CORPUS

The Liberal Arts College Journal
Volume 5 – Issue 1
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Société des Arts Libéraux | Liberal Arts Society
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In my beginning is my end. Now the light falls
Across the open field, leaving the deep lane
Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon,
Where you lean against a bank while a van passes,
And the deep lane insists on the direction
Into the village, in the electric heat
Hypnotised. In a warm haze the sultry light
Is absorbed, not refracted, by grey stone.
The dahlias sleep in the empty silence.
Wait for the early owl.

From "East Coker" by T. S. Eliot

Eliot composed "East Coker" as a way to start writing poetry again and, after four years of writer's block, he was proud of it. These lines convey uncertainty, but the voice of the poem is ultimately hopeful about the future.

Here is an image of a new dawn to follow the tumult of the last two years and the challenges it posed to academic and personal life. May this journal represent the various, powerful processes of creativity, learning, and self-compassion as we "get back into it."

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COVER PAGE
Sleeping Ariadne (one known as Cleopatra), 1704, engraved by Jean Baptiste de Poilly (1669 - 1728) and published by Domenico de Rossi (1647-1729).
The sculpture of the Sleeping Ariadne is a marble copy of a 2nd-century BCE Greek original from the school of Pergamon.

SECOND COVER PAGE
By Leone Carbone

BACK COVER
The Farnese Bull (Toro Farnese), 1704, engraved by Robert van Audenaert (1663 - 1743) and published by Domenico de Rossi (1647-1729).
The Farnese Bull may be a 3rd-century AD Roman adaptation of a Hellenistic sculpture by Appolinius of Tralles and Tauriskos of Tralles. Scholars are divided on its age.

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The Walk of Life: Holding Hands with Death

CHET SHIN

In my third year English class, our final assignment was to write a short essay about an experience that changed our life. One might think that it would be difficult to write about an impactful experience at the age of fifteen, and I remember that the other girls in my grade took a lot of time contemplating their topic. Unlike my peers, I had a clear idea of what I wanted to write about. One does not lose a father at nine years old and go on living without being subjected to a certain kind of change. So, in that paper I wrote about the day I learned that my father had passed away. I relayed, sentence by sentence, the consequential chain of events that would, in due course, lead my mother to take on the responsibilities of the bearer of bad news.

When I got my grade back for that paper, I saw a little comment left by my teacher on the top right corner of the first page, written in red: "You should consider writing a book about this… and how you recovered from it." I have always loved writing, and I suppose that my final paper showed some signs of this truth. So I began to undertake the task of writing a book about my recovery from my father's passing. I struggled to put the right words on the page because there was so much to say. I also lacked knowledge of the right terms and methodology to execute this project. My mind still needed the necessary tools to put the philosophies that had healed me onto paper.

When my father passed away, I failed to understand why bad things happened to good people. Did they happen for a reason? Did my father die because he was a bad person? As I remember these questions that I used to ask myself almost daily, I realise that they came from a place of anxiety. The sheer weight of things that I did

not know made me uncomfortable. That was until I started my classes at the Liberal Arts College, reading Marcus Aurelius in Political and Philosophical Foundations I. I found that a lot of the things Aurelius believed in were things that my mother told me—pieces of advice that she remembered receiving from my father. She would share these pieces of wisdom with me whenever I was having a hard time understanding my emotions or if we were talking about my father's death.

I had now found the necessary terms to express the ideas I had kept stored in the back of my mind. However, this only covered the "what to write" portion of my recovery. I was still lacking the "how to write" part of it. Fortunately, I was able to resolve this issue thanks to a seminar class I took at the College titled The Flâneur and the Pilgrim: Walking the Country and the City. Going into this seminar, I really had no expectations. I did not know that I would be able to personally relate to some of the texts we would read for the course. Yet in the first class, I had realised that a lot of the healing, reflecting, and meditating that I had done to cope with my father's passing had happened on walks, which is the flâneur's principal approach to experiencing the world. So here I was, walking every Monday and Wednesday from my little studio apartment to the John Molson building on campus to learn about how one's perspective and relation to the world can be influenced by the way one wanders.

One day, when I was nine, I walked home after school with my little sister treading alongside me. She was six years old at the time. Once I arrived, I went up the narrow flight of stairs from the side entrance through which I always came in, and saw my mother reading a small note with furrowed brows. She stood in the dining room, and there was a phone that had been left behind on the table—it was my father's phone. Strangely, it appeared that he had left us, out of nowhere, but somehow he had still had the decency to leave a note. Years later, I asked my mother what my father had written on that piece of paper because she did not want to tell me back then. From what she remembers, my father's note said something along the lines of: "I won't be gone for long. Take care of the kids. I will be back soon, I love you all very much." I suppose that in a way, my father's last words to me were "I love you." Even though I never got to read the note myself, that is what I have to believe. I do not remember

the last time I spoke to him before he left.

Still, my mom was worried that night. She called the police so that they could send out a search party to look for my father. After that, all we could do was wait. So for about a month, we waited. I was certain he would come back. There was no doubt in my mind about it. Every day, no matter where I was, I always expected him to jump in out of nowhere and yell "Surprise!" then everything would go back to normal. Of course, things never did go back to normal.

Some time in early December 2011, my mother picked me up from school. Up until then, it had been a daily ritual for me to ask her if the police had found my father yet, so like any other day, I asked her again. Curiously enough, this time, she did not repeat her usual "not yet." Instead, she said, I will tell you later. I got excited. I thought that maybe he was hiding in the trunk of the car or that he was waiting at home to surprise us. However, I got home and he was nowhere to be seen, nor did it seem like he was hiding in the trunk. So I asked my mother again, and she said she would tell me later, again. I shrugged and brushed it off. Maybe my father was just late, and she wanted to keep it a surprise. That night, I distinctly remember playing *Guitar Hero* with my sister. I wanted to show off to my mother how well I could rhythmically press on colour-coded buttons, until I got bored of it and asked her again about my father. That was when she finally decided to tell us.

My mother took my sister and I upstairs, sat us down, and enclosed our small hands with hers. She looked at us and then said, "your father passed away in a car accident." At first, I did not believe it. I sat there in frozen bewilderment until, slowly, the initial shock began to thaw from the slow burning reality of those words scorching my soul and searing the corners of my eyes. My heart felt like it had been torn out of my chest, and I was gripped with utter disbelief. I was nine years old. I had heard of death, I knew it existed, but up until that point, I was ignorant of my parents' mortality. Needless to say, that night, I cried out of the hole that was left in my chest from the heart that had previously rested there. At that moment, there was nothing else I could do. When I recall the details of that night, I still feel the urge to cry.

My mother allowed me to take a day off from school but I resumed classes the day after that as if nothing had happened. I wanted

to believe that things were business as usual, so I assumed that nobody at school had been told about my father's death yet. However, I could feel that something was different. As I walked onto the school grounds, I could tell that something had changed. I felt as if a lot of eyes were on me. People seemed much quieter, and none of them smiled too wide. Looking back on that day now, maybe I was paranoid. The bell rang shortly after I arrived, and everyone lined up and made their way inside, group by group. Once I got to my locker, I ignored my surroundings and moved almost mechanically. I took off my hat, my scarf, and my mittens and put them on the shelf above. I slipped off my winter coat and my snow pants and hung them up on the hook. I changed into my indoor shoes and set my boots down. Then I grabbed my backpack and headed to class, and like any other day, I settled down at my seat. And yet, unlike any other day, there was something at my desk. It was a pink card with a red heart on it, and it enclosed a series of short sentences that were each signed underneath by a student in the classroom. I forget exactly what they said but it was something along the lines of "You're not alone!" and "Our condolences, we are with you!"

Part of me felt touched. I recognized the names of my friends on that card, and their kind words made me smile. However, the comfort I felt from their well wishes was short-lived. I was grateful for my friends' show of support in that card. But, in that same card, there were also the names of the people who, up until that point, had either bullied me or acted as if I did not exist. I looked up from the scribbles and briefly glanced over at those very faces in the classroom. What I felt was spite and anger. Why were they pretending to care now? Did they suddenly realise that I had a life that mattered? Who said I needed their condolences? Those were the toxic contemplations that I held onto back then. I was angry that they were choosing to be kind to me now considering the way they had treated me before. As if that was not hard enough to endure, a few months later a dear school friend of mine turned his back on me.

We had been very close since kindergarten, and I had learned at the beginning of the year that he was going to transfer to another school for the fourth grade. I was naturally already saddened by this—but, now that I had lost my father, I was under the impression that the world had it out for me.

When April came around four months later, I was still grieving. It was very sunny outside and there was practically no snow left on the ground when that dear friend came up to me and said, "Stop being dramatic. You're only crying about your dad because you want attention." Those damaging words affected me for a long time, not because of what they meant but because of who they came from. The trust I had in my friend was thus broken.

For the entirety of that week, I never failed to bring up the fact that my old friend hurt me at the dinner table. My mother let me vent about it every night to give me the freedom to process this new kind of pain. Then, by the end of the week, after I went on again about this friend, she told me, "Not every person you meet will be who you expected them to be or who you need them to be during your times of need. Things can always change in a moment's notice, and people are no exception." Interestingly enough, when reading Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, I learned that he preached something similar about change. While my mother spoke of change as inevitable, Aurelius seemed to understand change as something that was also necessary: "It is the nature of all things to change, to perish and be transformed, so that in succession different things can come to be" (21; bk.12). This is something that would turn out to be true in my case. Following the loss of that friend, I gained a new piece of wisdom from my mother which would help me to better accept the hardships that I would encounter in the coming years.

Still, I felt alienated and alone in school. Every single time recess came around, I watched the other kids go about their day as if nothing had changed in the world when I had just lost my father. They laughed and played while I drifted aimlessly about in the school yard, consumed by my own grief. Every day, I fought back tears because the sight of others being happy reminded me of my own unhappiness. I felt so disconnected from them, as if I was living alone in a completely different world. I knew that it was I, and not them, who had just lost a father and yet, it was upsetting to me that nobody was feeling the pain I felt. Where did my peers find the energy to fret about whose team they were gonna be on for *Cops & Robbers*? Why was this girl terrified of confessing to her crush? Why would they whine after kicking the soccer ball onto the roof? All of these issues seemed so meaningless to me then, yet the only

thing I could feel towards them was envy. Their parents were still alive! After class, I watched their father or mother pick them up from school, and this led me to contemplate another question. Why me? Why did my father have to die? Why could it not have been somebody else? I did not recall doing anything horrible enough to deserve this nor did I think my father had done anything to suffer such a punishment. I was starting to hate the world because I was convinced that it hated me.

It was not until I took a walk with my mother during the summer of that same year that I realised that the world did not hate me. It was evening, and the sun was slowly setting. I remember the sky fading from a creamsicle orange to a grey-ish blue, separated only by a thin haze of pink, and the air smelled like a mix of asphalt dust and tree sap. It is a smell that I still associate with summertime today. My mother, my sister, and I were strolling around the neighbourhood after dinner. For once, my mother had some time off of work to spend with us, so I seized the opportunity to ask her what I had been pondering for the past couple of months. I asked: "Why did *he* have to die? Why not somebody else? Why did we lose our dad?" Then, she told me, "Everything happens for a reason. Nothing is forever, and your father died on that day because it was his time to go. The world did not look at you and say 'I'm taking away her dad because of this and that.' It happened because it did. That's all."

What especially struck me was the idea that nothing is forever. After she spoke, I looked around, and again I saw a lot of kids having fun. They were playing with their friends, their parents or their siblings, and somehow in that moment, the envy that I had felt when I was in school gradually began to dim. I realised that they too would die someday, or lose someone who was close to them. Their fathers, their mothers, their friends and whoever else.The fact that I was suffering from the loss of my own loved one at that exact moment in my life as opposed to a later time was just as impersonal as the flow of time. As Marcus Aurelius writes so beautifully, "There is a river of creation, and time is a violent stream. As soon as one thing comes into sight, it is swept past and another is carried down: it too will be taken on its way" (*Meditations* 43; bk. 4).

Of course, I was just a kid, so it took me a bit of time to truly understand what my mother meant by "It happened for a reason." Still, the more I pondered it, the more I was able to perceive death as merely

a part of nature. Reflecting back on that now, I notice that Marcus Aurelius understood the same thing. Realising the mortality of all living things may seem like a morbid thing to some but that is not the way that I view it nor was it the way that I viewed it back then. Along these lines, Marcus Aurelius writes, "All that happens is as habitual and familiar as roses in spring and fruit in the summer. True too of disease, death, defamation, and conspiracy—and all that delights or gives pain to fools" (*Meditations* 44; bk. 4).

When I read that passage for class, I remembered my mother's words. It took a few years, but once I was able to perceive death as a natural occurrence that remained indifferent to whomever it came upon, it seemed foolish to me that I ever thought death to be something biased and personal.

Today, I am happy to acknowledge that I owe a lot to my father's death. Thanks to his passing, I grew so close to my mother that she became my best friend. His death also led me to accept that everything happens for a reason, and that asking myself "why me?" would not give me the answer that I sought. Again, I cannot put this understanding in better words than those of Marcus Aurelius: "'It is my bad luck that this has happened to me.' No, you should rather say: 'It is my good luck that, although this has happened to me, I can bear it without pain, neither crushed by the present nor fearful of the future'" (*Meditations* 49; bk. 4). I found a lot of solace and comfort within those words. I no longer hated the world because I finally understood that the world did not take my father away because it hated me but that it took my father away because that was simply the way it had to be.

There was another walk that I took years ago quite late at night. I was sixteen years old. From what I remember, it was around 3:00 in the morning, and I snuck out through the window from my basement bedroom because I could not sleep. I kept tossing and turning under the covers because I was bothered by a new source of anxiety. The fact that my father had died at an unexpected time in an unforeseeable way made me worry about my mother's life. What if I lost her too when I least expected it while I am still too young to care for my sister, let alone myself? What would I do then? Would I have to resort to living in the streets? I was unable to put my mind to rest, so I decided that what I needed was to go outside for

some fresh air and a stroll around the block.

The late hours made me feel as if I was safe from the burdens of life, as if I was hidden from them by the night sky. As Virginia Woolf expresses it, "The evening hour [...] gives us the irresponsibility which darkness and lamplight bestow. We are no longer quite ourselves" (*Street Haunting*). During that walk, I would glance upwards here and there, and sometimes, I would even stop myself and sit by the sidewalk so that my eyes could better linger on the stars above me. It was not my first time enjoying a starry sky. I had spent many nights previous to that one sitting out on the back porch at around two or three in the morning just to gaze at the stars for maybe an hour or two hour. Each time I gaze upon those distant lights in the dark, I still feel as if I am marvelling at them for the first time, and each time, the same emotion overcomes me. Woolf conveys this feeling beautifully in her novel *Night and Day*: "When you consider things like the stars, our affairs don't seem to matter very much, do they?" (202).

In those moments, I realise that I tend to place too much meaning on worries that are not as important as they appear. Whenever I contemplate the stars, I remember that all of our individual problems and anxieties mean nothing to the world. I look up, and I am reminded of how vast it is. I recognize that the bothersome thoughts in my head do not necessarily make life a difficult and painful journey, or the world a miserable place. Rather, those anxieties are rendered insignificant when compared to the sheer volume of the universe. It reminds me of an anecdote that Ajahn Brahm, a Buddhist monk in Australia, shares in *Who Ordered This Truckload of Dung*? He recounts the time when he was tasked with building a brick wall for the monastery as a younger monk due to their strict budget. The wall he built had two crooked bricks, and the sight of them bothered him each time. Visitors who walked past it told him it was a nice wall, yet he would insist that it was not by bringing their attention to those two bricks. Then one day, a certain visitor told him: "Yes. I can see those two bad bricks. But I can see the 998 good bricks as well" (Brahm 4). These words led Brahm to the realisation that too many people allow themselves to be consumed by the "two bad bricks" in their lives, and that is how I felt during my 3:00 a.m. stroll. Thus, I was able to stop focusing on my fear of the slight chance that my mother may pass away in the same way that my father did. Slowly, I resorted to

being grateful that my mother is still alive and feeling very fortunate to have a good relationship with her.

All of these little pieces of wisdom came to me sporadically over the span of a few years, and my mother repeated these sayings in the subsequent walks we had. They were also recounted at the dinner table, sometimes after a couple of drinks, and still she tells me these things today whenever I speak with her. Nowadays, when I tell someone that I lost my father at nine years old, they appear sorrowful. However, what I have learned from this hurdle served me in more ways than one. They helped me to overcome other hardships, and they have allowed me to meet amazing people who I otherwise would not have met. The walks I shared with my mother, as well as those I took alone, gave me the necessary experiences to aid anyone I could. I was able to support my friends who suffered loss or unresolved trauma because I could empathise with them through the pains I endured. In *The Aeneid*, Dido expresses this same sentiment as she greets Aeneas and welcomes his soldiers, reassuring them by stating that she knows how to care for them because she has suffered many pains in her life: "My life / Was one of hardship and forced wandering / Like your own, till in this land at length / Fortune would have me rest. Through pain I've learned / To comfort suffering men" (1.857-61). I have not had to witness war nor have I ever been forced into exile—but the hardship that was the loss of my father, and the wandering that I have done, either in my mind or around the neighbourhood, have graciously served me as tools to help others.

Oftentimes, I wondered if I would have had a better life if my father was still alive. Frankly, in the few years that followed his passing, I strongly believed that I would have. However, today, I can confidently say that not a single ounce of me regrets this experience. I like to look back on the life that I lead as one long destination-less walk. I have never known where I was going, nor do I know any better now. During this long walk, I have risen and fallen, recovered and relapsed, cried and laughed, and I have both met and strayed from a number of different kinds of people. Although my walk is not yet over, I have come to understand that my father did not die because he was a bad person nor did he die because I was hated by the world. In the end, what matters is not the reason why nor the destination towards which we walk. What matters most is the walk itself and our will to become better walkers one step at a time.

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On Summer, Superstition, and Perfect Little Islands in Switzerland

GEORGIA CHANDLER

It was a perfect day. The sun was shining, squirrels ate bits of pastry from the palm of my hand. I remember the shimmering green of the grass, a cool breeze, and knowing it was over. I was shocked by the callousness of the voice in my head. Truth be told, the moment you joined me in the park I began wishing you would leave.

There are approximately 160 families of flowering plants in North America, and ever since receiving a copy of J. Eppel's *Botany in a Day* as a little girl, my dream has been to take a cross-continent road trip and collect one sample of each. I'd take greyhounds, and cargo trains to every corner of America that I could, harvesting *Sphaerelcea fendleri* in New Mexico and *Arctostaphylos auriculata* in Northern California, pressing the blooms delicately between the pages of my book. I'd return to Canada with all the ingredients for a magnificent scrapbook, and the smug sense of achievement that only comes with completing so tedious and personal a task, brimming with a confident, congealed sense of self.

…

Just the week prior, I had resigned my hopes of doing such for the second summer in a row. I feel ready for change, and old enough to go out in search for it, but Canadian Border Control had other plans. Devastated and desperate to insert some sense of meaning into my day-to-day life, I did what we've all done countless times during the pandemic: invent some appropriate alternative and trod onwards, tirelessly insisting against the obvious that *really this is no different*, and never giving myself the opportunity to grieve the loss of what could have been.

…

Like most of us, I live through the myth of linear progress, the promise of to-do lists, agendas, and desk calendars. I often feel as if I'm auditioning to play the role of myself in my own life, that there's always just a few more obstacles between me and becoming good enough to take the stage, becoming worthy of all the admiration, respect, and academic success I crave. *Sign the contract, wallow in a month of unemployment, end that relationship, disappear into the woods for six weeks*. Then and only then, I'll be good enough, ready to perform as the kind of person I'd like to be.

So I resolved to devote my month of unemployment to finding my flowers and sense of identity, all within a reasonable radius of my apartment here in Montreal. I then devised a schedule for doing such, and prescribed myself several distinct daily activities. I would rise each morning at 8am, go for a walk, then cement myself on a particular hill in the Park to read and write for a few hours. This wasn't an attempt at self-education, but rather a bizarre attempt at self indulgence. I read only what I wished I had time for prior, and wrote only what I wished too. This was an intentionally fruitless pursuit, amounting to little more than an uneven tan and an old diary filled with mostly illegible scribbles. Like most schedules, it was never really about productivity, but keeping a promise I made to myself. If I rose each morning at the time I said I would, lived my day according to the plan I set, surely that would render some sense of achievement.

…

When you came to visit me that fateful day, I was doing precisely that, reading while perched upon a shimmering knoll that was just bursting with buttercups. Eventually you left, but I stayed a little longer, hoping the last rays of afternoon sunlight could penetrate through the gloom surrounding the moment that had just passed. I plucked several of those buttercups, and tenderly tucked them into the McGill Library's copy of *Bluets* by Maggie Nelson, saying a silent prayer that they wouldn't stain. I then gathered all my belongings, folding up the pashmina I use as a buffer between the slick dew covered grass and my bare legs and slotting it into my bag.

I did all the things you do to leave.

…

Sometimes I fear that the endless checklists and sprawling resolutions serve only to keep me more firmly enmeshed within this cycle, inhibiting any real change. Eppel writes,

> Flax plants wake up with a cheer each morning. In spite of their wispy little stems and small leaves that may nearly disappear in dry weather, flax plants open up a whole bouquet of fresh flowers each day with the rising sun. The plants often droop under the weight of their exuberance, and the petals fall off by noon - but just wait until tomorrow and a whole new batch of flowers will bloom. (78)

I have this insidious fear that everyday I do the same: never truly growing, only stimulating the same burst of productivity and successive crash into complacency. This is not the first time I've determined I must radically improve myself, and do so instantaneously, nor will it be the last. As long as I can remember, I have been afflicted by this kind of crippling impatience, which several psychologists have since called "severe ADHD." In his work on the disorder, Dr. Rusell Barkley defines ADHD as a chronic near-sightedness to the future: the tragic coupling of a mind fully capable of setting intention, yet cursed with an inability for foresight, unable to feel any urgency towards or agency over a future beyond eyeshot. Most people have the capacity to make promises to themselves, to wish for better. Fewer are those who have the capacity to keep them, who possess some inscrutable ability to organise their actions in such a way that good intentions can actually come to fruition.

In her diary, Virginia Woolf writes that she can only ever work in "long flutters of the brain," and suffers great anguish everytime the tides turn from pride in her work to deep spiteful self-hatred, "up and down, up and down" over and over again. I too only ever dabble in extremes. I feel as if I only get a small window of lucidity each day, in which I can aspire towards something better, or form a few coherent sentences. Often, generating a cohesive sentence from my mind feels like trying to extrude a single silken thread out of a belligerent lump of steel wool. Productivity comes to me more often by accident than intention, and dissipates just as abruptly. Sometimes the words meld together effortlessly, and I'm able to spin sentences into one perfectly delicate wisp, like freshly spun candy floss. Even then, the feeling is one of precarity, an acute knowledge that should conditions change ever so slightly, I along with my work could be reduced to a sticky puddle. Like Woolf, I find myself unable to rest my eyes upon a calm future horizon, or revel in a temporary peak. Trapped in a sort of temporal squint, I'm resigned to the incessant churning of the now.

…

I wish I had the mental faculty to exercise moderation and consistency, to plan for a future I can't yet see. Most of all, I wish I felt ready to play the role of myself in my own life, that I could abandon the compulsive need to set an infinite number of obstacles between myself and finally feeling good enough. Woolf was undoubtedly brilliant, internationally acclaimed, and one of my favourites, personally. Yet ultimately, these dramatic fluctuations in self-esteem drove her to the brink. It's easy to get lost squinting, to become so immersed in the ups and downs of now, that you don't even notice how detached from reality you really are. You can wake up one day, exhausted, overwhelmed, struck by the chilling revelation that your feet no longer touch the bottom, just to discover the next day you've been standing in the shallow end all along.

I wish I could ask Eppel if the flax ever gets tired of the up-and-down, ever schedules a month of unemployment to wallow. I fear I already know the answer —flax only stops vigorously producing flowers each day when it dies.

…

By the time I was ready to leave the park, I was no longer thinking about you at all, but rather a particular passage from *Bluets*, in which Nelson mocks a radio host for claiming that Joni Mitchell's 1971 album Blue is brilliant because of its bluntness:

> The DJ played "River" and said its greatness lies in the fact that no woman had ever said it so clearly and unapologetically before: *I'm hard to handle, I'm selfish and I'm sad*. Progress! I thought. (16)

Maybe that's not very revolutionary to Nelson, but it certainly feels so to me. How I wish I clearly and unapologetically own my need to be alone. Why can't I be a girlfriend while figuring out who I am and what I want? Why do I need to isolate myself just to do something right? Perhaps I'm a bit biassed. I've had a soft spot for Joni Mitchell ever since I first heard her distinctive voice echoing from my dad's CD player. Now that's a woman who understands the power of cyclical symmetry, the myth of linear progress, and the sublime virtue of wallowing just a little bit. *I've looked at clouds, love, life.*

As the story goes, Mitchell made the abrupt decision to take a year off in 1970 and take a tour of Europe instead of continuing to tour with content from her three previous critically acclaimed albums. She sent

a telegram to her long-term lover Graham Nash from Formentera to tell him the relationship was over, then revelled in whirlwind affairs, drunken nights, all the little experiences that built what many consider one of the greatest albums of all time. There would be no *Blue* without *ending that relationship, wallowing, and disappearing for a bit.*

Joni did all the things you do to leave.

In a 1978 interview with Rolling Stone, she reflected upon that crucial period, remarking that "I felt like a cellophane wrapper on a pack of cigarettes. I felt like I had absolutely no secrets from the world and I couldn't pretend in my life to be strong." Perhaps it's exactly that ability to be so radically vulnerable that skyrocketed *Blue* to success, the ability to stand before a crowd of thousands and wring out every weakness, *I'm hard to handle, I'm selfish, and I'm sad.* It might not indicate any true political progress for womankind as Nelson critiques, but it represents a sort of personal progress that's impossible not to admire. Before I returned *Bluets*, I delicately transplanted the dried buttercups from that day into my own diary for safe keeping. I left one buttercup pressed into a page in which Nelson talks about the universally acknowledged hideousness of the colour yellow—just for the theatrics.

To deny myself an opportunity to indulge in a little melodrama seems unspeakably cruel, don't I deserve to wring some fun out of this up-and-down existence?

…

That being said, I certainly over-indulged when I wrote my response to your letter some weeks later in Mid-July. Eager to cast off my shame, I resolved to rid myself of this horrid artefact of my guilt and uncertainty. I slipped in one of the remaining buttercups, sealed the envelope with a garish neon pink monkey sticker, and dropped it into the slot. I regretted this instantly, but comforted myself with the knowledge that the damned thing was now on the side of the mailbox farther removed from me, which was certainly preferable. *Now things will be truly and firmly over by the time I return!* I thought to myself, this is my telegram from Formentera, a fresh beginning. Some things are easier without phone service, and this is certainly one of them.

I did all the things you do to leave.

Perhaps the Canadian Postal System could smell my insincerity, or perhaps you need to be writing your break-up letter from a

tropical island off the coast of Spain for full efficacy, — either way the letter found its way back to me like a Frankenstein's monster of its own.

On August 9th, I was aghast to find it in my hands once more, "Return to Sender" stamped across its face. I found myself panicking, inconsolable in the arms of a dear old friend, *this wasn't the plan* blaring over and over again like a siren between my ears. This grief felt all too familiar. I did everything right, I followed the schedule, kept my promise to myself, —and yet, ended up watching these carefully laid plans packed with so much intention, completely disintegrate in the palm of my hand.

She gently interrupted my delusions with the calm reassurance, *it already is over, it has been for months. You don't need to explain yourself again, or have the last say, it's okay.* She was right.

I always do the things you do to leave, but I can never just walk away.

The cycle ends when you decide it does, not after the completion of some arbitrary set of tasks assigned to some fictitious timeline. Lamentably, there isn't a to-do list, schedule, or desk calendar in the world that can make up for a lack of self-assuredness. Neither is there a particularly good way to infuse a sense of time into a period so broadly uprooted by a catastrophic pandemic, all one can do is live like cellophane and remember that in a few years you could be reflecting upon this as a charming anecdote.

Later that day I drafted a new version, bluntly prefaced "I sent you a letter July 14th, you never got it" and slipped it into the mailbox as expediently as possible. I skimmed all the theatrics and flowery phrases out, but still sealed this second letter with another garish neon pink monkey sticker. When asked why I didn't just pop the first one back in the mail in a fresh envelope, I found myself at a loss for a reasonable explanation.

Truth be told, I was both in awe and fearful of the potent melodrama infused into the original letter. In its journey to Montreal and back, all the way shouldering this enormous weight of the shame and guilt I had laden upon it, I felt sure the object had accumulated some kind of powerful karmic energy itself. Today, the damned thing watches over me from the top of my bookshelf, bearing witness to the endless up-and-down, and hopefully at least a little growth.

Hegel and Diderot: The Ironic Selves of Rameau's Nephew

DIEGO CARUANA

In his *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, the 19th century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) takes on a systematic evaluation of the role of art and aesthetics. In his *Lectures*, Hegel defines the parameters of aesthetic practice and the method of aesthetic reflection for the purpose of developing a theory of art. A number of decades earlier, the French enlightenment intellectual Denis Diderot (1713-1784) produced *Rameau's Nephew*, a dialogue which reflects radically on morality, class structure, and the significance of the genius. Where Hegel's *Lectures* and Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* intersect is at the level of irony: Hegel examines irony and its consequences, which leads him to diagnose the symptoms of an ironic life; the character of Rameau's nephew in Diderot's dialogue can be seen to embody the elements of Hegel's examination. To use Hegel's discussion and terms as a viewing-glass through which to examine the character of Rameau's nephew reveals that whereas Hegel predicts that the ironic life will result in either one of two outcomes (and that it would be a contradiction to fulfil both scenarios simultaneously), the character of Rameau's nephew embodies both such outcomes without contradiction.

Hegel begins his discussion of the ironic life with reference to August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845) and his brother Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), two German literary critics and philologists contemporary to Hegel. Though Hegel gives these two figures their due praise, he criticises them for "attaching a universal importance to what had only relative value" in their writings (70). Hegel furthers his criticism of the Schlegels by focusing the discussion on Friedrich von Schlegel, and remarking that his tendency to falsely attach universal relevance to things with relative value has resulted in a sentiment which Hegel deems "the so-called Irony" (70). Hegel then outlines the roots of this ironic sentiment, which he identifies as having originated in

the philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). One central aspect of Fichte's philosophy, which is also important for Hegel's discussion, is his account of the I, or the self. As Hegel notes: "Fichte establishes the I as the absolute principle of all knowledge, of all reason and cognition… every content which is to be of value for the I is given position and recognition only by favour of the I" (70). Fichte, according to Hegel's view, places heavy emphasis on the I as an ontological, epistemological, and moral centre: ontological in that the I constructs or constitutes the world, epistemological in that knowledge of the world and its characteristics can be obtained by acquiring knowledge about the I and its various processes, and moral in that the I creates the world as a realm in which it is able to exercise its freedom and thus fulfil its moral endeavours (154). Though Hegel does not explicitly specify as much, he seems to be outlining Friedrich von Schlegel's interpretation of Fichte's philosophical elements as they relate to art, rather than recapitulating Fichte's original views. Hegel's discussion of these principles differs from Fichte's treatment of them. In Hegel's reconstruction of the doctrine of the absolute I, he says that "whatever is, is only by favour of the I, and what is by my favour I am in turn able to annihilate" (70). Michael Inwood, the editor to the Penguin edition of Hegel's *Introductory Lectures* notes that Hegel's reconstruction misrepresents Fichte's initial view, since Fichte held that there are certain necessary features of the world which are objective and independent from any individual person, and as such are not subject to the whim of the I and cannot thereby be arbitrarily annihilated (156). Hence, in addition to how Hegel frames this section around a consideration of Schlegel, and implicitly ties Schlegel's irony to Fichteanism, he gives an account of Schlegel's interpretation of Fichte's metaphysics. In this sense, Hegel speaks to how Schlegel conflates Fichte's relation of the self to the world with the relation of the artist to their artwork.

With this definition and discussion of Schlegel's use of the absolute I in mind, Hegel provides two defining outcomes for the character of the ironist. The first of which is that the ironist finds themselves in a position of "God-like geniality" (72). The ironic absolute I suffers from a complex whereby "he… looks down in superiority on all mankind besides, for they are pronounced *borné* and dull in as far as law, morality and so forth retain for them their fixed, obligatory, and essential validity" and Hegel sums up this condition as "the concentration of the I into itself for which all bonds are broken" (72). The

condition of God-like geniality takes a stance of perpetual negation, which maintains the "futility of all that is matter of fact," including moral truths which are traditionally understood as holding essential validity objectively and in themselves. From this perspective, everything remains a "mere dead creature" for the ironic I, and nothing holds any actual worth outside of the ironic I's own subjectivity (72). The ironist thus assumes an ironic attitude towards all relations, including those with universal importance.

The alternative outcome for the ironic artist, which Hegel discusses as the opposite to the feeling of God-like geniality (and thus its contradiction), is a state of insufficiency, dissatisfaction, and "sickly yearning" (73). Instead of seeing themselves as superior to universal truths, and viewing all things as valueless besides the dictates of their own subjectivity, the ironic artist is unsatisfied and proves to be "insufficient to itself" (72). The result is that the ironic self will crave and seek "determinate and essential interests" to fill the existential hole in their being (72). Unfortunately for the ironist, Hegel notes that here "there arises misfortune and antimony, in that the subject desires to penetrate into truth and has a craving for objectivity, but yet is unable to abandon its isolation and retirement into itself, and to strip itself free of this unsatisfied abstract inwardness (of mind)" (73). Due to their position as an ironist, they yearn to escape the feeling of nullity and grasp something of substance outside of themselves, but are unable to because they lack the ability to escape their ironic paradigm (73).

Hegel frames his two outcomes of the ironic artist as mutually exclusive manifestations of the ironic self. However, the character of Rameau's nephew exemplifies both of these conditions simultaneously, which is not inconsistent with the way Diderot characterises him in *Rameau's Nephew*. Rameau's nephew exemplifies the first outcome when the discussion between him and the narrator turns to the topic of proper behaviour and moral guides: Rameau's nephew remarks, "in a matter as variable as behaviour there is no such thing as the absolutely, essentially, universally true or false, unless it is that one must be what self-interest dictates - good or bad, wise or foolish, serious or ridiculous, virtuous or vicious" (Diderot 83). For Rameau's nephew, it is clear that the proper guide to one's behaviour, which may traditionally be thought of as the pursuit of virtue, truth, or goodness, is instead whatever one decides it to be. In assigning only subjective validity to modes of behaviour, Rameau's nephew is also assigning subjective validity to the objects of one's behaviour,

namely morality, legality, and truth. Each of these traditional values, which are usually thought to exist independently of the self, are now subordinated under the subjective will. That Rameau's nephew sets relative validity to values that are otherwise cherished as universally significant informs an earlier event in the text. In an earlier passage, Rameau's nephew remarks ironically that all things, apart from drinking, eating, "having a tumble with lovely women," and reclining in comfort, are mere vanity (65). In response, the narrator lists a number of objections, such as fighting for one's country, helping one's friends, fulfilling civic duties, and raising one's children, to which Rameau's nephew consistently replies: "Vanity!…Vanity!…Vanity!…Vanity!" (65). Here we have an example of Rameau's nephew, in typical ironist fashion, deflating all of the narrator's received ideals. Apparently, for Rameau's nephew, all of the things the narrator lists are inferior to what he himself values subjectively—the pleasures of the body. The way Rameau's nephew places himself above these ideals, pronounces them empty and vain, and claims that the only redeemable actions are those tied to self-interest and pleasure, speaks to the first view of the ironic artist as Hegel defines it. Rameau's nephew demonstrates a stance of God-like geniality, insofar as he places himself above objective ideals, reduces their value to zero, and favours instead to indulge in his own subjectivity.

Rameau's Nephew exemplifies the second view of the ironic self insofar as he is subject to feelings of self-contempt and insufficiency. Rameau's Nephew's self-contempt can be seen when he compares himself to his genius musician uncle, Rameau, and wishes he could achieve Rameau's level of recognition and praise (43), and equally when Rameau's nephew complains about how he is unable to keep a seat at one of the "ten thousand good tables in Paris" (49). What these instances of self-contempt reveal about the character of Rameau's nephew is that while he only values his own subjectivity, this subjectivity is insufficient. Rameau's nephew is not satisfied with himself, which is reflected in the way he is resentful of never amounting to the legacy of his uncle, and feels self-contempt for being unable to curry the favour of wealthy aristocrats, despite their supposed idiocy (49). Rameau's nephew's feelings of insufficiency cause him to crave some "determinate and essential interests" outside of himself (Hegel 72). For Rameau's nephew, these interests fall short of the pursuit for objectivity and truth, and instead take the form of "good bed, good food, warm clothes in the winter and cool ones

in the summer, leisure, money, and lots of other things" (Diderot 123). The pursuit of these interests leads Rameau's nephew to metaphorically resort to prostitution, and dance the "vile pantomime" by selling himself to whatever rich patron will take him (123). The tragedy of Rameau's nephew in this sense is that while he is unsatisfied with his subjectivity and as such pines for something substantial outside of himself, because of his ironic perspective he is unable to reach for the substance of universal truth. Rameau's nephew cannot "abandon [his] isolation and retirement into [himself]" (Hegel 73), and as such his craving for essential interests falls short of truth and objectivity, and thus restricts him to the sphere of selfish interests. It is in this sense that Rameau's nephew embodies both the first and second manifestations of the ironic life, as defined by Hegel.

Hegel frames the distinction between the first and second manifestations of the ironic life as an either/or; namely, the ironic self either lives a life of God-like geniality, or conversely the ironic self lives a life of insufficiency and sickly yearning. Meanwhile, in Rameau's nephew's experience, these two states of being are not mutually exclusive and can manifest themselves at the same time within an individual. That the two views of the ironic life can be taken on simultaneously by Rameau's nephew is consistent with how the narrator characterises Rameau's nephew at the very beginning of the text. At the dialogue's opening, Rameau's nephew is described in contradictory terms:

> Nothing is less like him than himself. At times he is thin and gaunt like somebody in the last stages of consumption … A month later he is sleek and plump as though he had never left some millionaire's table … Today, in dirty linen and ragged breeches, tattered and almost barefoot, slinks along with head down and you might be tempted to call him over and give him money. Tomorrow, powdered, well shod, hair curled, beautifully turned out, he walks with head high showing himself off, and you would almost take him for a gentleman. (Diderot 34)

Rameau's nephew is thus a character whose primary feature is his ability to effortlessly take on contradictory positions. It is thus natural that he could at one moment exemplify the ironic attitude that sets no value on things

traditionally understood as having universal value, while privileging the importance of its own subjectivity, and at another moment exemplify the attitude of sickly yearning aimed at remedying feelings of self-insufficiency. In any case, Rameau's nephew's character is devised such that these two distinct outcomes of the ironic life can coexist without contradiction.

Hegel's discussion of irony in his *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* leads him to reconstruct what he takes to be the root of the ironic sentiment, namely Schlegel's interpretation of the Fichtean absolute I. A brief outline of Hegel's reconstruction shows how Hegel distinguishes two possible outcomes of the ironic absolute I, the first being the stance of God-like geniality, and the second being a perpetual and irremediable feeling of dissatisfaction and yearning. In Hegel's discussion, these two outcomes are framed as mutually exclusive opposites. Yet, they appear simultaneously in the character of Rameau's nephew in Diderot's dialogue. Moreover, the two concurrently present attitudes of Rameau's nephew do not suggest a contradiction, but rather a continuity, in the way Diderot characterises Rameau's nephew to begin with. That Rameau's nephew demonstrates both manifestations of the ironic self is consistent with his ability to take on contradictory perspectives at the same time.

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Windows to the Self: Windows, Gaze, and Point of View in Flaubert's Madame Bovary

SARAH DESROSIERS-LEGAULT

Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* vacillates between romantic tradition and realist literature. Flaubert's attention to how his characters see the world engenders this vacillation between genres. The narrative is set in motion through the many eyes of the narrative's collective consciousness. Flaubert's use of free indirect discourse positions the characters as both subjects that perceive, and objects of the other characters' gaze. We are finally granted access to Emma's point of view when she enters the narrative consciousness through her marriage to Charles. Most of the characters within the novel seem to passively allow the narrative to take its course through them and outside of them, but Emma wants a more totalizing agency over narrative voice. Using her imagination, Emma attempts to create her own independent narrative based on the romantic stories she has read. Despite her efforts, her vision is constantly thwarted by the subjective point of view of other characters. However, Emma's engagement with the objects that surround her, particularly windows, allow her some reprieve. This paper will investigate the window motif as a site for subjective perspective, specifically, as a vantage point from which we can gather *how* one sees. Windows allow Emma temporary authority over narrative voice and simultaneously act as reminders of her lack thereof. The first portion of this paper closely inspects the ball at Château de La Vaubyessard as an example of the many gazes Emma contends with for narrative authority; how the broken window dissolves the barriers between the psyche and the external world granting her temporary authority; and how the windows which face the Château demonstrate the limitations in perspective that even her imagination cannot transcend. Given that the windows do not offer a sustainable option for broadening her narrative authority, Emma now resorts to a different kind of expansion. In the later portion of the paper, it will be argued that Emma's desire for a more

assertive narrative authority is sexualized through her desire to merge with other perspectives within the text. Thus, this desire is played out through her intimate relationship with Léon. Her sexual relationship allows her to become independent by alienating herself from narrative voice. This paper concludes with an analysis of Emma's suicide as her final and successful attempt to remove herself from the limitations of the novel's free indirect discourse.

The ball at Château de la Vaubyessard exemplifies the competition between Emma's gaze and that of the other characters. Emma's gaze is at odds with that of the narrative and is consequently constantly interrupted. Within the public sphere of the Chateau, the narrative voice is full of movement as it shifts from gaze to gaze. The chapter is so full of seeing eyes that even inanimate objects are given a point of view. Just as the narrative voice begins to focus on Emma's perspective while she gazes on the paintings that decorate the wall, it is quickly interrupted by the painted subjects who gaze back:

> The rest of the sequence was scarcely visible, because the lamplight, directed down on to the green baize of the billiard-table, sent shadows floating about the room. Burnishing the canvases, the light scattered in delicate patterns, along the cracks in the varnish; and from each of those great dark rectangles edged with gold there appeared, here and there, a lighter section of painting, a pale brow, a pair of eyes gazing out at you. (Flaubert 135-136)

The detailed attention to light and shadows invites the narrative into Emmas's subjective lens from where she stands. We begin completely immersed in her wide point of view as we perceive the "shadows floating around" the entire room, and soon join her gaze as it zooms in on the light that scatters "along the cracks in the varnish." Finally, we are with her when her gaze focalizes on the brow and "a pair of eyes gazing out at you." We have so successfully merged with Emma's subjective gaze that the narrator includes us in this interruption through the invocation of "you." Feeling ourselves to be immersed in the role of subject and the act of perceiving along with Emma, we also join her in the realisation that we are being seen. We feel the violation of suddenly being noticed just when Emma has commanded our complete attention with her perspective. Even as Emma perceives these lifeless objects,

we are reminded that she is never only a subject observing, but is also at all times an object observed, whether by the other subjects that occupy the same room as her, or by the collective "we" of the narrator and readers.

This moment with the paintings, during which we are perfectly aligned with Emma's line of sight, is not an isolated event. Emma subsequently enters a room in the chateau where we follow the elaborate details of the food through her gaze. Her eyes eventually land on "the statue of a woman, swathed up to her chin, [gazing] steadily down upon the crowded room" and then to the bloodshot eyes of the Marquis' Father-in-law. At this time, the narrator intrudes to give a brief history of the man (136-137). It is the eyes of the man, the instruments of his gaze, that hurl us into an account of his life experience. Erich Auerbach writes that Emma "does not simply see, but is herself seen as one seeing" (781). Emma is never allowed complete agency over narrative point of view as she is inevitably a constant object of it. It is only when the window in the ballroom breaks that the varied point of view becomes fixed on Emma's perspective, and the narrative only shifts to a dialogue occurring close by when her eyes begin to close (143). The window, therefore, enables her to apply the vision of her mind's eye onto the outside world and virtually erase the gaze of the peasants who look back at her.

The shattered window at Chateau de La Vaubyessard signals the dissolved barrier between Emma's psyche and the external world. Through the vision she has of herself, Emma becomes both subject and object of her own perception, which subsequently enables her to compartmentalise the self. After the windows in the ballroom break, Emma gazes outside at peasants who gaze back in. The peasants' gaze are only acknowledged for a moment before Emma redesigns the sight with memories of Les Berteaux and the appearance of her past self:

> She saw the farmhouse, the muddy pond, her father in his smock under the apple-trees, and an image of herself, in the old days, skimming her finger over the cream on the milk-churns in the dairy. But, in the great dazzlement of this hour, her past life, always so vivid, was vanishing without trace, and she almost doubted that it had been hers. There she was at the ball; beyond it, only a great blur of shadows. Here she was eating a maraschino ice, holding the silver cockle-shell

> in her left hand, her eyes half closing, the spoon between her lips. (Flaubert 142-143)

Faced with the spectre of her past self, this doubling of Emma's character seems almost gothic in nature. Lynda Dryden describes gothic doubling as being haunted by yourself which in turn "strikes at the foundations of identity" (41). While the doubling of Emma's character does not mark a binary between good and evil like gothic convention would typically necessitate, it does pose a threat to the cohesiveness of the self which results both from and in a distorted chronotope. Lawrence Thornton investigates this scene as an epiphanic moment where Emma, through her imagination, exists in two places at once which allows for the intersection of past and present:

> …She sees herself as she used to be, the intensity of the recovered experience so great that it has tactile as well as visual qualities. Here the omniscient narrator has vanished, and it is Emma herself who links external and internal, past and present. But there is more here than simultaneity. Emma's problem, as opposed to Flaubert's, is not a "maladie de la memorie," but a sickness of consciousness in which the ego has been cut loose from its moorings in a stable psyche and allowed to contemplate itself in the "marvelous universe" of its own reflections: the domain of the autoscopic mode of vision, where mirrors abound under the sign of Narcissus. (985)

Thornton interprets the scene as more than just an encroachment of the past into the present. He suggests that in this moment Emma confronts and contemplates an externalised self that she has made tangible in the world. When faced with her past self, she "doubted that it had been hers" (143). On the surface, this disassociation can be read as an attempt to reinvent herself, or to erase her past, but the concocted vivid "image of herself" allows her to be both subject and object of her perception. It is this ultimate perceptual authority that enables Emma to "make the past that was always so vivid [vanish] without a trace" (142-143). She also gains control over when the narrative voice is allowed to shift perspectives: it is only when her eyes begin closing that the voice shifts. Emma is the one that disconnects the narrative from her gazing eyes.

When confronted with the image of herself, Emma's gaze focalizes on her finger. This compartmentalised gaze is only one among other moments in the text where her body is the object of a male gaze. The finger is the first part of Emma's body that Charles notices when he meets her: "she kept pricking her fingers…Charles was surprised at the whiteness of her nails" (81). Thus, in focusing on the finger herself, Emma reappropriates the gazes that have been set on her. Peter Brooks, struck by the plentiful descriptions of Emma's body and yet their failure to deliver any cohesive image of it, argues,

> While we have many details, including her dark hair, her supple waist, her amber skin, her white fingernails, her dark eyes with their soft black eyelashes, we have rather little sense of what she looks like. Descriptions tend toward the metonymical, accumulating details of her body and especially of her dress and accessories. Emma tends to become a fetishized object, or rather, an object that is never seen whole because her accessory details become fetishes, arresting attention along the way. (91)

While Emma's point of view seems to dominate the narrative, the descriptions of her body remind us that Emma is also constantly the object of other perceiving subjects. However, these fragmented images fail to illustrate her body in a cohesive way. Rather, fragments of her are described in tandem with her accessories or clothing. Due to the varied focus of the narrative voice, our perception of her is shaped not only through her voice, but through these other gazes that constantly perceive her. Therefore, when Emma gazes out of the broken window and perceives herself, she reappropriates the fragmentation that those who perceive her assign to her. Not only does she compartmentalise the body through a focalization on her finger, but she gains the authority to compartmentalise the past version of herself.

Though the motif of the window enables Emma's authority over narrative voice, the other thinking subjects within the text have their own windows. That is,their own subjective perspective that Emma cannot penetrate. Despite the narrative authority that Emma gains through the window scene at the ball, that same night she also experiences the limitations of point of view which reveals her desire to transcend spatial borders. From the bedroom where she and Charles spend the night, Emma opens her

window and "gaze[s] at the windows of the château, avidly, trying to guess which were the rooms of the people she had noticed that evening. She yearn[s] to know their lives, to penetrate, to merge with them" (146). Emma's gaze is directed by desire, a desire to move beyond the barriers of her own psyche, as she had already done earlier that evening, and merge with the supposed 'other' behind their own bedroom window. However, if windows are a signal of subjective perspective, then the doubling of the windows in this scene indicates that there are two subjective experiences at play. Victor H. Brombert argues,

> The window becomes the symbol of all expectation: it is an opening onto space through which the confined heroine can dream of escape. But it is also—for windows can be closed and exist only where space is, as it were, restricted—a symbol of frustration, enclosure and asphyxia. Flaubert himself, aware that Emma is often leaning out the window, explains that "the window in the provinces replaces the theater and the promenade" (II.7). More, however, is involved than a simple taste for spectacle. In fact, the symbolic uses of the window reveal not only a permanent dialectic of constriction and spatiality, but an implicit range of emotions embracing the major themes of the novel. (7)

While the windows allow Emma the agency to "dream of escape" or, as has been previously argued, to have authority over narrative voice, they also function as spatial limitations in the text. The windows mark a distinction between subjects. For instance, when Emma installs a garden at her windowsill and Leon, whose window she can gaze into from hers, "also had his own little hanging-garden; they would observe each other at the window, tending their flowers" (220). Both Emma and Leon share in their observation of the other.

However, in the scene where Emma gazes into the windows of the castle, there is a desire beyond observing. I argue, in tandem with Brombert's speculation on windows in *Madame Bovary*, that the window reveals a dialectic between spatiality and constriction that also applies to the body as a space inhabited by a perceiving subject. Emma's desire is not to enter the space of the bedroom, but rather to "penetrate" and to "merge" with the other (146). Therefore, the windows mark not only a spatial barrier between rooms, but also between bodies. Emma does not simply want to inhabit the space beyond

the windows but wants to inhabit their bodies and experience their point of view. In other words, she wishes to gaze from their windows, windows that only the narrator and the other has access to. Emma's desires are therefore impossible. Rather than being confronted by a doubled self from the broken window scene, Emma is confronted with a doubled barrier: the barrier of her body and the barrier of the other's.

The use of verbs "penetrate" and "merge" sexualize Emma's desire to appropriate point of views. Consequently, this desire to "merge" is played out through her intimate relationship with Léon, a relationship often described in language that connotes a fusion between bodies (146). When the two reunite in "Part III" of *Madame Bovary*, they begin to share in one narrative voice:

> They felt, eyeing each other, a buzzing in their heads, as if something audible had emanated from their fixed mutual gaze. Now they were hand in hand; the past and the future, reminiscence and reverie, were now melting together in the sweetness of that ecstasy. Darkness was gathering along the walls, where, half lost in the shadows, there flared the crude colours of four prints representing four scenes from La Tour de Nesle, with a text below in Spanish and French. Through the sash-window, they could see a scrap of dark sky between pointed roofs. (Flaubert 381)

The narrator uses "they" to indicate a now "shared mutual gaze" and the borders between their bodies dissolve as they both experience the same "buzzing in their heads." The two have now "melted together," thus their bodies and therefore their point of view becomes one merged entity. This image of merging when they hold hands is not unique: in "Part I" when Léon says goodbye to Emma, he holds her hand and feels "the very substance of his being flowing down into that moist palm" (262). Through the physical contact she has with Léon, Emma temporarily fulfils her desire to merge with another. This temporary merging is revealed not only through the body, but through the window in the aforementioned passage, which signals a now entirely joint perspective as they experience the same image of "a scrap of sky between pointed roofs." Through Emma's intimacy with Léon, the borders between bodies, and therefore points of view, are lifted. Rather than being faced with the possible interjection of another perspective, a new, shared voice increases the scope of Emma's authority over narrative voice.

The coming together of both Emma and Léon's bodies enables a joint perspective, which includes their sexual encounters. Sexual intercourse enables Léon and Emma to literally transcend the borders of the body, but also to isolate themselves from narrative voice and thus become alienated from any other narrative authority. In one of *Madame Bovary*'s most memorable and controversial scenes, where Léon seduces Emma within the closed space of the carriage, we as readers are placed in the same position as Emma was at the castle, unable to access her from within the closed space:

> Down by the harbour, in among the wagons and the great barrels, and in the streets, on every corner, the bourgeois gaped in amazement at this extraordinary thing appearing in a provincial town, a carriage with its blinds shut, coming into view like this over and over again, as secret as the grave and shuddering along like a ship at sea. // Just once, around midday, on the open road, when the sun was beating down on the old silvered carriage-lamps, an unclad hand was pushed out from behind the little yellow linen curtains. (476)

Once she begins having sex with Léon in the cab, Emma's narrative voice is temporarily expelled from the narrative. We are left to only imagine their intimacy through the movement of the carriage. Instead of following Emma's perspective in this instant, we follow that of the bourgeois gaping in amazement, whose gaze repeatedly draws our attention to the window without even mentioning it. Only the closed blinds "come into view" and "an unclad hand [...] from behind the little yellow linen curtains." The ever-present and simultaneously absent window hyperbolizes the impossibility of our entering the subjective perspective from within the cab. At this moment, we are placed in the same position as Emma was at the castle, unable to access the other. Indeed, when Emma leaves the cab, she is described anonymously as "a woman" with "her face veiled" (476). Through this new anonymity, Emma becomes an object that the narrative observes rather than a subject to which the narrative's consciousness has access. Objectification through her anonymity—rather than the objectification she faces through the male gaze mentioned above—gives her temporary authority over her own life without the intermediary voice of the narrator to translate her emotions and point of view for us.

Angela B. Moorjani argues that it is not only the cab that becomes eroticized by its movement through the landscape, but the whole textual world through fluid imagery: "Text, cab, landscape, and city are eroticized as the places visited become emblems of the female body" (51). The entire narrative landscape is captured as a representation of their sexual act. Through sexual intercourse, not only has Emma appropriated the role of the other she wishes to merge with at the castle, but she also gains command over the narrative's entire landscape. Moorjani explains that the narrator virtually disappears in this scene resulting in "a game of hide and seek with the nothingness inside the cab (from the narrative perspective) and the erotic activity readers are invited to glimpse through their own point of view" (52). The narrator has become as alienated as we have, which allows Emma's sexual act not only to take over the entire landscape, but also to become a temporary replacement for the narrator. However, this victory over narrative voice will not last. Eventually, Emma will reenter the consciousness of the narrative and fight with the many eyes that exist in the world of *Madame Bovary*.

Given that Emma's desire for narrative authority becomes sexualized, the windows, being the signal of subjective perspective, become erotic. The very opening of her window becomes a masturbatory act:

> When she felt the fierce heat of that intimate flame which adultery had kindled in her, breathless and shaking with desire she would open her window, breathe down the cold air, spread upon the wind the abundance of her hair, and, gazing up at the stars, dream of princely lovers. She was thinking of him, of Léon. (457)

When aroused, Emma opens her window and has what the image reveals to be a sexual experience. As the signal for subjective perception, the window is the intermediary space that symbolises *how* things are perceived by the one gazing. Thus, the erotic window suggests that she is not only craving Léon's touch, but possesses a deeper desire to integrate with her own subjectivity. However, this image of making love to one's own subjectivity is not narcissistic. Rather, it demonstrates her need for a more totalizing hold on her own voice. Emma is trapped within a narrative that was not hers to begin with. It was Charles' before she even entered it. Consequently, her romantic sensibilities and imaginative power are never allowed to come to full fruition within the

text. Her narrative desire is constantly interrupted by the subjective points of view of other characters and the objective reality the narrator has established for her. Emma's desire to merge with her own subjectivity is a desire to escape the limitations that have been placed on her authority to narrate her own perspective. In the end, through suicide, she finally escapes.

As Emma lays dying after ingesting arsenic, she laughs at the blind man's sudden appearance outside of her window. The blind man's presence suggests that her suicide is not only a choice to escape the desperate financial situation she has placed herself in, but a choice to remove herself from the narrative world of *Madame Bovary*. At first, Emma is revolted by the blind man; to her eyes, he is abject and grotesque: "he exposed, instead of eyelids, two yawning bloodstained holes[...] fluid was trickling out, congealing into green crusts that reached down to his nose" (513). The disgust that Emma feels towards the blind man is curious given her husband's profession. At several points within the novel, she is exposed to blood, rotting flesh, amputation, infection, and never has she had such a visceral response. Thus, her reaction must be due to something beyond physical disfigurement: his existence symbolically disturbs Emma. Scholars have argued that the blind man represents the grotesque reality that Emma has systematically harnessed her imagination to escape (Sachs, Thornton). However, it is more likely that the blind man embodies Emma's absolute fear: having no agency over narrative voice. In the imagistic world of *Madame Bovary*, narrative authority is accessed through the ability to create a visible landscape and voice is directed by the gaze, by what is seen. At first, Emma interpets the blind man as an embodiment of powerlessness over narrative voice. In the moment of her death, however, her laughter denotes her recognition of the blind man's absolute power over his gaze by actively excluding his perspective from the narrative. Despite Emma's initial revulsion, when she hears him outside her window just before the moment of her death, she laughs "an atrocious, frantic, desperate laugh, at the imagined sight of the beggar's hideous face, stationed in the eternal darkness" (616). Her exaggerated laughter as opposed to her earlier cry when he appears behind her (514) suggests that she no longer fears him. Her "imagined sight" of him reveals that she has finally accepted him within her field of vision, in contrast to an earlier moment within the text when she pays him in order to remove him from her sight (572). Her recognition of him is a recognition of the agency he possesses through the

exclusion of his perspective in the narrative. Thus, the blind man is exempt from any competition for narrative authority. Emma's laughter comes as she succumbs to the blindness of death, and therefore her own escape from the narrative voice. Indeed, the blind man's sudden existence within the text towards the end of the novel, as a figure that occasionally lurks behind Emma, symbolizes her impending suicide, her final "merge" with him in the "eternal darkness" where he resides.

In conclusion, Emma's plight is not simply an escape from her marriage or financial situation, but an escape from the constrictions that exist within the narrative framework assigned to her. Windows are a site that signal subjective perspective, but also authority over narrative voice. This is why there are so many scenes where Emma gazes out of the window; her imagination is allowed to rule the world she lives in even if it is for just a moment. Though Emma is never allowed complete agency over point of view as she contends with the many other eyes of *Madame Bovary*, there are moments, like that of the broken window of the Chateau, that grant her temporary authority over narrative voice. However, the other characters have their own windows, meaning they have their own subjective perspectives that are accessed by the narrative. Emma's desire for a totalizing agency over her world results in a desire to merge with the other in order to widen her authority over perspective. Like the windows, her intimacy with Léon allows her to merge with him and thus she temporarily succeeds in her desire to broaden her perspective. The power she experiences from this merge culminates in the scene of the cab, where the imagery of the landscape and the movement of the cab become visual representations of their sexual encounter. Thus, Emma succeeds in both removing herself from the narrative gaze while paradoxically transforming the whole landscape into it. In the end, despite the several efforts made for agency over her fictional world, the only solution seems to be removing herself from the narrative entirely. Thus, Emma's suicide is not the result of a desperate financial situation, or the dissatisfaction she experiences in her romantic life, but a last resort to escape the narrative world that had imprisoned her.

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The "I" and Eyes of *As I Lay Dying*: The Body as a Border Between Worlds

SARAH DESROSIERS-LEGAULT

William Faulkner's novel *As I lay Dying* is a phenomenologically conscious narrative in which the bodies of the characters author the world. The novel engages all the senses and consequently illustrates characters as full-bodied subjects. However, of all the senses, Faulkner privileges sight as the primary way through which his subjects experience and perceive their environment. Indeed, the act of seeing becomes the form through which all other senses are consistently understood. For instance, the "Chuck, Chuck, Chuck" at the end of the opening chapter appears slanted on the page and visually evinces the sound of the adze echoing in the background (5); Vardaman can see "hearing […] smell and sound" (57); Dewey Dell can feel with her eyes (62); and both Darl and Addie's eyes have the ability to touch others (44, 121). Moreover, the characters are hyper aware of the other's gaze; Faulkner often describes the eyes of others and consistently informs the reader about where people are — or are not — looking. The word "eye(s)" appears in the novel over one-hundred times and the verb "to look" appears nearly four-hundred times.[1] Through this emphasis, eyes become the site of the characters' subjectivity and thus of the liminality between external and internal landscapes. Vision is not restricted to what is seen in the present, external world but also includes interior modes of seeing such as imagination and visual memory. Thus, the characters understand themselves and the world through a kind of visual history and language.

[1] Comparatively, the word "ear" shows up twice, the verb "to hear" seventy-five times, the word "nose" nine times, the verb "to smell" twenty-five times, the word "mouth" thirty-eight times; the verb "to taste" appears twice, the verb "to touch" twenty-nine times, and "to feel" forty times. While hearing is the highest of those other senses, what is heard is repeatedly described visually. For instance, Vernon Tull compares the sound of people talking to "bees murmuring in a water-bucket" (Faulkner 87); Addie uses the image of spiders dangling from mouths to describe speaking (172). In such a way, the intangibility of sound is made tangible through the visibility of images.

This paper will argue that, upon Addie Bundren's death, the Bundrens are confronted with an "abject nakedness" (46) that escapes their visual language[2]: the corpse. This new insertion into their visual register disorients the ways in which they see the world and the other. In a novel already concerned with subjectivity and the borders of experience, this disorientation results in a focus on the body as a border between the interior world of being and the external world. After Addie's death, the ontological question of the novel becomes: how is the body distinguished from being and the world?

The opening scenes of the novel establish the narrative's concern with the relationship between internal and external spaces. Through the characters' gaze, the interior spaces of the cotton-house and the Bundrens' home contends with the external world. This contention foreshadows concerns centred around the body as a container for being which Addie's death later initiates. The text opens from Darl's perspective with the expressed intent of visually depicting the scene: "anyone watching us from the cotton-house can see Jewel's frayed and broken straw hat a full head above my own" (3). Darl's depiction of the environment includes perspectives outside of his own and expands definitions of sight. He continues to render a detailed mapping of the landscape and the cotton-house until his attention is directed solely on Jewel:

> Jewel, fifteen feet behind me, looking straight ahead, steps in a single stride through the window. Still staring straight ahead, his pale eyes like wood set into his wooden face, he crosses the floor in four strides with the rigid gravity of a cigar-store Indian dressed in patched overalls and endued with life from the hips down, and steps in a single stride through the

[2] I use the word "language" to signify the ways in which images are stored in the mind and form a system through which the mind communicates with a visual landscape. That is to say, how the orientation of objects convey their function as either stagnant or in motion for Anse Bundren. The insertion of a road within the visual landscape alters the way in which the world is understood (Faulkner 36-37).

> opposite window and into the path again just as I come around the corner. (4)

Darl, fifteen feet ahead, somehow renders Jewel with great detail as he enters through one window, and resurfaces out of the other. This focus on Jewel's movement upon entering and exiting the cotton-house already reveals the narrative's interest in borders between spaces. Nevertheless, these borders do not limit Darl's perception of the world; Jewel's movement within the cotton house is provided down to the number of strides he takes once inside. At first glance, it seems as though this narration of the invisible is an act of omniscience. However, Darl is able to describe the scene because the images already exist within his visual lexicon. His description of Jewel as having eyes "like wood set into his wooden face" reoccurs throughout the narrative and reveals that Darl applies images previously engrained in his perception of Jewel onto the scene (181). Thus, Faulkner immediately expands ways of seeing to include both imagination and memory. Darl's expanded sight, through a visual language that includes what is not presently seen, enables him to narrate and interact with both internal and external spaces at once.

The dynamics of Addie's death scene subvert the expectations that Darl's opening narration of Jewel establishes. Like the scene at the cotton-house, the death scene highlights a contention between internal and external spaces through the window and the gaze. Darl is still out with Jewel during Addie's death and thus does not directly witness it. However, whereas he is able to render the image of Jewel with great detail, despite his inability to see it, he fails to capture Addie. This failure suggests that Darl lacks the language and visual history to create an image of his mother's dying body. Indeed, once Addie dies, she disappears from his narration all together:

> [Cash] looks up at the gaunt face framed by the window in the twilight. It is a composite picture of all time since he was a child. He drops the saw and lifts the board for her to see, watching the window in which the face has not moved. He drags a second plank into position and slants the two of them into their final juxtaposition, gesturing toward the ones yet on the ground, shaping with his empty hand in pantomime the finished box. For a while still she looks down at him from the composite picture, neither with censure nor approbation. Then the face disappears. (48)

Darl imagines Cash looking through the window at Addie while she simultaneously takes one final look out of the window at her casket being built. In his article "Perception and the Destruction of Being in 'As I Lay Dying'," Homer Pettey observes that Darl has constructed the scene in terms of frames: "Addie's 'gaunt face,' itself a 'composite picture' suggestive of a framed image, is framed by the window; Cash's pantomime of the completed coffin frames Addie; and Darl's narrative frames the scene" (31). Pettey argues that the several framed images reveal Darl's desire to make Addie an object to be observed, and yet no object resides: the coffin is empty and the "composite picture" is of memory and not of any present object that can be observed. This absence is further reinforced by the lack of Cash's memories given that he is not the one narrating the scene (Pettey 33). Indeed, though Addie is the focus of the scene, she is virtually absent. However, the layered framing, particularly that of her in the window, situates Addie within the liminality of internal and external spaces. Addie's face, like a framed "picture," becomes the window — the opening through which internal and external spaces meet.

In the stages of dying and the moment of her death, Addie's entire being is reduced to her eyes. This reduction both hyperbolizes her embodiment of borders between spaces and also reveals the inability to fit the "abject nakedness" of her decay into the visual lexicon of the other characters. The emphasis on Addie's eyes is not limited to the members of the Bundren family. Indeed, Peabody, the doctor, curiously offers no diagnosis or account of the body, except for the eyes which he can only understand through metaphor: "Only her eyes seem to move. It's like they touch us, not with sight or sense, but like the stream from a hose touches you, the stream at the instant of impact as dissociated from the nozzle as though it had never been there" (Faulkner 44). Addie's eyes are imagined as a hose while her gaze, without "sight or sense," is the stream of water disassociated from its source. The rest of her body, which Peabody only refers to as the part of her beneath the quilt, is no more than a "bundle of rotten sticks" (44). Thus, her entire being is reduced to her eyes. The hose, much like the window, is the opening through which the gaze is dispelled, ever enforcing her liminal existence. Addie's liminal position between internal and external worlds is expressed in the way others perceive her body. Thus, Addie's eyes introduce a new focal point of containment besides the cotton-house or the home: the body. Indeed, Peabody describes death as no more than "a single tenant […] moving out

of a tenement" (44). Like the cotton-house or the home, the body is now understood as an enclosed structure that can be evacuated.

The abject nakedness of Addie's dying and dead body stems from her sheer materiality. In "Extremities of the Body: The Anoptic Corporeality of As I Lay Dying," Erin Edwards argues that Addie's absent body functions as a "blind spot that undoes the certainty of medical diagnosis and knowledge about the body." She explains, "through Addie's corpse, *As I Lay Dying* reasserts bodily materiality … but as that which escapes the control, understanding, and visual structures of power" (743). Peabody's clinical gaze of the body should provide an assessment that completes the body by encapsulating its entire anatomy, making what lies beyond the limits of the bodily surface visible (742). Paradoxically, Addie's body both escapes the visual world of the other and asserts its materiality. Her disembodied eyes, her gaze without vision, situates her within an uncanny, pure materiality that escapes any incorporation within the visual language of the other characters. This intrusion of sheer materiality infects her family with a concern for how their own bodies can be distinguished from the world and from their ontology.

Immediately following the death scene, Vardaman's first chapter reveals the way in which the body becomes the focus of containment. Distraught, Vardaman runs out of the house and into the barn where he contemplates the ontology of Peabody's horse in relation to his own:

> It is as though the dark were resolving him out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components—snuffings and stampings; smells of cooling flesh and ammoniac hair; an illusion of a coordinated whole of splotched hide and strong bones within which, detached and secret and familiar, an is different from my is. I see him dissolve—legs, a rolling eye, a gaudy splotching like cold flames—and float upon the dark in fading solution; all one yet neither; all either yet none. (56-57)

The horse's body occupies Vardaman's entire field of vision as he attempts to differentiate it from *being* and the darkness of the barn. However, just as Addie's body was never assessed in full, neither is the horse's. The darkness of the barn resolves the horse "out of its integrity." The composite picture from Darl's attempt to describe Addie returns in the fragmented depiction of the

horse which is only the "illusion of a coordinated whole." However, unlike Darl, Vardaman's use of the word "illusion" suggests that he is aware of his failure to offer a complete image of the horse — an awareness that there is a part of the body concealed beneath the hide which remains invisible to the eye. Like Peabody, Vardaman cannot give a full clinical assessment that reconciles the exterior part of the body with the materiality of its interior. In addition to a material interior, somewhere within the bones and flesh resides the horse's "is"— it's being, which Vardaman recognizes as different from his own. Nonetheless, the horse is an external object onto which he can visually project his anxieties about his own materiality. Darl makes a similar observation about Jewel's horse: "the shape of its mane and tail and the splotches of its coat had nothing whatever to do with the flesh-and-bone horse inside" (134-135). After Addie's death, Darl also becomes conscientious of the fact that there is both an inner and outer part of the body. Therefore, the children make a conscious attempt to incorporate the materiality of Addie's corpse into their visual lexicon. Moreover, Vardaman also contemplates the relationship between the horse's body and the external world. The border between the parts of the horse and the darkness of the barn become muddled as the body is both "all one yet neither; all either yet none" (57). This observation reveals the unavoidably entangled relationship between mind and body. In the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the body is "in the world as a heart is in the organism" (235). There is a way in which, through our senses, the world is sustained by the body. Thus, Vardaman begins to understand the body as a liminal space that mediates the relationship between the world and the self. Just like the "rolling eye" of the horse is only a part of the horse, so too is the horse's body only a part of the world. The horse is sustained by Vardaman's vision and thus they are in coexistence with each other through his experience, and the horse is in coexistence with the world given its ability to sense it.

For Darl, Addie's death triggers a similar questioning of the body in relation to being and objects outside of it. Darl's ontological speculation centered around sleep reveals the ways in which he attempts to fit death within his visual register:

> In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are

> filled with sleep, you never were. I don't know what I am . . . Beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours, the load that is no longer theirs that felled and sawed it nor yet theirs that bought it and which is not ours either, lie on our wagon though it does, since only the wind and the rain shape it only to Jewel and me, that are not asleep. And since sleep is *is-not* and rain and wind are *was*, it is not. Yet the wagon *is*, because when the wagon is *was*, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel is, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am is. (80)

The insertion of death into Darl's visual register engenders his concern with subject-hood as something that can be "emptied." Robert Hemenway argues that this passage exemplifies the ontological quest triggered by Addie's death: "To understand death they must establish a definition of life" (135). Confronted with the corpse, Darl attempts to understand his own state of being in relation to Addie's. Since sleep is a state of oblivion, it is a fitting point of contrast in order to define what being is. Therefore, the part of self that Darl thinks is evacuated must be *being*, which Darl comes to define as "is," the present tense of *to be*. According to Hemenway, this conclusion defines existence as "consciousness itself, a definition that limits man's essence to the "is" of present tense reality" (136). Thus, subject-hood is understood temporally: consciousness as the experience of now. However, Darl's syllogism is not limited to the present; Darl turns to images that exist "beyond the unlamped wall" of the room (Faulkner 80). He is able to fill in the blind spots through his imagination and memory of the objects from earlier in the narrative. Like the "is" of the horse, the "is" of the wagon and the load are different from his own is. The load, before it has been "felled and sawed," exists only as an image in his memory and no longer in material reality (80). Moreover, when the wagon no longer exists where it is situated in the memory, Darl would arrive at the point where Addie no longer exists, which he cannot yet conceptualize (Hemenway 137-138). Darl knows that when he delivered the wood, his mother died. Thus, the wagon must retain its "is." Despite his inability to incorporate Addie's death into the images of his mind, her death shapes his understanding of being. His understanding of being, that which

visualizes the wagon and the load, hinges on the fact that it can be emptied from the body. Like Addie's eyes at the moment of her death, described by Darl as "two flames" that "go out as though someone had leaned down and blown upon them," Darl's being is also capable of being extinguished from his body (Faulkner 48).

Unlike Darl, whose vision retreats inside to the landscape of memory, Dewey Dell attempts to externalize the interiority of her material body into the world. Dewey Dell is not concerned with what she can see as much as with what she cannot see. This concern stems from her pregnancy, which she does not have visual access to. Indeed, the only indicator for her pregnancy in these early stages is a lack — the absence of her period. Thus, Dewey Dell attempts to externalize her pregnancy through metaphors within her visual field. This externalization evolves after Addie's death, as the images become the flesh and internal organs that are contained by the body. Prior to her mother's death, Dewey Dell understands both sex and her condition through the act of picking cotton:

> And we picked on toward the secret shade and our eyes would drown together touching on his hands and my hands and I didn't say anything. I said "What are you doing?" and he said "I am picking into your sack." And so it was full when we came to the end of the row and I could not help it. (27)

Lafe manipulates Dewey Dell by taking advantage of her ignorance and using the euphemism of picking cotton to ease her into sexual intercourse. Dewey Dell maintains the metaphor of the sack when referring to her pregnancy when she says that her sack "was full" (27). Thus, the sack full of cotton is an external, visual reference through which she can understand what is going on out of sight and in her body. However, Dewey Dell's metaphor changes following the death of her mother:

> It's like everything in the world for me is inside a tub full of guts, so that you wonder how there can be any room in it for anything else very important. He is a big tub of guts and I am a little tub of guts and if there is not any room for anything else important in a big tub of guts, how can it be room in a little tub of guts. (58)

Dewey Dell now conceptualizes her pregnancy through grotesque, bodily imagery. She imagines Peabody as a "big tub of guts," herself as a "little tub of guts," and her baby as an even smaller one inside her. The tubs containing the guts highlights her awareness of the body as a border between the self and others. Dewey Dell claims that, due to her pregnancy, she does not have time to let Addie die or to allow her mother's death to become a reality (120). Yet, the change in how she sees the world after Addie's death reveals that she cannot escape the "abject nakedness" of bodily reality. Everything in the world for her is in a "tub of guts"; and the image of the cotton and the sack will no longer suffice. Indeed, her entire perception of the world is conceptualized through bodily images: "That's what they mean by the womb of time: the agony and despair of spreading bones, the hard girdle in which lie the outraged entrails of events" (121). The fabrics of the world—time, language, and the material—have all become saturated with flesh.

In conclusion, *As I Lay Dying* is deeply engaged with subjectivity and the limits thereof. This subjectivity is encapsulated by the eyes and visible language of the characters. The novel's specific interest in sight allows the characters to develop a visual lexicon that informs their world view. Darl's narration at the opening of the novel reveals the way in which the characters of *As I Lay Dying* operate within an expanded visual language that includes imagination and memory. However, the death of their mother resists being incorporated into this visual register. Through her position by the window and the reduction of her entire being to her eyes, Addy's decaying body becomes synonymous with borders between internal and external spaces. Thus, the narrative's concern with interiority and exteriority shifts to the body as a site that mediates both the internal *being* and external world of the characters. Grief, in *As I Lay Dying* is expressed through the characters' experience of the world, and themselves within it.

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Motherhood, Love, Revenge, and Sin: Addie Bundren's Monologue and the Embodied Experience

IZABELA KÖENIG

Language, its mechanisms and limitations, and how these processes define characters' engagement with the world are central to William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*. Addie Bundren most thoroughly articulates these concepts in her monologue, summarised in one question: are words capable of capturing experience and expressing it in its entirety? According to the mother of the Bundren family, the answer is a resounding no. Addie denounces word-only language systems as inadequate and incomplete; one must experience the world in order to understand its workings—words alone do not accomplish this task. Instead, she proposes an embodied approach to language using experience as the tie between the word and the world. Moreover, once the world is experienced and meaning is derived from this process, language becomes obsolete: we either have an individual understanding of the world, shared only by experience, or we are doomed to use an empty language where words are placeholders for our lack of experience. Addie differentiates these two language systems through her experience of motherhood; from this concept, she learns and enacts the meaning of love, revenge, and sin.

The central chapter in *As I Lay Dying*, Addie Bundren's only monologue throughout the novel, contains an indictment of words favouring lived experiences; motherhood, for Addie, despite being a fragmentary process, acts as her most important embodied experience. Addie claims that, after marrying Anse and giving birth to Cash, she "learned that words are no good; that words dont [*sic*] ever fit even what they are trying to say at" (Faulkner 171). She argues that after giving birth to Cash, she came to realise that words are devoid of meaning, marking more a lack of reference on the part of the speaker than a connection with what the word purports to represent. It is precisely the term motherhood that makes Addie understand the need for an embodied experience to grasp its whole meaning. Once

experienced, motherhood does not need to be defined in words. Furthermore, Addie posits that "motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it because the ones that had the children didn't care whether there was a word for it or not" (172). In other words, those who experience motherhood do not need a word for it; only those who do not go through the process of motherhood would be satisfied with a word that captures only part of the experience. Nevertheless, for Addie, motherhood is not the same as pregnancy: the latter is experienced as defilement, while the former offers the opportunity of reintegration of self.

Addie Bundren qualifies the experience of pregnancy as one of violation: according to her, once Cash is born, her aloneness, until then unviolated, "not even by Anse in the nights," is fragmented (172). The term pregnancy as it is generally understood in a word-based language does not encompass the loss of unity felt by Addie upon this violation of the self, hence her scepticism regarding the power of words to accurately represent reality. Laurel Bollinger points out that Addie's first pregnancy prompts her "to reevaluate the linguistic realm, recognizing the distance between lived experience and language" (440). For Addie, becoming a mother means a permanent "split"; perhaps, this violation stems from no longer being only one. After the split, Addie can only possibly be happy if both mother and child are happy. Her wellbeing, therefore, is rendered dependent on another consciousness, another body—in this case, Cash.

However, the violation represented by pregnancy transforms into wholeness again—a oneness inclusive of the child. Addie argues that the oneness she lost when she became pregnant is a defilement, but contains within itself a restorative power: her "aloneness had been violated and then made whole again by the violation" (Faulkner 172). Addie's relationship with Cash brings her a sense of unity restored while she is in a closed circle with her child, a circle that excludes everybody else, even Anse. The paradoxical experience of pregnancy and motherhood is thus restorative, leading to further perception of the wholeness of self, albeit now split into two parts, mother and child. As Bollinger puts it, Addie "clearly prizes the embodied experience of maternity, considering abstractions as artificial and faulty—much like language itself, which she sees as separating rather than connecting individuals" (440). The connection Addie and Cash share through their relationship bypasses language altogether and brings about the understanding of another embodied experience—that of love.

Love appears in Addie's monologue as a term used in both word-based and experience-based language systems. While the latter marks the connection between Addie and Cash, the former evinces the fundamental difference between how Anse and Addie use language. In one of his books, *Faulkner's As I Lay Dying*, André Bleikasten separates the novel's characters into two groups, the doers (Addie, Cash, Jewel) and the talkers (Anse, Cora, Whitfield) to provide the two sides of an antagonism formed between the reality of life and the unreality of words dramatised in the novel (134). The latter group, Bleikasten argues, uses speech as a mask and sham, where "the words they use are not the expression of any reality, but its substitute; they do not translate an experience, they take its place" (135). According to this analysis, not only are words inadequate to depict the world truthfully, they contain an insidious nature. More than mere stand-ins for events yet to be lived, or empty containers to be filled with individual experiences, words are prescriptive—precluding experience of the concept, in reality, blocking understanding, and rendering the process of making meaning through lived experience unattainable.

The opposition between the approach of a doer and that of a talker is made apparent in the use of the word love: while Anse talks about love, using the word to define his connection with his wife, Addie declares that "that word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack" (Faulkner 172). This vacuity of meaning of spoken words denounced by Addie exposes that the love she came to understand by embodying it took place in the context of motherhood, for her connection with Cash is unspoken but understood. "Cash did not need to say it to me nor I to him," she adds, "and I would say, Let Anse use it, if he wants to. So that it was Anse or love; love or Anse: it didn't matter" (172). This interchangeability of terms (Anse and love) only exposes how meaningless repeated words become when not anchored by experience; by disregarding the word love and relegating it to the realm of the talkers — Anse's realm — by no means does Addie imply that what she feels for Anse is love. She merely locates the empty usage of the word outside of the embodied experience of love, that is, outside of the circle created by herself and Cash. Moreover, if words are "just [shapes] to fill a lack" (172), when Anse mentions love, the term acts as a placeholder for the concept of love. For Addie, what the word denotes is not love itself but the lack thereof. However, not all violating processes of pregnancy result in oneness restored by maternity; when Addie becomes pregnant for the second time, she experiences resentment and not love.

Addie's second pregnancy is marked by another opposition between embodied experience and word-based language. This pregnancy engenders feelings of betrayal and plots of revenge against Anse, whom Addie believes has tricked her with words. Bleikasten makes an important distinction when dealing with Addie's feelings of resentment towards Anse. He posits that, although her resentment is first directed at her husband, Addie soon realises he has been taken in by the deceptive nature of words much like herself (135), declaring "I had been tricked by words older than Anse or love, and that the same word had tricked Anse too" (Faulkner 172). Even though Anse uses a word-based language system when he talks about love, which is expected of a talker, Addie understands that he has once been tricked. However, this understanding does not prevent Addie from focusing her anger around her pregnancy on Anse and from holding him responsible for her violation.

Addie responds to her second pregnancy with incredulity and rage, all of which she directs at Anse. Moreover, Addie declares that Anse is dead and does not know it. Addie's perception of Anse's presence is reduced to a word, which, much like the term love, only serves as a placeholder for a lack. In Addie's fantasy, Anse's lifeless essence melts and fills the shape of his name, a name which she then forgets:

> I would think about his name until after a while I could see the word as a shape, a vessel, and I would watch him liquify and flow into it like cold molasses flowing out of the darkness into the vessel, until the jar stood full and motionless: a significant shape profoundly without life like an empty door frame; and then I would find that I had forgotten the name of the jar" (173).

The habitual action of this fantasy nurtured by Addie is marked by the use of past tense verbs such as 'would think,' 'could see,' 'would watch,' and 'would find'; the visual element of a door frame denotes contempt for Anse in the emptiness of the image, while forgetting the name of the jar may suggest Addie's disregard or detachment from Anse, allied to the claim that Anse is dead — to her at least. Addie's second pregnancy does not elicit in her the same fusing of mother and child as her first. Bollinger argues that "[by] forcing maternity into a gesture over which Addie has no control," reducing it to what Anse describes as 'chapping' (Faulkner 173), "Darl's conception

produces a crisis of embodiment" in Addie (Bollinger 445). With Darl's birth, Addie's unitary identity splits anew with no chance of bonding with her child or reintegrating herself into motherhood. She is no longer one or a circle of two. Addie is "three now," irretrievably fragmented (Faulkner 173).

The violation brought about by Addie's second pregnancy provokes feelings of resentment and inspires a revenge plot against Anse, as she perceives words such as love as a ruse employed by him to impregnate her. Addie understands this pregnancy as a metaphorical backstabbing; she declares that she could kill Anse, for "it was as though he had tricked [her], hidden within a word like within a paper screen and struck [her] in the back through it" (172). Hence, the deep resentment and the feeling she has been deceived by Anse into having more children: she splits into more parts with every child she bears. Bleikasten argues that "[if] Addie begins by denouncing the futility of words, experience eventually teaches her to acknowledge their power" (135). Bleikasten also notes that though men might think they are in control, and able to employ language to achieve their purposes, it is language that in fact uses them, makes a game of them, and urges them to act in ways they do not intend. Therefore, despite Addie's exhortation of a lived experience of reality, *As I Lay Dying* serves as an ironical illustration of the power of words over humans: the whole action of the novel stems from the word given to Addie by Anse (135-136). Since Addie requests to be buried in Jefferson, her revenge plan kicks into gear as soon as she dies—the family must go on a trip to honour her wishes (Faulkner 173). On this revenge trip to Jefferson, each child of the Bundren family is condemned to experience flood, fire, grief, and loss. The most tragic result of this revenge is that Anse is the only Bundren to come back to Yoknapatawpha County with more than what he departed with. Anse does lose mules and his cart, but he gains much more at the expense of his children's few possessions, not to mention their physical and mental health: new mules, new teeth, and a new wife.

The last embodied experience outlined by Addie in her monologue, her affair with Whitfield, an evangelical preacher, brings Addie the embodied experience of sin. The affair therefore converges all of her embodied experiences in Jewel, in whom motherhood, love, revenge, and sin intersect. Addie's connection with Whitfield acts as a foil to her marriage to Anse. Although her connection with Whitfield does not necessarily depict an embodied experience of love, so much as one of desire, by using the

exact mechanisms as that of Anse's idea of love—physical intimacy and the conception of a child—the two relationships are parallel in a way that highlights the lack of meaning in the term love when used by Anse. Bollinger argues that in her affair with Whitfield, "Addie sets out to repair language by reconstituting it in an embodied form," marking her departure from the type of language Anse uses (440). She seeks to fully enact sin; Addie has an affair with "the instrument ordained by God who created the sin, to sanctify that sin He had created" (Faulkner 174). Addie's description of sin centres on experiencing her extramarital connection with Whitfield without shame, fusing body and language: "I would think of the sin as garments which we would remove in order to shape and coerce the terrible blood to the forlorn echo of the dead word high in the air" (175). Bollinger argues that Addie uses a grammar of habitual past to denote repeated action, making sin a bodily "deed" rather than a "dead word high up in the air" or an abstraction not centred on embodied understanding" (Faulkner 174-75, Bollinger 441). Moreover, by tying their activities to action and language, blood and word, Addie constructs a more embodied form of language, enacting the Christian-biblical construct of Word made Flesh, which makes "sanctify" a particularly apt description of the process she undertakes (Bollinger 440).

Addie's tale of adultery comes imbued with Biblical language that adds to the significance of the word she gleans from the process: sin is a loaded term in religious texts, whose original responsibility is often ascribed to the woman. The fact that the other actor in her embodied experience of sin is a preacher reveals yet another layer of connection with religion. When Addie declares that she imagines herself and Whitfield as "dressed in sin" (Faulkner 174), she introduces a perversion of the idea of absolution: only divesting themselves of the garments of sin will they be redeemed. In other words, Addie seeks to absolve herself of the sin by undressing and engaging in a sexual relationship with the preacher. She recognizes that, while the garment she exchanges for sin is not particularly special, Whitfield's is more beautiful since the garment which he exchanges for sin is sanctified—yet another term with heavy religious connotations (174-175). The garments in question can be thought of as their positions in the community: while Addie is Anse's wife and a mother of two children, Whitfield is a man of God, someone who is expected to uphold a high moral standard in the community.

Addie's affair with an instrument of God generates a parallel between the roles of Addie and Mary, and Jewel's own parallel with Jesus start to align. Almost prophetically, Addie declares to Cora that Jewel is both "[her] cross and … [her] salvation" (168). In this passage, what Cora interprets as being blasphemy turns out to be true. Addie declares that Jewel will save her from the water and the fire even after she has laid down her life (168), which he does when he pulls the cart containing her coffin out of the ford (154-155) or when he single handedly removes her coffin from the burning barn (222). Jewel may not be the redeemer of humankind, but he is a child conceived by a woman and God's emissary in sanctified sin, and he surely saves Addie's corpse from water and fire. Furthermore, as a product of the affair with Whitfield, Jewel is the physical reminder of Addie's indiscretion, and the element that ties Addie's embodied experience of motherhood to that of sin. Moreover, the experience of love for a child, which Addie only understands when having Cash, may have been repeated in the birth of Jewel. However, Addie feels ambivalent: she must love Jewel since he is hers alone and connected to her in more than one way by interconnected embodied experiences, making the words sin, revenge, love, and motherhood intersect.

In *As I Lay Dying*, the experiences of characters are framed by language and its limits. Addie Bundren's rejection of a prescriptive, word-based language where words are mere placeholders for the absence of meaning reveals another way to relate to the world. By proposing embodied experiences of meaning-making, Addie opposes how other characters, particularly Anse, use and see language. Motherhood is the central concept of Addie's system and the embodied experience of giving birth to Cash sets in motion the apprehension of subsequent concepts. As explored by Addie, the concept of motherhood must be separated from her pregnancy experience. Pregnancy, a violation, is remedied by motherhood, at least in the case of Cash. There is a paradox in Addie's first incursion into motherhood, that is, a fragmentation that leads to wholeness, but this process seems to have occurred only with Cash and potentially with Jewel. As Addie puts it, the other three children are Anse's and not hers (Faulkner 176). Addie's pregnancies of Cash, Darl and Jewel are especially important for the investigation of an experience-based language; Dewey Dell and Vardaman are born as a result of a calculation made by Addie — Dewey Dell "to negative" the illegitimacy of Jewel, and Vardaman as restitution for the child Addie took

away from Anse (176). Scholars debate whether Vardaman is supposed to replace Cash, the child closest to Addie (an interpretation which I believe to be the most plausible), or the child to replace the one Anse and Addie never had, whose spot Jewel took. Finally, Faulkner may be playing with the notion that an embodied experience of language is promoted by a character whose death permeates all aspects of the novel. It seems to be at least curious (if not morbidly humorous) that Faulkner uses Addie as a mouthpiece for an embodied experience of language and meaning-making; by the time we get to read her monologue and throughout most of the novel, Addie Bundren is just body. How else would she experience the world at that point?

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Poem compilation

OVÅL

Flow Transe

Perhaps nothing could blind you,
But remember that open eyes can't hide from space
Even corpses gather the morning dew
Their open white eyes in the holes of their face

And perhaps nothing can hurt you still,
But show me a man who refuses to feel
Plummeting dogs from machines of grey steel
The soft throwes of head and the gargle in cheeks
(And the keys that get lost on the keychain
Stick like the folds and the stains of my sheets)

I don't think I can see you & crawl through your eyes
I don't think I can make you reversed, like the peel of a grapefruit gouged and turned inside out You cling and clang and see that you rock to the beats that you make on your very own drum And the flow that you write and you sing and you dance
Will make any one following fall into trance
But you hate it, don't you (bis)

And you'd like to smash our throats

And you love it, don't you (bis)

And you'd like to make us live every night

Because here we are on this jolly-odd walk like dogs on a leash or a cat on a stalk

I can smell through your eyes but i can smile through them but ill lead you through town
nonetheless.

And the pegs of your legs and the chains of your key
Don't talk to each other
Like they used to

Your lost keys
And your open eyes
And the smile you put on and the way that you chant and the

Tricycles that see you pass
And the cars how they honk, love tired and scared
Affection and affliction alike

Pardon me sir, I know that you're funning,
But please my dear sir it's too late

And i know that all that you want is behind
So lead it out to its fate

And the patters in the city
They're jagged and crumbling

And they follow you across the fall of the city
The autumn dancer the walls they fall
And the churches go follow you home
(your new home)

And so here we are now
Please don't record

I'd rather be no one today
And here we are now
On the grey boulevards and we dance among shivering alleys and streets

So we have not a cause
And we give not a pause
And we shout and we sing and we play

And the birds on the wire
That smoke cigarettes
And fuck all those women and greece

Let them all fly away
And we'll stay and stay
And we'll fry our way through the evening

But when we have landed

From our beat-worthy transes
We might look back in dismay
How to find this lost time once again
How i must do something else
But we will not forget
The man entertainer
And the hip-hoppy scotchy embrace
Of his voice and his shoes and his bold elbow moves And the love and the hate and dismay

So now my dear people,
I existed and didn't
And none will know i was here

American Depression

I did will won't can't Fondly remember
the bright stained glassware, the
Wishes and hope it had blown into it by the Mothers to
their daughters to their ragged Theodore bears that bore the
weight of shame and shamelessness, inanimately
incompassionate
mom's idle hands needling a throughline
Through the bear's eyes and dad's breaking of the
Yellowed Blues and greens because all
he could give us were old beans and shards
Of cutting hope and glass that would
Leave teddy alone to tell me I was
A big girl ready to sleep, get up,
And cut myself at dawn on the
Yellow shards of mourning hope

Writing Improvisation Using "Wealth," "Attraction," "Damage," "Emulate," and "Ostrogoths"

She smells of white like a lily, and presumed herself chaste
But when Saturnalia comes, chariots aren't the only ones giving chase
So damages, breaks, until there's no land left for bait
She'll be one for the centuries to emulate
But Hadrianopolis brings not what was sought
And now she'll be ruled by the king of the Ostrogoths
So I drink to your wealth as I read your first comb,
And remember once knowing the girl who called herself Rome

Noticed ER Moments, Dramatised

A compilation of unrelated moments I picked up on, single-handedly typed out on a dying Computer.

I
Red eyed, curl-mouthed ex-mothers are
Only a shard in this mosaic of moments
"Sorry about your child, m'am, he seemed like a nice kid"
The nurses (somehow seamlessly??) chatter through and about the
Broken minds and bodies
Of unforgettable patients that will likely
Comme un point dans la foule be lost by the weekend.

II
The smiles that he gives his mother, and the
Chuckle that she bubbles back up from her now soft lips.

III
In the corner is a man who has tasted Sherbrooke
(the street) with much more than his feet
(clingy she tried to grab his arm from his hand)
Sat in these chairs his patience can stand,
But idle are hands when they're told they'll be scanned

IV
I'm witnessing a couple, two Icaruses
Who in the ER trade more than caresses
Give them some time in a year they'll be done
With those burn marks they have it seems
they both got to the sun.

V
"Please sir, be clement, it's for your own good"
The needle that's coming won't to be understood

VI
" ... We got the results."
The tiny voice on the phone wiggles to a stop.
"It's positive… I should call jack"
She hangs up.
Congratulations on your chlamydia, Jack.

The Sistine Chape of Impressionism

The Sistine chapel of Impressionism waves at me 3from Paris, France.
The subtle glance of still-life lilies form a silent dance which
Sits me down and tells me that
War like life has no third act.
Be like those cataract yellows,
And pump your eyes out to Verdun

But when your sons (if they do) return,
Let them awe at your painted garden sun.

France is a crutch. France is a net.
France is the Christ? Clovis lost his bet.

So paint away, and make your hollow love be seen
And let those filthy anarchists tell you to
live your truth out, Queen.

A Poem, Most Obviously Written in the Class of the English

Look at how the sovereigns, chained by the river
Lawrence Changed their identity with ice, touch, and shivers
The modernist poets, beleaguered and anglo,
Enter Quebec and the revolution (so slow)

So what is Anglo-Quebecois literature?
Angry canadians? Bilingual submissives?

English canadians, informed by modernist tendencies
And not marginalised pits of red
There was so much silence
Left to be said

Is there an Anglo-Quebecois Literature?
NO! Queb lit is French lit
NO? Those ***square heads*** don't
know how to pronounce
the province

Paradoxical effect, though.
Creative space created by a negative.
The questions, foundations of literature,
Seep up from the cracks to
Strangle itself into existence in
A painful reddish blue now-purple hue.

A city exists when it becomes a question.
A literature exists when it becomes a
question. You don't find any answers on
crescent street.

So turn yourself to Quebec literature,
Under the strain of Goliaths,
This blue wood needs plaster
This rotting blue wood
All of this plaster
At least it's not on fire.
English is minor
Abitibi minors
Curé mineur.
Jeanne! A l'aide!!

"English in Quebec will always be
a leash pretending it's a ribbon."

Why do we settle on referendums make it
One big General Assembly.
Bring back Levesque from the dead,
Or the smiles on election posters.
A collage.
A mirage.

But look! A rebranding! English no more is the language of the
colonisers! T'is the international tongue! ("shhh" they say)
Do you ever feel deterritorialized?
Your little words float not among your little winding
streets, But in the air the stars the dreams of readers
that eat Your

words in private, hidden.

But wait
This smell.
It's a meteorite.
Come down to earth and erase the street signs, The cross on the hill,
The corrections that pang up in day-to-day
Accented conversations.

By numbers only is this minority defined,
But try counting the shows on netflix,
The social-tool school slangs.

Stuck inside your purple lair,
Wake up from your boring nightmare

Writing Improvisation Using "Executive," "Peninsular," "Frescoes," "Flamingo," and "Vaulted"

Do you ever feel peninsular? Like a blooming flower at the end of
a rod;
A stretching eye, reaching for a kaleidoscopic vaulted fresco; the
Strict-
silly executive spearhead of a wobbling front yard flamingo; or
The ceiling's blank stare you've mistaken for God?
When you feel like a cloud brings your mind to
the sky,
Sit down to fly and be glad that you're high.

Writing Improvisation Using “Une,” “Deux,” “Trois,” “Quatre,” and “Cinq”

L’un d’eux! Au nom d’un saint que j’aie le cas de le dire,
Cas tressautés, canons sursautés.

Mais par qui?

Les portes de Troie ici fermées ne s’ouvrent
    qu’aux rires des champs,
    qu’à l’embarras du choix,
    qu’au grand jamais:
        Douce violence des campagnes squattées

Toujours assis.
Siège roupillé.
        Enchantement décanté par nos portes fermées:

Mais qui les a ouvertes?
La table et les deux verres devinrent un mourant qui nous jeta le dernier regard d’Orphée
Les verres
    tombèrent
        se brisèrent

Et nous apprîmes à rire.

Nous partîmes alors pèlerins de la perdition
À travers les rues
    à travers les contrées
        à travers la raison.

            Ne sachant point qui d’entre nous avait gardé la clef.

L'Hétérotopie

DAPHNÉ DUFÉTEL-LAMARQUE AND OVÅL

The bold perspectives that call you to the
Most controversial impressions, emotions, opinions, just to
See what you would look like on the edge of a cliff
The stiff harsh looks that the void judges you by, if
You knew how to read them, would make you shudder,
Perfume yourself,
Think,
Jump.

And we'd all like to remind you that no, our grief down here is not a quire, Or the silent moss of virgin quagmire

It's a beast without horns
A rose without thorns
    A hairless ape
    Non adhesive tape.

        So

Inflammable children don't cry for long, but their flesh remembers
The funeral benches and the bendy bits at the top churches.
So be careful about fireside calls,
happygladjoylunches eaten in bathroom stalls. The
shackles of language, and measurable time don't break,
but they (elastic chains) forgive,
and if you try to read me with a sieve,
don't be surprised if I give you a book of stars.
Thanks. Don't. Never again will I always repeat this.

Heterotopies merci
Moi je préfère l'atopie

Ca permet de ne jamais se remettre en question
Se destituer de la praticité du monde
Et tomber dans l'adolescence amère
de l'idéal qui ne saurait apparaître que par
La fuite de l'existence mon cher
Et rien, sinon la flegme d'avoir sur dire
Poser ces quelques mots dans un triste berceau
Les idées tombent et ne se relèvent pas
Ou peut être si
Mais dans une mauvaise foi
Alors oui
l'heterotopie
Mais elle n'est qu"un triste navire
Pauvre hiatus, hétéronomie sans direction
Qui ne peut s'intégrer que dans les méandres de ton imagination.

En d'autres termes,
Non adhesive tape.

Late Poem

The frailty that stays in the shell of broken eggs,
And the cold wind that sails across the open tundra
Please do not open any balsa doors for me, for
I am only a kite. Only a fight away
From the frailty of the clenched fist,
The angry gust or the grit of old, bearded sandpaper.

Nothing compares to the books that smell like knowledge,
Or the knowledge that smells like answers, or the
Answers that smell like questions, or the
Questions that smell like dinnertime conversations, or,
in the knee-shaken fear of cliche,
The dinnertime conversations that smell like books.

Don't forgive me, dear circle. Your standard of truth beat me to
Coherence, inherent to the truths you pretend to know about
yourself, Pinned and wriggling on the papillon display of
conditionality, and the Smaller holes in your logic that you've
hidden away for me to find
Like the to-be hammered out rosetta stone of an arch

Or the seam of a waterproof painting, both keeping me
Somewhat away from the domes of pain that look at
The screams and the grunts that overshadow the icons of my mind.

But without these delicacies, circularities, incoherent rambles,
I would not feel safe being in an empty-basket world, without
Puns about broken eggs, spinning wheels of Theucidiyian ideas
Or the dark unread typos that only exist in the author and nowhere else.

But do not write for me, no. Do not write about my pilgrimages across speech,
The

Languages that we all pretend to speak: clothes, paint, canvas (perhaps if you're
clever), And the orderly, fashioned way you wear uncoordinated
Conflagrations that will never leave your pretentious alone:
The depths that you never pretended to have,
The ideas that made the wind whistle but that hit no target,
The looks that shot back from the very bodkin point you sharpened
that morning.

But do not fear, the forgiver is here. And his god. And his god's God,
Which have all sat down in their marble palace in a triquetra,
And have decided that you (yes you!) do not deserve to understand the
Intrequacies of witrten lnaguauge,
the shock of clenched stillborn baby fists that words can have,
And the suitcases that words pretend to carry (they would hate the EU).

So don't forget to travel when you are lying in bed,
And be polemical with the friends that might not see
the smiling muscles lifting up your mask,
And be the manwomanwhatevermanworksyeahsure
that will change the world
by dying at twenty.

A Song about love, revolution and Tatiana Romanova

CALLUM ELLIS-MENNIE

She was dressed for the opera in glorious white
It was all you could do just to keep her in sight
She was spinning and twirling, and she said "Darling please stop your sighing.
Isn't it amazing how far you can get without even trying?"

Well you made it look easy, that much is true
Though she told me that really, between me and you
It always was destined to end in a tangle of flames
And quietly I agreed that I'd figured the same

She sang for the opera, she danced in ballet
She said all that a good little Russian should say
And they built her a church, I believe that they made her a saint
And she's the tsar's little girl so please exercise some restraint

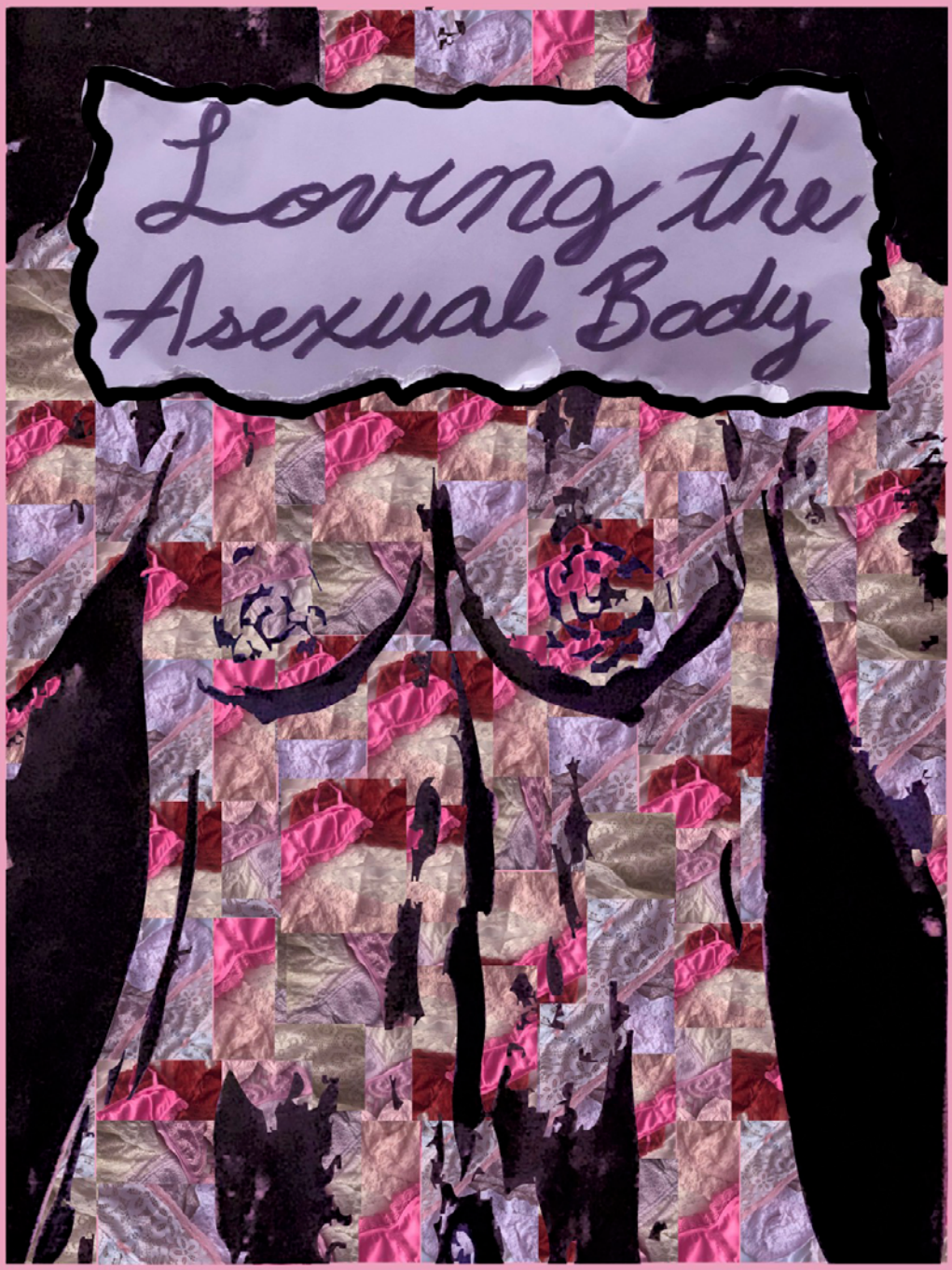
Now the war rages on, but the air has gone sour,
The cossacks are throwing themselves off their towers
And she's in the bedroom, lighting your letters on fire
Yes you can call her a cheat, but you cannot call her a liar

I know that you loved her, that's what you say
Before her body was sold to the state
But her soul is still yours, you said that no-one can take
But I understand it can make a man jealous to see tourists kiss her face

Do you remember, the last time you spoke
The world was on fire, as she pushed through the smoke
She laughed and she turned to you and I think her tears were still drying
She said, “isn’t it amazing how far you can fall before you start flying?”

It’s all very well, to say everything’s changed
But the ghost of Tatiana still moves with such grace
And she’s so very lonely, you swear you can see it in her face
Though she so rarely comes by, I see that you’ve set her a place

Well would it surprise you, I saw her last night
she’d tied everything that she owned to a kite
She said I am leaving this evening to go to the moon and
I do not suppose you’ll be hearing again from me soon!


Loving the
Asexual Body

"Finding Eros"

Untrusting,

I stared it in the face until it vanished;

Amid my loneliness,

I began to search,

Tracking my thoughts,

While picking up on traces of ink

And fragmented sentences,

Until I found it in the depths

Of my own psyche…

I wasn't alone anymore.

Based on the myth of Eros and Psyche, this poem depicts my detachment and subsequent rekindling with the ideas of love and eroticism, which only solidified when doing research for this project.

In her work, Przybylo explains how Audre Lorde redefines "eroticism," removing its sexual connotations. Instead, Lorde depicts "eroticism" as a force that comes from within, a passion that is exteriorized through the body in the form of "sharing deeply any pursuit with critiquing structures that want to usurp or profit off our erotic energies, and honing the simple pleasure of worldmaking, whether it be dancing, building a bookcase, writing a poem, examining an idea" (qtd in Przybylo 29-30).

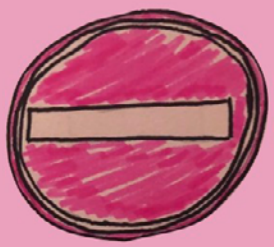
The poem is self-conscious in this idea of sharing my passion, writing, upon learning that I'm not alone in the need for this word's redefinition. The way that my body actively pics up the pencil, the paint, or lies down in bed while typing makes it a means to show my passion. This passion is housed within me and exteriorized to "the other" through my body, but I don't feel objectified or sexualized.

I feel connected in this project of sharing my love. In this same spirit, connecting with asexual communities on social media further emphasizes how seeing oneself in "the other" allows for intimacy, especially when viewing "the other"'s content, the product of their "eroticism."

At the Crossroads of Compulsory Sexuality and Compulsory heterosexuality

As someone who can experience romantic attraction to someone, regardless of their gender, I do not only identify as "queer" because I am asexual, but also because I am bi/pan romantic.

Consequently, I face the overlapping pressures of compul-



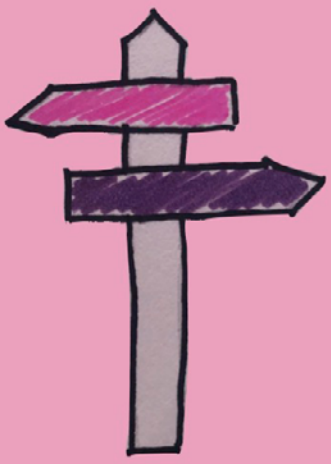
sory sexuality and compulsory heterosexuality; the pressure to conform to heteronormativity is also rooted in the very idea of sexual attraction and behaviours, specifically with members of the opposite sex.

My partner is gender fluid, so, when we are "out" together, we are "visibly" queer, meaning that my deviation from the heterosexual norm is more evident compared to if I were only romantically attracted to men. Nonetheless, despite how I stand in opposition to compulsory heterosexuality, I do not feel fully represented in queer sexual politics.

The emphasis on using one's body as a stage, whereupon sexuality is performed with the intention of circumventing the heterosexual norm, does not account for me and my (a)sexuality: "In queer politics sexual expression is something that always entails the possibility of change, movement, redefinition, and subversive performance-from year to year, from partner to partner, from day to day, even from act to act (Cohen 439).

In other words, queer politics inadvertently adheres to compulsory sexuality, thereby making its approach monolithic in this assumption of queer peoples' inherent sexuality.

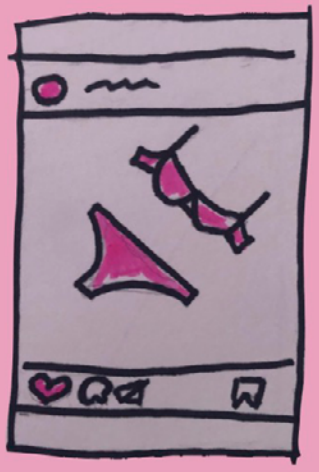
Thus, it is no different from heteronormativity in this respect, hence how my perspective mirrors Cathy Cohen's critique of queer politics as a "single identity politics;" this refers to when queer identities are generalized in the LGBTQ+ movement, resulting in the exclusion of some of its members, as well as the reifying of heteronormativity through this approach to sexuality that is centered around binaries and monoliths (Cohen 447).



Queerness and Womanhood: Sexual Liberation from the Male Gaze?

My experience with compulsory sexuality and compulsory heterosexuality takes on anther dimension given that I am a woman. As media commodifies and sexualizes bodies like mine for a male "other" 's pleasure, my teen-aged self saw my body through that same gaze, making me more susceptible to the pressures of compulsory sexuality and compulsory heterosexuality.

My body became a means to a male "the other" 's pleasure, as I partook in behaviours that



are typical of heteronormativity, including sexuality; thus, sexuality was not empowering for me. It was used to preform and reinforce the gendered expectations that I internalized:

> ***"[T]he question for me […] at that time, was the following: How do I reclaim something that I never really had to begin with?"***

"[A]lthough both pro-sex feminism and queer theory formally eschew notions of sex as liberatory, some of this work effectively equates sex with liberation and may therefore contribute to compulsory sexuality. This equation is rendered more problematic by the fact that […] consumer-oriented capitalism funds the intensification of sexual desires..." (Gupta, "Compulsory Sexuality" 144).

Growing up with social media, I saw women on Instagram reclaim their sexuality, posing their bodies in ways that were empowering to them and exercising their agency in being sexual, as opposed to being sexualized. While I support this endeavor, I can't help but notice how that message became co-opted by companies aiming to make a profit.

All that to say, this approach to liberation never felt right for me, as I couldn't fathom seeing my body in that light for myself.

Therefore, the question for me as a woman, who had yet to encounter the term "asexuality" at that time, was the following: How do I reclaim something that I never really had to begin with?

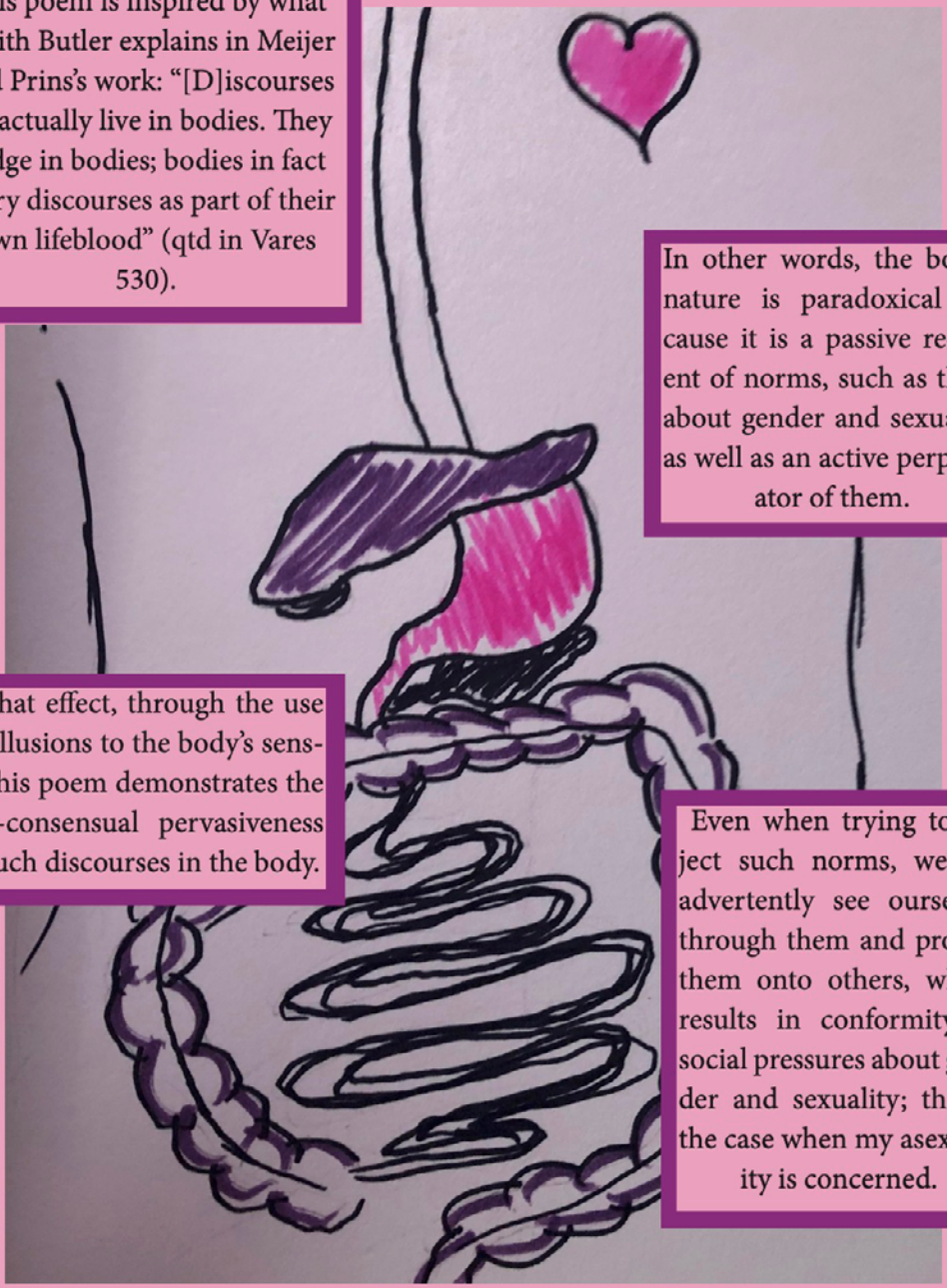
"Dislodging Discourses"

I receive them in earfuls,
Resonating in the echo chamber
Of my ear canal,
Pounding to the rhythm of my heartbeat's
Cacophony that never seems to keep tempo.
Overwhelmed, I breathe.

I breathe them in by the noseful,
Wafting into my nostrils
Like second-hand smoke,
Whose wispy fingers grip my throat
And curl around my lungs.
Sickened, I cough.

I cough them out through parted lips,
Which utter all that I've heard before
Until I want to eat my own words
In mouthfuls,
And when I'm full,
I'll give the rest away by the handful.

This poem is inspired by what Judith Butler explains in Meijer and Prins's work: "[D]iscourses do actually live in bodies. They lodge in bodies; bodies in fact carry discourses as part of their own lifeblood" (qtd in Vares 530).



In other words, the body's nature is paradoxical because it is a passive recipient of norms, such as those about gender and sexuality, as well as an active perpetuator of them.

To that effect, through the use of allusions to the body's senses, this poem demonstrates the non-consensual pervasiveness of such discourses in the body.

Even when trying to reject such norms, we inadvertently see ourselves through them and project them onto others, which results in conformity to social pressures about gender and sexuality; this is the case when my asexuality is concerned.

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King Lear: The Podcast Series

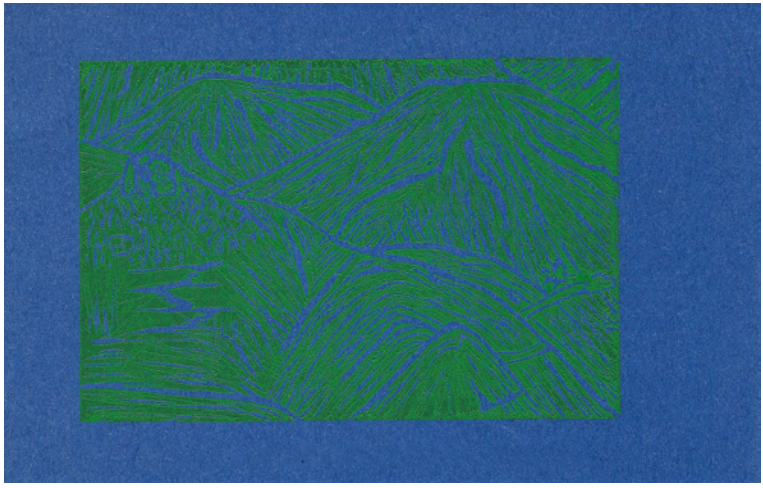
NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the covid-19 lockdown, the Liberal Arts College Theatre Society recorded an audio version of Shakespeare's King Lear. The project was originally planned to take the form of a film, but producer Aleah P. Carreau quickly and efficiently turned it into a podcast when lockdown restrictions tightened. While respecting safety measures, Antonina Morris, the director, rehearsed with the actors, passed the microphone between them to record, and familiarised them with the text as they developed their own bond with the characters. Carreau inserted the sound effects and the emotionally haunting music created by Aliyah Campuzano, which transformed the audio play into an entertaining and heartfelt production. Production assistant So Young Park professionally advertised the audio play with newsletters and kept the production on track, eliminating any kinks. The whole cast brought the tragedy to life with their animated voice-acting. King Lear: The Podcast Series can be found on Youtube, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts.

CREW
Director: Antonina Morris
Producer and co-director: Aleah P. Carreau
Production Assistant: So Young Park
Sound recording and effects: Antonina Morris & Aleah P. Carreau
Editing: Aleah P. Carreau
Music: Aliyah Campuzano

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN
Cover Photography: Laura Kopp
Cover edit and design: Aleah P. Carreau
Costumes: Yasmine Nowroozi and Aleah P. Carreau

CAST
Aleah P. Carreau as King Lear
So Young Park as The Fool
Olivia Kearvell-Jobin as Kent
Duncan Bain as Edgar
Jeffrey Talbot Ronald as Edmund
Bryan Lee as Gloucester
Alejandra Malo Monsalve as Goneril
Katia Stapleton as Regan
Aliyah Campuzano as Cordelia
Diego Caruana as Cornwall
Antonina Morris as Albany
Laura Quenneville as Oswald
Evelyn Chan as The Gentlewoman and 1st servant
Charlotte Herie as The Messenger and 3rd servant
Valentina Salas as The Doctor and The Captain
Miguel Gosselin as The Old Man and 2nd servant
Zahin Kabir as Burgundy and The Herald
Nicholas Bailey as King of France and The Narrator

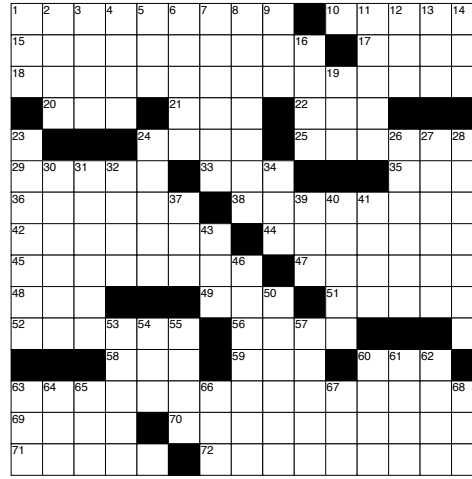


Pichincha Gravure, Alejandra Malo

Sabha-Ötün, the Queen of Worms, Leone Carbone

Liberal Arts College Crossword

CALLUM ELLIS-MENNIE



ACROSS

1 Frederick Douglass, for one?
10 Holder of the heavens, In Greek mythology
15 Ephemerality
17 "That hurt!"
18 Finally accept
20 "Once I had a love, but it was a ___ !"
21 As apposed to REP.
22 Fed. of Sheikdoms
24 Emperor who "fiddled while Rome burned."
25 Zebra marking?
29 Egg, for Don Quixote.
33 Weekend skit show, for short
35 unpublished bks.
36 Printing mistakes
38 "The list goes on..."
42 Move like wind through the leaves?
44 Like a sister
45 Collected by money lenders
47 Thing you aim for.
48 Vaccine approver, in the United States.
49 "Zip-a-dee-doo-_ __!"
51 Inscribed pillar
52 Person who may play a jig or a reel?
56 Performer in areal ballet.
58 U.S. govt broadcaster.
59 Opposite of WSW.
60 Montreal or Manhattan: Abbr.
63 Taking note.
69 Antioxidant-rich berry.
70 Large, undrained region of the western United States.
71 Send money.
72 Great queen of Russia?

DOWN

1 YUL tower worker.
2 Potential prince.
3 "___ Lama Ding Dong!"
4 Hydrocarbon suffixes
5 Quebec, of Ontario; in Quebec
6 The "D" of LED
7 They're fed at the curbside.
8 Sea creature named after a flower.
9 ATM maker.
11 Rapunzel's home.
12 George Sand's "Elle et ___"
13 Part of a Shakespeare play.
14 "This is the library, not the lounge!"
16 Targets of Australia's 1932 "war."
19 Planted oneself.
23 Western hero.
24 One paying attention.
26 Come out.
27 Jacobs second name
28 Prayer book
30 Ruanda-___ (former Belgian East Africa)
31 '90s-'00s Angels outfielder Darin with three Gold Gloves
32 Bouquet holder.
34 Mil. officers.
37 Consumed at Grumpy's Bar.
39 Simple bed.
40 Make blank.
41 Wrongful act.
43 Something that might be dropped.
46 Have a break, in Britain
50 Imply.
53 58, in Ancient Rome
54 Long, long time
55 Woolen yarn.
57 Canines that bite.
60 ___-Tass news agency
61 Spanish ayes.
62 Pas proche.
63 The usual.
64 Either high or low.
65 Fry ingredient alternative.
66 Biblical boat
67 Hoops org.
68 U-turn from SSW