THE HISTORY OF A TROPE:

FROM HOMER TO MILTON

By

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Abstract: Journeys to the afterlife occur often throughout literary history. This includes literature ranging from the Ancient Greek and Roman to medieval or Renaissance texts where the reader follows characters to either an underworld (as in Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*) or Hell (as in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*). These characters both converse with and attempt to embrace the dead; however, these embraces always remain unsuccessful. A gap between life and death informs the encounter, and it remains over time as a significant experience in literary texts that this project examines: Why does it begin? How does it evolve? And, through repetition over time, does the trope navigate new ways of understanding an essential human inquiry of whether living human beings can communicate with the dead? Additionally, this project reviews what the encounters mean for both non-Christian and Christian individuals, finishing by contemplating how, despite advancements by science allowing us further understanding of death, we continue to revisit this question today.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As an undergraduate, I was lucky enough to have taken Dr. Jones's Classical World Literature course. During that time, I began exploring texts such as Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. This course inspired me to continue my tenure at Oklahoma State University for my master's education, during which I was able to complete an independent study with Dr. Jones. While planning for this independent study, we considered several readings and themes, before ultimately settling on exploring our curiosity in patterns of "elusive embraces" throughout literature (a scene, usually taking place in hell/the underworld, in which a living being unsuccessfully attempts to embrace a spirit). Immediately, this topic piqued my interest as I would not only be working with some of the most well-known literary staples, but also many significant works throughout different periods such as Ancient Greek and Roman texts, medieval stories, and even Renaissance works. This was particularly exciting because there were many authors I had not yet explored such as Dante Alighieri and his *Divine Comedy*. Thus, in 2020, we created said independent study entitled "The Elusive Embrace: A Select History of a Literary Trope." Here, Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* became the foundation for my project as the first known failed embraces in Western literature. Over time, some of these works inspired my main portfolio piece titled "The History of a Trope: From Homer to Milton."

At the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, I met with Dr. Jones regularly to discuss the central idea of my portfolio. I began by reading and deciphering works, trying to understand how different embraces were depicted in texts such as *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *Agamemnon*, *Alcestis*, *The Aeneid*, *The Inferno*, *The Purgatorio*, and Milton's "Sonnet 23: Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint." I also studied earlier works such as Hesiod's *Works and Days* and *The Bible*; however, neither of these works contained the defined idea of failed embraces that aligned with this trope. I then worked specifically to see if other scholars were discussing this topic; however, there was a very obvious gap in the research. To my surprise, very few had attempted to unpack this trope. Some identified where these failed embraces occurred throughout literature, but no one ever fully uncovered why authors repeatedly returned to this elusive embrace. Exploring this question has been the target and most important aspect of this paper, and the focus of most of my revisions.

Although I do think the gap is extremely interesting and important, there were times in which it was hard to focus solely on embraces and their meanings in such prolific texts. Often, during my initial writing process, I would attempt to unpack other ideas, patterns, and complications that would arise. Therefore, Dr. Jones has encouraged me throughout this process to continually review each section of this paper to ensure I am identifying key aspects that ultimately point back to the thesis of the project.

This process of revision has greatly aided me in composing all of the works currently in this portfolio. Although the coronavirus pandemic greatly impacted many of my classes (and therefore some of these projects), I have made it a point to rewrite, edit, and revise each work. During this process, I have noticed that revising is much more successful when feedback is provided by professors and mentors versus attempting the revision process independently as a graduate student. Therefore, I am appreciative of my committee members for providing guidance in this regard.

This portfolio contains pieces from my first semester as a graduate student to my last, all of which relate to either literature or rhetoric and writing studies. I have included four literary projects (Chapter II "The History of a Trope: From Homer to Milton" completed under Dr. Edward Jones, Chapter IV "Procuring Veracity: Reconsidering Scandal in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*" completed under Dr. William Decker, Chapter V "An Odyssey of Public Perception: A Link Between Oral Tradition and Ezra Pound's Modernist Performance" completed under Dr. Lisa Hollenbach, Chapter VI "Tracing Successful and Unsuccessful Narration in *Voyage in the Dark* and *The Return of the Soldier*" completed under Dr. Elizabeth Grubgeld), and two writing studies papers: (Chapter III "Someone in Some Future Time Will Think of Us" completed under Dr. Anna Sicari, and Chapter VII "The Purpose of First-Year Composition" completed under Dr. Lynn Lewis.)

As I reflect on the works included in this portfolio, it is clear how the knowledge and skills I have gained from my courses were able to ultimately help me in composing each piece. There were many times I thought about giving up, especially when I began to compare my work to others with more experience in my program. However, despite suffering from "imposter syndrome," like many women in academia and higher education, I decided to trust the process and learn from my endeavors. Even though the two projects I created during my first semester (Chapters VI and VII) are vastly different than the main piece (which was completed during my final semester in this program), I still included these papers as a reminder of how my abilities to write and conduct research have changed over the past two years. Ultimately, each chapter in this portfolio represents a different point in my journey throughout this degree.

If I submit the main piece in this portfolio for publishing, I plan to do so at *Lapham's Quarterly*, which focuses on modern concerns and questions by reflecting on the past. Their focus aligns with mine, as each author included in my paper grapples with past concerns and questions over what happens to one when they die. Since this is still an ongoing question, I believe my project would fit in well with present publications at *Lapham's Quarterly*. This magazine also posts content pertaining to subjects included in my research such as Homer and Milton. Although *Lapham's Quarterly* is not accepting unsolicited manuscripts for the foreseeable future, they do

accept work to be included on their blog and website. Given my commitment to creating multimodal and accessible works, I believe a digital publication would be attainable and the best fit for me at this time.

Moving forward, I plan on completing a doctoral degree in English while helping my students grow and connect to the world outside of their assignments. My other career goals include weaving activism with pedagogy by teaching courses and being part of an empowering and uplifting writing center program while encouraging students to do the work needed in order to initiate community improvement. Because of the courses I've taken over the past two years, I have developed a steadfast commitment to serving students despite different (and constantly changing) social, political, and economic situations. All of these plans and ideas are a product of the knowledge and insight gained from the professors who worked with me to develop every chapter in this portfolio. None of this would be possible without them.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF A TROPE: FROM HOMER TO MILTON

Introduction

A trope typically represents an identifiable concept returned to repeatedly to convey the significance of the event. Although tropes were in use in texts produced as early as Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, the term itself may not have held its modern meaning at the time. The word "trope" originates from the Greek word "trepein," meaning *to turn*. It later became "tropos" before becoming the Latin word "trope" in the mid 16th century. Within the context of this paper, the notion "to turn" involves a failed attempt to embrace. Throughout many notable Ancient Greek and Roman, medieval, and Renaissance texts, characters have either visited an underworld (as in Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*) or Hell (as in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*) and have talked to a loved one who has died. At some point in these encounters, a character reaches out to embrace a spirit but the gesture remains in vain. No physical contact occurs. This gesture to reach out and embrace is the human impulse to understand and connect. This project examines the value of this repeated practice in literature and why it starts, how it changes, and how it becomes enriched by repeated use. Because of this repeated use, there is a significance imbued in the attempted embrace between two individuals, one a living being and the other a represented form of life resembling an individual once known to the other party but now without material existence. The trope that in the end displays an elusive embrace sets in

motion a host of ideas that are consistently explored throughout literary works including notions of life and death, ideas of beginnings and ends, relationships between parents and their children, friends, spouses, and life and death. This paper attends to these ideas by tracing how the initial examples established by Homer as a strategy for the writers who followed to negotiate and express central concerns that literary works characteristically and distinctively examine. What begins as a literary technique ends as a representative universal gesture from which readers of all literatures have come to appreciate and benefit.

Homer, followed by others such as Dante Alighieri, succeeds in investigating several concepts foremost on the minds of his culture and ideas his poem attempts to address. The first involves the subject of ghosts and phantoms. They are first and last to be understood as such. They are not living human beings but they are capable of communicating with those alive. Their information, moreover, can be taken as trustworthy, though not all of their requests can be satisfied. Communication between the living and the dead can apparently take place within the context of a dream, but such contact resides in a non-material space. Homer's readers are to accept this division along with others: life after death differs from life on earth and whatever afterlife occurs appears uncertain and unclear. Thus, while there remains a degree of ambiguity about aspects of the afterlife as understood by these authors, there are parts of the afterlife that bring with it knowledge about those who remain alive. These authors examine long standing human preoccupations with the relationship between life and death but with the ability of the living to communicate in valuable ways with those no longer physically alive.

These encounters resound through the repeated notion of something reaching out. The setting is the underworld and the characters are the equipment the trope works around, but at the heart of the project, a concern/question that we share with the authors of these early works, even centuries apart from one another, is that we are still asking the same questions. This is why it is important to study this trope, as we still don't have an answer for what happens to one when they

die. Notably, people continued to come back to this theme and idea again and again. Just as the characters attempt to return to the arms of their loved ones, readers throughout history have been brought back into contact with this trope. These authors were grasping death and a foundation of literature. Asking the same questions and using the same techniques to explore these questions reveals the significance for them. This in turn reveals how they are the foundation for the significance for us. When literature moves to written discourse it changes the way Virgil approaches his work, as he knows people have read it before; therefore, the trope deepens. Homer establishes the trope and others do not let it die.

Selected Texts - The Iliad

Throughout Homer's *Iliad,* he describes encounters through which he explores the elusive embrace, and by extension, the gap between life and death. This section unpacks the failed embrace of Achilles and Patroclus, specifically focusing on the impact it has on the experiences of these characters. Homer's *Iliad,* which centers around themes of honor, pride, war, divine intervention, grief, and burial, emerges at the forefront of this trope. The trope of the elusive embrace that readers first encounter in *The Iliad* occurs after 90% of the poem's action has taken place. Here, Achilles and Patroclus, two comrades, enact the first failed embrace. Specifically, Achilles "stretched his loving arms / but could not seize him, [Patroclus] no, the ghost slipped underground / like a wisp of smoke… with a high thin cry" (562 lines 117-119). After Patroclus died in battle, this attempted embrace occurs because he has not yet received a proper burial--a cornerstone in Ancient Greek tradition which exists as a requirement to pass through to the gates of the underworld. Therefore, Patroclus visits Achilles in a dream to ensure his burial despite Achilles' pre-existing intentions and preparations to bury his friend. Here, Patroclus explicitly states: "Sleeping Achilles? You've forgotten me, my friend. / You never neglected me in life, only now in death" (561 lines 81-82). Here, Patroclus references the longstanding relationship between himself and Achilles. Both his perception of Achilles' neglect

and the description of Achilles' "loving arms" reveal the depth of their relationship and heartbreaking nature of the failed embrace.

This act reveals that the spirits of those unburied have no recollection or understanding of present events in the living world; however, they can recall information from their time while living. Another key element in this encounter lies in Patroclus' response to Achilles stating he will never visit the living world again after a proper burial. This information reveals the spirit's utilitarian nature when returning to the living world, in Homer's text, in that they strictly visit to complete urgent and unfortunate tasks; this explains why no other spirit visits the living during *The Iliad* besides Patroclus. Thus, we can infer properly buried spirits in *The Iliad* do not visit the living. This encounter also exists as one of the first instances where a character attempts to reach beyond death. Throughout this interaction, Homer interrogates a question that plagued humanity of the disconnect between the living and the dead. As living beings, we are substance, and when we are dead we are a spirit, vision, and intangible. The early uses of the trope of the failed embrace represent the struggle of failed connection and lack of concrete knowledge.

Homer implies the importance and value of dreams as a familiar way of encompassing a strange experience, setting the stage for future works in which encounters with the afterlife are experienced outside of a dream. Similarly, Homer sets the groundwork for future works that will attempt to understand the concept of spirit and body as two separate entities only separated after leaving the living world. Homer's speaker further emphasizes this notion by observing that "even in Death's strong house there is something left, / a ghost, a phantom, - true, but no real breath of life" (562-563 lines 122-123). In this instance, the speaker further defines the belief of one's body being separated from the soul completely only after death. *The Iliad* additionally alludes to the idea that impure or tainted beings cannot embrace those going through a purification process – such as a proper burial.

Achilles has also dishonored Hector's body after his death by dragging him around and eventually "leaving his body for the dogs to rip him raw" (560 line 24). With revenge in mind, Achilles, "Pierced the tendons, ankle to heel behind both feet, / he knotted straps of rawhide through them both, / lashed them to his chariot, left the head to drag /… and whipped his team to run and breakneck on they flew, / holding nothing back" (554 lines 467-472). Hector's mother, who witnesses these assaults on her son, rips her hair out in mourning. Because of his actions, Achilles refers to himself as one with "man killing hands" (560 line 21). Therefore, as one attempting to gain access through the gates into the underworld, the failed embrace, in this instance, could be a result of Patroclus avoiding any further interaction with impure and even murderous associations.

In addition to this failed embrace, Patroclus predicts Achilles' fate by stating, "And you too, / your fate awaits you too, godlike as you are, Achilles" (562 lines 96-97). Although this interaction contains tragic information that even those who are godlike eventually meet their end, in the same vein, this interaction shows the possibility of comfort and optimism, as all who receive a proper burial eventually end up in the same place after death. Therefore, death carries through as an ending on the physical realm; however, not an overall ending.

Disconcerted, Achilles' composure becomes disrupted following his encounter with Patroclus. After Patroclus emphasizes the importance of a proper burial, Achilles halts the mutilation of Hector's body and returns it to his family as he comes to understand how death affects the dead. However, Achilles does not find himself startled or in fear of his comrade. Here, a philosophical position coexists with the literary one. Homer finds the problem of life after death too hard to solve. That is, he leaves the philosophic matter aside after the failed embrace occurs and solely focuses on the literary practice in play and his focus upon the experiences of his characters throughout the remainder of the text. Although Homer seems to have an ideological purpose underlying the trope, as he revisits a similar embrace in *The Odyssey*, he seems to have a

purely literary interest in mind during *The Illiad*. The more Homer writes, the more ideological purpose with which he presents his audience in relation to the trope. Homer chooses to emphasize the experience of his characters over the philosophical question of what happens to one after death. This becomes an emphasis his literary successors gradually come to feel differently about as they explore shifting views of life and religion.

Selected Texts - The Odyssey

In addition to looking at the gap between life and death, Homer's *Odyssey* forces the reader to consider the connection between the living and the dead. While the previous section detailed a relationship between comrades, this section incorporates a familial relationship as well, with the inclusion of Odysseus' mother. *The Odyssey*, which centers around themes of fate versus free will, memory, justice, grief, and honor, involves a central character who negatively impacts many things around him. He spends time with both friends and enemies, but most importantly travels to the classical underworld before being allowed to return home to Ithaca. It is within this context that Homer describes the meeting of the hero with his mother, in the process providing another instance of the living communicating with the dead informed by the trope central to this discussion. Here, Odysseus and his mother Anticlea enact the second failed embrace. Odysseus describes this failed encounter:

> How I longed
>
> to embrace my mother's spirit, dead as she was!
>
> Three times I rushed toward her, desperate to hold her,
>
> three times she fluttered through my fingers, sifting away
>
> like a shadow, dissolving like a dream, and each time
>
> the grief cut to the heart, sharper, yes, and I,
>
> I cried out to her….

‘Mother- why not wait for me? How I long to hold you!’ (256 lines 233-240).

Here, the use of language such as “rush,” “desperate,” and “grief cut to the heart” expresses the intensity of Odysseus’ reaction upon realizing the surprising loss of his mother.

Circe instructs Odysseus to find the prophet Tiresias in the underworld in order to seek assistance on his journey home. In order to do this, Odysseus has to make sacrifices to the dead to be able to converse with them which is where the failed embrace occurs. This information reveals the consistency in the tragedy of spirits interacting with the living in Homer’s texts, in that just as spirits strictly visit the living world to complete urgent and unfortunate tasks, the living strictly visit the underworld for the same reasons, which remain on terms outside of themselves, as no other living being visits the dead during *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey* besides Odysseus. Odysseus, the great-grandson of Hermes, succeeds where others have failed in part because of his godlike state; however, the main factor in his trip lies in the requirement to visit the underworld in order to eventually return home. This enriches our understanding of life after death and the connection between the living and the dead in that we now also know living beings in Homer’s texts cannot visit the underworld unless prompted and guided by a god or goddess such as Circe. Anticlea emphasizes this by asking her son, “What brings you down to the world / of death and darkness… / it’s hard for the living to catch a glimpse of this” (254 lines 177-179). Circling back to the idea of life after death, Odysseus cannot emotionally or physically grasp the state of his mother’s soul, though he desperately attempts to do so three times. Perhaps, Homer similarly cannot grasp what death is and what happens after one dies; therefore, he appears to use his characters to unpack this. These early uses of the trope of the failed embrace represent the struggle of that failed connection and lack of concrete knowledge.

This particular failed embrace stands apart from others in its ability to provide a direct answer as to why the embrace between the living and the dead consistently fails. In response to her son’s frustration, Anticlea states, “This is just the way of mortals when we die. / Sinews no

longer bind the flesh and bones together - / the fire in all its fury burns the body down to ashes / once life slips from the white bones, and the spirit, / rustling, flitters away… flown like a dream" (256 lines 249-253). Mortals can describe these corporeal happenings; however, the soul is never described. Here, the living body can be described as substance, while after death it is more abstract. Anticlea provides a practical answer which sets a concrete foundation for future texts in that physical beings cannot grasp what is no longer physical. From this knowledge, we gain an understanding that certain rules apply to everyone, including godlike Odysseus who seems to conquer the unconquerable. Therefore, even godlike beings cannot escape decomposition or bridge the gap between the dead and the living.

During this same trip to the underworld, Odysseus encounters several others who provide key information in understanding both the failed embrace and Homer's understanding of life after death. One of these individuals, Odysseus' comrade Elpenor, seeks Odysseus' aid in a proper burial, as Odysseus and his other companions failed to do this for him after his fatal fall from the roof of Circe's house. Elpenor's urgency presents itself to Odysseus as he begs, "My lord, remember me, I beg you! Don't sail off / and desert me, left behind unwept, unburied, don't / or my curse may draw god's fury on your head" (251 lines 79-81). This echoes Patroclus and Achilles' failed embrace, bringing to the forefront once again the Greek cornerstone of a proper burial in Homer's text to reveal its importance in the quality of "life" one has after death.

In this same interaction, Elpenor not only asks to be remembered but he also asks Odysseus to bury him in all of his armor with a marked grave, "so even men to come will learn his story" (251 line 85). In this instance, Elpenor desires the association with his youth, by requesting to be buried in his glorious armor. From this, we see the possibility of a trope used to instill fear to stop the glorification of youth. Once people heard and eventually read and began to understand how horrific life after death could be, it's possible that Homer hoped others would stop glorifying death at a young age. Often, in life, but specifically in Homer's texts, the

glorification of wasted, squandered potential exists. Throughout Homer's texts, war is a key theme in which death almost becomes a desirable outcome for many. Dying at a young age from fighting for their home and people in it halted any future expectations to become greater than many of these Greek men already were. Dying in this way also left many men behind with an honorable association attached to their name. Because of this commonality, Homer seems to present his audience with information of failed embraces and the state of the underworld to warn them to hold on to the living and life, as their state and overall quality of being only becomes worse after death. Achilles further emphasizes this claim by stating, "No winning words about death to me, shining Odysseus! / By god, I'd rather slave on earth for another man - / some dirt-poor tenant farmer who scrapes to keep alive - / than rule down here over all the breathless dead" (265 lines 556-558). Here, Achilles, who encountered the first failed embrace now suffers eternally in the underworld despite being glorified by many during his life and even favored by some of the gods and goddesses. His willingness to be a slave among the living instead of a ruler among the dead displays the atrocities waiting for those after they part ways with the living world; thus, warning youth to stop glorifying death, especially in battle, as living by heroic code only leads to new challenging objectives in death.

The Odyssey also contains a second failed embrace between comrades Agamemnon and Odysseus. Odysseus reflects, "He knew me at once, as soon as he drank the blood, / and wailed out, shrilly; tears sprang to his eyes, / he thrust his arms toward me, keen to embrace me there - / no use" (262 lines 443-446). This embrace differs from others, such as the one with Anticlea, in that Agamemnon does not seem to understand or remember the inability to embrace the living in the same way Anticlea does. Agamemnon died a tragic death through the betrayal of his wife; therefore, upon seeing Odysseus, he becomes overwhelmed with emotions as he remembers his past and longs to be in Odysseus' place. During this encounter, Agamemnon warns Odysseus to be cautious of a similar fate. In a moment filled with emotion, Agamemnon forgets that embraces

between spirits and the physical are in vain. Potentially, this is Homer's way of relaying his belief that spirits retain the memories and character traits they once had while living, as Agamemnon's personality largely consisted of narcissistic qualities. Therefore, this forgetful embrace may be the result of Agamemnon's focus on himself and the grief surrounding the remembrance of his time while alive and not on actions that he can or cannot enact as a spirit.

In the first failed embrace in *The Odyssey*, Odysseus is surprised by his mother's appearance in the underworld. Death does not necessarily startle him as much as the realization that his mother has passed, as he has been disconnected from his home and family for so long. Homer has focused this text and specific embrace through the frame of his philosophical question. Although the question of life after death is still too hard to solve, he revisits this philosophic position through the experiences of his own characters. For example, through the use of Odysseus' mother, Homer attempts to unpack what happens to the body after death. As the story progresses, Homer confronts his audience with this ideology through his portrayal of the trope. During the second failed embrace in this text, the living has to inform the dead instead of in the previous encounter where the dead informed the living of the physical limits of the body in death. Through these limited interactions of characters like Odysseus and Agamemnon, Homer explores the value of both life and life after death.

Selected Texts - Agamemnon

Similar to the previous text, this section covers a failed embrace between two members of a family unit; however, this section focuses on a spousal relationship rather than that of a mother and son. Aeschylus' play, *Agamemnon*, the first in the trilogy *The Oresteia*, which centers around themes of fate versus free will, family, and justice follows *The Odyssey* in this trope. Menelaus and his wife Helen enact the fourth failed embrace. In this encounter, Paris has just taken Helen, the wife of his host [Menelaus / King of Sparta], to Troy. Later, the Greeks assemble an army led

by Agamemnon, Menelaus' brother, to retrieve Helen. While gone, Helen appears to Menelaus in a dream similar to Patroclus and Achilles in the first literary encounter of a failed embrace. This embrace depicted by the chorus of elders states, "For all in vain is her seeming embrace, / elusive the vision, / twisting aside from his grasp, a dream / lost forever from sleep's winged path" (11 lines 423-426). This encounter differs from the previous three, in that Helen has not yet died; however, she still appears to Menelaus in a dream and fails to embrace him. Maybe, this depicts the death of love as Helen is no longer with Menelaus, or, possibly, Aeschylus creates this encounter to show the importance of a contract between a host and guest. The "spirit" in this instance would then be the result of a dead contract between Paris [the guest] and Menelaus and by default Helen [the hosts]. Potentially, Helen and Menelaus' failed embrace represents the death of their marriage, or, once again, maybe this shows the importance and value of dreams as a familiar way of encompassing a strange experience. It seems Menelaus does not know how to process the information that his wife might be gone forever. Therefore, a dream could represent his subconscious providing answers to a circumstance without any. Nonetheless, Aeschylus clearly enters into a conversation with Homer. Just as Agamemnon has been betrayed by his wife and Aegisthus, Menelaus has similarly been betrayed by his guest Paris. Honoring the contract between host and guest exists as another cornerstone in Ancient Greek culture, and both were broken in these instances.

Surprised, Menelaus does not know how to process an encounter with his wife who has just left with Paris. He becomes confused and frustrated in why his wife would be appearing to him in such a way, even though dreams remain as a tool employed often to make sense of an uncertain experience. Similarly, Aeschylus felt unsure in his exploration of the concept of life and death. Possibly, Homer grapples with this confusion, leading him to introduce the trope. Here, the literary connects to the philosophical in that Aeschylus focuses on the experiences of his characters while also continuing to philosophically build off of Homer's questions. Unlike later

writers, Homer and Aeschylus find themselves concerned with the value of lived experience. Future authors focus more on the value of life after death rather than the lived experiences of characters. However, in early non-Christian life, death seems to be just the next step rather than the end goal. Homer and Aeschylus deal with lived experiences in order to be remembered, but when future writers like Dante enter into this conversation, there becomes a greater emphasis on the afterlife based on how one once lived. Although Aeschylus does not have a religious emphasis of Christianity, Helen and Menelaus' actions will be viewed by future writers as breaking the "sanctity of marriage." Therefore, a death of their marriage occurs while Paris and Helen live in sin--future writers will equate this to eternal death.

Selected Texts - Alcestis

The fifth instance of the elusive embrace also focuses on a husband and wife. However, instead of a physical separation as seen in the previous text, this text describes the separation of a husband and wife through death. Within this section, the effects of the elusive embrace as well as the separation between the living and the dead are studied further. Euripides' text, *Alcestis*, which centers around themes of sacrifice, hospitality, and fate, focuses on Alcestis who has agreed to take her husband's place in the underworld so he can have a longer life. When Thanatos, a servant of Hades, comes to lead Alcestis to her death, her husband Admetus attempts to embrace her, "He weeps; begs her not leave him desolate, and holds her to his heart - too late, too late! She is sinking now, and there, beneath his eye fading, the poor cold hand falls languidly" (16). Instead of having time to say departing words to his wife, Alcestis' spirit is instantly gone and her hands are immediately cold. This experience shows the reader that death is the instantaneous disconnect of the spirit and physical body.

Death is a fluctuating image from a spirit appearing in a dream to a more immediate separation of spirit and body. Additionally, this embrace, unlike the others in this trope, ensues

while her soul separates from her physical body on Earth, showing that the physical cannot successfully embrace other physical beings without a spirit--just as physical beings cannot successfully embrace spirits without a physical body. Both are requirements of a successful embrace. After Alcestis' death, Admetus claims, "Oh, I will find some artist wondrous wise shall mould for me thy shape, thine hair, thine eyes, and lay it in thy bed; and I will lie close, and reach out mine arms to thee... And good dreams of thee will come like balm. Tis sweet, even in a dream, to gaze on a dear face, the moment that it stays" (19). This encounter shows the desperation and therefore lengths Admetus is willing to go to in order to recreate the body of his wife and thus recreate the embrace as well. Additionally, Euripides seems to enter into a conversation with Homer, who initially revealed the importance and value of dreams where the impossible can occur.

Similar to Homer, Euripides also chooses to include an instance where the living venture into the underworld. Heracles, son of Zeus, "goes down to the house without light" and retrieves Alcestis--something only possible because of his godlike heritage like Odysseus in Homer's text (33). After Heracles and Alcestis return, Admetus refuses to embrace his wife for fear it may not be her. In this instance, Alcestis "reaches out her arms" only for Admetus to exclaim, "I touch her not!" (40). Admetus' refusal to embrace someone who may be a stranger, shows the value and intimacy the act of an embrace holds.

This text experiments with life and death in a new way as Euripides has his characters defy death or "cheat it." This could result from a concern with the philosophical--more so than those before him. While unpacking these concepts and the hold they have on the living, Euripides discusses how the soul separates from the physical body on Earth, and that certain godlike characters can help others manipulate death and reconnect the soul and physical body once again. In the text, the appearance of Alcestis frightens Admetus as Heracles has seemingly done the impossible by reconnecting her body with her soul, but Admetus also fears for this reason he

might embrace someone that is not his wife. Because Heracles has bridged a gap between the living and the dead in a way those who are human and mortal cannot, Admetus finds the concept of life and death puzzling--possibly as Euripides feels while contributing to the ideological purpose underlying the trope. Because a unique event occurs in which a character comes back to life, Euripides examines the role of life after death. Here, he also explores the extent of the physical limitation of death rather than looking at lived experiences alone.

Selected Texts - The Aeneid

This section further details the failed embrace between not only husband and wife, but also father and son by combining the two. Therefore, this section looks at the effects of the failed embrace on multiple facets of one man's family as opposed to previous sections. Virgil's text, *The Aeneid*, which centers around themes of honor, pride, war, and divine intervention by the gods contains the sixth and seventh failed embraces in this trope. Because two failed embraces also occur in this text, Virgil seems to be entering into a conversation with Homer. The first failed embrace between Aeneas and his wife Creusa happens when Aeneas, Creusa, Ascanius, and Anchises flee Troy while it continues to be under attack. During this escape, Creusa falls behind and Aeneas goes to find her. Shocked, Aeneas finds his wife dead as she falls behind without his knowledge. He states, "Oh dear god, my wife, Creusa - / torn from me by a brutal fate! What then, / did she stop in her tracks or lose her way? / Or exhausted, sink down to rest? Who knows? / I never set my eyes on her again. / I never looked back, she never crossed my mind" (134 lines 915-920). Aeneas goes on to frantically search for her "madly rushing" until he sees "her stricken ghost" (135 lines 956-958). Here, the use of "stricken" displays a similar pattern to previous texts where other members involved in this experience are equally as surprised.

At this stage, Creusa tells Aeneas of his fate, then, she "dissolves into the empty air" (136 line 982). Yet again, we see here that death is a fluctuating image. Aeneas tries three times to

"fling his arms around her neck;" however, he embraces "nothing… her phantom / sifting through his fingers" (136 lines 983-984). The embrace presents itself as "quick as a dream in flight" (136 line 986). Again, there is an immediacy in the transition to the afterlife similar to that of Alcestis. Equating this failed embrace to something "dream-like" emphasizes the importance and value of dreams as a familiar way of encompassing a strange experience, while also connecting them to others who felt similarly like Homer and Aeschylus. In this first encounter, Virgil concerns himself with lived experiences of characters like Aeneas where the second encounter deals with agency and life after death.

The second failed embrace in *The Aeneid*, between Aeneas and his father Anchises, takes place in the underworld (in the Fortunate Groves). At first, Anchises "reaches out both of his hands as his spirit is lifted" (260 line 792). Then, Aeneas begs his father to not "withdraw from his embrace" (260 line 806). Here, Aeneas' begging almost gives agency to the spirit, as if the spirit somehow has the option and makes the choice to withdraw. An implication remains that agency exists in life after death. This encounter also shows the desperation and disconcertion of Aeneas as he does not fully comprehend and understand the capabilities and limits between the living and the dead. Three times, Aeneas tries to embrace his father; however, "he embraces nothing… the phantom / sifts through his fingers, / light as wind, quick as a dream in flight" (260 lines 808-811). By Aeneas attempting to embrace his father three times, just as he previously tried with his wife, readers see Virgil's connection to Homer, who also describes the attempt of Odysseus to embrace his mother's spirit three times. Although Homer would not have connected the number three with the Biblical association of "divine wholeness," possibly Virgil had these intentions.

Virgil likely took several aspects from Homer's epic and placed them in his own. Additionally, Virgil may have been influenced by Christianity as it was gaining more attention, drawing him to the conclusion of a rewards-based Christian-like afterlife in his work. This also

may have been inspired by the rewards based Greek afterlife. However, what the use of the number three does reveal in all of these occurrences is the utmost desperation each individual has to embrace another; so much so, that the possibility of a failed embrace is not deemed acceptable until multiple attempts have proven to be inefficacious.

Virgil also provides a text where everyone goes to the underworld after death. However, in a manner similar to metamorphosis, people eventually do go back to Earth. This experience is depicted as:

> A cycle of time seen through, / cleansing our hard, inveterate stains and leaving us clear / ethereal sense, the eternal breath of fire purged and pure. / But all the rest, once they have turned the wheel of time / for a thousand years: God calls them forth to the Lethe, / great armies of souls, their memories blank so that / they may revisit the overarching world once more / and begin to long to return to bodies yet again (262 lines 862-869).

Virgil supplies one of the first texts which fully attempts to describe the process one goes through after death, more so than those before him like Homer and Aeschylus. This detailed description, therefore, shows the enhanced experience of the afterlife created through a foundation in texts. Furthermore, the texts leading up to this often detail a process of purification through a proper burial. Here, we see a process of purification through fire or punishment. Furthering this description, Anchises explains to Aeneus that, "Souls / are drilled in punishments, they must pay for their old offenses… / each of us must suffer his own demanding ghost" (262 lines 854-859). These ideas will go on to be foundational for Dante in his future work over purgatory.

Another encounter, which adds to Virgil's conception of life after death, occurs while Aeneas tears off a shoot of brush to make offerings on the beach (139). After grasping a shoot, "dark blood oozes out and fouls the soil with filth" (139 line 35). Then, Aeneas hears "A cry heaving into the air stating: 'Why Aeneas, / why mangle this wretched flesh? Spare the body /

buried here… / the blood you see is oozing from no tree… / I am Polydorus'" (140 lines 47-53). Aeneas, recognizing the importance of a proper burial, eventually grants this to Polydorus. Through this, we see that just as spirits return to the living world through metamorphosis, in Virgil's text, they can also take on the form of objects such as trees if not given a proper burial. Although Virgil details this outside of Aeneas' time in the underworld, the encounter still aids in understanding the process of life after death in Virgil's terms.

In this text, Sibyl, a guide to the underworld, also reveals, "No spirits may be conveyed / across the horrendous banks and hoarse, roaring flood [into the underworld] / until their bones are buried, and they rest in peace… / A hundred years they wonder, hovering round these shores / till at last they may return and see once more the pools / they long to cross" (245 lines 371-376). This emphasizes the importance of a proper burial while also providing even more information into the state of spirits after death in that some unburied souls, like Polydorus, become objects such as plants, while others wander restlessly. Because improperly buried spirits and the living cannot visit the underworld, we now know that only those whom the gods favor can receive this access in texts like Virgil's. Even though he possesses an obsession with the afterlife, Achilles cannot visit the underworld in the same way godlike Odysseus in Homer's text and Virgil's Aeneas can.

Selected Texts - The Inferno

While the previous sections have dealt with specific interactions between a living being and someone with whom they were in a relationship, this section deals more with the interaction between a living being and the afterlife as a whole. Dante interacts with the specific figure, Virgil, but beyond that, he is navigating the circles of hell and the deceased souls within them. Although Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* does not contain a failed embrace, it does contain critical information about life after death leading into the failed embrace in *The Purgatorio*. Throughout *The Inferno,* Virgil leads Dante through hell in order to reach purgatory. Through this experience,

we gain an understanding of an early Roman Catholic view of the afterlife for those who were not deemed pure enough for purgatory or heaven. Before entering hell, Dante and Virgil encounter the souls of the uncommitted and neutral angels who never picked a side during the war in heaven. After passing these souls, Virgil and Dante enter into the first circle of hell – limbo. Limbo consists of virtuous souls who failed to receive a baptism or who lived before the advent of Christianity. Virgil's soul lives here, though access has been granted to him to guide Dante on his journey. Those like Homer, Horace, Ovid, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Aeneas also live in limbo. Following limbo, the monster Minos decides what circle of hell one will enter into based on the sins they committed. The circles of hell following limbo include lust, gluttony, greed, anger, heresy, violence, fraud, and treachery. Each progressively leads to a worse sin and an eternal punishment to match it. At the end of these circles, Lucifer resides.

Throughout their journey, souls often ask Dante to remember them. Ciacco, in the third circle of hell (containing the gluttonous), specifically asks, "When you move again among the living, / oh speak my name to the memory of men" (68 lines 85-86). This shows Dante's reliance on previous texts, such as Homer's, who value living and dying honorably and being remembered for such. Ciacco, during his time on Earth, gained the name "Ciacco, The Hog" (67 line 49). Therefore, after a time of reflection in hell, his hope rests in the remembrance from others--one which reflects him differently than his time on Earth. After this interaction, Virgil reveals, "The host shall come to judge all men. / Then shall each soul before the seat of Mercy / return to its sad grave and flesh and form / to hear the edict of Eternity… / As for these souls, though they can never soar / to true perfection, still in the new time / they will be nearer it than they were before" (68-69 lines 94-108). From this, Virgil details the second coming of Christ or The Last Judgement, a major belief in the Catholic church--and most Christian denominations. Later, in the seventh circle of hell, we gain insight into the life of the spirit Epicurus, a Greek philosopher with the goal of obtaining happiness in each stage of his life by pursuing pleasure thinking the body

and soul share a mutual death (96-100). This belief is one outside of what many Ancient Greeks like Homer and Romans like Virgil believed. Thus, Dante appears to warn those of their fate once they die if they stray from his Roman Catholic beliefs.

In the seventh circle of hell, Dante and Virgil come across a forest of those who chose to end their lives. This reflects Virgil's text where spirits can also take the form of vegetation if they fail to receive a proper burial. Additionally, this reflects the theme of the glorification of death prominent in many of the previously mentioned texts, as many chose to become martyrs by ending their lives willingly in battle – perhaps unnecessarily, as when Patroclus took Achilles' place in battle in *The Iliad*. Although, in Dante's text, Minos ultimately decides what circle of hell one will enter and what classifies as suicide, the seventh circle of hell still seems to reflect a warning towards the ongoing glorification of death.

In the ninth and final circle of hell, we see a representation towards those who violated relationships, specifically those of loyalty to their family, country, and guests. This circle of hell reflects many of the themes seen in the previous texts, such as *Agamemnon*, where honoring the contract between host and guest exists as a crucial foundation in Ancient Greek culture. From this, Dante seems to be reflecting on the texts of those before him who contain both non-Christian and Christian beliefs by incorporating correlating punishments into his own text. Similarly, because it is the ultimate sin in the final circle of hell, the importance of honoring one's loyalty throughout history is emphasized.

While in circle nine, Dante "grabs the hair of Italian traitor Bocca Degli Abati and states, 'Either you tell me truly who you are, / or you won't have any hair left on your head'... / he had a good grip on his hair; already / he had yanked out more than one fistful of it" (270 lines 98-103). Similarly, back in circle seven, Virgil "gathers and embraces" Dante (152 line 90). These instances seem to contradict the ongoing notion of a failed embrace between spirits and the living.

However, in Dante's text, Virgil can embrace Dante, because he becomes a presence with him. In the encounter with Abati, Dante can attack and grasp him because, in Dante's text, assaults from the living onto those in hell are viewed favorably. Dante's text also allows souls to enter hell before their actual deaths if their crimes contain enough significance. In these instances, demons occupy the bodies of the living until they pass on. This information shows Dante's enriched notion of life after death, in that one's soul can be separated from the body before their physical body leaves the Earth, something undocumented by those writing about failed embraces and/or life after death before him.

Instead of dealing with a failed embrace directly in *The Inferno*, Dante sets the foundation to enter into a conversation of the trope in his following text--*The Purgatorio*. The idea that assaults can be acceptable while embraces cannot seems to position a divide between souls that are meant to suffer and those that are not. Because of this, Dante becomes concerned with the lived experience solely because it influences one's afterlife/life after death. As Dante presents a warning towards the ongoing glorification of death to his audience, he seems to be aligning with some of Homer's beliefs and portrayals, while simultaneously pushing back against Homer's work due to a Christian lens. Here, because Dante's work becomes informed by the religious emphases of Christianity, it ultimately gains force in a way that both Christian and non-Christian notions figure into the mix--something no text in this trope before his has encountered. In this way, Dante builds upon the trope and tradition set up by Homer and those directly following him.

Selected Texts - The Purgatorio

This section, following Dante's exploration of the afterlife as a whole, discusses more specific interactions between Dante and the dead. Based on the information gathered in the previous section, this section delves deeper into the failed embrace and how the status of the dead

affects it. The second text of Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy [*The Purgatorio*], which centers around themes of fate versus free will, love, sin, and God, follows *The Aeneid* in this trope making it the eighth failed embrace thus far. This failed embrace between Dante and Casella (one who sang with Dante while alive) occurs upon Dante and Virgil's arrival into purgatory. Dante states:

> I saw one of them [Casella] come forward / with such affection to embrace me / that I was moved to do the same. / Oh empty shades, except in seeming! / Three times I clasped my hands behind him / only to find them clasped to my own chest. / Surprise must have been painted on my face, / at which the shade smiled and drew back / and I, pursuing him, moved forward. / Gently he requested I stop. / Then I knew him (33 lines 76-86).

Once again, the number three is repeated. This shows Dante may be building upon an established tradition. From this, we also see that Dante cannot embrace spirits in purgatory; however, he can embrace them in hell. Possibly, Date reveals this contradiction as a way of conveying that spirits going through a purification process in purgatory cannot embrace the living who are flawed. This could also explain why other beings in previous non-Christian texts, who had not yet passed through to the underworld, could not similarly embrace the living. Just as Christians such as Casella are attempting to reach heaven, non-Christians like Patroclus are similarly attempting to cross the gates of the underworld. Therefore, those like Dante in his text and Achilles in Virgil's text enact embraces that fail towards those on a path to reach their final destinations.

Dante also rejects Plato's theory that man has more than one soul by including the lines, "When one of our faculties is given over / to pleasure or to pain, / our soul will focus on that one alone / and seem to pay no mind to any of its other powers - / revealing the error in the doctrine that maintains / among the souls within us one is more aflame" (77 lines 1-6). Furthermore, he includes an explanation for what happens to one's soul upon death, "At the moment of death, the / soul leaves the body but carries / with it the potential for both / states, the bodily one 'mute,' /

the rational one more acute / than in life, and falls to / Acheron (if damned) or Tiber / (if saved), where it takes on its / 'airy body,' which, inseparable / as flame from fire, follows it / wherever it goes" (553 lines 79-104). From these explanations, Dante provides the most comprehensive and thorough accounts over the state of one's soul throughout this entire trope. Dante also appears to allude to the instant detachment of the soul from the body upon death like Euripides and Virgil--who is also heavily referenced in *The Purgatorio*.

Dante's text also details an explanation of free will, a topic in most of the previous texts thus far, "Yes the heavens give motion to your inclinations… / you still possess a light to winnow good from evil, / and you have free will" (351 lines 73-76). Dante's text once again reflects the views of the Catholic church in that he appears to believe that everyone has to be accountable for their actions. This holds up in earlier Greek and Roman texts; however, the blame can often be shifted onto the gods because of their frequent manipulation of others' free will. Dante's text also includes himself dreaming at several points in order to make sense of an unfamiliar experience which has become a repeated important feature in this trope. Because the manipulation of free will from the gods does not exist in Dante's text, not only do souls receive punishment in hell for their actions but also in purgatory. Although many of the punishments, even if justified, seem to contradict the Christian principle of "turning the other cheek," the souls in purgatory claim, "Our pain is renewed… / I speak of pain but should say solace (515 lines 71-72). This statement also reflects how differently Romans viewed their wrongdoings as sins worthy of punishment while Greeks tended to view their actions as harm towards others instead. Virgil's pre-Christian beliefs initiate this in his text, as he develops a theory of reincarnation through the transmigration of souls where spirits still have to pay a price for their wrongs even though they eventually forget through the process of being "reborn." Dante uses and enriches this belief in his own text. The religious emphasis of Christianity and Dante's early Catholic beliefs would have led him to consider those who he cannot embrace as going through a purification process. Again, Dante

emphasizes a lived experience specifically as a pathway to the afterlife. Because they go through a purification process, Dante places a higher value on going through life after death.

Selected Texts - Sonnet 23: Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint

Concluding this project's discussion of the trope, John Milton relays the dream he experiences in which he attempts to embrace his wife. John Milton's "Sonnet 23: Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint" contains the ninth and final example of a failed embrace this project will examine. Here, Milton recalls a dream in which he attempts to embrace his deceased wife; however, the embrace, like many in the texts before him, is in vain. Specifically, Milton states, "But Oh! as to embrace me she inclin'd, / I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night" ("Sonnet 23" lines 13-14). Once again, a dream seems to represent the subconscious providing answers to a circumstance without any. Additionally, by including this failed embrace within the realm of a dream, Milton enters into a conversation with those before him like Homer, Aeschylus, and Virgil. This text also states, "Methought I saw my late espoused Saint / Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave" ("Sonnet 23" lines 1-2). In this instance, Milton specifically references the failed embrace in *Alcestis,* a similar technique used by Dante who includes Virgil in his text.

Milton lost his sight completely by 1652. Considering "Sonnet 23" originated in 1658 following the death of his wife, he seems to use his dreams or portrayal of dreams as a way to see again. In this trope, since Achilles and Patroclus in Homer's text, dreams have been used as a way for the living to communicate with the dead and to aid in understanding an unfamiliar situation. "Seeing" the figure of his wife does not startle or frighten Milton. If anything, the interaction exists as a reassuring reminder to Milton that he will see his wife again after his death. Specifically, he states, "I trust to have / Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint" ("Sonnet 23" lines 7-8). Therefore, Milton's text provides an ending point to this trope where we can

examine the effects of a full foundation in religion. Once again, a philosophical position coexists with the literary one, but now Milton begins to gain a better understanding of life after death and, therefore, writes about encounters with the dead in a different light than his influences in this trope who held non-Christian, early Christian, and often unsure views of the afterlife.

Conclusion and Significance of the Embrace

Although the failed embraces in this trope primarily stem from human connections seeking love, solidarity, and companionship, this intent does not always hold true for embraces in society which complicates my conclusions. What we do know, however, is that these repeated encounters become a trope of fear--a fear of death, not being able to cross through the gates of the underworld, never having a proper burial, a failed connection, and never being able to embrace the ones valued most. This fortifies the principles societies have been based upon both good and bad, bridging the gap between languages, societies, space, and time. Today, we still have the same questions as those before us, as death is still unknown. While we have more information today due to scientific advancements, the same questions are still revisited in modern literature. Therefore, there are major gaps we may never be able to bridge, and we may always contain questions that will forever plague us despite what these failed embraces attempt to uncover.

CHAPTER III

SOMEONE IN SOME FUTURE TIME WILL THINK OF US: A PARALLEL ANALYSIS OF DISMISSAL IN THE WESTERN HISTORICAL TRADITION

Introduction

As both a student and instructor at my university, I see the effects of generational feminine dismissal on both myself and the women around me on a daily basis. As a student, I struggle in most of my courses to speak up for fear my opinions will not be considered valid. Many of the other women who are in my courses have expressed similar feelings. Imposter syndrome impacts most graduate students, but it was not until the only male in one of my classes was absent that I fully grasped where a lack of confidence stems from. During that particular seminar, the entire atmosphere shifted and every person in the room participated, including myself. Afterwards, I noted this shift to a classmate who also recognized the discussion hadn't been as hostile as usual because the male student wasn't there to criticize and debate the majority of the statements being made by other students. Although the act of pushing back in the classroom is positive in most circumstances, as it pushes students to develop their own opinions and learn about other points of view, because this action was repeatedly initiated by one man against other women, many of us reacted negatively. I believe this reaction stems from the subconscious generational effects of feminine dismissal. Although other scholars have touched on

this before, that makes it all the more important to explore the issue of feminine dismissal which is so deeply systemic, it still occurs on a regular basis in ways we often do not even think about it.

Feminist scholar Sheri Sternberg states: "Women had to claim the right to speak and insist upon their right to personhood… Therefore, women's rhetoric will often sound different than the self-assured voices that have been long defined" ("Feminist Repurposing" 23). Because their opinions were not considered valid, I, and many other women, have taken on this default sense of unworthiness and have carried it into academia. Therefore, when a man consistently pushes back on the opinions being voiced in a classroom, the mentality of not being "valid" for centuries resurfaces, leading to a hostile classroom environment where women no longer feel comfortable expressing their opinions. Luckily, this is not always the case, and I have been able to hold debates with several male students who are respectful of my opinions and the opinions of other women. However, negative experiences such as these are still common in the classroom setting--particularly for instructors of color, trans instructors, queer instructors, and instructors with disabilities, and others who do not share my relatively privileged position as a white woman.

As an instructor, I also see this beginning to take shape in my own classroom. Several of my male students participate in class discussions while the women rarely do unless I directly call on them or have them hold discussions in small groups. Additionally, freshman composition instructors, such as myself, have been viewed negatively because of the feminine associations--such as their willingness to do more work for less pay, engage in service learning projects, and "mother" incoming freshmen. In fact, "in positions of low salary [freshman composition] women were assumed to do better than men because they were more tied to the business of teaching" ("Feminist Repurposing" 27). Therefore, I am expected as a woman to be comfortable with receiving less money for my position in academia, because historically women have received less money for teaching simply because they center their pedagogy around the well-being of their students. This, as scholars concerned with gender contingent labor such as Eileen Schell have

noted, places the instructor in the position of a "caretaker." I have changed the way I view myself as an educator now and my goals of where I want to be in the future to ensure I do not fall into the pattern of a low salary "caretaker."

Throughout the process of reading various feminist rhetorical pieces over women whose works have mostly been forgotten, I have found commonalities which can be traced throughout history until present day. One major thread I followed was the dismissal many women received from men. Scholar Susan Jarratt states: "Practices of rhetoric, philosophy, and literary production have long been considered the domain of men" (391). This is significant in gaining understanding over the areas from which women have historically been excluded. Another scholar, Andrea Lundsford, states: "Tradition has never recognized the forms, strategies, and goals used by many women as 'rhetorical' (6). This can also help us understand the position from which women have been viewed for centuries. Once these areas have been explicitly identified, we can move forward in recognizing patterns, and thus, solutions to change those patterns.

Historically, academics have been taught to critically examine and critique early rhetoricians such as Aspasia and poets such as Sappho. However, since we are in a society where the research related to these women is considered a "specialty" field, many of us spend our time solely studying these select women, leading to the neglect and dismissal of other women in other cultures--women in nonwestern societies, women of color, trans women, queer women, and women with disabilities. Meanwhile, contemporary feminist rhetoricians and their work are still being ignored, silenced, and "pushed back" on by men in the humanities. Therefore, this project contains a comparative analysis over the dismissal and silencing of women at the beginning of our Greek western study of rhetoric in order to examine the parallel experiences of dismissal faced by women in academia. For the purpose of this project, I am defining [dismissal/feminine dismissal] as the effect of as well as the process by which the works of certain [communities/discourse communities] are invalidated. This project concludes with possible ways

to break these patterns of dismissal and silencing that has gone on for too long. For example, practicing rhetorical listening, engaging in ethical citation practices, and promoting the recovery work of feminist scholars.

A Brief History of Sappho and the Problems She Faced

I started my examination around 6th century BC Greece with Sappho, a lyric poet from the island of Lesbos. Although little is known for certain about her life, it is still significant that many of her works remain today. In this sense, Sappho set the stage for many feminine scholars. She has even been credited with stating: "You may forget, but let me tell you this: someone in some future time will think of us" (Enoch and Jack 518). The "us," which is not explicitly defined, can be interpreted as women not only in the 6th century BC but for centuries to come. Through this statement, Sappho looked to the future in hopes one day women and their works would be valued in the same way men and their works were.

In a backhanded way, most of Sappho's work has been preserved through the citations of male rhetoricians. Aristotle even said: "'Everyone honors the wise Sappho, though she was a woman.' [Otherwise, Aristotle denied any philosophical or rhetorical contributions of women]" (Glenn 192). Here, it is clear why Sappho's concerns for remembrance existed. Although Aristotle is praising her, he states "though she was a woman," implying being a woman is something to be ashamed of. By Aristotle referring to Sappho and her intellect in this way, he not only discredits her and his first statement that she was wise but also future women who dare to do similar work.

Sappho "has been remembered by various groups… and for different rhetorical purposes... as a lyric poet, lesbian, madwoman, feminist, creative force, distraught lover, sexual deviant, and so on" (Enoch and Jack 529). As one of the earliest representations of a feminist, or one who supported the equal rights of women and men, Sappho would have been viewed and

treated negatively by many of those in her social circle for challenging societal norms in 6th century BC Greece. Thus, the association of "sexual deviant" would have been initiated from her ties to feminism and her poetry as they centered around topics of lust--specifically lust towards other women. During a time when being pure and silent as a woman was valued, Sappho's association with writing, and more specifically, writing about sexuality would have placed her outside of the traditional social circles of most women in her society.

A Brief History of Aspasia and the Problems She Faced

Moving forward into 5th century BC Athens, I began to examine the life of and works credited to Aspasia, an influential speech writer and immigrant. During this time, "women in Athens were utterly silenced; in fact, because women were denied citizenship, the language did not even have a word for a woman" ("Feminist Repurposing" 20). This is significant in predetermining how women would go on to be treated and viewed in society today. Because women were silenced, they were taught they should not have opinions, and if they did, their opinions did not matter enough to be heard by others. Echoing this mentality is Aristotle who states: "Between the sexes, the male is by nature superior and the female inferior" ("Feminist Repurposing" 20). Aristotle, who was, and still is, greatly admired, reinforces how women were and still are viewed by many, in that others would have taken his views as truths not to be questioned.

Despite the views of women in early Athens, Aspasia made a "name" for herself, for better or for worse. In a world where others looked down upon her, she refused to remain silent by teaching others in her private salon--which has since been wrongfully attributed to Pericles (Glenn 186). Thus, some know of her today from the men who learned from her. However, there are no works that are completely credited to Aspasia despite what men during the time said about her knowledge and rhetorical skills. In Plato's *Menexenus*, Socrates states: "She, [Aspasia] who is

my instructor, is by no means weak in the art of rhetoric; on the contrary, she has turned out many fine orators, and amongst them one who surpassed all other Greeks, Pericles, the son of Xanthippus" (Plato 235). Part of the injustice of Aspasia's lack of recognition rests in the fact "historical tradition has readily accepted secondary accounts of Socrates' influence, teaching, and beliefs; however, the same cannot be said about any female counterpart" (Glenn 182). So the question arises, why should Aspasia be discredited when Socrates has never been? Neither of them have works that are completely theirs, yet Socrates is a name most know and value, while Aspasia is a name many have not and will not ever come to know or value.

In the few works in which Aspasia is referenced, we can see the skewed portrayal of how men wished for her to be viewed instead of how she was. Cheryl Glenn writes about a 19th century painting entitled *Alcibiades and Aspasia* (Gérôme). Here, "Aspasia appears to be reclining seductively on Alcibiades, her hand cupping his breast, her head suspiciously near his stomach and wide-spread legs, while Alcibiades looks away from her and reaches out to grasp Socrates' hand" (Glenn 180). Here, Aspasia is presented in a sexual manner that automatically would have discredited her, as only women who were silent and pure were valued in early Athenian life. Aspasia is also depicted as looking upon Alcibiades who is turning away from her in rejection and reaching towards Socrates, another man, in admiration. Thus, the power rests in the masculine figure of Socrates, not only in the portrait but in life.

Other accounts of Aspasia depict her as "self-indulgent, licentious, and immoral" (Glenn 186). However, despite how many have depicted her as such, there are multiple accounts of men who went to Aspasia to learn--and brought their wives. If Aspasia did not hold power men were afraid of, why did they feel the need to consistently make her appear inferior? This is better explained through a quote by scholar Marie Delcourt who states: "Aspasia was so brilliant she could not possibly be respectable" (Glenn 184). Just as Delcourt touches on, Aspasia was an exceptional female rhetorician. This instantly flagged her as a threat to the men with whom she

would have circulated in daily life, and subsequently, men for years to come. Scholar Cheryl Glenn states: "Even now, Aspasia's intellectual estate seems to be 'off-limits,' except in that her story serves as a morality tale for women who insist on entering the rhetorical arena: such women will be used, misappropriated, and eventually forgotten. Or worse, perhaps, they will be disfigured in artistic renderings, inscribed with masculine fantasy" (194). Glenn reminds us just how powerful the effects of history are on present-day society, specifically in the academy, as the actions of feminine dismissal which occurred centuries ago are still echoed today.

Just like Sappho, who set the stage for women by pushing against the societal norms of Greek women, Aspasia similarly pushed back on the norms of life in 5th century BC Athens by opening up her own salon for others to visit and learn in. This placed Aspasia in a similar social circle to Sappho in that they both would have been around others who valued education. More specifically, "Aspasia was an active member of the most famous intellectual circle in Athens" (Glenn 191). This circle would have included men such as Pericles whose works are still known and valued today. Additionally, just as Sappho was depicted as a "sexual deviant," Aspasia was similarly depicted and remembered as such by those in Athens for challenging the norms of staying silent and pure. Some images of Aspasia depict her conversing with other rhetoricians of her time which goes against the values of staying silent, while others, like the painting previously mentioned, portray her with Alcibiades and Socrates as overly sexualized. Because of this, Aspasia challenged the views placed onto women and helped to continue on some of the earliest feminist mentalities for equal rights--although the term feminist would not be created until the 1800s.

Patterns of "Otherness" - Aspasia

Glenn refers to Aspasia in Thucydides' description of society in Asia Minor, as a "'stranger woman' who was subject to Athenian law but did not have citizen rights" (Glenn 182).

Here, the word "stranger" is used to label Aspasia as different from the rest of Athenian society. It is also significant that the word "stranger," which in this instance also holds negative connotations is used in tandem with the word "woman" to show there is a direct correlation. Additionally, after Aspasia was rumored to compose an oration for the dead, Menexenus, in a conversation with Socrates, stated: "If Aspasia, who is only a woman, should be able to compose such a speech, she must be a rare one" (Ianetta 95). Here, not only is Aspasia discredited as "only" being a woman, Menexenus claims a woman is "rare" if she is capable of creating rhetorical speeches, meaning women should not be capable of producing scholarly thoughts.

Men also hoped through this process of "othering," people would forget about these women over time. Scholars Jessica Enoch and Jordynn Jack confirmed my assumptions over this by stating: "Forgetting can be seen as a more overt and strategic process of erasure--a purposeful act of striking from public memory--because the memory of the person or thing proves dangerous to the status quo" (529). This act of intentionally erasing women from the memory of others goes into obscuring rhetoric for personal gain. The process of using rhetoric in this way was recognized in people as early as Aspasia and Plato. "Plato agrees with Aspasia that rhetoric, which is the daughter of truth-disclosing philosophy, does not always carry on tradition; rhetoric can be used to obscure the truth, to control and deceive believers into belief" (Glenn 191). These early thoughts from Aspasia were possibly her predicting her own future dismissal of her work not only by those around her who began to define her as part of the "other," but future male scholars as well.

Patterns of "Otherness" - Current Scholars

In addition to women such as Sappho and Aspasia, current feminist scholars and academics have also been placed into the category of the "other" in non-explicitly defined ways. This can be viewed through their comparison to the women who *have* been defined as the "other"

by men for going against traditional societal norms. After recognizing these patterns of "otherness," I began to wonder why the term "other" was so frequently associated with women who wished to advocate for themselves and for other women, such as current feminist scholars who advocate for themselves and for the works of historical women.

The term and mentality of the "other" stems from the beginning of 6th century BC Athens when "the key to authority in the state, was the means of commanding and dominating others" (Glenn 185). Men were afraid of women gaining power via domination. Therefore, men wanted to ensure women were not allowed rights. In fact, the "Athenian democratic state, polis, was founded upon excluding women" (Glenn 185). If men were able to exclude and dominate women, then women would not be able to do the same to them. Therefore, anytime a woman challenged these rules of society, men would label them as "mad," "rare," or "stranger" so other women would not follow in the same path. Likewise, if men were never challenged or questioned by women, then men would always be the ones in control to determine what women were and were not allowed to do.

The Problems Current Scholars Face

Frequently, male scholars discredit the works women have done in academia. Melissa Ianetta, another feminist scholar, recognizes this by stating: "Edward P.J. Corbett and Robert Connors have defined Aspasia as merely 'the closest [Glenn] comes to finding [classical] women who could be regarded as a theorist and pedagogue of rhetoric" (Ianetta 95). In this instance, two men have decided to push back on a woman's [Glenn] work over the recovery and recognition of another woman whose voice has long been silenced and pushed back on.

Although the intentions of Corbett and Connors may not have been explicitly malicious, I do think they were subconsciously initiated from a generational mentality of questioning the works women produce. Any opportunity to recover the works of women rhetors should be taken.

More specifically, if long-standing credible men such as Socrates and Pericles praised Aspasia for her wisdom during a time where women were otherwise silenced, what would compel Corbett and Connors to push back on evidence given what we know today--especially since they did not similarly question the existence of Socrates whose work also only exists through the voices of others? Possibly, this is an attempt to discredit the works of feminist scholars or, possibly, they wanted Glenn to produce more evidence for the claims she makes in her work. Regardless, what it does do is continue to discredit the voices of women past and present.

Narratives

In 2017, the New York Times asked women around the world to share their experiences with male dismissal. One woman, Grace Ellis, shared: "I can't even count the number of times I've witnessed a woman being interrupted and talked over by a man, only to hear him later repeat the same ideas she was trying to put forward" (Chira). Another respondent, Joyce Lionarons, wrote: "My female boss told me she needed to allow each man to interrupt her four times before protesting in a meeting. If she protested more often, there were problems" (Chira). Similar experiences as those mentioned, occur in the office and school settings, town hall meetings, and even the United States Senate.

In an anonymous blog centered around sexism and women in academia, author "Dualitea" shares her experience working in academia as a queer and trans woman. She states: "There have been plenty of times in life when I've had men assume that I don't know what I'm doing or saying, and treat me accordingly" (Dualitea). "Dualitea" recently attempted to ban the acronym "FAG" from being used in the STEM field at her university. However, the directors of her department, who were older straight cis men, argued that "the acronym had been around for a long time, and that they shouldn't have to change it 'just because someone might get offended' (Dualitea).

In her book *Making Our Voices Heard: Women of Color in Academia*, Harriet Curtis-Boles shares her concerns with women of color having to act like their white male colleagues. She states "for too many years the challenges we have faced in the academy have been endured in silence and isolation, and our achievements and triumphs known to a small few" (Curtis-Boles). Since only the lived experiences of white men are largely known, she shares that many women of color have to lead themselves to success without the guidance of others. This places them at a special disadvantage in graduate school, which bases its pedagogy on a mentorship system. Additionally, she states: "Many of us live through years of feeling inadequate or questioning our competence because colleagues and students dismiss or minimize our expertise or place us in the position of the "other"' (Curtis-Boles). Students experience this even from those who are specifically appointed to aid them through their academic careers. For example, one of my colleagues encountered an undergraduate advisor who told her she would succeed in graduate school because she was "pretty" and "pleasing." I have provided these examples in order to show that it is not necessary to be a historical figure to experience sexism and dismissal from men. Furthermore, I am sharing these narratives to emphasize the everyday nature of dismissal and how easy it can be to let these experiences disappear into history. If we have minimal evidence of how Sappho and Aspasia were treated, then we can only estimate how many more women like them have been lost to us.

An important rhetorical concept to counter dismissal, which American writer Alexis Gumbs points out, is *survival*. Gumbs states: "Survival is life after disaster, life in honor of our ancestors, despite the genocidal forces working against them specifically so we would not exist. I love the word survival because it places my life in the context of those who I love, who are called dead, but survive through my breathing, my presence, and my remembering" (1). Survival allows us to not simply lament our losses, but celebrate the living.

Complications

With this project, I do not want to discount the ongoing silencing of other women that has been inflicted by members of my own field. I recognize that we need to recover the voices of women that have been buried by history; however, recovery is not enough, because the women we choose to elevate are tainted by our own biases and motives. For example, my own choice of subjects for this project is limited to women who, though ostracized for their genders, were still relatively privileged. Additionally, anyone who teaches nontraditional feminist rhetors and rhetorics has to contend with a canon and curriculum designed for their exclusion. In doing this, we risk the further neglect and dismissal of other women in other cultures--women in nonwestern societies, women of color, trans women, queer women, and women with disabilities. Feminist rhetorical scholarship is currently doing such recovery work, but perhaps these have not yet made their way into common graduate curriculums.

Conclusion

Now that we know there are threads of dismissal from men towards certain women and mechanisms used by various men to label these women as the "other," we need to take action in order to break these pre-existing patterns. The first step in breaking these patterns is for others to continue to recover and validate the texts of women. Feminist scholar Kathleen Ryan defines recovery in this way: "recovering historical women rhetoricians, recuperating contemporary and historical women's writing and speaking not traditionally viewed as rhetoric and analyzing the recovered women's texts" (24). This action is one that can be completed through classroom assignments where students are asked to question traditional historical narratives. In the Composition II courses at my university, students spend an entire semester exploring archives to examine whose story they are telling and whose story they are leaving out. By exploring local archives, students can begin to not only uncover and recognize the voices of women who may

have been forgotten, but also honor them while they are alive and gain an overall understanding of the importance of recovery work as a whole. Projects like these are highly individualized and allow students to create work that matter to them, as is the goal of pedagogy-based texts like *The Meaningful Writing Project* which states:

> Learning, teaching, and writing can become simultaneously more connected to our goals as educators and more connected to student's goals as learners if we value where students might choose to take their writing and why they might make those choices- allowing them the agency to make those choices and encouraging them to take hold of who they have been, who they are, and who they want to be in their futures. (Eodice et al. 140)

However, feminist scholars Gesa Kirsch and Jacqueline Royster state that the act of recovery work on its own is simply not enough. More specifically, they state: "If we stopped with rescue, recovery, and reinscription, we would be placing women's lives mainly in service to our lives and agendas rather than placing them in symbiotic partnership with women over time" (Kirsch and Royster 655). Therefore, instead of finding the works of other women as they fit within the interests of ourselves and then moving on to other works of recovery, Kirsch and Royster suggest "...recognizing and honoring these women's traditions, respecting the communities in which they have functioned, and seeking to amplify their voices and visions" (662). This is a similar process to the threads of overlapping social circles I traced from Sappho in 6th century BC Greece up until modern scholars and academics.

This process is one that can also be encouraged in the classroom. After students locate the works of women in locations such as archives, instructors can then encourage them to dig deeper into the worlds these women were a part of. Students can learn about and perhaps contribute to efforts to support their local environments through community-engaged classrooms. Rhetorical scholar Romeo Garcia states: "My sense is that the greatest need for research and teaching is in

taking community listening seriously. In this way, the interplay of stories-so-far (Massey) and possibilities of new stories (Rohrer) implicates us and demands that we renew our relationships with one another in more humane ways" (Creating Presence). In doing this, students can recognize similar patterns of dismissal occurring today and perhaps even break them. Kirsch and Royster state: "We, like the women (and others) whom we study, negotiate various social circles… Therefore, excellence demands that we pay more attention to where we live, work, and dwell as scholars and as human beings" (664). The goal of going beyond simply recovering the works of women, as Kirsch and Royster state, is to fully grasp who these women were and what their works are about. By recovering works with no further research, we not only risk misrepresenting and misinterpreting the women and their works, but we also risk the chance of missing patterns as they relate to ourselves.

Another action that will aid in the breaking of feminine patterns of dismissal is being explicit with our students in relation to not only how these patterns have been passed down but also how these patterns are affecting them in the classroom today. For example, making our reading choices clear with our students in relation to how we are disrupting the literary canon, connecting assignments to lived experiences and the sociopolitical climate, requiring diverse citation practices, and actively interrogating our own biases. These may lead to not only male students being more conscious of what they say and do in the classroom but also to the encouragement of women to recognize their opinions, like the opinions of the women before them, are valid if not infallible. Once students begin to recognize this and act on these recognitions, the future begins to hold possibilities with which we may dismantle feminine dismissal. Glenn states: "perhaps the most important consequence of refiguring history, however, is the effect on our students, for we also shape the perceptions of them. By writing a more inclusive history of rhetoric, we can more easily enable and encourage both our female and male students to participate in literature, in history, in a profession, or in communities of discourse

from which they may feel excluded or detached" (Glenn 195). Therefore, by defining these patterns of dismissal for our students while encouraging them to recognize and validate the voices of others, they are given the tools to navigate their future courses and professions with confidence in themselves and greater respect for the works of others too.

A final action that will aid in the breaking of feminine patterns of dismissal is listening rhetorically. Instructors and students alike should listen to the voices and stories of their colleagues, mentors, students, and other scholars both past and present. However, the act of listening alone is not enough to evoke significant change. Scholar Krista Ratcliffe suggests "employing understanding as an end of rhetorical listening...understanding means listening to discourse not for intent but with the intent to understand not just the claims, not just the cultural logics within which the claims function, but the rhetorical negotiations of understanding as well" (204-205). Garcia extends this claim as he interrogates the white privilege of Ratcliffe's work--and how perhaps radical transparency allows the white woman instructor to acknowledge their privilege in situations and their need to learn from others who are different. By listening rhetorically *with* intent and employing understanding, as well as being willing to critique our own privilege, we are better equipped to validate the opinions and stories of others both past and present.

Rhetorical listening also goes hand in hand with being radically transparent/explicit. For example, with the experience I shared in the opening of this essay, my instructor could have used rhetorical listening and radical transparency to push back at the male student. Perhaps this would have entailed dwelling in uncomfortable silence for a few minutes as everyone would have been allowed to gather their thoughts. Additionally, the instructor might have been honest about the concerns of having a white man dominate space and time. Then, it would have been productive no matter what, I think. An instructor's willingness to approach uncomfortable moments, regardless of the outcome, demonstrates how students might do this. Through this act of

validation and understanding, we are more likely to view disagreements as something that can bring others together. Thus, the works of women are more likely to be remembered and not added to the list of those forgotten.

CHAPTER IV

PROCURING VERACITY:

RECONSIDERING SCANDAL IN *JANE EYRE* AND *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

Introduction

Scandal refers to the actions taken to disrupt a set of rules or orderly systems in place. Scandal pushes against the normalcy of everyday life in order to challenge the majority of opposing opinions. Scandal exists not as a solitary term, but rather as a sociable one, requiring communication through the various relationships it intersects with. This paper engages the conference theme, "*Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*: A Reconsideration," by examining and reconsidering several instances in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* where an act of scandal leads to the uncovering of a hidden truth, such as the dehumanization of others. *Jane Eyre* perpetuates truth and remains the scandalous text that leads to the uncovering of truth in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Considering the historical context and reading both novels through an alternate tradition reveals how these scandals show transgressive acts and disclose hidden truths surrounding the characters and their identities--truths that are often overlooked with a traditional reading. Why is it important to examine the relationship between scandal and truth? In the following discussion, this will be detailed through examples in *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the historical contexts surrounding them.

Scandals in the Historical Context of Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea

Rhys's "scandalous" re-envisionment of *Jane Eyre* leads to the uncovering of truth for certain characters and certain historical events. By restricting the rights of not only women but people of other races, the restricted are dehumanized. Rhys's text engages in scandal by encouraging others to speak out for the rights of women. Where *Jane Eyre* fails to advocate for women, *Wide Sargasso Sea* does through the rebellion of Antoinette. In "An/Other Side to Antoinette/Bertha: Reading `Race' into *Wide Sargasso Sea*," Carmen Wickramagamage argues that what distinguishes *Wide Sargasso Sea* from other works by women "is that its 'disobedience' is directed against another female-authored text--Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*--one that, moreover, has become with time 'a cult text of feminism'" (27). This act of "disobedience" on Rhys's part--recreating an already well known feminist text--is initiated by the time period in which *Wide Sargasso Sea* was composed. While *Jane Eyre* was written in 1847, *Wide Sargasso Sea* was written in 1966 during the second-wave of feminism that pushed well beyond the issue of the vote to issues surrounding sexuality, families, and the workplace. In "The Mystery at Thornfield: Representations of Madness in 'Jane Eyre," Valerie Beattie claims Bertha's role exists to push back on the "suffer and be still" mentality enforced on women in the nineteenth century (503). The historical context of *Wide Sargasso Sea* shows the importance of revealing truth during this time.

In addition to equality for women, scandal uncovers racial injustices in Jamaica during the early 1800s and into the 1900s in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Slavery was abolished in Jamaica around the beginning of the 1800s when *Jane Eyre* was written. However, prejudices stayed in place well into the 1900s when *Wide Sargasso Sea* was written. In "Shutting up the Subaltern: Silences, Stereotypes, and Double-Entendre in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*," Carine Mardorossian touches on the "cluelessness" from Antoinette and her mother towards the racially different relationships around them in Jamaica. Just as they do not recognize these

relations, Mardorossian claims they have a similar "amnesia" towards their participation in the history of slavery (107). By considering Mardorossian's point, it can additionally be concluded that Annette and Antoinette participated in racial prejudices. However, despite Antoinette and Annette's participation and denial in degrading Creole workers, in "Between and Beyond Boundaries in *Wide Sargasso Sea*," M. Adjarian states that *Wide Sargasso Sea* does what *Jane Eyre* fails to do in confronting British colonialism instead of concealing the works and effects of it (208). Here, *Wide Sargasso Sea* breaks the boundaries of literature through scandal in doing what *Jane Eyre* does not: refusing to stay silent towards racial inequalities. Bringing scandal into *Wide Sargasso Sea* unveils the historical truth of not only post-slavery life in Jamaica, but also 1900s feminism that sought to push back and speak out on important issues.

Scandals in Jane Eyre

Scandal in *Jane Eyre* remains relevant in showing how the reputation of characters can change. One act of scandal can be seen at the wedding of Jane and Rochester. Here, Mr. Briggs, a solicitor from London, and Bertha's brother, Mr. Mason, reveal the truth to Jane about Rochester's relations with Bertha. The scandal begins when Mr. Mason interrupts the wedding with an exclamation that "the marriage cannot go on: I declare the existence of an impediment" (285). Rochester, in attempts to maintain his reputation, furthers the scandal by demanding the wedding proceed despite the concerns of others. Here, Rochester silences Bertha's brother in an attempt to silence Bertha's truth because he has lied to everyone at the wedding in attempts to have more than one wife. However, despite Rochester's efforts, Mr. Briggs states part of Bertha's truth for the first time in front of Jane by declaring "Mr. Rochester has a wife now living" (285). Rochester further escalates the scandal at the wedding scene by calling into question whether Bertha is still alive. At this moment, Mr. Mason steps in and speaks the truth on behalf of his sister and states that she is.

As Rochester's truth of being a deceiver--through his marital status and dishonesty to those around him--becomes uncovered during the wedding scene, his views towards women come to light. Through his attempts to maintain his reputation, Rochester dehumanizes everyone involved by still ignoring the truth of Bertha's identity. Readers begin to see that Rochester views Jane in a similar way as he views Bertha, as property rather than a human being. Jane also recognizes this during the wedding scene and states "without seeming to recognize in me a human being, he riveted me to his side" (286). Just as Rochester views Bertha as less than a human being, Jane foreshadows the possibility of her own fate by recognizing Rochester's views towards her. These truths are brought to light during this moment of scandal. Rochester then shares a rumor he has devised for his own amelioration by stating, "Bertha Mason is mad; and she came from a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations! Her mother, the Creole, was both a mad woman and a drunkard!" (287-288). At this moment, no one seems to notice Rochester's previous claim that his wife was no longer living. All is forgotten as Rochester misleads others--such as Jane--to believe that his scandals were for valid reasons--for example Bertha's "madness"--because it protects his image. By presenting another human being as less than human, he hopes that others will adopt similar views. Likewise, by referring to Bertha's mother as "the Creole" he attempts to separate a sense of identity from not only Bertha and her family--by disconnecting them from their names--but their truths through racial divide and otherness.

Jane, who should look to Bertha sympathetically after discovering parts of her truth, comes to view Bertha as Rochester does because of his deception. Looking upon Bertha, Jane states "whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal" (288). Here, Jane does not refer to Bertha by her name, even though she just discovered it to be Antoinetta. Instead, Jane refers to her as "it" encouraging the separation from Bertha to not only her identity but her truth as well.

This description deeply dehumanizes and robs Bertha of any human characteristics. Jane sees her as an animal because of the scandal of Rochester's deception.

Towards the end of *Jane Eyre*, when Jane hears of the burning of Thornfield, a scandal viewed by readers as an act of suicide initiated by Bertha in her attempts to free herself from her current condition, Bertha is referred to as "a lunatic" by people near Thornfield--such as Jane and the host of the inn who once lived at Thornfield (411- 412). Despite how the town views Bertha, people now know of her. Others know she was shut away in an attic, silenced and ignored. They now know she was, in fact, Rochester's wife although they know nothing of her past. Because of Bertha's scandalous actions in burning Thornfield and taking her own life, she can exist as more than a rumor. She is now viewed by readers as an actual person capable of revolting against injustices done to her, despite the negative associations her name now bears. The scandal of the fire reveals Jane's truth as we see the way she views people from the West Indies, and women more generally. Jane, after discovering Rochester's version of Bertha's truth, not only leaves Bertha to continue living a secluded life but also, she returns to Rochester and marries him in the end. By returning to Rochester, Jane not only continues to silence Bertha and her truth as she rewards Rochester's deception through marriage, but she also makes us question her mentality behind returning. Perhaps readers could argue that Jane rationalizes Rochester's actions and her decision to marry him because she views Bertha as a savage from the West Indies. However, in "Of Heroines and Victims: Jean Rhys and *Jane Eyre*" Dennis Porter, brings up the point that Jane finds happiness in the suffering of another female (548). Porter suggests that this mentality may or may not have resulted from Jane's unconscious racial views and that the act of suffering was normal due to Bertha's "madness" (548). Through this scandal, we see Jane, not as a heroine, but as Porter suggests--a woman who finds marital happiness and security through the suffering of another woman. However, arguably, Jane does not see the actual truth because she was bound up in the patriarchal lies of Rochester and his scandalous deception.

Through a traditional reading of *Jane Eyre*, these actions would not be viewed as scandalous and would lead to a reading in favor of Jane and Rochester. This reading would not only advocate for their marriage but would pity Rochester's physical and mental state as a result of Bertha. Likewise, the reader would be unlikely to sympathize with Bertha's character. An alternate reading, however, presents all of the characters in a different light because their actions are viewed as scandals. By reading *Jane Eyre* through an alternate tradition, we seek for the representation and critical understanding of all characters. Through this lens, the reader sees Bertha's character as the victim, while Jane and Rochester are the instigators of her suffering. Through this reading, we also see that Jane has turned her back on another female. Possibly, Jane has turned her back on another female because of Rochester's deception. However, readers can infer from her degrading remarks towards Bertha and her choice to ultimately return to Rochester, that Jane's character is prejudiced at the very least.

Jane Eyre does little to represent truth, revealing only Rochester's heavily altered truth. After reading *Jane Eyre*, readers still do not know much about Bertha or her truth. Instead, readers only see the perpetuated lies of Rochester. However, *Wide Sargasso Sea* uses scandal to reveal truth and gives us some reconciliation. Additionally, an alternate reading provides a way to interpret these scandals and truths. While *Jane Eyre* perpetuates truth, *Wide Sargasso Sea* makes these truths known to readers.

Scandals in Wide Sargasso Sea

Scandals are used as a pathway to interpret truths in both *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. This section reconciles the scandal in *Jane Eyre* by humanizing those who were silenced. In *Jane Eyre*, where scandal can be seen in the marriage of Jane and Rochester, *Wide Sargasso Sea* presents scandal in the marriage between Antoinette and Rochester. Whereas scandal is presented in *Jane Eyre* through Bertha's suicide, the reader views it as an act of empowerment in *Wide*

Sargasso Sea. However, *Wide Sargasso Sea* presents these scandals in a way which gives a voice to those who were previously dehumanized in *Jane Eyre*.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, scandal presents itself in Rochester's ill-intended marriage with Antoinette within one month of Rochester's arrival in Jamaica. Here, Rochester's intentions behind the marriage are purely financial. Rochester, in a letter to his father, writes "the thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her [Antoinette]. I have a modest competence now. I will never be a disgrace to you… I have sold my soul or you have sold it" (41). The scandal of Rochester's marriage exhibits his truth as he admits to his father that his marriage exists solely to gain financial independence from his family, as he would not inherit his father's estate as the youngest son. However, by stating that his "soul has been sold," Rochester foreshadows his own fate by confessing the truth of his actions. By doing so, he recognizes that his actions to marry Antoinette will cost him his life or at least his reputation.

In this same instance, the scandal of Antoinette's marriage to Rochester divulges her truth. Antoinette's truth is that she committed to a relationship with Rochester from a place of love and not ill-intent. This becomes affirmed as she tells Rochester "I never wished to live before I knew you" (54). Antoinette's decision to marry Rochester transpires because of the abuses her mother endured while she was single--such as the poisoning of her horse.
The readers see the intentions behind both characters, unveiling Antoinette's truth as an innocent and kind character.

Another instance of scandal in *Wide Sargasso Sea* exists in the "suicide" of Antoinette. While this action has sparked much debate over whether suicide can truly be viewed as an empowering act, arguably, it remains a crucial action in revealing her character's truth. After setting the house ablaze in her dream, Antoinette jumps towards Tia and Jamaica. At this

moment, she seems to escape back to a place where she once had an identity. During this time, Rochester also calls out to Antoinette using the name he has given to her in an attempt to advance the stripping of her identity to further dehumanize her. At this moment, Antoinette states that "I heard the man's voice, Bertha! Bertha! … I called 'Tia!' and jumped and woke" (112). Here, Antoinette's truth becomes disclosed as she seeks revenge against Rochester's imprisonment of her through an act of liberation. By leaping towards Tia, Antoinette takes the first steps in remedying the hatred and oppression from not only Rochester but colonial history at large. Similarly, by jumping, Antoinette gains a sense of who she is and how she was a victim during her time in England. When Antoinette mentions that she woke up after jumping, this operates not only in a literal sense of waking up from a dream, but also a metaphorical sense of waking up her consciousness to the realities of her truth and what her life has become.

For Rochester, Antoinette's dream and the act of burning down his estate reveals his truth in how malicious his actions have been. By Antoinette choosing Tia, and arguably death, over her own husband, we see how years of neglect have changed Antoinette's heart and how scandal and secrets have degraded her sense of identity. This change ultimately reveals Rochester's true character in that he, instead of Antoinette, is the true "animal." Thus, *Wide Sargasso Sea* represents Antoinette's truth in addition to Rochester's truth.

Conclusion

Where scandal as a trope in *Wide Sargasso Sea* operates as a pathway and mode to reveal truths for not only the characters but the history centered around them as well, *Jane Eyre* alters the truth leading to the dehumanization of characters. In these instances, truths are exhibited, whether it reflects poorly on characters or in their favor. By reading in search of the representation of all characters, readers fully grasp these truths which may have been overlooked

in a traditional reading. Thus, scandals facilitate a pathway to discover hidden truths that challenge the way characters are received by readers.

CHAPTER V

AN ODYSSEY OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION:

A LINK BETWEEN ORAL TRADITION & EZRA POUND'S MODERNIST PERFORMANCE

Introduction

Ezra Pound has various versions of "Canto I;" however, for this project, I will be examining the textual representation on the page as well as the audio performance of the work. These two separate readings hold different meanings for various audiences while experienced simultaneously: they represent forms of mental illness for some listeners, while also encompassing the performed oral tradition for others. These ideas are particularly reliant on the audience's understanding of both textual and sound poetry, which is especially important when discussing how others' perceptions of Pound's text and the 1958 Caedmon recording of "Canto I" influenced his public perception, literary status, and alleged treason and insanity. This paper examines aspects from personal interviews with scholar Robert E. Knoll, to studies regarding Pound's preoccupation with Homer, and the Caedmon recording company owned by Barbara Holdridge and Marianne Mantell. These sources, ranging from academic peer-reviewed journals to books, recordings, and newspaper articles discuss differing and even opposing viewpoints regarding Pound and his mentality (some highlighting his delusion and ties to fascism and some in support of his sanity and ways of viewing the world and those in it), his fascination with Homer, and how Homer's storytelling influenced Pound to explore this newly adapted oral

tradition. All of these opinions, however, include (in some form) the problematic ties Pound had to fascist leaders. This agreement amongst scholars will also be explored in this paper, along with a discussion about Pound's racist tendencies. I also utilize works regarding histories--both the history of Pound's purported madness along with the societal history regarding Homer--which affected the public's perception regarding Pound's image and social status.

This paper traces patterns of performance and oral tradition that could be interpreted as a descent into insanity, narcissism, and overall mental illness--particularly Pound's focus on and embodiment of Odysseus, who is the focal point of "Canto I." Currently, there is a significant lack of work over the 1958 audio recording. Therefore, my exploration of these events and the historical, epistemological, and psychological contexts surrounding Pound's disposition of unwellness will bring an additional and informative viewpoint to literary scholarship. While all of this information should be considered, my main and most important argument is that individuals without previous knowledge of sound poetics, poetic scholarship, and the oral tradition will not be able to understand Pound's "Canto I" in what some may call its "intended meaning." Pound was committed to oral works and opposed to written works for the sake of permeating a wide range of audiences; however, due to the uncommon stresses, chanting tribal tone, and mix between English hexameters and classical pentameter brought to light through his Caedmon recording this generally failed. His audience tended to view his work in relation to his alleged mental illness and what contemporary society would consider problematic beliefs--such as fascist ideologies.

Public Perceptions of Pound

Pound's image was greatly affected by his public perception because of the inaccessibility of his work, particularly "Canto I." While he intended to promote widespread fascism through the dissemination of his writing, this fell through with the primary audience of

his text--white, middle-class men. This can be seen through the complexities of patterns and syllables, along with the inconsistency in his work (both the oral and written text). Although scholarship frequently attempts to analyze his work, the general public seemed to struggle with this. Another issue standing in the way of his positive public perception was the scandal (including ties to fascism and racism) surrounding his name. In his book chapter "The National Skeleton: Ezra Pound (1885-1972)," scholar Peter Liebregts provides a detailed examination of Ezra Pound's life and overall disposition. Throughout this exploration, Liebregts directs the reader's attention to how scandal has heavily impacted Pound's life--and arguably his success as well. These opinions, as Liebregts suggests, often oppose how Pound wished to be viewed. Liebregts specifically shares that Pound went through a period where he reached out to "thousands of politicians, bankers, and anyone involved in the monetary system" to discuss his interests with economics and overall political views (184). These letters were often written in a direct and sometimes blunt way to get his point across; however, this aggressiveness, as Liebregts argues, led to a public view of belligerence (184).

His conduct was considered treasonous and resulted in his incarceration--but to St. Elizabeth's instead of federal prison. While admitted, "he was awarded the first Bollingen Prize for Poetry for *The Pisan Cantos*, which resulted in an enormous uproar in the media (Liebregts 185)." This public uproar became global and even had Radio Moscow commenting on Pound's insanity a month after his award was announced in the United States (Liebregts 185). Pound's release from St. Elizabeth's in 1958 also made the headlines of many news sources. Although news sources revealed an overall negative public view towards Pound prior, during, and after his release from St. Elizabeth's, following the publication of the Caedmon recording of "Canto I" with the attached liner notes, the public arguably viewed Pound with even more skepticism than before. Whether or not this increase in negative feelings from the public stemmed directly from the release of this recording is debatable; however, there has been an increase of scholarship

written on Pound which portrays him unfavorably. This view, in my opinion, is a semi-direct if not a direct correlation to the information Holdridge and Mantell released to the public, as the general public would have had to rely on the supporting material released from the recording company to understand the audio due to its inaccessibility.

Not only were articles written, such as scholar Sarah Parry's, which interviewed Holdridge and Mantell on their findings and views towards Pound after the release of their "Canto I" recording but also articles such as scholar Jerome J. McGann's "The 'Cantos' of Ezra Pound, the Truth in Contradiction." McGann's article touches on the scandal surrounding Pound's work while criticizing *The Cantos* specifically. McGann states, "*The Cantos* are difficult to like or enjoy. It is a paradigm of poetic obscurity because its often cryptic style is married to materials which are abstruse. The poem also makes a mockery of poetic form. All that is scandalous, but the worst has not been said. For *The Cantos* is a fascist epic" (McGann 2). Here, it is likely that McGann's claims stem from the information the Caedmon recording of "Canto I" and attached liner notes revealed. McGann's article was written in 1988. This was after Pound's death in 1972; therefore, McGann would have had to draw his conclusions on Pound from the works and criticisms of others before him. Additionally, McGann's article does not include the work of Knoll which displays Pound in a favorable light and provides insight into his mannerisms. Being a scholar whose works primarily focus on literature and culture, McGann would have paid attention to not only the primary text of "Canto I," but also the supporting material such as the audio, the notes included with it, and the cultural views surrounding Pound before drawing conclusions in his article. Therefore, his article not only aids in understanding a specific public view of Pound but also a more collective one in that "Canto I" is often inaccessible due to its "obscure" nature.

Importantly, McGann states the only reason Pound's literary friends still advocated for him was because "their efforts to understand the Cantos were not, finally, successful. Pound's

friends misread his work because they wanted the Cantos to be something other than what it is" (McGann 24). I argue, however, that McGann's views are such because of the public perception of Pound during the time this article was published in 1988. McGann was alive for all of Pound's scandals which were broadcasted with the increase in technological advancement. Therefore, a large majority of his views towards Pound and his work could have been influenced by the information McGann had been hearing and seeing for years. Additionally, these arguments were still made before more recent scholarship such as Parry's, which provides some different insight into Pound and the materials others were releasing on him during that time.

My assertions that Pound's work and success were affected by his public perception are enforced through McGann himself by stating, "Fascism, like Ezra Pound, occupied the human world, and occupied it in a powerful way. Human beings have extraordinary capacities for evil. Fascism is one way human beings decided to be human in the twentieth century. It is our touchstone for reading *The Cantos*" (McGann 14). Here, McGann shares how he views the world more broadly as one who was alive at the same time as Pound--especially during Pound's time at St. Elizabeth's though it is speculated that the Caedmon recording of Pound's "Canto I" was not actually recorded there during his stay. Again, knowing how McGann viewed Pound and his works aids in understanding how others during the same time would have viewed his works including the Caedmon recording of "Canto I" and attached liner notes despite the significant lack of scholarship over it even today. Possibly, this lack of scholarship is a result from the inaccessibility of the Caedmon recording due to the complexities of the uncommon stresses, chanting tribal tone, and mix between English hexameters and classical pentameter.

Interview #1

It is well documented that Pound was treated for narcissistic personality disorder and schizophrenia when he was admitted to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in 1946. Nevertheless, it was

speculated that Pound's mental health was sound upon admission. One scholar who addresses Pound's stay and mental state while at St. Elizabeth's is Robert E. Knoll. In his article "Ezra Pound at St. Elizabeth's," Knoll reflects on his interview and afterword correspondence with Pound. Through his experience, Knoll unveils not only Pound's unfavorable living conditions, but also the visitors that spent time with him such as his wife, Dorothy, along with various professors, academics, and interviewers. Knoll takes a traditionally unpopular stance by inexplicitly arguing in favor of Pound as a pleasant and seemingly mentally sound individual. Specifically, Knolls states:

> On seeing him [Pound] I first thought, 'How gay he is!' There was the look about him of one being enormously, though privately entertained. It seemed to me he looked like one who had just come from a game he plays very well, a game to which he knew he would soon return. There was nothing pathetic about him, nothing sad. There may have been something horrible about his circumstance, something depressing about his appearance, but he was not one for whom sympathy was required (6).

Knoll's observations are important because they reflect a different view on Pound's character and personality. From this specific quote, we receive a positive view of Pound away from what his close literary friends were saying about him at the time. Additionally, Knoll provides another well-documented personal encounter of Pound during his time at St. Elizabeth's outside of what Caedmon Record founders Barbara Holdridge and Marianne Mantell had to say.

Knoll's nod to Pound playing a game that he would seemingly be able to return to aids in understanding whether or not Pound actually suffered from mental illness upon admittance to St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Here, Knoll seems to agree with the previously provided findings and reports of others such as author Herbert Mitgang in a 1981 article in *The New York Times* which states that "Pound himself chose to be regarded as irrational, and put on a good 'act' for

psychiatrists so that he would not be imprisoned" (Mitgang). This newspaper article goes on to provide several accounts from medical professionals and those who had access to the hospital records from St. Elizabeth's, all of which claim that Pound was eccentric at most. By portraying Pound in this light, Knoll reflects on his beliefs that Pound was mentally stable and thus "performing" a role of insanity that would be dropped as soon as he was able to leave the hospital. This information shows that any claims of mental illness from the public are the result of a misunderstanding due to either the inaccessibility of Pound's work to the general public or a "write off" because of his fascist and racist ties.

Knoll also remarks that Pound and his work seem to be understood only by those who understand the depth of his performance. This information is crucial in my argument for why certain scholars, the general public, and his close literary friends view him in vastly different ways. Specifically, Knoll states, "E. P. seemed to me, that afternoon, a mass of paradoxes. Without doubt the most influential writer of his time, he remains esoteric" (13). By referring to Pound as esoteric, Knoll claims that Pound's work is only likely to be understood by a select few who also contain a similar knowledge to his subject field. As Knoll states, Pound "influenced not only T. S. Eliot but William Butler Yeats, William Carlos Williams, and a host of other writers" (1). Because these well-known writers--who are mostly poets--were influenced by Pound, they understood his content area. His friends in academia were also able to decode and understand Pound's work, and therefore were some of the only ones who advocated for him (whether or not they agreed with his actions and political viewpoints towards the end of his life). In fact, Knoll shares that Pound's release from St. Elizabeth's in 1958 was largely influenced by the actions of Robert Frost and his connections.

Knoll additionally provides insight into how Pound seemingly recalled all of the information stated in his interview and was unable to add anything to what was already provided in many of his works. Knoll states, "None of his opinions were new. He had no more

information to give. He simply couldn't come to fresh conclusions. He seemed incapable of reconsidering recomposing" (8). This correlates with Pound's fixations on past ways of thinking, which Knoll notes in Pound's harsh remarks towards Jewish individuals as well. Pound's racism and Knoll's remarks in response are areas addressed in a complications section later on in this paper.

Interview #2

Where Knoll reflects on his experience with Pound fondly, Caedmon Record founders Barbara Holdridge and Marianne Mantell did not report similar findings in their interview with Parry. In her article "A Return to the Scene of the Postmodern: 'Ezra Pound Reading,'" Parry examines Pound's LP recordings in relation to his written works and radio broadcasts. Parry also discusses spoken word more broadly, but especially concerning LPs in response to modernism and post-war media. Additionally, she argues that through their recording projects with Pound, Holdridge and Mantell were advocating for a more positive public post-war perception of him despite his fascist image. Parry states that "Holdridge and Mantell were at the forefront of a separate effort to rehabilitate the poet's voice image. However, their project was haunted by Pound's status as America's 'designated fascist intellectual,' a status that arose largely as the result of his wartime radio broadcasts on behalf of [Benito] Mussolini" (Parry 2). Although they reportedly attempted to portray Pound in a positive way, their contradictory statements recounting their experience with Pound do not reflect these efforts.

Holdridge often characterizes Pound's mannerisms and overall disposition to reflect madness. She reports to Parry that, "'He [Pound] got enraged about something - I don't remember now what - and threw the salami at me! He was certifiably insane - I mean, really!'" (Parry 6). Here, Holdridge displays Pound in a light of madness which would have tainted his public image to those who would listen. Interestingly, her partner Mantell had a different recollection of that

specific interaction with Pound stating, "'What he said was, 'You must be hungry.' And he brought us this French loaf of bread with mayonnaise on it. And he handed it over, somewhat jerkily'" (Parry 5). Here, Mantell portrays Pound as caring and sympathetic by extending an act of kindness and offering food. Thus, the "jerk" like motion, in this case, seems to be a result of Pound's theatrical disposition and not a gesture of hostility and madness as Holdridge has suggested.

Further support of this can be found in descriptions of Pound in the earlier part of his life. Liebregts shines a light on these descriptions by specifically stating, "Pound's theatrical behavior and his need to impress is a recurrent theme in descriptions of him during these early years in London. There is the apocryphal anecdote about Pound eating the floral decorations at a supper party attended by, amongst others, D.H. Lawrence, Ford, and Yeats" (Liebregts 179). From this, Liebregts shows critical information in deciphering whether or not Pound's behavior is indicative of madness and overall mental illness or rather a performative personality. Similarly, Liebregts displays that those who were around him in these explicit moments of performance were also the ones who defended him during his biggest moments of scandal. This shows once again that those who understood Pound's character and subject field also understood that he was mentally sound enough to be released from St. Elizabeth's. However, those who viewed him and his work differently derived their views from a lack of understanding of Pound due to the inaccessibility of his work.

Interestingly enough, it is speculated that this Caedmon recording of Pound was not recorded during his stay at St. Elizabeth's. Parry claims:

> Company correspondence indicates that the two hoped to make an interview recording that would feature Pound and poet Archibald MacLeish, who was directing the campaign to free Pound from St. Elizabeth's. However, according to Mantell, Pound

> refused to record for Caedmon while he was incarcerated. As she recalls, It was never possible, or he always said, 'Caged bird won't sing.' So he wouldn't record (5).

If this is true, then any information given by Holdridge and Mantell, including their claims for and against Pound's mental state, should be disregarded or at the very least viewed with speculation. Whether or not this recording was completed during Pound's stay at St. Elizabeth's, it had an impact on the public once it was released. Therefore, the motivations behind its creation are important to review. Parry claims that Pound's motives were to spread the "aesthetic dimensions of his spoken performance" (7-8). Pound also allegedly wanted this recording to be spread to call attention to his political views in order to raise money for his release from St. Elizabeth's. Holdridge and Mantell, on the other hand, claim to have done this to not only aid Pound's public reputation but for aesthetic purposes as well.

Contrastingly, when concerns were brought up over how Pound was being represented prior to the release of the recording, Holdridge refused to release any content or liner notes as Pound was "fair game for attack" (Parry 8). The liner notes included by Holdridge and Mantell impacted the public's perception of Pound arguably just as much if not more than the recording. In these notes, Pound is portrayed as "insane" (Parry 9). However, the Caedmon record founders also state, "If he often sounded outrageous we imagined the outrage of others when Pound first championed Frost, Joyce, and Eliot" (Parry 9). Here, Holdridge and Mantell contradict themselves once again in the information they provide to not only interviewers but also the general public in their liner notes. This not only shows they are not credible sources but also that Pound's work is incredibly complex. If those who worked closely with him to release his work could not understand his content, then the general public would not either. Because the general public and record owners viewed him similarly, the release of their liner notes and audio with nods to Pound's madness impacted the public's perception of Pound more than ever. More specifically, they state in their notes that he talked about Mussolini, squirrels, and the end of

friendships from disagreements over the language of birds (Parry 9). By roping in Pound's political views with statements that portray insanity, Pound's goal of spreading awareness towards his political beliefs are discredited. Thus, anything that Pound had to say about his beliefs from that point forward would also be discredited by a large majority of the public due to a lack of understanding. Whether intentional or not, this also impacted the way his work was viewed, including the associated Caedmon recording of "Canto I."

The Caedmon record company may have further tainted Pound's image through the association of their company name. Parry shares that there is a slippage between the Caedmon company name and the Cadmus trope Pound uses in *The Cantos*. Pound, according to Parry, uses this trope of the Greek hero Cadmus to aid his work into being a fascist text. He similarly uses the Caedmon record company to broadcast this work. However, Parry suggests that because of the "schizophrenic slippage" between the Cadmus and Caedmon names, the Caedmon recording company "unconsciously re-coded one of the most toxic tropes of modernist and fascist discourse" (13). This would result in a negative view towards Pound's work by those who were opposed to fascism; it would also negatively impact his goal in spreading his political views to change public perception of fascism, as those who might have been persuaded by his text would be turned away by Caedmon Records alluding to Pound's insanity. Thus, associating Pound's work and political views to insanity.

The Motivations Behind "Canto I"

Pound's "Canto I" is a translated version of Homer's *The Odyssey*. Here, Pound specifically works with the character Odysseus by following his trip to the underworld to seek advice from the dead. In his article "Oral Dimensions in Ezra Pound," scholar Max Nänny examines the intentions driving Ezra Pound's work--most notably *The Cantos*. Nänny argues that Pound has modeled his work off of those versed in oral tradition to create neo-oral works.

Ultimately, as Nänny argues, this oral background influenced how Pound would intend and eventually come to read and arguably perform his work. Nänny additionally asks readers to consider Pound's work from the perspective of an ongoing oral tradition. Specifically, Nänny reflects on the continuing notion that, "*The Cantos* are not meant to be mere reading matter, but above all, singing matter, shouting matter, the tale of the tribe" (23). Because of this oral connection, we see how Homer has specifically influenced Pound's views and ultimately the performance of "Canto I." Just like the oral poets, Pound wanted his work to be read aloud instead of read on the page. Therefore, his readings often reflect the performance of those before him. In this case, Pound's works are influenced by Homer and other oral poets, as his work and Caedmon recording, in particular, are "read with full voice, chanted, and are to be reminiscent of a singer of tale" (Nänny 26). This is relevant, as it aids in one's overall interpretation and listening of Pound's Caedmon recording of "Canto I." Conclusively, Nänny's insight alters one's understanding as a chanted tribal representation instead of "slips" into insanity which I initially perceived as a listener with no prior context. Nänny's article, along with my initial interpretation as a listener, provides insight into how Holdridge and Mantell set up their recording of Pound to be perceived more generally by the public without further insight into Pound's inspiration of oral tradition and dedication to spoken word. Thus, Holdridge and Mantell added to the inaccessibility of Pound's "Canto I."

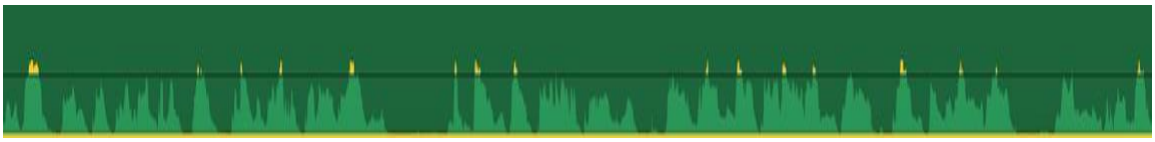
In her article "'The News in the Odyssey Is Still News' Ezra Pound, W. H. D. Rouse, and a Modern Odyssey," scholar Leah Flack examines Ezra Pound's correspondence to W. H. D. Rouse through several letters. Here, she argues that these letters contain critical information in understanding Pound's views of Homer. Overall, Flack's work follows the relationship between Pound and Rouse along with Pound's influence on Rouse's translation of *The Odyssey* despite the lack of accreditation from publishers. Through these letters, Flack also argues that readers gain an understanding of the role that the classics, such as *The Odyssey*, had on modernist writers such as

Pound. Specifically, Flack states that "Pound represents *The Odyssey* as a guidebook for the modern ruler and Odysseus as a proto-Fascist leader" (105). This shows that Pound's interests in Homer and his oral works were more than stylistic but rather ideological. Homer, therefore, had a large impact on Pound's literary works and political views. Flack also shares, "Pound's late work suggests that Odysseus became the ideogrammic figure through which he clarified his vision of intelligent, artful authority he ultimately saw realized in Mussolini" (106). Through Flack's insights over the letters between Pound and Rouse, I have grasped an understanding of the way Pound's ties to fascism, Mussolini, and overall political views could be projected back onto characters like Homer's Odysseus. This aids in understanding Pound's modernist political motivation and agenda behind "Canto I," in that he believed if his audience could respect the qualities in Odysseus, then they would eventually come to respect and recognize the same qualities in leaders like Mussolini.

Analysis of the "Canto I" Caedmon Recording

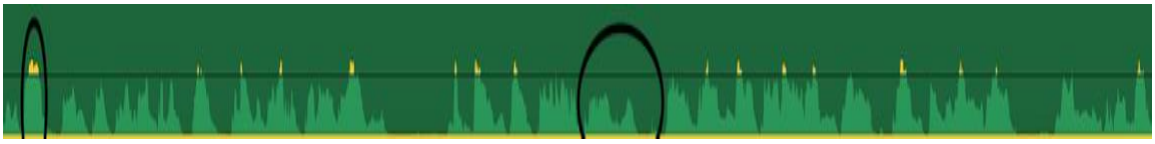
When "Canto I" was recorded, LPs were a newly emerging technology for the time. Parry shares, "Spoken word LPs reproduced the sound of poetry and responded to the modernist complaint (advanced notably by Pound) that the medium of print was incapable of accurately recording and representing prosody" (1). Because of Pound's dedication to oral poetics, he wanted to take advantage of an opportunity to share and preserve his work on a platform other than printed text. However, upon listening to Pound read "Canto I" for the first time, one may view his reading as a result of his diagnosed mental conditions. When reading, Pound often places stress and exaggerations towards the endings of several words such as "down" in "And then went down to the ship" (Pound, "Canto I [3-5] ('And Then Went down')," 00:01). He also does this with "weeping" in "And our bodies also heavy with weeping" (00:17). There is never a consistent pattern in which words or even syllables within those words contain stress--something

that is present not only in the audio but also in the written text. This is something brought to light and better understood through his Caedmon recording.



The previous image shows the inconsistency in tone, inflection, and duration of each word in a short section from the Caedmon recording of "Canto I" (02:42-02:50). Specifically, the lines "I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead, / Till I should hear Tiresias" (Pound, "Canto I" from *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 44-45).

It is also worth noting that since "Canto I" is from Odysseus' point of view, Pound often reads words like "I sat" in "I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead" and "I should" in "Till I should hear Tiresias," further associating his connection to Odysseus (02:41). Any occurrence of "I" in these moments is also said with more conviction in comparison to other words in Pound's reading where he seems to be overtaken with feelings. To ensure this interpretation was accurate, I transferred Pound's Caedmon recording to an audio editing application where I could trace the different stress patterns in his voice and found that Pound does, in fact, raise his voice when saying "I." Additionally, Pound never prolongs the pronunciation of the word "I" as he often does with other shorter words such as "came." In the image below, the first circle encloses an example of the word "I" while the second circle encloses the word "came" (02:42-02:50).



Here, the yellow represents any instance of a peak in the audio waveform where the audio was distorted. Thus, this first encounter of "I" is one of the largest peaks in a selection from the Caedmon recording of "Canto I," where other words are not as pronounced. Poignantly, during his reading, Pound sounds moved by the content of his work. This could initially come across as

Pound's identification with Odysseus, visiting the underworld, where he sees his mother who he had not known was deceased. Pound's reading seems to take on the same emotions that Odysseus would be feeling in these moments, thus playing into Pound's ties to mental illness and the slip into thinking he is the character he is discussing.

The strong movement Pound displays in this recording also bleeds into his ties to fascism as much as it does to his ties to mental illness. Drawing on Flack's findings, that Pound identified the character Odysseus as a key example of fascist leaders such as Mussolini, one sees the urgency expressed in his reading as Pound hopes others will view the two men similarly. This urgency is more noticeable towards the end of the recording when Pound arrives at his final stanza in "Canto I." However, Pound never pauses for a long amount of time in between words, lines, and even stanzas throughout the entity of "Canto I" further enforcing this sense of urgency in the recording.

As previously touched on by Nänny, through the lens of oral tradition, Pound's recording is viewed as a tribal representation (23). This tribal representation in the form of chanting and shouting is audible throughout the entirety of the recording and stems from Pound's fascination with Homeric verse. More recent scholarship, such as Orla Polten's article "To Break the Hexameter: Classical Prosody in Ezra Pound's Early Cantos" shows that Pound's "Canto I" is representative of this Homeric tradition through the use of "Greek pentameter as opposed to the English iambic pentameter" (283). Polten states that the best way to describe this is "as a dactylic hexameter missing a foot" (283). An example of Greek pentameter is represented specifically in Pound's line, "Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean" (11). According to Polten, Pound places stress in several areas throughout his lines, more than one would initially anticipate (284). For example, in the line "Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads," Pound places emphasis on almost every word such as "prayed," "many," "prayer," "sickly," and "death's-head" (02:42-02:50). This rejects the standard conception in English that "head," the second syllable in

the hyphenated word, would have less of a stress placed on it versus the first half of the syllable. Therefore, Pound's Caedmon recording seems to follow a different metrical system than most of his contemporaries.

Polten also states that Pound's oral performance turns into an English hexameter pattern (284). Thus, Pound "draws on an old tendency in English hexameters to fuse the Greek and Latin triple-rhythm and six-beat model of the hexameter with Anglo-Saxon alliterative meter" (Polten 284). What Pound is doing in his Caedmon performance of "Canto I" is using English to take on the words and rhythms of other languages. Thus, to an untrained ear, this mix between English hexameters and classical pentameter could easily be misheard as a slip into insanity, as Pound's audience for the Caedmon recording would more than likely be thrown off by the uncommon stresses placed on words in tandem with the chanting tribal tone. In reality, however, Pound is following the traditions of other oral poets.

Scholar William McNaughton provides other insights on how to view and listen to Pound's work in his article "Ezra Pound's Meters and Rhythms." Here, McNaughton states "'Obscurity' disappears from *The Cantos* if one… grasps the style of Pound's work" (146). He goes on to recommend that this can be done by reading his work slowly (146). Although this seems simplistic, there is truth to this statement. Pound's work and style are so reliant on the traditions of others, that if one does not contain a prior knowledge of them, his work can be difficult to not only read but also listen to. By reading "Canto I" at a slower pace or by manipulating the Caedmon audio recording by slowing it down, one has a better chance at grasping the complexities of Pound's stress patterns and overall oral tradition--key components in what I claim are needed for a full appreciation and understanding of Pound and his recording as an act of performance and not one of insanity and overall madness as many claim in the media.

Analysis of Odysseus and Contested Character Interpretation

In "Canto I," Odysseus makes sacrificial offerings to the dead to communicate with them to gain assistance in his journey home. These actions follow Circe's prompt to find the prophet Tiresias who is the only one who can help him at this stage in his journey. Upon his arrival to the underworld, Odysseus states that it is, "Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever" (Pound 14). This displays the tragedy of the underworld, in that living beings are rarely allowed to visit--and if they are, the trip is the result of an instruction from gods and goddesses, as no other beings journey to the underworld in "Canto I" or in Homer's *The Odyssey*. Odysseus, therefore, does the unthinkable by making this trip. As the great-grandson of Hermes, he is also godlike, further setting him apart from others. By writing about a character who holds these qualities, it is possible that Pound made the connection between Odysseus and fascist leaders such as Mussolini. Although this sounds extreme, fascist leaders have historically viewed themselves as "godlike" while taking power by whatever means necessary. This volatile mentality to obtain one's goals parallels Odysseus's constant battle to return home; however, these connections are too weak to claim that Odysseus is representative of a fascist leader as Flack finds evidence of in Pound's letters to W. H. D. Rouse (105).

After he makes the necessary sacrifices, Odysseus also states, "Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead, of brides / Of youths and of the old who had borne much; / Souls stained with recent tears, girls tender, / Men many, mauled with bronze lance heads, / Battle spoil, bearing yet dreory arms, / These many crowded about me; with shouting" (Pound 33-38). Here, Odysseus seems to encounter those who he "mauled" during the battle at Troy, as many of the spirits which approach him had died from battle--either directly fighting in it or were impacted in some way--and still have grievances upon his arrival. This implies that they knew him or at least knew of him while alive. The interaction links his character to fascist leaders like Adolf Hitler who killed both the young and old to obtain their goal in any way possible, regardless of the outcome. However, if

Pound's idea was to shed a positive light on leaders such as Mussolini and Hitler, his argument ultimately fell flat, because this comparison ultimately shows a lack of compassion from both parties, which was not a part of Pound's goal in spreading his pro-fascist beliefs. Therefore, once again, Flack's findings fall short.

After pushing these angry spirits aside, Odysseus encounters his old comrade, Elpenor, who is, "Unburied, cast on the wide earth, / Limbs that we left in the house of Circe, / Unwept, unwrapped in sepulchre, since toils urged other. / Pitiful spirit" (Pound 47-50). Elpenor fails to receive a proper burial--a cornerstone in Ancient Greek tradition that is needed to enter the underworld; therefore his spirit is in agony. By neglecting to bury his friend because of the focus he had on himself and his own goals, Odysseus portrays himself as a self-centered character just like leaders who hold fascist ideals and are willing to let others suffer for their gain. Again, this portrays both Odysseus and fascist leaders in a negative light. One could try to make an argument that Pound viewed these negative qualities as ones that are good and thought his audience would do the same; however, there is not enough evidence to support these connections or withhold Flack's findings.

Complications

Along with his ties to fascism, antisemitism, and treason, Pound was also scandalized by his own racist remarks. Nearly every article which covered Pound and his life around the time of the Caedmon recording contained some nod to a racist remark he had made at one point in his life. These remarks were not limited to the Caedmon record founders either. In their interview with Parry, Mantell recalls a statement from Pound that he wasn't anti-Semitic "and that some of his best friends were Jewish" (5). This statement is one that was also included in the liner notes with the release of "Canto I." The fact Pound felt the need to mention this and Holdridge and

Mantell also felt the need to include it in their liner notes and interview with Parry years later further emphasizes the severity to which the public was discussing Pound's racism.

Parry's article also covers that those who admired Pound and his work were also in the media for bombing elementary schools and voicing their opinions that Jewish Americans should not be allowed to vote (10). All of this information complicates my conclusions on Pound and the public's perception of him, as the lines tend to blur between audiences who believed he was mentally ill, who did not know how to read and listen to his complex works, or resented him for his ties to fascism, antisemitism, and racism.

Conclusion

When experienced simultaneously, the textual representation and the Caedmon audio performance of "Canto I" suggest different meanings depending on the audience: for some, it could represent mental illness, but could also indicate oral tradition for others. Both, however, are reliant on the audience's perception of textual and sound poetry. Where some view his recording as the "disposition of fascist radio propaganda," thus influencing the public's view of Pound, his work, and the awards he received negatively, others view it at face value--a work reliant on oral tradition and using English to take on the words and rhythms of other languages (Parry 7). Pound's "Canto I" is a paradigm of poetic obscurity, although he intended to rally a wide range of audiences, he only makes it accessible to academics and poets who understand his content field.

CHAPTER VI

TRACING SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL NARRATION IN *VOYAGE IN THE DARK* AND *THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER*

Jean Rhys' female narrator, Anna Morgan, keeps the reader's faith and empathy throughout the entirety of the novel *Voyage in the Dark*. Keeping the reader's faith requires the narrator to maintain a trust with the reader throughout the entirety of the novel, even in controversial or difficult events; and being empathetic requires one to place themselves into the situations of another to understand what they may be going through. These two components have impact on the reader's interpretation of the novel. Jean Rhys' contemporary, Rebecca West, also has a female narrator in her novel *The Return of the Soldier*. However, this narrator, Jenny, proves to be unreliable and garners less empathy from readers unlike Anna. In their work "(Un)Reliability in Narrative Discourse: A Comprehensive Overview," Sternberg and Yacobi refer to Fludernick who states: "A first-person homodiegetic narrator who shows him/herself to be untrustworthy in his/her narration is referred to as unreliable" (330). Being a reliable or unreliable narrator has the control in determining and maintaining the empathy of the reader.

Knowing how Anna and Jenny exist both similarly and differently within their own narrations, aids in understanding how Anna keeps our faith and empathy while Jenny does not. To begin with, knowing the similarities allows a better understanding of what makes a narrator reliable overall. Since both novels contain first-person narration, this shows the reader's trust

becomes stronger when the encounters remain on terms told by the narrator themselves. In addition, by both women lacking a sense of belonging, the reader gains empathy largely due to relatability. Many experience a lack of belonging at some point in their lives; therefore, when reading about narrators who have similar experiences, the reader's empathy increases. Furthermore, both women rely on men for financial stability. However, Anna's circumstances remain far more drastic and relatable to readers as the question of how far one would go to earn money comes to mind. Here, the differences between the narrators also aids in understanding what actions evoke reliability. Where Jenny remains financially stable because of her cousin, Anna has to put herself into undesirable situations in order to survive which becomes more relatable to readers.

Comparing the differences in the control both narrators have, evokes the question of where readers begin to lose faith in Jenny. Throughout the beginning of *The Return of the Soldier*, Jenny proves reliable, until readers see the control she begins to hold over Kitty, Chris, Margaret, and even us as readers. Once readers view Jenny in this light, her unreliability can trace back to the first page of the novel where she describes Kitty brushing her hair in the room of her deceased son. Here, Jenny portrays Kitty as an unfavorable character who is concerned with only her looks. However, as the story progresses, readers view Kitty as a mourning mother who wants to spend time in the room where the only memories of her son remain. Jenny initially states: "I turned away so that I might not spy on Kitty revisiting her dead. But she called after me. 'Come here, Jenny. I'm going to dry my hair.' She looked so like a girl on a magazine cover that one expected to find a large '7d' somewhere attached to her person" (West 47-48). Here, Jenny attempts to manipulate the reader's feelings towards Kitty, just as she attempts to manipulate Chris' feelings toward Margaret. By relaying to readers her plans of respecting Kitty's privacy in a time of mourning, Jenny evokes the empathy of readers towards herself. However, by

portraying Kitty in an unfavorable way immediately after, she loses some of the reader's empathy.

In comparison, the two women share some similarities which stand as key components of both novels. To begin with, *Voyage in the Dark* and *The Return of the Soldier* both contain first person women's narrations, as readers follow the life of Anna in *Voyage in the Dark* and the life of Jenny in *The Return of the Soldier* through their own accounts of events. This similarity remains particularly intriguing as one can read a first person narration as an argument of narrator identity. Because of this similarity, readers view Anna and Jenny's narrations as an argument for reader faith and empathy towards what they each say. Both women also share a lack of belonging. From the beginning of *Voyage in the Dark*, Anna relays how her life in England remains drastically different from her previous life in the Caribbean. She expresses this change as "it was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had ever known. It was almost like being born again" (Rhys 7). Throughout the novel, readers see she never truly finds her place in England. Jenny similarly struggles with her place amongst the complex relations of Kitty, Chris, and Margaret. Readers see Jenny seek out the friendship of Kitty and Margaret at different points in the novel in an attempt to reach Chris. However, in her attempts, she does not end up becoming closer to any of them. By the end of the novel, Jenny still does not have a place of belonging as she once again remains an intruder on Chris' romantic affairs.

By the narrator providing background information, readers can understand where and under what terms the argument takes place. For Anna, this information exists mostly in the introduction as she describes the setting of England and introduces some of the main characters early on. Jenny similarly presents readers with the main issue on the first page when she introduces the conversation over Chris' lack of communication: "'Ah, don't begin to fuss!' wailed Kitty. 'If a women began to worry in these days because her husband hadn't written to her for a fortnight-!'" (West 47). By doing this, Jenny also introduces two main characters, Chris and

Kitty, into the setting. Therefore, both narrators successfully provide background information which guides readers in keeping their faith in the two narrations. The main difference rests in Anna's ability to stay neutral while Jenny remains biased during the background. Anna only tells her background information without any additional biased comments against other characters. However, Jenny refers to Kitty as someone worth only a few cents. This comment not only discredits some of Jenny's background information but also lets readers know under what terms Jenny argues for the reader's faith.

Both novels also exist as confessionals of the narrator. For Jenny, her narration stands as her confession of the desires she cannot explicitly tell to those in her life. Therefore, she reveals these desires to readers at times whether she fully realizes her actions or not. These desires consist of a more intimate relationship with Chris, where Kitty and Margaret no longer intrude on their affairs. For Anna, her narration stands as a confession of the actions she has made in life to lead her to her own ruin. She remains honest with readers and fully understands her choice to explicitly confess her actions, unlike Jenny. However, both confessions exist from motivations to prove themselves as reliable and worthy of the reader's empathy. Anna's motivation more specifically rests in her desire to share her life struggles, while Jenny's motivation rests in her desire to evoke empathy towards herself while simultaneously dejecting the reader's trust in other characters. This motivation drives Jenny's manipulation of not only other characters but also us as readers.

An additional similarity between both Anna and Jenny rests in their reliance on men for financial stability. Anna does this by seeking the finances of men like Walter, while Jenny takes advantage of her cousin Chris' finances by living with him and his wife Kitty. However, the finances of both narrators also show a major difference between them, as Anna remains of a lower class, while Jenny remains of an upper class. Where Anna remains deprived of financial support from her stepmother, Jenny has always had the support of her relatives. This financial

dependency changes the risks between both narrators. Where Jenny manipulates situations knowing she has the security of her family, Anna must remain cautious with her actions so she does not lose the support of those around her. This specifically shows in her actions with Walter and Ethel. With Walter, Anna has to worry about keeping his interest so he does not move on to other women and cut off her financial support. She also has to remain friendly with Vincent who plays a great role in Walter's life decisions. Along with the men, Anna needs to stay on good terms with Ethel as she contains her main source of income outside of Walter, her resources for a place to stay, and truly the only one who comes close to being a "friend."

Because both women never marry in their narrations, they spend their time dedicated to others. For Jenny, this dedication rests in Chris' affairs and the ongoing pursuit for his happiness. For Anna, this dedication rests in those around her such as Ethel, Walter, and Vincent as she attempts to please them. The difference lies in how they treat other characters. While Jenny dedicates her time to Chris, she does this at the disadvantage of other women such as Kitty and Margaret. Anna, on the other hand, never has ill intent towards others.

A major difference between the two women remains in the amount of control they each hold over other characters. Anna lets others like Vincent and Ethel control her actions. Vincent pushes Anna to have an abortion, a decision he minimizes by telling Anna the action stands as "nothing to fuss about" (Rhys 173). Ethel remains just as manipulative in what she expects Anna to do. In one instance, Ethel tells Anna "I don't want you here, you're no use" (Rhys 145). However, Ethel turns around and begs Anna to stay with her a few moments later by stating "I didn't mean a word I said. Where are you going? Don't go, for God's sake. I can't stand it any longer. Please don't go. I beg you don't go. I can't stand being alone any longer" (Rhys 146-147). This manipulation from Ethel remains present throughout their time spent together, as Ethel also makes Anna justify her actions. For example, when Anna goes out to eat, Ethel immediately confronts her upon her return stating: "If you'd let me know you were going to be so late I'd have

given you a key. I didn't want to have to sit up half the night to let you in" (Rhys 142). Here, Ethel not only lets Anna know she should notify her of her whereabouts, but now guilt also rests on Anna for inconveniencing Ethel.

This manipulation does not exist in the same way in Jenny's narration. Jenny manipulates others for the benefit of herself. One instance of Jenny's manipulation derives in her initiation of Chris and Margaret's reconnection. Jenny convinces Margaret to meet with Chris. However, before Chris and Margaret meet, Jenny tells Chris: Margaret "is the greatest dear in the world. But she's not as you think of her. She's old Chris. She isn't beautiful anymore. She's drearily married. She's seamed and scored and ravaged by squalid circumstances. You can't love her when you see her" (West 79). Here, Jenny attempts to manipulate Chris' feelings toward Margaret by reforming her image in Chris' mind into someone old, ugly, drearily married, and ravaged. However, by bringing Margaret to Chris, Jenny appears to place others' needs above her own, when in reality these actions remain only for her own benefit. Additionally, before degrading Margaret, Jenny refers to her as the "greatest dear in the world" in attempts to seem neutral in the situation. She also takes advantage of Chris' current mental state by exclaiming "you can't love her when you see her," as this would mean if Chris does still love her then he must contain further problems they had not considered. Because of his vulnerable mental state, Chris can only rely on those around him. Jenny knows this and also knows as his cousin he remains more inclined to take her words into consideration.

Another difference between the narrators, rests in Anna's ability to remain passive, while Jenny remains active in her narration. Anna, for example, allows readers to connect with her as she never hides information. When Anna receives money in her handbag from a man, she states "All right, if you like – anything you like, any way you like. And then I kissed his hand" (Rhys 38). Here, Anna does not detour readers from her actions which may cause others to view her in an unsatisfactory way. However, Jenny remains active in her narration as she makes readers read

her the way she desires. Jenny often plays the victim in her narration by stating things like: “then I was stunned with jealousy. It was not their love for each other that caused me such agony at that moment; it was the thought of the things their eyes had rested upon together” (West 95). Here, Jenny attempts to manipulate the reader to look upon her with empathy. However, despite her efforts of active narration, readers still view her as an unreliable narrator.

As a whole, Jenny does not face nearly as many troubles as Anna. Mental illness exists as one of the main differences between the two women. Anna suffers from depression throughout most of the novel. Anna’s mental health initially begins to decline when she moves to a new place she describes as cold, dark, and frightening (Rhys 7). Readers can see this in comparison to how she initially lived somewhere hot, light, and happy (Rhys 7). Anna discusses her new and frequently mentioned surroundings as: “dark houses all alike frowning down one after the other all alike all stuck together – the streets like smooth shut-in ravines and the dark houses frowning down – oh I’m not going to like this place” (Rhys 17). Here, Anna uses England as a way to express how she feels. She personifies the city, as if the buildings themselves sneer at her wanting her to leave. Throughout the novel, Anna often feels stuck and shut-in to the realities of life. Likewise, she uses the houses in England to describe those around her as she states “they frown down on her” (Rhys 17). Many frown on her choices in life, which greatly alters her mental health. From the beginning of the novel, Anna faces prejudices towards her as her landlady initially turns her away because “she doesn’t let to professionals” (Rhys 8). Once accepted as a tenant, the landlady continues to shame her for her indecent exposure and “giving her house a bad name” (Rhys 9). Anna never finds a place of acceptance and belonging from her stepmother, love interests, and supposed friends which only adds to the decline of her mental health. Even the city she inhabits does not accept her.

At the end of the novel, Anna remains in a state of complete depression and mental decline after receiving her abortion. During this state of disillusionment, Anna ponders her own

fall and how nothing and no one will save her from this (Rhys 187). This is Anna's way of conveying her suicidal thoughts at a point of no return. She goes on to "desperately cling with her knees while feeling sick," as a way to convey her attempt to hold on to her mental sanity (Rhys 187). The last of Anna's actions consist of her looking "under the door at a ray of light like the last thrust of remembering before everything is blotted out. She lays and watches it and thinks about starting over again. And about being new and fresh" (Rhys 187-188). Although Rhys altered the ending of her novel away from Anna's death at the request of her publisher, suicidal possibilities still exist where these might be Anna's final thoughts as she takes her own life or becomes so mentally and physically ill death overcomes her. This encounter makes readers empathetic towards her unfortunate state while simultaneously maintaining our sympathy in her.

By Anna ending her narrative on a somber note through the telling of her abortion, readers get called to take action to support other women who may also go through similar situations. Additionally, *Voyage in the Dark* takes readers through Anna's life after arriving in England. By starting at the beginning of a life-altering event and ending at another, Anna leaves readers not only invested in her story but also ready to take action. Even though Jenny also takes readers through a timeline of her life after discovering her cousin's news, she never provides readers with a call to action. Instead, Jenny leaves her narration at a standstill point where readers can only speculate how the characters will proceed with their lives.

Anna's call to action *is* her last attempt to persuade the reader to have faith in her narration. This stands as a successful technique, as the reader's faith does indeed continue through to the end of her narration. Jenny attempts to end her narration strong by sharing with readers the recovered memory of Chris. However, Jenny's final words rest in a response to Kitty asking how Chris looks: "Oh… How could I say it? Every inch a soldier" (West 118). Here, she concludes her narrative on a solemn note acknowledging even though Chris has recovered his memory which consists of what the other characters desired, she remains unsatisfied with this

outcome as she recognizes her part in his life to recall memories no longer exists. Additionally, Jenny acknowledges his returning memory means she can no longer control the other characters like Margaret to her liking. Therefore, Jenny does not successfully persuade readers to maintain their faith in her narration towards the end of the novel like Anna does. This failed final attempt at persuasion stands as one of the many reasons Jenny's narration fails while Anna's does not.

Nonetheless, readers still trust Jenny throughout a large portion of her narration, as her control over others is not always transparent. Readers see the control she attempts to have over us when Jenny and Chris reunite. Here, Jenny describes her reunion stating: "I stuttered, and then could say no more for shame that I was thirty-five instead of twenty. For his eyes had hardened in the midst of his welcome as though he had trusted that I at least would have been no party to this conspiracy to deny that he was so young… He might as well have said, 'I've dropped Frank, who has grown old, like you'" (West 64). In this encounter, Jenny remains similarly concerned with her looks just as she had previously depicted and degraded Kitty for being. At this moment, readers begin to recognize her unreliability as a narrator. Soon after, Jenny manipulates Kitty's thoughts by stating: "Dear you're taking things all the wrong way… Kitty! Kitty! how can you?" (West 70). Here, Jenny has complete control over Kitty as she scolds and treats her like a child and not her cousin's wife. Jenny states: Kitty "spoke so pathetically, like a child who hasn't enjoyed a party as much as it had thought it would," then she states: "I perceived that, perhaps because I was flushed and looked younger, Chris felt more intimate with me than he had yet done since his return… my vanity could hardly endure his slow stare" (West 70-71). After creating this double standard for herself and Kitty, and manipulating the control over not only the other characters but also the readers as well, readers completely lose empathy for Jenny. Because Anna remains controlled instead of the one initiating the controlling, we know a writer can develop a narrator who keeps the reader's faith and empathy throughout the entirety of the novel by placing them in the position of the controlled instead of the controller.

An importance rests in the ability of the narrator to establish what goals remain for the completion of the narration. In this case, this importance exists in both *Voyage in the Dark* and *The Return of the Soldier* as a time to persuade the reader into trusting their narration. Anna does this by opening up about her new life in great detail. She remains honest, and readers place their trust in her narration. Jenny does this by placing Kitty in a negative light. Although Jenny remains successful in gaining the reader's trust initially, she loses this later on. Additionally, when doing a second reading of *The Return of the Soldier*, Jenny's introduction no longer succeeds in persuading readers to trust her as readers see her as a faulty narrator solely interested in her own interests.

Similarly, readers cannot keep the same trust and empathy toward narrators if they feel manipulated by them. Anna remains honest with us throughout the entirety of her narration, where Jenny does not. Jenny never explicitly reveals to readers her romantic wishes towards Chris. However, Anna remains completely transparent with her love and intentions with Walter. Jenny also hides her intent of reuniting Margaret and Chris as she lets Chris believe she has his best interests at heart when she really only wishes to prove her loyalty and commitment to him so he will continue to financially support her. Additionally, she manipulates Kitty and Margaret into believing Chris' best interests co-exist with their best interests too. In the process of this, Jenny often switches her companionship between Kitty and Margaret depending on who Chris emotionally connects to throughout the novel. Many have been manipulated and controlled by someone who they deemed reliable at some point in their lives. Therefore, when readers begin to realize manipulation by a narrator towards themselves, they completely disregard their narration.

From the examples previously given, we know Anna remains credible by providing knowledgeable information. For example, Anna shares a conversation with Maudie stating "you go out with him if he asks you. Those men have money; you can tell that in a minute can't you? Anybody can. Men who have money and men who haven't are perfectly different" (Rhys 16). By

Anna and Maudie revealing their knowledge on men and their profession, they show readers their credibility. This statement also places the women in a vulnerable state by exposing their goals despite prostitution being frowned upon by society at the time. By Anna's sharing of vulnerable information, readers ask why she would lie over something which places her in an unsatisfactory light. Jenny attempts and fails to provide insight into situations like this throughout *The Return of the Soldier*. By being Chris' cousin, Jenny often shares insight on what remains in his best interest in order to build her credibility with readers. However, because readers come to understand Jenny's actual motives behind her actions, her "knowledgeable" information no longer remains credible to readers.

Likewise, when readers can connect with someone who becomes manipulated like Anna, readers believe them. Anna's mental illness stands as another instance where readers can connect with her. Anna's depression remains prevalent throughout the novel from her description of the arrival in gloomy England to the end when she becomes ill after her abortion. Many of the signs such as sadness, loss of hope, and overall dissatisfaction with her life reaffirm this claim. When readers can connect to narrators on this level, readers will more than likely believe what they say. Her abortion contains another connection which draws readers into her narration. Abortion remains an ongoing debate in society. Because of this, many women have to deal with slander from others after an already difficult decision. Many reading this novel can sympathize and relate to Anna in this way making her story more believable and her narration more trustworthy.

Anna also aids readers in using inductive reasoning to show her logic as her entire story rests upon the facts she provides. These facts range from her location, her family situation, and her profession. From these facts, readers come to the conclusion her narrative remains truthful and logical as she not only never gives readers a reason to doubt her, but also because she has faith in her own truths. Additionally, readers conclude from these facts, Anna's life overall has been hard and unfortunate in comparison to others like Jenny. This evokes empathy from the

reader. This empathy, as previously discussed, makes readers more accepting of her narration. Since Jenny does not provide credible information, she no longer appeals to the reader's logic. In fact, Jenny's narration aids readers in using inductive reasoning to show her faulty logic throughout the story. The facts Jenny provides often remain inconsistent. For example, Jenny early on in the novel talks about Margaret in a negative light by saying: "I hated her as the rich hate the poor" and "She was repulsively furred with neglect and poverty, as even a good glove that has dropped down behind a bed in a hotel and has lain undisturbed for a day or two is repulsive" (West 53-56). However, despite these negative comments, Jenny still states "I was physically so jealous of Margaret that it was making me ill" (West 91). Here, Jenny loses her credibility and logic by being inconsistent with her thoughts towards other characters.

Because of Jenny's inconsistency, her narration causes readers to make hasty generalizations which they later retract. Readers believe Jenny wants the best for her cousin and for Kitty. Readers also believe Kitty stands as the antagonist of the story. These thoughts become retracted later on by readers when they use logic and inductive reasoning to figure out the actual intentions of the narrator. Along with this, Jenny "charges" the person instead of the person's actual thoughts and ambitions, by slandering Margaret's image without knowing her and what she stands for. Jenny also does this with Kitty, as she judges her actions of conceitedness in her deceased son's room when Kitty actually cares for and misses her son. Readers see Kitty's actual thoughts towards the end of the novel when she needs to retrieve her son's items from his room. "Her hard hunger for the child that was not melted into a tenderness for the child that had been… I found that from her I could accept even pity" (West 114). Here, readers see Kitty's true intentions and not what Jenny wants readers to see. In this instance, Jenny pulls the reader's attention away from the main issues at hand. Where readers would normally express concern towards a mother mourning the loss of her child, Jenny directs the reader's attention towards Kitty's conceitedness. Likewise, when readers would normally express concern with the message

Margaret brings to the house concerning Chris, Jenny directs the reader's attention towards Margaret's unsightly appearance.

Even though the similarities between narrators and readers hold the potential to increase the trust of the reader, the vastly different and rare instances of her circumstances also draws readers in. According to Salem, Weskott, and Holler in their work "Does narrative perspective influence readers' perspective-taking? An empirical study on free indirect discourse, psychonarration and first-person narration:"

> There are many reasons why people read fiction. Among them is the possibility to partake in experiences otherwise inaccessible to us because of our confinement to our subjective experience in the here and now of the actual world: by reading fiction, we can transcend this limited horizon and 'experience' situations--if only in a secondhand fashion--that are removed with respect to place, time, and modality thus taking on, as it were, a perspective different from our own (1).

Although some readers may have gone through a difficult move to a different country, received an abortion, undergone manipulation, lost the support of their families, or worked in undesirable conditions; in an extremely rare instance, one would endure all of these circumstances simultaneously. Therefore, the unthinkable draws readers in closer as their empathy towards the narrator increases. Jenny becomes so far removed from the trauma in her story, the reader's empathy rests in other characters such as Kitty, Margaret, and Chris. Many readers cannot relate to the rare instance of a love triangle caught up in the mix of a post-war loss of memory. However, Jenny does not go to war, nor does she get married and lose a child. Therefore, the rare circumstances of her story have no effect on the reader's connection to her narration.

Another major factor determining the connections made between the reader and narrator rests in the demographic. The demographic for both novels consists of a younger audience.

However, where Anna exists as a younger narrator figuring out the world on her own, Jenny exists as an adult who remains reliant on her family for support. Therefore, readers relate with Anna as they have similar ages making the events more believable to the demographic. Both novels additionally target a female identifying demographic. Those who identify as female and read *Voyage in the Dark* will remain more willing to empathize with Anna and her circumstances of hardship, as they can see themselves in similar situations or possibly have been in similar situations. Those who identify as female and read *The Return of the Soldier* will pick up on the desire Jenny has for Chris which alters Jenny's reliability. Likewise, female identifying readers of *The Return of the Soldier* will remain more willing to empathize with Kitty and Margaret's characters.

Anna's narration also frequently appeals to the emotions of readers through her various life struggles. When the target audience of younger and usually female identifying readers follow Anna through an unfortunate series of events, their empathy increases towards her. This does not occur with Jenny's narration as she manipulates and takes advantage of others. In other words, the reader's emotions do not extend to a narrator who remains incapable of extending their own emotions to others. Jenny never stops to consider how her actions affect others like Margaret. Instead, she focuses on how she can use others to get to Chris.

The reader's faith also rests on how they perceive the narrator's faith in themselves. This faith does not derive from factual information, as Jenny provides facts throughout the novel such as the time elapsed since Chris had written a letter, but rather the truth each narrator believes at their core. Anna remains transparent with readers and herself throughout the entirety of the novel. She understands the choices she has made in life and how they not only affect herself but also those around her. Anna remains a genuine person who would not wish ill will upon others. Jenny, on the other hand, not only deceives readers but also herself. Jenny never recognizes how her actions exclude others' interests. She likewise never acknowledges her selfishness. She never

fully understands the choices she has made in life and how they not only affect herself but also those around her. By Jenny being blind to her own realities, readers lose their faith in her.

Throughout their novels, Anna and Jenny create identities for themselves by telling their stories as they wish. Readers cannot react to a narration with trust and empathy if a narrator never provides an identity for themselves. In a letter to her cousin, Kathrine Mansfield once stated: "would you not like to try all sorts of lives--one is so very small--but that is the satisfaction of writing--one can impersonate so many people" (Bennett 33). By narrators creating the identity they wish to uphold, they often change other characters' perspectives of them as well. For example, when Anna initially arrives at her landlady's house with Maudie, Maudie portrays herself as a lady by "making her voice sound as ladylike as possible" (Rhys 8). Here, the two girls alter their identities in order to persuade the landlady to let them stay. As the women as outsiders attempt to become insiders in the novel, they present different versions of themselves to readers. Readers then have to decipher which version of the narrator remains truthful and similarly which aspects of the narration remain truthful.

Additionally, telling a story gives a voice to the voiceless. Jenny often becomes voiceless when Chris directs his attention and thoughts to Margaret and Kitty. Likewise, Anna becomes voiceless while others like Ethel and Vincent control her life. Therefore, their narrations allow them to tell their stories when they cannot to others in the present. However, when a narrator recalls the past, they only recover the voice they remember. Therefore, information may be misconstrued and misremembered, calling the narrator's reliability into question if they show any gaps in their narration like Jenny does with the intentions she has with Chris. By readers determining what we do and do not believe, we create the narrator's voice, our own version of their narrative, and the amount of empathy and trust placed in their narration.

In their work "(Un)Reliability in Narrative Discourse: A Comprehensive Overview," Sternberg and Yacobi state: "Unreliability (and though omitted here, also reliability, presumably, along with the choice between them) depends on "us" readers" (331). Despite the narrator's attempts to persuade readers to trust their narration, the reader remains in constant control of who successfully or unsuccessfully remains reliable. Going back to the leading question of how a writer develops a narrator who keeps the reader's faith and empathy throughout the entirety of the novel, this question remains ongoing. However, I can conclude by examining some steps which largely ensure the reader's faith remains throughout a novel. To begin with, a faithful and trustworthy character will also exist as the narrator of the story. A faithful narrator will also more than likely share commonalities with the readers. These commonalities can range from specifics such as a lack of belonging, a need to rely on others, and manipulation. However, these commonalities can also exist on a larger scale with the targeted audience. Therefore, a narrator who relates to the reader's demographics maintains their faith as they go through some of the same life experiences as the narrator. Additionally, a narrator who also provides the unthinkable and calls the reader into action, will hold the reader's faith. Finally, readers maintain faith in a narrator who also has faith in their own narration, as one must believe in themselves before others will.

CHAPTER VII

THE PURPOSE OF FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Transfer, in the academic context, refers to the repurposing of knowledge from one area to another. According to Jillian K. Skeffington, one of the scholars I discuss later, "the major purpose of first-year composition is transfer (35). This statement is one that often derives mixed feelings and frequent uncertainty from various voices in academia. Many have their own ideas about the purpose of first-year composition and often provide lengthy insights which contradict other scholars. It is interesting to see psychologists, directors, professors, and curriculum coordinators interested in this topic. Therefore, it can become challenging and overwhelming to decide who provides accurate information that is worthy of implementing. For this reason, I have provided summaries from stakeholders in each of these disciplines before coming to my own conclusions. It can also be daunting to attempt new strategies not knowing if they will actually help students transfer their information successfully. However, we have statistical data and themes which have proven successful amongst most scholars to initially implement before creating our own conclusions on the success of student transfer in the first-year composition classroom.

Diane F. Halpern, American psychologist and former president of the American Psychological Association, discusses the psychological moves behind transfer in her work

"Teaching Critical Thinking for Transfer Across Domains: Dispositions, Skills, Structure Training, and Metacognitive Mentoring." In summary, Halpern informs instructors that they should alter their current teaching strategies by turning away from a focus solely on course material. Instead, students should learn critical thinking skills, recognize how they are learning them, and how they can then transfer them to other courses. In order to promote transfer across multiple courses, she suggests teaching students through dispositions, skills, structure training, and metacognitive mentoring. These domains of critical thinking involve various tasks of reflection, recognition, and change. Some specific activities Halpern suggests for initiating critical thinking and transfer are through various dispositions like "willingness to engage in and persist at a complex task, habitual use of plans and the suppression of impulsive activity, flexibility or open-mindedness, willingness to abandon nonproductive strategies to self-correct, and an awareness of the social realities that need to be overcome so that thoughts can become actions" (452). She also states that instructors should teach their students "verbal reasoning skills, argument analysis skills, skills in thinking as hypothesis testing, likelihood and uncertainty, and decision making and problem-solving skills" (452). Another way to ensure student transfer is through structure training. Therefore, students who "create retrieval cues, recognize sunk-costs arguments when they are made in other settings, have different examples, receive corrective feedback to develop the habit of spontaneous noticing, elaborate on connections, and use real-world examples" are more likely to not only remember the material, but also transfer it to other courses (Halpern 453-454). Finally, Halpern suggests implementing metacognitive learning strategies by asking students structed and concrete questions that they can return to for reflection throughout their academic careers (453-454). If instructors focus on how students are learning along with what they are learning, then students will be able to successfully transfer their knowledge and actively recognize when they are doing it in other situations.

In her work "Enhancing Transfer from First-Year Composition: A Pedagogy of Shorter

Essays," Jillian K. Skeffington, a rhetoric and writing studies scholar, discusses how instructors can enhance the probability of transfer from first-year composition courses. In summary, Skeffington explains how the current writing students complete in first-year composition classes are nontransferable due to their lack of real-world relatability, length, and frequency (28). In Skeffington's opinion, the key for transfer in the first-year composition classroom lies in "shorter and more frequent essays" (28). These essays need to be similar in style and likewise similar to what they may encounter in other courses (Skeffington 39). If students do not view their composition courses as anything other than personal writing assignments, then they will struggle to recognize a connection between their writing in relation to other courses. However, she recognizes that the process of transfer is far more complex than that. In order to set students up for success in their other courses, instructors must ensure the goal of first-year composition is for far transfer instead of near transfer. Skeffington defines far transfer as "applied knowledge across markedly different areas or arenas. She states that in first-year composition, we teach students far transfer through conceptual ideas about writing hoping they'll be able to recognize the information in other situations" (30). She also builds off of Perkins and Salomon's ideas on "bridging" by stating instructors need to be transparent towards their students in what they are doing now and what they will encounter in their other courses (Skeffington 30-31). However, instructors also need to recognize the problems that may occur with transfer such as the variations in what information students transfer and how they transfer that information (Skeffington 32). Skeffington suggests the best way to discover the answer to this problem is by communicating with faculty members from different disciplines to discover what first-year composition knowledge is being transferred specifically into their courses (32). Finally, she discusses "using metacognitive awareness to bridge and transfer information through assignments like portfolios" (Skeffington 42). This is particularly interesting since Halpern also discusses the link between metacognitive awareness and successful transfer.

Tom Pace, director of university writing at John Carroll University, furthers the discussion of how instructors can enhance the probability of transfer from first-year composition courses in his work "Transfer and Writing Assignments Across the Curriculum: Broadening the Knowledge and Practice of Rhetorical Contexts beyond First-Year Composition." In summary, Pace makes references to several scholars in the process of forming his own conclusions. He is concerned with the transferring of rhetorical skills or the "repurposing of texts for new rhetorical situations" (Pace 204). However, Pace also acknowledges the opposing views of David Smit, author of *The End of Composition Studies*, who argues that rhetorical skills do not normally transfer except in the context of "surface constructions like spelling, punctuation, and syntax" (Pace 204). Pace then draws on *Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing* by listing instructor examples for transfer: "One, be explicit. Two, build in expert practices. Three, tap prior knowledge and concurrent knowledge. Four, include processes and link them to key terms and a framework. Five, ask students to create their own frameworks drawing on prior knowledge. Six, build in metacognition" (206). Here, he draws on other scholars to acknowledge some of the same concepts Halpern and Skeffington did, such as metacognition, explicitness, frameworks, and building off of familiar information.

In their work "Dynamic Transfer in First-Year Writing and 'Writing in the Disciplines' Settings," Hogan Hayes, Dana R. Ferris, and Carl Whithaus continue to add to the conversation of transfer as it relates to first-year composition. In summary, Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus mention several of the same concepts Halpern, Skeffington, and Pace deem essential for transfer. Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus also discuss the ongoing debate of the purpose of first-year composition and acknowledge the many opposing views of transfer in these courses. Russell (1995) is quoted in their work stating "like genre theory, activity theory focuses on systems where people share goals and are bound by context… goals can only be attained in these systems via social means… all learning is situated within some activity system and adolescents and adults do

not ‘learn to write’ period… the skills learned in a writing context like FYC do not effectively transfer into other contexts” (Hayes, et al. 181). Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus also reference Perkins and Salomon’s fears of transfer being feasible, but harder and taking place less than originally believed (182). Bazerman (1997) is also quoted in their work acknowledging the complexity of genre awareness as “genres are often tacitly constructed abstractions intended to mitigate challenges presented by highly complex social situations” (Hayes, et al. 187). Building off of these claims, Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus conducted a study of transfer at the University of California, Davis.

During this study, it was suggested that “a writing program with consistent, explicit, and intentional transfer-oriented learning objectives in FYC provides a curricular setting that facilitates the transfer of writing skills across contexts and fosters the development of discipline-based rhetorical awareness” (Hayes, et al. 182). At the University of California, Davis, graduate students teach the composition courses from a pre-designed teaching for transfer syllabus (Hayes, et al. 190). This syllabus contains a standard portfolio assignment where students pick two artifacts and create a letter of reflection (Hayes, et al. 190). Additionally, the assignments included in this syllabus are designed for “explicit presentation of ways rhetorical concepts work with texts for specific purposes and defined audiences… and metacognitive reflection” (Hayes, et al. 198). This study, conducted by Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus, asked students questions based on their experience with transfer from their lower-division courses to their upper-division ones. These students were from various majors such as Science and Technology Studies, Spanish, Economics, and Computer Science (Hayes, et al. 193). However, because of the pre-constructed assignments for transfer, all of these students were able to provide text examples from the same assignments such as portfolio letters and personal narratives (Hayes, et al. 193).

During the study, students were then asked to select areas in their assignments, like the portfolio, where they recognized the first-year composition’s goals for transferring. These

department goals include “incorporating evidence appropriate for the task, demonstrating an awareness of audience, producing purpose-driven texts, using language effectively, and collaborating with others during the writing process” (Hayes, et al. 195). Some resulting answers included “model texts” where students, like student number six, found connections between the work they did on their portfolio letter and the course readings and essays they wrote (Hayes, et al. 197). Other students, like student number two, expressed “explicit metacognitive reflection” where they were able to recognize the moves made during their writing process (Hayes, et al. 197). From the pool of upper-division students who participated in the study, “84.6% of them reported that their lower-division classes had helped them to write for a specific audience and read challenging academic texts” (Hayes, et al. 200-201). In post-course interviews, students spoke on their “writing skills and challenges in the present tense, acknowledging that the process of development is ongoing” (Hayes, et al. 208). From this study, Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus are able to conclude that first-year composition courses structured around transfer do in fact aid students in their upper-division work.

Danna Lynn Driscoll, professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric at Oakland University, provides some insight and tools for instructors in her work “Connected, Disconnected, or Uncertain: Student Attitudes about Future Writing Contexts and Perceptions of Transfer from First-Year Writing to the Disciplines.” Driscoll mentions multiple scholars and recognizes that if students are unable to successfully “recognize similar features in diverse writing contexts and tasks, then the transfer of writing skills will most likely be unsuccessful” (2). Likewise, she states that the attitudes students have towards the material they learn and how they perceive the likelihood of transfer greatly impacts the actual process of transfer. Driscoll recommends:

> Encouraging students to engage in metacognitive reflection about their writing and learning, encouraging students and other instructors to learn about future writing contexts

> and connect learning to those contexts, not assuming that transfer occurs – always, directly addressing transfer issues through explicit teaching, asking students to practice skills in various contexts and encourage them to understand how skills can be generalized and applied across contexts, not dismissing prior writing knowledge, and ensuring that students know how different skills connect to each other and how knowledge builds upon previous knowledge (19-22).

She, unlike many scholars, provides not only tips for initiating transfer, but also handouts for students to complete at the beginning and end of the semester to evaluate writing issues and transfer (Driscoll 19-24).

In their work "Writing across College: Key Terms and Multiple Contexts as Factors Promoting Students' Transfer of Writing Knowledge and Practice," Kathleen Blake Yancey, Matthew Davis, Liane Robertson, Kara Taczak, and Erin Workman state:

> Teaching for Transfer curriculum, includes three integral curricular components constituting an ensemble: (1) a shared set of writing concepts or key terms; (2) students' engagement in systematic reflection and the development of a reflective framework for thinking about writing concepts and practices; and (3) students' development of a theory of writing through completing a reiterative assignment, in which students articulate their writing knowledge and practice based on learning about writing (e.g., through the key terms) and on analyses of the rhetorical choices made in responding to writing situations (43).

More specifically, as students draw on key terms to articulate their writing experiences, they acknowledge their rhetorical acts, particularly when writing in differing contexts (Yancey et al.

50). After implementing these three components of transfer, Yancey, Davis, Robertson, Taczak, and Workman think students can transfer information successfully.

Joshua Peter Kutney, a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction, disagrees with many of the previously mentioned scholars in his dissertation "First-Year Composition and the Problem of Transfer." Kutney believes that the implementation of transfer into first-year composition curriculum is solely for lower-division writing courses to validate their purpose. Kutney goes on to claim that the issues of transfer largely rest in the magnitude of theories centered around them and that if collected data showed transfer, then this was more than likely because the results were "localized" (4). He additionally pushes back on the many in favor of meta-awareness learning by questioning how instructors can accurately judge meta-awareness in their students' writing (Kutney 25). Where Halpern lists several skills for instructors to implement in their courses, Kutney states that it should "concern" instructors that these terms are never explicitly defined (36). In light of these claims, he conducts his own research in attempts to grasp transfer in the first-year composition setting. This study was held at a small college with less than 1,000 students and where the majors range from Natural and Social Sciences to those of Creative Arts (Kutney 47 & 76). This college's first-year composition courses are also centered around "rhetorical skills and knowledge" (Kutney 44). Kutney interviewed twelve faculty members in relation to the issues they recognized in student work, and as a result found that many problems within major-specific writing such as "specialization" had no relation to what was being taught in Composition I and II courses (49-58). He recommends moving away from methods of "rhetorical structure and focusing on understanding the various writing topics, following directions, proofreading, and appearing serious about learning when they interact with their instructors" (Kutney 69). Successful students of writing, in Kutney's opinion, "take a serious approach to learning, control course content, and exhibit the characteristics of good students"

(98). Although Kutney's opinions vary greatly from other scholars, I think it is important to view all perspectives before drawing conclusions.

After reading over the various studies and opinions of scholars across America, I have come to the conclusion that the purpose of first-year composition, among many other things, is transfer. Although I agree with Halpern's overall messages to focus on how students learn along with what they learn, she provides too many suggestions to implement in the classroom. Her list of various skills is unrealistic and I agree with Kutney that it is concerning these skills are never explicitly defined (Kutney 36). I agree with Skeffington that short and frequent essays that are similar to what students will encounter in other courses would aid transfer (28). I also like the implementation of portfolios for metacognitive awareness as I am not only observing this in my mentor's class, but also many like Halpern, Pace, Hayes, Ferris, Whithaus, and Driscoll mention the links between metacognitive learning and transfer despite Kutney's doubts. I agree with Pace's theory of "repurposing texts for new rhetorical situations" which is what many others like Skeffington, Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus agree with once again despite Kutney's doubts (204). I disregard Kutney's doubts as Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus' study provides data proving that "84.6% of students reported their lower-division classes had helped them to solidify sub skills such as writing for a specific audience and reading challenging academic texts" (200-201). I also disagree with Kutney's claims that what will really help students is "exhibiting the characteristics of good students and appearing serious when interacting with their instructors (69-98). I believe these ideas are largely based on the fact his study was done at a small college. I think they may be successful in high school contexts and maybe two-year colleges, but not for students who wish to earn a four-year degree.

Driscoll's work is the most beneficial for first-year composition instructors as she provides actual tools to assess student learning from the beginning to the end of the semester. This is something I plan on using in my classroom and something I now encourage other

instructors to implement as well. Specifically, I want to implement the handouts she provides for students to complete at the beginning and end of the semester to evaluate writing issues and transfer (Driscoll 19-24). Some of the questions students are asked at the beginning of the semester: "What do you think the overall purpose of your ENGL ___ course is?" and "Why or why do you not expect what you learn in this course to help with writing in your major?" (Driscoll 23). Some of the questions students are asked at the end of the semester: "List what you believe to be three overall purposes of ENGL ___." and "How much of what you have learned will help you in your other courses? Why is this so?" (Driscoll 24). Another move for transfer that I see as integral to my future teaching is short and frequent assignments that are similar to what students will encounter in other courses (Skeffington 28). For example, working on annotated bibliographies. Finally, I want to implement activities that "aid students' engagement in systematic reflection and the development of a reflective framework for thinking about writing concepts and practices" (Yancey et al. 43). For example, through the use of metacognitive awareness of portfolios, reflective free-writes in class, and weekly journals over the information they are learning and how they think they can use it in their other courses.

Ultimately, the purpose of first-year composition and transferring that does or does not take place will always be up for debate. It is up to us as instructors to continually do research as to what others are saying about this topic and alter our approaches as we learn what works best.

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