fantasy” (106). Common sense is clearly represented by the love and marriage of Hippolyta and Theseus. The nonsense level is represented by the young Athenians--Helena, Hermia, Lysander, and Demetrius--as well as the story of Pyramus and Thisbe presented by the workmen. Oberon and Titania bring to the play a love of fantasy and fairy tales. Each of these relationships is viewed as love; each has its own “true love” story, and therefore, each leads (supposedly) to a happy ending for all the couples involved. My question after reading the play and the critique is this: what defines “true” love and how do you know when you are in it?

The union of Hippolyta and Theseus is one of common sense love. He bravely fought for her hand in marriage, and she reluctantly gave it. It makes sense for these two members of royalty to be united by marriage. He is the Duke of Athens, and she is a defeated Amazon Queen. We are all familiar with the saying, “All’s fair in love and war.” Theseus vows to love Hippolyta: “Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword, / And won thy love doing thee injuries; / But I will wed thee in another key, / With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling (1.1.16-20). Clearly, he plans to respect and honor her throughout their marriage. Theseus does love Hippolyta, and she may grow to love him. However, it is unclear whether she does or not by the play’s end. A marriage of true love cannot be made out of the common sense type of love; such a union makes for a marriage of contempt. Although the couple may seem happy on the outside, she will more than likely resent Theseus for taking her away from her country and her birth
The idea of the common sense love marriage is as old as time, and time has proven over and over again that this type of love is not true love but a tragedy.

Time has also shown that nonsense love is a love that tragedies are made of. The love of Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius, and Pyramus and Thisbe are three very different examples of nonsense love. Hermia and Lysander are in love and desire to be wed, but Helena catches Lysander’s eye, and therefore also his heart during the play. The nonsense in this relationship is tragic for several reasons. The primary reason is that Lysander is mistakenly given a dose from Cupid’s flower to fall in love with Helena. Second, when he does fall for Helena, it almost destroys the life-long friendship of Helena and Hermia. The relationship between Helena and Demetrius is also nonsense because Helena makes a fool of herself to show him her love. The desperate woman pleads to Demetrius:

I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius, / The more you beat me, I will fawn on you. / Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me, Neglect me, lose me, only give me leave, / Unworthy as I am to follow you. (2.1.203-07)

This could not be love. How could a woman lose so much of herself to gain the affections of a man? It is tragic for all women that Helena does indeed follow Demetrius around like a dog begging for his affections. He could not respect her and adore her as “true” love should be. She does not respect herself enough to see that he does not love her as she deserves to be loved. Surely no love can be gained from this type of nonsense. Little love is also to be gained in the fictitious and laughable relationship of Pyramus and Thisbe; for both lovers, who are simply “stood up,” tragically die for each other in the end. A couple cannot be truly in love while dead at the same time. It is possible to die for true love, but in death one will not find true love.

So the answer to the question of what true love is, therefore, must lie in the level of love known as fantasy. A Midsummer Night’s Dream is full of fantasy, thanks to the King and Queen of the fairies, Oberon and Titania. Myers describes the fantasy love as “The imaginative level which softens the sharp distinctions between the world of sense and the world of nonsense” (110). The fantasy level helps us to see the absurdities in both the levels of common sense and nonsense love. Fantasy love is the love we all dream of having but very few, if any of us, experience without the help of magic juice from Cupid’s flower. The insight that the level of fantasy brings is one that reminds us that true love is just a dream that mortals can only hope will come true, which is the tragedy behind this type of love. Yet, on the other hand, because fantasy lies in the hearts of
every mortal, we can create our own fantasy love. As Theseus explains to Hippolyta:

More strange than true. I never may believe / These antique fables, nor these fairy toys. / Lover and madmen have such seething brains,

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend / More than cool reason ever comprehends. / The lunatic, the lover and the poet / Are of imagination all compact. (5.1.3-9)

He continues his explanation by stating:

And as imagination bodies forth / The forms of things unknown, the poets’ pen / Turns them into shapes, and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name. / Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That, if it would but apprehend some joy, / It comprehends some bringer of that joy; / Or in the night, imagining some fear,

How easy is a bush supposed a bear! (5.1.14-21)

Theseus illustrates how unpredictable the heart can be when it is filled with the imagination of what “true love” actually is. Love is formed by the imagination and the fantasy of the heart. The chance that two lovers with the same fantasy will find each other is remote, maybe even impossible, which is the tragedy behind this type of love.

Therefore, I am forced to conclude that “true” love does exist, but it must be found within one’s own heart. It cannot be created by the union of two royal subjects in common sense love. Love cannot be forced into existence by hungry, needy women/men. True love must bloom, like a flower, from the hearts of two people with the same idea of fantasy love. When a couple is united in fantasy love, all of their dreams can come true together. Only then can the couple truly live happily ever after.

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