
NKU
KENTUCKY
UNIVERSITY

PENTANGLE

Established 1992

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Sigma Tau Delta

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Pentangle's History

Pentangle, a journal of student writing, debuted in 1992 at Northern Kentucky University and is sponsored by the Pi Omega chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society. Pi Omega is committed to the principles of Sigma Tau Delta, as stated in the international pledge: "To advance the study of chief literary masterpieces, to encourage worthwhile reading, to promote the mastery of written expression, and to foster a spirit of fellowship among those who specialize in the study of the English language and of literature."

The name of the journal, Pentangle, alludes to the famous image of the pentangle in the Middle English poem, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, where it is a symbol of truth and of the perfection to which Sir Gawain aspires. This association is consistent with the editorial staff's goal of honoring writing of merit in Pentangle. The Pentangle title also echoes the title of Sigma Tau Delta's official journal of student writing, The Rectangle.

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Pentangle solicits submissions of research papers, critical essays, and book reviews pertaining to all areas of literary studies in upper division and graduate courses. Book reviews should be for books written in the last two years. All submissions must be in MLA format (Gibaldi, et al., 7th ed.) and typed using Microsoft Word. Please email all submissions to pentangle@nku.edu. When submitting manuscripts, please include a bioline and contact information.

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Contents

Portrayals of a Boy's Loneliness: C. S. Lewis' *Dawn Treader* and Philip Pullman's *The Subtle Knife*

Sara Leonhartsberger

While diametrically opposed in theological mindset, Philip Pullman's *The Subtle Knife* and C. S. Lewis' *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* both feature an adolescent protagonist that is isolated from and must reconnect to society. In *The Subtle Knife*, twelve-year-old Will Parry struggles with the absence of parental guidance and his uncertain environment yet develops an independent personality through his struggles. In contrast to Will, Eustace Clarence Scrubb in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* possesses a sense of superiority fostered by the controlling influence of his parents; through the environment of certainty surrounding him, however, Eustace forms a dependent personality that proves detrimental to his adaptability. Although Will Parry's means of isolation evoke sympathy while Eustace Scrubb's isolation seems well-deserved, both boys reconnect to society by similar means of realized loneliness, unavoidable incapacitation, and mysterious power figures. However, the societies that Will and Eustace join differ in their sustainability, a final nuance between Pullman and Lewis.

Being introduced to Will's character through his act of ensuring the safety of his mentally-disabled mother, readers are alerted to

the abnormality of the situation yet immediately are encouraged to sympathize with him. Will intends to isolate himself further from society with his quest for the green leather writing case, but his reassurance to Mrs. Cooper that he will "be back soon, and I'll take her [his mother] home again, I promise" (Pullman 3) indicates his dedication to his mother. Furthermore, the interchange of Mrs. Parry's look of "such trust" and Will's look of "love and reassurance" (Pullman 3) establishes credibility for Will's identifiable character. If Will is willing to leave behind his mother that he loves for this unknown quest, readers can reasonably assume that his chosen further isolation is worthy of sympathy.

Conversely, through Eustace's unfavorable introduction as an intrusive, egotistical nuisance, readers may readily wish for him to isolate himself entirely from the entirety of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Indeed, within the opening line describing him as "a boy called Eustace Clarence Scrubb, and he almost deserved it" (Lewis 425), a blatant condemnation of Eustace's character is made by the narrator. Further revelations of Eustace's love of "bossing and bullying" and knowledge of "dozens of ways to give people a bad time" (Lewis 425) certainly detract from any reader's compulsion to sympathize with the boy, and his belittlement of Edmund and Lucy for their belief in Narnia and his persistence in "hanging about and grinning" (427) merely to irk his cousins swiftly become rather tiresome. In addition to his other isolating traits, Eustace also overhears his cousins' conversation by "listening at the door" (Lewis 427), having little regard to privacy in order to gather more material for his continued harassment of Edmund and Lucy; learning that Eustace has no name among friends for "he had none" (Lewis 425) cannot elicit much surprise from readers. Not only is Eustace isolated from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*'s society through his repugnant behavior, but he is also excluded from readers' sympathies.

Though Will's quest in *The Subtle Knife* involves searching for

more nurturing to their infants were more likely to offer emotional support later in their children's lives (Grossmann 858-859). Will, however, is not granted the positive reinforcement of his father's presence, let alone a secure relationship: John Parry "had vanished long before Will was able to remember him" (Pullman 9). Lacking a father's presence to encourage him to interact with others, Will chooses to isolate himself from all others except his mother.

While Mrs. Parry is physically present to provide a home for Will, her mental state is precarious, as first recognized by Will when he is seven years old. After participating in a game to avoid enemy detection by carefully placing groceries in the shopping cart, Will soon realizes that his mother finds the game to be based on "real danger" instead; yet this danger, he discovers, resides solely within her own mind (Pullman 9). At this juncture, mother and son's roles reverse, with Will vowing to protect her from the perceived danger in her mind as well as an outside world hostile to those with mental illnesses. When school boys harm Mrs. Parry for her illness, Will recounts to Lyra how he fought the lead boy responsible for the attack, breaking his arm and "some of his teeth" (Pullman 262). Fearing that his mother will be taken away from him, Will also forgoes friendship, because "friends come to your house and they know your parents" (Pullman 263), which might put her in jeopardy. As sole protector of his mother's fragile mental state and freedom, Will removes himself constantly from society to ensure her safety, her needs superseding

novel, Harry and Alberta Scrubb produce a child sure of himself and aggressive to any society unable to align with his worldview. Eustace does not "approve" of what he believes to be the made-up Narnia, for "he was far too stupid to make up anything up himself" (Lewis 427). Instead of admitting his lack of imagination, Eustace derides what he cannot or will not understand.

Eustace is unwilling to acknowledge the reality of Narnia because his identity is rooted in the realm of factual information learned in books. This is shown in the first entry of his Dawn Treader diary when he ridicules Caspian's pride in "showing off his funny little toy boat as if it was the Queen Mary. I tried to tell him what real ships are like, but he's too dense" (Lewis 437). Both Eustace's pride in his own factual knowledge and his belief in his resulting superiority gained over Caspian are evident; the diary entry serves as only the first of numerous instances of Eustace's mentality. Eustace's prideful attitude isolates him, eliciting many groans and much discontentment from his fellow travelers. The Dawn Treader's first mate Rhince even mutters "good riddance if he has" in response to the theory that Eustace might have been killed by wild beasts (Lewis 465). Through their controlling influence, Eustace's parents instill an intolerant, condescending worldview within their son that isolates him from the world of Narnia.

In contrast, because of his parents' absence in his life, Will Parry constantly resides in an environment of uncertainty, yet his resulting adaptability allows him to survive within this environment. Without his father's guidance or his mother's provision, Will alone must make decisions, awakening suspicion and hesitancy to trust anyone but himself; his view of the world is that of a pessimistic realist, not of a hopeful child. According to Bugentel and Grusec, environment heavily factors in a child's social development, either positively or negatively. (391). While his uncertain environment fosters a negative view of society, a positive facet of hope still lingers in Will's longing for his father's return, believing that "he'd [John Parry] know exactly what to do about everything—about my mother especially—and she'd get better and he'd look after her and me and I could just go to school and have friends …" (Pullman 263). Although Will cannot remember his father, he associates stability with John Parry, motivating him to seek out his father in order to change his environment of uncertainty.

as the beginning of Will's independence, the catalyst for his fully realized independence occurs after Will accidently kills a man who breaks into Will's house (Pullman 6-7). The sudden act forces Will to flee to Oxford, where he begins his life of self-preservation (Pullman 13). The culmination of his ability to survive arrives in the form of his fight with Tullio in Ci'gazze; although his opponent is older and taller, Will is able to win the fight (Pullman 173-176). Will's independent personality, formed by his parents' absence, enables him to survive in his tumultuous world, allowing him to navigate through difficult situations.

Furthered by his environment of certainty, Eustace exhibits

both Will and Eustace's first step to reconnecting with society follows after a moment of realized loneliness. Although Baumeiter and colleagues caution that emotion can be "detrimental" as "the direct guidance of behavioral choices" (147), both boys are driven by emotion to realize their desire to rejoin society. For Will Parry, the moment in which he experiences the full weight of his isolated state occurs after the loss of his two fingers in Ci'gazze. Bleeding profusely from the gaping wound, Will attempts to create a window with the Subtle Knife, yet instead thinks of his mother, separated from him by an entire world. The thought of her prompts him to "crouch low, hugging his wounded hand, and cry…The sobs rack his throat and his chest…he is desolate" (Pullman 182). Now physically separated from both of his parents and unable to receive comfort from them in his wounded, weakened state, Will emotionally cracks, aware of how alone he truly is. When Pantalaimon does reach out to comfort Will, the fact that the heretofore emotionally-reserved Will allows Lyra's daemon to comfort him demonstrates a shift in Will's isolation (Pullman 182). Will recognizes his isolation and accepts the need for others.

In similar fashion, Eustace only recognizes his isolation from society after his transformation into a dragon. At first glorying in the superiority of strength that his dragon form offers, Eustace has a moment of revelation that "he was a monster cut off from the whole human race…an appalling loneliness came over him...when he thought of this the poor dragon that had been Eustace lifted up its voice and wept" (Lewis 466-467). Because he is transformed into a dragon, Eustace experiences remorse and realizes his isolated state. Physically stronger than he has ever been in his life, the boy weakens emotionally, becoming vulnerable and aware of how his past actions have led to his isolation. Eustace suddenly questions "if he himself had been such a nice person as he had always supposed" (Lewis 466). Eustace's realized loneliness immediately shifts his behavior, as he allows Lucy to "console him [and] to kiss [his] scaly face" (Lewis 470). Recognizing his isolation in this moment of dragonish loneliness, Eustace desires to connect with a society from which his behavior has ostracized him.

The second step toward reconnection with society shared by Will

blood loss. While previously fiercely independent, the boy must allow Lyra to aid him, as she "tie[s] a bit of rope around [his] arm [and] urge[s] him down the steps" immediately following the loss of his fingers (Pullman 177). Will's need to depend on Lyra is exhibited in a growing trust of her, as demonstrated in his instructions that Lyra "take something in your rucksack for me, in case we can't come back here. It is only letters" (Pullman 192). These letters, however, are letters from John Parry to Mrs. Parry, valuable possessions in their son's eyes for sentiment and content; Will entrusting their security to Lyra demonstrates Will's acceptance of her presence in his life. After losing further blood, Will also allows the witches from Lyra's world to attempt to heal him. Initially wary of any strangers, Will accepts Lyra's validation of the witches and "let[s] the spell go on" as Serafina Pekkala chants over him, even "urging his leaking blood to listen and obey" (Pullman 256). Because his blood loss compels him to accept aid, Will also begins to accept both Lyra and the witches' society, allowing tentative connections to form.

Correspondingly, the dragonized Eustace, unable to rejoin the human race, attempts to join himself to the crew by becoming useful. While Will allows others to aid him, Eustace aids others in ways he either refused to or was not capable of previously as a human. Dragonized Eustace flies "over the whole island and found it was all mountainous" and kills goats and swine "as provisions for the ship" (Lewis 471). The dragon Eustace brings back a "tall pine tree" for the Dawn Treader's mast and keeps the crew warm by both being a source of heat and starting fires with his fiery breath (Lewis 471). Eustace's negative physical transformation sparks a positive behavioral transformation, in which he becomes eager to help others. Indeed, his assistance to the crew produces a "pleasure (quite new to him) of being liked, and, still more, of liking other people [which] kept Eustace from despair" (Lewis 471). Although he is still physically separated from reintegration within the crew's society, Eustace learns how to emotionally and behaviorally connect with society through his incapacitating dragon form.

Both Will and Eustace are painfully healed and decisively reintegrated into society by a mysterious power figure, whose appearance marks the final step in their reconnection with society. As Clausen and Williams mention, a "designation of agents charged with the responsibility of child care and tutelage" is an integral step in the socialization process of a child (63). Almost delirious through blood loss after the witches' spell fails to stop the bleeding, Will decides to climb up the looming mountainside, impelled by

"a need to move and keep moving" so that "he hardly noticed the pain in his hand anymore" (Pullman 316). Once he reaches the top, the boy is confronted by "a grip on his right arm" and combats his unknown assailant, the darkness masking the man's identity. The man even lands a "dizzying blow on the back of [Will's] head" (Pullman 317) and leaves "every nerve in [Will's] body ringing and dizzy and throbbing" (Pullman 318). However painful their initial encounter, the man, Stanislaus Grumman, proves to be the only one who can heal Will's wound, applying a salve that sends a "marvelous soothing coolness" into Will's hand (Pullman 318). Grumman serves a further purpose by imparting his knowledge of the Subtle Knife to Will, instructing him to deliver the knife to Lord Asriel as the weapon to defeat The Authority (Pullman 319-320). In this way, Grumman not only saves Will's life but also give him new purpose. As the Subtle Knife's wielder, Will has a potential purpose within Asriel's rebellion, should Will choose to deliver the knife to him; however, he would have been unaware of this purpose without Grumman's guidance. Through his healing and instruction, Grumman provides Will the means to escape his isolated state.

Likewise, Eustace returns both to his human form and the society

potential role in Asriel's army is revealed to him by Grumman, Will is left uncertain if his newfound role will be wrenched away with that society's very possible downfall. Also, in rapid succession, the boy witnesses his father's murder, descends the mountainside to discover chaos and destruction awaiting him, and is separated from his most viable connection to society, Lyra (Pullman 322-326). The same uncertainty of environment that prompted his initial isolation follows Will to his integration within society.

Eustace, by contrast, is granted a stable state of society; he continues on the voyage of the Dawn Treader (Lewis 476), reunites with his parents (Lewis 541), and is essentially promised a return visit to Aslan's world by Aslan (Lewis 541). Eustace once again exists within an environment of certainty, yet his environment has expanded to further horizons or worlds. Instead of being confined to the worldview of his parents, Eustace gains insight into the world of Aslan, allowing him to navigate two societies instead of one alone.

Though brought into existence by authors whose worldviews are opposed, both *The Subtle Knife*'s Will Parry and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*'s Eustace Clarence Scrubb experience a similar state of isolation and a nearly identical path out of it. Will Parry isolates himself as a method of self-preservation, a reaction to an uncertain environment and absent parents; his isolation leads to an independent personality that adapts to adverse situations. Eustace Scrubb, on the other hand, is isolated by his sense of superiority fostered by a certain environment and controlling parents; his isolated state forms a dependent personality that is unable to adapt to unrecognized obstacles. Neither are able to reconnect with society until they are confronted by a shared realization of their loneliness, an inability to rely solely on themselves, and mysterious power figures that both heal their incapacitation and provide societies for the boys to enter. Still, Will's and Eustace's entrances into society are in stark contrast: the instability of Will's reintroduction to society contrasting with the stability of Eustace's integration into society. As Pullman's and Lewis' views contrast in nearly every aspect of their literature, the shared method of reintegration into society within their literature may reasonably point to an inherent truth of humanity. From Will and Eustace's similar journey from isolation to integration, one can infer the existence of a common human desire to be included, to belong to someone or something. Reasons for isolation differ, but all eventually seek similar means to belong.

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“Street angel and house devil”; Performative Gender and Identity in Nighttown

Hayley Kirley

James Joyce’s 1922 novel *Ulysses* shows a day in Dublin, 1904. The experimental novel is broken up into eighteen episodes. One of these episodes, “Circe”, takes place in the red-light district of Dublin called Nighttown. All the events in “Circe” can be understood as a performance, and most of the characters that appear within *Ulysses* perform a part within “Circe”. In the episode, the action, dialogue, and description of characters takes the form of a stage play. However, the play would be impossible to stage in part because of the fantastical nature of the costuming. For instance, throughout the episode characters undergo costume changes that would be impossible in real life. The descriptions of the costume changes are written in the stage direction without any consideration for whether or not the changes are feasible. Joyce purposefully does not account for the feasibility aspect of these costume changes. He uses the costume changes to indicate gender for his characters at that point in the performance. Since the characters’ gender changes at a later point, he is signifying the fluid nature of gender identification. Analyzing the costuming and accessories in “Circe”, especially those used by Mrs. Breen, Bella/Bello Cohen and Leopold Bloom provides insight into how Joyce questions

societal views on gender. He specifically uses costume changes and dialogue in "Circe" to show the performative nature of gender within Ulysses as well as in a broader concept of gender.

typically masculine trait. Her entrance is akin to a young rake arriving in Nighttown. However, this outwardly masculine appearance inverts in the last part of this quote. Mrs. Breen is described as "smiling in all her herbivorous buckteeth". This description implies a predatory baring of the teeth or perhaps a derisive smile. Joyce turns the masculine aspect of this description on its head by putting the word "herbivorous" in front--which lightens the predatory aspect of baring of teeth. Although Mrs. Breen give the impression of a roguish masculine predator, she is not actually carnivorous. She has buckteeth rather than fangs. In this way, the description re-establishes the weaker, more feminine aspect to Mrs. Breen's appearance—her herbivorous nature as well as her buckteeth—in contrast to her outwardly masculine costume. Mrs. Breen's character performs masculine as well as feminine traits. Neither feminine nor masculine traits as shown by appearance are inherent to Mrs. Breen and this illustrates the performative nature of gender.

In a similar way, Mrs. Breen gives the impression of masculinity through her dialogue while simultaneously acting submissively—typically thought of as more feminine. Mrs. Breen initially accuses Bloom of decadence for being in Nighttown. She says, "Mr Bloom! You down here in the haunts of sin! I caught you nicely! Scamp!" (Joyce 443). These accusations are initially predatory and accusatory towards Bloom. However, soon after this exchange and Bloom's subsequent flaky excuses, Mrs. Breen says of Bloom, "You were the lion of the night with your seriocomic recitation and you looked the part. You were always a favourite with the ladies" (Joyce 444). In this statement, Mrs. Breen exaggerates the performance of masculinity—by mentioning a 'seriocomic recitation' and telling Bloom that he 'looked the part'. Mrs. Breen re-establishes Blooms outward expression of masculinity and now associates it with sexual prowess. Krouse supports this interpretation saying in "noting the favor that

person, the virginal white, the tassels and black 'exotics' of a whore—the eyeliner and fan. The feminine costume Bella dons contrasts with her more masculine actions and masculine features; her sweaty, heavy, and full-nosed face--most commonly associated with masculinity.

Joyce's text reflects bodily and mercurial changes shown in "Circe". Palusci discusses this idea in her essay about cross-dressing in *Ulysses*. Palusci describes how by changing names, both Bloom and Bella's names act as "gender inflected adjectives" (Palusci 157). Through this method, Joyce can "morph her gender through grammar" (Palusci 157). This textual aspect of identity changes simultaneously with the changes in physical appearance and costuming.

Therefore, when Bella becomes the male Bello in the narrative her costume changes accordingly. She is then dressed even more strangely;

> With bobbed hair, purple gills, fat moustache rings round his shaven mouth, in mountaineer's puttees, green silverbuttoned coat, sport skirt and alpine hat with moorcock's feather, his hands stuck deep in his breeches pockets, places his heel on her neck and grinds it in (Joyce 531).

This passage shows Bello's costume to be strange and colorful. Bella's feminine costume was quite plain in comparison. The feminine aspect mixes even more with the masculine in this passage. As Bella, the character's hair was not described. Bello sports a bob—an androgynous cut. Bella has a mustache. Bello is shaven. The purple gills offset the green coat in a garish and monstrous way. Bello presents himself in an extravagant and peacock-like fashion similar to the way Mrs. Breen was described when she was donning more masculine traits—although Bello takes on more monstrous characteristics with his hooves and gills. Since Bello has more monstrous features, Joyce most likely uses them to show how he

fact that Bloom is a 'soubrette' could also mean that he continues to take on the persona of a poor female side character trying on her master's or the main character's clothes. This passage clearly illustrates how Bloom tries on different aspects of gender identity through the use of changing costume and mixes both feminine and masculine traits.

In modern *Ulysses* discourse, Bella's fan is often described as an object through which Bloom expresses his own thoughts. As Palusci asserts, the fan "becomes a fetish for Bloom. It functions…as a detachable part of Bella in which is displaced and concentrated all of the phallic power which Bloom attributes to her" (156-157). Although, the fan acts within the narrative and dialogue it does not have a distinct identity. However, this view depends on the assumption that the episode exists completely within the confines of what Bloom is capable of analyzing as his reality. This view disregards the autonomy of Bella as a character and the way in which she performs her own identity.

The fan acts and speaks on its own which allows for arguments that view it as an accessory of Bella as well as a separate part of her identity speaking for itself. In keeping with the concept that the accessories and costuming within *Ulysses* act as fluid identifiers, the fan is a great example of how gender is performative in "Circe" and therefore the book as a whole. The fan is part of Bella/Bello Cohen's costume. Joyce uses the fan to show how Bella presents her gender as well as how she expresses her thoughts. On the other hand, if one views the words of the fan as Bloom's ventriloquism, it reduces the performative aspect of how Bella expresses herself. Although impossible for a fan to talk, it is not impossible for the fan to act as an expressive object for Bella and so can best be examined as an extension of Bella rather than just an extension of Bloom's thoughts. Joyce includes little description of the fan itself. The little description he gives is that it is, "a black horn fan like Minnie Hauck in Carmen" and "her large fan winnows wind towards her heated face, neck and embonpoint" (Joyce 527). The large aspect of the fan reflects Bella herself—a "massive whoremistress" (Joyce 527). This passage above also emphasizes how the fan is personified and acts rather than being acted upon by Bella or Bloom. The fan is the one that winnows wind toward Bella rather than Bella acting on the fan. The fan also works in emphasizing Bella's femininity—it calls attention to her "face, neck and embonpoint" showing how flushed all three are. However, the line directly following says Bella's, "falcon eyes glitter" (Joyce 527). Although the fan shows off her sexualized femininity it also calls to attention her more

masculine and predatory 'falcon' eyes.

The idea of personification becomes more obvious when the fan enters into the dialogue. The fan addresses Bloom, "(Flirting quickly, then slowly.) Married, I see." (Joyce 527). The way in which one might imagine the fan 'flirting' here is complex. The line itself suggests flirtation and at the same time that it acts as an accusation—it mirrors Mrs. Breen's earlier flirtation and simultaneous accusation. The fan seems to be relishing in discovering Bloom's secret and the appeal of the scandalous nature of infidelity—simultaneously emphasizing a feminine quality in Bella.

When Bloom tries to redirect the conversation with the fan, it continues, "And the missus is master. Petticoat government" (Joyce 527). Here, the fan asserts that Bloom's wife acts as the dominant one in their relationship. The words can also be referring to Bella as well. The idea that the 'missus is master' as well as 'petticoat government' reflects upon Bella simultaneously as it implies Molly. One might assume that Bella's fan would address Bella as 'master' and that the brothel itself works as a 'petticoat government' given that Bella runs it. When Bloom submits to this statement, saying "that is so" the fan reasserts its connection to Bella (Joyce 527). The fan is described as

us since knew? Am all the and the same now we?" (Joyce 528). Here, the fan seems to question the nature of identity and the universal

gender and gender dynamic these characters are exhibiting at a given moment. The objects and costumes that suggest gender take on part of these character's identities and serve to show the performative gender that each of these characters inhabit. The costumes change relative to each other in the conversations between Mrs. Breen and Bloom—Mrs. Breen's costume changes in accordance with her dialogue. Bella's costume initially emphasizes the mixing of masculine with her feminine outward appearance. When Bella becomes Bello his masculine appearance incorporates more feminine aspects through the jockey comparison. Bella's fan serves to further complicate this dynamic by both indicating her feminine aspects as well as insisting upon her dominance. The gender dynamic throughout "Circe" becomes clearer through close reading and examination of their outward gender performance. The association of gender traits relies on costume and accessory within this episode and therefore supports the idea of the performative nature of gender within Ulysses.

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of relationships, so this is where the overlap begins: "On the other hand, people's PSR with personae indicates an accumulation of shared past experiences and gives additional meanings to people's perception of the personae in PSI" (Hu 219). The conclusion that Mu Hu comes to in her research is that the correlation between PSR and PSI is a positive one, because everything that constitutes a relationship is strengthened through interaction. The repetitive sight of the characters in *The Walking Dead*, combined with the paralleled story formats in each episode, allows audience members to not only have a weekly catch-up session with their persona but also to become emotionally invested in them due to the stressful, and sometimes scary, situations in which they find themselves. You wouldn't want your best friend to die; that's how media consumers view their favorite television characters and personalities.

Brunick defines a parasocial breakup as, "the reason the parasocial relationship ends" (186). PSB can be caused by a number of things: a viewer outgrows the personae, real-life scandal causes a discontinuation of a parasocial relationship with older viewers, or something tragic or otherwise debilitating happening to the character or actor themselves. Hu notes that, "Most current PSB research explores involuntary PSB, while audience members' voluntary PSB is seldom examined" (217). Now, the difference between voluntary and involuntary breakups can be boiled down to the real celebrity and the fictional character. If the real celebrity is involved in some sort of scandal, if it goes against a viewer's values, they will voluntarily cease to care as much for that persona as they did before. Also, if a character's morals suddenly change in the program, the viewer could voluntarily break up with them due to that as well. For instance, when Carol, from *The Walking Dead*, got a little more hardened and started taking things into her own hands by putting people out of their misery, some viewers voluntarily "broke up" with her persona, because of the lack of morals that might have been involved with those decisions.

"Most PSB research focuses on hypothetical or real situations
[illegible] its most recent season, fans were shocked, to say the very least, when fan favorites Glenn (Steven Yeun), and Abraham (Michael Cudlitz) were revealed to be on the receiving end of the barbed wire-wrapped bat, Lucille. This caused an uproar from the fan base in the following days. People were horrified at what had happened to their favoritebase in the foll

everyone could bid farewell to the two casualties of the premiere.

Glenn's death was taken the hardest, having been a main character since the beginning of the show back in 2010. This brings back

imitating the personae's behavior, discussing the personae with other people, imagining interactions with the personae, or even attempting to contact the personae" (218). While, usually, this means that there would be a positive interaction when the persona was contacted, there are scenarios supported by Hu's information that could be negative. For instance, on The Talking Dead, Jeffrey Dean Morgan recounts a time when he had coffee with co-star Norman Reedus (YouTube). They were sitting outside the establishment, enjoying their coffee, when this old woman approached. She called him a bad name, and looked at him, "hate in her eyes," and told him that she wanted to know where he lives. This is a clear indication that she had a negative parasocial interaction with his alter ego from the show, Negan. In the moment, she does not seem to notice the fact that Morgan is an actor with a role he gets paid to play. In a way, the woman was pleased with her interaction with the character because when she did see him out in public, she felt the need to let him know that she did not like what he had done when he was in character and on set.

The Talking Dead, as mentioned before, is an interview and discussion segment that airs each week after the episode of The Walking Dead airs. When the premiere aired for season seven in October of 2016, the whole cast joined the host on The Talking Dead to discuss what the ramifications could possibly be for future seasons, as well as how each actor felt about what had transpired. In these interviews, it seemed that each actor also experienced some kind of parasocial interaction and/or relationship with their co-star's characters. An example in The Talking Dead is the fact that the whole cast was quite emotional and sad about losing Glenn and Abraham in the premiere. The host mentioned during a segment of the interview that "it is nice for the audience to know that it means as much to [the cast] as it means to them," when Lauren Cohan (Maggie) was talking about what the last words that Glenn spoke to Maggie in the premiere meant. Another example of the actors having parasocial relationships with the characters that their co-stars portray is when Andrew Lincoln (Rick Grimes) mentions that both of those characters (Glenn and Abraham) are strong men in the show, and also bring a humorous factor to many of the episodes, so it is going to be strange that they are gone.

In closing, parasocial relationships are prevalent in today's media consumers. It is not exactly a lack of knowledge of what is real, and what's not. Rather, personae in entertainment programs are created to be relatable, or something to attain to be a better person. Consumers grow close with these characters, and while there are a few here and

there that don't understand that the actors are just playing a role, most viewers are entirely aware that they have some kind of less than interactive relationship with a fictional character. The awareness of these relations is how consumers can become media literate, or remain literate.

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A Feminist Critique of Othello

Elizabeth Massie

In the play *Othello* by William Shakespeare, we encounter many forward thinking actions and characters for the Venetian era but we also see the opposite viewpoints as well. While looking at this play through a feminist viewpoint, we are given the tools to analyze different social values and statuses of the women in this play. *Othello* is an example that demonstrates the expectations of the Venetian patriarchal society, the practice of privileges in patriarchal marriages, and the suppression and restriction of femininity. There are only three women in *Othello*: Desdemona, Emilia and Bianca. Throughout the play, the Venetian patriarchal society portrays women as possessions, submissives, and temptresses.

In the beginning of the play, we meet Desdemona. Normally, she would come across as a very strong female character. She has eloped with "the moor", Othello, against her father's wishes. After hearing Brabantio's complaint and Othello's defense, the Duke eventually grants permission for Desdemona to accompany Othello to Cyprus. Othello speaks to Iago, ironically describing him as a man of 'honesty and trust', informing the Duke that "To his conveyance I assign my wife" (1.3.324). Desdemona, as Othello's wife, is treated as his possession: he implies that she is a commodity to be guarded and transported. The Senator ends the conversation with Othello by hoping that he will "use Desdemona well" (1.3. 332). The word 'use'

seems to run parallel to the phrase 'look after', but also supports the Venetian expectation of women. They are expected to bow to the wills of their husbands who may utilize them as they wish. The function of women within marriage is also supported by Othello's 'loving' words

compelled by the laws of society to be 'circumstanced' - to 'put up with it' - implying that she has no other choice.

Society weighs heavily on the shoulders of these women; they feel that they must support the men they are married to, even if the actions of the men are questionable. Brabantio's opinions of women appear to represent Venetian ideology. Speaking of Desdemona, he describes her as 'perfection', 'Of spirit still and quiet' and 'A maiden never bold' (1.3.112).

By expressing the qualities of these women in the patriarchal society of the Venetian senate, Brabantio compounds and develops the traditional expectations of women. When Desdemona marries Othello, going against his wishes and the ideal mold of woman, he describes her as erring "Against all rules of nature" (1.3.119). Venetian society presents its own social beliefs as immutable laws of nature. It is 'natural' for fwomen to be feminine and to do as their husbands and fathers tell them. It is 'unnatural' for them to do anything else. This Venetian concept was also an Elizabethan and pre-Elizabethan belief, and was widely understood by Shakespeare's audiences. (Nachit 98)

Today, feminists argue that it is not 'natural' for women to be 'feminine', that history has tried to camouflage its social expectations of women as part of the laws of nature. The women of Othello,

to be an 'evil' which must be resisted by the men in society. Men are free to refer to women as 'whores' and get away with it. The language that Shakespeare gives to his female characters suggests that they have internalized society's expectations of them.

There is some hope in the play. The women do begin to question the validity of unchecked male authority. Emilia shows her feminist opinions throughout, but it is Desdemona, who in conversation with Emilia, indicates that the tide may be finally turning: 'Nay, we must think men are not gods' (3.4.169). This line suggests that Desdemona has certainly perceived men to be god-like figures in the past, but indicates that her experiences with Othello have taught her a lesson. It is clear that the actions and language of Shakespeare's three female characters, although seemingly subservient, signify a tentative step towards an egalitarian society.

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Power Dynamics in Land of the Dead, American Psycho, **and** Funny Games

Molly Hartig

When most people think of horror movies, the first things that come to mind are the classic horror monsters, like Dracula or Frankenstein, or the supernaturally-human monsters of the 1970s and

in the whole city, a mall-like paradise known as Fiddler's Green. This is a place where only the richest are welcome to live and pretend that the lower-class people right outside aren't struggling to find food and shelter. Kaufman also creates and runs an underground dungeon of vice, a place designed to get the lower classes to spend what money they do have on things like alcohol and gambling. He turns prisoners over to this place where they are forced to fight to the death against captive, starving zombies. He talks about this place as if it is good, a place where the lower class can take a load off and really relax. He fails to mention that people die there every night. When he turns on one of our main characters, the lower class Cholo who he is tricked into trusting him and doing his bidding, he also displays some definite racial prejudices. It is not a coincidence that the only person of color we see living in Fiddler's Green is Kaufman's personal butler.

When Kaufman is killed at the hands of a zombie, someone we know by the color of his skin and the uniform he wears would be welcome at Fiddler's Green even if he was alive, the audience cheers. Kaufman represents corruption and oppression in the United States government that can still be seen today, and people are vindicated when they watch the film and see the person representing those who oppressed them in real life getting punished for oppressing the people that represent them. On the other hand, representations such as this one show that people are fully aware of how much corruption there is among those in power, but realize they are not likely to be punished for it any time soon unless it is on screen. In other words, the money that has given those in power the power they have is stopping them from facing any sort of any retribution in real life. Thus, we turn to film.

American Psycho (2000), directed by Mary Harron, is less about government corruption and more about the evils of corporations and the individual businessmen that run them. Patrick Bateman fits in with his coworkers and subordinates at work. They can all get together in the middle of the day when they are supposed to be working, talk about how they are all cheating on their significant others, and do cocaine in the bathroom. The only discernible difference between Bateman and the others is that in his spare time, Bateman likes to murder the homeless, prostitutes, and even coworkers who dare to have a more professional looking business card than his. Interestingly, however, Bateman displays very "progressive" opinions about the goings on in Africa at the time the film takes place, which would appear to make him aggressively not racist, something you wouldn't really expect of a rich white businessman in the 80s. According to

Jarcho (2012), the fact that Bateman uses Africa often as an alibi is what reveals him as racist. Bateman is a sociopath on the brink of schizophrenia and total insanity, and the conclusion of the film leaves the audience wondering what is the truth and what has been fabricated in Bateman's mind. One thing is definite even if nothing was as it appeared, Bateman is a psychopath who managed to rise undetected to an incredible position of power and wealth, and the other businessmen he interacts with in the film could be the same, and no one would have noticed.

Bateman is deeply classist and misogynistic, and his hatred of women is the most obvious of his prejudices shown throughout the film. The scene in which he runs almost naked down his apartment hallway covered in blood in order to drop a chainsaw on an escaping prostitute from the top of the stairs is one of the most famous from the film. It seems like something like that could never happen in real life, that surely someone would notice and inform the police that something terrible was happening. However, the scene calls to mind the real-life case of Kitty Genovese, who was raped and murdered while nearly forty people either watched or listened to it happen without calling police. Things like this really do happen, and rich white men are the most likely to get away with these crimes.

Another famous scene is the murder of Bateman's coworker, Paul Allen, while Bateman discusses music in a carefully practiced way, masking the fact that he knows absolutely nothing about people and the way they interact with each other. Bateman chops off heads and stores bodies in suit storage bags in a spare closet, admitting to eating the flesh of at least some of his victims. The fact that he can get away with all this with no one noticing that anything is amiss is the most terrifying of all. It is not until his behavior becomes extremely erratic and he actually confesses to his crimes that anyone notices that something is wrong with the man who calls himself Patrick Bateman. Misogyny and drugs are the norm among businessmen anyway. In the end, Bateman gets away with everything he may or may not have done, and life goes on for the men on Wall Street.

Funny Games (1997), directed by Michael Haneke, shows a different kind of power. While Kaufman from *Land of the Dead* was an older man, and Patrick Bateman is a younger, still very well established adult, the antagonists in *Funny Games* are younger still than even Bateman. Paul and Peter are bursting with life and charm when they first appear, and it is not really surprising that the family falls victim to them. Theirs is the power of youth. One of them, Paul, also has

Peter, his accomplice, is shot by the mother of the family, Paul is actually able to pick up the family's remote control and literally rewind the events that have just unfolded. This obviously lends itself to the feeling that the family has never had a chance of survival, that they were never going to get away from these two young, strong, and able-bodied men. They are utterly powerless, and Paul and Peter are infinitely powerful. Also, while we have come to expect the corruption of the rich and those in power, such violence coming from two attractive and charming young white men is seen much less often on screen. They're the kind of young men that people would probably describe as "seeming like such good boys" if it ever came to light that they were involved in such violent crimes.

So why would these privileged individuals partake in such violence in the first place? The viewer is never given a definitive reason. All we know is that they seem to enjoy the killing, even breaking the fourth wall to make bets with and wink at the viewer. They play sadistic games with the family, and once the remote scene happens, the audience knows that Peter and Paul have nothing to lose. When the father of the family escapes next door and finds that their neighbors have already been murdered, the audience knows that Paul and Peter have won this game before. They have the invincibility of youth and things are hopeless for any person they choose to play with next. If the audience is paying attention, they wouldn't dare bet against them. Even though they don't have socially established power beyond what the privileges they were born with, being young, strong, white men affords them enough power to do what they want to do and kill whom they want to kill. *Funny Games* is not an easy film to watch, because watching almost feels like rooting for Peter and Paul to win and for them to kill all the members of the family, which they do. According to the article by Herling (2012), this is a purposeful effect. Michael Haneke made *Funny Games* not as entertainment, but to make people think about all the violence they watch as entertainment. The difference between his film and the others like it is that *Funny Games* gives no hope for a future hero to take down these antagonists.

It is no coincidence that all the antagonists in this paper are upper-class white men. Oppression at the hands of men like these is something almost every person has experienced, even other upper-class white men. This makes these antagonists extremely relatable to the viewer. However, a lot of people are in denial that this kind of oppression happens purposefully, even if they've experienced it themselves. Plus, people who are more marginalized, like people of color and women, can't always talk about their experiences with those

in power without being retaliated against or discredited due to their identity. Thus, films like Land of the Dead, American Psycho, and Funny Games make it easier for people to discuss these issues in a sort of code. Horror films are excellent at bringing up social issues in a way that is very obvious but pretends not to be. While Land of the Dead kind of pokes fun at the issues within it while still taking itself very seriously, American Psycho and Funny Games both portray terrifying stories that could happen, and probably actually have.

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“But Like a Man He Died:” Violence and Masculinity in Macbeth

Elizabeth Martin

Macbeth’s ambition is traditionally and culturally thought to be the cause of his downfall and ultimately his death. Arthur Kirsch states that Macbeth’s “ambition provokes desires in him that he is increasingly incapable of satisfying,” and it is this that leads to his demise (272). While Macbeth’s ambition and desire for power are two traits that are most often associated with Macbeth’s character, they are only contributing factors when it comes to his downfall. A trait that ends up affecting Macbeth’s path throughout the plot of the play more than his ambition is his tendency to be so easily persuaded by those who affect or question his masculinity. The societal ideals and expectations of the time regarding masculinity have been imprinted onto Macbeth, making these persuasions possible. Macbeth’s correlation between manhood and violence lead to the multiple murders in the play, while his thoughts on manhood and guilt leave him with little remorse. While Macbeth’s ambition does play a part, it is the ideologies and social expectations on masculinity that persuade Macbeth to take action and participate in the killing of other characters.

The first instance in which the audience is able to witness how impressionable Macbeth is occurs shortly after Macbeth and Banquo receive the first prophecy from the three witches (1.3.39-81). This

prophecy states that Banquo, Macbeth's friend shall be the father of kings, and that Macbeth shall become king himself. Before this point, there is no evidence to suggest that Macbeth had ever considered the idea of being king in the past. Macbeth's reaction to the three witches' prophecy supports this claim. If Macbeth had a desire for kinghood to be his future, the prophecy "should first fill him with joy" (Cheung 431). There is no sign of joy from Macbeth. Instead, Macbeth seems to be unsettled by the prophecy he is given: he states that the "supernatural soliciting / cannot be ill, cannot be good" (1.3.144). Macbeth appears to make the decision not to take action in order to make his possible kingship a reality, believing that "chance may crown [him] / without [his] stir," (1.3.157-159). However, being king is an idea that he comes back to multiple times in the scenes following in the play. In scene four, Macbeth seems to instinctively see Malcolm, the son of the current king, as an obstacle he "must fall down or else o'erleap," (1.4.56). Macbeth's inability to forget and move on from the ideas of the witches and their prophecy illustrates to the audience how susceptible Macbeth is to persuasion from outside forces. It is this inability to forget that sets up Macbeth's demeanor and trajectory for the remainder of the play. The Macbeth's reaction to the prophecy sets up the next instance in which the audience is able to see how Macbeth is influenced by an outside force on a much bigger level: the patriarchy and the gender roles associated with it.

Through the comments of others, the audience is able to see what Macbeth's character was like before he hears the prophecy. Before the audience can meet Macbeth for themselves, they are introduced to him through the conversations between Duncan and Malcolm. According to Duncan, Macbeth is a "worthy gentlemen" (1.2.26). Shortly beforehand, Malcolm describes Macbeth as a "good and hardy soldier," (1.2.5). Macbeth is referred to by Lady Macbeth as being "too full o' th' milk of human kindness," (1.5.17). By most of the characters' standards, Macbeth is a respectable, and even kind, person. By being exposed to Macbeth in this manner, the audience comes to understand that Macbeth is an impressive, respected, socially acceptable man (Favila 5). This then begs the question: how does a respected person like Macbeth end up turning into a murderous usurper? The answer simply being: gender roles and the societal expectations of men. These expectations play a large part in the development of Macbeth's character as well as his downfall.

Macbeth has a very specific view about what it is to be a man and to be successful. Macbeth was a soldier and was greatly respected because of his actions during conflict; he received praise from a king that

he respects, as well as titles such as the Thane of Cawdor rewarding him for his service. While acting as a soldier, Macbeth is noted to be a violent person as his Captain recalls he "doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe. / Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds" (1.2.42-43). Macbeth has grown accustomed to having violence be a key factor in determining whether he is a successful and societally appropriate man or not. Macbeth's association of masculinity with violence is further supported during the scene in which Macbeth is discussing killing Banquo with the murderers. When the two murderers show some hesitation in their plans to kill Banquo, Macbeth immediately begins to question their manhood stating that "in the catalogue [they] go for men" (3.1.103) and asking if they "are not i' th' worst rank of manhood" (3.1.115). From Macbeth's perspective, the two men that are hesitating to kill Banquo are less manly because of their refusal of violence. According to Howell, Macbeth "suggests the murderers are essentially an inferior specimen of the male species because unlike real men, they lack an innate killer instinct" (20). Because this type of thinking appears in the beginning of the play, the audience can assume that Macbeth thought this way before he heard the prophecy from the witches. Although Macbeth is, per some of the characters in the play, uncommonly kind and

Macbeth is no longer thinking about the acts of violence that he is participating in, and instead sees them only as a way of maintaining his masculinity. Due to the same reasons, he shows no remorse or guilt after participating in the acts, as we see none when Macduff's family has been killed, on Macbeth's orders. According to Calderwood, "murder has become almost a reflex action for Macbeth" (75), as he no longer thinks of what he is doing, just that "what must be done must be done" in order to preserve his masculinity and that "what has been done cannot be undone" explaining the lack of guilt from Macbeth about events that no long beforehand cause him so much pain (Low 826). After the dinner, Macbeth believes that not showing guilt or remorse is a sign of masculinity, and does not do so for the remainder of his life.

In the events leading to Macbeth's death, Macbeth begins to lose the characteristics that he believes make him a masculine person. No

for fiction and its truth to be come out (Proudfoot 16).

In 'Scylla and Charybdis,' Stephen presents his opinions on both Hamlet and Shakespeare to four characters who exist in real life as an actual person, but also as a character in *Ulysses*: Thomas William Lyster, John Eglington, Richard Irvine Best, and George Russell (AE). According to Possible Worlds Semantics, these men are not the actual Lyster, Eglington, Best and Russell—all of whom in some way have authority in literary criticism—but are instead Joyce's fictionalized versions of them. This could also present the idea that the real men were starting points for Joyce's fictionalized versions. By not changing their names, Joyce is still leaving authority with these men. Despite their being fictionalized, these men manage to retain their accomplishments just as they retain their name. Their presence makes Stephen's fictional character more sympathetic, but simultaneously fails to give Stephen more authority as a literary figure. There's an allusion that some of the men in the Library in 'Scylla and Charybdis' has heard the theory as well before when "Eglington's later comments suggest that even before the scene opens, Stephen has already stated his thesis to the company in the Librarian's office," (Norris 4). Eglington even downplays Stephen's theory by simply calling it a "ghost story" (Joyce 153). This implies that he does not regard Stephen's theory as being more than fiction; if he viewed it as being more than a ghost story, he might have called it a theory, but because he didn't, he lowers the integrity of Stephen's theory by continuing to think of it as a ghost story. Because Stephen has most likely told his theory to these authoritative men, there's some inquiries to be made as to why Stephen would try it again. It seems that the stakes would be raised, because Stephen has already failed before with them and must try especially hard to impress them the second time around. This means that before Stephen even presents at the library, he's already aware of how the men view his theory. By presenting despite this, Stephen's inexperience as a critic is magnified. Without the proper evidence to persuade these men, he automatically has no authority to theorize with them. However, by trying to anyway, Stephen is only proving his disadvantages, because he is going into a losing battle, knowingly. His persistence only brings out his flaws as a literary critic, rather than increasing his integrity and credibility.

Often when presenting an idea that's meant to persuade, credibility is important. People are more likely to listen to someone who is credible because it means that they have studied their topic in-depth. But Stephen does not hold enough necessary credibility; these men hold more than he does. They are well educated, while

working toward that rejection. When Stephen is aware, he is also fully aware that a consequence could be his isolation, but it is his need to be accepted that fuels him to continue with his performance. By not stopping, Stephen is allowing the isolation to be a consequence which he is aware of. When he doesn't stop his performance, even when it is clear that the audience is rejecting his theories, he is furthering his isolation. Additionally, this isolation is decreasing his authority. While he is persevering, his dedication is not improving the men's opinion of him or his work. His performance as a character is just causing the others to become more discouraged by him than they already were. If Stephen should choose to present to them again, then it will be even more difficult for him to sway them and that difficultly will only increase the more he tries, only to fail. The more he persists, the more his authority with these men will drain.

When asked if he believes his own theory on Shakespeare, Stephen replies, "No" (Joyce 175). This means that Stephen is attempting to persuade the men in the library to believe an argument that Stephen himself does not believe. This "no," can mean that Stephen's theory is a "work in progress" (Gordon 502). After all, Stephen might not just believe his own theory yet, but maybe once he's built it up enough, he will. At this point however, he doesn't believe it, so his audience can't be expected to believe it either. Here it seems that Stephen is just a mouthpiece created by Joyce to talk about literary criticism. Literary criticism is about creating original ideas about works of literature. This is exactly what Stephen has done, but the scholars do not see it that way. To them, Stephen has only formulated a far-fetched origin for Shakespeare. Perhaps James Joyce is trying to point out that all criticisms are far-fetched at first, until they have the evidence to back them. The question he might be posing here is: what makes one literary critic's ideas more important than another, or is there ever even a critic's theory that's correct? After all, theories are just theories—waiting to proven, but unable to be anything more as long as the writer is not here to relay his exact meaning. This makes the scholars at the library seem less scholarly. Their fame and authority seem to dwindle at this, which makes them seem less real themselves. This is just another way in which these men become less of historical figures and more characters of Joyce's making. Since he is removing their authority, their touchstone to real life is fragmented. They become characters themselves, which makes the contrast between them and Stephen disappear. Without this contrast, there's little question whether Stephen is made more real amongst his peers. The reality becomes that he is just a character amongst other characters. Because these

ruminating, which only creates art in the mind. Until Stephen can physically create it, he will not be able to hold the same authority of Shakespeare or even come close.

For Shakespeare to simply be a character of Stephen's design means that it is hard to see what Stephen's real trajectory is in Ulysses.

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Author-to-Audience Conversations: Behind the Fictional Narratives in *Doctor Faustus* and *King Lear*

Zorada Porter

The interaction of individuals within the contemporary social hierarchy of Early Modern England is a key theme in both Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and in the narrative of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Marlowe targets issues presented by the contemporary class structure through the story's setting and the use of over-dramatized, Christian supernatural elements. Shakespeare's *Lear*, differentially, uses the context of an unfamiliar setting to direct the subtextual, author-to-audience conversation to similar questions regarding the worldly class structure. This essay will discuss how the use of supernatural elements in the narrative structures of William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Lear* and Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus* are purposeful, imaginative devices through which the authors are able to ask questions about class structure without the threat of social repercussion. Both Marlowe's *Faustus* and Shakespeare's *Lear* engage in conversations about the appropriate order of the culturally specific, perceived, natural class structure. The use of distinct Christian wording in a pre-Christian setting, as in Shakespeare's *Lear*, and the inclusion of supernatural figures of Christian theology, as in Marlowe's *Faustus*, become guises through which the audience is engaged in an

introspective conversation about the Christian influence on the Early Modern sociopolitical framework.

A narrative, fictional or non-fictional, is "a text in which an agent relates a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof" (Bal 5). In the tragedies of *King Lear* and *Doctor Faustus*, the linguistic style treating the fictional, supernatural Christian elements in *Faustus* and the fictional, pre-Christian setting of *King Lear* draws the audience's attention. Though written for an audience in the Early Modern Period, Shakespeare's *King Lear* is set in a period that pre-dates its publication. Before the foothold of Christianity stamped English soil, the setting of *King Lear* and the landscape which sparks the tragedy provides subtext essential in decoding the dialogue between author and audience. For those in attendance to a performance of *Lear*, using references to a cruder and outdated sociopolitical structure stands at stark contrast to the intended audience's contemporary, Christian-dominant structure. First introduced by the Duke of Kent in Act 1, Scene 1, where he addresses the silver-tongued sisters Goneril and Regan and the recently, unjustly banished Cordelia: "[*To Cordelia*] The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid, that justly think'st and hath most rightly said. [*To Goneril and Regan*] And your large speeches may your deeds approve, that good effects may spring from words of love" (Mowat and Werstine 19). Here, Kent is the first verbal medium to confirm that the setting of the play is distinctly non-Christian. The exchange of "God" for "gods" separates the listener's reality from the story which allows the author to safeguard their message within the folds of fiction. On this topic, de Rivera and Sarbin state that "constructed accounts meet a number of important psychological needs. They provide excitement and a distraction from the unbearable complexity of modern existence" (9). However, the audience needs elements within the narrative that reach into their personal experience, without which the author's conversation becomes lost to audience interpretation.

It is not accidental that the first identification of the pre-Christian setting runs concurrently with the abdication of Lear's responsibility and power as a father and as a king. Shakespeare purposefully contradicts the pre-Christian setting with the use of Christian phrasing, further adding to the emphasis that the story is a fictional narrative because the wording stands out against the medieval backdrop. The language of fathers to children and servants to kings features prominently throughout the narrative of *King Lear* while

In a society heavily influenced by Christian theology, the paternal, familial position in the domestic framework held prominence due to its association with the Almighty. Reference to God as one's heavenly father remains a common colloquialism used in Christian culture. The Lord's Prayer serves as another example; dedicated solely to the veneration of the traditional God figure, it is more widely known as the Our Father. The first lines of the prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven" emphasize that God, as the holy father, is able to carry out his might throughout his "kingdom" due to his position at top of the natural hierarchy.

The fictional, pre-Christian setting of King Lear features a subversion of the familial hierarchy as a major plot driver. Cordelia, Lear's youngest daughter, is the source of this subversion when she refuses to address her devotion to Lear publicly. Because Lear has already abdicated his right to the throne, however, he is in a vulnerable position where Cordelia's words directly impact the audience's perception of his importance. The natural hierarchy that a Christian audience would expect is subverted because the child has exerted dominance over the parental figure. At the end of Act I, Scene 1, Goneril reasons for the combined treachery of herself and her sister against Lear, exemplifying further subversion of the Christian familial structure: "If our father carry authority with such disposition as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us" (Shakespeare 29).

As Goneril schemes she references Lear's 'disposition,' relating it back to the abdication of his supremacy earlier in the scene. Lear states, "'tis our fast intent to shake all cares and business from our age, conferring them on younger strengths… since now we will divest us both of rule, interest of territory, cares of state" (10-11). He voluntarily moves down the social hierarchy in the story world and disrupts the audience's ideation of inheritance-post-death that their sociopolitical climate normalizes .

Lear's kingship acts as his identifier to other characters. Through the narrative's progression his kingship is frequently referred to in Christian terminology. In Edgar's speech in Act 3, Scene 6, his reference to Lear's title also serves a double meaning to the audience who are assumed to have a comprehensive understanding of Jesus' biblical title: 'King of Kings.' Edgar says, "How light and portable my pain seems now, when that which makes me bend makes the King bow" (157). Another incident of this phenomena occurs later within the dialogue between Cordelia and Lear in Act 5, Scene 3 as they

are marched by Goneril and Regan's soldiers to face their imminent judgement: Cordelia says, "We are not the first who with best meaning have incurred the worst. For thee, oppressed king, I am cast down," referencing to the "oppressed king" and assimilating Lear to the oppressed Jesus, who bore the pains of the world only to bow his head in death on the cross. Due to the biblical connotation associated with the kingly office, the continued use of the word King in reference to Lear in spite of his recent shift down the social ladder shows that the author is attempting to bring attention to the rigidity of the Christian social structure beneath the narrative's fictional camouflage.

The idea of a king in the Christian ideals of the Early Modern period was influenced by the sociopolitical structure built on the Divine Right of Kings. King James I, reigning monarch for a significant portion of the period, delivered a famous speech while addressing a gathering of Lords and Commons: "The state of the monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth: For kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods" (qtd. in Burgess 837). By introducing the idea of birthright in the context of a Christian framework to the sociopolitical structure of Early Modern England, it is made clear that any movement of the predetermined monarch holding the kingly office or those to follow in the same bloodline would, in a heretical sense, defy the will of the Father in heaven.

Burgess says that:

> Far from making kings absolute, [the Divine Right of Kings] was actually hostile to the idea that kings had any substantial latitude for the discretionary exercise of sovereign will. It embedded them in a divinely created hierarchy, and this position required them to obey the norms and serve the purposes that God had laid down. (839).

Lear, by abdicating his authority as the fictional representation of kingly office, disrupts the typical social hierarchy where kingship was the penultimate diction of God's authority.

Lear uses the pre-Christian setting to fictionalize the play and therefore provide a guise beneath which Shakespeare questions the sociopolitical boundaries that exist within a Christian-influenced class structure. Similarly, Marlowe's Doctor Faustus includes Christianized supernatural elements, weaving the fictitious narrative disguise to converse with the audience about the state of the reality of that time. Doctor Faustus, as described in the beginning chorus of the

production, is a man born "base of stock" (Marlowe 1128). Base of stock, in this context, implies that the character lacks a background of affluence and says to the audience that the character of Faustus will act, speak, and perform within the context of his class. However, reality soon parts with Marlowe's fiction by Faustus' opening soliloquy, incorporating intelligent Latin phrases that claim self-grandeur.

A man of lower stock with the intellectual capability to reference material associated with the scholarly elite would not have been a clear indicator of the story's fictional classification due to the expansion of education to more people in lower classes spreading at this time. However, "while the number of grammar schools increased, this did not bring with it a necessary broadening of educational opportunity. The better schools still catered to the elite of the society, whose schools usually afforded them the better teachers" (Jenkins 2). Faustus' disproportionally inflated education serves as a fictional guise, or, the summoning supernatural skills from the Christian Devil to transcend the authority of the rigid social hierarchy as dictated by the Christian God.

Scene nine of Doctor Faustus both subverts and reestablishes the expected social norms of the contemporary reality through Faustus' supernatural expression of his grand cosmic powers at court. Chorus 3 explains how Faustus' fame has led to employment by the emperor to perform like an entertainer. While at court he is repeatedly insulted by a knight, recognized in the Early Modern hierarchy as a member of high rank. Faustus, with the aid of his supernatural abilities, has the power to enact divine justice over any mortal man who casts him insult. Yet, the only act of justice taken to correct the perjury of his public image is in placing horns on top of the knight's head to brand him a cuckolded husband; "How now, sir knight? Why, I had thought thou hadst been a bachelor, but now I see thou hast a wife that not only gives thee horns but makes thee wear them!" (Marlowe 1154). The knight responds with, "How dar'st thou thus abuse a gentleman?" (Marlowe 1154). Marlowe makes an important distinction for the audience through both Faustus' rebellious supernatural actions against the social hierarchy and the reaction of the high class courtier. He separates the knight as a gentleman. Thus, by proxy, Marlowe exemplifies that Faustus is not.

Despite Faustus' extensive education and mastery of the four principle disciplines of the time, his God-given background originating by birthright in the lower social classes follows him up to the affluence of court. Similar to Lear, Faustus is trapped by his own class. Movement, either up or down on the class structure, is

deemed impossible by the fictional narratives based on the reality of the contemporary class structure, imbued with the authority of the almighty through the Divine Right of Kings. God, in the ideology of Early Modern Christianity, trickles down the appropriate role of every person within the society by placing the premeditated king on the throne with purpose.

When Faustus attempts to climb the ranks of the Christian social hierarchy, as juxtaposed to Lear's decline, displaces the rest of the hierarchy and subverts God's authority in the sociopolitical climate by rejecting its correctness. The main premise of the play focalizes on Faustus' desire for powers beyond human comprehension. He says:

> Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires. O what a world of profit and delight, of power, of honor, of omnipotence is promised to the studious artisan! All things that move between the quiet poles shall be at my command: emperors and kings are but obeyed in their several provinces, nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds; but his dominion that exceeds in this stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man: a sound magician is a mighty god. Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity. (Marlowe 1130).

Through Faustus' desires and acquirement of metaphysical powers, Marlowe exhibits a subversion of the socially accepted theology on natural hierarchical order and the consequences of that subversion.

Faustus' socially damnable actions literally drag him into hell. His last words before the Devils overpower him are "I'll burn my books- ah, Mephastophilis!" (1163), followed by the epilogue of the play, resonating as the last input into the conversation from Marlowe. He says:

> Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight, and burned is Apollo's laurel bough, that sometime grew within this learned man. Faustus is gone! Regard his hellish fall, whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise only to wonder at unlawful things: whose deepness doth entice such forward wits to practice more than heavenly power permits. (Marlowe 1163).

Here, Faustus' unrealistic education and blatantly supernatural extension of that education bear blame as the primary source of Faustus' unearthly punishment. However, the audience translation

of the last lines of the epilogue indicate that stepping outside the sociopolitical class boundaries decided by the Almighty leads to the swift enactment of Divine Justice.

Featured prominently in Christian thought, divine justice refers to a heavenly veneration or reimbursement awarded for living wholesomely according to Christian doctrine and a punishment enforced for living defiantly. Because rigid Christian doctrine was so completely intertwined with political and social hierarchical theory and, during this time, "Absence from church, and any deviation from the forms and rubrics of that book, were statutory offenses and attracted the secular penalties of fine and imprisonment" (Collinson 75). The enactment of divine justice logically applied, in an Early Modern context, to those that subverted the hierarchy dictated by the Divine Right of Kings. In both play-texts, the protagonists perish beneath the cruel, adjudicating hand of divine justice.

In King Lear, the titular character is punished by the fictional 'gods' for abdicating what the Christian-rooted audience would perceive as the holiest decision of God's social ordainment. Cordelia is punished for her subversion of that divine hierarchy through her display of power over the natural authority figure. Is his punishment just or unjust? Lear himself says "I am a man more sinned against than sinning" (Shakespeare 131). A characteristic central to the creation of an archetypal tragedy, Lear's character moves from an ignorant disposition- blind to his faults- to achieving insight which, unjustly, leads to his own downfall. In Act 4, Scene 7, Lear re-acknowledges Cordelia as his daughter, thus containing the previous subversion interpreted through the intended audience's cultural filter. Lear says, "For, as I am a man, I think this lady to be my child Cordelia" (221). Lear is beginning to re-ascend the social ladder and enact his artificially dormant power as a father figure in the play. The rest of the dialogue in the scene, however, exemplifies that a complete return to the audience's desired Christian power structure is not possible within the confines of the fiction. "If you have poison for me, I will drink it. I know you do not love me, for your sisters have, as I do remember, done me wrong. You have some cause; they have not… Pray you now, forget, and forgive. I am old and foolish" (221-223). In Lear asking for forgiveness rather than taking forgiveness, Cordelia and Lear become equals in the familial hierarchy.

In this sense Cordelia represents, to the audience, the medium through which the divine source of Lear's authority. "He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven and fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes. The good years shall devour them, flesh and fell, ere they

fictional possibility of the lowborn Doctor's stellar education, Marlowe is also emphasizing, through the guise of the narrative, that the subversion of the lower class moving up the social ladder with the aid of education will lead, ultimately, to undesirable aftereffects. Faustus is unable to repent and save himself because he cannot unlearn what has been learned just as Eve brought the permanent consequence of mortality on the human race by reaping the benefits from the Tree of Knowledge. Further, when Faustus attempts to repent, he reiterates his crime of verbally manifesting his improbable intelligence by inserting Latin into his soliloquy: "let this hour be but a year, a month, a week, a natural day, that Faustus may repent and save his soul. O lente, lente currite noctis equi!" (Marlowe 1161). Within the audience's understanding of this concept based on their Christianized world view, Faustus is unable to correct the subverted, rigid social structure represented in the supernatural conjuring of the definitively Christian antagonists to gain godlike power and disrupt the natural hierarchy of God-above-man.

Faustus' inability to repent reflects the rigidity of the Christian societal structure and the injustice of the predestination featured within said structure. Marlowe, within the same soliloquy, also draw's audience attention to the omnipotence of the Christian God as the designer of the roles; he already knows who will go where and how they will participate within their respective class in the contemporary Early Modern society. "You stars that reigned at my nativity whose influence hath allotted death and hell… cursed be the parents that engendered me!" (Marlowe 1162). Marlowe, here, uses the concept of the "stars" ruling one's fate and predetermining one's life as a delivery mechanism of the author-to-audience conversation about the fairness of divine justice at work in the then-current social framework.

Because the audience is forced to confront the unfair, emotionally taxing effects of the divine justice in the fictional pre-Christian narrative of King Lear and the supernatural action driving towards the climatic damnation in Doctor Faustus, questions arise. If an omnipotent God determines social hierarchy, how fair is that premeditated social structure that plans for divine justice to punish those whose greatest sin is an ill-fit with the station of their birth but restricts movement?

By diverging with reality through supernatural, Christian elements and under the disguise of a pre-Christian setting, the authors diversely play on the personal experiences of the intended audience and thereby engage in a controversial conversation without fear of repercussions reverberating back onto themselves: "The problem of truth or falsity of imaginings-cum-believings is often rendered