

EAPSU Online:  
A Journal of Critical  
and Creative Work

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# EAPSU Online: A Journal of Critical and Creative Work

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## Introduction

We are pleased to present the Fall 2013 edition of *EAPSU Online*. As usual, this edition offers a broad range of articles. *EAPSU Online* is known both for its breadth of subject matter and diverse critical approaches to disciplinary issues in English studies. The Fall 2013 edition keeps with this tradition.

Our opening article, Anthony Todd Carlisle's "Pauline E. Hopkins Protesting in Literary Fashion" contextualizes Pauline E. Hopkins's fiction writing in terms of Hopkins's journalism in the early twentieth century and her work as an editor of the *Colored American Magazine* from 1900 to 1904. Carlisle insists that readings of Hopkins's fiction must recognize her concerted effort to present African American domesticity in ways that challenged American racism.

Patricia D. Pytleski's "Crossing the Ideological Borders of Writing: The Fundamental Nature of Personal Writing (and Academic Discourse) In the First Year Writing Classroom" argues for the importance of personal writing in the college composition classroom. Pytleski posits that personal writing gives students voice and agency in their writing, allowing them then to use their own stories within academic writing. She situates her argument in terms of larger questions concerning cultural studies and academic foundations in other disciplines.

Cynthia Leenerts's "The Drover's Wives: Literary and Artistic Tropes of the Australian Bush" examines the trope of the itinerant sheep driver's wife (that is, "the drover's wife") in Australian literature. Leenerts analyzes multiple versions of this trope that have circulated from the 1890s to the present. She suggests myriad ways in which the many iterations of this character provide openings for discussions of Australian literature, postcolonial studies, and feminism.

Kim Combs-Vanderlaan's "Sexual Politics in Wharton's *The Reef* and *The Custom of the Country*" discusses how Edith Wharton's female protagonists reverse the power dynamics of patriarchy and assert control. Through readings of *The Reef* (1912) and *The Custom of the Country* (1913), Combs-Vanderlaan argues that sexual intimacy becomes a leveraging tool for women to negotiate power dynamics. She also considers the impact that Wharton's own affair with Morton Fullerton had on her writing.

Sandra Eckard's "Facebook as a Tool for Both Writing Centers and Academic Classrooms" offers a number of strategies for using Facebook to build cohesion among writing center tutors, create enthusiasm, and further opportunities for training and instruction. Eckard makes the case that Facebook is especially valuable because it allows for reflection within a social networking medium that students like to use and that is often already part of their day-to-day lives.

Last, we have poetry contributions by Lindsey Brodie, Shannon Bertoni, and Alex Jashinski, recent winners in the poetry writing competition hosted at the 2013 EAPSU Undergraduate

Spring Conference. These poems highlight the creativity and promise of students within the fourteen colleges of the Pennsylvania System of Higher Education.

We hope that you enjoy the 2013 edition of *EAPSU Online*.

Sincerely,

The Editors

Dr. Jeffrey Hotz  
Associate Professor of English  
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

&

Dr. Kim McKay  
Associate Professor of English  
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

## **Pauline E. Hopkins Protesting in Literary Fashion**

***Anthony Todd Carlisle, California University of Pennsylvania***

The recent attacks made by many prominent persons upon our race, and the efforts which have been made in some states in the South to deprive our people, by legislation, of the political and other rights guaranteed us by the Constitution, make it imperative for us everywhere to appeal to the conscience and heart of the American people.

This can only be accomplished by making our white brothers and sisters realize the work we are doing, and that, in a single generation after the abolition of slavery, we have produced not only farmers and mechanics, but singers, artists, writers, poets, lawyers, doctors, successful business men, and even some statesmen.

—*Colored American Magazine* March 1904 (Hopkins, *Daughter* xxvii)

At the turn-of-the century, Pauline E. Hopkins as editor of a major literary magazine found herself in a position of power few women, African American or white, could imagine. As an African American woman, Hopkins wielded a great amount of influence not only to use her journalism to fight racism and discrimination, but also to create a space for literature to act as an agent of protest. Also as a woman of color, Hopkins saw it as her goal to fight against racial stereotypes of African Americans, particularly of African American women, who suffered from the black mammy and mulatto seductress images of the day. Hopkins's decision-making as editor of the *Colored American Magazine* promoted images in the magazine that ran counter to the negative stereotypes of African Americans. She chose stories and subjects to write about

that spoke to black history, humanity, and success. She celebrated black culture, and she painted a picture of black life through words and pictures that aligned black values to American values, ultimately demonstrating that African Americans were worthy of all rights associated with U.S. citizenship.

In this essay, I argue that Hopkins protested racial injustices by creating a counter image of African American life through her journalism and fiction in her work at the *Colored American Magazine*. I will demonstrate how Hopkins used journalism and fiction to create an image of African American domesticity and family life that paralleled American domesticity. Further, I will show how she created a social reality of black life by constructing an African American past through both her biographical journalism and in her fiction. Lastly, I will show how Hopkins used the issue of miscegenation in her journalism and fiction as a destabilizing factor in a segregated society, intentionally blurring the line between white and black life in a further attempt to construct a black reality congruent with the myth of white America.

My consideration of Hopkins examines her journalism work during the period between 1900 and 1904, when she served as editor of the *Colored American Magazine*. In addition, I focus on her three novels—*Hagar's Daughter. A Story of Southern Caste Prejudice* (1901-1902); *Winona. A Tale of Negro Life in the South and Southwest* (1902); and *Of One Blood. Or, the Hidden Self* (1902-1903)—and her short story “Talma Gordon” (1900), all published in the *Colored American Magazine* during this period.

Hopkins's most prolific writing happened at a time America entered a new era of institutionalized racism and sanctioned discrimination. The black press, to which Hopkins was a member, called on America to live up to its promise of democracy. Arthur and Ronald Johnson

in their essay “Away from Accommodation: Radical Editors and Protest Journalism, 1900-1910” contend that Hopkins use the Boston-based magazine as a vehicle to merge protest journalism and literature (Johnson and Johnson 325-26). Nellie McKay says, “One of her primary goals for *CAM* was that it should inspire the creation of an African American art and literature that would demonstrate the talents and skills of the group and prove to the rest of the world that black people, only recently released from slavery, were already as culturally advanced as other groups” (McKay 5). By the summer of 1900, she was named editor of the Women’s Department and by 1903, she had earned the title of magazine’s literary editor. As a leader at the magazine, she set the tone for the magazine and ensured stories were being published that would uplift African Americans.

Although her contribution to the magazine, to black literature, and to black struggle was great, Hopkins languished in obscurity for many years after her tenure with the *Colored American Magazine* ended in 1904. Her writings were more or less forgotten during the Harlem Renaissance and Black Arts Movement. She was rediscovered after a biographical article by Ann Allen Shockley in 1972 was published. Most of these scholars agree that she is a talent who has been under-appreciated, under-valued, and misunderstood. Hopkins has largely been dismissed because her stories follow the conventional dime-store sentimental romance novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She also has been particularly maligned by scholars for her use of mixed-race characters and her playing with racial stereotypes that equated beauty and virtue with near white appearance. However, many scholars, such as Kristina Books, are starting to reevaluate Hopkins’s rhetorical use of mulatto characters. In “Mammies, Bucks, and Wenches: Minstrelsy, Racial Pornography, and Racial Politics in Pauline Hopkins’s *Hagar’s*



*Daughter*,” Brooks argues that Hopkins used these caricatures to include the tragic mulatto to fight racism by “confronting turn-of-the-century racism with visible proof that racial barriers were indeed artificially constructed and imposed, using a strategy that nearly one hundred years later, ironically leaves her open to charges of elitism and accommodationism” (124-25). Nevertheless, even in Brooks’s defense of the writer, she also argues that Hopkins sent mixed messages, which undermined her protest. If Hopkins’s literature is viewed in the context of her work as a journalist and editor at the *Colored American Magazine*, however, there is no ambiguity, and there are no mixed signals of her intentions. Once one understands how her creative production was informed by her journalism, Hopkins can be appreciated for the protest writer that she was.

Other scholars have examined her work through the feminist/historical lens. For example, Hazel Carby’s “Of What Use Is Fiction,” argues that Hopkins’s fiction represents black women’s bodies being colonized by white men and that she uses historical fiction that squarely addresses slavery to tackle the contemporary issue of the raping of African American women by white men. While I agree with Carby’s basic reading, I believe a clearer and more complete picture of Hopkins’s work is possible when one considers her journalism. Hopkins uses her fiction and nonfiction to reclaim black women’s bodies and identities as something to be revered and protected. In fact, in her stewardship of the *Colored American Magazine*, she stresses black womanhood as a great virtue to be admired and contends that “maligned and misunderstood, the Afro-American woman is falsely judged by other races. Nowhere on God’s green earth are there nobler women, more self-sacrificing tender mothers, more gifted women in their chosen fields of work than among the millions of Negroes in the United States”

(Hopkins, *Daughter* 115). It should come as no surprise that Hopkins's editorial decisions are dedicated to the rebuilding of the image of the African American woman. Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins's work on black female stereotypes is important in understanding how critical Hopkins's work was and still is today. For example, Collins explains how the "sexual stereotypes of women of African descent as jezebels not only justified rape, medical experimentation, and unwanted childbearing inflicted upon Black women but it covered up Black women's protests as well" (58-59). Hopkins, again, attempted to reclaim the bodies of African American women by destroying the white-male manufactured stereotypes in her protest writing.

Hopkins's task in normalizing the African American and the African American family had to come through the African American woman, the vessel of life. After all, it was through the bodies of black women that the slave industry was promulgated, nurtured, and sustained. Hopkins sees freedom coming through the bodies of African American women as mother, as wife, as pillars of society. Her emphasis on women, particularly black women, puts her in company with other African American writers of the period such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Anna Julia Cooper, Gertrude Mossell, Fannie Barrier Williams, Victoria Earle Matthews, and Mary Church Terrell. According to Wallinger,

In all these writers there is decidedly feminist tone, a firm conviction that the African American woman has a role to occupy in the fight against oppression and discrimination, that she has more than sufficient material to write about, and that, above all, over the course of history, she has commanded respect and admiration. (138)

Like these women before her, Hopkins did not and would not abdicate her role to men to speak out against injustices, particularly injustices felt often by African American women. She was a woman's voice in a sea of men's voices.

Hopkins's images, editorials, news stories, and fiction were used to create images of African American domesticity that subverted stereotypical representations of black family life. Hopkins's use of these devices taps into an agenda-setting function described by Toshio Takeshita in the essay "Exploring the Media's Roles in Defining Reality: From Issue-Agenda Setting to Attribute-Agenda Setting." Takeshita explains how the media, through images, create or attempt to create a social reality. Takeshita's pulls from Walt Lippmann's work, saying "it is one of the principal functions of the media to mediate between 'the world outside' and 'the pictures in our heads.' The media provide information that is a major component of our 'pictures'..." (qtd. in Takeshita 15). Takeshita explains how the study of the media's influence on creating a social reality has been a major research component for mass communication (15), saying, "the cultivation analysis advanced by Gerbner and his associates has investigated how and to what degree TV portrayal of reality (mostly in fictional content such as dramas and movies) influences and homogenizes the viewers' conceptions of social reality" (15-16).

In the early twentieth century, Hopkins was trying to create pictures in the minds of her readers. In fact, not only was she trying to create a social reality of black life for whites to consume which might then change their views of African Americans, but she also created these images for African Americans to inspire their growth. Through her work at the *Colored American Magazine*, Hopkins featured African Americans who were as cultured as the most cultured white citizen. Images of African Americans pictured in the pages were those people of

distinguished character, great beauty, extraordinary achievement, and who were ultimately and undeniably American.

One picture that stands out is the “The Young Colored American,” which ran September 1900. The photo is of an African American baby boy sitting on top of the American flag with his index finger pointing to the sky and with a smile on his face—indicating he is the face of America. According to Tanya Clark, the magazine editors were going for pure imagery, saying, “The stars and stripes stand out clearly, and a corner of the flag, covers his lower body. The baby picture used the African American family’s hottest commodity—its youth—and linked it directly to the future to America” (88). Most noteworthy, however, is a detail not mentioned by Clark, that the boy is dark-skinned—no racial ambiguity here. In Hopkins’s promotion of blackness as beautiful, intelligent, and American, the African Americans pictured in the *Colored American Magazine* run the spectrum of color from the almost white to caramel colored to the darkest of skin tones. The images that she uses in the magazine are of African Americans, and they are beautiful and intelligent-looking, debunking the racial stereotypes of the time. In her journalism decisions, one can ascertain the full breadth of Hopkins’s appreciation for her people, which may not be as evident in her literature. She saw achievement and beauty in all shades, and these images and stories were proudly displayed in her magazine. In fact, I would argue that Hopkins was extremely conscientious in her inclusion of the array of African Americans in the magazine. In her journalism, she redefined beauty subversively with her inclusion and promotion of African Americans who were not always mulattos, nor tragic.

Again for Hopkins, through pictures and words in her journalism and in the pages of her magazine, images of black life emerge that are similar to white life. African Americans have the

same hopes and dreams and desires for their lives. They conduct business in the same manner, live their lives in the same manner, and rear their children in the same manner. They achieve, they fail, but they are Americans. They are beautiful and demure like Mrs. Marshall Walter Taylor, pictured on the September 1902 cover of the *Colored American Magazine*. They are stately and dignified like the magazine's owners, Walter W. Wallace, Jesse W. Watkins, Harper S. Fortune, and Walter Johnson, pictured on the May 1901 cover. They are homemakers, teachers, pastors, poets, factory workers, soldiers, mothers and fathers.

There probably was no greater place that Hopkins brought home this point of a universal black domesticity and black family life than in her series of biographies of everyday African Americans that ran in the magazine. In her piece "Elijah William Smith: A Colored Poet of Early Days," Hopkins paints a picture of a domicile that is comparable to white affluent homes during the late nineteenth century. In Hopkins's depiction of Smith's home, we see an African American entertain friends and neighbors in his home just like any white family:

For many years he lived at the corner of Smith court and Phillips street in intimate association with the dearly loved, tried and true leading men of his race, and its white friends, Garrison, Phillips, Sumner, Wilson, Francis Jackson, Gov. Andrew, and all the rest of those stars of the first magnitude, loved Elijah Smith and visited him, finding in his brilliant intellect fit meat for thoughtful minds. Mrs. Smith library contained the leading writers and most of the books written by colored men. The walls of his house were covered by the pictures of the leading spirits in American history, and one could not but feel the air of culture and refinement pervading his home. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 278)

Hopkins, in her quest to provide a snapshot of black life, packs a great deal in these three sentences. Not only do we get a sense of an African American living in a beautiful home with his wife, but we see a man who is called upon by other men of esteem, white and black. We see a home that is graceful, dignified, and intellectually stimulating because of the African American inhabitants. In her bid to show that African Americans live normal/American lives, she conspicuously points out that the books on Smith's shelf are written by African Americans. Hopkins draws a connection between African Americans and American histories by informing the reader of the historical portraits on the wall. Hopkins creates an image of African American home that is as American and tied to America's past and history as any white person's home. Often in her fictional work, she sought to show that African Americans were not some exotic "other," but lived like white Americans.

Hopkins places special emphasis on family. For example, she writes in detail of the makeup of the family: "Mr. Smith's immediate family included his wife, two daughters—Mrs. Annie Paul Sims and Miss Hattie Smith—since married to John M. Burrell, Esq., a promising young lawyer of Boston—Mrs. Susan Paul Vashon, his sister, well and favorably known in the southwest as public school teacher" (Hopkins, *Daughter* 278). Through her writing of these people and the identification of these folks as lawyers and teachers, Hopkins is creating what I will call the Bill Cosby<sup>1</sup> effect, which creates/highlights a new image/reality of African American life that is convincing to readers, both black and white. For Hopkins, who grew up in a household of some influence, these were not empty pictures. These were her realities, and she

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<sup>1</sup>Comedian Bill Cosby's television show *The Cosby Show*, which ran from 1984 to 1992, featured an African American upper middle-class family where the father was a doctor and the mother was a lawyer. This comedy broke new ground as one of the first shows to portray African Americans as middle class and professional.

wanted to recreate those realities. Here is a picture of Smith, who is deceased by the time of her writing:

He was the life and soul of the domestic circle, and in the society of his dear ones at home he passed his happiest hours. No husband and father was ever more truly mourned than Elijah W. Smith. By his daily life he sought to inculcate a comprehensive Christianity. His religious enthusiasm and love for his church, his upright character, and patience during a long illness, all present an example rare and beautiful. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 283)

According to Hopkins, Smith represents a dignified African American man looked like and how he lived, and by creating biographies such as this, she tears down old stereotypical images and builds up new reality-based ones, showing that African American life is multifaceted.

In another example of creating a picture of black life through biographies is Hopkins's "Charles Winter Wood; or From Bootblack to Professor." In this article, she describes this young African American's man's journey from poverty to a position of influence. His story is as American as any white man's success story. In this article, Hopkins describes how Wood was born in Nashville in 1871 and after living there for nine years, he moves to Chicago, where he works as a bootblack and a newsboy. The story discusses how he, through his intellect, attracted the attention of a Justice Jarvis Blume, who brings him in contact with a Professor Walter C. Lyman. Wood ends up working for Lyman, who also trains him in the ways of the theater. Later, Wood is accepted into Beloit College; he later moves on to Chicago Theological Seminary, graduates, and becomes a pastor, and at the time of the news article, he was continuing his education, pursuing a doctorate. In stories such as these, Hopkins recast the

American Dream, which is now being pursued by African Americans. Like other African Americans, Wood is not the exception; he is the rule in this pursuit of American life.

The same could be said about the Rev. John Henry Dorsey, who is highlighted in the pages of the magazine in October 1902. Dorsey, the second African American to be ordained to the Roman Catholic ministry, is celebrated by Hopkins for his rise to this great distinction in public life. Hopkins writes about Dorsey, who is unlike the depiction of African American men at that time, to counter the image of black men as dangerous: “His countenance is most benignant, his manners suggestive of poise, reserved strength, social tact and great delicacy of feeling. To the discharge of his sacred duties he brings a mind thoroughly consecrated in the fullest sense to his priestly calling” (Hopkins, *Daughter* 264). In this description, she combats the stereotype of African American male as beast. Here is a man who is poised, thoughtful, and rational. Hopkins says he has a “reserved strength.” She purposefully omits descriptions of his physical stature because if she focuses on his physical strengths, it will play to the stereotypical brute image. Dorsey is a man with “reserved” strength, which is quiet, understated and controlled. Lastly, in this quote, she describes his mind as “thoroughly consecrated.” She shows that he is a spiritual, being dedicated to Christianity in contrast to being some heathen “other.”

Hopkins was mindful to include women in her several biographies. In “Mrs. Jane E. Sharp’s School for African Girls,” published March 1904, Hopkins discusses the work that Mrs. Sharp was doing in Africa with the goal to raise money to go to constructing a school for girls in West Africa. In Hopkins’s description and characterization of Mrs. Sharpe, this African American woman is seen as refined womanhood. By discussing Mrs. Sharp’s work in Africa, Hopkins shows Sharp as a well-traveled/worldly woman. Also by discussing Sharp’s charitable work,



Hopkins shows that the woman acts and lives with a higher social purpose than most people. Money also seems to connote refinement, and Hopkins is sure to mention that Mrs. Sharp married into money through her union with “Mr. Jesse Sharp, a wealthy coffee planter...” (Hopkins, *Daughter* 301). Mrs. Sharp, a product of Boston Girls High School, is a pillar of the community: “Mrs. Sharp is brilliant in conversation and well-versed in the literature of all nations. Ideality in her is well developed, and adds a touch of romance to a personality at once queenly, yet touched with deep humility” (Hopkins, *Daughter* 301). Again, Hopkins does not hold up Mrs. Sharp as the exception; she is just one of many dignified African American women featured often in the magazine. Hopkins’s use of her journalism presents African Americans in all walks of life doing all sorts of feats that racist ideology would argue impossible for these people to do. Hopkins, through her biographies, paints a picture of an oppressed people, less than forty years removed from the Civil War, who have been able to climb society’s ladder in a short time, even in the face of constant discrimination. In all of her choices she creates images of African Americans who live like their refined white counterparts. They are as American as any American except their skin is darker, which she tells readers through words and shows through pictures in the magazine.

As Toshio Takeshita discusses, through the images Hopkins uses in the magazine and the stories and editorials she writes, she creates a new social reality not just for white readers, but African American readers as well. Her journalism continues to show that African Americans do live and behave in a respectable manner, contrary to negative stereotypes. For her African American readers, Hopkins provides them with a barrage of African American achievement to show them that this can be their reality—they also can achieve, should expect to achieve, and

they should strive to achieve. Hopkins does what Takeshita explains that the media do in reporting, creating a new reality, so to speak: “A pseudo-environment provided by the media is assumed to serve as a ‘common world’—socially recognized area of subjects” (18). Through her journalism, Hopkins created a social reality that she hoped her black and white readers could share and experience.

Moreover, Hopkins’s journalism sets the stage for her fiction and allows her fiction to continue in the agenda-setting function of creating pictures in the heads of her readers. When Hopkins included her fiction in the pages of the *Colored American Magazine*, she incorporated pieces that emphasized the same themes as her journalistic non-fiction. Hopkins provides readers with African American characters who are achievers, who are noble, who are refined, dignified. Her African American characters are brave, intelligent, much like the people—famous and not so famous—Hopkins writes about in the pages of her magazine. Hopkins’s creative mind is a byproduct of her journalistic mind. Thus, much of her creative work features African American families who experience domesticity akin to white American families. Often in her fiction, she places much emphasis on the mother and child relationship. In Hopkins’s fictional writing, families are where children are nurtured and loved and taken care of by parents in what looks to be traditional American homes. Hopkins creates these stories and images by design to combat stereotypical ideas held over from slavery. Proponents of slavery often viewed their slaves as being detached from human feelings and familial bonds. That thinking by slave owners made it easy to separate mothers from children and wives from husbands. In promoting her message of black family life in her fiction, Hopkins’s literary device was one of subversion. In her fiction, Hopkins can redefine and recreate black family as she sees fits.

One way Hopkins protested racism and discrimination was through what I call the use of “blackening,” a play on the old notion that one-drop of black blood makes an individual black. In Hopkins’s fiction, one black member in a white fictional family “blackens” that family. For example, a black ancestry somewhere in the family’s past turns a white fictionalized family black. When writers in the African American literature tradition played with the notions of passing and the tragic mulatto, the idea of blackening gained currency. Just as in passing narratives, these characters function as white people, and this allows the author to subtly and subversively demonstrate how black families function in a manner that is not much different from white families, especially when given the same opportunities to improve themselves.

In her efforts to create pictures for protest, Hopkins “blackens” several of her fictional families by creating a strain of black blood somewhere in the family’s past. For example, in the short story “Talma Gordon,” the family appears white but is “blackened” generations earlier on the mother’s side of the family. “Talma Gordon” spins a tale of a prominent “white family” of means in which the father, mother, and brother are murdered and suspicion falls on the two sisters—Jeannette and Talma Gordon, with Talma ultimately being tried and exonerated in her family’s murder. After Talma is cleared of the murder, the revelation of Talma’s and Jeannette’s black heritage through their mother is discovered. Jeannette, who is dead at this time, leaves a letter behind to Talma that reveals the secret. What we learn is that Talma’s and Jeannette’s mother, Miss Isabel Franklin of Boston, was adopted by the wealthy Franklins. Isabel’s mother was an “octoroon girl who had been abandoned by her white lover” (Hopkins, “Talma” 660). Because the baby looked white and because of the Franklin’s Northern upbringing, they had no problem raising Isabel as their own. Isabel was lavished, loved, and was given a large

inheritance, but by the legal and social mores of the community, she was an African American woman. Thus, in adopting Isabel as their own, the Franklins are “blackened.” Yet, nothing about the Franklins changes outwardly. Taking in a black child knowingly, the Franklins “stain” themselves—they become Negroid and assume all the risk that goes with this decision. They care for their child, thus creating a black family dynamics for unsuspecting readers. They have become a black family, and what Hopkins wants us to believe is that this is a typical black family—eventually marrying Isabel off to Captain Jonathan Gordon. Isabel and Captain Jonathan, who become parents to Talma and Jeannette, are a black family— albeit, unknowingly. Their daughters are raised in the family’s tradition of wealth (which is, ironically, wealth gained through their black mother) and are afforded opportunities that come with that wealth. Although black by social constructions of race, they live a “white” existence. But this family is a typical American family, as Hopkins would have us to believe: “Jeannette was tall, dark, and stern like her father; Talma was like her dead mother, and possessed of great talent, so great that her father sent her to the American Academy at Rome, to develop the gift” (“Talma” 653). What else makes these black young ladies, Talma and Jeannette, as American as any white American is being descendants of early colonists. Their family, through the father, has been in America since the beginning: “The Gordons were old New England Puritans who had come over in the ‘Mayflower’; they had owned Gordon Hall for more than a hundred years” (Hopkins, “Talma” 653). We see the cycle of blackening of families recur at the end with the mingling of Talma’s African American blood with white Dr. William Thornton’s white blood through matrimony. Hopkins creates subversion with a “black family” that appears to be white.

In Hopkins's novel, *Hagar*, white characters and white families also are blackened. *Hagar* reads like two stories, which eventually merge at the end. The first half of the story the reader meets Hagar and Ellis Enson both from white southern aristocratic families. The two fall in love, marry, and have a daughter together. They are enjoying life as slave owners of a large plantation when their marital bliss is interrupted by the entrance of Ellis's brother, St. Clair, and slave trader, Mr. Walker. Mr. Walker claims and proves that Hagar was born a slave, and she was taken away from him by the Sargeants, Hagar's adopted parents. After the revelation, Ellis first rejects Hagar because of her "black blood," but he eventually decides he will take her abroad with the child. Before that happens, St. Clair and Mr. Walker attempt to murder Ellis, but unbeknownst to them, they fail. Ellis returns in the second half of the novel as a new person. Meanwhile, Mr. Walker takes control of Hagar and her baby with the intention of selling them. After being sold, Hagar jumps off a bridge with her baby, and the two are presumed to be dead.

In the second half of the story, Hopkins fast forwards twenty years later and many of the old characters reappear with new identities as they have tried to escape their pasts. Hagar is now Estelle Bowen; St. Clair is now General Benson; Mr. Walker is now Major Madison; and Ellis is now Chief Henson. Their identities are discovered at the end with the conclusion of a dramatic court scene. The plot revolves around Cuthbert Sumner, who is betrothed to wealthy socialite Jewell Bowen. Cuthbert is set up by General Benson (St. Clair) and Major Madison (Mr. Walker) in the death of the office secretary Elise Bradford, who works for General Benson. General Benson (St. Clair) and Major Madison (Mr. Walker) want the secretary out of the way, so she does not expose or disrupt the men's intentions of stopping the marriage of Cuthbert

and Jewell Bowen. General Benson and Major Madison, along with Major Madison's daughter, Aurelia, come up with this scheme to go after the Bowen fortune. Aurelia will marry Cuthbert and General Benson will marry Jewell Bowen to gain access to her fortune. After Cuthbert is framed and jailed in the murder of the secretary, Jewell Bowen hires Chief Henson (Ellis), a detective to help clear her fiancé's name. The truth comes to light with the final courtroom scene where the trio are revealed (identities as well as nefarious intentions), and General Benson and Major Madison are implicated not only in the death of the secretary but also in the attempted murder of Ellis years earlier. Estelle Bowen (Hagar), the widow of the late millionaire Sen. Zenas Bowen, recognizes Chief Henson as her beloved Ellis. Once the plot and characters are revealed, Ellis (Chief Henson) reclaims Hagar (Estelle Bowen), widowed prior to the trial. Ellis and Hagar also reclaim their daughter Jewell, whom Hagar thought she lost after her leap into the river. Sen. Zenas Bowen saved Jewell from drowning when she was a baby, and he and his first wife adopted the child as their own. After the death of his first wife, Bowen meets and marries Estelle (Hagar) who becomes Jewell's stepmother, not knowing in reality she was rearing her own child. Zenas kept items found on Jewell during the time of her rescue, which would prove that Jewell was the baby that Hagar sacrificed twenty years earlier.

Starting with Hagar's parents, the Sargeants, again we see Hopkins creating an artificially constructed black family that becomes "blackened" with the addition of Hagar, a child of African American descent. Later we see the Bowens, Estelle and Zenas, raising their black daughter Jewell. Hopkins is allowing us to witness a black household, black domesticity. Although these characters function as white characters, the reader discovers that these characters are not white and that the mother and daughter are African Americans through

lineage. Jewell is raised in privilege, with culture and with doting and loving parents. Although Hagar and Jewell appear white, they are black because of their black blood, and as a result of his marriage and fatherhood, Zenas, who is white, becomes blackened. African Americans are loving and have loving families. It may appear that Hopkins undercuts her arguments because the characters live a white existence, but I would argue that only strengthens her case—these people are American regardless of skin color or racial constructs. Upon revelation of their African American heritage, these characters, although conscious of their lowered status in a racist country, there is no major shift in their behaviors or personalities.

Hopkins again creates Black domesticity in an unlikely environment in story of *Winona*. In this novel, again we have a white father, but one who lives as a Native American. I would argue again that the white father, White Eagle, lives a black existence because he marries a fugitive mulatto slave and with her fathers his mixed-race daughter, Winona. White Eagle adopts Judah, the son of another fugitive slave who died trying to escape. In societal terms, White Eagle is no longer white because he has infused African American blood into his family, thus, “blackening” himself. This family, in their multi-raciality, is the American family, which is only disrupted when slavery becomes part of the mix. White Eagle teaches Judah his ways, preparing him for manhood. White Eagle’s lessons stay with Judah even when father is gone and Judah is enslaved. Hopkins writes, “Warren thought him a superb man, and watched him, fascinated by his voice, his language, and his expressive gestures. Slavery had not contaminated him. His life with White Eagle had planted refinement inbred” (*Winona* 335). White Eagle also imparted lasting values and love to Winona. He showed this black girl that she should be honored and revered. White Eagle, the doting father, pampered Winona as seen in this

passage, “Winona was queen of the little island, and her faithful subjects were her father, Judah and old Nokomis” (*Winona* 290). White Eagle dotes on his dark daughter. And she, like Daddy’s little girl, loves her father dearly. What we get is Hopkins’s creation of a black family that is American in tradition. However, with the entry of slavery, the family is destroyed, in keeping with the historical disruptive effects of this institution. Slavery murders White Eagle and sentences his children to a life of servitude. Because White Eagle has blackened himself through his family relationship, he can be killed with impunity. And again slavery is the destabilizing factor in the relationship among black families. In fact, slavery challenges the notion of family as a whole.

There is no greater place where we see this destabilization of slavery on a black family than in Hopkins’s book *Of One Blood* (1902-1903). What makes this story even more telling is that nearly forty years has passed since slavery. When two brothers unwittingly marry their sister, this situation harkens to slavery’s past, where family members might have been forced to have intercourse as a way to procreate for the purpose of profits. *Of One Blood* in its intricate plot, is the story of medical student Reuel Briggs, who is passing; Aubrey Livingston, a “white” friend who finds out about Reuel’s identity; and Dianthe Lusk, a fair-skinned African American gospel singer who they both fall in love with and marry. Shortly after meeting Dianthe, Reuel saves her life and cares for this woman who has lost her memory. Reuel does not reveal to Dianthe their racial identities, and he marries her. Aubrey, who appears to be a friend, but is really an enemy, uses his knowledge of Reuel’s identity to steal the man’s wife away from him. Aubrey reveals Reuel’s secret, which keeps him from finding a medical position in the United States. Through Aubrey’s advice, Reuel applies for and earns a medical job that



takes him to Africa, where he is part of a crew searching to uncover treasure in Ethiopia. After Aubrey tells Dianthe the truth of her racial identity, he has her believe that Reuel is dead. Aubrey marries her and takes her to his home in the South. As these events unfold, Aubrey kills his fiancée, so he can be with Dianthe and Reuel learns he is the royal descendant to the Ethiopian throne. Also what is revealed is that all three of them have the same parents—white father and African American mother. Ultimately, Aubrey kills Dianthe, then must kill himself, and Reuel returns to Africa to marry his Ethiopian queen and govern.

Moving beyond the unwieldy plot, what we see with the two main African American characters is a traditional domesticity that one would find in a typical white household. We see an African American man capable of providing a home and great love to his wife; in fact, he so wants to please her and keep her in a lifestyle fitting of her (African American queen), he sacrifices by leaving the country to find work prior to consummating the marriage:

Her husband drew the fair head to his bosom, pressing back the thick locks with a lingering lover's touch. "I wish to God I could take you with me," he said tenderly after a silence. "Dear girl, you know this grief of yours would break my heart, only that it shows how well you love me. I am proud of every tear." She looked at him with an expression he could not read; it was full of unutterable emotion—love, anguish, compassion. (*Of One Blood* 499)

Even Aubrey in his diabolic way is searching for secure domestic life as well, and he, too, tries to provide it for Dianthe. Aubrey values family and domestic living, and Hopkins shows that this is innate in all people not just white people. Aubrey with his money creates a home most would be proud of, but he does it without love and under false pretense—a recipe for failure in

marriage/family, white or black. Hopkins's use of Aubrey, Reuel, and Dianthe, as with her journalistic biographical sketches, are used to break down stereotypes and paint whole pictures of African Americans and African American life.

In all of these examples, Hopkins uses color subversively as she promotes black family domesticity. She does this in two ways—she provides a picture of a seemingly white family whose members are actually African American, and she moves to blacken white families that go knowingly or unknowingly into familial relationships with members who have African American blood. Hopkins's slight of hand techniques allow people to read these characters as they appear without passing racial judgment. Again, Hopkins blackening her characters harkens to the passing narrative in the African American literature tradition. Just like the characters in the passing narrative tradition are not what or who they appear to be, Hopkins's characters and families are also not who they are believed to be. Phillip Brian Harper, quoting Amy Robinson, author of "Forms of Appearance of Value: Homer Plessy and the Politics of Privacy," contends racial identity classification is a capricious construct, allowing for passing because "appearance is assumed to bear a mimetic relation to identity, but in fact does not and can not" (qtd. in Harper 382). Using Robinson again, Harper contends it is because appearance signs can be inconclusive that passing "jeopardizes the very notion of race as a biological essence, foregrounding the social contexts of vision by calling into question the 'truth' of the object in question..." (qtd. in Harper 382). As Hopkins dismantles stereotypes, she turns the notion of race upside down with her use of blackening in conjunction with the already slippery slope of passing. In all of these fictional instances, we are witnessing loving and nurturing black families who produce children who grow up to be respectable adults. Hopkins's black household is no

different than a white household except for the threat of slavery. Hopkins plays bait and switch with the character's color to gain a wider audience and acceptance of her fiction. But because of this literary device, Hopkins's works have been misunderstood and criticized. However, juxtaposing her fiction to her journalism work, Hopkins is crystal clear on her position about what black families look and act like and that these strong families are tied to the success of not just the black community, but American society. She creates an African American domesticity universal to American domesticity in both her journalism and fiction.

What Hopkins also does when she creates the image of an African American family life in both her journalism and in literature is provide a clear link to an African American past. Hopkins, particularly in her journalism work, wanted to create and highlight a past of achievement and substance for African Americans. Through a past history, African Americans could start the process of human validation-- something that Hopkins saw sorely missing as she writes, "The Negro's right to be classed as a man among men, has been openly doubted, nor do we find this doubt removed in the dawn of the Twentieth Century..." (Hopkins, *Daughter* 114). One of the major criticisms of African Americans and a justification to discriminate during the first part of the century was the argument that they had no place in history and had made no real contributions to society. As far as many white Americans were concerned, Blacks were a product of a white America who brought them here, named them, gave them Christianity, and cared for them. The belief was that African American life and their history started in America. Using journalism and fiction in the pages of the magazine, Hopkins linked African Americans to the race's heroes of the past through biographical sketches of historical figures. Hazel Carby explains, "The network of these relations between *Of One Blood* and other, nonfictional articles

in the *Colored American Magazine* indicated the extent of an intertextual coherence, achieved under Hopkins's literary editorship, which aimed at the reconstruction of a sense of pride in an African heritage" (159-60). As Carby points to, Hopkins's goal through journalism and fiction was to create a true picture of African Americans contribution to mankind.

Again, Hopkins's journalism led the charge in protesting stereotypes and creating a past for African Americans. In her efforts to restore a past, Hopkins ran two series in the *Colored American Magazine*: "Famous Men of the Negro Race" and "Famous Women of the Negro Race." In these series, she highlighted such African American luminaries as Toussaint L'Ouverture, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Sergeant William H. Carney, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman. In her article "Toussaint L'Ouverture" published in November 1900, Hopkins provides a detailed history of Toussaint and his bravery and leadership in liberating the enslaved people in Haiti. Hopkins describes Toussaint in terms like valiant, intelligent, brave, leader, tactical, moral, loyal and just. She made a point to write he was a "Negro of unmixed blood" and Senegal African (Hopkins, *Daughter* 14). His admirable characteristics were not tied into the blood line of whites. His character traits were wholly his own and wholly African. And not only was Toussaint a brave African soldier, but his men were as well with their proud African blood and natural courage, "But think of the rise of the Haytian slaves under a slave! Armed with nothing but their implements of toil and their own brave hearts..." (Hopkins, *Daughter* 21). She contends men like Toussaint should be used when judging and understanding those of African heritage. In her historical recreations, she saw her task to equate individual greatness to the body of the African American community. She wanted to

demonstrate that greatness was not an aberration, but was in the bloodline of African Americans of the day:

Races should be judged by the great men they produce, and by the average value of the masses. Races are tested by their courage, by the justice which underlies all their purposes, by their power and endurance—the determination to die for the right, if need be. If the Negro race were judged by the achievements and courage in war of this one man, by his purity of purpose and justice in times of peace, we should be entitled to as high a place in the world's relation of facts respecting races, as any other blood in the annals of history. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 12)

Hopkins, by remembering the past history and dispelling the notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority and African inferiority, is using subversion to create a new social reality. The reality, as Hopkins saw it, included a history as long as the human race and as fruitful. Her social reality gave African Americans a past that stretch beyond slavery. Furthermore, Hopkins saw telling this history of African Americans a divine mandate. She believed that for African Americans to move from the bottom of the human ladder that knowledge of their historical past and people must be told as mandated by God. In her “*Toussaint L'Ouverture*” article she says, “History has recorded these deeds, and they shall be known; God intends it so!... there raised our bethel consecrated by the life-blood of the brave black man. History has recorded that, also, and it shall be known; God intends it so!” (*Daughter* 21-22). Not only does Hopkins recreate a heroic and noble history of African Americans, but she is bold enough to say that God has mandated this history to be known. Hopkins reiteration of a divine mandate plays to a society steeped in Christian beliefs.

Hopkins was at her best in journalism or fiction when she connected African Americans to Africa. The stereotypes of Africa prevailed and ruled heavily throughout the twentieth century; Africa, viewed through Western racial lens, was seen as dark, as heathen, and as primitive by white Americans and often a badge of shame by African Americans. However, Hopkins's reporting showed that Africa was not a dark continent, but a mature civilization enlightened in literature and art. Often in her reporting, she carefully explained how Africa was the cradle of civilization and that Europe and America owed Africa a great debt. Her writing on Africa enabled her to create a touchable past for the African American whose reality had cast him as a construct of the white man. Hopkins creates a new narrative to be read, owned and shared. African Americans do have a glorious past. After resigning from the *Colored American Magazine* in 1904 and later writing for the *Voice of the Negro*, Hopkins published a five-part series "The Dark Races of the Twentieth Century" in 1905 (Hopkins, *Daughter* 305). However, prior to that, anytime Hopkins had a chance to highlight Africa and Africans in the *Colored American Magazine*, as in her "Famous Women of the Negro Race VII: Educators" published June 1902, she always did. She writes,

Rome got her civilization from Greece; Greece borrowed hers from Egypt, thence she derived her science and beautiful mythology. Civilization descended the Nile and spread over the delta, as it came down from Thebes. Thebes was built and settled by the Ethiopians. As we ascent the Nile we come to Meroe the queen city of Ethiopia and the cradle of learning into which all Africa poured its caravans. So we trace the light of civilization from Ethiopia to Egypt, to Greece, to Rome, and thence diffusing its radiance over the entire world. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 169)

Through tedious research and copious reporting, Hopkins, in the tradition of W.E.B. Du Bois, used her journalism to set the record straight about Africa, its people, and its origins. Also like Du Bois, she took a Pan-African view as she thought of protest for African Americans in a broader sense. She created a picture of an African past and heritage to protest against misrepresentations and inaccuracies about African Americans and their historical worth to civilization. Hopkins uses the tenets of journalism-- accurate, detailed, and thorough reporting-- to advance this historical understanding of African American life. Her thorough reporting on the origins of man lends credibility to her writing when she takes on these subject matters in her literature. The literature is a nice counter balance for those who might not be receptive to a history lesson in the newspaper, but more acquiescing of a history lesson tucked within the confines of a fictional narrative: "The *Colored American Magazine's* desire to use her fiction to get through to 'those who never read history or biography' implies a preference for using narrative rather than conventional historical apparatus (such as citation) to communicate effectively with its readers" (Dworkin xxxviii).

Although her fiction and journalism both are designed to protest, they attract different audiences. Hopkins writes about Africa in her fiction for both African Americans and whites; Africa is a mystical place, but not one to be fearful or ashamed. In *Of One Blood*, Professor Stone discusses with Reuel how Africa has been misrepresented by revealing truths about that continent that people are unaware: "You and I, Briggs, know that the theories of prejudice are swept away by the great tide of facts. It is a *fact* that Egypt drew from Ethiopia all the arts, sciences and knowledge of which she was mistress" (Hopkins, *Of One Blood* 520-21; her emphasis). Hopkins uses fiction as a way to correct ignorance and serious misrepresentations.

Here in her telling of the story Hopkins is acting in the capacity of a reporter—she is providing vital information to her readers. We see another example of this in her writing of Africa in *Of One Blood*, when Professor Stone explains to his fellow travelers the history and the importance of Africa and particularly Ethiopia:

For three thousand years the world has been mainly indebted for its advancement to the Romans, Greeks, Hebrews, Germans and Anglo-Saxons; but it was otherwise in the first years. Babylon and Egypt—Nimrod and Mizraim—both descendants of Ham—led the way, and acted as the pioneers of mankind in the untrodden fields of knowledge. The Ethiopians, therefore, manifested great superiority over all the nations among whom they dwelt, and their name became illustrious throughout Europe, Asia and Africa. (*Of One Blood* 531)

In *Of One Blood*, Hopkins skillfully defines America's association with Africa, playing on both the perceptions and misrepresentations of this continent. In several incidents, we see incredulous reactions from both African Americans and white listeners of Professor Stone's revelations. Hopkins understands in her protest of racial stereotypes and prejudices against Africa, she has to destabilize long-held beliefs to influence how Americans think about Africa, hence, how they think of African Americans. She has to do it for the characters in the book as well as the readers of her book. But this is no easy task as evidenced by the white character Charlie Vance, who can hardly believe Professor Stone's explanation how Africans created civilization: "Great Scott!" cried Charlie, 'you don't mean to tell me that all this was done by *niggers*?' Even Reuel, who is half being sarcastic and half being incredulous, questions Professor Stone's findings about African civilization and its relationship to the western world:



“Your theories may be true, Professor, but if so, your discoveries will establish the primal existence of the Negro as the most ancient source of all that you value in modern life, even antedating Egypt. How can the Anglo-Saxon world bear the establishment of such a theory?” (*Of One Blood* 520). The question that Reuel might have very well asked was how would he bear such a theory? In fact, how would African American readers bear such a theory? Thus Reuel, who expresses shame about hiding his heritage, becomes a metaphorical agent for discovering Africa. As he comes to learn and gain pride in his African blood, the reader, particularly the African American, learns and gains pride in Africa. The reader discovers as Reuel discovers his African heritage. There is a level of revelation that Hopkins wants not just for Reuel to experience but for her African American and white readers to understand as well of Africa’s, hence, the African American’s past. This is demonstrated when spiritual leader Ai quizzes Reuel about his attempt to flee from his African heritage saying, “And yet, from Ethiopia came all the arts and cunning inventions that make your modern glory. At our feet the mightiest nations have worshipped, paying homage to our kings, and all nations have sought the honor of alliances with our royal families because of our strength, grandeur, riches and wisdom” (*Of One Blood* 560). Ai wants Reuel to remember and Hopkins wants society to remember the contribution of the African. Again, Hopkins’s series “Famous Men of the Negro Race,” which she started in 1900 speaks directly to her hopes of cultivating racial pride in African American history.

Her decision to lead the series off with Toussaint L’Ouverture gives us an indication of the importance she placed on Pan-Africanism, in general, and in Africa, specifically. To talk about Ouverture, who Hopkins informs us was “of the Senegal African race,” she can talk about

Africa and its people. Later in 1901, when Hopkins writes her biographical sketch of Sergeant Carney, she says he “is an African of, I should think, full blood...” (*Daughter* 75). Here again, she does not hesitate to connect this African American to Africa. In her piece, “Phenomenal Vocalists,” written in 1901 as part of the “Famous Women of the Negro Race,” Hopkins provides a history lesson about Egypt and its connection to African Americans. Nearly two years prior to the publication *Of One Blood*, Hopkins, in her journalism, is trying to resurrect Africa’s and African American’s image through pieces she writes. She constructs a history in both her journalism and fiction that enables those of African descent to move with pride, and she does it in such a manner, like a good reporter, using details and evidence to back up her claims. She creates a new historical reality of the African and his origins through her journalism and fiction in the *Colored American Magazine* and by doing so, an agenda-setting function is occurring, allowing Hopkins to change the pictures in her readers’ heads.

Lastly, in Hopkins’s attempt to create a social reality of African American life through her magazine, she uses the issue of miscegenation in her journalism and fiction as a destabilizing factor in a segregated society, intentionally blurring the line between white and black life in a further attempt to construct a black reality congruent to white America. Again, the issue of miscegenation is where Hopkins’s reputation and intentions have seriously been called into question. Because of the creation of these near-white characters and interracial relationships in her fiction, Hopkins has been maligned by scholars, who again see her perpetuating stereotypes that African Americans are only legitimized through white blood. Sigrid Anderson Cordell says,

Hopkins's ideology appears inconsistent, or at least problematic, because of her concomitant valorization of light-skinned European ideals of beauty and her advocacy of amalgamation. Some critics have questioned why almost all of her fiction features blonde-haired, blue-eyed mulatto protagonists, and, further, why, as Vashti Lewis points out, there are no "dark-skinned African-American major female character [s]" in Hopkins's four novels. Scholars have long criticized Hopkins's novels for, as Julie Neraud puts it, "implicitly arguing an assimilationist politics because her Black characters—many of whom are 'mulatto'—are too physically and socially 'white.'" (60)

Unlike those scholars, McKay contends that Hopkins work was militant-nationalistic in its presentation, and Hopkins published like minded fiction—fiction that spoke of oppression saying, "She called for black protest literature, unconciliatory to all forms of white oppression, and opposed other kinds of literature that did not denounce all oppression of blacks" (McKay 5). As McKay contends, Hopkins work did not sell out. Hopkins's decisions in her fiction all had the same aim even if it appears as if she is partial to white Western thought. And again, if her journalism is juxtaposed to her literature work, we can get a true understanding of where she stands in terms of interracial relationships.

In Hopkins's addressing of interracial relationships in her journalism, she does not speak softly. In fact, some of her positions are similar to Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the great nineteenth century anti-lynching crusader who attacked the claim that anti-miscegenation laws were developed to protect white women from black men. Like Wells-Barnett, Hopkins contends that white women have freely associated with black men, and when they, on occasion, cried rape, it

did not necessarily mean they had been raped. Hopkins in the article “Rev. John Henry Dorsey” published in 1902 in the *Colored American Magazine* stated,

The Southern white woman poses in the eyes of the world as the most virtuous of women. We sincerely hope she is. But human nature is the same the world over, and we mark the fact that handsome Negroes cut a wide swath in some communities. And the sin brings its punishment in lynchings and burnings and the torments of the accursed—to the Negro. No guilty woman hesitates one instant to sacrifice her dusky lover to save her reputation. (*Daughter* 266)

Hopkins also explained often in her journalism that just as the white woman victim/ black male perpetrator is a falsehood, so is the idea that the white man is a proponent of keeping the races pure. Questioning the use of legislation to bar interracial unions, Hopkins points out the hypocrisy of white Southerners in one column article published in 1903, “The Anglo-Saxon argues that no fouler blight can fall upon his race than the curse of intermarriage with former slaves, forgetting that the ‘shaded Afghan’ which represents the present conglomeration, once pure African, was contributed by the blood of the Southern whites” (*Daughter* 208). She often pointed to the hypocrisy of the white man who for years lusted, raped, and cavorted with black women. In slavery and in the early part of twentieth century, she argued, white men were the greatest contributors to creating mixed-race children while condemning the practice. Again, Hopkins argues in her journalism that one cannot police interracial desire. It is not realistic. The picture she paints, the social reality she tries to create, is to show that it is natural for blacks and whites to be attracted to one another and to form relationships.

Due to amalgamation, many of Hopkins's fictional characters are near white and are able to pass in their race-conscious environment. Those who would argue that Hopkins's protest literature is weakened by her "promotion" of interracial relationships only need to look at her journalism to get a true account of her position on miscegenation. In her article "Black or White—Which Should Be the Young Afro-American's Choice in Marriage" published March 1903, while Hopkins argues that people should be allowed to marry outside of their race, she is not, contrary to belief, a supporter of interracial relationships, stating, "To the young Afro-American who hesitates between black or white in his choice of a life partner, I say 'Don't!' This time for amalgamation is not yet. In the company of the beautiful, virtuous and intellectual of your own race, lie health, happiness and prosperity" (*Daughter* 214). Although it appears that Hopkins contradicts herself, she does not. Her position has always been for the right of interracial relationships not the promotion.

Furthermore, Hopkins contends that when African Americans have joined in matrimony with white people, often they married "down." According to Hopkins, it was the African American stock that was "polluted," so to speak, in this exchange, not whiteness. She said in the North, where the practice was more accepted, African American men married white women who were far from refined and virtuous. She viewed these unions with regret:

We find no fault in this if the Negro unites himself to one who is in all things his equal—morally and intellectually. But we are sorry to say, the reverse often happens, and no men entail upon themselves and their children the deadly association of a nature vile, miasmatic and filthy, dealing the death to all hope of moral cleanliness. (Hopkins, *Daughter* 209).

In her attempt to protest stereotypes, here again we see Hopkins creating a new social reality that debunks the virtuous white woman myth and the black male rapist. She seeks to cultivate a critical mindset that questions whether that African Americans are the ones who risk pollution when they engage in interracial relationships. She turns upside down the idea that white womanhood is a virtue to be sought; rather, a black man who binds himself with a white woman often does so with little return on his investment. But even, in her fiction, she rarely (if at all) introduces relationships between African American men and white women. Scholars who believe she promotes interracial relationships simply overlook this obvious point. I believe her sole purpose of writing about white men and African American women is an act of irony and subversion, nothing more.

Her journalism seems to be a contradiction to the lives shared by her characters in her fiction, many of whom are products of interracial relations and who also engage in interracial marriages/relationships. Again, I would say, even though it appears a contradiction, Hopkins's fiction supports her position in her journalism with regard to amalgamation and miscegenation. What we see in her journalism is that Hopkins believes in and fights for is equality and the right for those to choose their own life partners. She sees no room for discrimination in matters of the heart, thus, she does not support legislation that would prevent people from marrying outside of their race. On the other hand, although Hopkins believes in the right for people to marry outside of their race, she really is not a promoter of interracial relations. Hopkins, though, is a realist. She writes in both her journalism and fiction that the mixing of the races is not new and in fact, white males are the main culprit, "Anglo-Saxon blood is already hopelessly perverted with that of other races, and in most cases to its great gain. Well, if it is so, what of

it? The world moves on; old ideas and silly prejudices disappear in a fog of ridicule” (Hopkins, *Daughter* 262). Here is the reason that we see these interracial couples and products of interracial relations in her fiction. Again in the three novels and the short story we examine, the main characters are biracial or mixed-race and all are involved in or products of interracial relations. In fact, these relations appear normal, common, nothing out of the ordinary. Brooks argues that Hopkins uses miscegenation to subversively attack racial discrimination, but contends it is “problematic” because it appears to push the idea of “lightening up”:

By countering legal, social, and literary prohibitions against relations or marriage between individuals identified as racially different, Hopkins can be viewed as a protest writer. However, because she uses the literary stereotypes of the tragic mulatto... Although her strategy is to destabilize racial difference through representations of mulatto characters and interracial unions, Hopkins’s objectification of racial difference in several caricatures results in a mixed message about the value of African American identity. (121)

Scholars contend that she uses these interracial relations and mulatto characters to show how capricious race and discriminatory laws based on skin color actually are. In her fiction, her interracial characters make that point by moving within a “white world” easily. Where the contradiction appears is when Hopkins uses the tools of the enemy to help undermine the enemy.

Hopkins’s message is especially not mixed when you connect her journalism writings, particularly those addressing interracial marriage, with the characters in her books. Her journalism position is not different than the position she takes in her fiction. However in her

fiction, she must be more subversive. Her goal, although appearing so, is not to promote interracial relations; her goals are to subversively create a social reality that shows miscegenation is natural, has occurred for many years, and is not a detriment to white America. In fact, in both her journalism and literature, her job is to show that miscegenation is a reality of black life—that it is a reality in American life—and that African Americans and whites share the same blood:

Throughout her fiction, she examined topics widely considered taboo and usually excluded from conciliatory journals. She assailed conventional theories of race, declaring that the boundary separating black and white was fictive. *Wiona*, for instance, begins in a ‘mixed community of Anglo-Saxons, Indians and Negroes... (Johnson and Johnson 327)

While in her journalism work she protests loudly against the boundaries separating black and whites, her fiction dealing with these issues is much more subtle and subversive. In her fiction, the social reality she creates is one that shows these particular relationships as longstanding and normal, especially in the South. She demonstrates how the social order has not been destroyed by the mixing of the races. I argue that her greatest reason for creating mixed race characters, who are “*really*” black because of the prevailing one drop of black blood rule, is to show these African Americans as they really are as people rather than as the stereotypical caricatures, created by racist ideology. These characters are used to debunk racial stereotypes. These characters are used to give black men and women a footing in American society as Wallinger succinctly argues, “Her fiction set out to persuade the skeptical white reader that



colored characters could possess impeccable manners and morals, social refinement, and sophisticated political thought” (144).

Hopkins has to make them light, half white, appearing to be white, to attract an open-minded white readership. She wants these white readers to see these black characters as beautiful, intelligent, moral, religious, and Americans, thus building the psychological apparatus that would enable them to extend those thoughts to real African American men and women. She subversively makes the argument that black blood does not demean, but helps create something better---it enhances. She also wants to ensure that white people keep an open mind about her stories by creating characters that look like them.

When she does create interracial relationships in her fiction, she most often uses white men and black women as the model in an effort not to offend. Hopkins understands for her protest to have some traction in her fiction, she can only present interracial relationships that will not offend white sensibilities. She is not trying to be an accommodation; however, she is labeled as one, much like her contemporary African American writer Charles Chesnut as Cynthia A Callahan explains,

Over the course of his career, and of the century, critics have accused Chesnut of, at best, ambivalence toward the act of passing and, at worst, of being an ‘accommodationist.’ While there may be legitimate evidence to support these perspectives, part of the ambivalence attributed to Chesnut can be accounted for by an evolving critical attitude toward passing novels. (Callahan 317)

With that changing wind on passing narratives, Hopkins literary reputation suffers in much the same way as Chesnut’s. For her protest to work, she needs white folks also to read her stories

and not be turned off from the story on the onset. She can only make her case if people are reading. She can only change minds if people are reading. Nonetheless, Hopkins still encountered objections to using white men and black women as subjects of her interracial love stories. For example, white reader Cornelia A. Condict was particularly incensed by Hopkins interracial love affairs, dropping her subscription, and writing that “The stories of these tragic mixed lovers will not commend themselves to your white readers and will not elevate the colored readers” (qtd. in Johnson and Johnson 327). Hopkins was undaunted by Condict’s admonition, writing, “I am glad to receive this criticism for it shows more clearly than ever that white people don’t understand *what pleases Negroes*” (qtd. in Johnson and Johnson 327). Hopkins’s response to Cornelia Condict provides excellent insight into why she used mixed-race characters and interracial relationships to protest conditions of African Americans at this time. Hopkins believes that showing these characters, who can pass, who look white, will more often than not elicit some empathy from white readers who could identify with these characters because of appearance. These mixed-race characters, many of whom believe they are white and live a “white existence,” provide a compelling story of African American life for white America. To her white readers, Hopkins could very well be asking, “What would you do if all of a sudden you realized you were African American as Hagar, Jewell, Talma and Jeanette discovered?” “How would your life change?” and “Could you bear the new position in this caste system?” Hopkins, using these near-white characters to provide insights to an unsuspecting white reading public, shows what it means in America to be African American. By the time these white readers realize these characters are of mixed race, they have already understood them as people, have learned their characters, and have seen their virtues. Hopkins seems to

be saying here are the stories of these people, here are their real characters—take heed. Without understanding the role of her journalism, many scholars will miss the role of her fiction in terms of protesting America’s racist social order.

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**Crossing the Ideological Borders of Writing:  
The Fundamental Nature of Personal Writing (and Academic Discourse)  
In the First Year Writing Classroom**

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At least one English Composition course is required of all students at all universities and colleges in the United States, regardless of major or concentration. Although the course is often seen as a means to fulfill a requirement or fill in a box on a course grid sheet, I attempt in my own “required” Composition/First Year Writing (FYW) at Kutztown University to have students enjoy writing and to recognize its value. My model of the FYW course encourages students to become better writers who are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and of their own processes. To accomplish this goal, I familiarize students with personal writing and then academic writing samples, some basic Composition and Rhetoric theory, Cultural Studies based topics, and the benefits, acceptable occasions, and audiences of both styles. My students compose essays in which they synthesize both personal and academic writing forms later in the semester.

Lacking in many of my students’ prior writing experiences is any encouragement or acceptance of personal writing as argument and evidence; from their high school English classes, most of my students know nothing besides academic writing, usually composed in the five paragraph essay format away from which higher education professors often direct them. Although these students may have experience writing in a more academic, formal way, these same students are often ignorant of how to do so correctly and effectively.

Unfortunately, students are taught to think that personal voice within writing is not “good college writing,” when in actuality, it often makes the best kind of writing possible and helps students become better writers in general. Fostering an academic writing mode in isolation, writing instructors fail to encourage students to incorporate their own voices and write about their own lived experiences; thus, they ignore this valuable writing practice. In doing so, they lessen students’ motivation and interest in writing and create a border between the two writing modes, which students find difficult to cross unguided and later when trying to blend the two styles of writing. Once personal writing as argument and evidence flows into students’ compositions, oftentimes, they enjoy writing more, feel more invested in the topics and overall products, and value the act of writing. The type of personal writing to which I refer consists of analyses of personal experiences, perspectives, and arguments, not just narratives of events that only recount a story.

Recently, one student from my Fall 2013 English Composition class, in response to being asked about the strengths of the FYW course on an end of the semester course evaluation, wrote, “I really liked that we did some personal writing. Throughout high school, I hardly ever did any... It feels very refreshing that I can finally put my own voice into papers” (Anonymous student). Once I demonstrate to my students that their writing is valued and that their voice is validated, they then build upon their knowledge of personal writing and learn more about how to compose academic college essays more effectively and how to synthesize personal and academic writing together successfully to benefit their arguments. The synthesis of these two practices within composition courses leads students to become successful writers who like to write.



In academic discourse centered composition classes, at the high school or collegiate level, students are asked to compose essays in a dialect and structure of which they are ignorant. Students who are unaccustomed or uncomfortable with the standardized language and convention bound discourse fail because they have difficulty translating their own language, experiences, and modes of expression into the format required by the academy. The encouragement of personal writing in the composition classroom would allow all students to speak from their own experiences and modes of expression, gain interest and confidence as writers, and allow them to later be more capable of succeeding as academic writers. Fostering personal writing in the FYW classroom, through which essential essay elements can also be taught, will help these students to eventually crossover the boundaries of writing into academic discourse.

When academic writing is taught in isolation, students can experience the same difficulty and frustration felt by the basic writers that Patricia Bizzell discusses in “What Happens to Basic Writers When They Come to College?” She states, “the academic community uses a preferred dialect [so-called ‘Standard’ English] in a convention bound discourse [academic discourse] that creates and organizes the knowledge that constitutes the community’s world view” (Bizzell 297); this community is the academy. According to David Bartholomae in “Inventing the University,” academic discourse asks students to “appropriate [or be appropriated by] a specialized discourse,...to learn to speak our [the academy’s] language, to speak as we do” (Bartholomae 134). By incorporating both the language and formalized mode of academic writing, Bartholomae notes that “the student has to invent the university for the occasion... to try on particular ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating,

reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community” (Bartholomae 134). Joseph Harris, in “The Idea of the Community in the Study of Writing,” examines this academic community, pointing out that

We write not as individuals but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns, and practices both instigate and constrain, at least in part, the sorts of things that we can say. Our aims and intentions in writing are thus not merely personal, idiosyncratic, but reflective of the community to which we belong. (12)

Thus, this community from which the students must appropriate their language is the university, or academy, “and its various and competing discourses become [its] language” (Harris 13). This sense of community not only shows students what discourse should be adopted, how it should be adopted, and when it should be adopted, but it also positions them to be either insiders, who can acclimate themselves successfully to the community’s discourse, or outsiders, who cannot.

Patricia Bizzell examines the “outlandishness” (294), or the feeling of being outsiders, that writers, especially basic writers, feel as they come to college. Her analysis relates to many FYW students as well. She examines these “outlanders” in regards to three ways these students encounter difficulties at the academy. Either they experience “a clash among dialects” (294) where their home dialect differs greatly from the standardized English seen at college, a “clash... of discourse forms” (295) where they are unfamiliar with the “genres of academic writing” (295), or a clash between ways of thinking including the differences between their home world view and the academic/ new world view they are asked to adopt (296). She states that “the academic community uses a preferred dialect [so-called “Standard” English] in a

convention bound discourse [academic discourse] that creates and organizes the knowledge that constitutes the community's world view" (297). Students who are unaccustomed or uncomfortable with the standardized language and convention bound "genres of [academic] writing" become outsiders because they have difficulty translating their own dialect, experiences, and modes of expression into the format required by the academy. As a consequence, they have great difficulty in their composition courses when they are asked to only write academic discourse, even though they have had experience with it.

The focus on claims, evidence, support, and other general "college writing" conventions that has been fostered by high school English teachers and some professors and instructors demands a specific, argumentative, formalized style of writing that encourages the critical analysis of texts over the detailed description of personal experiences and arguments. Academic discourse is an approach in which students are taught to make claims (on topics that seem interesting and important to both the students and other informed members of society) that are supported by evidence. Students are asked to learn and recreate writing modes (such as cause/effect, compare/contrast, definition, etc.) without any usage of personal experiences or arguments. Students in these classes are discouraged from including personal arguments and expressionistic discourse, yet they would succeed and value their writing if encouraged to compose personal writing and then eventually to compose academic discourse or a synthesis of the two forms. Even Peter Elbow, a voice of expressionist pedagogy and personal writing, acknowledges in his essay, "Reflections of Academic Discourse: How It Relates to Freshmen and Colleagues," that academic discourse is important to college writing. Elbow states that students

need [academic discourse] for the papers, reports, and exams they'll have to write in their various courses throughout their college career... If we don't prepare them for these tasks, we'll be shortchanging them...and put[ting] them behind the eight ball in their college careers. Discourse carries power. (135)

In addition to his statement about the place of academic discourse at the university and the power it carries, Elbow also affirms, however, that the discourse does not benefit first year students and that few students will have to use it after college: "The writing that most students will need to do for most of their lives will be for their jobs- and that writing is usually very different from academic discourse" (136). He would prefer a writing course to encourage students to do more writing in the everyday lives; "if we teach only academic discourse, we will surely fail at this most important goal of helping students use writing by choice in their lives" (136). Despite Elbow's opinion that academic writing has limits in its real world applications, he sees its place and importance at the university, as do I. That said, students often cannot compose successful academic discourse recommended in their FYW courses.

Additionally, in its insistence that students implement a specialized discourse in order to be successful, academic discourse relates to one of the main arguments of cultural studies. Oftentimes, in FYW classes, students discuss and write about cultural studies based topics. I have worked at two Pennsylvania colleges, Lehigh University from 2003-2007 and at Kutztown University from 2007 through the present; all of the FYW classes that I have taught and discussed with colleagues deal with these issues. Interestingly, personal writing aligns itself much more to these cultural studies topics discussed within our courses than academic discourse does. These courses should foster personal writing not only because the discussion

topics are most easily and successfully written about using personal writing and arguments, but because some the foundation of academic discourse, more widely conceived throughout the university, is in conflict with the tenets of cultural studies.

Put simply, cultural studies argues that the subject is not autonomous but is shaped by various discourses. Before examining relevant, current cultural studies issues, I make my students familiar with the background of cultural studies and examples of it in practice, including in terms of ideologies at work within their lives. In the first year writing classroom, many students who are asked to write academic discourse not only feel like outsiders because of their ignorance, but they are not autonomous and free to write as they please; rather, they are subjects that are shaped by an educational ideology that asks them to write the specialized discourse of the academy in order to succeed. The question of subjectivity is central to the formation and development of cultural studies and its application in composition classes.

Although the desired effect of combining academic writing and cultural studies topics would be to incorporate the strengths of each practice into a stronger synthesis of both, these two approaches have proven to be, in some ways, incompatible and even antagonistic to one another regarding their overall aims and methodologies and can also possibly cause adverse effects on composition programs and students. When incorporating these two practices into the writing program, other practices, such as personal writing, could be a beneficial supplement or replacement to the composition program and remedy some of the differences of interpretation. The inclusion of personal writing can remedy this collision of ideas and help students to create writing that matters to them.

In his response to David Bartholomae in “Interchanges: Responses to Bartholomae and Elbow,” Peter Elbow voices his views on personal writing versus academic writing. This discussion relates to the academic community in which students find themselves when discussing cultural studies topics. Peter Elbow articulates as a goal in writing instruction that “students should keep writing by choice after the course is over [by] trying to find words for one’s thinking and experience and trying them out on others...[he] want[s] them to get there by a path where the student is steering, not [the instructor]” (92). Elbow states, “The goal is for student to think for themselves and not be dupes of others thinking for them” (91). According to James Berlin in “Poststructuralism, Cultural Studies, and the Composition Classroom: Postmodern Theory in Practice,” cultural studies claims subjects are not autonomous, not able to think for themselves, and not necessarily “the author[s] of all [their] actions” (Berlin 18). As Berlin puts it, in this model,

each person is formed by various discourses, sign systems...[and] these signifying practices then are languages that tell us who we are and how we should behave in terms of such categories as gender, race, class, age, ethnicity and the like. The result is that each of us is heterogeneously made up of various competing discourses, conflicted and contradictory scripts, that make our consciousness anything but unified, coherent, and autonomous. (Berlin 18)

Thus, through the examination of the ideology behind cultural studies, students discover that when writing the prescribed academic discourse, they are not the authors of their actions and are not necessarily doing what Elbow wants them to, thinking for themselves. Rather, in a course based on cultural studies texts, students are encouraged to examine and be freed from

the ways society and its competing ideologies attempt to manipulate and shape the choices and decisions these students make. Students are shown how they are not necessarily responsible for their own actions; rather, to fit into acceptable societal roles, they are being manipulated to act in specific ways by outside forces.

In this type of cultural studies classroom, writers are not autonomous or free to write however they choose. Rather, to be insiders, they must adopt the educational ideology, however unnatural and difficult, which is the specialized discourse of the academy in order to succeed. Since most students have already experienced ideological shaping related to their educations—and the way they fit into the power structure in the classroom with the instructor as the authoritative figure telling them how to succeed academically—they accept not being the independent authors of their actions but rather the followers of a specialized discourse maintained by college instructors that determines their place and success at the university. Their unquestioning acceptance of the academy's type of writing has a conflicting relationship with the analysis and examination that cultural studies instructors require of these students.

In fostering cultural studies in FYW courses, we teach our students to analyze the world around them and begin to think for themselves about how different ideologies affect them, including educational ideologies; yet, the conflict between the two practices exists because, in mandating any form of academic discourse at all, most instructors also require that they write within a specific, formalized discourse identified as the writing of the academy. Academic discourse conflicts with the message of cultural studies because it does not allow students to have agency and decide how they want to present their knowledge in writing. The field not only encourages students to examine the cultural constructs around them, but also to question the

way in which these cultural constructs, like the academy's requirement of academic discourse, shape their own lives and decisions. According to Nancy Grimm in her text, *Good Intentions: Writing Center Work for Postmodern Times*, "Even though educators increasingly encounter students who do not share their cultural values and mental models, they still expect students to somehow magically become more like them" (Grimm 12) by writing the dominant discourse of the academy. An inconsistency exists between these two ideologies: one imposed by cultural studies, of questioning the various shapings of social institutions, and a form of another ideology, academic discourse, that allows little room for student questioning in regards to their writing. Grimm states that "Students seem to have no choice but to conform" or, as she puts it, "they will hurt themselves in the long run" (57).

By mandating academic discourse and discouraging personal writing, instructors demonstrate the same forced ideological shaping that they encourage their students to analyze and question in the world around them through cultural studies based discussions. Imagine what the inclusion of personal writing could offer students: a way to acknowledge this forced ideological shaping and voice their views about it in personal writing while still having agency. Students could at least be actively engaged in resisting this ideological shaping. Many FYW students come to our classes having some limited experience with academic discourse; they have been encouraged to compose 5 paragraph essays, but this form of discourse removes students' agency also when it asks them to plug information into a rigid, given format.

Louis Althusser, in *Ideology and Ideological Apparatuses*, calls this form of shaping interpellation (127). Does the academy, and its insistence on academic writing, interpellate first year composition students, mostly freshmen, to write "for the academy" or to "invent the



university,” (as Bartholomae calls it), in the only manner that is deemed appropriate in order to succeed? Students are encouraged to analyze how various ideologies shape them and affect their world, yet they are required, at the same time, to accept and quietly adopt (and not to question or oppose) the ideological shaping that occurs when they are forced to write academic discourse. Students are forced into an awareness of all of the ways they are being ideologically manipulated in society, except for the way they are being ideologically manipulated by the university through its encouragement of academic discourse. Additionally, the two pedagogies focus on different goals; cultural studies aims to raise students’ social awareness while academic discourse prevents them from making personal compositional choices that examine their varying subjectivities. The inclusion of personal writing as argument would remedy this collision of ideas and benefit students academically and emotionally.

When mandating discourse that discourages personal investment and subjective perspective, instructors encourage students to disembodiment themselves in order to write academic discourse, even if that discourse comes unnaturally or with lacking personal investment. One of the first questions I am often asked by students about their writing is if they can use “I.” They ask because they have been discouraged to write in first person. Students should be encouraged to use their own first person objective to rethink and challenges the limitations on their perspectives. They should be able to argue against ideologies present in the world without providing writing that is shaped by an educational ideology. We, as educators, want students’ ideas to grow and change as they mature, not stay steadfast from freshman year on. Rather than mandating a third person, objective voice within student writing, professors should encourage students to use “I” and examine their subjectivities, while also

being aware of other students' perspectives and personal spaces. It is only then, when students voice their views and share their related experiences, that they can re-examine their perspectives and perhaps alter these viewpoints. This type of writing should also be deemed as "good college writing," although oftentimes, it is not.

What has been considered "good college writing," academic discourse, is isolated and disconnected from the cultural studies topics, the students themselves, and the community of the classroom; therefore, oftentimes, when academic discourse is composed, it is often seen as a means to an end, a getting of a grade or meeting a requirement. It assumes all students and the instructor all think and argue the same way and in the same given format. Yet composition classes are composed of more than one student and one teacher. There are males and females from a multitude of ethnicities and backgrounds with varying belief systems. Therefore, we should ask them to write from their original perspective and to be proud of their arguments and what they have to say. We should not try to mold their thoughts into a specific form all the time. We should not make them all conform to be "insiders" to write academic discourse alone. None of our students should be seen as outsiders if they cannot acclimate right away to academia. First year composition classes should ask students to share their differences and to examine and possibly challenge their views.

Students should be encouraged to write themselves into their papers and share their work with a peer audience. Then, students are being asked to think and write critically, acknowledge their viewpoints in comparison with their peers, and to assert their views even more strongly once they have to defend them against varying or opposing opinions. Incorporating the personal into writing is essential for the creation of critical thinking and

writing that impacts the students. Elbow's earlier goal, for students to "keep writing by choice, steer their own writing, and to think for themselves and not be dupes of others thinking for them" (91) can be achieved through the inclusion of personal writing, not the isolated instruction of academic writing.

As stated, my FYW course assigns students to think for themselves about many cultural students based writing topics, one of which is an identity analysis (not a narrative). The class examines what identity is and can mean and reads various identity stories concerning racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual identity. Most of these essays are written from a first person perspective, not the third person perspective of academic discourse. A few of the texts students read were Teja Arboleda's essay, "Race Is a Four Letter Word," about his inability to fit in anywhere, Betty Shamieh's "Censoring Myself," about the censoring of her Arab American based writing in a post 9/11 world, Deborah Tannen's "Marked Woman, Unmarked Men" about female stereotypes based on external appearance, and Warren St. John's, "Meterosexuals Come out," about sexuality versus masculine and feminine gender stereotypes. We discuss the personal writing styles of these various authors, their ideas, and the choices they made to communicate their identities in writing to the audience.

Then students composed their own identity analyses. Most of them mention some of the reading from class to demonstrate how their identities are similar or different from the writers. These essays encourage personal writing (and possible academic writing) in a way that matters to the students; it is oftentimes the first time they are asked to think about how they define themselves. Additionally, these essays are usually the students' favorite piece of writing during the course. Following are two examples of students' compositions that focus on

personal writing but synthesize both forms of writing in meaningful ways. The writers examine their own experiences to formulate arguments and make meaning. The first writing sample is from a hearing impaired, non-traditional male nursing student; the second sample is from a traditional female freshman student.

From “My Silent World”

I have a hearing impairment, which is the inability to detect or understand sounds. The hearing in my left ear is nonexistent while the hearing in my right ear measures at about 70%. I lost my hearing to meningitis, which produced an extremely high fever that damaged the cochlea in both my left and right ears. While I accept my inability to hear normally and acknowledge it as part of who I am, it is not easy to be deaf and part of a world where the ability to hear is taken for granted. As I ponder my hearing ability, I am thankful for what hearing I possess, but always with the realization that I don't measure up. I am a man stuck between two worlds, the hearing and the deaf. Like Teja Arboleda, I question who and what I am and where I truly fit in.

Although Teja Arboleda's identity is linked to his multiracial background, my student identifies with his desire to fit in. Similarly, my second student discusses the questioning of identity but in a more external manner.

From "Finding Me In You"

I am 100% natural and I love it. From the crusty curls after my cowash to the softness of my twistouts. Even though I am neither African, nor African American, I am from an African descent, one that I inherited in my hair and my skin from. I have permed my hair, jerry curled my hair, dyed my hair black, and have added many types of braids to my hair. I have done it all. My hair is just one of the things that identify me. In Tannen's essay "Marked Women and Unmarked Men," she stated, "There is no women's hair style that can be called standard that says nothing about her" and while that is true, it is not the only thing that speaks volumes about a woman.

This student examines her identity in relation to gender and race, whereas the text she cites speaks only of gender. Neither of these writing samples would have had such an impact on the writers if they were not allowed to bring in their own personal experiences and arguments. These essays examined topics very essential to these students' identities, were an expression of their voices, and were more meaningful than most pieces of isolated academic writing could be. They showed agency and control and also blended academic writing into the essays to reinforce personal viewpoints and experiences.

The essential inclusion of personal writing into the composition classroom—in addition to the eventual instruction of academic discourse, and not as a replacement of it—benefits student writing success, aligns more closely with the cultural studies based topics of the course, and is meaningful to the students' lives. These students are able to learn about themselves, their views, and how these views have been constructed, while also experimenting with their

writing. By not just providing carbon copies of a given format, students are encouraged to use their voices to argue their views to make meaning of their worlds.

We want our students to succeed, but to me, this means so much more than completing an assignment for a grade (or checking the FYW course off of their course grid sheets) with little to no personal investment or benefit. Students should be engaged thinkers who think for themselves and perform critical inquiry of subjects that matter and impact their lives; we need to guide them and provide them with the necessary tools and models to accomplish this act. By providing personal writing instruction and models and later academic writing instruction and models, backed by Composition and Rhetoric theory and theorists, and asking them to compose themselves into their writing, we make writing matter, to the students in our courses, but hopefully also to them in other courses and eventually in their own lives. If we do not attempt to encourage originality and personal investment and to assign essays that matter to our students by aligning them well with the cultural studies topics of the course, we are doing a disservice to them. One student in my Spring 2013 FYW course wrote, "I learned a lot of good writing skills both academic and personal writing. It was great to be able to express my emotions... while at the same time applying them to my audience. I loved the freedom, and it made writing fun!" (Anonymous student 2). I greatly value student feedback of any form, but especially that which states that for the first time, because of the inclusion of personal writing, a student does not hate to write or hate English class and that he/she can see how writing can have an impact; students should be encouraged to make arguments with a written personal voice, a voice which may have otherwise been silent.

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## The Drover's Wives: Literary and Artistic Tropes of the Australian Bush

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Henry Lawson's 1892 short story "The Drover's Wife" focuses on an unnamed Australian woman who is married to a drover, an itinerant worker who contracts out to various sheep stations (ranches, in American language) to drive (drive) sheep on horseback from the station to the big-city markets. Lawson's short story shows up in nearly every general anthology of Australian literature. The story also appears in nearly all multi-regional postcolonial readers that carry Australian literature. Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" short story is about as prevalent as Banjo Paterson's near contemporary 1895 song "Waltzing Matilda," with unexpected pro-Union resonances. As it turns out, "The Drover's Wife" is at least as iconic as "Waltzing Matilda."

John Thieme's 1996 *Arnold Anthology of Post-Colonial Literatures* presents four stories of the same name, "The Drover's Wife": Lawson's story plus a 1975 story by Murray Bail, accompanied by a reproduction of Russell Drysdale's 1945 painting of the same name; a 1980 story by Frank Moorhouse, which is a fine spoof [of] academic conference papers gone bad; and a 1980 feminist talking-back story by Barbara Jefferis. Barbara Baynton's "The Chosen Vessel" (1902) and Anne Gambling's "The Drover's De Facto" (1986) are two additional important versions of "The Drover's Wife" story. I also own a painting of that name done by Daniel White, a former student of mine, who read the four "Drover's Wife" stories in the Arnold anthology and chose to illustrate a sentence from the Jefferis story ("I got down [from the horse] with him, holding him, and lay down with him behind some bushes") (266), with his

landscape, particularly the trees, showing a Drysdale influence. My former student's painting highlights the elasticity of this trope and its iconic interest for readers worldwide.

Sue Kossew, in her 2004 book chapter "The Violence of Representation: Rewriting 'The Drover's Wife,'" mentions many more versions of the "drover's wife," including Kate Jennings' 1996 novel *Snake*. Australian Classical Theatre produced it as a play in 2005. The Australian bush, and particularly the women who inhabit it, come in for representation again and again, well over a century. We also see the trope in the genre of film, Australian and otherwise: even Robert Mitchum and Deborah Kerr get into the act in their performance of Fred Zinneman's *The Sundowners*, in 1960.

Suffice it to say that Australians, and even some outside of Australia, have not finished commenting, directly or obliquely, on the Lawson story, and many of these commentaries take place in the form of retellings. In this article, I plan to set out, as briefly as possible, key Drover's Wife texts and to suggest explanations for the continuing focus upon both women in the Australian bush country, generally, and the intertextual Drover's Wife, whoever she is in a particular text. A collection of Drover's Wife texts offers a fine introduction to Australian literature and to post-colonial studies, and thus invites scholars and students alike to see both the limits and possibilities of tropes in the creation of cultural identities and knowledge.

In Lawson's 1892 story, the husband had been a squatter, someone who illegally occupies government land, fallen on hard times. Droving requires long absences from home, and the wife must cope with everything that befalls her, effectively running a small family farm—in Lawson's day, without electricity or running water: candles for light, a wood-burning stove, a creek or a well for water. Her last two children were born in the bush: one delivered

ineptly by a drunken doctor, the other skillfully by “black Mary, the whitest gin [Aboriginal] in all the land” (164). She lives in a harsh climate—usually dry, and often hot. Her two-roomed house is built of “round timber, slabs and stringbark [eucalyptus]” (162), with a large, dirt-floored kitchen. This particular woman, whom Lawson describes as “gaunt, sun-browned” (162), has four small (“ragged, dried-up-looking”) children, and her only real help and protection is Alligator, their dog.

Most of the action in the story takes place in the afternoon and through the following night, when one of the children discovers a snake, which promptly hides itself under the house. The snake can easily re-enter the house through one of the many cracks in the wood floor. As night falls, complete with a storm, the kitchen is their only refuge, with its large central table upon which the woman settles the children in for the evening while she and Alligator wait for the snake to emerge so they can dispatch it. As the night slowly passes, the woman sits awake—reading, sewing, keeping an eye on the children—and reflects upon earlier crises she has suffered alone: a bushfire, which she successfully put out; a flood, which she could not avert; cattle disease, which killed two of her best cows but spared others; and a rampaging bullock, which she killed. She remembers fighting off crows and eagles, protecting her chickens. And she also reflects about the time she had to outwit and intimidate a swagman (a term for an itinerant laborer who carries his bedding on his back) who, aware that her husband was away, announced his intention of turning in for the night. Rape is not mentioned here, but it is implied. Worst among her memories is the day when her baby took sick and died while she rode nineteen miles to get help.

Just before morning, the snake emerges, and she and Alligator battle it—she even has to force her oldest little boy, awakened by the commotion, back to the table to keep him out of the way. Between her heavy stick and Alligator’s strong jaws, they kill it—“a big black brute, five feet long” (167)—and she tosses its body into the stove’s fire. As she watches it burn, her oldest little boy declares, “Mother, I won’t never go drovin’—blast me if I do!” (168). Lawson’s narrator concludes, “And she hugs him to her worn-out breast and kisses him; and they sit thus together while the sickly daylight breaks over the bush” (168).

In her 1902 collection *Bush Stories*, Barbara Baynton published “The Chosen Vessel,” which features another lone, unnamed mother, her baby, and, this time, another swagman who comes in the evening to terrorize the mother. Similar to Lawson’s snake, Baynton’s swagman in the story returns at night and circles the wife’s little house again and again. His dark form is visible through the cracks between the slabs of the hut, and his heavy tread shakes the ground, searching for a way in until he finds what the woman feared he would find: a place where she had had to patch a shrunken board with a little piece of wood, which he kicks in. The narrative is a “sunk/saved” narrative: just as he is about to kick in the slab, she hears a horseman in the near distance, and she flees outside, in her white nightgown, with the baby in her arms, calling wildly. However, in a way only explained at the end of the story, the horseman keeps riding, persuaded that he has seen a vision of the Blessed Mother and her child. The swagman captures the young woman and stifles her because she will not stop screaming. Her last shrieks of “Murder! Murder!” are carried by the birds. The next morning, a traveler discovers her bloody body—the baby is still alive—and has to cut the baby’s dress free from the mother’s death grip. In both stories, the absence of the husband and the cracks in the house,

with threats from outsiders, feature strongly. In Baynton's tale, the wife is still a young girl, city-bred at that, who has not developed the survival skills of Lawson's character—nor does she have a fierce, protective dog.

Murray Bail's 1975 "Drover's Wife Story" is narrated by one who presents himself as the drover's wife's previous husband, Gordon, a dentist who expresses deep vitriol toward his ex-wife, Hazel. Embedded and referenced in Bail's story is Russell Drysdale's 1945 painting *The Drover's Wife*, which Gordon sees and recognizes in terms of his own failed marriage to Hazel. Gordon reads the painting, beginning with the large, soft body, which is neither gaunt nor sun-browned, in terms of the couple's last fight, which had been about her weight. Hazel left her husband with their two children, on the spur of the moment, on a family camping trip, where they had casually met the drover, with whom Hazel sat down to enjoy some billy tea, to Gordon's disgust. Hazel, who throughout their marriage has seemingly never failed to draw her husband's criticism—she goes around the house in a slip, she is not bothered by flies, she jumps into an impromptu and most undignified snowball fight on a trip to the mountains—takes the main chance and takes to the road.

Drysdale's painting also surfaces, interestingly, in Frank Moorhouse's sardonic story, published in 1980. The frame narration is of a reporter enclosing a conference paper by Franco Casamaggiore (note the similarity, in Italian, to Frank Moorhouse) in Milan, and Casamaggiore's paper follows, positing, in the words of the fictional conferee:

An elaborate example of a national culture joke, an "insider joke" for those who live in that country—in this example, the country of Australia. Each of these works has the status of an Australian classic and each of these works, I will show, contains a joking

wink in the direction of the Australian people which they understand but which non-Australians do not. The joke draws on the colloquial Australian humour surrounding the idea of a drover's "wife." (260)

As the narration progresses, it is clear that Casamaggiore got his information from visiting Australians at local (that is, Italian) bars, who were only too glad to explain to him, for example, that each sheep was placed into an individual wicker basket to protect it on its journey to the sea, which the bullocks drawing the cart could smell, not really needing drovers. The wagon in the painting would probably hold a thousand such baskets (260). Casamaggiore notes that "the length of the journey and the harshness of conditions precluded the presence of women and the historical fact is that for a century or more there were no women in this pioneering country" (260), which led, not only to "mateship" among men, "a marriage with vows unspoken," but to a "close and special relationship" between the drover and his sheep, "who became an object for emotional and physical drives" (260). This relationship, Casamaggiore asserts, has been covered by "national shame," only to emerge in this painting, clearly a coded message in the sheep-like appearance of the woman.

The rest of the paper continues, a fine parody, with detailed descriptions of the boots used as "love aids." Even here, the Australians are having fun with Casamaggiore—one might say pulling his leg—putting the boots on the sheep instead of on the sheep-violator. In true theoretical-paper form, "'Why not dogs?' comes the question" (261)—with the inappropriate, mock serious explanation that dogs were bed companions to Aboriginals, while sheep were reserved for white men.

Moorhouse's story draws on Lawson's story, Drysdale's picture, and Bail's story, which is briefly mentioned as part of this covering-up of "national shame." In none of these tellings or retellings, however, does the Drover's Wife speak much for herself. Apart from a little motherly by-play, she is mainly spoken for by Lawson. In Baynton's story, she tries to keep silent in her terror, and is strangled and stabbed when she does cry out. Bail's narrator tells every disgusting thing he can think of concerning "Hazel," effectively silencing her, although the reader quickly learns to read against his insufferable narrative, viewing her with great sympathy.

Barbara Jefferis's "Drover's Wife" (1980) finally has a voice. "It ought to be set straight," she begins. "All very well for them to spin yarns and make jokes but nobody has written any sense about me. Nobody has even given me a name except one and he got it wrong and said I was called Hazel" (265). The drover's wife describes herself: "I'm 46 years old. I have four children, all of them boys. My womb has fallen, so've most of my teeth, but I've got a straight back and a good head of hair and I can match anyone on a hard day's work. I know 73 poems off by heart and I'm not afraid of the dark" (265). Then, beginning with Henry Lawson himself, who came to visit her and to whom she told stories, some of which he got right, and moving through Drysdale, Bail, and "that Eyetalian," she undermines their narratives, much as Alligator "undermined" the side of the house on his first attempt to get the snake. Lawson, she holds, focuses far too much on the snake: she kills two or three snakes a year. Losing the baby was much harder on her—and worse yet, something she could not tell Lawson. After she returned and buried the baby, she had a miscarriage—with no one to help her. She speculates that Bail got his story from Gordon: "He must've known the dentist, but don't think much of the company he keeps" (269). She admits to having been the dentist's wife, but "sets it straight"

that the kids were his from a previous marriage. The writing of the Eytalian simply amuses her. Everything in words is frustrating, infuriating, annoying. The painter Russell Drysdale, she says, only hurt her vanity, but she admires his technique and can tell that he has been out in the bush, not confined to a studio: “He knew it—he knew how the ground reaches up into you” (269). She concludes, “The dentist was right about one thing, though. I’m not the drover’s wife. Or only in the eyes of God if he’s got any. If he’s not another one with blinded sight” (272).

Anne Gamble’s 1986 “The Drover’s De Facto” spins the “not-wife” possibilities into a story, like Jefferis’s tale, told by the woman herself, in this case a city girl, a graduate student who is bored with city men and runs off with a married truck driver, no more bullock wagons or fanciful wicker baskets. The truck driver, the modern drover, sets her up as his woman in a small bush town. His neglect, infidelities, and overall insensitivity sap all her motivation for continuing her studies. She misses deadlines, and she is kicked out of the program. These events lead her to an innocent evening in the local pub with a few oil workers. After her husband returns and hears from his mates about his wife’s time at the pub, he savagely beats her. She leaves him the next morning, and as she trudges alone down the road, the narrator describes the “the sun beating down on her uncovered head” before adding, “And she decided to change the topic of her thesis” (259), a statement of her unbroken spirit and resilience.

My article outlines only a handful of “Drover’s Wife” tellings and retellings. My exploration started with the John Thieme anthology, and from that time onward, I find myself asking my students and myself, “What is it about this character?” The later Drover’s Wife representations that purport to be of or in the voice of the almost-historical voice of Lawson’s Drover’s Wife of the 1890s, including the Drysdale painting and the stories by Bail and Jefferis, have stepped



outside of time. The Drysdale wife has a very 1940s quality in terms of her depiction as a woman. Bail's dentist has just seen the 1945 painting, ostensibly done not long after "Hazel" left him. Jefferis's narrator is contemporaneous with Lawson, who visited her, as well as with Drysdale and Bail, and she speaks of Moorhouse, who wrote in 1975, in the past tense. Her atemporality suggests a bid for eternity, or at least for persistence of image.

Lawson writes of this character in 1892, "Her husband is an Australian, and so is she" (164). His story comes at a time when Australians were increasingly asking themselves who and what they were. Her survival over more than a century has its roots, as Sue Kossew argues, in what Australians referred to as the "Legend of the Nineties," a decade which was "a time of debate about nation, nationhood, self-definitions and mythologising, leading up to Federation in 1901" (24-25). A reviewer of Lawson's story wrote, in 1896, that this character, iconic already, was "typical of the trials, tribulations, and troubles of the woman doomed by matrimony to work, weep, and wither in the dreadful loneliness of the unfruitful, unpromising bush" (qtd. in Kossew 25).

Over the decades, as Australians have continued to examine what it means to be Australian, what it means to be female or male, what it means to be part of an ethnicity, what it means to struggle for survival on the land, many have continued to speak for or to speak as this palimpsestic character who, as Lawson tells us, can manage by herself; who can win and lose; who can wait out a snake, face down a swagman, put out a bush fire, fight a flood, stop a rampaging bullock, give birth to children in the wilderness, try to save her baby, understand her husband, and still laugh; and who, as Jefferis's narrator tells us, can "tell not so much about me and the drover and the dentist and the rest of them, but about how women have a history too.

[...] Someone ought to write it down” (272). She is iconic, but she is not universal: she does not speak, nor does she attempt to speak, for Aboriginal women, or for women in the cities, or for affluent rural women, or for men. At least not directly: she speaks for survivors. Perhaps, it is here as a survivor’s tale—a narrative of a human being who must struggle on the land and with the land, a subject that evades or gets around nationalization of her character as a sort of illusive “mother of us all”—that Drover’s Wife can continue to share her history and set it straight.

A collection of Drover’s Wife stories, as well as Drysdale’s painting, works well in a postcolonial or Anglophone literature class and is critical in a class focusing entirely on Australian literature. Such a collection works well in a theory/criticism class. Students can see for themselves the Australian fascination with this character, as well as enjoy the intertextual byplay. Noticing those for whom this composite character speaks and does not speak leads to fruitful discussions of audience and open the way to the problematic notion of “white Australia,” which can lead to explorations of mainstream versus minority cultures, as prised through literature, in any nation under study. With particularly advanced students, the Moorhouse story both amuses and cautions, by showing how easy it is to get a culture wrong (particularly if the locals abet the process), as well as by laying out the dangers of over-interpretation. Connections are also fruitful with the continuing American fascination with and reworking of the Western frontier and other venues of the lone woman struggling to hold down the farm or the home against a plethora of natural and human threats (or perceived threats). *The Sundowners*, while set in Australia, likewise manifests the American attraction to the Australian bush and to the trope of heroic settlers, including a woman who struggles to get her

husband away from droving, settled on one piece of land, in a sense reversing Lawson's bush family's fortunes. Finally, as with other compelling short stories, given sufficient cultural and historical context, students may spin new narrations from points of view of characters not yet given much voice: Black Mary, one of the children, the husband, the dog, the snake, or one of the other characters in later iterations.

Australian literature is still underrepresented in U.S. university syllabi: typically, it is a subsection of a postcolonial set of readings, and rarely does Australian literature get a whole semester, even a term that is shared with New Zealand literature. Studying variants of "The Drover's Wife," a most canonical work, can at least bring students to the edge of the continent. After that familiarization, they can then more fully engage with non-canonical Australian texts, exploring how tropes can be undermined and transformed, and ultimately return to examine non-canonical literatures in their own outback. And perhaps, like the Drover's *de facto* (Gambling 159), one can "decide to change the topic of her thesis."

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## Sexual Politics in Wharton's *The Reef* and *The Custom of the Country*

*Kim Combs-Vanderlaan*

It is no new argument to suggest that many of Edith Wharton's fictional women suffer myriad forms of degradation at the hands of that intangible machine called "society." In much Wharton criticism, the supposition is that this kind of gendered inequity has been imposed on women, implicitly or explicitly, by the patriarchal hegemony, which has traditionally functioned to keep women in their proper (that is to say, objectified) place. Emily Orlando, for instance, suggests that "Wharton's women are repeatedly likened to 'inexhaustible fields' to be settled, overtaken, and fertilized, not just physically, but perpetually, in the male imagination" and her book suggests that Wharton's "fiction voices a dissatisfaction with the objectification and sexualization of women as objects and not agents" (3). And, as confirmation of the essence of that argument, Wharton herself recorded in her autobiography the intended target of her satire in her 1905 *The House of Mirth*. Clearly, the target of Wharton's satire in this early novel is the very society that produced the main character, Lily Bart. Wharton points out that "a frivolous society can acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys. Its tragic implication lies in its power of debasing people and ideals" (Wharton, *A Backward Glance* 207).

If the patriarchy, in most of Wharton's fiction, has the power and position of privilege to debase and destroy the women who are featured as its gorgeous trinkets, I am interested in investigating examples of where and why Wharton succeeds in reversing the dynamics and granting her fictional women the kind of power otherwise reserved for men. This essay will take

up the question of woman's place as determined by her sex, as in gender, but also by sex – as in sexuality. As many as one hundred years ago (1912 and 1913 respectively) the women in the two novels written most closely to Wharton's own sexual awakening are portrayed as savvy negotiators in a game of sexual politics in which *they* managed to control the playing field.

My specific argument will be that Wharton understood the power of sex, and the power that sexual partners could wield with it, after she had been involved with Morton Fullerton, in an affair well-documented by Wharton scholars, lasting roughly from the early months of 1908 through 1910. She processed, for the first time in her life, the fact that sexual intimacy can be accompanied by enormous emotional and psychological leverage. This statement may sound puerile, but in point of fact, the phenomenon was likely new to Wharton, whose relationship with her husband Teddy seemed to have lacked sexual intimacy.<sup>2</sup> Wharton's own words demonstrate her profound recognition that sexual love establishes bases of power. Those bases of power will be uneven if one partner is more invested than the other. Wharton writes, with dawning recognition of this phenomenon, "I know how unequal the exchange is between us, how little I have to give that a man like you can care for, & how ready I am, when the transition comes, to be again the good comrade you once found me" (Lewis and Lewis 189-90).

In creating a social victim like Lily Bart, whose only glimpse into the real world of sexuality was a moment of panic when faced with possible rape by Gus Trenor, Wharton exposes what may have been her own naiveté about matters of adult sexual power plays. To offer a striking contrast, Undine Spragg, in *The Custom of the Country*, in her aggressive and

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<sup>2</sup> Many critics have speculated that Edith and Teddy never engaged in sexual intercourse. See Lewis, Lee, and Dwight. Even more have cited a fundamental incompatibility between the two in reference to temperament and interests.

almost predatory exploitation of vulnerable men, reveals some aspects of Wharton's own dawning knowledge that, to put it bluntly, sex changes everything.

What if, rather than depicting her post-affair female heroines as victims, Wharton was slyly arming them with the power to control domestic and even social agendas in ways that promoted female self-interest? Female characters in Wharton's novels, especially after her affair with Fullerton, achieve an array of social, political, and marital agendas via their manipulation of sexual relations. They take charge of their own destinies in ways that Lily Bart (or Wharton when she dreamed up Lily Bart in 1905) would never have had the audacity to imagine. Judith Fryer speaks about the shift: "By 1911 the affair was over, but this newly experienced passion would give an increased range and depth to her fiction, and her characters, from this point on, would have alternatives to entrapment, even if they did not use them or made bad use of them" (qtd. in Dwight 167). Said another way, Wharton's post-affair fictional women allowed her to vicariously live out--through their myriad sexual negotiations and treacheries--her own need for stability, independence and empowerment.

It would be in *The Reef* (1912), her first novel written after the affair, or, more accurately, as she was still struggling to come to terms with the end of the affair, that Wharton would delve fully into the explicit realm of female sexuality. She was still writing to Fullerton, imploring a visit from him on the pretext of mere friendship and editorial advice. The novel has been called by other critics, and I too believe it is, Wharton's most raw kind of autobiography--Anna is Edith. She writes on June 25, 1912, "Do you think you could perhaps come & see me somewhere for a day or two next month, so that I cd go over *The Reef* with you? I don't think I have ever been so worried & uncertain about the 'facture' of a book -- ... If it were possible for



you to do this, I'd transport myself to some place not too remote... If you would come to pay Anna & me a little visit of three or four days, & read the whole book, it would help immensely" (271). And then, with a not too persuasive attempt to achieve a casual tone--"How are things going with you?" (272)--, Wharton reveals the real source of her worry and uncertainty: how to carry on without her romance/friendship/relationship (what *should* one call it?) with Fullerton. The title is therefore appropriate--Wharton is adrift among the reefs, and profoundly aware that she may not make it to shore, to extend the metaphor. In the novel, Anna Leath, former love of Charles Darrow, meets him in England after she has become widowed, and they renew an implicit vow to one another. On his way to see her, in Darrow's mind, to confirm the implied engagement, Anna inexplicably calls off their reunion. Her abrupt and cryptic note reads, "Unexpected obstacle. Please don't come till the thirtieth" (Wharton, *The Reef* 3). Darrow, confused and frustrated, engages in a romantic detour, as he is no longer sure she wishes to see him, or of their future together.

Wharton is also Sophy, a girl de-flowered by the very man she unexpectedly meets up with as he has embarked upon the reunion (and supposed engagement) with another woman. Just as Fullerton had proposed to his cousin, Katherine Fullerton, unbeknownst to Wharton, Darrow has come to Givre with the intention of suiting Anna Leath, the woman for whom Sophy will eventually work.<sup>3</sup> Wharton's technique of splitting *her own* situation into the lives of two fictional women is a stroke of genius. She can at once allow Sophy to pay the traditional

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<sup>3</sup> "Katherine Fullerton (born 1879) was in fact Morton Fullerton's first cousin, but she had been brought up in the Fullerton household believing she was his sister. It was only during her graduate years at Bryn Mawr College, around 1903, that she learned she was an adopted child, the daughter of a younger brother of Morton's father. The information served to liberate the deep, passionate love Katherine had felt for Morton from an early age. In the fall of 1907, on his visit to America, Fullerton called on Katherine at Bryn Mawr, and to her understanding they became engaged to be married" (Lewis and Lewis 139). She ended up marrying Gordon Gerould in 1910.

price that would have been demanded of a single woman engaging in sexual activity at the turn of the twentieth century, but she can also allow Anna a victory which remained elusive in her own life; Anna does, after all, get the man. One may read Sophy as a kind of template for the independent, albeit working class model of female sexual freedom, for she “made it clear that she wished their brief alliance to leave no trace on their lives save that of its own smiling memory” (Wharton, *The Reef* 152). Darrow, fumbling, stupid and cowardly, is not necessarily drawn to be admirable, but he is likeable, and he still maintains some level of integrity. He does come clean and he is remorseful. Fullerton, however, led Wharton to believe that his sexual attentions were exclusively directed toward her, when, in fact, he was seeing other women and perhaps other men concurrently. As one scholar points out, “Although generally characterized as a rotter and a scoundrel, Fullerton liberated the sexuality of some remarkably discerning men and women” (Erich 87). She goes on to qualify Fullerton’s accumulated behavior as “gaudy sexual history” (87). Curiously, he never seems to have felt remorse for the long wave of emotional destruction he left in his wake.<sup>4</sup>

While Wharton was devastated by the discoveries of Fullerton’s indiscretions and lack of integrity, Sophy is able to remove herself emotionally from any future expectation in regard to Darrow’s emotional commitment to her. Wharton, cleverly, never provides the reader with

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<sup>4</sup> One need only read Wharton’s letters to Fullerton during these years to see how he toyed with her feelings, failed to answer her many letters, and seemed, as she once put it in a letter of May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1908, to *want* to destroy her: “Sometimes I feel that I *can’t* go on like this: from moments of such nearness, when the last shadow of separateness melts, back into a complete *neant* [nothingness or void] of silence, of not hearing, not knowing—being left to feel that I have been like a “course” served & cleared away!...” (Lewis and Lewis 145). There are numerous letters written in the mood of total surrender and absolute desperation, and yet Fullerton continued in his obstinate and unfeeling silence. He conducted his amorous relations with other women according to the same pattern. As R.W.B Lewis records, “To his fiancée, waiting miserably back at Bryn Mawr, his letters grew infrequent, brief, and evasive. He was, to say the least, a man who lived almost entirely in the moment” (203).

direct access to her consciousness, except to make two points clear. Sophy does not regret having had the affair with Darrow, for she “fling[s]” at him, “Don’t imagine I’m the least bit sorry for anything!” (Wharton, *The Reef* 149). Furthermore, Sophy is afraid of his influence. He wields the social power, as the man who had sex with her and the man who can proclaim her morally unfit to care for Anna’s child. The moral here is that a woman who ‘gives out,’ even if preternaturally modern and progressive, has forfeited a crucial point of leverage on the social stage. Wharton shows that her whole future becomes vulnerable. Wharton has Darrow indicate his good intentions at this point, however: “Poor thing... his first duty, at any rate, was to the girl: he must let her see that he meant to fulfill it to the last jot” (153). Significantly, the scene forces Darrow to admit that he had “fallen below [even] his own standard” (152), perhaps a fictional dig at Fullerton, who had fallen beneath all standards [of decency and communication] toward the end of his affair with Wharton. R. W. B. and Nancy Lewis note that during the two years in which the relationship with Fullerton was of a sexual nature, “the pattern repeated itself at intervals, with Edith Wharton constantly moving from the exhilarated to the apprehensive, from the hopeful to the wretched” (15), and her letters do bear this observation out.

The timing of the novel is not accidental, for it is a form of therapy for Wharton’s wounded pride. Hermione Lee writes that the “painful and emotionally intricate novel is a study of, and an exercise in, disguise and evasion” (354). Darrow attempts to evade the truth of his past; Anna attempts to evade her slowly dawning consciousness of his sexual past with Sophy. Most importantly, perhaps, Fullerton had been evading Wharton for months—ignoring her pleading and imploring letters. He “would not write her for long periods; he would be

affectionate and familiar and then play with her feelings by cruelly distancing himself” (Dwight 151). Wharton handles the extended rejection by writing this “extraordinarily candid expression of private feelings about her own desires and sexual knowledge, immaculately disguised by the novel’s formal control and careful, dramatic design” (Lee 354). Anna is constantly having the “veil removed” from her eyes, allowing Wharton a vicarious fictionalized embodiment of her own disillusionment: “Just such a veil, she now perceived, had always been hung between herself and life. It had been like the stage gauze which gives an illusive air of reality to the painted scene behind it, yet proves it, after all, to be no more than a painted scene” (*The Reef* 86).

Darrow’s power, as a symbolic sexualized male, is at times only implicit, but nonetheless, in spite of his initial good intentions, he becomes the reason that Sophy’s dreams (as wife to Owen, and potentially for the first time in her life, in a stable socio-economic domain) are shattered. Even as Sophy leaves Anna, Owen, and Givre, the reader understands that her sexual intimacy with Darrow has been the single most powerful episode in her life. She cries out to Anna, half as confession, half as justification, “I wanted it—I chose it. He was good to me—no one ever was so good!” (283). Her time with Darrow in the early chapters of the novel parallels Wharton’s “long secret night together” (Lewis and Lewis 15) with Fullerton at the Charing Cross Hotel in London. Like Fullerton, Darrow is no stranger to sex. The reader is made aware of this fact early in the novel: “George Darrow had had a fairly varied experience of feminine types, but the women he had frequented had either been pronouncedly ‘ladies’ or they had not” (Wharton, *The Reef* 26). Even more than pointing to his varied sexual experiences, Wharton subtly underlines his hypocrisy. Darrow is “[g]rateful to both” types of

women “for ministering to” his “more complex masculine nature” (26), indicating a self-centeredness not unlike Fullerton’s, combined with a propensity to judge women, which would have mirrored traditional mores of the time: “His experience had left him with a contemptuous distaste for the woman who uses the privileges of one class to shelter the customs of another” (27). In other words, he, with his masculine “complex[ity]” assumes a moral supremacy over all three “types” of woman, while still maintaining his right to judge them all. Sophy, of course, is of the third class, having neither shelter for her actions nor the audacity to pretend her natural desires place her among the customs of another class.

The fact that Darrow would, one might say perversely, decide that Sophy and Owen should not be married--“One feeling alone was clear and insistent in him: he did not mean, if he could help it, to let the marriage take place” (192)--strikes the reader as immoral, hypocritical, and just plain cruel. He knows that Owen loves Sophy, and she him, and he does not seem to wish to keep her as a mistress for himself. He seems simply to have established, in his own microcosmic moral view, that she is too dirtied and sullied to be the wife of a gentleman. How preposterous, when one thinks that *he* is the man who sullied her. At this stage in Wharton’s life, of course, she would still have felt sullied by the repeated rejections and long periods of silence from Fullerton, who was abroad during many months of their affair, as well as by the eventually divulged vulgar accounts of his other affairs. It makes perfect sense that Wharton created the sacrificial woman to endure a serious wrong at the hands of a capricious man. So too would she feel compelled, at this critical juncture in her life, to create a woman who would have the strength—and the means—to finally put that man in his place. Anna becomes that vicarious leveler of the sexual playing field.

In accordance with social mores of the early decades of the twentieth century, Anna initially condemns Sophy. Darrow defends her on abstract principles: “She had the excuse of her loneliness, her unhappiness – of miseries and humiliations that women like you can’t even guess” (290). Anna exclaims that she does not want to understand “about such things” (291), perhaps a throwback to Wharton’s pre-Fullerton naivete. She appropriately suggests to Darrow that he has an obligation to the girl: “Nothing to do for her? You can marry her!” (289), a statement reflecting the option Fullerton certainly had with Wharton herself, but seemed not to have seriously considered. Moral considerations attached to the institution of marriage were shifting in the second decade of the twentieth century. For instance, there was finally a resolve to the question of incompatibility. While divorce certainly was not frequent, or even fully sanctioned by social mores, it was at least acceptable.<sup>5</sup>

Sexual activity outside of marriage still carried with it serious taboos. And Anna’s first reaction to Sophy is consistent with such social judgment. When Anna recognizes, even in her humiliation, “kindred impulses in [Sophy when] she would have liked to feel completely alien to her” (Wharton, *The Reef* 319), she also realizes that the only way to achieve, and perhaps even surpass, the intimacy Sophy has shared with Darrow is by engaging in sexual intimacy. While Wharton would never pen the awareness so coarsely, she makes it clear that sexual intercourse is the only avenue that will bring Anna any kind of relief from the agony resulting from her betrayal. Wharton writes, “She longed to be to him all that Sophy Viner had been” (342). The

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<sup>5</sup> By 1916, one in nine U.S. marriages ended in divorce, as compared to one in twenty-one U. S. marriages that ended in divorce in 1881. See Singley 232-240.

reader knows here that she will be sexually enlightened: as Darrow catches Anna in his arms, she opens her eyes “to the flood of light in his” (343).

Of course, her sexual enlightenment does not come without a price. She has let go of her old ignorance, her old preconceptions, and she can never return to that state:

The truth had come to light by the force of its irresistible pressure; and the perception gave her a startled sense of hidden powers, of a chaos of attractions and repulsions far beneath the ordered surfaces of intercourse. She looked back with melancholy derision on her old conception of life, as a kind of well-lit and well-policed suburb of dark places one need never know about. (353)

Anna eventually accepts the “hidden powers,” which will enable her to see finally that “he and she were as profoundly and inextricably bound together as two trees with interwoven roots” (360). This phase of her recognition comes from accepting the truth about how sex can change the dynamic of a relationship, and how, if played with consideration to other forms of power (beauty, money, social capital), it can solidify a woman’s position with a man. Of course, Sophy had only beauty on her side, and so Anna’s hand trumps hers. Anna exclaims at the end of the novel, “Why, he’s mine—he’s mine! He’s no one else’s!” (359). Wharton concludes with another suggestion of the physical intimacy, which reinforces a happy emotional ending: “The mortal sweetness of loving him became again the one real fact in the world” (359). Like Anna’s intense happiness, Wharton herself wrote on August 12<sup>th</sup>, during the summer of 1909 when she and Fullerton traveled in England, “I have been completely happy. I have had everything in life that I ever longed for” (Lewis and Lewis 15).

Fullerton's selfish fickleness would change her tune, for within a fortnight, Wharton writes that it is impossible that "our lives should run parallel much longer" (Lewis and Lewis 15). At the end of the novel, one half of Wharton's fictional alter ego lives out the first sentiment. The second dimension of her alter ego lives out the latter. Sophy wanders off to her next tenuous job, loveless and without a hold on the world. Anna, wielding her sexuality alongside her authentic love for Darrow, assumes the position of proprietor. She owns her man in a way that Wharton could never manage.

By the time Wharton penned and published *The Custom of the Country* (1913), her new heroine, Undine Spragg, "a more crude and powerful version of Lily" (Fryer 103), demonstrated that Wharton had emotionally, in some ways, moved past her affair with Fullerton, perhaps imaginatively constructing the type of woman who might have been able to 'stick it to' any man who might ask for it, so to speak. As Judith Fryer has already noted, "Undine chooses certain, available ways to power (over men) because in her society other means—those chosen by Elmer Moffatt or Frank Cowperwood, for example, *were* closed off to women" (104). Wharton's divorce also went through in 1913, the same year she became estranged from her brother, Harry (Singley 241). With this new novel, not coincidentally, she seems to have been saying, in fictional terms, good riddance to all men!

It also may not be accidental that Wharton was reading about Darwinian survival of the fittest in the spring of 1908, and the ideas inherent in that theory may have been fermenting in her brain as she constructed a woman like Undine.<sup>6</sup> In terms of timing, the span of time

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<sup>6</sup> R. W. B. Lewis writes that Wharton returns to her writing the novel (*Custom*) after having been away from it "for half a year, making a start on the seventh chapter" (*A Biography* 228). He points out that she was reading H. R.



between reading theories about determinism and executing them in *The Custom of the Country* is less difficult to accommodate than one might assume, for Wharton had “begun the novel at the Mount in 1907” (Dwight 167) or as late as the “spring of 1908” (MacComb 790). Given the fact of Lily Bart’s inability to adapt to her environment, by 1908 at least, Wharton might have been interested in fictionally constructing a woman who *was* fitted to her environment—not only for survival, but for domination, conquest, and the power to decimate her female rivals as readily as her male competitors. As Judith P. Saunders notes, “Beneath the polished surface of her fictional worlds [Wharton’s characters can be seen] competing fiercely for desirable partners, questing aggressively for status and resources, and plotting ruthlessly” (1) for self-advancement.

Undine is ruthless, plotting, *and* aggressive. She is both “warrior Queen” (Wharton, *Custom* 333) and snake-like vixen. Her name links her to the “fisherman’s wife in the fairy tale” who, like Undine, is never satisfied, implying a kind of monstrous and fatal appetite.<sup>7</sup> R. W. B. Lewis comments: “No character Edith Wharton ever invented more closely resembles that bird of prey by which James, Sturgis, and others so often, and only half-jokingly, portrayed Edith herself. Undine Spragg, is, so to say, a dark Angel of Devastation: Edith Wharton’s anti-self; and like all anti-selves, a figure that explains much about its opposite” (*A Biography* 350). Undine is a brutal sexual predator; Wharton would come to learn that Fullerton was also a sexual

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Lock’s scientific *Heredity and Variation* at the time. Clearly, the basic tenets of survival of the fittest, based on one’s environment and hereditary factors, operated repeatedly in all three novels I have discussed here: *The House of Mirth*, *The Reef* and *The Custom of the Country*.

<sup>7</sup> Ralph thinks of his wife as “divers” and “ondoyant.” The terms are taken from an essay entitled, “By Various Means We Arrive at the Same End” in the first volume of Montaigne’s *Essays*. “The essay’s subject is the courage by which certain historical figures achieved the mercy of their conquerors, as opposed to others, who achieved mercy by demeaning and humiliating themselves” (Killoran 53). For a discussion of the symbolic power of Undine’s name and her role as a harbinger of doom for the old order, see “The Devouring Muse” in Waid, especially 135-55.

predator who feasted on vulnerable women like Wharton--even if perhaps subconsciously at times.

Described in supernatural, hardly human terms, Undine manipulates--even terrifies--her parents into submission and deference to her every wish. Wharton writes that she is like a force of nature, seemingly devoid of feeling. She, at the center of attention, becomes the consuming machinery of social affirmation that Wharton has constructed her to be: "the sentient throbbing surface which gathered all the shafts of light into a surface" (*Custom* 313). Undine is mechanized, sentient, processed sexualized energy--in other words, pure ego.

Conversely, while Wharton was involved romantically with Fullerton, she was reduced to a vulnerable, self-deprecating person--unlike the strong-willed, intelligent woman many others knew her to be. It would be difficult to imagine Undine writing the following words of effacement to any man. Wharton writes to Fullerton in June of 1908, apparently after he had praised her in a previous letter for "adjusting [herself] to the facts" (Lewis and Lewis 149)--presumably the facts of his unwillingness to commit, or his perceived implicit superiority over her. Her letter reads, "Know that every letter gives me a pleasure you can hardly imagine--& yet that I shall so understand if there comes a break--so that, in the same breath, I am moved to say 'Write,' & 'Don't write'--which means, write always when you want to, & never--not once! when you are busy, or in the least feel it is a thing-to-be-done" (Lewis and Lewis 148). If Wharton wrote these words in a state of abject self-effacement in 1908, she had, by the time she constructed her new heroine, revolted against the notion that a woman might be so vulnerable at the hands of a man's sexual domination. Sexuality still controls the bases of power in *The Custom of the Country*, but the dynamics have shifted in enormous ways.

Undine uses sex (or the promise of its allure) to procure all forms of material goods, but as she is safe-guarded by her participation in the institution of marriage, and by her ability to “divorce” herself from a rather inhuman capacity and from any emotional ties, the exchange is always a safe one for her. The novel is about “two interconnected kinds of power, one financial, one sexual, both of which seek to invent, create, control the world” (Fryer 106). In particular the chapters after the first seven that she wrote in 1907 may be seen, in broad strokes, as Wharton’s attempt to take control over her world. Wharton wrote to a friend on New Year’s Eve, 1913: “What you *have* been through, my poor Daisy. I hope 1914 will make up. I don’t feel as if anything *cd* obliterate 1913 for *me!*” (qtd. in Dwight 178). The notion that Wharton would *want to obliterate* the entire year is not necessarily surprising, given the long build-up of strains leading to her divorce from Teddy and the aftermath of her relationship with Fullerton. In fact, Undine uses divorce and remarriage as her primary vehicle for self-advancement--which is consistent with the historical context about the time the novel was written:

Between 1880 and 1900, the number of divorces granted in the United States doubled, and by 1920, it had more than doubled again. While the so-called divorce havens were not in themselves responsible for this tremendous increase, they did provide those who could afford it an attractive site for severing the marriage bond: fully seventy percent of the Dakota divorce rate was composed of out-of-state traffic. During this time and in accord with the general market trend, women supplanted men as the largest consumers of divorce decrees in the liberalized West. (MacComb 772)

Undine seeks her first divorce in North Dakota, Wharton’s nod to historical authenticity, for Ralph receives his divorce papers from lawyers in Sioux Falls.

As one Wharton biographer notes, the *Saturday Review* “observed with considerable prescience that the entire novel should be read as a fable for the times” (Lewis 350), presumably with an attached moral about the dangers of divorce and the potential abuses the legalization of divorce might encourage. Yet Wharton notably allows the woman in her story to create a new product demand and a ready ‘marriage market’ which would create a commodity of that institution. It is a market arranged to afford women one of the only vehicles for equalizing the social playing field in the early decades of the twentieth century. Debra Ann MacComb remarks that Wharton adds to “her already potent critique of the marriage market” in this novel, “the role that the booming divorce industry plays by creating a product... that keeps the marriage economy expanding because spouses and even families become disposable items in the rotary system of consumption” (771). And it is true that the system is marketed in order to appeal to a woman’s desire to keep improving her own commodity value by adding to her “freedom, mobility and status” (MacComb 771), which is exactly what Undine procures, in exponential valuations, with each of her respective divorces. The “leisure class marriage economy” Wharton satirizes here also allows her female character to eschew the kind of victimization other of Wharton’s fictionalized women encounter specifically *because* she is more concerned with the enterprises of power than with love or loyalty or compassion, or any other humanizing value.<sup>8</sup>

As one scholar points out, “Undine does, undoubtedly, stand for everything in the new American female that Edith despised and recoiled from” (Lewis, *A Biography* 350). And yet, the fictional anti-heroine can also be understood as another kind of alter-ego for Wharton. Just as

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<sup>8</sup> See also Blake for a detailed account of the divorce industry as it developed in the United States.

she split the victimized Sophy and the eventually triumphant Anna into two discreet characters to dramatize the two very different ways women can respond to sexual power plays, Wharton has gathered and concentrated all the energies of feminized sexual form into one mighty destructive force in *Undine*. Lewis writes, “We see in *Undine Spragg* how Edith sometimes appeared to the harried and aging Henry James: demanding, imperious, devastating, resolutely indifferent to the needs of others; something like an irresistible force of nature” (350). She is irresistible because of her clear sexual attraction. Wharton describes her as full of “incessant movements” for “she thought it the correct thing to be animated in society, and noise and restlessness were her only notion of vivacity” (*Custom* 293). We should not forget that one of the reasons this kind of sensual, animated movement would be equated in her mind with attractiveness in a woman would certainly be connected to the fact that she has already been married—and presumably is no longer a virgin. To put it crudely, she knows that bodily movement excites and satisfies a man.

Furthermore, Elmer Moffatt, a crude, uncultivated man himself, has taught her to use her own sexual arts to attract men. And truly, only Elmer, who was the first to enjoy the vulnerable position that her loss of virginity would have created, has any degree of real or lasting power over her, from the early to the last chapters. He speaks to her in the language of Wall Street negotiations when he meets her in the park before her marriage to Ralph: “But *is* it a bargain – fair and square? You’ll see me?” (335). She is operating under the knowledge that to refuse him means her secret leverage, deriving from her sexual authority (presumed virginal purity) over Ralph, will be revealed and therefore her new means to achieve power (marriage into the aristocracy) voided. And, therefore, she allows Elmer the dominant social position

again; the social authority she grants him is consistent with their past sexual relationship. It is only once she is introduced into the aristocratic set of Ralph Marvell's family that she begins, through her "passionately imitative" (291) resilience to transform her sexuality into various external personas, to ascend the proverbial social ladder. Wharton depicts Ralph not only as pathetically romantic and gullible to an extreme but also vulnerable to Undine's power plays by virtue of his own virginity. Here again, sexual prowess translates into social capital.

Wharton's language in her description of the symbolic landscape of their honeymoon says it all. She writes that "their hastened marriage had blessed them with, giving them leisure, before summer came, to penetrate to remote folds of the southern mountains..." (353) and the reader understands, even if on a largely subconscious level, that penetrating bodily (rather than panoramic) folds is foremost on Ralph's mind.

Sexual innuendos are littered throughout the text. Undine's marriage to Ralph was "hastened" after all because Undine possesses the "instinct of sex" (318) – notice Wharton does not write "the instinct of *her sex*" as she does in other venues, which would indicate a gender inspired intuition but just *sex* as in a sense of one's sexual domination over another. Wharton goes on to suggest that Undine could sense Ralph "throbbing with the sense of her proximity" (318). We find, once again, a mirror reflection of that scene in several of Wharton's letters, though she (and not Ralph) is the one incapable of controlling her sexual longings. For instance, Wharton admits that she has no resistance to Fullerton's sexual charms, writing, "I can't say this to you, because when I do you take me in your arms; et alors, je n'ai plus de volonte" (Lewis and Lewis, *Letters* 190). This last phrase translates to "and then, I have no more will [power]."

Wharton was brought sexually alive under Fullerton's masterful guidance, but the author grants Undine almost super-human imperviousness to sexual intercourse, as if to guarantee her the upper hand in any battle she will face: "She had never shown any repugnance to [Ralph's] tenderness, but such response as it evoked was remote and Ariel-like, suggesting, from the first, not so much of the recoil of ignorance as the coolness of the element from which she took her name" (*Custom* 360). Unresponsive and indifferent to the physicality of sexual intercourse, Undine nonetheless uses the act of sex as a vehicle for self-promotion and social advancement. When Ralph gives into her desire to be seen and admired in St. Moritz (rather than spending quiet days together in their original honeymoon seclusion), she gives in to his. She presents herself to him as a sexualized creature promising him physical delight and rapture ("her face alight, her hair waving and floating")--she lets Ralph "take her to his breast" (361).

Her exploitation of this sexualized power dominates other men as well, however worldly they may be. To Undine's accountant-like mentality, once she has secured the divorce from Ralph, Peter Van Degen "owes" (462) her a specific form of payback; that is, she awaits a formal proposal of marriage from him. Undine uses her friend, Indiana Fusk Rolliver, to help pacify Van Degen's dawning awareness of Undine's unscrupulously self-serving behavior (she bartered her own son in order to secure money for her divorce and she has sacrificed Ralph in horrible ways to social scandal). Peter is able to avert his own demise, as he refuses to subject himself to Undine's play for marriage and, therefore, her eventual power over him. He is too horrified by her "moral obtuseness" as Indiana identifies it. Undine is so heartless and selfish that she refuses to see Ralph when she was cabled that he is "desperately ill" (467). Even Indiana is

shocked by the baseness of the revelation, and Peter predicts, rightly, that he could be her next victim.

Wharton must have wanted her audience to understand the significance of Peter's narrow escape in this relationship (the only one in the novel that does not result in marriage for the heroine). At some point in the narrative, Wharton makes it clear that Undine actually is operating on the premise that she had "paid" for her indiscretions—or put another way, she had given herself sexually for the future prospects of the marriage which would secure her future social standing. Wharton explains it this way:

She had gone away with him, and had lived with him for two months: she, Undine Marvell, to whom respectability was the breadth of life, to whom such follies had always been unintelligible and therefore inexcusable. – She had done this incredible thing, and she had done it from a motive that seemed, at the time, as clear, as logical, as free from the distorting mists of sentimentality, as any of her father's financial enterprises. (470)

Of course, Wharton writes with sardonic irony here, for clearly she does not wish to paint Undine in the saintly light her words might superficially indicate. While to "yield to him [had] seemed the surest means of victory" (470), she has nevertheless miscalculated, apparently for the first time in her life, the actual commodity value that sexual intimacy might ensure for her future. After all, sexual exploitation generally works on the premise that one will be "paid in kind" for services rendered in advance. In this case, her valuation in the rotary system of marriage does not increase, for she has not been able to "marry up."

Undine strives to "get back an equivalent of the precise value she had lost in ceasing to be Ralph Marvell's wife. Her new visiting-card, bearing her Christian name in place of her



husband's, was like the coin of a debased currency testifying to her diminished trading capacity" (469).<sup>9</sup> She wastes no time in securing an alternative to Peter in the form of an even more pronounced 'trade up' in the marital and cultural market economy.

We know that Wharton valued French culture. She writes, for example, in *French Ways and Their Meaning*, that she has "singled out" as typically French, "in the best sense of that many-sided term, the qualities of taste, reverence, continuity, and intellectual honesty" (18). Clearly, Undine can offer none of the aforementioned virtues. Moreover, we know that Wharton had only disdain for the sordid commercialism, conspicuous consumption, and lack of cultivation she saw around her when she returned briefly to America after establishing herself in France.<sup>10</sup>

Raymond de Chelles, Undine's third husband, represents all that Wharton would have considered superior in French culture to American culture, with but one inherent flaw: he is, still, after all, a man with sexual desires. In fact, he may be closer than any other male character penned by Wharton to the actual Morton Fullerton—in terms of general charm and sophistication. It is likely not accidental that Wharton allows the Frenchman to level the most ardent and incisively perceptive attack against Undine's vacuity. After Undine has sold off the family tapestry, with no regard for its inherent aesthetic or familial value, Raymond is horrified; and he finally comprehends the extent of his wife's selfishness. In an oft-cited passage, Raymond reprimands Undine and claims that she is just like all other Americans in that she

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<sup>9</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of the etiquette surrounding how a divorced woman might make use of calling cards and last names, see MacComb's notes, especially 56.

<sup>10</sup> Wharton often wrote to Sara Norton of her disillusionment and dissatisfaction with her native land, as R. W. B. Lewis, for example, has documented. She writes that she is "not enough in sympathy with our 'gros public' to make up for the lack on the aesthetic side" (*Edith Wharton: A Biography* 120). She also comments on the "wild, dishevelled backward look of everything when one first comes home" (120), as she had to the Mount in 1903 to discover a somber sight: "dust everywhere, the grass parched and burned, flowers and vegetation stunted" (120).

embodies the most common and sordid of American 'values.' He accuses her of coming to an enduring culture from an empty and vacant one, incapable of appreciating the longevity and sacred attributes of history and legacy: "Before you have been a day in [our country] you've forgotten the very house you were born in" (*Custom* 564).

The passage effectively conveys qualities for which Wharton admired the French and which we see absent in Undine's character. Furthermore, Undine fails to see the far-reaching implications of her abjectly hollow behavior. Wharton underlines her tactlessness, vacuity and basic moral depravity, by having Undine declare, "I can do as I please – my husband does. They think so differently about marriage over here: it's just a business contract" (577).

There is little to be surprised about when Undine's one intellectual strength--her shrewd business acumen, accompanied by her accurate tally of just what her sexual accoutrements, physical pliancy, arm-candy status, and ascendancy on the social ladder (now exponentially increased via the freedom her most recent divorce accords her)--lead her back to Elmer Moffatt. He has announced his own approach to making his way in the world early in the novel, when Wharton has him say in clever double entendre speak, "I'd rather let the interest accumulate awhile" (401). Of course, he means to 'buy' Undine back eventually.

Interestingly, just as Moffatt has increased Undine's commodity status and value in equipping her with the sexual tools to use for exchanges, Fullerton once indicated that his sexual relationship with Wharton might improve her writing in some way. She remembers, "You told me once I should write better for this experience of loving" (Lewis and Lewis 162). And, even if there was a great deal of suffering which accompanied that experience of loving--and its counterpart, the experience of losing--it certainly is true that the relationship changed key

aspects of Wharton's writing. She was more aware of the psychological implications associated with sexuality, she was more interested in the power dynamics as two sexual partners work through the tension of implicit hierarchies, and she was more attuned to the emotional decimation that could occur if that balance of power tilted, and resulted in one person's disproportionate loss.

Wharton once made use of the analogy of game-playing to help illustrate the way she at times conceptualized her relationship with Fullerton. She writes, "...my lucidity shows me each move of the game—but that, in the same instant, a reaction of contempt makes me sweep all the counters off the board & cry out:—'Take them all—I don't want to win—I want to lose everything to you!'" (Lewis and Lewis 152). And she very nearly did. There can be little doubt that Fullerton, in his long absences, conscious or subconscious toying with his many sexual partners, including Wharton, and his unwillingness to commit fully to any lover, perpetuated the psychological sense that their love was either a win or lose proposition. Wharton knew that there could only be one winner and that she was too invested in the outcome to maintain a proper defensive. *The Reef* and *The Custom of the Country* serve, in the final analysis, to demonstrate the marked shift in the way Wharton portrayed her fictional women in post-Fullerton days. She would still, in her later works, notably use sexuality as a weapon that women could wield when under duress, but these works represent Wharton's dawning awareness of the real power that women might afford themselves if they simply played the game of romantic and sexual love with adequate shrewdness, strategy, self-control—and always, always, with an eye to self-preservation.

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## Facebook as a Tool for Both Writing Centers and Academic Classrooms

*Sandra Eckard, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania*

In *The Online Writing Conference*, Beth Hewett opens with a simple, yet important, concept about online learning: "...It is becoming increasingly common for traditional-aged college students to have used some form of computer technology for social interactions" (4). In fact, according to Facebook's website, the application boasts over 500 million users, and one-half of those users log on to the site every day (Facebook.com) to post comments on their daily lives, house and group photos, invite their "friends" to real-life events, such as movie premieres or reunions, and open discussion on specific topics of interest. In the academic realm, although students use tools such as email, Facebook, and IM, they are "not used to interacting with instructors this way" (Hewett 4). Likewise, while many faculty and administrators have embraced using Facebook for leisure activities and to share their lives with friends, they might be surprised to learn that they can also use it as a serious, yet informal educational tool to communicate with students. As a test of how Facebook might augment instruction, I initiated a Facebook group for the student tutors in the writing center at East Stroudsburg University (ESU). In fact, the social media component has proven to be a powerful tool for daily reflection, communication, and team building, which are desired student-based goals in all academic disciplines.

A valuable practice for all student learning, reflection exercises ask students to take the measure of their individual growth in relation to the topic. Reflection requires writing tutors to consider their own writing experiences as well as those of the students with whom they work.

As Muriel Harris argues, a lack of reflection could stem from timed tutoring sessions, busy student schedules, and a desire to get down to revisions without thinking about why: “In our eagerness to get to the real stuff, we could very possibly overlook some difficulty with motivation or attitude” (63). It is only when tutors slow down and reflect on their work as tutors—how a session went, why a session went well, why a session went wrong—that they can fully digest and understand their own tutoring practice. Reflection, then, is key to a viable tutor-training process. Since reflections about tutor experiences in writing centers “are generally convoluted” because of the unpredictable nature of working with many different learners in different ways, it is important that tutors have multiple ways of sharing their stories (Murphy 99).

A Facebook group, open and visible only to assigned members and overseen by a faculty member or administrator, can help students process their learning experiences in a new way, allowing them to share ideas and post responses to others students’ posts. Tutors can post announcements and thoughts with status updates on the Facebook Wall. This space allows group members to share topics of concern to them on the group’s news feed. The ESU tutors wrote about satisfying experiences—or confusing ones—and asked questions of the others in the group. For example, one tutor asked, “How do you tackle working with an ESL learner who does not use any articles in their work?” Within an hour, other tutors had posted back a list of comments that included reading suggestions, empathy, and additional questions about to what extent they could use modeling with a student with second-language difficulties. In addition, the status updates create community, a space where even the tutors who do not work together can bond. One tutor’s post about a stressful day, such as “I had a horrible day. Parking on

campus sucks,” allowed everyone a space to vent about issues that all the tutors can relate to. It also allowed them to ask for help, with posts about shift changes: “Can anyone take my Sunday shift? Will switch,” one tutor posted. In the end, all of these posts initiate conversations and provide additional time for students to reflect on what it means to work as a writing tutor. Not all status posts discuss serious issues, of course. Other updates were announcements such as weather cancellations, reminders about important dates, or in-the-moment musings about their feelings. Many posts discussed upcoming tutor-training dates, such as “Don’t forget: training Thursday at 3 pm or 7 pm!” This rolling list of updates records their excitement, too, as many tutors during college holidays or breaks posted countdowns: “T-minus three days until we open!” posted one eager tutor.

As most tutor training programs would argue, becoming an effective tutor centers on reflection. As Murphy and Sherwood attest in *The St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*, those “who draw on...an evolving personal philosophy can bring to the tutoring session the technical skill and creativity needed to teach writing successfully. This approach suggests reflective practice” (7). With limited time for training, or perhaps in a program like mine that does not have an ongoing training course for tutors, it can be hard to carve out a space for reflection. Ideally, tutors could meet at one time each week to share ideas and discuss pedagogy or readings. But in a busy world with tutors balancing classes, other college activities, and their own lives, it can be hard to make in-person meetings happen as often as a director would like. The Facebook group can be especially helpful here, allowing all tutors access to readings and activities online, where their assignments and discussions could be read by all regularly, even if asynchronously. To this end, the feature of Docs (document uploads) can be



useful. This feature of the group focuses a specific topic or question to be separately posted as a thread, very much like a separate discussion board. If the director creates a Doc, Facebook automatically posts a status update that will show up not only on the Wall, but also in the director's own News Feed on the individual Facebook page. These Docs—or discussions—are capable of more than quick status updates and can complement tutor training objectives, extend assignments, or be new activities altogether. The best part of these is that the director or professor can save them, like records of conversation, or use them for future training days.

The Docs feature can also extend academic and tutoring-training assignments beyond the classroom. For example, recently a guest speaker presented an hour-long seminar on tips for accommodating all students' learning styles into tutoring sessions at ESU's Writing Studio. The workshop took the full hour, and while tutors did get the opportunity to ask questions, this occurred in a hurried five-minute wrap up at the end. I posted a few questions on Facebook Docs, however, and in that way initiated further conversation, allowing the tutors to reply to the workshop individually. Many students revealed that they were surprised to learn their learning style was not what they assumed it was, while others talked about how they would incorporate what they learned into their tutoring. One tutor said, "One tutoring technique that I will incorporate into my sessions is using color. I like the concept of separating ideas with the colors of life." Another spent time processing her reactions and thinking about how what she learned would inform her tutoring:

I learned that I am a Kinesthetic/Tactile learner. I was surprised by this outcome, but after thinking about it, I feel like I do learn best by doing. I thought I was audio because I can learn through discussions and listening, but I realized that I am taking notes, asking

questions in my head, and making meaning for myself. I do this naturally. Some students don't. This is something we should keep in mind when tutoring because students might be listening to our comments, but not really processing.

This tutor used the Facebook discussion to make connections between her own behaviors and those of the students that she works with; because the space is inviting and informal, many times, students present deeper responses than I might have expected.

A third way to use the Doc feature in the Facebook group is to craft new assignments that make use of the online medium. One fruitful activity is a scavenger hunt of sorts where tutors can “play online” productively. As the first activity of a semester, a scavenger hunt makes tutors stretch their tutoring muscles—and makes use of the slow time at the beginning of the semester. The objective of one scavenger hunt I used was to find interesting, creative, or interactive tools online that could be useful in the center. Tutors could post anything from links to surveys to websites. While some ESU tutoring students found punctuation handouts and grammar “Jeopardy!” games, others branched out more to find other writing centers’ tips for editing or for helping students with non-traditional writing activities, such as how to make effective PowerPoint slides. One tutor even found a brush-up tool she could recommend to the tutors, posting, “I found this fun site where you can play games to improve your grammar! Give it a shot!”<sup>11</sup>

In short, self-reflection is a valuable, and on-going, goal for effective tutor training programs. Building in discussions in Docs that focus on reflection can allow tutors to write *more* due to the informal nature of Facebook—as well as write *more often* with reflection activities

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<sup>11</sup>[http://www.harcourtschool.com/menus/preview/harcourt\\_language/grammar\\_park.html](http://www.harcourtschool.com/menus/preview/harcourt_language/grammar_park.html)

sprinkled in throughout the semester. In January, for example, I posted a starter Doc for the semester posited this question: “If you could set a New Year’s Resolution for yourself as a writing tutor, what would it be?” The tutors were eager to respond, posting, “I need to ask more questions,” or “I want to be better at focusing on high-order concerns like organization rather than low-order concerns like commas.” While this type of activity surely works in a face-to-face meeting, a Facebook discussion Doc serves as a written record, too, one that the instructor can return to later for follow-up on the extent to which tutors are reaching their goals. Whether finding an online game or writing about what they were learning about tutoring, using Facebook increased—and deepened—the conversations that ESU tutors had about what it means to be a writing tutor, while also requiring critical thinking and reflection.

At a quick glance, the Facebook Wall might seem like an unnecessary tool for a writing center director; however, there are benefits that extend beyond the administrator posting closings due to inclement weather. The Wall can serve another purpose—it can allow tutors to get to know one another and connect. In *Tutoring Writing*, Thomas Regstad and Donald McAndrew focus on how talking and sharing is “a way to learn in general, and to learn writing specifically, is another theoretical ground for tutoring” (4). In other words, in order to build new skills, communication with fellow learners plays a helpful role. Denise Stephenson focuses specifically on how this contact—especially in the form of storytelling—is important to tutor training:

Storytelling is a vital aspect of this training, with trainees explaining what happened in a given session, reflecting on their own actions in the situation, and asking for input about what else might have been done. Those listening use their own experiences as well as

readings and theory to add to the collaborative brainstorming of possible solutions. I find this narrative aspect of training particularly critical for novice tutors (7).

The Wall—much like status updates on personal Facebook pages—promotes quick link sharing and provides an arena for sharing stories. Tutors can post an interesting link to an article they read or an inspiring quotation to motivate fellow tutors. During finals week, for instance, ESU tutors posted funny pictures of stressed-out students. At the beginning of the semester, tutors posted about common interests, such as a link to a YouTube clip on the Joy of Books.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the Wall becomes part of the fabric of the tutoring community, a space where everyone from the administrator to novice tutors can share ideas and make connections.

In addition, the Wall is the ideal space for tutors to vent from time to time. With hectic schedules, most tutors will need to vent about a professor, assigned work, or even from time to time, tutoring a specific student. At ESU some professors offer extra credit for students' visiting the writing center, but it may be frustrating to tutors that twenty students, who may have no real interest in improving their writing skills, arrive wanting proof that they came to the center for the extra credit. The Wall gives a place for the tutor to vent, to which other tutors can send encouraging messages or some advice how to handle those situations. The Wall also provides a place for tutors to get to know one another. Since it is informal, tutors can write about more personal matters than they can in the Docs, and by reading each other's posts, tutors can forge relationships with one another. Tutors could learn that they share a favorite book with another tutor, could offer sympathy when someone is having a bad day, could laugh at a funny story

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=SKVcQnyEIT8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=SKVcQnyEIT8)

shared, or could click that they “like” an article someone else posted. These informal posts, sometimes rants, can help create a bond in a community.

Posting pictures is another excellent way for students to feel connected to one another. ESU’s tutors typically posted pictures from events the writing center hosted, but they also posted their own pictures from time to time. For instance, one tutor posted a picture of herself drinking coffee from our official writing center mug. Many other tutors commented on the post because they also loved their mugs and used them all the time. In addition, Facebook provides a good place to store these photos for future use, along with the captions and comments from tutors. Since users can see the pictures only if they are in that particular Facebook group, the photos remain private within the group. Sorting the photos into virtual albums helps archive the photos but also keeps them available to past, current, and future tutors who become, or are, part of the writing center. The Pictures page is always a favorite spot for tutors, one of whom stated, “My favorite part of the Facebook group is checking on the pictures of my friends and fellow tutors at work in the Studio. Love it!”

Since collaboration is at the heart of peer tutoring, it makes sense that the tutors should collaborate as well. One of the dangers of any group environment is exclusion, and while every tutor may not make the same connections or feel the same level of affinity for the job of tutoring, a productive team of people should always provide ways to help every member feel included and wanted. In one study, “Expanding Writing Center Assessment: Including Tutor Learning,” the authors focused on atmosphere as part of the recommendations for tutor-training programs. They recommend spotlighting “team building efforts to ensure *all* consultants feel a part of the community” (Macklin, Marshall, and Law 13-14). While Facebook

is not the sole answer to crafting a strong environment, it does allow all members to read and post equally, while in face-to-face discussions, the more talkative students often claim the floor. Therefore, with proper monitoring, such a tool can help increase collaboration and team building in a learning environment.

The goal of any tutor training program is to help tutors build a toolbox of skills that they can use to work with students. However, if it were that easy, there would be no need for the many and varied training manuals that seek to deconstruct the complex layers of personality, team work, content knowledge, and interpersonal skills that combine to create an effective tutoring practice. Since many tutors are the brightest students on campus, they often maintain a full load of classes, work a part-time job, and serve as tutors on top of all of their other academic and family obligations. As a result, finding time to tackle tutor-training endeavors is often difficult, especially if tutors are not required to complete these tasks as part of a course. Further, with belt tightening due to budgets constraints in today's economy, there is little money to compensate tutors for the academic work, such as the reading, research, and reflective activities of the best tutors, so these must happen "off the clock." Tutors can feel resentful when asked to complete work—even if it makes their jobs easier in the long run—when they have piles of work and assignments that "count" because they are part of a graded course. Many administrators, then, often walk a tightrope: they want to help tutors improve and develop their skills each semester, but they also know they are likely to encounter resistance. Often it takes just one student's resistance "extra" work to fracture the bond between administration and staff. Without pay available for all training tasks and without a

tutor-training course every semester, directors must find clever ways to build in effective activities.

Of course, directors and professors could use any course management system online to add those activities to the tutors' list of responsibilities—Blackboard, WebCT, and Desire 2 Learn come to mind—but what those systems lack is not function or capability; it is *desirability*. Students *want* to share on social media like Twitter or Facebook. However, unlike using the traditional Facebook system of “friend-ing” others, the closed Facebook group for tutors allows members to join but also maintain privacy with their own personal friend list. In other words, no one in the Facebook group needs to be “friends” in order to join the group. And, since the group is monitored regularly, if there were an angry vent or inappropriate comment, a director or someone with administrative capability could easily delete a comment or post. In my experience, however, tutors have always used the space as intended, and the ESU Writing Studio has had no issues with unprofessional posts in the two years of using the Facebook group for tutor training.

In the end, from both the tutor's and the administrator's perspectives, the Facebook group has proven to be a successful tool. Tutors are impressed by how much “fun” they can have while doing work, and I have been pleased by the effortless way the group has deepened the everyday conversation of the center. In addition, the group does not require constant maintenance but seems to have a life of its own. Tutors post items I had not thought of; pictures appear that are spontaneous shots from in—and out—of the writing center. The informal nature of the site also allows the tutors to feel at ease about approaching the director with questions, as well as receive answers quickly. Not surprisingly, in their article “I'll See You

On Facebook,” the authors study how such teacher-student interactions “create a positive learning experience for both parties” (Mazer, Murphy, and Simonds 15).

The idea of using Facebook academically is not new. Many teachers have found that one advantage is that “students generally accept Facebook as a social technology rather than a formal teaching tool” (Baran). This image works for directors’ goal—the Facebook space is theirs, not owned by academia. They can manipulate it, add items, and become part of a community. In the meantime, if they learn something important—from a discussion on a chapter on working with ESL writers or from an issue a tutor presents as a problem-solving opportunity—then this is more tutor training than a director could offer in any one-hour session. Instead of training being a set time, set place, set location, now ESU’s Writing Studio has *ongoing* tutor training throughout the semester. In “From Friending to Research,” Anne Pemberton asserts that “while we may not completely relate to students, we can at least try to help them relate to the concepts they will need to understand...and perhaps Facebook just might be one way to do that.” Tutoring directors, as well as academic instructors, have much to gain from instituting Facebook groups for their students—it can be a very productive way to build even more training and teaching into the semester.



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## the things (we need)

*Lindsey Brodie, West Chester University of Pennsylvania*

it's those applesauce mornings  
when you feel like lukewarm mush  
rolling over a hot tongue, and wish  
that instead, you could be an apple  
or at least have someone  
throw a little cinnamon your way.

the bathroom houses sticky air,  
where blonde hair tangles around  
doorknobs like children clinging  
to their mother's broad shins  
and even the sweetest little  
cups of coffee settle into your tongue  
like dirty water on New York streets.

and it doesn't matter that your class starts in  
one minute...

thirty seconds...

...now

because your shirt is too rough  
and the room feels claustrophobic  
in a sweaty upper lip kind of way  
that is giving you uneven breathes.  
and no matter how hard you try  
to make them even again, you can't  
because the hairs look like spider webs,  
and you don't want to live in New York  
and neither does your mouth.

so you push through your front door,  
and your feet choose their way,  
because right now, they want breakfast,  
and sometimes on a Wednesday morning,  
we need a bagel a lot more than  
we need an education.

it was blueberry, by the way,  
toasted with cream cheese.  
and you bet I licked my fingers  
when it was gone.

## Penance

*Shannon Bertoni, West Chester University of Pennsylvania*

Under the godless sky, I watched as the darkness  
reflected the shine from your eyes.  
Recollecting hours spent in thankless wooden pews:  
Knees rubbed red, crucified eyes omnipresent,  
I rolled my weight to my toes and turned my head.  
I felt holiest while genuflecting between your legs.  
Your hipbones touching mine with a gentle kiss:  
a Bible pressed softly into an ancient Priest's lips.  
Ghosts of nails throbbing as your hands caress my wrists.  
Your palms against my praying hands as I bow my head. Your heartbeat echoed through the  
cavity in your chest  
like the word of the Lord on cathedral walls being stressed  
to children like me who had given up long ago hope of ever being blessed.  
I now believed. You taught me how to pray again,  
left me crying out for a God I had not seen in years.  
My lips brushed against your forehead, your lips,  
each of your guiltless cheeks. I recalled every wicked sin  
as your wooden arms stretched out against my unholy skin.  
In the name of the father, and the son,  
and the holy spirit. Amen.

## Iroquois Drive

*Alex Jashinski, Clarion University of Pennsylvania*

back to the so called home;  
    *my heart isn't there-*  
over the lands of torn down timber,  
where they name the streets  
after the departed tribes.

home after home,  
the same repetitive style.  
aesthetically pleasing to the eyes  
of incredibly one-sided minds,  
breathe in for a second-  
understand these empty sighs.

    i'll overlook truffles of once lush green,  
i once had in a dream.  
    now it has become an endless sea of  
    dirt.  
skeletons remain as a constant reminder,  
until the other Marondas are built.  
they will forget. they will forget.  
    *don't you feel an echo too?*

i have a cold heart,  
a constant reminder-  
of what i left,  
back at this home.  
    over past Mia's grave  
    where poems were written  
    but never fully reassessed;  
i've taken on your profession,  
oh grand wordmonger.  
    i hope you don't mind,  
that your grave is now going  
to be that new couple's home.

maybe they'll have that child,  
that child that we'll never have.  
i feel jaded in this so called home;

that iroquois drive  
no one can ever spell  
correctly.

here's to starting over!  
they've changed it all together really.  
*they fucking took the trees,*

if you could just,  
wake up for maybe,  
i don't know.  
maybe just a little bit-  
you could catch ourselves a fire.  
go back to the place  
where poetry never mattered  
and neither does the  
whole other world you've created.

## **Submission and Subscription Information**

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