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## FRAMING PERSPECTIVES, LOOKING AROUND



*"By seeing a photographed object through a photograph, viewers can see features we might have not been able to see face-to-face given the context of seeing the object or the physical defects in the viewer that would not perceive textural details that are clear in the photograph."*

— Christine Nelson, *from* "Skepticism on Scruton: the Possibility of Photography as Representation"



STABILIZING EXPERIENCES THROUGH ART  
*by Melany Su*

Literature, as an art, captures and typifies fleeting moments in time. In their introduction “The Enlightenment in Europe and the Americas,” the editors of *The Norton Anthology to World Literature* discuss the stylized modes of expression that characterize literary genres by Enlightenment writers. Established literary conventions characteristic of each genre allow readers to expect the experience they receive from a text (98). The deliberate, artificial formal features of Enlightenment writings, such as those by Behn, Pope, and Voltaire, work to stabilize the otherwise transient, fluid experience of the world. Artistic stylization, according to the editors, helps impose “formal order on the endless flux of event and feeling” (99). Through the rhyming couplets and artistic discourse in *The Rape of the Lock*, Alexander Pope illustrates that art makes stable one’s experience of the world.

Pope begins the second canto of the mock epic by describing the physical setting surrounding the eye-catching Belinda as she sails down the river Thames. Ariel the Sylph calls for “his denizens of air” (l.55): they move about the vessel as “lucid squadrons” and “aerial whispers” (l.56-57).



Pope's diction suggests and reinforces the evasive, transient quality of these ephemeral zephyrs:

Transparent forms too fine for mortal sight,  
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light,  
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,  
Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,  
Dipped in the richest tincture of the skies,  
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,  
While every beam new transient colors flings,  
Colors that change whene'er they wave their wings. (II.61-68)

The zephyrs dancing around the traveler seem to escape human senses. They are unattainable by human sight; they cannot be pinpointed by light; and, evading with the wind, they escape human grasp. Our experiences of them are momentary and constantly in transience.

Yet even as our senses seek to gather a stable experience of the surrounding zephyrs, the evasive quality of the "aerial whispers" seems somewhat undermined. The deliberate rhythm and rhyme schemes of the mock-epic, structured in couplets, confine the otherwise elusive aerial whispers into fixed patterns constructed by the poet-artist. In the lines following, artistic terms convey a sense of control over nature. The "filmy dew" is "[d]ipped in the richest tincture of the skies, / Where light disports in every-mingling dyes"; nature is altered by the art of illumination (II.64-66). The light make the colors dance, and the colors, "wav[ing] their wings" almost seem to mimic the waving hand of an artist as he paints a canvas.

This artistic discourse carries on as Ariel explains the role of the fantastical creatures of the "aerial kind" (II.76). The aim of sylphs and sylphids, Ariel explains, is "to tend the Fair" (II.91):

To draw fresh colors from the vernal flowers  
To steal from rainbows e'er they drop in showers

A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,  
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs; (II.95-98)

The act of describing the natural world—an artistic act—stabilizes one’s experience of nature. Just the “glittering textures of the filmy dew” are the production of an artistic hand, the sylphs and sylphids draw from nature the colors with which they maintain and reinforce transient natural appearances. Through the art of “steal[ing] ... / [a] brighter wash,” the rainbow’s appearance can be maintained and enhanced.

Pope’s deliberate, crafted language in *The Rape of the Lock* inscribes the ephemeral elements of nature into a structure that stabilizes one’s experiences of nature. Though features of the landscape seem to evade the human senses, a prevailing artistic hand imposes a sense of control over them. The poet’s artistry recreates the experiences he describes, and thereby stabilizes the experience of nature.

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THE IDEAL CLASSICAL LANDSCAPE IN LORRAIN'S *THE*  
*JUDGMENT OF PARIS*  
by Cyndi Trang

Claude Lorrain was one of the most prosperous and prominent painters during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Over 250 paintings, 1300 drawings and 44 etchings are attributed to him and he is hailed as the “greatest draughtsman of his time,” after Rembrandt and Rubens (Kitson, Rothlisberger 36). Patrons of this Frenchman’s landscape paintings span all over Europe and include eminent people like Pope Urban VIII and King Phillip IV of Spain (Rand 26). His work has inspired many people, including Britain’s J.M.W. Turner and John Constable and America’s Thomas Cole (Kitson). Most of his artwork portrays vast, idyllic landscapes and tranquil pastoral scenes (Sonnabend et al. 16). So what was it about this congenial man’s ideal landscape paintings that made them such a success? Part of the answer lies in exploring the “ideal” components of his artwork. Lorrain’s 1645-1646 oil painting *The Judgment of Paris* depicts the atmospheric perspective and naturalistic style that made his ideal classical landscape paintings so successful.

*The Judgment of Paris* (44’ 3/16” x 58’ 7/8”) was originally painted for the French ambassador in Rome,

Francois de Val, the marquis de Fontenay-Marouil, but now resides in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. (Rand 156). In the painting are five people dressed in ancient Roman garb engaged in a conversation, with one peacock and eight lazy sheep around them in a grassy, mountainous setting. The people from left to right are: the poor, young shepherd Paris who sits on a boulder, the winged, child-like Cupid who stands with an arrow in his hands, the nude Venus who stands with her hands modestly placed over her nudity, the fully clothed Juno who stands next to her peacock, and the half nude Minerva who sits on a boulder and touches her left foot (“The Collection...”). The painting depicts Paris pointing to Venus, whom he chooses as the most beautiful out of the three goddesses. In exchange for his choice, Venus promises to give him the fairest woman alive, Helen of Troy. The plot, symbols, and gestures in this painting can be seen in previous artworks of the same title by Rubens, Cranach the Elder, and many others (Damisch 174). For example, Lorrain’s version is very similar to Rubens’ 1638 version in the following ways: all five characters are drawn standing in the same order with their limbs posed in a similar fashion, the scenery is outdoors on a mountain with a background that includes water features, and the moment in the story is the same in which Paris contemplates the offers of the three goddesses. However, the main difference in Lorrain’s version and what makes his so interesting is the focus on landscape, the atmospheric perspective, and the naturalistic style.

Before the 17<sup>th</sup> century, landscape paintings were unpopular with the masses and deemed “second-class” (Rand 22). Although Lorrain’s landscape paintings are not entirely landscapes and could be categorized as mythical or biblical paintings, his art nevertheless elevated landscape artwork. *The Judgment of Paris*’s main focus is the landscape and is an excellent example of Lorrain’s brilliance with landscape painting. However, the general layout of the painting must first be defined. The landscape is divided into three sections and covers a vast majority of the painting. In

the foreground there is a patch of land bordered on the left by a mountain and waterfall and on the right by a tree. In the middle ground is a tall, green tree that is vertically in the center of the painting and is  $\frac{2}{3}$  the height of the painting. In the background is an open landscape that depicts a river, with short, white brush strokes throughout, indicating a frothing, active current. Beyond the river are smaller mountains interspersed with small, blurry green shapes representing trees. There is a continuous patch of rich, light blue sky, which spans across the top quarter of the painting, with white puffs of clouds interspersed. The main subjects of the title are in the left lower corner and take up only a quarter of the space. Other artists may have painted landscapes before, but Lorrain is the main artist who gave the ideal classical landscape “ethereality and nobility” (Rand 22).

The “ethereality” and idealism of the painting come from its atmospheric perspective and soft, rich colors. Atmospheric perspective is the portrayal of blurred objects to create the illusion of depth and distance (Kleiner 101). *The Judgment of Paris* exhibits this technique, which is not new to art, but is perfected in Lorrain’s paintings. The objects in the painting decrease in size and grow blurrier as they recede from the foreground, which reflects how distance appears in reality. By painting the trees, mountains, and river this way, the painting appears to have depth and can continue beyond the human vision. The humans and animals in the painting are also proportionately portrayed in relation to the mountainous setting, which reflects “correct” proportions to reality. The eternal expanse of the clear blue sky further contributes to the illusion of space. This vastness adds to the ethereal and timeless quality of the idealistic painting.

Lorrain had a great appreciation for color and the naturalistic world. Art historian Joachim von Sandrart states that Lorrain would lie “in the fields before the break of day and until night in order to learn to represent very exactly the red morning-sky, sunrise and sunset and the evening

hours...[then] he immediately prepared his colours accordingly, returned home and applied them to the work he had in mind" (48). This explains how dedicated Lorrain is to the most naturalistic use of color. Lorrain also knew the theory behind colors and in his later paintings used blue for divinity and serenity, yellow for splendor, green for hope, and white for purity (Rothlisberger 26). The use of such rich colors creates a warm tone of serenity and idealism in *The Judgment of Paris*. The soft variants of brown of the mountain and the soft, glowing light yellow and pink radiating from the top right side of the painting from the invisible sun create a peaceful effect on the landscape. The soft color effect is additionally shown surrounding each tree. For example, the tree in the center shows soft outlines of lighter shades of green and gaps of yellow because this is where there are less or no leaves so the light could filter through. The overall effect of the color creates an expansive tranquil scene that enhances the ideal landscape.

*The Judgment of Paris*'s realistic representation of the people and nature also makes it an ideal classical landscape. The mythical figures all have the ideal human body proportions and their limbs are all placed in a proper order that adds cohesion to the painting. In fact, their body proportions are similar to Michelangelo's artistic figures. The scenery is also natural and ideal. To the left and further behind the center tree is a beautiful waterfall which has patches of white color painted on with thicker, coarser strokes to show the different frequencies at which the water flows down. The naturalism of the cloths in the painting also adds to the ideal look because the cloths have the shape and texture that is suited to their owners' personalities. For example, Venus has a transparent, white, mesh cloth with a brilliant blue lining wrapped precariously around her. The transparency suits a goddess of love who is known for vainly exhibiting her beauty. By depicting naturalism, Lorrain's work exemplifies the ideal classical landscape.

Although some aspects of Lorrain's landscape paintings pay homage to past traditions from Titian, Campagnola, Annibale Carracci, and Domenichino, his landscape paintings are still unique (Whitfield 83). Art historian, Pamela Askew gives high praises to Lorrain's landscape paintings by stating they depict "a world of high and open skies and consistently traversable distances, whose altitudes, depths, and imperceptibility modulated light" give "new meaning to life" (9). This just shows the monumental effect his idealistic landscape had on the art world, and *The Judgment of Paris* is a great example of his idealist techniques.



*The Judgment of Paris* by Claude Lorrain. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



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### Formal Analysis of *The Judgment of Paris*

*The Judgment of Paris* is a 1645-1646, two-dimensional oil painting on canvas by Claude Lorrain. It currently hangs in gallery 36 on the west main floor of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The painting is 44 3/16 x 58 7/8 inches and is horizontal format. In the painting, there are five people with one peacock and eight sheep around them in a grassy, mountainous setting. Two ladies stand, one lady sits, one man sits, and one winged male child stands. Although there are spiderlike lines on the painting, most likely due to age, the painting still exquisitely expresses Lorrain's devotion to naturalism, which is the use of art forms to express nature as it naturally is. Lorrain's painting expresses naturalism through perspective and color.

This landscape painting appears vast and uncluttered due to spacing and perspective. In the foreground there is a patch of land that is bordered on the left by a mountain and waterfall and on the right by a tree. In the middle ground is a tall, green tree that is vertically in the center of the painting and is 2/3 the height of the painting. In the background is an open landscape that depicts a river, with smooth, white brush strokes throughout, indicating a frothing active current. Beyond the river are smaller mountains interspersed with small, blurry, green shapes representing trees. There is a continuous patch of light blue sky, which spans across the top quarter of the painting, with white puffs of clouds interspersed. The distinct spaces for the scenes and their distance from one another create a vast setting that is uncluttered.

Perspective further contributes to this wide open look. The objects in the painting decrease in size and grow blurrier as they recede from the foreground, which reflects how distance appears in reality. By painting the trees, mountains, and river this way, the painting appears to have depth and can continue beyond the human vision. The

humans and animals in the painting are also proportionately portrayed in relation to the mountainous setting, which reflects “correct” proportions and stays true to naturalism.

Another form that expresses the artist’s close attention to naturalism is the use of color and shadows to depict the scenery and people. By studying the shadows, the direction of the sun becomes evident. The blue cloaked lady and the sitting man’s right foot cast shadows that point to the left lower corner; thus, the sun must be in the right upper side of the painting. Moreover, that is the direction of the sun because a soft, glowing light yellow and pink radiates from that direction. The soft color effect is further shown surrounding each tree. For example, the tree in the center shows soft outlines of lighter shades of green and gaps of yellow because this is where there are less or no leaves so the light could filter through. Thus, portraying how trees really look in sunlight.

On the other hand, darker colors are also used to accentuate the scene and remain true to naturalism. The sheep and people stand on a long patch of grass whose overall appearance is dark black, brown, and green because it is within shadows cast by the surrounding land features. Dark colors are also used to depict different features of the mountains. For example, the man sits on a boulder that is connected to a mountain on the left side of the painting. The mountain seems to have a cave inside because of the darker shades of brown painted on the center of it. The brown gets increasingly darker, indicating the presence of a hollow groove. To the left and further behind the center tree is a waterfall that has patches of white color painted on with thicker, coarser strokes to show the different frequencies at which water flows down.

Although the main focus of the painting revolves around the five people in the left lower portion of the painting, the setting around them is also crucial. The setting is important because it creates a mood that can affect the viewer’s opinion of the artwork. Due to Lorrain’s use of colors and perspective to portray naturalism, the painting

appears open and tranquil. Contrarily, what the figures actually portray in the painting is for another essay.



SKEPTICISM ON SCRUTON: THE POSSIBILITY OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY AS REPRESENTATION

*by Christine Nelson*

In his article “The Hand Camera – It’s Present Importance,” published in *The American Annual of Photography and Photographic Times Almanac* in 1897, Alfred Stieglitz reflected on his works created with hand cameras. Stieglitz waited for hours until certain figures or natural elements would cross his viewfinder in such a way that they harmonized the composition so it was aesthetically pleasing, such as in *The Terminal* (Figure 1). While Stieglitz controlled the style of the photograph and the deliberation taken in selecting the exact moment of exposure, the process he ascribed to his photography was causal, meaning that the elements of his composition exist independently in reality. It was only necessary for him to recognize them and the camera to capture them.<sup>1</sup> This idea that photography is merely the mechanical reproduction of an object, rather than a valued, arduously-created representation of a subject,

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Jeffrey, “Photography and Nature,” *Art Journal* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 29-30; Alfred Stieglitz, “The Hand Camera – It’s Present Importance,” *The American Annual of Photography and Photographic Times Almanac* (1897): 19-27.

as in painting, is a well-debated subject in the philosophy of photography. One of the most cited proponents of this idea is the philosopher Roger Scruton. In this essay, I will argue against Scruton's argument that photographs are by definition non-representational by proposing that the subject captured in a photograph portrays the artist's intention, which is separate from the objects depicted in the photograph. Then one can answer, can photography be a representational art?

In his highly contended essay on photography, "Photography and Representation," Scruton argues that the difference between photography and paintings' abilities to represent their subjects is the relation of intention to their subjects. According to Scruton, a photograph has a causal relation to its subject whereas a painting has a relation of intention. The painter intends to represent the subject of their painting whether the representation is a mimetic representation or an impression. So, a painting essentially has two subjects. There is the subject of intention, which is the subject as depicted, and the represented subject, which is what the artist intends to represent.<sup>2</sup>

In his argument, Scruton claims photographs lack these two abilities paintings have. Photographs are not representational nor have the ability to be aesthetically interesting in a representational nature. He argues that the only way a photograph can "represent" a subject would be to reproduce the appearance of the photographed object, which is the defining quality of the ideal photograph. In other words, due to the causal relationship between the subject and the photograph, the photograph can only hold aesthetic interest through the interest the viewer has for the

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<sup>2</sup> Damuid Costello and Dawn Phillips, "Automatism, Causality and Realism: Foundational Problems in the Philosophy of Photography," *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 1 (2009): 4-6; Roger Scruton, "Photography and Representation," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1981): 577-584.

subject, which in Scruton's argument is necessarily the photographed subject. Scruton maintains that while someone can have an abstract aesthetic interest in the photograph, this interest will be contingent on its form and shape, not its representational nature. The key to Scruton's argument is this: for an artistic medium to produce an artwork that is representational, then it must have an intentional relationship between the medium and the product. The artist, therefore, intended the subject to be depicted in such a way, not the image randomly occurred.

Objections to Scruton's argument are important to consider. First, philosophers have found fault in Scruton's premise that if an ideal photograph is not a representation, then the photograph is not aesthetically interesting. Second, they have also found fault in his premise that a photograph is not a representation. I argue it is counterproductive to critique the former premise without likewise arguing against photography's non-representational nature. In order to deconstruct Scruton's argument, the implication that the subjects are naturally the depicted objects must be contradicted, since if the subjects are not necessarily the photographed objects, then the subject no longer participates in a causal relation with the medium. Rather, the subject would enter an intentional relation. Thus, contrary to Scruton's argument, the photograph would actually be representational.<sup>3</sup>

Dominic Lopes challenges Scruton's argument. He indicates in his article, "The Aesthetics of Photographic Transparency," the question of whether a replica of an object can contain aesthetic interest outside of that perceived in a photographed object is not merely a question of photography but a question of art in general. For example, is the aesthetic interest derived from Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* different from that which can be

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Alward, "Transparent Representation: Photography and the Art of Casting," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70, no. 1 (2012): 12; Scruton, 577-596.

experienced from the Brillo boxes themselves? In applying this question to photography, Lopes agrees with Scruton's premise that a photograph cannot be a representation. However, borrowing from Kendall Walton's theory on photographic transparency, Lopes argues against Scruton's conception of the nature of photography. Walton argued that when we look at a photograph of a relative, we are seeing the relative through the photograph in a way that would not have been possible if not through the photograph. Lopes challenges Scruton's argument by proposing that the aesthetic interest that we take in the photograph is different than the interest we take in seeing the objects of which the photograph is comprised because photographs are transparent and show us the image in a way which is contingent upon its photographic nature.<sup>4</sup>

Like Walton, Lopes argues that seeing through a photograph is different than seeing the object itself in person. Photographs allow viewers to see an object indirectly. Similarly, in his essay "Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism," Walton argues that photography is a method or an improvement to seeing. What is seen in the photograph is not a duplicate or reproduction of the object but the object itself. However, this is not to say that the photograph and the object are separate. We see the photograph and the photographed objects simultaneously as one. According to Walton, photographs help us see while hand-made pictures, like paintings, do not because the photographer's mental state is not involved as the artist's mental state is. While the photographer might use various methods to manipulate the photo, his subjective perception of the object will not be in the photograph. Walton contends that since the object caused the photograph, we are really seeing the object. A photograph can have a point of view, but you still see the object. Similarly, you can change the lighting in a

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<sup>4</sup> Dominic McIver Lopes, "The Aesthetics of Photographic Transparency," *Mind* 112, no. 447 (July 2003): 433-438.



photograph, but you will still see the object because the photograph is transparent.<sup>5</sup>

By claiming photographs are transparent, it would appear that both Lopes and Walton would agree with Scruton's object argument. Yet, Lopes and Walton argue that aesthetic interest in photography comes from viewing the photographed object through the photograph not the object itself. The aesthetic interest in seeing a photograph as a photograph is the same as the interest in seeing the photographed object through the photograph since photography is a means of seeing. This theory on photographic aesthetics assumes that in order to take interest in a photograph, appreciation for the photographed object and the photographed object as seen through the photograph must be different.<sup>6</sup>

In order to differentiate the aesthetic interest taken in the object, as in the case of Scruton's object argument, and that taken in the photographic object as seen through the photograph, Lopes contrasted the nature of seeing an object face-to-face with seeing it through a photograph. First, photographs capture a particular moment in time. Second, photographic seeing can occur without the object because the moment is captured. Third, seeing through the photograph decontextualizes the object, so its properties cannot change. Fourth, there is the possibility that the process of taking the photograph disturbed the scene in a way that would not be accessible to viewing the scene in person. Fifth, the process of seeing a photograph blends the photograph's properties and the photographed object's properties. We can have aesthetic interest in how we see an

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 438; Kendall L. Walton, "Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism," *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (December 1984): 252-253, 262; Scott Walden, "Objectivity in Photography," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 45, no. 3 (July 2005): 259.

<sup>6</sup> Lopes, "The Aesthetics of Photographic Transparency," 442.

object. By seeing a photographed object through a photograph, viewers can see features we might have not been able to see face-to-face given the context of seeing the object or the physical defects in the viewer that would not perceive textural details that are clear in the photograph.<sup>7</sup>

In effect, Lopes accepts Scruton's premise that the ideal photograph cannot be representational, and he changes the qualifications needed for a photograph to be of aesthetic interest. Yet any interest taken in the photograph is still partially the viewer's interest in the subject. Since the interest in the photograph is still an interest in the photographed object as the subject, Lopes has provided little critique of Scruton's argument and has instead only qualified how a photograph, given its non-representational nature, can be of aesthetic interest. Therefore, if Lopes is arguing that aesthetic interest can be found outside of representation, as was suggested by his Brillo box preface, then his argument was made in vain. Scruton admits that aesthetic interest can be found in abstract art through its lines and shapes.<sup>8</sup>

The problems that arise in Scruton's argument concern his premise that photographs cannot be representational. In "Transparent Representation: Photography and the Art of Casting," Peter Alward argues that not only can photographs be representational but that their status as representations does not necessarily undermine photographic transparency. In order to argue that a photograph can represent a subject in other means than by its physical attributes, Alward distinguishes the pictorial object and the pictorial subject. The pictorial object is causal, being that it is any object that happens to be in front of the camera. The pictorial subject is what the object represents or thoughts expressed about the object.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 442-445.

<sup>8</sup> Alward, "Transparent Representation," 12; Scruton, "Photography and Representation," 591.

Scruton's argument implies that the pictorial object is the same as the subject.<sup>9</sup>

Alward argues that representations can be made by representational casting. Casting is a method used by the photographer in which an object or person fulfills a role, making the resulting photograph fictionally competent in that it has a pictorial subject separate from its pictorial object. Scruton would respond in two ways to this argument. First, as Alward identified, Scruton would argue that the photograph would then not be the subject. The subject would be the photographic object. According to Scruton, "Of course I may take a photograph of a draped nude and call it *Venus*, but insofar as this can be understood as an exercise in fiction, it should not be thought of as a photographic representation of Venus but rather as the photograph of a representation of Venus."<sup>10</sup> However, as Alward has argued, this same idea can be applied to paintings in which the artists used models. The painting named *Venus* depicting the model would just be a picture of a pictorial representation as well.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, Alward suggests that if the photographer took a great variety of pictures, the selection of the exact picture that would then be labeled *Venus* is another method of photographic representation. However, Scruton would argue that the name of the photograph is merely pointing to its subject, which in Scruton's essay is necessarily the object, not representing it. Scruton provides the example of a photographer taking a photograph of a drunken man and labeling it *Silenus*. This method of identification arguably would cause the photograph to be fiction or representational. Yet, this act would be the same as if Scruton had pointed to a drunken man on the street and called him "Silenus." It could be construed that by pointing and calling the man this name, the man is now a

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<sup>9</sup> Alward, "Transparent Representation," 13.

<sup>10</sup> Scruton, "Photography and Representation," 588.

<sup>11</sup> Alward, "Transparent Representation," 13-14.

representation because he has indicated to those around him to imagine him in this way. Ultimately, the camera is pointing to the subject, not representing it. If one were to accept *Silenus* as being representational, then this action would open up the possibility of considering anything expressive to be representation, and thus there would be no difference between representational and non-representational art.<sup>12</sup>

Alward dismisses these arguments and clarifies how photographs are representational. Scruton's hypothetical situation is based on actual practice among appropriation artists such as Sheerie Levine, whose exhibitions are comprised solely of photographs taken by other people. Also, cameras are not used to point or signify an object. They reproduce images of the object. Alward argues that if cameras are means of ostension then so are pens, pencils, and paint brushes. The photographer's representational act occurred after the photograph was taken. Alward concludes that through representational casting, a photograph can be representational. However, unlike paintings, photographs cannot be intrinsically representational. Even still, photographs can be used as a means of representation. The representation can be understood through extrinsic factors like its art-historical context or the artistic statement. Often, more interest is developed by placing any form of art within context.<sup>13</sup>

In "Photography and Representation," Scruton tried to prove that ideal photographs cannot be representational, and that by virtue of their inability to be representational, they also cannot be aesthetically interesting in their representational nature. Although philosophers like Lopes have taken issue with Scruton's aesthetic interest in photography, few have tried to assert that a photograph can be representational on its own without editing. In the case

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<sup>12</sup> Scruton, "Photography and Representation," 589; Alward, "Transparent Representation," 13-14.

<sup>13</sup> Alward, "Transparent Representation," 14-16.

of Scruton's essay, it is fruitless to argue against the incapability of a photograph to be aesthetically interesting in its representational nature while accepting his premise that photographs cannot be representational. Rather, to undermine Scruton's essay, one would have to prove that photographs could be representational. If photographs can be representational, then one could argue they would be aesthetically interesting as representational art. For a photograph to be representational, Scruton's concept that the subject of the photograph is the same object has to be contradicted since he believes that the causal relation between the photograph and the subject prevent the photograph from being representational. Alward ultimately offers a valid explanation as to how the pictorial object and pictorial subject are different and provides a method, representational casting, by which an artist's intention can be expressed in the photograph.

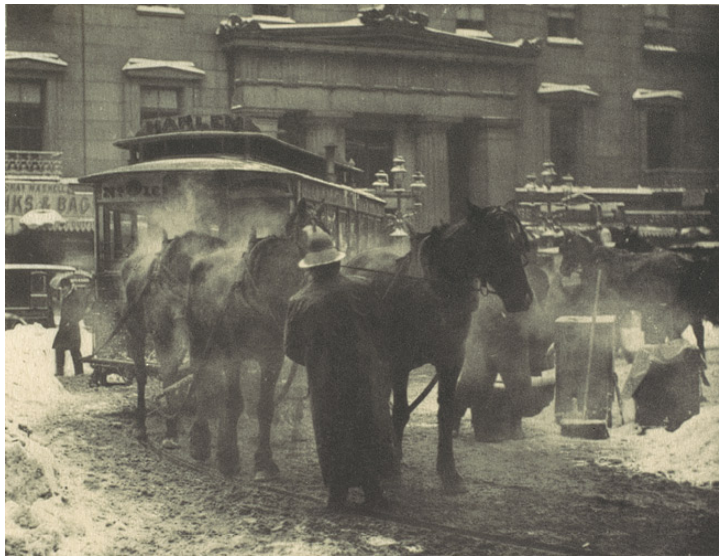
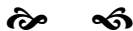


Figure 1. Alfred Stieglitz, *The Terminal*. 1893.

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COLOR AND PERSPECTIVE IN *PORTRAIT OF A  
MERCHANT AND MONEY-CHANGER AND HIS WIFE*  
by Cyndi Trang

Early sixteenth-century Dutch portraits are full of interesting depth and details. Of particular interest are the *Portrait of a Merchant and Money Changer and His Wife*. Painted by Jan Gossaert in 1530, *Portrait of a Merchant* is a  $25 \frac{1}{16}$ -by- $18 \frac{11}{16}$ -inch oil painting which currently hangs in gallery 41 in the National Gallery of Art. The focal point of the painting is a white man shown from the bust up. The man is writing in an open journal and is in a black room with writing tools on a table in front of him. *Money-Changer and His Wife* is a portrait painted by Quinten Massys in 1514. This  $27 \frac{3}{4}$ -by- $26 \frac{3}{8}$ -inch oil painting currently hangs in the Louvre. The focal point of the painting is a husband and wife shown from the bust up. They are counting their money with a green table in front of them. Gossaert's painting uses color and perspective similar to Quinten Massys's *Money Changer and His Wife*.

Gossaert's painting uses color to artfully depict different textures, thus expressing the quality of different items. In the painting, on the black background are two reams of white papers hanging on the wall on both sides of the man's head. The two reams are crinkled around the

edges and the papers in the back of the ream are brownish-yellow, creating a worn out and aged effect. The papers in front of the piles are white, which accurately reflects how newer papers are usually cleaner and crisper than old ones. The color he uses to paint the dagger also shows texture. The black dagger hangs horizontally from a golden, black, and gray coil dangling above the man's head. Parts of it reflect a silver shine, which indicates that is probably made of steel. Thus, Gossaert remains true to the quality of the items.

This use of color to show texture and quality is persistent throughout the painting, but is best expressed in the man's clothing and his jewels. He appears wealthy due to the quality of his clothes and rings. He wears four layers of clothing with the outermost layer descending to innermost layer as follows: red jacket, black tunic, brown shirt, and white shirt. Each layer has a rich color and minute details that add to the man's smooth and wealthy look. His rich red jacket with black lining, white shirt, and brown shirt all have vine-like designs on them which contribute to the wealth of the fabric. His black tunic has horizontal, darker black stripes lining the front of it, each one centimeter apart, further adding to the details of the painting. The white shirt protruding at the neck and wrists also has intricate, pearly, white bead designs lining it at the collar, which adds to the splendor of the clothing and hints at subtly portrayed wealth.

The man's two rings also modestly hint at wealth due to their design and color. He has a pure golden ring on his left forefinger with the letters "IS" engraved in the center of the golden ring. On his left pinky is a golden ring with a square, ruby red gem in its center surrounded by golden swirls. All the objects in black have a curving, thicker outline which makes the objects even more visible and distinct from afar. Gossaert also emphasizes details by adding white dots of paint to the edges of the man's sleeves. The technique appears like the artist had dipped the base of his brush with white paint and then dotted the sleeves'



edges. This technique gives the paint a different texture and helps create a more dynamic painting.

Similarly, Gossaert also uses perspective artfully in the painting. The depictions in the portrait are tilted about five degrees below the viewer; thus, the viewer appears to be looking down at the painting. Hence, the man and objects in the painting are shown from a perspective that accurately depicts how the object should look from such an angle. For example, the table and open journal appear wider toward the viewer and narrow further away which creates a receding effect. The diameter in all the circular objects in the painting also depicts perspective. Their horizontal widths are wider than their vertical widths due to the angle at which they are depicted. The man's face is also turned slightly ten degrees to the left of the viewer. Thus the artist shows more of the man's left cheek and his right eye is smaller and at a lower angle compared to the left eye. Gossaert's use of color and perspective is brilliant and similar to Massys.

Massys' and Gossaert's artworks are similar due to the paintings' genre, colors, and perspective. Both are portrait paintings, although Massys' depicts a man and his wife from the waist up. Both can be classified as genre paintings because they depict people doing a common day activity. Both also have elements of still life due to the inanimate objects placed on the table in the forefront of the paintings. Similar to the man in Gossaert's painting, the main figures are also the main focus.

Massys also uses color to portray different textures and quality. For example, the golden coins on the table in front of the couple have a shine which reflects off their surface hinting at the possible texture of gold or copper. The transparent, glass jar in the left lower corner expresses the brilliant use of color due to its realism. The jar has a glass center with a copper bottom stand and copper ringed lid. The jar appears to be made of glass due to its vertical lines, opaque yellow greenish color, and distorted appearance that glass can have. The brown frock of the

man, which is lined with fur, and the red dress of the lady, which is lined with fur, also have distinct details hinting at wealth. The furs on both garments are created by quick, long brush strokes, thus giving it a fur-like texture. The materials for the clothing have rich, smooth color, which contributes to the underlying appearance of wealth. These uses of color to portray texture are skillfully exhibited and evident in Gossaert's painting.

Massys and Gossaert also share similar knowledge of perspective due to their depiction of perspective. Just like Gossaert, Massys knew how to use perspective to depict depth. For example, the book and coins in Massy's painting are wider when closer to the viewer and narrower away from the viewer. The most interesting use of perspective in this particular painting by Massys has to be the circular mirror in the forefront of the painting. The convex mirror reflects an image of a window showing the houses nearby. The viewer can tell the circular object is a mirror because the image it shows has a curve in the middle and the image is narrower towards the poles which are all characteristics that a round mirror would realistically portray.

Overall, Gossaert and Massy's *Portrait of a Merchant* and *Money-Changer and His Wife* respectively, both represent how skillful early sixteenth-century portraits can be. The bold use of color to express subtle wealth and details is evident in both paintings. The clever use of perspective succeeds at realistically capturing life's actions. In essence, both paintings are a wealth of interest and seem to encourage viewers to look deeper into the paintings for hidden meanings.

## SYMBOLIZING IDENTITY, REPRESENTING STRUGGLE



*"In the play, the African American identity of the main character, Sarah, is ambiguous. In her mind she views the standards of white society as good, and black standards as evil. Sarah's view did not conform to the Black Power Movement's message at all, and illustrates the root of the play's struggles within the context of the Black Arts Movement. Some of Kennedy's personal experiences provide a basis for the distorted images of race and power that are present in Sarah's psyche and create the illusion of a "funnyhouse".*

—Angela White, *from* "The Art of Adrienne Kennedy's  
*Funnyhouse of a Negro*"



## DEVELOPMENT OF SIGN LANGUAGE AND SIGN LANGUAGES AROUND THE WORLD

*by Hajung Kim*

The concept and idea of sign language is evolving slowly around the world. Over time, the people who are deaf have begun to make visual language to allow them to communicate using hand and mouth movements. This visual language came to be known as sign language, and includes hand motion, hand shape, hand location, facial expression, body posture, and sometimes mouth movements. These features of sign language allow the deaf to easily communicate and to be educated in special schools for the deaf. All sign languages share the basics, such as hand and body motions, but how they utilize them differ around the world. However, there are some similarities. Today, many sign languages are continually developing and more people are taking an interest in analyzing communication along with gestures, and how the deaf process these features. To further understand the developments of sign language in the modern world, it is crucial to look at the origins of sign language and learn its differences and similarities around the world.

Although many believe that sign language is difficult and complicated, the basics help to interpret the

different sign languages easily. There are five basic parts in American Sign Language (ASL): hand shape, location, orientation, movement, and expression (Donnelly, 2011). Although it is specified that the five basics apply to ASL, the same basics exist in other sign languages as well. According to Donnelly, “how the hands are shaped when making signs can change the meaning of the word or expression...” (Donnelly, 2011, para. 1). For location, “sign area relates to where the hands are held during signing. They can be against the head or other parts of the body, depending on what you are saying” (Donnelly, 2011, para. 3). Orientation is crucial because it “refers to which way the hands are facing” because where the hands face can alter meanings (Donnelly, 2011, para. 2). Movement is significant because it plays a major role in passing on one’s thoughts, and wrong movements can indicate other meaning (Donnelly, 2011, para. 4). Lastly, facial expression plays a role in adding emotion when communicating (Donnelly, 2011, para. 5). These five basics apply to all sign languages as an important tool for effective communication.

One well-known similarity between ASL and French Sign Language (LSF) goes back to history. Apparently, “the language used by deaf people in the United States is a blend of signs brought from France early in the 19th century” (“History of Sign Language,” n.d., para. 1). The French or LSF is what initiated the formation of ASL, which is considered as the most developed sign language. However, the LSF did not just influence the formation of ASL, but also contributed to the formation of the Mexican Sign Language (LSM). ASL and LSM are similar because of geographical reasons and their ties to the LSF. The LSM development began when a deaf Frenchman, Edouard Huet, came to Mexico City (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 167). When Huet arrived, he “established a school for deaf children in Mexico City,” and it is assumed that he was fluent in LSF. This led to the belief that the invention of LSM was influenced by Huet’s use of LSF (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 167-168). For the invention of

ASL, a Frenchman named Laurent Clerc had the most influence after he arrived in the United States in 1816 to spread sign language (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 168). Through the influence of Huet and Clerc, three distinct sign languages have come to share similarities, which demonstrates that languages are connected by the influence of people despite their distinctions and geography.

Another similitude has to do with hand shape between ASL and Chinese Sign Language (CSL). The likeness between the two specifically deals with the closed fist motion with the hand, and although two motions look similar, their meanings completely differ. The closed fist hand motion in ASL means 'secret' while it means 'father' in CSL (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 167). The closed fist hand motion in ASL is more "relaxed, with fingers loosely curved as they close against the palm" (as cited in Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 167). The CSL "handshape displays fingers that are rigid, not curved, and folded over further onto the palm" (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 167). Even though the two have the same basic frame of the hand motion, the shape and grip slightly differ, demonstrating that similarities and differences can exist in the same motion in sign languages and showing a variety of ways of interpreting signs.

Even if there are similarities, there are more differences among sign languages. For example, one of the main differences is found in LSM itself. According Quinto-Pozos, the sign language acquired by the Mexican deaf people slightly differs depending on their age because LSM has been developing each year. Most of the variation in the sign language comes from the urban areas, but depending on situations, "variation appears at the phonological rather than the lexical level" (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 168). The reason for the variations is because of dialectical influence from different regions and it mostly affects the hand-shape movements (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 168). An additional important factor for variance is "religious differences between signers [...], levels of education, and geographical distribution of signers..." (Quinto-Pozos, 2008, p. 168). The

same general LSM is used throughout Mexico, but depending on the region and people, the same sign language differs. This represents that sign language is open to many variations rather than being fixed. This helps to illustrate that differences in sign language can come from people and places within the country, and not only from other countries around the world, breaking the notion of language barriers. It is fascinating to see that just like spoken language and its different accent from certain regions, the sign language functions the same way according to certain regions and people.

In addition, interesting finger motions showing feelings and mood can be found in the Mongolian Sign Language (MSL). Even though the finger motion mostly has to do with the feelings and moods, MSL uses more finger movements than any other sign language making MSL more different than other sign languages. For example, ring finger indicates the feeling 'not very good' while the index finger means 'pretty good' (Healy, 2011, p. 577). As each finger indicates certain feelings, the pinky is more special because it deals with bad feeling or mood. The pinky movement with different hand-shape represents multiple feelings within the category of 'bad feeling.' For instance of bad thought, the ulnar side of the pinky is moved "up the side of the face by the eye, keeping contact with the face throughout the movement," and this describes "untrustworthy or evil person" (Healy, 2011, p. 578). For the 'feeling bad' sign, the pinky gets "extended over the heart, combined with nonmanual features such as slumped shoulders, lowered head, and furrowed brow..." (Healy, 2011, p. 578). The examples of 'bad thought' and 'feeling bad' are the two broad categories of pinky signs and within these, there are more negative signs involving the pinky such as: argue, unfriend, divorce, bad health, and very ill (Healy, 2011). In MSL, most of the feelings are expressed using specific fingers, especially the pinky, with only different hand movements. This unique characteristic of

finger usage is what makes MSL distinct and more complicated to learn than other sign languages.

The sign languages share many similarities, but the similarities are limited. Ultimately, there are more differences. Therefore, international sign language was created in order to allow deaf people around the world to communicate despite the sign language barriers. The international sign language is referred to as ‘Gestuno’ and it is very useful during international events, such as the Olympics, for the deaf (“History of Sign Language,” n.d., para. 4). Also, sign language is becoming more popular because there are National Theater for the deaf as well as signed interpretation of music “portraying the lyrics, emotions and the rhythm of the songs” (“History of Sign Language,” n.d., para. 4). Today, more colleges are offering sign language for credit in foreign language or for general credit acknowledging sign language as official curriculum (“History of Sign Language,” n.d., para. 4). Sign language has gained more respect over the years and is continually growing to enhance communication among the deaf.

Overall, sign languages around the world have a number of similarities and differences that make them unique and appealing to examine. Beginning with sign language’s invention using just the hands and mouth, it has developed significantly with the efforts of deaf people, such as Edouard Huet. These efforts made sign language standardized among the deaf, allowing effective communication. Not only the deaf, but more people are becoming interested in sign language and are choosing to learn it for further research or educational purposes. Notably, the similarities among ASL, LSF, and LSM show that languages are connected despite their own standardizations and country barriers, but at the same time, the differences among the sign languages show the prominent features of each sign language for a specific country. Altogether, sign language is another way for people to communicate and interact.



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THE ART OF ADRIENNE KENNEDY'S *FUNNYHOUSE*  
OF A NEGRO  
by *Angela White*

In the late 1960s the Black Arts Movement sprung out of the Black Power Movement. The ideals of the Black Power Movement distinguished African Americans as a different breed of Americans than whites. Blacks created their own subnation within the United States because of their African roots. Further, black artists were urged to include these roots in their aesthetic and reject the ideals of white society in their art (Neal 29). The pressure to incorporate this type of aesthetic became somewhat of a barrier for Adrienne Kennedy's 1964 Obie award-winning play, *Funnyhouse of a Negro*.

In the play, the African American identity of the main character, Sarah, is ambiguous. In her mind she views the standards of white society as good, and black standards as evil. Sarah's view did not conform to the Black Power Movement's message at all, and illustrates the root of the play's struggles within the context of the Black Arts Movement. Some of Kennedy's personal experiences provide a basis for the distorted images of race and power that are present in Sarah's psyche and create the illusion of a "funnyhouse."

In the play, Kennedy inserts many symbols of white society to paint a portrait of the identity struggle that Sarah endures. Her bedroom, where most of the play takes place, is also used to depict the inside of Sarah's mind. Kennedy notes that she has a statue of Queen Victoria next to her bed (Kennedy 562). Queen Victoria is one of Sarah's inner selves who interacts in her room at various points throughout the play. Kennedy was enraptured by a statue of Queen Victoria that she had seen in London because she was "a woman who had dominated an age" (Wilkerson 126). The Queen's statue in Sarah's room represents not only whiteness, but power, and not only power, but female power.

As a young African-American woman, Sarah feels conflicted because she lives in a world where she has been taught everything that is good is white. She says, "Victoria always wants me to tell her of whiteness...of a royal world where everything and everyone is white" (Kennedy 563). Because of the shame of her blackness, Sarah harbors hatred toward herself and her heritage. "[S]he sees herself irredeemably tainted" (Barnett 155), and Kennedy expresses that tainted image through the symbolism on stage. She chooses to frame the scenes with silk curtains that are pale and look as if they had been gnawed on by rats (Kennedy 562). On the bed in Sarah's room her female selves, the Duchess and Queen Victoria, are wearing gowns that resemble the same dingy white shade as the curtains. Kennedy also notes the lighting on stage is "unreal and ugly" (Kennedy 562). These stage elements express the distorted image of whiteness Sarah sees within herself.

All of the distorted images associated with her selves stem from Sarah feeling plagued by her black roots. She describes her father as a "wild black beast" that has haunted her since her conception (Kennedy 562). "I am tied to the black Negro" she says, "He came when I was a child...haunted my conception, diseased my birth" (Kennedy 562). She claims that her father, "the blackest one of them all," raped her mother, who "looked like a white

woman,” making his blackness her curse (Kennedy 562). One of her male selves, an African named Patrice Lumumba, describes her as “a nigger of two generations” and claims that her dream to live in rooms with European antiques is her “nigger dream” (Kennedy 565). The polarization of Lumumba’s comments further illustrates the fragments within Sarah’s character.

The disturbing elements in Sarah’s psyche established connections between black and white histories that went against the aesthetic of the Black Arts Movement. In his book *Understanding Adrienne Kennedy*, Philip C. Kolin quoted a notable critic named Clive Barnes who said, “Of all our black writers, Kennedy is most concerned with white, with white relationships, with white blood. She thinks black, but she remembers white. It gives her work an eddying ambiguity” (Kolin 3). Reactions like this reflect Kennedy’s role as a writer. She often steered away from groups like the Black Arts Movement, which she would have been expected to join. When she was questioned on the subject in an interview, Kennedy claimed that “People wanted me to be part of the movement but, frankly, I was always at home with my children. So apart from my temperament, the hours didn’t exist” (Betsko 571). This statement is reflective of an emerging female attitude within the Black Arts Movement. The female perspective within the movement sparked an interest in art that encompassed this point of view.

The Black Arts Movement affected black men and black women differently, which came to light during the rise of black literature. Black women’s literature grew from within the Black Arts Movement but was sometimes critical of the male dominated ideals that it reflected (Salaam 57). Black women’s literature taught that real power was not in political power, but in human relationships, whether they exist on a family level, or extended into the community (Salaam 57).

In *Funnyhouse*, Sarah’s family and community are the source of her inner torture. Her selves are black and

white figures who all have “wild kinky hair” (Kennedy 562). Throughout the course of the play, all of her selves begin to rapidly lose their hair because of their tainted image (Kennedy 566). In the second to last scene, two of Sarah’s selves, a hunchbacked Jesus and the Duchess, begin to lose more of their hair. “Our father isn’t going to let us alone, our father is the darkest of us all,” they say (Kennedy 566). Sarah’s father’s presence is represented on the stage by a consistent knocking that Kennedy emphasizes in the stage directions by stating that “the KNOCKING does not cease” (Kennedy 566). There is an element of expressionism present in her father’s persistent knocking because it evokes an element of Sarah’s psyche that is not physically on stage, yet very present through the action surrounding it in Sarah’s mind. The hair loss symbolically links Sarah’s African roots to her destiny.

In addition to inner conflicts with black and white images, Sarah also has an outer conflict with her white boyfriend Raymond, who lives upstairs from the “Negro’s room” in the funny house (Kennedy 564). Raymond basically watches Sarah suffer. He does not understand her and he feels that the stories she tells of her father are not true. He calls her a “funny little liar” (Kennedy 567). In an article printed for the *Theatre Journal* in 1996, Claudia Barnett claims that, “To him she is an oddity to be observed from a distance, a distance which he maintains in place of grief” (Barnett 145-46). But Raymond’s distance only serves as another element of opposition within Sarah’s psyche, and ultimately leads her to hang herself in her room (Kennedy 567).

The absurdly grim images that Kennedy uses to distort race and power in *Funnyhouse* can be attributed to her own upbringing. Much of the dark influence in the play comes from her mother, a schoolteacher who stayed home with her until age eleven (Kolin 12). She was a major influence in her style of writing. Kennedy says, “My mother always talked to me. She would tell things that happened to her...her dreams, her past...it’s like the monologues in my

plays, it really is (Kolin 13). Her mother's stories were filled with tragedy, darkness, sarcasm, and humor, so the ominous characters in *Funnyhouse* speak to the audience from within a twisted memory where Sarah's black roots, sex, and education are all factors that make her an outcast. The idea of being an outcast is something that Kennedy also experienced as a young writer, and as a result, she created a work in which blackness, femaleness, and education are all factors that reflect her own truth.

Growing up, Kennedy's father was a social worker and political activist who worked with the NAACP (Kolin 10). In Kolin's book, Kennedy is quoted as saying, "I grew up in a house where people wrote and were members of the NAACP and the United Negro College Fund. I knew my alliances" (Kolin 10). During a trip to Africa with her husband, Kennedy became aware of a whole new aesthetic to her writing that connected these roots of activism to her African history (Betsko 571).

One connection that could be made between Kennedy's male influences and Sarah's character is one of her male selves, Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba was a political activist and the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa. He pushed for unity along ethnic and regional lines but was assassinated shortly after being forced out of office (Patrice). Kennedy claims that "There was no doubt that Lumumba, this murdered hero, was merged in my mind with my father" (Kolin 12). The connection between Lumumba's pan-African activism and the community outreach that Kennedy's father illustrated, explains part of the root of the black male figures in *Funnyhouse* and their need to represent action on behalf of the race.

There is an underlying text within the play that displays the black man's need to represent the race, while never being able to truly take action. The Barnett article claims that "[t]hese truths coexist as funnyhouse mirrors, falsely contextualizing one another within their destabilized universe-a universe which ironically mirrors our own"

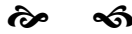
(Barnett 155). This is why Sarah tells two different versions of her father's death, and why her father keeps returning to see her when he is supposed to be away in the jungle finishing Lumumba's work. Through the funhouse mirrors, it becomes impossible to determine what is true and what is not. Since Sarah's psyche is unable to establish the existence of a singular truth, the contradictions of the opposite ideals are what lead to her ultimate demise.

In *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, Kennedy used expressionism as a means to take the mind into social, psychological and political realms. She also went against the typical aesthetic of a black artist during the Black Arts Movement. By using the ideals of white society to illustrate the absurdity of an ideal identity, Kennedy was able to convey her own message, which made her a vital part of black women's literature and the movement as a whole.

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FIST TO THE SKY: THE CIVIL RIGHTS DEVIANCE  
*by Payton Bodecker*

The flimsy reels of film denoting the choppy marches and spray of hoses express the violent reaction from the white mainstream that exploded during the Civil Rights Movement, but even more shocking is the quick rise and implosion of the Black Panther Party in the 1960's. The militant tactics of a quasi-political movement spanning a short period was the negative result of a peaceful African American movement. This goes against the current mindset that paints the movement as white versus black, when it can also be seen as black versus black, ideals clashing with ideals. Peniel Joseph writes in his book *Black Power Movement*, "understanding the Black Arts and Black Power Movements requires a deep, substantive appreciation of the history of black radicalism" (12). The revolutionary socialist group that called itself the Black Panther Party drew influence from Marxism and Islam and left much to review to truly understand its trajectory. To understand it even further it is important to look at the peaceful movement they collectively loathed, rejected, and used to fuel their fire. While social programs were a forefront of their cause, guerilla-like warfare against the white symbol of authority cut a sharp division between the violent and non-violent

movements concerning the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960's.

Considering the generically stale rhetoric of the common Civil Rights Movement of peaceful protest and drawn-out compromise points to how many African Americans would choose to pick guns over pens. While the movement of people such as Martin Luther King, Jr. cannot be discredited, it can be seen as slow and too accommodating to whites who didn't exchange respect. It can be deduced that there were only two paths for African Americans to choose, the radical Black Panther Party or the accepted peaceful movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. A way to explain this further is to imagine black America with two exclusive political parties working towards what they believe are the same goals, but the means to achieve them greatly affecting the outcome. That statement alone shows how almighty the white majority was, and how African Americans had to be strategic in their way towards equal rights. Knowing how this piece of history plays out is crucial, so while it is necessary to look at all the facts and determine exactly what happened, it can also be useful to project the many paths this timeline could have potentially have taken. A note from a Nigerian civil servant who regularly visited America during this time predicted clearly, "We have a voice, a black voice....The naiveté and fashion of the soul brother should wear off. But we need them" (Astrachan A24).

Instead of records illustrating the triumphant rise of compromise, there would have been evidence of uprising and death. The Black Panther Movement placed emphasis on the murder of cops to get their point across that the limits had been pushed and there would be no more compromising. Ross Baker in the *Washington Post* writes, "The wings of Panther self-defense, however, extend beyond the Panthers themselves to cover the entire black community. The Panthers claim that police activities within the ghetto are usually repressive and aimed at persecution rather than protection. The black man is the target of law

enforcement rather than its beneficiary” (37). Had this train of thought been confined to those who chose to join the Black Panther Movement it might not have been seen as destructive, but the inclusion of those who had little political and social voice was predatory. Whites had tried to keep those minorities down, the Black Panthers were trying to simply force impoverished African Americans to sweep into their ideals rather than allow them a choice.

Even more important to understand is the difference in whom the two groups were working against. The Black Panthers were actively fighting against policemen who followed parameters they established and openly used to discriminate with, yet this would never get to the source, only fuel the fire of color clashing. The writing of Martin Luther King, Jr. points to the methods deployed by the peaceful movement to effect monotonous, in regards to the Panther movement, change. In his “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” King emphasizes, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial ‘outside agitator’ idea” (*Historical Text Archive*). This may seem like a wakeup call to whites, but it speaks directly to those endangering the future of African Americans most, the Black Panther Movement. Their injustices directed towards authority might feel vindictive laced with justice, but it wouldn’t correct the troubles their community faced. The blatant disrespect for law on the Panther side only dug them deeper into a hole of counterculture that washed out their ideals and made their movement lose power and support. What started as a focused group to protect social rights of black citizens morphed into an angry gang of misguided African Americans. Essentially, the Panthers became the losing side of the Civil Rights Movement, even behind the whites who were against equal rights.

Ultimately what pushed the Black Panthers to this disregard for evolution can be seen as the lack of spirit in actively fighting against the buildup of years of injustice. There were no fireworks or large displays from the peaceful movement, only steady marches and white Christian-derived religious speeches. Thomas Johnson in the *New York Times* notes, “The basic fermenting agent in the civil rights cauldron is the lack of meaningful progress” (1). This restlessness can be seen as an activator, and pushed the Panthers to not only rebel against popular white culture but ultimately their own people. The disagreement over how to seek civil rights clearly divided the two into either exceedingly violent or peaceful movements to the point of what seemed like reaching for radically different ideals. At the end of the day, the Panthers were fighting not for civil rights, but for the thrill of it. To fight simply to be recognized and because they realized they could.

“The black civil rights activist who stood motionless as a policeman beat him for attempting to register to vote received sympathy from many in white America. His contemporary who fought the police in response to discriminatory treatment was looked upon with more suspicion; an angry black man, and a possible danger to society” (Henderson 90). This is what African Americans would face no matter what. No matter how hard the Black Panther Movement fought and struggled against this, using violence to show they should be respected, it would never help them reach a viable end goal. The peaceful movement wasn’t cowardly, but it required throwing pride away for the hope of eventual justice, a slow-burning idea that could turn away those inflamed youth who were caught up in the tempestuous times of the 1960’s. It can be gleaned that perhaps they weren’t caught up in the times but just glazed in it, forever stuck and never able to move on, losing their vision of civil rights. The idea of battle was more tempting than resolve, but brandishing before whites what they could potentially be rather than embodying it would be the death of their movement. The internal dissolution from shifting

morals ignited the popular but short-lived life of the Panthers. Killing a cop on a corner where you promised to keep the downtrodden community safe doesn't foster a sense of togetherness, only blatantly uses a group to further a radical agenda. Wallace Turner exposes the mindset of Panther members when he quotes Huey Newton in the *New York Times* as explaining, "We do not believe in passive and nonviolent tactics. They haven't worked for us black people. They are bankrupt" (66). The accumulation of discrimination towards African Americans brought forth this deviance that was so different it could only call attention to itself.

Above all, they both began with ideals to work towards equality and civil rights in an ever-changing America, but change wasn't fast enough for one group. The togetherness of the peaceful movement fostered a bond between African Americans that inspired change while instilling values of slow and steady progress. However, the militaristic and stark disrespect for law as demonstrated by the Black Panther Movement acted as a solvent for many African Americans, pushing them to hide from their own people and choosing to not act at all. The unfocused and counterculture dependence of the movement served to make the Panthers relevant for only a moment in time, stuck in history as an attempt to rebel.

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CLAY WILLIAMS: VICTIM OF HIS DOUBLE  
CONSCIOUSNESS  
*by Courtney Deal*

One ever feels his twoness,—an  
American, a Negro; two souls, two  
thoughts, two unreconciled  
strivings; two warring ideals in one  
dark body, whose dogged strength  
alone keeps it from being torn  
asunder.

— W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of  
Black Folk*

In *Dutchman*, Amiri Baraka splits his protagonist, Clay Williams, into two parts: the American, the assimilationist ideal of what a black person should be and the mask that society forces him to wear; and the Negro, his true black soul (Du Bois 3). For Clay, these two sides correspond with a side that wants to assimilate into white culture and another that wants to express his anger at the same white culture he is attempting to assimilate into. Throughout the course of the play, Clay struggles with trying to reconcile these two sides of himself. In addition to the internal struggle Clay goes through, there is an external

struggle with Lula, who represents white culture. Clay's struggle with Lula is representative of his struggle to assimilate, and eventually, in his final demise, Lula's murder of Clay comes to represent Baraka's opinion of the results of assimilation, and in effect, the attempt to merge the "American" and the "Negro." In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois advocates for a merging of the American and the Negro souls. Baraka, in response, argues that there is no reconciliation, but instead that black men become victims of assimilation.

Baraka's *Dutchman* chronicles a fatal subway ride. Clay Williams, a young black man, meets Lula, a white woman who seduces and then murders him while riding this train. Lula persuades Clay into going home with her and later drives him to show his "true" self, only to then murder him. In the time before Clay's murder, Baraka explores stereotypization and the sanity of African Americans based on these stereotypes and limited opportunity to truly be themselves.

Du Bois' double consciousness argument, exemplified through the American and Negro sides of the black man, is based on the idea that the black man is "shut out from [the white] world by a vast veil," yet at the same time can only ever see himself through that veil (2). Moreover, as Du Bois admits, the black man often "[has]... no desire to tear down that veil" (2). Clay, in the "American" side of himself, shows this lack of desire in the way he dresses in a "jacket and tie" and his belief that he is "a black Baudelaire" (Baraka, *Dutchman* 554). However, it became impossible for Du Bois to ignore this veil because he could no longer ignore that he was "an outcast and a stranger" in his own society (Du Bois 2). Like Du Bois, Clay can no longer ignore the veil after his encounter with Lula.

Lula represents white society's endorsement of the stereotypes and the "veil" through which Clay sees himself (Du Bois 3). As a function of this veil, Baraka indicates that "[t]he subway [is] heaped in modern myth" in the opening stage directions (*Dutchman* 551). This myth of the



monolithic black man pervades all aspects of the play, particularly in Lula and her relationship with Clay. Lula repeatedly tells Clay she “know[s] him like the palm of [her] hand” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 554). This assertion comes from her belief, as a representation of white society and culture, that all black men are the same type of person, specifically black men that attempt to assimilate into white culture. Lula’s adamant claims that she does not “know anything about [Clay],” but instead that he is a “well-known type” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 553) reinforce “the real power of white stereotypes in black life and thought” (Bruce 301). Lula would rather that Clay see himself through the veil instead of try to discover his own person, as she has power over him while he not only believes in the veil, but agrees with its representation.

Through her seduction, Lula reinforces the veil through which Clay sees himself. Her seduction is representative of the way in which white society seduces Clay into believing he can assimilate. In a display of how persuasive, but at the same time controlling, white culture can be to black men desperate to assimilate, Lula tells Clay to ask her questions, that “those [are his] lines” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 553). By having Clay repeat these lines back to her, Baraka shows his audience the only way to assimilate into and be accepted by white culture is to accept their terms and conditions. Another tactic that Lula employs to make Clay believe he can have her, and therefore assimilate, is to make him dependent on her. Even as she attacks him for wearing the “three-buttoned suit and striped tie” that she says he “ought to feel oppressed by” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 554), she also tells him they can “pretend” they are both “free from [their respective] histor[ies]” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 555). In order to be free from his history, Clay has to depend on Lula to also be free from hers. However, as she displays to him in scene two, Clay cannot become a part of white culture, as his culture and who he truly is as a person is ultimately in opposition with white culture.

Although Clay and Lula are initially attracted to each other, their opposition, with Lula's automatic superiority based solely on her status as a white woman, can only lead to Clay's demise. Victor Leo Walker II describes Clay's and Lula's statuses as "opposing archetypes" as a "magnetism" that "pull[s] them together and forces them to react with each other until one is destroyed" (240). Only because Lula was able to seduce Clay is she then able to destroy him. However, Lula and Clay's meeting does not appear coincidental from Lula's perspective. She openly says that she was "searching [Clay] out" (Baraka, *Dutchman* 552). This declaration shows her purpose to lure Clay only to destroy him before the audience understands it by the end of the play.

To truly destroy Clay, Lula must make him see through the veil white society has put in place for him; she must make him remove "the mask of the African American that has adopted the ideology of white America" (Walker 240). She does this by continually calling him out on his attempts to assimilate, calling him "Uncle Tom" and a "dirty white man" (Baraka, *Dutchman* 557). By telling Clay "[he] ain't no nigger, [he's] just a dirty white man" (Baraka, *Dutchman* 557), Lula plays right into his insecurities much in the same way that Du Bois says "the Nation echoed and enforced [blacks'] self-criticism," making them believe they would never be on the same level as white people (7). Lula, as the external representation of the veil and the American side of Clay that yearns to assimilate, makes Clay delve into an exploration of his Negro side—the truest version of himself. With this exploration, it is possible to see the internal struggle that is involved in Clay's double consciousness.

Clay's last speech before Lula kills him exemplifies the internal struggle he deals with as he tries to form a personal identity in a white culture that wants him to assimilate, but at the same time denies him the right to do so. Clay tells Lula to let him "be who [he] feel[s] like being," even if it is a "middle-class fake white man" (Baraka,

*Dutchman* 557). This is a declaration of his right to choose who he wants to be, fully aware of the veil he sees himself through. However, in the same speech he tells her she only sees “an act” and not “the pure...pumping black heart” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 557), showing his awareness of who he is beyond and in spite of the veil. These two sides, “Clay’s “dual personalities,” “[a]re not just different from each other but [a]re inevitably in opposition” (Bruce 304).

Clay says that he would rather be “insane” and attempting to assimilate than murder and become sane (Baraka, *Dutchman* 558). This particular dilemma exemplifies Clay as a “by-product of the neurotic, white culture which insists that he hide his inner feelings while it goads him into revealing them” (Piggford 78). To further his case, Clay calls black people “a whole people of neurotics, struggling to keep from being sane” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 558). Clay continues, saying “the only thing that would cure the neurosis would be...murder” because then white people would begin to understand him (558). This moment is significant in that Lula goes to lengths to tell Clay that she knows his type and understands the person he is, and Clay is telling her plainly that she does not. He takes this moment to talk to Lula clearly without any metaphors or hidden meanings; this is his attempt to make himself sane. Clay’s insanity can be described in terms Baraka used to describe his own experiences at Howard in an interview with Judy Stone. He calls this insanity “the Negro sickness,” saying that at Howard “they teach you how to pretend to be white” (Stone 9). When Clay breaks this act, he has broken free of the restrictive veil and is able to recognize the game that Lula is playing. Ironically, even after Clay is able to recognize his double consciousness and how it makes him “insane” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 558), he still makes the choice to assimilate.

With Clay’s decision to assimilate, he warns Lula about “preach[ing] so much rationalism and cold logic to... niggers,” telling her, “one day...they [will] actually understand exactly what you are talking about” and will turn

these lessons on white America and will “murder [her] and have very rational explanations” (Baraka, *Dutchman* 558). In Baraka’s words, they will be cured of the Negro sickness, and then develop the “white sickness” (Stone 9), a phrase he coined in an interview with Judy Stone and explains through Clay:

...the Air Force made me understand the white sickness. It shocked me into realizing what was happening to me and to others. By oppressing Negroes the whites have become oppressors, twisted in the sense of doing bad things to people and finally justifying them, convincing themselves they are right—as people have always convinced themselves. (Stone 9)

Coupled with Baraka’s personal statement, it can be deduced that Clay’s final speech before his death was the removing of the veil, even as he has still decided to assimilate. However, the danger in Clay understanding what the veil means and what it does to black people is not lost on Lula. Once she has “heard enough,” she kills Clay (Baraka, *Dutchman* 558). Through becoming Lula’s victim, Clay becomes a victim of white culture by way of assimilation. Clay serves as an example to Baraka’s audience, as Baraka is trying to make them “better able to understand that they are [not only] the brothers of victims, [but also] that they themselves are victims” (Baraka, “Revolutionary Theatre” 559). Clay’s death is Baraka’s way of showing the audience that assimilation into white culture only leads to loss of identity and eventual demise.

Baraka makes a statement with Clay about the impossibility of assimilation into the white world. Through Lula, he also makes a statement about “the scheming and conniving racism of white America” in that the culture teaches black people to be white, but at the same time constantly reminds them that they are Other (Walker 240). In his decision to speak honestly about his feelings despite

his attempts to assimilate, Clay breaks the mold made for him as an assimilated black man, and therefore is punished. Lula's seduction and murder of Clay is meant to "expose the victimization of the socially assimilated African American" (Walker 238). Not only does Baraka reject Du Bois' idea that the American and Negro sides of the black man can be reconciled, but he also argues that a reliance on the American side can only lead to death.

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## CHOOSING SIDES, TAKING ACTION



*"One of the ways in which the theme of duality in the novel is represented is through the manifestation of sympathy the reader feels for Bruno. There are two different sides to Bruno, just as there are two different sides to Guy."*

—Emily Giroux, *from* "Criss-Cross: Internal Focalization in *Strangers on a Train*"



TURNING A BLIND EYE: THE ETHICAL  
IMPLICATIONS OF BLINDNESS IN *NATIVE SON*  
*By Courtney Deal*

[h]is crime seemed natural; he felt that all of his life had been leading to something like this. It was no longer a matter of dumb wonder as to what would happen to him and his black skin; he knew now. The hidden meaning of his life—a meaning which others did not see and which he had always tried to hide—had spilled out. (Wright 106)

Bigger Thomas, Richard Wright's protagonist in *Native Son*, only finds "the hidden meaning of his life" after killing his white boss' daughter, Mary Dalton. Bigger correlates this hidden meaning with his black skin. Bigger's blackness becomes the reason "his crime felt natural." However, because race is a social construct designed by those in power to maintain power, any attributes or personality traits seen as natural based on the color of one's skin are entirely unnatural. Martha C. Nussbaum discusses *Native Son* in her book, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*, saying, "[Bigger] is aware of himself in images drawn from the white world's denigration of him"



(93). This means that Bigger can only see himself through the lens of the white world. In other words, he views all of his actions through the veil of white society, a veil that relies on the perception of black people as less than, and even further that they deserve this fate because it is “natural” for black people to be criminals and, therefore, less than white members of society. Because of this veil, Bigger and other characters are blind to the reality of their world. Wright shows us, as readers, how unnatural Bigger’s crime is and that the idea of anything being “natural” because of the pigmentation of someone’s skin is, in fact, incredibly unnatural. Further, he asks us to question the ideals of both Bigger’s society and our own. Finally, he seeks to help us remove the veil from our eyes and cure our blindness.

Wright’s novel, which takes place in 1930s Chicago, follows Bigger Thomas, a young black man in a white world. Bigger struggles with a split personality; he hates his blackness, which he describes as “feel[ing] like [he is] on the outside of the world peeping in through a knot hole in the fence,” but he also hates the side of himself yearning to experience the freedom of whiteness (20). He finds a job working for Mr. Dalton, a prominent white businessman, and accidentally kills Dalton’s only daughter. After committing this murder, Bigger comes to realize that others around him cannot see—literally. Bigger repeatedly says everyone around him is blind; they only see life the way they want to see it rather than how it truly is. In an attempt to evade arrest, Bigger kills his quasi-girlfriend, Bessie, because she “know[s] too much” (178). However, as I will discuss later, Bessie’s murder is much larger than Bigger’s desire to not be caught. Bigger’s violent actions drive both the novel and his revelations about both himself and others around him. Once Bigger has committed these two acts of violence, he begins to reconcile the sides of himself that he hates; he begins to come to grips with his whiteness and his blackness.

Perhaps the most obvious motif running through *Native Son* is the motif of blindness. Every character in

Wright's novel is blind at least once. This blindness comes from each character's "wan[ting] and year[ning] to see life in a certain way" (Wright 106). With this in mind, it is more accurate to describe blindness, as James Nagel does in his article, "Images of 'Vision' in *Native Son*," as "an analysis of 'perception' which documents the effect prejudice, alienation, oppression, and isolation have on one's ability to 'see' and 'be seen' clearly" (109). Bigger considers both the black and white characters blind to the world around them. Most obviously, the white characters are blind because "they [do] not want to see what others [are] doing if it [does] not feed their own desires" (Wright 106). They would rather keep the veil, which separates their perception of black life from its realities, drawn than try to truly empathize with the plight of Bigger and the black people of Chicago. To subscribe to this veil is easier than trying to debunk it because it protects the white society from their fear that they "made [Bigger commit his crime]" (Wright 358).

W.E.B. Du Bois' theory of double consciousness provides a frame in which to explain both the split in Bigger's personality and the blindness in the novel. According to Du Bois, there are two sides to the black man in America, the American and the Negro (3). Additionally, the black man has "no true self-consciousness" because he can only see himself "through the revelation of the other [white] world," as if through a "veil" (3). As Bigger sees himself through the veil of white society, who views him as a threat, he also sees himself as a threat—to the point of believing that he has forged himself a new identity after killing Mary, even as this act fulfills the long-standing stereotype of black men being a danger to white women. The blindness of both the characters in the novel and of the reader is a product of the veil of which we are often unaware.

Bigger begins to realize who he is as an individual after his acts of violence. After Mary's death, he sees everyone's blindness and their desire to see him in whatever

way works best for their “own desires” and their world (Wright 106). He believes that he is the only one who can see, while everyone else would rather be blind. After Bessie’s death, Bigger feels the lack of “wholeness” in his life because of his black skin (240). He realizes that the two murders he has committed did nothing to solve the twoness he sees in himself, the difference between “something he [knows] and something he [feels]”: his double consciousness (240). This twoness makes him act out in violence; he is yearning to be whole, to find a way for “his two worlds” to join (240). However, the white world around Bigger has a hand in creating this split. Bigger’s double consciousness results from others’ unwillingness to recognize his individuality as a person, exemplified by their blindness. Because Mary and Bessie are the representations of Bigger’s double consciousness, they become the victims of Bigger’s violence.

Bigger’s violence and his blindness act as a reinforcement of Bigger’s double consciousness and, therefore, the veil. The belief in this veil shows a “refusa[l] to imagine one another with empathy and compassion” (Nussbaum xvii). This refusal, as Nussbaum argues, is a hallmark of our society and would have only been truer in Bigger’s society, a society that blatantly relied on inequality. Nussbaum argues that literature functions in developing “the ability to imagine the concrete ways in which people different from oneself grapple with disadvantage” (xvi). This is particularly relevant in *Native Son* because even as the reader is actively engaged in developing empathy for Bigger and his plight, the characters are not. Part of the blindness of the black characters comes not from the inability to empathize, but rather an inability to recognize the veil being placed in front of them—especially in the case of Bessie and Bigger. In an interesting and telling excerpt from the novel, Bigger can recognize this blindness in Bessie but cannot recognize it in himself:

She did not answer; he turned from her and got a chair and pulled it up to the dresser. He unwrapped the package and balled the paper into a knot and threw it into a corner of the room. *Instinctively*, Bessie stooped to pick it up. Bigger laughed and she straightened suddenly. Yes; Bessie was blind. He was about to write a kidnap note and she was worried about the cleanliness of her room. (Wright 175, emphasis mine)

Bigger recognizes that Bessie “instinctively” acts, reinforcing the notion put forth by the “Nation,” saying “[b]e content to be servants and nothing more” (Du Bois 7). Bessie’s instinct to clean up after him reinforces the veiled perception of black women as servants. However, and perhaps part of the reason that Bigger views Bessie in such contempt, he sees himself through that same veil when he feels that his crime is natural and predestined.

Despite believing that he can see clearly where others cannot, Bigger is also blind to the veil, something he realizes just before his trial when he wonders if “he [had] been blind all along” (Wright 362). Bigger’s blindness comes from his inability and unwillingness to see white people as individuals, as well as a blindness to how he is viewed in his society. Nagel argues that blindness on both sides “is operative throughout the novel as a metaphor of a lack of understanding and of a tendency to generalize individuals on the basis of race” (110). Bigger is unable to see people like Jan and Mary as individuals who on some level, although they are blind, are trying to understand him. He is more comfortable with white people like Britten, the outwardly bigoted prosecution lawyer, because “he had met a thousand Brittens in his life” (Wright 154). Just as the white world is content to group all black men together, so Bigger is content to believe that all white people are the same and like Britten.

Bigger's blindness to his own struggle is most evident when he reflects upon his family's living situation:

He hated his family because he knew they were suffering and that he was powerless to help them. He knew that the moment he allowed himself to feel to its fulness how they lived, the shame and misery of their lives, he would be swept out of himself with fear and despair. So he held toward them an attitude of iron reserve; he lived with them, but behind a wall, a curtain. And toward himself he was even more exacting. He knew that the moment he allowed what his life meant to enter fully into his consciousness, he would either kill himself or someone else. (Wright 10)

Although he hates people for their blindness, Bigger seems to choose blindness as a response to his own suffering. He turns a blind eye to his family and how they live because he does not want the full weight of their suffering on his back. He would rather be blind because, even in this early section of the novel, Bigger can see his reaction to complete consciousness would be to "kill himself or someone else." Eventually, however, Bigger is inevitably forced to open his eyes—and these foreshadowed murders do actually happen.

While the characters in the novel are blind, the reader is also blind. Bigger's blindness is cured through his violence; the reader's blindness is meant to be cured through the reading of the novel. Jane Gallop, in "The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading," discusses the destructive tendency of readers to look for "timeless universals" rather than practice close reading (182). Wright makes it impossible for the reader to subscribe to these universals when reading Bigger. Regardless of his violent actions, readers are forced to see him in a sympathetic light.

This sympathetic portrayal complicates the idea of the “bad nigger.” Although Bigger’s killing of Mary and Bessie, Mr. Dalton’s daughter and his girlfriend, respectively, makes him a “literalization of their racial expectations,” the reader is forced to empathize with him because the novel is written from his point of view (Felgar 70). Watching Bigger commit these heinous acts, but at the same time struggle with them, makes the reader see that Bigger is not acting fully of his own free will. His belief that he could not stop himself from committing violence comes from his inability to see himself outside of the perceptions of the white world around him. As Robert Felgar describes in his teaching of *Native Son*, the reader, and—according to Felgar—particularly his white students, must “disrupt their (often unstated and unrecognized) belief” in the veil that both makes Bigger act and struggle with his actions (70).

Because the readers see Bigger in a sympathetic light, they can begin to see other oppressed black men who may or may not act out in violence in a sympathetic light as well. Wright intended Bigger to represent “the Negro’s uncertain position in America” (Wright 455). In his mission to accomplish this, he constructed Bigger out of the “many” Biggers he met in his life (Wright 434). Wright mentions that “the white folks called [Bigger No. 3] a bad nigger,” which was combined to make “Bigger” when referring to him (435). With this in mind, it is important to note that “nigger” is not just a racial slur, but also a socially constructed identity for black people. This identity is characterized by a slew of generally negative stereotypes. Because society trains us to be familiar with these stereotypes, Wright’s narrator writes in a way that suggests the reader knows them. Further, Wright counts on the reader going into the novel understanding these stereotypes and even possibly believing these so-called Truths, which will initially color their view of Bigger.

Part of empathizing with Bigger, which is the goal of Wright’s novel, is to understand the purpose of his violence against the women. James Butler, in his article,

“The Function of Violence in Richard Wright’s *Native Son*,” combats claims that the violence in *Native Son* is gratuitous and unnecessary, arguing that Wright “uses violence extensively but as a necessary and powerful reflector of the deepest recesses of [Bigger’s] radically divided nature” (Butler 10). In justifying this violence, Butler continues, saying that Mary and Bessie “represent the extreme poles of [Bigger’s] divided self” (11). Mary and Bessie function within *Native Son* to externalize the struggle that Bigger is going through internally. While Butler says that the women represent the two emotional sides of Bigger, this paper will argue the two women are the external versions of Bigger’s double consciousness, Mary being the American side and Bessie as the Negro side. Bigger does not feel like he can truly identify with either side, and this causes him to hate and violently murder both women. Bigger’s antagonistic relationship with each woman is a reflection with which the reader can see how Bigger hates the parts of himself.

Mary, despite their differences, is connected to Bigger in his desire for whiteness. Even as she represents the American side of Bigger, Mary wants to learn more about Bigger beyond the stereotypical—whether it is a sincere desire or not. Before the reader ever meets Mary as her own character, she is in the movie Bigger goes to see with Jack. She is shown on a resort in Florida to show how the rich live. Bigger sees her and wonders if the things he had heard about rich white people were true (Wright 33). He then starts to wonder if he “would get some of [that life]” once he begins working for the Daltons (Wright 33). To make the connection between Mary and Bigger clearer, Bigger replaces the “naked black men and women whirling in wild dances” with “images in his own mind of white men and women dressed in black and white clothes, laughing, talking, drinking and dancing” (Wright 33). Bigger automatically takes the media’s representation of what black people are like, a function of the veil, and replaces it with what is more positive in his eyes that have been shaped by the media.

At the same time that Bigger admires the whiteness on screen, he hates the “great natural force” he considers white society and hates it within himself (Wright 114). When he goes to work for the Daltons and experiences Jan and Mary’s interest in his life, he is forced to consider his own whiteness—which he is extremely uncomfortable with. He is forced to think about why they would be interested in his life as an individual person rather than as just one of the ten million black people in Chicago. This recognition as an individual both scares Bigger and makes him think about himself in relation to Mary and Jan. It makes him consider that they are not as different as he once believed.

After killing Mary, Bigger “all but shudder[s] with the intensity of his loathing for [her] house and all it had made him feel since he had first come into it” (Wright 87). He believes that he can escape the whiteness in himself. However, when dreaming about his crime, Bigger sees his own head in the place of Mary’s:

[H]e had a big package in his arms so wet and slippery and heavy that he could scarcely hold onto it and he wanted to know what was in the package and he stopped near an alley corner and unwrapped it and the paper fell away and he saw—it was his *own* head—his own head lying with black face and half-closed eyes and lips parted with white teeth showing and hair wet with blood and the red glare grew brighter... (Wright 165)

By forcing Bigger to see himself in Mary, he forces himself to see not only the desire for the freedom of whiteness, but also the whiteness within himself. This is also a clear symbol given to the reader by Wright that Bigger and Mary are connected to each other and that Mary is a part of Bigger, to the point that Bigger is able to recognize himself in Mary. Nagel interestingly argues that “without the



whiteness [in Bigger] there would be no killing,” meaning that even as Bigger kills Mary to destroy the whiteness within himself, it is also whiteness that forces him to kill her (Nagel 112). This whiteness functions to make Bigger believe that his blackness is evil, which then causes him to believe he could not stop himself from killing Mary.

Alternatively, Bessie represents Bigger’s “Negro” side. While Bigger hates Mary because she reminds him of the freedom he cannot have, Bigger hates Bessie because she reminds him of “the impotence and despair” of the world he lives in (Butler 17). Butler further elaborates, “Bigger sees Bessie as a mirror into which he can no longer bear to look” (Butler 17). Bessie falls into the category of black people that have accepted the narrative the “Nation” endorses, “saying: Be content to be servants, and nothing more” (Du Bois 7). Bigger is fighting against this “Nation,” and therefore is insecure about his own place in the world. He recognizes Bessie’s submission and hates her for it. In what is undoubtedly a rape scene, Bigger’s actions grow more violent and uncontrollable after he hears Bessie give “a sigh of resignation” that he determines to be “a giving up, a surrender of something more than her body” (Wright 233). Bessie, unlike Bigger, is content to give up fighting against the system set in place by the white people in their society that would have them in a subservient position. Bigger sees this contentment as blindness and fights against it in the only way he knows how—through violence.

While it is true Bessie is blinded by her comfort in the status quo, she is not blind to the way she and Bigger are perceived by the white world they live in. Bigger “[feels] the narrow orbit of [Bessie’s] life: from her room to the kitchen of the white folks was the farthest she ever moved” (Wright 139). Bessie feels it as well, and even acknowledges Bigger’s statement that the “white folks...done killed plenty of us” (Wright 178). However, Bessie sees where Bigger is blind, telling him that just because the white people have made his life miserable, it “don’t make it right” for Bigger

to act out in violence against Mary Dalton (Wright 178). Bigger immediately begins thinking about how “easy” it would be to murder Bessie after she says this to him (Wright 178). He says Bessie “now knew too much”: and at first it reads like she knows too much about the murder, but she actually knows too much about the world around her that Bigger does not see, which threatens him in a way he cannot describe (Wright 178). Bigger hates that Bessie willingly subscribes to the veil that tells black women their place in society is subservient, but he cannot see that he subscribes to the same veil; he believes it was “natural” for him to kill Mary, a side effect of his black skin.

While his acting out in violence is Bigger’s initial way of reconciling his two sides, it is not successful. Even after his murder of Bessie, Bigger realizes he had never and does not “[feel] a sense of wholeness” (Wright 240). Although he recognizes that he wants “to merge himself with others and be a part of this world, to lose himself in it so he could find himself, to be allowed a chance to live like others, even though he was black,” he does not feel he has accomplished this goal in killing Bessie (Wright 240). In ultimately killing Bessie, Bigger recognizes his double consciousness. He recognizes that because he is black he lacks opportunity, and the social structure of the white world he lives in both denies him this opportunity and tells him he does not deserve it.

The final act of merging his two selves and removing the veil is to recognize that white people are individuals, and not all like Britten. Du Bois tried to resolve the split between black people being both “African” and “American,” by saying that the black man should try “to merge his double self into a better and truer self,” while “losing neither of the older selves” (Du Bois 3). This would require Bigger to recognize both his whiteness and his blackness. His whiteness, the internalized narrative that all white people are the same and hate him, is solved through realizing that Jan is an individual separate from the “looming mountain of white hate” (Wright 289). Initially,

Bigger sees white people as “not really people,” but more of a “great natural force like a stormy sky looming overhead” (Wright 114). When Bigger realizes that Jan genuinely wants to help him, he muses:

For the first time in his life a white man  
became a human being to him; and the reality  
of Jan’s humanity came in a stab of remorse...  
He saw Jan as though someone had performed  
an operation upon his eyes, or as though  
someone had snatched a deforming mask from  
Jan’s face. (Wright 289)

After coming to this realization, Bigger recognizes that like Jan, Mary was an individual person, and rather than killing the entire social institution that kept him from opportunity, he killed a human being. His blindness seems to be cured, as if being able to see Jan as a human being helped to reconcile the part of himself that is ambitious and wants to be like Mary and Jan.

Bigger’s blackness is reconciled after the trial, when Bigger allows himself to think about the murders he has committed. After being sentenced to death, Bigger tells Max, “It must’ve been pretty deep in me to make me kill! I must have felt it awful hard to murder...What I killed for must’ve been good!...When a man kills, it’s for something...I didn’t know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for ‘em” (Wright 429). This moment is Bigger’s final cure to the blindness he employed when thinking about his family’s situation. Bigger no longer prevents himself from feeling the “fullness” of his family’s struggle (Wright 10). Because he is able to feel this fullness, he is able to locate within himself a reason for his crimes. Because their suffering comes from their blackness, Bigger can locate this blackness within himself and come to peace with it. He no longer has to hate his family because he can understand that they go through the

same things he does, and they must feel the same hate he feels.

Bigger's reconciliation of his two sides comes at the cost of two women's lives. However, it was not simply an act of his blackness to commit these crimes. Nussbaum believes that it is the duty of "the reader, while judging Bigger culpable" of his murders, to also be "inclined to mercy in the imposition of punishment, seeing how much of his character was the product of circumstances created by others" (Nussbaum 95). While we are not supposed to excuse Bigger's actions, we should acknowledge how the social structure played a part in facilitating these murders. We are meant to recognize that Bigger's society and its forcing of "reductive generalizations" on black people through the veil of narrative and oppression play a role in Bigger's violence (Gallop 185). *Native Son* encourages readers to see past what we believe to be "natural" about others and question the social structures that create people like Bigger Thomas, as well as the role we play in reinforcing these structures.

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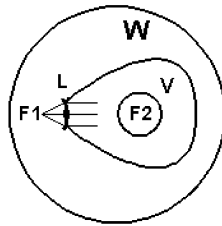


CRISS-CROSS: INTERNAL FOCALIZATION IN  
*STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*  
by Emily Giroux

Throughout Patricia Highsmith's novel *Strangers on a Train*, the reader is exposed to the thoughts and desires of the two main characters of the story as they plan, carry out, and face the fallout of committing two murders. As the story progresses, the reader finds himself or herself at the mercy of the third person narrator. The narrator switches between the different focalized points of view of Guy and Bruno. The entanglement of the narrator's point of view with the differentiating perceptions of Guy and Bruno in Patricia Highsmith's *Strangers on a Train* urges the reader to sympathize with two murderers. Initially, Highsmith uses the narrator's perception to manifest sympathy for Guy Haines, the apparent protagonist, and resentment towards Charles Anthony Bruno, the apparent antagonist. Upon the climax of the novel, the point of view of the narrator quickly alternates between Guy and Bruno. Not only does this complicate the characters' roles as protagonist and antagonist, but it also creates the context for the reader to relate and get inside the conscience of two murderers. In *Strangers on a Train*, the author uses internal focalization to evoke sympathy from the reader, showing the reader's own

unexpected criminal duality. Having created morally ambiguous characters, Highsmith has challenged her readers to defy the common conceptions of everyday social norms. She turns empathy and understanding into sympathy and sentimentality for Guy Haines and Anthony Bruno.

In his essay *Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing and Reconstructing a Narratological Concept*, Manfred Jahn explores the framework of focalization, a concept originally created by Gerard Genette. One way in which Jahn explains this is through a “Model of Vision” (figure 1). Highsmith uses the narratological technique of internal focalization to get inside the heads of Guy and Bruno. “Theory addresses the options and ranges of orientational restrictions of narrative presentations” (Jahn 241).



*F1* focus-1; *L* lens, eye;  
*F2* focus-2, area in focus; *V* field of vision; *W* world

Figure 1 from “Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing and Reconstructing a Narratological Concept” by Manfred Jahn (242).

The inference made by this diagram is that what is being perceived comes from a fixed focal point. These focal points each have their own field of vision. Within a field of vision is an “area in focus”(Figure 1). In terms of the novel, Guy and Bruno serve as the two main focal points in *Strangers on a Train*. Their perceptions and accounts of

events represent the field of vision given to the reader, and the area of focus here would be the intuitive assessments of the murders that Guy and Bruno commit. Because the reader is 'seeing' through two different focuses, the more specific term for the technique Highsmith is using here is internal focalization. According to Jahn, internal focalization is defined as "(vision within): presentation of events restricted to the point of view of one or more focal characters"(244).

It requires more than an understanding of focalization to comprehend the effect that this style has on the reader. Peer F. Bundgaard wrote about this in his essay *Means of Meaning Making in Literary Art: Focalization, Mode of Narration, and Granularity*. Bundgaard focuses on focalization as well as other narratological concepts and how they are used to evoke or make meaning of a text. In regards to focalization, Bundgaard says, "By focalization...[Meaning making] can be embedded within a sentient being who does not only perceive, but also explicitly evaluates, judges, thinks, etc."(66). This is how he is defining what makes a character capable of being a focalized figure. He is also pointing out how the material the reader receives from the perceptions of Guy and Bruno can be used to create meaning. Guy and Bruno both fall under Bundgaard's qualifications. As Guy and Bruno are evaluating, judging, and thinking the reader is doing the same. While the characters of the novel are working within the content of the novel, the reader is working outside of the novel, taking in the characters' evaluations, judgments, and thoughts within the story's fictional world.

In order for a reader to rightly judge a character, he or she must understand the character that he or she is focusing on, and this has effects on the reader. In *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters*, Blakely Vermeule explores the concept of fictional character as well as how and why readers connect to characters the way that they do. At the end of her preface Vermeule states, "[Literary narratives] harvest not the bright leaves but the dark roots of our



desire for social information, often delving deeper than any other medium. They swim in the deep end. And this gives them special claims on us. Or so I will argue” (xiv). Focalization is certain to act as a catalyst to further investment in these characters. Vermeule supports her assertion that characters have a special hold on their audience with the claim, “readers typically adapt their point of view to one or another of a story’s characters, usually the protagonist, and make their way through the narrative by tracking that character’s actions” (41). Early on the reader is exposed to the relatable aspect of Guy Haines. He is no longer a stranger on a train, but a character that the reader can understand, trust, and identify with.

By allowing oneself to walk in the shoes of a character, one is expressing empathy. Empathy allows the reader to work to gain a full understanding of the character(s) at hand. Suzanne Keen says, “Character identification often invites empathy, even when the fictional character and reader differ from each other in all sorts of practical and obvious ways, but empathy for fictional characters appears to require only minimal elements of identity, situation, and feeling, not necessarily complex or realistic characterization” (xii). Keen considers this theory and others like it in her book *Empathy and the Novel*. In her statement above, Keen is addressing the notion that a character doesn’t need to be similar or comparable to the reader in order for the reader to empathize with that character. While Guy is presented to the reader as the typical run of the mill kind of guy, Bruno is presented in a different light. He is not necessarily what most people would label as a relatable character. He has more negative traits than Guy and is portrayed as a maniacal momma’s boy obsessed with murder; this is not the kind of character most readers are eager to embrace. However, Keen says, “empathetic responses to fictional characters and situations occur more readily for negative emotions, whether or not a match in details of experience exists” (xii). According to Keen, Bruno’s characteristics make him no less eligible for

the reader's empathy; in fact, they make him the better candidate. His flaws, vices, and obsessions are what allow the reader to get inside Bruno's consciousness and gain understanding. One must ask, however, does the justification of the reader's empathy mean that their sympathy for Bruno is just as acceptable? Wayne C. Booth has some thoughts on such a matter.

In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth discusses the art of communication with readers, the idea of sympathy and how it should or should not be applied to certain characters in a work of fiction. He says, "If an author wants intense sympathy for characters who do not have strong virtues to recommend them, then psychic vividness of prolonged and deep inside views will help him" (377-78). If this idea is applied to the situation of Bruno as an immoral character, then it can be inferred that Booth believes that the internal focalization used by Highsmith is a necessary tool in order to evoke sympathy for this character. By making this statement regarding "intense sympathy", Booth is acknowledging that it is possible for characters with a weaker moral compass to gain sympathy from readers. But Booth will only take this idea so far. He freely admits that sympathy for an immoral character is possible. The question is, just because it is possible, is it acceptable to take this principle to its limits?

How far is it okay for authors to go when it comes to the detail and emphasis they put on characters that commit acts of the greatest evils known to man? Monsters like Dracula and Frankenstein's monster, killers such as Dexter Morgan and Hannibal Lecter, and mentally unstable Mr. Hyde and Randal McMurphy types are all evidence of criminal success in the realm of fiction. According to Booth, it is possible for writers to create characters that fall under this category and still hold readers' sympathy. In addition to his previous statement regarding this aptness for sympathy, he also says, "inside views can build sympathy even for the most vicious character. When properly used, this effect can be of immeasurable value in forcing us to see

the human worth of a character whose actions...we would deplore" (378). This is not the only point that Booth makes on this type of circumstance. He also discusses the limits of such a technique and how far an author should go with these criminal characters, morally speaking. The point that Booth brings up regarding the matter of immoral characters and how far an author should go is expressed through his experience with Allain Robbe-Grillet's novel, *The Voyeur*.

[The book] does, indeed, lead us to experience intensely the sensations and emotions of a homicidal maniac. But is this really what we go to literature for? Quite aside from the question of how such a book might affect readers who already have homicidal tendencies, is there no limit to what we will praise, provided it is done with skill? (384)

Booth is asking his readers where the line should be drawn. When is it *not* morally acceptable for writers to deal out these characters that are nefarious wrongdoers? The answer is sure to come. However, at this point it is time to take a deep look at how all the theories mentioned so far can be applied to Guy and Bruno in Patricia Highsmith's literary work *Strangers on a Train*.

Highsmith uses the technique of internal focalization to build up empathy for her main characters. From details such as Bruno's motives and Guy's resistance, the reader gains understanding about why they do the things they do. By gaining this understanding, the reader is able to rationalize Guy and Bruno's actions and sympathize with them. Their criminal behavior now becomes acceptable and even encouraged. This effect is a product of the internal focalization that brings characters' reasoning to the foreground of the reader's attention. The reader now has his or her own thoughts along with the characters', bringing a dual perspective to the big picture.

The first chapter of *Strangers on a Train* opens with

a third-person omniscient point of view of Guy Haines as he sits on a train headed for his hometown of Metcalf. He is physically described as “[wearing] flannel trousers that needed pressing, a dark jacket that slacked over his slight body and showed faintly purple where the light struck it, and a tomato-colored woolen tie, carelessly knotted” (10). In pursuit of a divorce from his estranged wife, Guy, the reader learns, is a struggling architect with no spare money to buy a divorce. All of these details portray a middle-class guy in a worn suit working hard to earn a living, and who has had failed confrontations with love. Highsmith’s decision to introduce the story with a focalization on Guy urges the reader to identify with him as his or her protagonist.

The way in which the reader is introduced to Guy Haines can also be applied to the way in which the reader is introduced to Charles Anthony Bruno. When Guy first comes across Bruno he describes him as possibly drunk and with a zit in the middle of his forehead. He is, “neither young nor old, neither intelligent nor entirely stupid”(11). While this may not give the initial suggestion that Bruno must be the story’s antagonist, the thoughts that Guy has regarding Bruno lead the reader to identify him as a bit of a joke; a lesser character than our current protagonist. Even further, the reader gets their first true impression of Bruno through Guy’s thoughts. Because Guy was introduced as the protagonist, the reader is prone to believe what he believes. When Guy thinks, “He seemed only a voice and a spirit now, the spirit of evil. All he despised, Guy thought, Bruno represented. All the things he would not want to be, Bruno was, or would become”(33-34). Guy is the lens through which the reader is looking at Bruno and Bruno’s first impression is the area of focus within the reader’s field of vision. Guy feels negatively about Bruno. Bruno is not just everything Guy despises; he is everything the reader despises. The reader has only experienced Guy’s perceptions, therefore, Guy’s perception is the only thing

the reader trusts and relates to. Audiences now perceive Bruno as the anti-Guy. Bruno is the antagonist.

In the first five chapters of *Strangers on a Train*, there is a focalization through Guy's perception of events. However, in the sixth chapter the narrator becomes focalized from Bruno's point of perception. During this brief chapter the reader becomes aware of Bruno's thoughts towards Guy. He says, "Not that Guy was the kind of fellow to plan a murder with, but he liked him, as a person. Guy was somebody worth knowing" (Highsmith 45). The other information the reader receives in this chapter is a hint of Bruno's personality. He is presented in a rather vain light when he comments on the one thing wrong with the hotel and when he calls the telephone operator a "lunk" for not knowing where Great Neck was. By this point, it is clear to the reader that Guy is the character the author is gearing up for the role of 'good guy'. The structure in which the shift in focalization is presented in the novel also plays a significant role in how the reader perceives Guy and Bruno. The chapters that exhibit the focalization of Bruno's perceptions are of particular importance.

Bruno's point of view is experienced through internal focalization in 13 chapters. Twice within the Bruno focalized chapters they fell in a sequence of 3 back-to-back chapters. The first of these sequences takes place during chapters 10, 11, and 12. These sequences explain Bruno's underlying motives and thought process for deciding to go through with his end of the scheme by killing Miriam. This is best captured by the following moment:

And last night he had decided yes. He had been thinking really since Saturday when he had talked to Guy, and here it was Saturday again, and it was tomorrow or never...He was sick of the question, could he do it. How long had the question been with him? Longer than he could remember. He *felt* like he could do it. Something kept telling him that the time, the

circumstances, the cause would never be better.  
A pure murder, without personal Motives! (60)

Having highlighted the fact that Bruno is obsessed with his idea for the perfect “pure murder,” it is evident that Highsmith is using the narrator’s point of view to cause discontent for the reader in regards to Bruno’s character. No reader with a conscience is going to want to connect with a man with a determined desire for the perfect ‘pure’ murder. Being exposed to such desires should leave a reader uncomfortable and distressed. Bruno also goes over thoughts that suggest Guy isn’t going to go through with his end of the murder scheme and that if this is the case, his murder of Miriam will only help him solidify the deal the next time around. These thoughts take all ideas of murder away from Guy and place them solely upon Bruno’s shoulders, reinforcing the previous notions of the first chapter.

While an insight such as this may not be shedding a positive light on Bruno as a likable character, it does serve a critical purpose. In his book *Anatomy of a Murder*, Carl D. Malmgren explores a theory that could lead to the exposure of Highsmith’s master plan. Malmgren says, “Readers begin to understand Charly, even as they are repulsed by him. Their reaction, in fact, is not that different from Guy’s, a fact which helps to reinforce their sympathy for and identification with Guy” (143). Highsmith is strengthening the neutralization of the good guy and bad guy roles of Guy and Bruno. At this point the reader is identifying with Guy and rejecting his or her sympathetic tendencies towards Bruno as the reader obtains understanding for who he truly is.

Chapter 11 continues with the similar build up of chapter 10, bringing the audience deeper into Bruno’s psyche. In chapter 12, Bruno murders Miriam, and aside from the physical description the reader gets insight regarding Bruno’s afterthoughts. These insights consist of moments such as, “He was thinking! He felt Great! It was

done" (81), "A girl's scream made it final. A beautiful scream, Bruno thought with a queer, serene admiration" (82), and "Everything was perfect and he felt terribly happy" (84). All of these thoughts highlight moments in which Bruno is feeding off of his murder of Miriam. The joy that Bruno feels after killing another person shows the reader his true colors. Unlike before, the reader is no longer seeing Bruno through Guy's perspective, but through his own. Later on in the novel the reader is going to gather sympathy for this character, this murderer.

In the next sequence of chapters where the narrator focalizes from Bruno's perspective, 25, 26, and 27, it is after Guy has killed Bruno's father. Bruno is experiencing heat from Gerard, as the investigator tries to solve Sam Bruno's murder. These three chapters allow the reader to experience Bruno under pressure. After being questioned by Gerard in chapter 25, Bruno says, "Who else was like them? Who else was their equal? He longed for Guy to be with him now. He would clasp Guy's hand, and to hell with the rest of the world! Their fears were unparalleled!" (167). These thoughts give the notion of Guy, Bruno, and the reader versus the world even though two out of the three are definitely murderers. He also says, "He and Guy were not leaden-eyed. He and Guy would not die like sheep now. He and Guy would reap" (168). The repetition here of "He and Guy" reverberates this notion of unity. This notion allows the reader to apply the positive feelings received from the focalization of Guy to the perceptions the reader obtains from the focalization of Bruno.

We also see Bruno at a split second of vulnerability after his father is killed. After passing his father's bedroom Bruno thinks to himself, "The open door to his father's room gave him a funny feeling, as if he were just realizing his father were dead. It was the door's hanging open that made him feel it, he thought, like a shirttail hanging out, like a guard let down, that never would have been if the Captain were alive" (171). The reader feels bad for Bruno in this

split second of vulnerability. The reader is given a look at his human side, rather than his murder obsessed self that the reader is used to. This is a point where sympathy from the reader is at a high point in the novel.

In chapter 27 it is unclear if guilt is getting to Bruno, or whether it is simply the anxiety of getting caught by Gerard that is affecting him, but Bruno is losing his grip on reality: "He braced himself against the bathroom door. It was getting him at both ends now, the shakes, early and late, waking him earlier and earlier, and he had to take more and more at night to get to sleep" (177). Bruno is falling apart. Rather than rooting for his downfall, the reader may find himself or herself hoping for his escape, his perfect murder.

These sequences of focalization that express Bruno's perceptions track Bruno's transformation in the eyes of the reader. He begins as a character the reader is skeptical of and transitions to a character that the reader understands. By the second sequence of chapters, the reader sees Bruno as a character that he or she can sympathize with. This is all done through the technique of internal focalization and how it provides the world through Bruno's mind.

The focalization presents the reader with the opportunity to recognize the two beings. One of the ways in which the theme of duality in the novel is represented is through the manifestation of sympathy the reader feels for Bruno. There are two different sides to Bruno, just as there are two different sides to Guy. These sequences that open the reader up to noticing this new side of Bruno widen the field of vision in which the reader is susceptible to new perceptions of Bruno.

Guy goes through a similar yet opposite transformation. He starts out as the good-guy protagonist and makes his way towards unstable murderer. According to Malmgren there is more to the way in which Bruno introduces the murder scenario and then seemingly forces Guy into going through with his end of the deal. Malmgren says, "[Bruno's action] enlists readers' sympathy for Guy,



making them feel that he is the beleaguered innocent party. This feeling is, however, partially undercut by Guy's passivity and by his strange identification with Charly." (142). This draws attention to the thought that just because Guy didn't actually physically do anything, he is not innocent. He still didn't turn Bruno in, and he relates to Bruno. Guy sees Bruno as a sort of adversary yet an ally at the same time. How can an individual that identifies with the man who killed his ex wife be 100% innocent or completely good? Highsmith is subtly transforming the kind of character Guy Haines is in the first chapter, to a broken and lost version of our former protagonist.

By chapter 23, the points leading up to Guy's murder of Sam Bruno, the thoughts and overall mentalities of Guy Haines are so similar to those of Charles Bruno before he kills Miriam, that they could have been the same person. After Guy officially tells Bruno he will go through with his end of the deal the narrator tells us, " 'Yes,' Guy said, and felt the yes absorbed by the darkness, not like the other nights when the yes had been silent, not even going out from him. It undid the knot in his head so suddenly that it hurt him. It was what he had been waiting to say, what the silence in the room had been waiting to hear" (145). This is so similar to how Bruno felt after making the decision to commit murder. The reader also catches sight of how dependent Guy has become on Bruno, how his feelings for Bruno have shifted just as the readers' have. Guy thinks to himself, "He was like Bruno. Hadn't he sensed it time and time again, and like a coward never admitted it? [...] Or why had he liked Bruno? He loved Bruno. Bruno had prepared every inch of the way for him, and everything would go well because everything always went well for Bruno. The world was geared for people like Bruno" (148). These are thoughts that Guy has on the train on his way to Great Neck, Long Island to kill Sam Bruno, Bruno's father.

There are most certainly more "Guy chapters" than "Bruno chapters," but through the course of chapters

40 through 45, the narrator's focalization switches from character to character rather quickly. With 45 containing the death of Charles Bruno, it is safe to say that these chapters behold the novel's rising action and climax. Aside from the familiar Guy and Bruno dual internal focalizations, the reader also gets to experience the internal focalizations of Anne and Gerard. Highsmith does this to present an outside view of Guy and Bruno from inside the story. A closer examination of these chapters can clarify the importance of internal focalization in this novel.

In chapter 40 the reader receives Guy's perceptions as he finds out from Bruno that Gerard is on to the two of them after finding Guy's Plato book in Bruno's position. Upon this discovery Guy thinks to himself, "Death had insinuated itself into his brain. It enwrapped him. He had breathed its air so long, perhaps, he had grown quite used to it...he was not afraid. He squared his shoulders superfluously" (231). This is hardly the Guy Haines that the reader is introduced to at the beginning of the novel. The focalization at this point is highlighting Guy's thought process and drawing attention to the dramatic shift in his mindset. This pinpoints the final stage of Guy's transformation.

In chapter 41, the reader witnesses the first in a series of inner-chapter shifts in focalization. The significance of this chapter lies in the perception the reader receives as Guy and Bruno have virtually the same thoughts at the same time, each regarding the state of mind of the other. First, the reader gets Bruno's perception of Guy as he enters Gerard's office to be questioned. Bruno thinks to himself, "Guy looked nervous...but his usual air of being nervous and in a hurry covered it" (233). This is followed by Guy's perception of Bruno. "Guy looked at Bruno. Bruno was nibbling, so casually the action seemed nonchalant, at a fingernail of the hand that propped his cheek" (233). Both of these observations regard the state of aloof nervousness that each character feels the other is possessing. Guy looks nervous, but that is just how he

looks normally. Bruno is biting his nails, a behavior associated with anxiety, but he is doing so nonchalantly. Both characters recognize the other's anxiety, and both make excuses to disprove their own observations. This moment solidifies the connection of the two characters. This portrayal of the two men is presented as if they were one person.

Next, the reader gets Anne's perception of what is going on. Here Anne is serving as an objective third party. She is objective because she is not privy to the thoughts, motives, and desires of the two men the same way that the reader is as she comes to discover who Bruno is and what he is capable of. Her initial deductions are similar to those of the reader. Bruno is the bad one. Guy is the good one. As Anne comes to terms with the information she finds herself making similar observations to those that the reader has been making as the characters transformed before them.

Anne's perceptions of Bruno that the internal focalization uses in this moment are used to open the reader's mind to the fact that there is a world outside of the minds of Bruno and Guy. Anne comes to many of the same conclusions that the reader came to, but she is not vulnerable to the manipulation of the author the way that the readers are. Anne has her own thoughts. Not Bruno's. Not Guy's.

The chapter preceding Bruno's death consists of a look at Bruno's relationship with Guy and Guy's relationship with Anne. While Bruno is spending time with Anne it becomes clear that his relationship with Guy has become a bit of an obsession for Bruno. Bruno tells Anne, "There is nothing I wouldn't do for [Guy]! I feel a tremendous tie with him, like a brother" (249). A few moments later Bruno thinks to himself, "if he could strangle Anne, too, then Guy and he could really be together (251). This statement jerks the reader awake to the unstable Bruno that was present at the beginning of the novel, but had been covered by the internal focalization of

Bruno and Guy that distracted the reader from these kinds of characteristics. Guy is growing closer and closer now that Anne has turned against Bruno and informs Guy of her pregnancy. This reverberates the notion of Guy as 'good guy' family man.

In Bruno's final chapter he comes off as erratic and drunk. He is often incoherent and mentally falling apart. His last thought before falling overboard is that, "He wanted to take a long walk away from all of them, even away from Guy" (263). After Bruno falls off the boat and Guy has failed to rescue him, Guy thinks to himself, "Where was his friend, his brother?" Guy finally admits to what Bruno actually meant to him. Because Bruno means so much to Guy in this moment, Bruno means just as much to the reader. After Bruno's death Guy thinks, "He was aware that, one by one, they left him, even Anne" (263). This bears a striking resemblance to the thought that Bruno had right before he fell. Bruno walked away from Guy and now Guy has been left completely alone.

The different focalizations within these chapters provide a massive amount of insight into the thoughts and perceptions of the characters. The perceptions received by the reader build connections between Guy and Bruno and his or her self. The reader was able to develop sympathetic bonds to these characters despite their immoral acts. What does this mean about the reader? Is the reader a bad person because he or she was emotionally invested in the lives of two murderers?

In *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters* it is suggested that while the point of view received by the reader can put him or her in the shoes of a criminal, they are separate from the deeds themselves. The reader is a third party. Vermeule uses the works of Amy Coplan to demonstrate these ideas. Copland states, "Through the process of empathic connection, the reader simulates a character's experience, but because he simultaneously has his own thoughts, emotions, and desires, his overall experience involves more than just simulation" (qtd. in

Vermeule 42). Coplan also states that while the reader may be empathizing with a character he or she also has his or her own thoughts to apply to the situation as well. These thoughts that the reader has taken into account include aspects like theme and messages of the narrative, details that the characters are not privy to (42). According to Vermeule and Copland, the answer to the morality question of fictional murder and murderous characters is that it is not immoral or unethical. Sympathizing with murderous characters is not unethical because there is often a message behind the murder.

While there are murders that take place in *Strangers on a Train* and the novel closely follows the characters as they commit murders, the point of the novel, the overall theme, has nothing to do with murder. The theme of the novel investigates the abstraction of a double identity, of duality. This theme applies not just to the content of the novel, but to the reader as well. There is a sense of duality in the role of the reader. The reader must become invested in what the author is trying to relay through any given piece of work. In order to do that, the reader must be able to sympathize with various aspects of the writing. However, they have a second role. That role consists of analyzing and dissecting the work and applying outside reasoning to the text in order to find the author's true meaning. There is the reader that is inside the story with the characters, and the reader that is outside the story with his or her own knowledge and perceptions.

Patricia Highsmith uses the narratological technique of focalization in a very successful and productive way. She is able to use the point of perception of the narrator in *Strangers on a Train* to evoke feelings of sympathy from the reader. These sympathetic feelings allow the reader to transform his or her perceptions of two murders. Murder is not a practice that is socially or legally accepted in society, yet Highsmith gets the reader to accept the murders committed by Bruno and Guy. The reader sees Guy and Bruno through the eyes of Guy and Bruno. A

sense of camaraderie is built up between the two men and because the reader is included in the characters' consciousness, they become a member of this companionship. The novel presents Bruno and Guy as two versions of the same self. There are two versions to the reader's self as well. As the reader experiences what goes on in the novel they are drawn in and urged to rationalize the characters' criminal behavior. While the reader is immersed in world of *Strangers on a Train* they are also still present in the world outside of the novel. They are able to apply themes and other literary devices to what they are reading. This allows the reader to keep a part of him or herself isolated and capable of recognizing ideas that are separate from Guy and Bruno's.

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BULLYING: THE ANCIENT QUANDARY  
*by Rebecca Olexson*

Archilochus of Paros is an ancient Greek writer who was known for his satire and “ferocious invective.” He was so talented with his words to mock and torment, he actually drove an entire family to commit suicide, just because their daughter, Neobule, would not marry him. Paros received no punishment for his actions (“Archilochus” par. 5). Today we would deem Archilochus a bully. Isn’t it funny how the bullies survive, but the innocent die?

Bullying continues to haunt our society. While Archilochus was limited to pen and paper for his bullying technique, today advanced technology gives bullies the internet, which allows bullies the opportunity to constantly harass and mock their victims. Cyber bullying is widespread, and causes hundreds of children to mutilate themselves, develop psychological problems, and even commit suicide. In fact, about forty-three percent of children bullied in school have reported they have been bullied online. Approximately five thousand kids commit suicide each year due to bullying, fourteen percent of students have considered suicide, and almost seven percent attempt it (“Suicide Facts”). These statistics are frightening and they



continue to increase every year. Why do the bullies continue to win?

One would think we would start trying to change these statistics to make people more aware of the problem. There are anti-bullying programs and seminars for teachers, parents, and students about the subject, but nothing can be accomplished without the full support of the whole society to enforce good values. Especially support from the adults. For example, Megan Meier killed herself when she was only thirteen. She was a victim of cyber bullying. It all started when Megan had a falling out with a girl whose parents invented a fake boy to mess with Megan's emotions. The parents posted intimate messages all over MySpace, which led Megan's peers to make fun of her. They even told her the world would be a better place if she was not around (Pokin). Not only children sent this girl to her breaking point, but the adults were the true catalysts of the conflict. Adults are supposed to be good role models for children, which means adults must know how to act properly and responsibly. Society is doomed if adults cannot act appropriately.

On June 20, 2012, a 10-minute video went viral on YouTube. The video was entitled "Making the Bus Monitor Cry." I watched the video, and it made me feel disgusted, upset, and horrified. In the video a group of young boys tormented and tortured a sixty-eight year old bus monitor in upstate New York. The boys mocked her, saying if they cut her, the knife would go through her like butter (Blow par. 5). I saw tears streak down the old woman's face but she never yelled or lifted a hand to those children. After watching the video, I wondered, "Why are these children so cruel?" and "Who taught these children to disrespect their elders like that?" As the saying goes, "Like father, like son." The children learn from their parents.

Some parents and adults feel nothing needs to be done about bullying because it is a normal school experience that everyone eventually has. Supposedly, bullying makes their kids stronger and more prepared for

society. I argue that bullying only damages its victims, doing nothing to make them stronger. Overall, bullying is a serious conflict that inflicts emotional and physical abuse upon its victims. Psychologically, bullying has major consequences. It leads the bullied individual into severe depression, causes them to inflict harm on themselves and others, and permanently damages them for the rest of their lives, sometimes with the individual tragically ending their own life.

Furthermore, parents are key when it comes to bullying. They need to first realize that their actions affect their children. If the parents act right, then the children will act properly. Parents also must be more aware about bullying by attending bullying awareness programs or anti-bullying conferences. The schools should hold informational sessions for all parents to attend. Finally, the parents must talk to their children about bullying, and understand how to monitor their children's behaviors. Equally, children must talk if they are being bullied, but the parents must be willing to listen. Adults are here to help guide children through their adolescence, and to protect them from harm. Teachers are also instrumental in the lives of children, and must recognize bullying too. They need to know what to do to prevent bullying and how to appropriately manage it. Ultimately, the lives of society's youth are of the utmost importance. Adults must start acting like adults, and change the bullying trend. Bullying has gone on long enough, and it only leads to devastation. If we all do our part, hopefully, the statistics will change.

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PHAGES TO THE RESCUE: THE WAR AGAINST  
ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

*by Melany Su*

Hospitals, where antibiotics are widely used, are one of the most suitable places for breeding invincible bacteria.

In any population of bacteria, there can exist a few bacterial cells with genes that code for antibiotic resistance. In recent years, methicillin, an antibiotic of the penicillin family, has lost some of its effectiveness against *Staphylococcus aureus*, a bacterium that often causes infections of the skin, respiratory system, and digestive system. According to a study by Dr. Jason Newland, physician at the Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics in Missouri, the number of children hospitalized with antibiotic-resistant staph infections increased ten times from 1999 to 2008 (Associated Press, 2010). When methicillin fails to exterminate all *S. aureus* bacteria in a patient, the surviving ones can exchange genes and reproduce, resulting in an entire population of methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA) that can only be eliminated by a more potent drug. In the past decade, health care specialists have come across an even more alarming problem—MRSA bacteria are developing resistance to vancomycin, a powerful drug often

used as a last resort (Sieradzki, Roberts, Heber, & Tomasz, 1999).

In a battle against these disease-causing agents, scientists are turning to bacteria's natural enemy for a solution. Just as some viruses infect and cause diseases in humans, so others infect and kill bacteria. Bacteriophages, literally "bacteria eaters," are found everywhere in nature—from murky river waters to human intestines. As the most abundant life form on earth, phages number over  $10^{30}$  and destroy half of the world's bacteria every two days (Deresinski, 2009).

A phage consists of a DNA-containing head, a syringe-like tail, and multiple tail fibers (Kursepa, Dabrowska, Switala-Jelen, & Gorski, 2009). When a phage approaches a bacterial cell's surface, molecules on its tail fibers recognize proteins specific to that bacterium (Bradbury, 2004; Deresinski, 2009). After attaching itself to its victim, the phage contracts its tail, injecting genetic material into the bacterium. The phage then hijacks its host, forcing it to produce new phages. At a certain time dictated by phage DNA (Wang, 2005), enzymes digest the bacterial cell wall, releasing new phages into the environment, where they attack other bacteria.

For over a century, before antibiotics were invented, scientists harnessed these "bacteria eaters" to treat diseases, a practice known as phage therapy. In 1896, British chemist Ernest Hankin discovered that water from the Ganges and Jumna Rivers could cure cholera (Parfitt, 2005; Deresinski, 2009). Frederick Twort, a microbiologist at the Brown Veterinary Hospital in London, observed a similar antibacterial phenomenon in 1915 (Bradbury, 2004; Deresinski, 2009). He grew bacterial cultures on agar plates and subjected the agar surfaces to doses of bacteriophages. Transparent spots, today known as "plaques," appeared in these cloudy, bacteria-occupied agar plates.

Felix d'Herelle, a French-Canadian microbiologist at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, was the first to attribute these observations to bacteriophages (Summers, 2001).

While stationed with French troops in 1915, d'Herelle concluded that phages promoted recovery from dysentery (Sulakvelidze, Alavidze, & Morris, Jr., 2001). After treating animal diseases with phage therapy, d'Herelle successfully attempted the technique on human beings, including four cases of bubonic plague in Alexandria, Egypt, and a cholera epidemic in Bombay, India (Deresinski, 2009; Kuchment, 2011; Summers, 2001). From then until the 1940s, phage therapy became highly popular. Commercial companies, such as the Société Française de Teintures Inoffensives pour Cheveux (Safe Hair Dye Company of France; now L'Oréal), marketed over-the-counter phage preparations (Bradbury, 2004; Deresinski, 2009; Parfitt, 2005). In 1923, d'Herelle and Georgian bacteriologist Giorgi Eliava co-founded an institute in Tbilisi that continues to produce therapeutic phage preparations today (Sulakvelidze et al., 2001). The Eliava Institute has developed new ways of administering their products, including powder, injections, and even biodegradable artificial skin applied to wounds, called PhageBioDerm (Deresinski, 2009; Parfitt, 2005).

Phage therapy in the West did not remain popular for long, though. Despite anecdotes of success, negative results such as toxicity, bacterial resistance, and inactivation of phage preparations by preservatives were observed (Bradbury, 2004; Foster, 2004; Parfitt, 2005). While phage therapy persisted in Germany and the Soviet Union, attention in the United States shifted to antibiotics at the advent of World War II. Longer shelf-lives, along with broad-spectrum effect, are all advantages of antibiotics over bacteriophages (Summers, 2001; Deresinski, 2009). The mixed results of phage therapy, and postwar avoidance of Soviet medicine, are additional possible reasons for which the technique was not embraced in the United States.

In response to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, however, Western countries have recently re-taken phage therapy into serious consideration. Bacteriophages offer several advantages over antibiotics. When applied to wounds, antibiotics decrease in concentration as depth into

the skin increases (Bradbury, 2004). On the other hand, because phages do not diffuse through tissue as regular chemicals do, but rather “hitchhike” the cells they attack, they can not only travel deep into wounds, but also reproduce in proportion to bacterial population (Parfitt, 2005). Furthermore, although bacteria can develop resistance to both antibiotics and phages, new phage preparations can be produced within days, and clinical trials have shown that phage cocktails can circumvent resistance. A new antibiotic, in contrast, takes years to develop.

Though antibiotics are still the main weapons against bacteria in the United States, research into the potential use of phages is well under way. Vincent Fischetti, bacteriologist and immunologist at Rockefeller University, studies phage enzymes that attack anthrax bacteria (Bradbury, 2004). PhageTech, a biotech company in Montreal, Canada, uses phage proteins to identify “weak spots” on bacterial surfaces, with the goal of developing more effective antibiotics (McGill University, 2002). Numerous laboratories have characterized various phages and collected their genomes to create phage libraries for reference (Deresinski, 2009).

Nevertheless, it may be a while before bacteriophages can replace antibiotics in clinical use in the United States (Parfitt, 2005; Summers, 2001); some specialists even doubt that this will ever occur (Stone, 2002). Motivating entrepreneurs to invest in phage therapy, a century-old—and therefore not very patentable—technique is a challenge in itself (Thiel, 2004). Furthermore, acquiring FDA approval for phage cocktails appears complicated (Fischetti, Nelson, & Schuch, 2006).

Despite these financial and legislative hurdles, bacteriophages may pioneer their way into fields where regulations are less stringent, such as the agricultural sector (Stone, 2002; Thiel, 2004). Scientists, however, have gotten us closer to the potential use of phages in clinical settings. Since d’Herelle’s time, the biological nature of phages has been better researched and understood, and both scientists

and companies are harnessing bacteriophages for medical purposes. Recently, wide use of antibiotics in western countries has fostered the growth of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and renewed interest in phage therapy. As investments in research and production continue to grow, phages may soon fully launch into clinics and hospitals, where they may begin to combat antibiotic-resistant bacteria.



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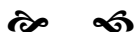
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## BOARD OF STUDENT EDITORS



**Walter! Bottlick** is a senior majoring in English with an emphasis in writing. He is also minoring in History. This is his third year as an editor for Magnificat. He writes fictional prose as well as the narrative for his own video game prototypes with the goal of becoming a part of the video game industry as a narrative designer. Walter! enjoys editing for Magnificat because it keeps his own writing skills sharp.

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**Ariel Marie McManus** spent her past three years serving as an editor for *Magnificat*. She hopes to find an internship at any museum, but she is mainly interested at working in an art museum, zoo or the National Air and Space Museum. At the moment, she volunteers with the education department at the Air and Space Museum while also writing a blog for Marymount University about her experience studying abroad in China and university life in the Washington DC Metro Area.

Born and raised in Taiwan, **Melany Su** came to Arlington in August 2010 as a freshman at Marymount. She is now a junior Biology and English double-major with experience in both dissecting frogs and dissecting literature (though the latter happens much more often). When not reading in the library or monitoring turtles in Dr. Rimkus's turtle lab, she enjoys being outdoors, where she finds most of her writer's inspiration. Melany has research interests in neurobiology, disability studies, and medical theology, and she hopes to pursue a career in medical ministry. Melany is thrilled to serve as a member of the *Magnificat*'s editorial board again this year.





