

Volume 4, Number 2 • Spring 2009



# DISTINCTIONS

Journal of the Kingsborough Community College Honors Program  
The City University of New York

*Distinctions*, the journal of the Honors Program of Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, welcomes scholarly articles and creative works that explore important issues in all aspects of humanistic endeavor, not confined to a specific academic discipline. Our editorial staff is sympathetic to a broad range of theoretical and critical approaches; however, the views expressed in articles are solely those of the authors.

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Sincere appreciation is extended to Joseph Tammany  
and his staff at Office Services.

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## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

All manuscripts should be submitted electronically by the student or mentor to robert.cowan@kbcc.cuny.edu as Microsoft Word attachments and include a working e-mail address and telephone number for the student. Submissions should be in 12-point font and double-spaced throughout in a legible typeface like Times New Roman or Arial. While there are no length restrictions, we prefer articles that are 3,000-5,000 words and do accept articles that include notes, diagrams, and illustrations. Articles should include a list of Works Cited and be properly referenced according to the guidelines of the Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, or other citation system appropriate to the discipline for which they were written. Submissions are accepted from September through May.

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## **ERRATA**

Please note that we neglected to credit Professor Valerie Sokolova for her mentorship for Xiaoting Lau's illustrated book "This is not about me. It's about you." in the Fall-2008 issue.

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The City University of New York

## EDITOR'S COLUMN

# Degrees of Proximity

This summer will be my twentieth high school reunion, which means, to help you with the math, that I graduated in 1989. What a watershed year. The Berlin Wall came down (my first day in Germany was November 9<sup>th</sup> of that year), *glasnost* and *perestroika* finally took hold, and our definitions of first and second world shifted dramatically. When I began college that next year, I had no computer, only particle physicists and the U.S. military used e-mail, and the revolution of the Internet still sounded far off, the far-reaching ramifications of it as yet inconceivable. Nineteen-eighty-nine, 1990, these are the years in which so many of our Kingsborough students were born, and the world I grew up in might as well be ancient history for many, but not all, of you.

Now, the idea of writing a paper for my class on your phone is pragmatic, not remarkable. Waiting for me to write a complete sentence on the chalkboard is like stepping back in time against your will, against your clock. And yet... and yet... The students in the pages of this issue of *Distinctions* demonstrate that the revolutions that rock the world still rock them. That gender inequality and public perceptions of female embodiment are still major issues, at home and abroad. That a subtly wrought narrative, an exquisitely rendered passage in sound, a raw apparition on canvas will always transport us into the realms of the unknown, the disarming, the deeply stirring, the comforting. That concerns such as obesity in children deserve our justified ire and our prolonged attention.

We received over 50 submissions for the Spring-2009 issue of *Distinctions*, so our selection process was rigorous, but also deeply gratifying in the reading. These students have caused us to reconsider our own assumptions, our own needs, that which we thought so exigent, and for that the staff of the journal thanks all of them. This issue of *Distinctions* rocks with revolutions small and large. I hope it will rock you.

Robert Cowan

Assistant Professor, Department of English



LISA SAMPSON

## United States' Economic Disaster<sup>1</sup>

The state of the United States' economy is the worst we have seen since the Great Depression in the 1930's. During the Depression the stock market crashed, which caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs and homes as unemployment rose to staggering double-digit figures. However, the current state of our economy is not due to a stock market crash, thanks to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) which was implemented after the Great Depression. It is suffering due to a combination of Wall Street greed, mismanagement, government deregulation, and spending and borrowing beyond our means which have finally caught up with us. Working people who are close to retirement are watching their entire retirement savings evaporate daily before their eyes; unemployment is on the rise; the credit and real estate markets are continuing to decline; and people are losing their homes to foreclosure as a result of the subprime lending crisis and job losses. Experienced economists are reporting that they have not seen anything like this. The economic indicators have fallen off the radar, distorting their ability to forecast future problems with confidence. Now, greedy, disconnected and overpaid CEOs of these large corporations have the hubris to want taxpayers to bail out their companies to the tune of billions of dollars. Unfortunately, our current economic situation has not only affected the United States, but the global economy as well.

One of the contributing factors to the decline of the United States economy was the deregulation of the financial services industry by President George W. Bush's administration. This was one of the most catastrophic decisions, apart from the Iraq war, that Bush has made. Also, "Job creation during the Bush-era business cycle was the weakest since the end of World War II" (The Employment Crash). According to Senator Barack Obama in his second presidential debate moderated by Tom Brokaw, "I believe the final verdict on the failed economic policies for the last eight years, was strongly promoted by President George Bush . . . that essentially said that we should strip away regulation consumer protection, let the market run wild and prosperity would rain on all of us." President Bush believed the less we regulated corporations, the more they would function more productively. Given the freedom of deregulation, corporations believed that they were now at liberty to engage in deceptive and unethical practices, and did whatever was appealing for their financial gain with people's investments. The red flag should have gone up when Enron, which was the largest energy trading company during the Bush era, went bankrupt due to a series of unethical bookkeeping practices. As large as the Enron scandal may have seemed at the time, it was just a fraction of the financial catastrophe we are currently experiencing due to deregulation, which has also contributed to our nation's recession. The company was responsible for robbing its investors and their employees of their nest eggs with no apparent remorse, leaving them empty-handed. Enron was also responsible for holding the entire state of California ransom in exchange for energy by manipulating the

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<sup>1</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Eric Rothenburg for Economics 12.

system to cause a series of blackouts. They did this by artificially driving demands for energy up, which caused prices to increase. This situation caused hardships for residents, leaving them unable to pay to keep their electrical services. While this catastrophe was going on, Enron's executives and traders were filling their pockets with millions of dollars. Even though Enron's executives knew what that they were doing was ethically and legally wrong, year after year they ignored their fiduciary duties, engaged in deceptive practices, and failed to manage their company ethically, because they were blinded by greed. Eventually the company collapsed through bankruptcy. A whistleblower was responsible for reporting the company to the SEC after discovering the accounting records were not in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The company had lost all of its employees' retirement funds as well as their customers' investments. This is just one example of some of the unethical trends and daily workings of most large financial investment corporations.

Wall Street's downfall is also due to various unethical practices including the use of mark-to-market accounting. The problem with mark-to-market accounting is that it only looks great on paper; what actually happens with this method of accounting is that brokers are trading against anticipated prices in hopes of the market doing well, which is another normal practice of Wall Street corporations. Because of overwhelming reports of malfeasance in the financial services industry, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act was implemented in 2002. Unfortunately, this was not enough; without regulation greed prevailed and mismanagement continued which is why we are currently in a recession. Landon Thomas Junior of the *New York Times* reported in 2006,

Prudential Financial, agreed to pay \$600 million to settle charges with federal and state regulators that one of its units engaged in inappropriate mutual fund trading...the investigation into market timing became public in the fall of 2003, regulators have imposed more than \$4 billion in fines and penalties, including \$675 million paid by Bank of America in March 2004 and \$600 million by AllianceBernstein in 2003. Bear Stearns paid \$250 million earlier this year to the Securities and Exchange Commission to settle charges that it facilitated improper fund trades for its clients.

This is just a glimpse of the events on Wall Street. Another devastating result of the deregulation of the financial service industry was subprime lending, which led to the current real estate crisis. Mortgage brokers were targeting minorities, the elderly, and individuals with bad credit, offering loans which ballooned within months or in a few years unbeknownst to the mortgage holder. According to Edmund L. Andrews of *The New York Times*:

In 2001 a senior Treasury official, Sheila C. Bair, tried to persuade subprime lenders to adopt a code of "best practices" and to let outside monitors verify their compliance, but many rejected the proposal. An examination of regulatory decisions shows that the Federal Reserve and other agencies waited until it was too late before trying to tame the industry's excesses. Both the Fed and the Bush administration placed higher priority on promoting financial innovation and what President Bush has called the "ownership society."

Security firms were also trading stocks which were called mortgaged-backed securities. These stocks were actually mortgages bought from banks, where individual mortgages were held. What is astonishing is that securities firms ignored the fact that they were actually gambling with people's nest eggs. The risk associated with this type of investment was extremely high considering the fact that the corporations were solely dependent upon the mortgage holder's payments to generate profits.

Ali Velchi, *CNN's* Chief Business Correspondent, reported:

The US housing crisis was the driving force which led us into the recession and has caused job losses. This has never happened before in America. Now the job losses are resulting in mortgage defaults or delinquent payments, at a rate of 76% which is about 1.3 million. This does not



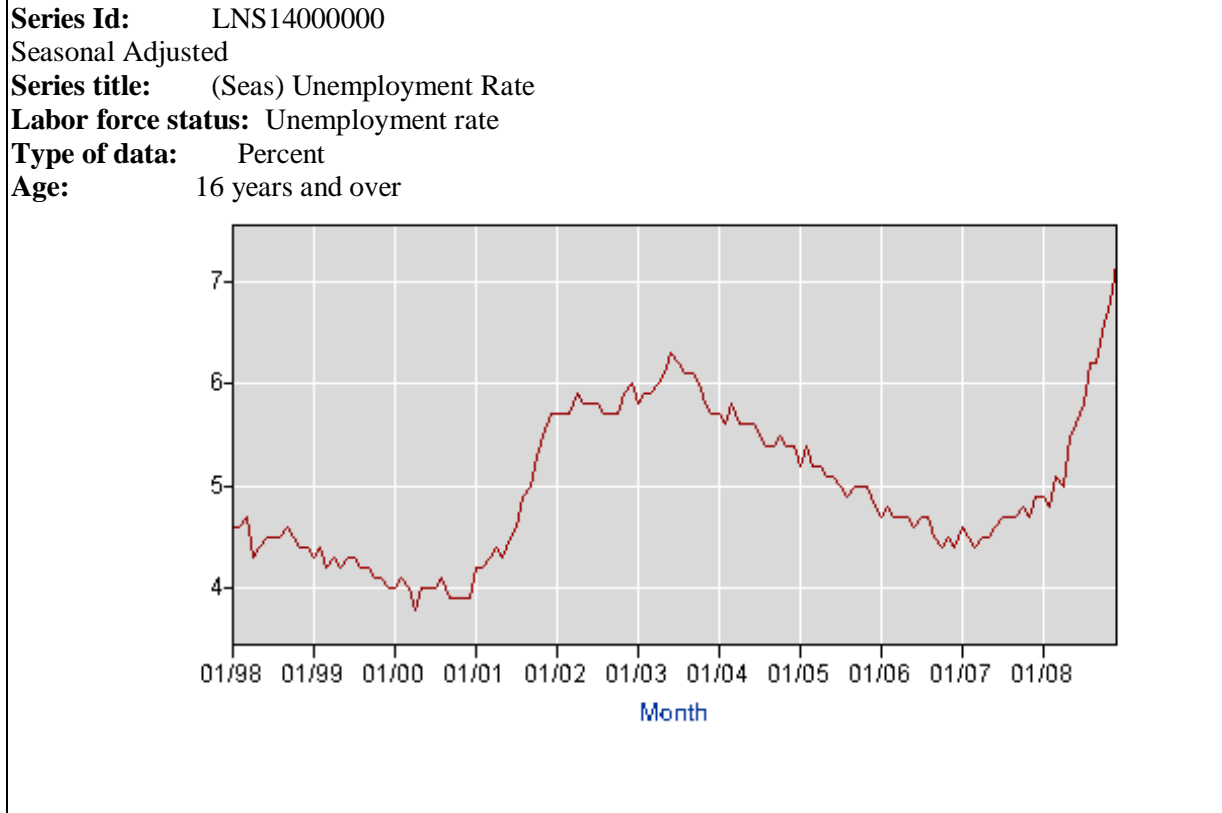
include subprime people or people with bad credit ratings. 10% of all American holders are in trouble who actually could have afforded to pay their mortgages before they lost their jobs.

Yet, Federal officials completely ignored continuous red flags regarding the speculative practices in which the financial service industry engaged. As a result, the financial market suffered losses amounting to billions of dollars causing large Wall Street corporations like Lehman Brothers, AIG and Washington Mutual to suffer devastating losses. It is truly unfortunate that the financial intermediaries who were supposed be the gatekeepers of our financial environment have so undermined America's financial infrastructure with unethical practices and have seriously compromised the future workforce.

In an effort to revive and stimulate the economy Congress agreed to a federal bailout in the amount of 700 billion dollars. Unfortunately, with the volatility of the economy, banks are now very cautious about lending even after receiving funds from the Fed. Banks are now taking extreme precautionary measures when lending to consumers as well as lending to each other. Banks have now also raised annual percentage rates on credit cards and have cut credit limits to reduce their risk. To add to this distressing fact, the United States is not alone in this recession. Unfortunately, "When America sneezes everyone catches a cold". According to the *Korea Herald*, "The looming global recession is being fed by several factors: the collapse of the housing bubbles in the US, UK, Spain, Ireland and other euro-zone members; punctured credit bubbles where money was too easy for too long; the severe credit and liquidity crunch following the US mortgage crisis... and the stagflationary effects of high oil and commodity prices."

Moreover, people are losing their jobs and homes because of the continued bad decisions of government, combined with Wall Street greed. This is truly a devastating situation for homeowners who have worked hard all of their lives to build the American dream and now because of logically disconnected lawmakers, these poor individuals have to be subjected to losing their homes to foreclosure. "Joblessness and the threat of joblessness will depress already dismal consumer spending, which in turn will depress business investment, leading to higher unemployment. Rising unemployment will also fuel more foreclosures, which will further destabilize the financial system" (*The New York Times*). As seen in the charts below, the United States, Bureau of Labor Statistics reported, "In December, the number of unemployed persons increased by 632,000 to 11.1 million and the unemployment rate rose to 7.2 percent. Since the start of the recession in December 2007, the number of unemployed persons has grown by 3.6 million, and the unemployment rate has risen by 2.3 percentage points."





Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1998	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	
1999	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	
2000	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	
2001	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.3	5.5	5.7	
2002	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.9	6.0	
2003	5.8	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.2	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.8	5.7	
2004	5.7	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	
2005	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.8	
2006	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4	
2007	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.9	
2008	4.9	4.8	5.1	5.0	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.2	6.2	6.6	6.8	7.2	

However, we have to take into account that these unemployment figures do not include marginally attached workers who are workers who have relentlessly searched for jobs with no success, as well as discouraged workers who have simply stopped searching for work. If these categories of individuals were included in the labor force participation rate, the numbers would be significantly higher. There are also individuals who are willing and ready to work full-time but have to settle for part-time work because of the lack of available jobs due to the economic decline; these individuals are classified as individuals working part time for economic reasons. This is a real catastrophe for the economy considering that individuals who have lost their jobs are taking a much longer time to find another job because there simply are no jobs available. Also, individuals who are close to retirement are opting not to retire due to

the decline in their retirement nest egg. People are now going back to school to retrain in new careers or because the demand for jobs is extremely high. This situation has resulted in college students graduating from college with no job prospect.

In addition, we have also not invested in the infrastructure of our future such as education. Considering that the US is the “leader of the Free World,” our educational system is in dire straits. Coming out of the recession of the seventies the information age was born; however, with the exception of a talented few like Bill Gates of Microsoft Corporation and Steve Jobs of Apple, while our technological talent has increased we are still behind China and India. Instead of being the greatest innovators of technology, we became the greatest consumers. Foreign countries like China and India have become the leading innovators of technology, they produce it and the Americans consume it. Alex Johnson, a reporter for MSNBC.com, reported in 2006,

The economic surge in India and China comes down to brains. The industries driving the region’s challenge to American leadership in communications, information technology, biotech and the like can’t thrive without a steady supply of highly educated, intellectually flexible workers. Most U.S. high school students don’t take advanced science; they opt out, with only one-quarter enrolling in physics, one-half in chemistry,” the National Science Foundation found. The National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century concluded that U.S. students were “devastatingly far” from leading the world in science and math.

America has to begin to wean itself off of foreign consumption and start rebuilding our infrastructure. According to Brian Knowlton, of *The New York Times*, “President-elect Obama pledged to pursue a recovery plan equal to the task ahead, including the creation of a vast public-works program not just built around bridge and highway projects, but on creating green jobs and disseminating new technologies”.

One of the good outcomes of this recession is the decline in the outrageous gas prices. The decline in gas prices can be attributed to the trickle-down effect of continuous job losses. As individuals who drove to work lost their jobs, their need for gas went down. Also, individuals began to use public transportation which drove the demand for gas even lower. Virginia Miller of the *America Transit Transportation Association* reported, “In the second quarter of 2008, as gas prices rose to more than \$4 for a gallon of gasoline, public transit ridership increased by 5.2 percent. The third quarter transit ridership increase of 6.5 percent... [I]ncreased public transit use reduces our dependence on foreign oil and lowers our nation’s carbon footprint”. But consumers have to be careful in the future of the way they consume gas; with gas prices on the decline, we seem to be getting a little too comfortable with the current low prices. We have to realize that we have the power to drive the prices up again with the infamous “invisible hand” if we are not mindful about the amount of gas we consume, which can eventually drive the demand up again. Another positive outcome of this recession is the average individual’s financial intellect has improved a great deal. People have become interested in the way the economy functions primarily because they want information on how to safeguard their jobs and their investments.

President-elect Obama’s economic plan for America’s future involves Keynesian theory and is reminiscent of the “New Deal” fiscal policies which were implemented by President Roosevelt to revive US economy after the Great Depression, which included government intervention and spending on infrastructure to create new jobs. President-elect Obama is proposing several plans which would cost the US trillions of dollars, causing a major increase in the budget deficit. Some economists fear a national debt of trillions of dollars will have a lasting effect for years to come. According to Jeff Zeleny and Edmund L. Andrews of *The New York Times*, “A big deficit will force the government to borrow more money, saddling future generations with large financial burdens, and leaving the nation reliant of foreign

government for loans" (A1). President-elect Obama believes that it is imperative that government intervene in order for the US economy to recover. He has plans to rebuild America's infrastructure by building bridges and repairing our roads, and to repower buildings with new energy technology. Americans are hopeful that congress will approve President-elect Obama's economic proposals will create millions of new jobs and eventually we will regain financial stability. We are a nation that is strong and resilient; we possess the ability to weather the storm of this recession.

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DONALD ACOSTA

## **A Look Into the Exposition of Excellent Literary Technique: How Jhumpa Lahiri’s Perfect Style and Prose Convincingly Portrays Indo- American Relationships in *The Namesake*<sup>2</sup>**

Do not explain too much. Avoid fancy words. Omit needless words. All three of these rules are essential to becoming good writers, especially of prose fiction, according to William Strunk Jr: writer of *The Elements of Style*—all of which could very well be the same rules Jhumpa Lahiri, sensational author of *The Namesake* and several short stories, abides by. Her realistic prose, simplistic yet intelligent narrative “voice,” and that elegant, easy-going pace of hers captures the very real feeling of a world we live in that just drudges-on, all with a style that makes the reader feel like he/she is really there, in real-time. Very few writers have been able to master this style—like Ernest Hemingway, screenwriter David Chase, Khaled Hosseini, Leo Tolstoy, to name a few. But Jhumpa Lahiri takes realism to a level all her own, leaving out absolutely none of the particulars that other authors would deem to be mundane and extraneously unnecessary details about ordinary life. She did it that way regardless, and readers have found themselves absolutely captivated by this level of realism at a time when most fiction readers expect to go to books to escape the reality of the grind of everyday life. However, family, life, love, relationships, alienation, rebellion, and approval-seeking are many of the issues we as a people have to deal with on a daily basis—and seeing it portrayed so realistically may be

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<sup>2</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Samantha Losapio for English 24.

comforting for readers who may have felt like no one else in the whole world felt the same alienation or need to escape the pressures of parental obligations that they do.

It is one thing to get your readers to identify with your characters, but it's entirely another thing to keep them involved without any real frills, drama, action, comedy, or even suspense in the story. Without a visible story arc (aside from possibly one supporting character (Ashima) having assimilated to American culture after some resistance), Lahiri still managed to write a book that has inspired several readers and writers alike. Was it her writing style, which uses no sophisticated vocabulary that causes thousands of writers to praise Lahiri's style? No, it couldn't be that simple. Some might say it is the portrait she paints of family life that draws readers to want to come together and discuss its brilliance and relevance to their lives, even though *The Namesake* seems to have no real dynamic story-arc, or actual, definitive ending or resolution—staples of literature that book readers and story-lovers alike expect from their books, movies, and media.

The author of *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk, says: "A sentence should contain no unnecessary words...for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts....This requires not that the writer make all sentences short, or avoid all detail and treat subjects only in outline, but that every word tell." (Strunk 23). Lahiri's style is so well controlled in that her writing never seems to fall victim to unbearable wordiness; William Strunk Jr couldn't have given better advice on how to wrap up her sentences with the least amount of extraneous words than she has (I, myself, am still working on that!). It will be a tough job for anyone to find a word in her novel that does not "tell" what is needed to be told in order to move the plot forward. Also, *The Elements of Style* teaches writers that a good story will keep to one tense when summarizing the action or the drama of a scene. In particular, Strunk mentions that the present tense is most favorable. Lahiri would always use the past tense when summarizing a past event, and present tense when she intends on snapping the reader "back into reality." For example, on page 21 of *The Namesake*, Ashoke, a man who at that time had just been born a son (Gogol), suddenly goes into a daydream about his wedding to his wife. In the flashback in the narrative (or what was the equivalent to Ashoke having a reminiscent daydream), the past tense was used, and when he "snaps back" into reality the narrative too returns to the moment at hand of his son being wrapped in his wife's arms, and immediately the narrative voice returns to present tense (more on this later).

Also of interest is Lahiri's insertion of the past scenes into the present scene to include missing details of events already covered in the novel (called Internal Analepsis: one of two types of flashback techniques that stay within the timeframe of the novel's start). Lahiri cleverly injects past events without running on-and-on for too long— getting the reader back to reality without being left for too long in the past. Lahiri makes it seem like it wasn't the narrator choosing to go back in time for no apparent reason, but that the characters were *instead* portrayed to have been "daydreaming" about the past after having something or someone provoke these thoughts to come up again, but with greater revelation. Either way, we as readers always feel like we were there with Gogol, Ashoke, or Ashima *in real-time*, even when it goes into past-tense, and past thoughts, and past events, all because of Lahiri's clever technique of disguising flashbacks as a character's daydream intended to help this particular character pass the time. We are never "awoken" from the text; we're constantly immersed in this world. This is what brings out the realism in the novel, the fact is that as we read from left to right, we are constantly moving further in time in the novel *even when we're presented with flashbacks*.

In reality, most of us can't remember most parts of our days because we spend a lot of them daydreaming and drudging through uneventful routines, much like the characters in *The Namesake*. This incredible ability to encapsulate the past tense inside of scenes that don't pause

in-between is a technique that masters the sense of duration in a way that is so delicately and beautifully crafty that writers will be scratching their heads for years trying to figure it out. Finally, I have to say that this once unimportant technique has yet another very important purpose it serves: It frees-up a scene that was already presented prior in the text back when it was originally given, so that that very same scene would not have to be too long and boring, and can live to be revisited in small, sweet bursts of renewed appreciation. To further elaborate, we shall return to the previous example I talked about from page 21 of the novel. Again, going back to Ashoke awaiting to embrace his first born son, as he is waiting, he (a.k.a. the narrative voice of his own P.O.V.) begins to revisit two scenes previously mentioned in the novel: First, his wedding to Ashima, and second, his having survived the train wreck which was the first turning point in his life. But the thing is that when those two preceding scenes were being revisited for the second time, we were treated to *more* details than previously revealed; details that might have been too extraneous if told all at one time in the original scene (the actual moment of marriage or train wreck). However, these details have more significance when Ashoke remembers those extra details of the events (such as remembering the wedding rituals he performed with Ashima, or even more revealing, when he was able to pinpoint the deepest fear of not just dying, but of the possibility of having died waiting in vain to be rescued, only to be overlooked and left for dead).

The timing of Ashoke's subconscious revelation of the more detailed observations of these two parallel scenes tells us so much about Ashoke, and does it better than if it were revealed earlier, only for us as readers to forget its significance in how Ashoke must feel when later on his son is born. Lesson learned: Keep details slim in certain scenes (such as those about routine like the Indian wedding), then (later on, and when it can forward the plot) reveal the significance those routines had on a character to give it meaning to the reader. Also by going into these events in his mind again, at this particular time in his life, Lahiri masterfully ties the birth of Gogol, Ashoke's son, to the past life altering events (wedding and train wreck) to contrast and compare how Gogol is the new life altering change in Ashoke's life. She does it without blatantly saying this, but it's clear and it gives the readers something to think about. Simply it's clear that Gogol was the third life altering thing in Ashoke's life—all as result of his marriage and surviving the accident—all of which happened in a relatively short amount of time.

The novel is told from a mainly third person point of view; but brilliantly shifts around within the third person sphere of movement: such as *Multiple* third person, *Single/Deep* third, and *Objective* third person perspective. For those of us who are not in the know, let's do a quick review: Third person Point-of-View (POV) is when a narrative in a story tells the story by referring to the protagonists as "he" or "she", as opposed to "I". *Single/Deep* Third is a narrative so deeply immersed in the filtered perception of a scene through the eyes of a single protagonist that his/her thoughts and the "voice" of the narrative have virtually become one in the same. And Finally, *Objective* Third is like a camera-eye view in the movies, showing emotions through conveyed action and dialog, not from the characters thoughts. A good example of a great *point of view*, is when Gogol, now an adult, goes on vacation to his girlfriend Maxine's cabin. The vacation scene was mostly uneventful, but we get the sense that Gogol loves the care-free feeling of the great outdoors, without a bother, unlike being bogged down by worries as he describes his parents as being uptight and slow to conform to American ways.

The scene goes in and out of both deep third person and objective third. In deep third, the narrative (filtered through Gogol's perception of life) while at Maxine's parents' cabin was through the lens of an *artist* and an *architect*:

"[He sees that] the eastern sky is streaked with the thinnest of pink clouds." And "[They] watch the sun set behind the mountains, bats darting between the pines that soar as tall as

ten-story buildings...” and also, “the shapes of the surrounding pines and cabins [are] growing distinct”(154-158)

Moreover, he continued to draw architectural outlines while on his vacation and birthday. A whole book could be written on how craftily Lahiri blended the thoughts of her characters with the voice of the narrative. Also, by having Gogol reflect every now and then on the visual surroundings he finds most appealing, Lahiri is painting the image of a character whose conscience (whenever he’s reminded that he’s abandoned his family on his birthday), begins to distract himself with these observations, thus hiding his guilt. Lahiri does all of this without telling us he feels guilty—it’s just obvious. As an author, she took hold of the golden rule for fiction writers—*show, don’t [just] tell*.

After the vacation, Gogol’s father dies and he subsequently he breaks up with Maxine. The death of his father was too stressful on his relationship with her and she resented it. About two years later Gogol’s mother asked him to take out on a date an old acquaintance of his named Moushumi. After a few dates, they share apartments, fall in love, and get married. But it does not take long for them to develop marital problems. What is interesting in this novel is how Lahiri portrays more than just the point of view of one character, but instead, uses the comparisons and contrast of Moushumi’s behavior to reflect on Gogol’s—all to eventually shine a light on the processes of what leads to the breakdown of relationships. When at first Lahiri dealt with the psychological aspects of a protagonist (Gogol, using deep/personal Third person), she uses *multiple* third person to show the readers the most nonjudgmental, and realistic portrayal of a relationship gone wrong. In Moushumi’s third person perspective we learn that she felt like she merely settled for Gogol. Her heart had given way to infidelity before she had realized it. And Gogol had become an increasingly minor figure in her day to day life before he even realized that she marginalized his role in her life. She got reacquainted with an old fling and pursued a relationship, telling herself beforehand that it was not a big deal to contact him. Detecting that something is wrong, Gogol’s point-of-view asks of himself: “Did he still make her happy? She accused him of nothing... he sensed her distance, her dissatisfaction, her distraction.” (Namesake, 271). Here, Lahiri captures this sixth sense that a spouse feels when they know something is wrong—that the heart isn’t in it anymore, while showing how the *initiator* (Moushumi) can hold power by keeping secrets from the *partner* (Gogol).

As one of the most authentic portrayals of modern American breakups ever depicted in fiction, Jhumpa Lahiri tells this part of Gogol’s life in ways that countless westerners, those who marry for love, can identify with. Examining the realism behind her portrayal of their short-lived, deteriorated marriage we can see: displays of discontent, resentment, and the secret-holding power that the initiator of the cheating and eventual breakup have. First, Moushumi started reverting to an older way of life, burning bridges to any way of building a new one with Gogol. For example, she didn’t care to make neutral friends Gogol could appreciate, but instead spent time with friends of her former fiancé, Graham. She went to Paris with him yet didn’t invite him to hear the speech she was giving there—as if to consciously separate her new life with Gogol from the original life she wants to resurrect: "Initiators [instigator of the eventual break-up] may find self-realization in a return to some former lifestyle that was displaced by the relationship", says Diane Vaughan, Associate Professor of Sociology at Boston College, and author of the book *Uncoupling: Turning Points in Intimate Relationships* (22).

So Lahiri captured that aspect of Moushumi's discontent as if lifted straight off the pages of Diane Vaughan's sociological study of divorce and break-ups. After starting the affair, she goes from casual sexual encounters with the other man, to lying to Gogol about trips she is taking in order to stay the night at that other man's house—sometimes days at a time. Then Moushumi had the audacity to return home as if she weren't unfaithfull, but Gogol sensed a gap between



them, a "distraction" is what he called it (*The Namesake*, 271). Similar to Moushumi's behavior, Vaughn points out,

‘The initiator continues (for the time being) to go home, but, like the man [or woman] who routinely stopped by his [or her] mother's house every evening, does so having *contributed* elsewhere, having been *fed and nurtured elsewhere*.’

(Italics added for emphasis) (23).

All are things Moushumi did, in that same order with such realism in the portrayal. When Moushumi no longer puts in any effort, not even to argue, then it's clear she doesn't care because she has her back-up plan with another man. Gogol finds out about her cheating ways when she accidentally said the other guy's name after a disagreement about renting a vacation house (282). Diane Vaughan's study shows that eventually "Initiator and partner spend more time together with the result that the couple's incompatibilities become more obvious, [thus] causing the initiator to act before the *scheduled* confrontation." (88).

So, with that Gogol moves on and divorces her; yet Lahiri presents the revelation of his uncovering of his wife's infidelity and their subsequent divorce by telling it to the reader from Ashima's point of view. It is debatable, but I believe the reason for revealing it through Ashima's objective view rather than by Gogol's emotional, deeply third person perspective is because she didn't know how to convey raw male emotion, or more likely, she didn't want to get into the emotions because the book would probably have to dedicate a whole chapter or two for that. "A writer who omits things because he [or she] does not know [their character's personality] only makes hollow places in his [or her] writing.": This is a quote made by acclaimed writing legend, Ernest Hemingway, which was a line that originally appeared in one of Hemingway's books, but is now being reprinted as a selection in editor Larry W. Phillips's book entitled: *Hemingway On Writing* (p. 77). Although some aspects of the "confession-to-divorce" timeline are made known, it is told from a more objective view, starting from Ashima's and finally ending in Gogol's. Very little in the way of emotions are displayed here (that must be why the final chapter immediately picks up more than a year after Gogol discovers Moushumi's infidelity, to spare us from having to feel his pain—instead, letting us pick up from a time where he's (mostly) gotten over her.) But, in my opinion, I think this one minor narrative lapse is the only thing I think the late Hemingway would've criticised when it comes to *The Namesake's* style.

In lieu of the fact that Lahiri is the winner of the PEN/HEMINGWAY Award (not to mention the O. Henry award and The Pulitzer), I couldn't think of a better way of concluding this literary criticism than by comparing Lahiri's style to that of Hemingway himself (whom other, more credible critics than myself have compared her to). Better yet, we can find out what Hemingway himself would likely say today--*and what better critic could one ask for?* Thankfully, there's no need to attempt to contact the spirit of the late, great writer, because Larry W. Phillips, author of *Hemingway On Writing*, has collected many of the comments and remarks Hemingway has made on the topic of writing, and put them all in one one book. Comparing the positive things I think Lahiri has done in light of what Hemingway would "approve" of (literary-style wise), I believe he would have commended her ability of mastering prose, especially for a first time novelist; Hemingway once said: "The hardest thing in the world to do is to write straight prose on human beings...[and it can] take a lifetime to learn..." (Qtd. in Phillips 26). Also, he would probably applaud her choice and portrayal of such realistic characters, or more so, for her having created what he calls [real] "people," breathing life into the narrative and relating to the realities of everyday life. On this topic he was written that:

"When writing a novel, a writer should create living people; *people* not characters," and he also states that:

If the people the writer is making [like to] talk of old masters; of music; of modern painting; or of modern science then they should talk of those subjects in the novel. (Qtd. in Phillips 71)

In *The Namesake*, Gogol and Moushumi, and his other past love interests have engaged in typical conversations that modern people take for granted, making them strikingly real--where every word uttered by the characters doesn't have to be a foreshadowing omen of sorts, but can simply be what's on the person's mind at the time. This realism helps to keep the reader grounded in the "here-and-now", in the present. This brings up one last thing: Lahiri's ability to lock us into the present moment of whatever page we happen to be reading in the novel. I found myself savoring each page as it came, and I do not ever remember being in a rush to reach the end (yet I could barely stop reading). I've already mentioned my input on her mastery of analepsis, but I'd like to once again refer to the wisdom of Mr. Hemingway on the matter of capturing the "here and now".

When the question "How can a writer train himself" was posed, Hemingway's response was: "Watch what happens *today*." In other words, write about the "here-and-now," to capture that feeling for the readers in your writing. Later he continues, "Remember what the noises were and what was said" and then he recommends that the writer should "...write it down making it clear so the reader will see it too and have the same feeling that you had" (Qtd. in Phillips 30). Clearly, Jhumpa Lahiri must have used these same techniques, or at least something similar, because she was able to capture the feel, sounds, and sensations of *the moment* to "lock" us into the reality that her characters (and possibly herself) had felt. She just keeps on satisfying readers with the current flow of the story, suppressing that nagging feeling we readers sometimes get of wanting to figure out the ending before we've even gotten there. It never becomes about the ending, only the journey. This allows for enjoyable re-readability because once we finish it, it isn't ruined by any definitive, conclusive ending...life just goes on after the story "ends", and we can re-read the book as an indicator of the kind of world our favorite characters will continue to live in.

Much like HBO's *The Sopranos*, we are given (in both that and *The Namesake*) a story where the characters, and the "open-for-interpretation" humanistic themes about love, family, loyalties and pursuits of happiness in America take precedence over the "plot" alone. This emphasis on themes rather than on story-arcs is what makes Lahiri's *The Namesake* a work of *literature*, not just mere "fiction". (And consequently, this emphasis of the exploring of themes is what has labelled HBO's classic (yet controversial) television series as being "Televised Literature"). Although both have been criticised for their abrupt endings, I chose to compare them to one another to show that by Lahiri choosing to have given readers a no-frills, anti-climactic ending, it leaves us with only the good memories to return to. (And also the intention of writers of *The Sopranos* was to re-focus attention to the themes of the past episodes again instead of a climactic "ending"). So on that issue, I would say Lahiri's ending was appropriate, and would appear to have been cautiously thought-out and planned in order to preserve the integrity of the themes of the entire text.

In conclusion, I think I've displayed that the "hype" on Lahiri's writing style in *The Namesake* has definite merit (not just grounded on fandom), especially when compared, in hindsight, to those qualifications that Hemingway believes that an excellent writer, such as himself, would need, and the fact that Lahiri has also lived up to a large quantity of them. I have my opinions, but I could think of no greater honor for Lahiri than to know that even the great Ernest Hemingway

(if he were alive today) would probably have put her at the top of a short list of young writers that have the potential to be one of the best writers of our modern times.

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FADIMA BA

## Gender Inequality in Pakistan<sup>3</sup>

In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, women are considered inferior to men. Some of the reasons for this inferiority are the traditional roles that women play in society, the religious laws that are biased against women, and the authoritarian political regimes. Since Pakistan is a religious state, all the laws are based according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. In some cases, the Qur'an is sexist against women, and some leaders have interpreted the Qur'an verses strictly. One such leader is Zia ul-Haq, who my paper focuses on because he in particular made women's lives difficult. In this paper I will first introduce the leaders of Pakistan since partition and then Zia-ul-Haq and his discriminatory laws against women, and finally President Pervez Musharraf, who tried to change those discriminatory laws. The purpose of this paper is to show how women are affected when their country is a religious state and under authoritarian rule; whether religious laws benefit or hurt women.

Since Pakistan received its independence from the British in 1947, the state policies have dramatically changed with the changes in government. The people of Pakistan have been under a military rule for a long time, and being that it is also a religious state, the country was governed by religious laws. The people saw changes in power from elected to nonelected politicians. The people didn't matter much, especially the women.

The first elected president of Pakistan was Iskander Mirza (1956-1958). Mirza was the first president to govern Pakistan, and he ruled under a democracy. His goal was to mobilize Pakistan. During his tenure, Pakistan's first constitution was finalized in 1956, which established general elections. But with the help of Commander-in-Chief, Muhammad Ayub Khan, Mirza abolished the constitution and replaced it with martial law in 1958 because he feared that the constitution could lead to the election of a new president in the general elections. He appointed general Ayub Khan as the martial administrator. Martial law is usually imposed in a country when there is an absence of a constitution and the presidents govern under an authoritarian rule. Soon after the martial law, Ayub Khan snatched Mirza's powers and Mirza was forced to resign from his presidency and died in London. Afterward General Ayub Khan became the first non elected military president (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003).

Muhammad Ayub Khan governed Pakistan under an authoritarian rule throughout his presidency (1958-68). His era is known for the industrialization of Pakistan (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003). He established an environment where people were encouraged to open up businesses. Those businesses opened up opportunities for jobs and the country's

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<sup>3</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Katherine Opello.

economy went up. He also created the family ordinance law, which was the first attempt by the government to give women economic and legal protection from their husbands in case of divorce or polygamy (Banuazizi & Weiner 416). In addition, he raised education standards and promoted “female literacy as a way of creating a larger work force” (Banuazizi & Weiner 413). Since Ayub Khan was a dictator, he ruled under religious laws, but he was not very strict about them because he promoted women’s education. But there were some people who didn’t like the country being ruled under a dictatorship. Soon Ayub Khan realized that his tenure wouldn’t last long and so he introduced a new constitution. In 1962, Khan lifted the martial law and a new constitution was introduced, which said that the country would be ruled under a democracy with free and fair elections (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003).

Even though the new democratic constitution was in effect, Ayub Khan refused to obey it. In 1965, presidential elections were held and Fatimah Jinnah was the preferable candidate, but Ayub Khan cheated the polls and he was “elected” president. In 1965 the Indo-Pakistan War led to the downfall of Ayub Khan. After the war, the country’s economy declined rapidly, and an anti-Ayub movement was organized by the urban middle class which involved students, teachers, lawyers and doctors. Soon strikes broke out. (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003). There was no longer law or order in the country and even Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ayub Khan’s right hand man, turned against him and started his own party, known as Pakistan’s Peoples Party (PPP). The PPP’s main goal at the time was to remove Khan from power. In March 1969, Ayub Khan resigned and handed over the Islamic Republic of Pakistan’s presidency to the commander in chief general Muhammad Yahya Khan (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003).

General Muhammad Yahya Khan restored martial law and assumed the role of chief of martial law. Yahya abrogated the 1962 constitution and abolished all basic democratic rights that Ayub Khan had established. But in accepting the presidency, he said he would only govern until the 1970 national election because he was not interested in holding office. He was the first president that ever had free and fair general elections, which took place in December. In 1971 a war broke out between Pakistan and India, and since Khan failed to plan for the war, Pakistan was defeated, and many Pakistanis were imprisoned. Khan was blamed for the war and hated in Pakistan. He couldn’t hand over the presidency to another general because the country was tired of military rule, instead, he gave the power to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the end of December 1971 (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003).

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-77) was a democratic ruler who brought hope to Pakistan. He ruled with and for the people. He released all the prisoners held in India during the war and tried to reduce poverty and improve the economy, agriculture and industry by promoting female literacy and employment (Banuazizi & Weiner 413). “He gave the third Constitution to the country and established civilian authority” (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003). Bhutto stepped down from the presidency when the 1973 constitution adopted a federal parliamentary system for the country in which the president was only a figurehead and the real power lay in the hands of the prime minister. Under this new system Bhutto ran for Prime Minister and was selected. Bhutto’s regime was known as a democratic one that increased women’s involvement in the labor force. Another reason is his involvement in the PPP. The PPP was organized by Bhutto in 1968 along with people who wanted Pakistan to ignore religion as the basis of politics in favor of a democracy (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, online). Even though Bhutto was a better leader than all the previous Presidents and Prime Ministers in terms of democracy, there were some groups like the Pakistan National Alliance that didn’t like his way of governing. The PNA decided to speak out against Bhutto at the mosques by saying that he was not a religious leader, which led to a jihad against Bhutto’s party to save Islam (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003). This approach by the PNA was popular because Pakistan is a

religious state and it was thought that all the leaders had to govern by Islamic laws. Soon the country fell into a lawless state. Bhutto was arrested and while in jail, the country was again controlled by military rule. Elections were supposed to be held, but Zia-ul-Haq, the Chief of Army, imposed martial law and postponed the elections for a very long time.

Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88) was appointed Chief of Army Staff in 1976 by Bhutto. Bhutto thought Zia would not be a threat to his presidency because Butto believed that Zia was only interested in religion not politics (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003). However Zia was interested in becoming president and while the PNA was threatening Bhutto, Zia took advantage of the situation and in 1977 he overthrew Bhutto's government by a coup. Once again Pakistan was under military rule and martial law. In the 1980's, Zia decided to hold elections to legalize his presidency through a referendum. The question on the referendum was whether the people liked what he was doing for the country, which was making laws that corresponded to the holy Qur'an (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003). The majority of the people voted for his referendum and he was elected for the next five years, which led to eleven years. In 1988, he promised the people that general elections would be held again within 90 days, which he kept postponing. Then in a plane crash before elections, Zia and all the passengers were killed, and police never found out who was responsible.

Zia ul-Haq was one of the only presidents that created a big gender gap between men and women on the basis of Islamic law. "General Zia wanted to bring the legal, social, economic and political institutions of the country in conformity with the Islamic principles, values and traditions in the light of Quran and Sunnah, to enable the people of Pakistan to lead their lives in accordance to Islam" (*Story of Pakistan Interactive Encyclopedia*, 2003). In other words, he tried to interpret the law in accordance with the Qur'an. Zia "took the Qur'an verses regarding women and interpreted them strictly" (Bubb 2007). His laws were always in favor of men because he thought that women were less important than men. For the first time in Pakistan, the law regarded men and women as having different legal rights, which has limited women's involvement in public life ever since Zia first took office.

For example, the Hudood Ordinance, passed in 1979, created punishments for those who committed zina, and zina-bil-jabr. Zina is a crime committed by a man and woman when they willfully have sexual intercourse without being married and zina-bil-jabr is rape. If someone commits zina, men or women their punishment is death by stoning or a hundred lashes (Benuazizi & Weiner 418). The same punishment is applied to a woman who has been raped, unless valid evidence is provided to prove her innocence. For a woman to prove she was raped, she has to provide four male witnesses, who are mature, of age, responsible, and with a good character, who will testify against the rapist (Bubb, 2007). The most difficult task was finding the men who were willing to testify. If the victim could not prove a case against her rapist under the Hudood Ordinance, her only option was to punish her rapist with the Ta'zir punishment. Under the Ta'zir punishment a rape victim could send the rapist to jail, for between four to twenty five years (Bubb, 2007). To win a Ta'zir case the victim must provide a confession of four male witnesses, or the victim could testify and bring other female witnesses (Bubb 2007). However, in Pakistan a woman counts as only half of a man, so the victim needed eight females compared to four male witnesses. If the victim failed to prove that she was raped, the law assumes that she is guilty and her punishment would be the same as that of zina, death by stoning or hundred lashes. Both practices did not benefit women because it has the same resolution, at the end the woman still dies. A man never had to go through this because men were never raped and so they didn't have to prove his innocence, but if he was raped he probably would win because he has more rights than a woman.

During Zia's regime female literacy was at the lowest because his government made no attempts to improve the female literacy rates. Rural women were the ones that were most affected by Zia's government because they were more traditional than urban women. Out of all Pakistan's rural women between the ages of twenty five and above, 96.5 percent never went to school (Benuazizi & Weiner 426). Zia's government was not interested in funding money for education; in 1986 his government spent 33.9 percent on the military compared to 3.2 percent on education (Benuazizi & Weiner 425). Finally Zia thought that a women's modesty could only be protected within the four walls of her home. This meant that women were not allowed to work outside of their home, and since most of them had no education, there wasn't much to do in public life. The only thing they were allowed to do which earned them some source of income was work that was traditionally based and required them to stay at home. Such jobs were sewing, embroidery, tailoring, weaving. In poor areas, such as the rural areas, it was important for a woman's activity to be respectful, which was basically living a traditional life. In Pakistan, traditional meant that a woman's place was at home while the man's was outside the home. In 1988, the female labor force participation was only ten percent also women were not allowed to take part in athletic events because it could lead to immodest exposure (Benuazizi & Weiner 420).

Women suffered a great deal under Zia's government. But there have been some women who tried to break away from the traditional roles they were supposed to play. Most of these women were urban and wives of wealthy husbands. One of the first women's organizations was the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA), which was started by Raana Liaquat Ali Khan who was the wife of a former Pakistan Prime Minister. The APWA was a charity organization which was again made up of urban wives of rich men, and its main focus was to establish hospitals, family planning clinics, schools, and colleges. It was also an interest group that promoted rural women's integration and expanding work opportunities (Benuazizi & Weiner 432). Another organization was the Women's Action Forum (WAF), which is an independent group that started in 1981 by women in response to discriminatory laws made by Zia "to strengthen women's position" (Benuazizi & Weiner 419). These organizations were not successful in bringing change for women because there weren't a lot of women involved, which made the organizations weak. Women did not get involved because most of them did not have the money to get involved in an organization, and most husbands would not let their wives participate in such organizations because it was not the place for an ideal Muslim woman. Basically the organizations were created to help women challenge the role that the government and Islam expected them to play. These kinds of organizations would scare men who controlled their wives and who wanted their women to take care of them, the children and the house. Men were scared of women knowing they could do something else with their lives other than being housewives.

Greater change began to start for women when Benazir Bhutto, the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan took office. Benazir was the daughter of former President and Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. She held office between 1988 and 1990. Being that Benazir was a Harvard graduate, and had lived in the United States, she was familiar with democracy, and knew that the people made the government and not the other way around. Benazir Bhutto brought back the PPP and tried to strengthen Pakistan's government. After she took office, her first actions were to free all female prisoners who were in jail for being raped. She built schools and hospitals. She brought electricity to the places that didn't have it, and she improved health care (Benuazizi & Weiner 440). She appointed more women to the federal government, and during her time women became more involved in political life.

At the same time that Benazir Bhutto was Prime Minister, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, who was Zia's advisor on finance and chairman of Senate, served as President. During his tenure (1988-1993) he removed Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister in 1993. Khan held many political offices



during his career but he never operated in a democratic system (M Ilyas Khan, BBC News). Eventually he resigned due to differences he had with the Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. After the resignation of Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Leghari, Federal Minister for Finance, was elected President for a term of five years in 1993. Before becoming President, he had a high profile career. In 1978 he was secretary general of the PPP. In 1983 he was jailed for four years under Zia's martial law because he fought for the restoration of democracy. But during his term as president, he started making inappropriate appointments in the judiciary, which led to some controversy between him and the second term Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. President Leghari used the Eighth Amendment for the dissolution of the National Assembly to dismiss Benazir Bhutto. In 1997 Mian Nawas was elected Prime Minister. Mian was a political opponent of Leghari who, with the help of the Muslim League and The National Assembly took away the Eighth Amendment and introduced the Thirteenth Amendment which gave the Prime Minister power to advise the president on decision making and to appoint chiefs of armed forces. This amendment did not please the president and in 1997 Leghari resigned from office. Shortly after, the Nawas government nominated Muhammad Rafiq Tarar for president.

In 1998 Muhammad Rafiq Tarar was elected president. Tarar was a former Supreme Court judge who took office after the resignation of President Leghari on December 2, 1997. Tarar won the election with free and fair votes. During his presidency he abided and led the country by the constitution and he was a firm religious believer. Tarar's presidency didn't last long. After overthrowing the Nawas government in 2001 by the military, Tarar was removed from office by the chief executive General Pervez Musharraf in June 2001, who took office afterwards. Tarar's presidency did not bring major change for the country because it did not last long and the Prime Minister was basically the law maker. Even though there were some Presidents after Zia, none of them tried to change women's status and so there were no advances for women until the next president took over in 2001.

President Musharraf was chief army staff in 1998, and chairman of the joint chiefs-of-staffs in April 1999. In October 1999, the military took over Pakistan's government through a bloody coup, and Musharraf became president on June 2001. However, his presidency was not legalized under Pakistan's constitution, which stated that every president had to be elected through general elections. And so in April 2002, he held a referendum, which basically said if you want to restore democracy and keep the local government, then elect Musharraf for President for the next five years.

President Musharraf's era was a very important and a significant change for women in Pakistan. He tried to make women's position better by ending the discriminatory laws passed by Zia-ul-Haq. In 2001 Pakistan became a signer of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, and is known as an international bill of rights for women. It defines what constitutes discrimination and sets up ways to act towards ending it. When Pakistan signed the convention, it agreed to take serious actions to end women's discrimination. He agreed to the country's adoption of gender quotas giving women reserved seats in parliament. Pakistan's gender quotas gave women 33 percent seats in local government (offices that are smaller than a state, such as city council, PTA), 18 percent in other legislatures (mini Congress in States), and women can also fight for general seats, and 60 percent of the seats are reserved for them in the national and provincial assemblies. These changes meant that women can try to make and change laws. It could also be assumed that if women are elected to political offices they can change other women's lives by making laws that affect them positively. Musharraf also promised to remove inequalities in education by 2010, and to free women from poverty, powerlessness and illiteracy (Andrabi Hussain).

Another major change for women in Pakistan occurred in August 2006, when President Pervez Musharraf announced he was changing the Pakistani rape laws. The new bill, the Protection of Women Bill, replaced the Hudood Ordinance law. This bill removed the Ta'zir punishment, and left only one option for the rapist, which is death or life imprisonment. According to the *New York Times* article "Pakistan moves toward altering rape law" by Salman Masood, rape cases were to be tried in a secular court instead of an Islamic court, and any four witness of any gender would be good enough for evidence. The bill also outlawed sex with girls under the age of 16 whereas the Islamic code only banned sex with girls before puberty. According to Seth Mydams, with the previous law, "rape victims are the criminals". Under rape cases when in Islamic court, men are innocent until proven guilty, while women are guilty until proven innocent, and seventy-two percent of rapes in Pakistan take place while in police custody when they come to report rape. For this reason most women did not report rape (Bubb, 2007). With the new law women have an easier chance of prosecuting their rapist. But the law has a downside to it. In the tribal areas of Pakistan, where the tribe has its own laws that are different from the national governments, women who commit adultery or have been raped are punished through something called honor killing. Honor killings are acts of violence, sometimes murder, that are committed by the woman's family members when she brings dishonor to the family. Honor killings are condoned in tribal and rural areas, and also by the government of Pakistan. Five thousand women are killed worldwide every year in honor killings (Bubb, 2007).

With these changes in the government regarding women, one might say that women's lives are better in Pakistan because of the law changes and the increase in women's representation but that was not the case, in a study done in 2000-2001 in Pakistan by Kwawar Mumtaz, one of Pakistan's leading women's rights activists, found that women were found to have no say in decision making, and were subject to domestic and other forms of physical and sexual violence and harassment in both urban and rural sites (Wendy Harcourt and Arturo Escobar, 20). Rape is still a major problem for women in Pakistan. Rape occurs approximately every two hours, gang rape occurs every four days, and half the victims are under aged (Bubb, 2007). Irin's article titled "Violence against Women in Pakistan Still a Huge Problem" reported that during 2004 Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid (LHRLA) reported 4, 302 cases of violence against women and more than 1,000 cases of sexual abuse. The sexual, physical and verbal abuse at home was the highest in the world, and 80 percent of women in Pakistan suffered from such abuses. In the first half of 2004 about 5, 646 cases against violent husbands were in pending in Pakistan jails. Even though the government has gender quotas and laws have been passed against the violations of women, it hasn't made much of any difference in the daily lives of most women. They are still hurt and violated and the laws are not helping them in any way. The laws are just there, but they do not punish anyone who does not follow them.

In conclusion one cannot say whether Pakistani women's situation will change for the better. As we have seen, the role of women changes as the government changes. A democratic government means that the people would elect their preferred candidate as president because they feel that he has what it takes to make the country better, while authoritarian rule is not about what the public wants but about what one person wanting to control everyone based on what he thinks is good for them. While Pakistan has tried to end discriminatory laws against women it has not gone far enough to protect women. In a country where laws are based on religious beliefs, especially the Qur'an, which, for a lack of better word, is sexist, it's hard to see men and women having the same rights. Another factor that makes it hard for people to be heard in Pakistan in general and women in particular is the authoritarian rule that has existed since the creation of Pakistan. According to "The True Clash of Civilization" by Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "No society can achieve the desired state of well being and human development, or compete in a globalizing world, if half its people remain marginalized and disempowered". The only way

women's situations can improve in Pakistan is when it adopts a democratic government and steps away from Islamic laws, which consider women inferior to men.

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**EKATERINA LALO**

# **Readjusting to Society After Defending My Country: A Studs Terkel Piece<sup>4</sup>**

My name is Ronald Fields. I served in the US army for almost six years. For a year of that time, I was a sniper in Iraq. I learned a lot from it.

I didn't choose to go to Iraq. I chose to go to the army and I was eventually sent to Iraq. I joined the military because I thought that it would have a great impact on my life- that it would give me the opportunity that I wouldn't have on my own. Being a soldier for almost six years was a good lesson for me that I will always remember.

One of the things that I had to learn in the army was how to deal with my short temper. Short tempers and the military don't mix too well, so that was something I had to let go. I tried to work on it for all those years that I spent in the army. After a while, I noticed a change and it's not as big a problem. Now I can manage it well and many things that, as I notice, upset people, just don't bother me anymore.

The second thing that I gained from the military is maturity. I'm a lot older and I'm not referring to my age. I am only 26 right now. I mean maturity. Even though I'm younger than some people, mentally I'm older than them. It is going to take them some time to reach where I am. This is probably why they are doing some of the things that they do, like hanging out. Don't get me wrong, I hang out and I do a lot of stuff that people of my age should do, like going to the parties and so on, but this is not everything I am concentrated on right now.

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<sup>4</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Patrick Hickey, with special thanks to Professor Frank Percaccio.

Now that I am back home, I'm thinking about my career and what I want to devote my life to. I am a student at Kingsborough Community College, majoring in Liberal Arts. I'm not sure what my career will be. I am considering Criminal Justice or Psychiatry. I would like to be a therapist or psychiatrist. I enjoy working with people and find and correct general things that may cause them to lose focus. It is a hard job, though, as many of us listen to something only if we realize that people who are advising us are not making something up and are just trying to help.

The bad thing, however, is that I tend to over-analyze things. It has become a bad habit of mine. I talk to people and I feel as though I'm in the field again. I'm a soldier and I need to orchestrate every detail of their life. I cannot let it go. A lot of people don't want to be analyzed. Everybody loves to point the finger, but not to have the finger pointed at them. Many of us like to give advice, but cannot take constructive criticism.

The good thing is that I don't have nightmares. Occasionally, I think about something that I went through, but it's not traumatic. It's not traumatic for me to think about it. It is a learning experience. You're seeing things and you learn from them. If you've never been in a fight, you don't know what to do in a fight. Even though fighting is bad, it taught you something. Every experience teaches you and this is just another experience that taught me something different, not what I was used to. I stored those years in my memory, as I believe that negative experience is also important to remember. If you only remember the best, you get into the sphere where everything is bliss; you are in your own little world. As long as you remember bad things, you learn to appreciate the good. If you have always had a silver spoon, if you have been always given money, if you have never had to pay a bill, then you won't appreciate working and receiving a paycheck or see it as some kind of achievement. You shouldn't forget where you came from and the things that brought you where you are now.

Maybe, you will also decide to join the army one day. But I need to warn you: know what you want. Don't just go to the military. If you don't know what you want, you'll get sucked into it and you'll never get a chance to do what you actually want to. The military shouldn't be your goal or a way to achieve your goal. It can help by serving as a teacher and it can hurt by destroying your morals. If you can be... I don't know what is the word that I should use... molded, without having any thought of your own, then the military is definitely not the place for you. In order to go to the military, you should be strong, because if not, they can change everything about you. You can be nice and they can change you so much that you may become mean. Think first whether or not you are able and ready to face this change and then come back to your "old self."

In a sense, the military is a form of brainwashing. You are made to think in a certain way by means of repetitive actions. For example, combat. You are taught to think only respectably to your orders. You can have little initiative, but you are not supposed to have your free will. You are doing what you're told to do, you have your orders and you carry out your orders. That's it.

I've seen different kinds of people while I served in the army. It is all about how much of yourself you give to the service. A few people are like rebels. They still can't come back to their original

self after basic training. Some people were like commanders. All they know is the military. They talk to you like you are their soldier and they give commands. Some of them even do it to their families. The brainwashing is so deep that their children look like little soldiers. They give commands to their wives as though they are not equal, like they are just a part of their company or so. Everyone is different. To remain yourself and continue living a normal life after the army, you need to be strong enough and try to predict how joining the military may change you.

There is one more thing I would like you to remember. It's not impossible to leave the army, but it's really hard. You figure, in all honesty, to train each person, put all of them through basic training cost a certain amount of money. It is almost as if they invest in you. Let's say a big company invests money into a small company and then the little company says that it doesn't want to be managed by that bigger company anymore. The little company will be destroyed. Sometimes soldiers go to any means to get out that they receive dishonorable discharge and that's where your life is a mess. Will the military service make you or break you? This is what you have to know.

I was strong enough to remain myself. I avoided becoming only a soldier. I always remembered that I was a human being with certain goals that I needed to achieve. Being in the army didn't break me. It taught me how to face the challenge and move forward. I am sure that with all the maturity I possess now, I will have a brilliant future, whichever career I choose. I hope that learning about my experience will benefit you and let you make it through as I did.

**CHRISTINE HALL**

## **Gentileschi and *Esther*<sup>5</sup>**

**F**our years ago I moved to New York City from Portland, Oregon. I was excited and anxious for all that the "Big Apple" had to offer, to nourish my mind with new culture and new experiences that weren't readily available where I was born and raised. One of the first things on my long list of things to see and do here in New York was to go to one of the many museums. The Metropolitan Museum of Art or "The Met" was my very first choice. It was a good choice at which to start what would become a new obsession of mine, which was to learn as much as I could about art. Learning about art at my age is a daunting task when considering my previous lack of access and very little knowledge of the subject. I feel like I have a lot of catching up to do.

Since moving here, I have visited the Met more than three times so far. I'm pleased that every time I go I have an easier time finding my way around the many halls and tremendous rooms. The museum's atmosphere is so special; I adore it. I sense excitement from most of the adults at the museum. I also sense boredom from some of the visitors who have yet to learn about the uniqueness of what is appearing on the walls before their eyes. The front steps to the museum, which are very large and grand, are usually full of people from all walks of life, which helps the visitor feel like she is about to enter into a special place full of history, artistic talent and yet to be acquired knowledge.

I was even more excited than usual for my most recent visit to the museum. This excitement stems from my new Art History class. This class was my very first formal education in art. My assignment was to go to the museum and select only one piece to study and devote myself to for the entire semester. I had a few artists in mind that I was considering studying, but I also hoped that something else from a new artist would catch my eye. It is tough to decide on one piece to study. It takes commitment and belief that the work chosen will be sufficient enough to write about in-depth.

I originally thought I would select a piece by Edgar Degas. I have always liked his work. At an early age I was exposed to replicas of some of his paintings, which often depict dancers. I used to dance, and I would often receive "good luck" cards before performances from other

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<sup>5</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Caterina Y. Pierre for Art 34.



dancer's with the images of Degas' paintings on them. I also had a small poster of one of his paintings in my bedroom as a teenager. These images had convinced me that Degas must have been the greatest painter. However, my most recent visit to The Met surprised me. Apparently, I had developed a bit more taste in art and have become a bit more critical of artwork that I may have once liked. I had only been in my Art History class for a few weeks, but it had clearly taught me a lot already.

I impressed myself by noticing new and different styles and techniques of which I was previously unaware. I remember seeing the word "tempera" on multiple placards throughout the museum, and I thought (almost aloud!) "egg-based paint!" I also recognized illuminated manuscripts and pieces with continued narration within them. I recognized some artist's names that we had read about. Most important to me, however, was the fact that I discovered an artist that was previously unknown to me, and intriguing enough to choose for my project.

The piece I selected is an oil painting on canvas called *Esther before Ahasuerus* painted circa 1622-1623. The artist of this work is Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1652/53). What struck me at first with this painting was how large it was. It measures 82 x 107 3/4 inches. Even when considering the large size of the canvas, I felt it seemed very empty. There is a large space in between the characters in the painting, almost as if they are standing on two separate sides of the canvas.

The painting shows a total of four people. There are three women on the far left side of the canvas and one man on the right. The man appears to be royalty and is seated in a fancy chair. The three women across from him are all in appropriate clothing for the time, however the main character, whom I am assuming is Esther, wears a bright yellow-gold gown with a blue sash around her waist. She appears weak and seems to be fainting or dying. Her arms are lifeless yet graceful. While Esther seems to be collapsing, she is surrounded very closely by two other females. One of them is holding her arm up in a helpful and caring way. The other female to the right of Esther appears to be kissing her neck. It seemed to be an incredibly intimate display of affection, although I am confident that it is less sexual than it originally appeared to be. The woman kissing her neck is wearing a thin white veil on her head of which I am unsure of the significance.

The royal man across from her conveys several emotions through his face and body. Primarily, he shows concern for her well-being from his alert sitting position. His face also appears to be confused and perhaps doubtful. I originally did not know the story that this painting depicted, although I fully intended to find out soon.

The painting at first seemed very dark, most probably from the lighting in the room. But upon gazing a little closer, I noticed an intentional use of a lot of dark colors, which I later learned was called "tenebrism". Primarily I noticed the incredible brightness of the dress that Esther is wearing, and how it seemed to be almost shining. Her skin also appears almost porcelain-like. The other main color effects I noticed were the browns used in the piece. It appears that the brown tones were used on almost every surface in the painting except on Esther. I hoped that deeper research of this painting would provide me with more insight into the reason and purpose for using these dark colors by the artist.

I was genuinely looking forward to studying this painting further. However, I have to admit that I was even more excited to learn about the artist Artemisia Gentileschi. I found it fascinating that she was one of the pioneers of female painters. I was curious to learn about her life because she was one of the few women in the male dominated world of art at that time. I think it was a shame that I had never heard of her before my visit to the museum. One would

think that a female painter from the post-Renaissance era would get more attention and popularity. She seemed to be a refreshing and exciting artist to study.

As I had anticipated, the research I conducted on Artemisia Gentileschi proved to be quite fascinating. As a female artist of the seventeenth century, she gained quite a reputation and led a highly publicized life. Her father, Orazio Gentileschi (1563 - 1639), was a gifted and well-known painter as well. Gentileschi was lucky to have an artist for a father, and he was willing to train her as an artist. I'm sure that this must have played a role in her becoming a wonderful painter at a time when women were discouraged to become artists.

Gentileschi was an artist during the Baroque period. The word "Baroque" in its simplest definition translates to "irregular, imperfect pearl" (Adams 652). However, in the art world, it was viewed and "tended to be relatively unrestrained, overtly-emotional and more energetic than earlier styles" (Adams 652). One could view a perfect example of this style when looking at any painting made by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571/73-1610). Caravaggio was a brilliant and innovative artist during the Baroque period. Of coincidental note, I did actually know of Caravaggio before this course, and thought it interesting that I ended up working on a "Caravaggisti". A "Caravaggisti" means that Gentileschi was a follower of Caravaggio's styles. Her works parallel Caravaggio's closely, especially through her use of tenebrism, which makes the painting appear very dark, with some form of light source within it.

The Baroque period lasted roughly from the end of the sixteenth century until approximately 1750. As the Protestant Reformation began in the sixteenth century and because of the ongoing inquisitions and censorship of art, Europe remained in religious turmoil. "Politically, the seventeenth century was a period of crisis and conflict, while at the same time great strides were made in science" (Adams 650). This period was also culturally rich. Some of the great advances in science, for example, were Copernicus' revelation that the sun was most probably the center of the universe, and Galileo's proven theory of gravity as well as his invention of the telescope. At this time the Church and science did not always agree, and the Church banned a lot of these scientific writings. It seems that the Catholic Church had a lot going against them during this period of history. Although they still had power in some countries, the Church's censorship caused France and other northern European countries to become the primary focus of Baroque expression.

Even though Italy remained true to the Counter-Reformation, the Baroque style was still seen there. Gentileschi and other artists still created religious "church-worthy" works of art. However, the main purchasers were wealthy patrons. Religious-themed subject matter was still done accurately, as it was done during the Renaissance, but the artists at this time added much more drama to their work and seemed to have a lot more fun with it. There was a markedly noticeable contrast to the rigid perfection of the Renaissance period.

I believe it is necessary to recall what I have learned about Gentileschi's life before I discuss the particular painting I have chosen to study. One of the very first things I learned about her was that she was raped by her art instructor, Agostino Tassi (1578/79-1644), at the age of seventeen. I was shocked to learn this fact. Furthermore, I was appalled that according to public records she was ridiculed and called a "harlot" for being raped. My heart immediately went out to her as a fellow victim of sexual abuse. Upon further research, I realized that the label I had given Gentileschi as being "a victim" subsided a bit; her life as a "victim" recedes in the presence of her powerful art.

In the book: *Artemisia Gentileschi and the Authority of Art* by R. Ward Bissell, he wrote that "Women rule Artemisia Gentileschi's pictures and some of them are most assuredly non

silent, non humble, powerful personalities"(Bissell 113). I think that view of Gentileschi is very accurate. She was known for painting stories of Old Testament Jewish heroines. One popular and well-known painting by Gentileschi is her *Judith Slaying Holofernes* painted circa 1612-1613. This painting is a dramatic, gruesome and violent depiction of the apocryphal book of Judith in the Old Testament. It captures the moment in the story when Judith cuts off her enemy's (Holofernes) head with his own sword. This painting is definitely not for the faint of heart.

Even though women were a common subject matter in her oeuvre, she did paint other subject matter as well. Therefore, I do not think that she had any sort of feminist agenda as her goal. I believe that the fact that she chose these particular women for her pictures, and the fact that she painted during the overly emotional style of Baroque, only enhanced her most authentic identity as an artist.

In the particular work I have chosen, *Esther before Ahasuerus*, the subject matter is religious. Gentileschi used oil on canvas for this piece. It also portrays a story from the Old Testament. Bissell's book on Gentileschi certainly explained a lot about her life, as well as her many works. As for the story behind *Esther before Ahasuerus*, I had to refer to another book titled: *Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi* by Keith Christiansen and Judith W. Mann, for the most concise explanation of the apocryphal moment that Gentileschi portrayed in the story of Queen Esther:

Ahasuerus was a proud and powerful ruler. His queen, Vashti, refused his summons to appear before his guests at a feast and she was disavowed. The king replaced her with Esther, a renowned beauty, not knowing she was a Jewess. Some time later, hearing that Ahasuerus had signed an edict that all Jews be slaughtered, Esther agreed to intervene, though aware that to appear unbidden before her husband would result in death. Before her audience, Esther ordered that all Jews fast for three days. Weakened from her fast, she appeared before the king and fainted. Ahasuerus however did not punish Esther but showed favor toward her [and her people], touching her with his scepter to indicate her special status (Christiansen and Mann 373).

I found it interesting that Gentileschi chose not to show the previously mentioned scepter of Ahasuerus' in her painting. The scepter could have been used by Gentileschi as a visual tell-tale of the story and the significance of the scene depicted in her painting. Why she chose to leave the scepter out of the scene can best be described in an article found in a bulletin released by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in which the author attempts to define the sparseness of this piece. The author of the article wrote: "Even the scepter is not shown... Instead the action is focused upon the fainting queen supported by two handmaidens as she appears before the king in a darkened room" (Kaufmann 169). I believe Gentileschi's goal was to prove her artistic talent,

especially in painting accurate facial expressions, by omitting props and other obvious gimmicks to help tell her story.

According to the placard next to the painting, it says there was originally a black boy with a growling dog painted next to the Ahasuerus. However, it was painted out. It claims the viewer should notice a shadow left over from where the boy was once standing in the painting, but I was a little skeptical as to the real cause of the shadow in the painting. Again, it was very difficult for me to detect the shadow due to the glare from the lighting in the room of the museum and due to the high placement of the painting on the wall. It seemed as if the shadow could either have been a painted out boy, or perhaps it could have just been a painted in shadow of Ahasuerus' knee. My extended research gave me clearer detail and understanding of the shadow.

I learned that this piece has recently undergone "painstaking restoration" (Bissell 242), and in doing so the restorers learned that the canvas had been stretched, resulting in my original viewing of it to be smaller than what was originally intended. I also learned about, and viewed a copy of the x-radiograph of this piece. Bissell states that the "X-radiography has brought to light a fascinating pattern of experimentation on Artemisia's part"(Bissell 242). He explained that originally in front of Ahasuerus' knee was a dog, then painted over by a page boy, and finally painted out altogether, "much to the benefit of the drama of the empty space"(Bissell 242). I recalled noticing the dramatic empty space when I first viewed the painting, and I am more than satisfied to have been able to answer my own question as to the reason why she chose to display such an empty space in her painting.

Gentileschi's life and art is so interesting. I relish the fact that I had been given this assignment and the tools necessary for learning even more about her. If she were alive today, she would have been a pop culture icon. In fact, in some art circles she is an icon. Her works are jarring and sometimes shocking. I believe that she must have felt a great sense of achievement and reward when doing her craft, as well as some form of therapeutic relief to help deal with her personal tragedies.

Gentileschi was indeed a pioneer of her craft. Not only did she have great talent, but she simultaneously perfected a subject matter that was considered off-limits to female artists during her lifetime. Women artists tended to only create still-life subject matter and portraits due to the fact that they were not allowed to draw from live models. Therefore, Gentileschi's masterpieces should be applauded even more so, not only for her obvious talent, but also as a reminder of the struggle for gender equality throughout time.

Learning about art history is not only about memorizing different artists' names and the dates of their works. It isn't even about the different styles or subject matter. For me, it is most importantly an overall education on culture, world issues and influences. It is not only important to know what and how a particular artist painted, but also to question why they might have created a particular piece at a certain time in history.

One way to learn even more about a work of art is to compare and contrast it to another similar piece. This way the student or art historian can settle their mind from being impressed, or on the other hand, disgusted by a particular work. It is a way to start fresh and get the facts straight before jumping to any conclusion about an artist or an artwork. It is a valuable exercise to get a better understanding of what a particular artist specialized in, or maybe even where they lacked in ability. It can also tell you a lot about their influences, beliefs and training.

To begin the compare and contrast exercise into the research of Artemisia Gentileschi's, *Esther before Ahasuerus*, I had to first decide on a similar work with which to compare and

contrast it. For me, this decision was difficult, due to the fact that there are many other painted versions of the same Biblical story. Some of them were very similar to Gentileschi's, and some of them were quite different and unpleasant or boring to look at.

The piece I finally settled on to investigate more deeply is *Esther before Ahasuerus*, painted circa 1547-1548 by Jacopo Robusto (1518-1594). He was more commonly known by his nickname which was "Tintoretto." He was also a painter from Italy. He painted during the Mannerist period, a period that began just before and overlapped into the Baroque period. I chose this piece to use for comparison because both artists painted their works within a half-century from the other. Yet, they were both artists who helped define and perfect different movements in art history, and both chose to depict similar subject matter.

Knowing that Tintoretto completed his painting before Gentileschi did show that Gentileschi could have quite possibly been inspired to paint her version in a similar fashion. Both paintings depict the same part of the story; the exact moment in the story when Queen Esther faints. However, the number of characters, the poses and the clothing styles are all quite different.

At first glance of Tintoretto's painting, I noticed that there were many more characters in his painting than in Gentileschi's. Gentileschi's *Esther* shows a total of four people, while Tintoretto's version of *Esther* shows about a dozen or more people in the room at the scene. Also, the paintings differ in where the artists decide to place the main characters of the story. The pieces are like a mirror- image of each other.

The fainting body of Esther in Tintoretto's painting is far more dramatic and theatrical than in Gentileschi's. Tintoretto places his Esther much closer to the ground, and her faint appears even more exaggerated than Gentileschi's canvas. The exaggerated way in which Esther is falling in Tintoretto's version reminds me of something that was discussed in my Art History class, which was that Mannerism was a time of exaggerated poses and styles. This would make Tintoretto's *Esther* very appropriate for the period.

There seems to be a seriously increased amount of action and commotion in Tintoretto's painting. In my opinion, the added amount of characters in Tintoretto's version makes this story much easier to understand for someone that might not have known the subject matter when first introduced to the piece. Unlike Gentileschi, Tintoretto chose to include the previously mentioned scepter in his work.

I noticed a remarkable similarity in Esther's appearance in both versions. Her face, hair and the neckline of her dress are all so very identical to each other. This similarity makes me believe that Gentileschi must have seen Tintoretto's painting with her own eyes before she attempted to create it herself. Noticing this similarity, to be frank, was a little bit of a disappointment to me, because I wanted Gentileschi's version to be a completely original and unique work of art.

The stairs in both pieces, upon which Ahasuerus' throne is perched, are similar as well. They are both carpeted and tiered in a similar fashion. I see the idea, or perhaps the very beginnings of, tenebrism in Tintoretto's painting. His use of tenebrism is not as perfected as the Baroque artists did theirs. However, I believe that he did attempt to create the effect but in a more subtle and less defined way.

Figura serpentinata was another characteristic of Mannerist painting. Figura serpentinata was an effect artists used to create an elongated and exaggerated, twisting body in their paintings.

I am surprised that Tintoretto did not use this technique on any part of this piece. This missing trademark of the Mannerist period might possibly confuse some people into deciding which time period his version of *Esther* should be placed.

Tintoretto, being a male in the sixteenth century, had much more access to the arts and training than most women of his day. Thus, he probably had far more experience in painting more diverse subject matter than did Gentileschi. I do not see how this affected these particular works on both of their parts, since this painting didn't require the use of any nude character or other risqué subject within it. Both of them have accurately depicted the same story from the Old Testament, and their gender difference has apparently made no difference, for this piece at least.

In conclusion, I find I have a far better understanding not only of the Baroque period and of Gentileschi's artistic style and her life. I also learned a bit about Tintoretto's techniques and the Mannerism period. I have benefited from the added challenge of comparing two similar works because now I know for certain that I need to do some research before proclaiming any adamant opinion on any piece in the future.

The lack of knowledge I previously had in art prevented me from fully understanding images. My Art History class cemented my belief that art needs to be part of public education in all elementary and high schools in the United States. It is shocking and saddening how little I knew about a subject that I care so much about. I plan to continue with my art education in the future. I am thoroughly inspired and fascinated by this subject.





Gentileschi



Tintoretto

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PASCALE LEBRUN-GAY

## Health vs. the Fashion Industry<sup>6</sup>

Generally, a model is a person who is displayed for the purpose of art, fashion or other products and advertising. Presently, models appear to be suffering from the fashion industry's obsession with being a size zero. I will present evidence to further support this fact throughout the essay. In addition, I will introduce the issues of how anorexia nervosa is currently the most talked about eating disorder in the fashion industry, but bulimia nervosa is commonly found among fashion models. You will see quotes from doctors who discuss the health issues concerning the wide epidemic of emaciated images of female models and how eating disorders appear to be destroying the lives of fashion models. Moreover, you will find brief cases of models who were affected by this peril epidemic. You will also find how social, psychological and family factors trigger these occurrences in certain individuals. As the count of these deteriorating fashion models continues to rise, you will begin to understand the dangers in their career choice and to their overall health. What could be done to deter this epidemic of eating disorders among female models today? Are male models exempt from this unhealthy trend?

The word model is defined as "a structural design; miniature representation; something worthy of copying; one who poses for an artist or displays clothes" (Webster, 221). A supermodel is primarily meant to promote new and upcoming apparel. Typically, supermodels are highly paid fashion models. These models are usually known as Cover Girls. They appear on top fashion magazine covers such as Vogue, W or even Harper's Bazaar. They can also be viewed in catalogues, fashion shows, movies, billboards. The first model to open the doors for what would become the first supermodel was Lisa Fonssagrives (The Fashion Ezine, 2). "The relationship between her image on over 200 Vogue covers and her name recognition led to the importance of Vogue in shaping future supermodels" (The Fashion Ezine, 2). Ms. Fonssagrives, like many top models of her zeitgeist, was featured in innumerable magazines like Town and Country, Life, Vogue and the original Vanity Fair during the 1930's, 40's, and 50's (The Fashion Ezine, 2). Although Fonssagrives was never actually called a supermodel during her era, she is considered by very few to be the "first supermodel" and a major fashion icon from the 1930's - 1950's. However, supermodel Janice Dickinson has reserved the title for herself during the height of her career. Apparently, while conversing with her agent, Ms. Dickinson stated "I'm not superman, I'm a supermodel" (Dickinson, 1), thereby giving birth to the term "supermodel".

Certainly, by now there is a concern for today's supermodels who are apparently suffering from the fashion industry's obsession with being size zero. As a result, the pressure to

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<sup>6</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Vincent Scotto for Health & Physical Education 12.

be thin has become astronomical. Based on a new study conducted by the Model Health Inquiry, 20-40% of models all over the world are experiencing certain medical conditions, particularly eating disorders (Nordqvist, 1). An eating disorder is a “psychological condition in which the patient develops unhealthy eating habits”, for example, eating too little, repeatedly over-eating in a rather short time, and trying desperately to get rid of food consumed (Nordqvist, 2). Three major eating disorders are Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating. Bulimia is indeed the most commonly found eating disorder in the fashion industry, although studies show that anorexia remains the most famous eating disorder among fashion models (Nordqvist, 1). Psychiatrist Dr. Adrienne Key mentions briefly how the effects of eating disorders are growing rapidly and getting worse among fashion models (Nordqvist, 1). Perhaps, it’s safe to say it’s because so many individuals who have adopted this behavior of battling with their food surround models. Could this have a negative effect on the dimensions of health? Dr. Key goes on to say: “many of the models, it seems, are purging or consuming vast quantities of water to conceal their weight- a dangerous move as it can seriously deplete potassium levels” (Nordqvist, 1). Fashion models are completely unaware of the destruction which is affecting their bodies. Potassium is an important and necessary nutrient in order for the human body to function as it should. According to Dianne Hales,

Potassium assists in muscle contraction, maintaining fluid and electrolyte balance in cells, transmitting nerve impulses and releasing energy during metabolism. Diets rich in potassium lower blood pressure, blunt the adverse effects of salt on blood pressure may reduce the risk of development Kidney Stones and may decrease bone loss (Hales, 95).

Apparently, by consuming an excessive amount of water these models are increasing their levels of bone loss as well kidney failure.

Bulimia, one of the common disorders among female models, is “characterized by binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting and/or use of laxatives” (Matthews, 59). Typically, bulimia is treated with medication, cognitive therapy or group therapy and nutritional counseling as well (Hales, 140). Although there are factors that trigger this disorder, the cause of bulimia remains unknown. However, many experts believe it may be a chemical imbalance in parts of the brain that control a person’s mood and appetite (Matthews, 59).

On the other hand, “anorexia is a psychological illness characterized by marked weight loss, an intense fear of gaining weight even though the patient is underweight, has a distorted body image and amenorrhea” (Matthews, 45). In short, anorexic patients ignore the severity of their condition. They often believe that everyone in their lives is trying to make them larger. I was briefly acquainted with a young lady with this condition and she always commented that the reason why I ate in front of her was because I was trying to make her fat. Clearly, this was not the issue but in her mind this was what she believed.

There are several factors that produce or trigger these unhealthy eating habits, including psychological, social and family factors. Psychologically, individuals with eating disorders tend to be perfectionists. In most cases, they tend to have goals and expectations that are unrealistic. Despite their accomplishments and beauty they have a steady feeling of failure. Evidently, these individuals are left thinking “everything is either good or bad, a success or a failure, fat or thin, if fat is bad and thin is good, then thinner is better and thinnest is best-even if thinnest is sixty eight pounds in a hospital bed on life support” (Matthews, 120). Ultimately, the need to remain thinner and thinnest without taking heed of the dangers is a clear sign that these individuals’ lives depend

on being socially accepted. Is this the feeling that these fashion models have? According to research those with eating disorders often find it difficult to develop a sense of identity. Usually, these sets of individuals define themselves by “manufacturing a socially manufactured exterior” (Matthews, 120). Perhaps this is why British supermodel Kate Moss lives the life that she lives despite its perilous outcomes. For instance, Moss calls herself a “Rexy,” saying that she is both Anorexic and sexy. Currently, she maintains her double zero size with a diet of green tea and lettuce (The Fashion Ezine, 4). According to health professionals, having a diet that is comprised of just lettuce is unhealthy. Despite the dangers, Moss still believes she is naturally thin (The Fashion Ezine, 4). This type of mentality is not only destructive but it promotes a bad image for both models and designers as well. The notion that thinner is best is a deep-rooted issue that certain people believe to be caused by society. And this is how the social factors concerning eating disorders play a role.

It's obvious that the media outlets, television, movies and magazines introduce and promote messages that are geared to have individuals believe that thinness is an advantage. Young women and teenage girls are constantly being bombarded with advertisements that indirectly inform them that the only way to acquire popularity, fame, intelligence, a physical partner, and even intimacy is through physical beauty and being thin. Therefore, individuals lacking this are viewed as weak, unattractive, unintelligent and even losers. However, family plays an enormous role on the set of these factors as well. For instance, experts have heard individuals mention that they felt claustrophobic in their families, while some felt no one understood them or knew what they were experiencing. In addition, parents who purposely or inadvertently put too much emphasis on their child's physical appearance have a helping hand in the start of an eating disorder, even parents who make critical comments jokingly (Matthews, 120). Keep in mind what happens to a beautiful petite woman who walks into an audition. At first glance, she'll mostly be told verbatim “you are too fat”. Unfortunately this is primarily where the problem is often conceived. Perhaps more explicitly, this explains why the eating disorder epidemic is running rampant in the fashion industry. Apparently, the constant demand and pressure of being thin places models in a position where they are forced to choose their career over their overall health. During my research, I realized the set standards of beauty for supermodels are impossible to always meet. A sculptured physique and impeccably flawless skin and hair are not always inherited. And it is not solely intended for female supermodels but male models as well.

Male supermodels make up a small amount of the fashion industry. Male models are paid less but from my perspective get a lot more respect from the media than females. Meanwhile, female supermodels are being ridiculed for using drugs, falling flat on their faces on the catwalk and behaving violently. On the other hand, male models get little or no coverage in the tabloids because “no one doesn't care what male supermodels do or don't do (The Fashion Ezine, 8). There are cases of men experiencing eating disorders, mostly athletes. Psychologist Janet David, of the center for Anorexia and Bulimia in Manhattan, mentions:

Originally, eating disorders in all males were under-diagnosed and I think now we're more likely to look for certain kinds of characteristics that might be related to males with eating disorders. Athletics is one of them... male athletes and especially if you include dancers and models-performers, males who have a high investment in appearance, in weight are more at risk than other males (Matthews, 132).

For example, according to Hales, men who are featured in playgirl centerfolds have a chance at gaining more muscle. Compared to the present, their Body Mass Index was much higher in the past than it is now, including Canadian and American men varying in ages 18-24 (138). Body Mass Index “is a mathematical formula that correlates with body fat; the ratio of weight to height squared” (Hales, 394). Doctors usually use BMI as method to determine weight-related medical conditions. A healthy BMI ranges from 18.5 to 24.9 (Hales, 121). But a person may still be considered healthy at a higher BMI if they are extremely active, muscular and have higher lean body mass (Hales, 120). However, researchers have a theory that “male models have become more muscular over time, accounting for their high BMI’s while real guys may simply have gotten fatter” (Hales, 138). But facts about males and male models in general do not seem to matter in the eyes of the public. In short, the only requirements for male supermodels is bulking up and keeping their muscles visually and physically attractive.

Ultimately, the unfortunate abundance of social criticism and overall pressure of being thin has taken a toll on those who were negatively effected by these actions. As a result young models are “dying to be fashionably thin” (Bender, 1). In 2006, 21-year-old Brazilian model, Ana Carolina Reston passed away from complications due to kidney failure and an infection due to her battle with Anorexia. At the time of her death Reston was 5 feet and 7 inches and weighed 88 pounds. Shortly after her demise, Uruguayan model Luisel Ramos died of heart failure and fell off the runway during a fashion show. She weighed 98 pounds and stood 5 feet and 9 inches tall (Bender, 2).

Due to these unfortunate occurrences in the fashion industry, government officials as well as health organizations are taking steps in order to rescue the dying and future generations of aspiring models. Moreover, because of recent deaths of underweight models in the fashion industry, Italy’s cabinet was encouraged to demand Body Mass Index (BMI) standards for models. Under the new code, models under age 16 and models with a BMI under 18.5 would be banned from Italian fashion shows (Bender, 1). In fact, the Italian leaders endorsed the code upon the debut of Milan’s fashion week in February for the 2007-2008 fall/winter collections in apparel. Medical Doctor Joel Yager told Psychiatric News:

Steps now being taken in Italy, Spain and elsewhere to reduce the number and impact of ultra thin models in prominent fashion shows offer encouraging signs that political leaders in those nations understand that flaunting emaciated female body images can potentially damage young women and provoke eating disorders among the vulnerable (Bender, 2).

In other words, maybe by enforcing this new code the rate of sickly supermodels might turn in a different direction. Perhaps it is safe to say, impressionable young teens and women, who are affected by what the fashion industry portrays as beauty may ironically gain high standards of themselves.

As London fashion week enters the spotlight, the constant talk about models’ sizes continues. The British Fashion Council’s recent report has amassed several recommendations for models to consider. The aim of the report seems to be an attempt to rectify the pressures of being thin and health issues among the fashion industry. (Toovey, 1). One of the recommendations includes health certificates paid for by the models. In addition, models who are 16-18 years of age should have chaperones verified by the Criminal Record Bureau, and models who are under 16 years of age should be banned from the London Fashion Week catwalk as well (Toovey, 1).

One of British's top fashion designers, Maria Grachvogel, has joined in the controversy of models being too skinny. At one point the designer found it difficult to get a model that could fit her size 10 dresses for a past fashion show. According to Grachvogel, most agencies could only provide models size 8 or smaller (Cartner-Morley, 2). It's obvious that within the past 6-10 years or so, the typical model size has dropped from 8-10 to a 6-8. The founder of Storm Model Agency, Sarah Doukas, mentioned this year: "there is no doubt that in the past few years the girls at the top end are thinner. You'd have to be a fool not to notice it" (Cartner-Morley, 2). Grachvogel is known for requesting agencies to provide their curviest girls. But the designer says it is extremely difficult to find a model who could make a pair of size 10 trousers look amazing because they are not large enough (Cartner-Morley, 2). The designer has even worked with supermodels like Kate Moss and Karen Elson. Because of her experiences with these models, Grachvogel has become "part of a growing number of voices from within the industry speaking out against size zero culture (Cartner-Morley, 2). During a magazine interview in August, Moss commented that she "never liked being that skinny" (Cartner-Morley, 2).

Nevertheless, the concerns regarding this widespread epidemic of eating disorders in the fashion industry are evident. Now that steps are being taken to reduce the level of emaciated models, perhaps impressionable young females as well as fashion models will not feel the pressure to be thin. Maybe introducing models with different shapes and sizes far bigger than a zero might give these individuals a different view of themselves. In fact, they might gain a more positive outlook of themselves rather than thinking their bodies are defective. It would be beautiful to see an average size woman walk down the catwalk and not be ridiculed for having normal attributes, such as stretch marks or even cellulite.

I hope to see one or two changes within the industry within the next two years or so. First, we might see the health of male models turn a different direction. If they are engrossed on bulking up, there might be a sudden intake of steroids among male models; or not, given that steroids shrinks a man's testicles. But the issues concerning female models are seriously damaging. The effects of bulimia and anorexia still remain rampant in the industry. Ultimately, with the recommendations the British fashion council is considering, the unhealthy habits that models have adopted might come to a halt. Educating them on the hazardous effects they put their bodies through might ensure healthier habits. Finally, I also believe that developing certain requirements for agencies booking the models might help as well. For example, having them attend a brief training course in health so they can be aware of the dangers and possibly inform the models of tips that can help them.

In short, now that designers are taking a stand towards this emaciated model controversy, models themselves might want to make the change. I really feel the future may have hope in regards to this issue of models and their health, now that there are designers lamenting the situation. I find it so ironic and a bit humorous how few designers do not want frail and sickly models in their garments. Maybe the concern in addition to the recommendation mentioned previously might have models put their health first. I hope and pray so for their health's sake.

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**DEVORA MANNE**

## **Childhood Obesity and Diabetes: A “Growing” Concern<sup>7</sup>**

**T**he numbers are alarming. More than 15% of American children are now struggling with obesity, an issue that used to commonly plague only adults. Children as young as two years old have been diagnosed with obesity. This means that the child’s weight is at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of the BMI for age growth charts. (1) Studies show that this is a new phenomenon as the number of 6-11 year old obese children has increased a whopping 13.5% since the early 1970’s. (2) Because obesity is a central player in multiple disease processes including diabetes mellitus and insulin resistance, it has the potential to be profoundly detrimental to our species unless major methods of prevention and/effective treatments are put into place. (3)

Much discussion about the causes of childhood obesity has been devoted to the role of genetics; however, this does not fully address the growing numbers of children who are diagnosed each year. While genetics certainly play a role, the majority of childhood obesity stems from poor eating habits coupled with a lack of exercise. “Children who eat fast food meals, rich deserts and drinks with lots of sugar, are eating foods that are low in nutrition, but high in fat, and full of empty calories,” says Cindy Heller, food writer and researcher. (4) Because of lifestyle changes, we have eliminated old fashioned snacks such as apples, bananas, carrot and celery sticks and have instead replaced them with sugar. It has become de rigueur for school age children tote candy such as gushers, fruit by the foot and laffy taffy to school on a daily basis. It is no wonder that teachers complain about hyper activity and other manifestations of sugar highs they notice in the children as soon as recess has ended.

To make matters worse, American children are less and less active. Only 10% of public school students walk to school today, as opposed to a large number only a generation ago. (5) Cars are used for short trips; computer games, TV programs, and the internet consume our leisure time and often completely replace much of our physical activity. “We may be exercising the mind and hands-but not the body,” says Ms. Heller. (6) When children are fit at an early age they are more likely to remain active and physically fit throughout their lives. (7) It is therefore essential that we institute major effort towards the education of our children. We must promote better habits of eating and daily physical exercise. (8)

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<sup>7</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Barbara Gattullo for Nursing 45.

In the mid 1990's investigators around the world began to observe an increased incidence in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. In the past, doctors had called this "adult-onset diabetes, because it generally affected only overweight adults. Today, that description is no longer accurate. The number of children and teens being diagnosed with the disease has reached epidemic proportions; researchers attribute this, to the increased prevalence of obesity in children. "It is clear that obesity constitutes a stress on the endocrine pancreas," says Dr. James Baird of the University of Edinburgh, "It is the key risk factor for Type 2 diabetes at a young age." (9)

There are two common kinds of diabetes, Type 1 and Type 2. Patients with either type experience higher blood sugar levels than normal. The way in which this occurs however, is dependent on the type of diabetes in question. Diabetes Type 1 (also known as Juvenile Diabetes/ Insulin Dependent Diabetes) involves the destruction of insulin producing cells in the pancreas by the patient's own immune system. Type 1 diabetics are therefore insulin dependent. They must inject insulin in order to maintain normal blood sugar levels. (10)

Patients who are Type 2 diabetics, (also known as non-insulin dependent diabetes) do produce their own insulin. Their bodies however, do not respond properly to the insulin. Instead of enabling the extra sugar to leave the bloodstream and enter the cells, the body holds on to it, causing a rise in blood glucose. This is called insulin resistance. The continual rise in serum glucose then triggers the pancreas to secrete even more insulin in an effort to bring the blood sugar levels back to normal. If this pattern continues, it can cause the pancreas to break down from the overexertion of continually producing excess amounts of insulin.

At this time, although the exact cause of Diabetes Type 2 is not known, it is clear that both genetics and weight play a significant role. 45-80% of children diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes have at least one parent with the disease. However, most children diagnosed with this disease are overweight. Both the extra fat and the lack of physical activity make it more difficult for the body to respond to the insulin produced by the pancreas. It is important to note that not all people with insulin resistance will develop Type 2 diabetes. It all depends on whether the pancreas can maintain normal blood sugar levels. When blood work shows serum glucose levels are consistently elevated, it is a sign that the patient has developed diabetes. (11)

Signs and symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination (polyuria), high levels of thirst and increase in liquid intake (polydipsia), along with unexplained weight loss or lethargy. Overweight children, even those who do not exhibit any symptoms, should be screened for diabetes with a blood test. Often times, these children are diagnosed as pre-diabetics and lifestyle measures can be implemented to avoid the full blown disease.

Overweight children as young as eight years are now being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. (12) Dr. Robert Schwartz of Wake Forest University predicts that one in three children born today will develop diabetes at some point during their lifetime. He attributes this to the serious epidemic of childhood obesity we face today. Because of the myriad health risks that increase as a result of this disease, he further postulates that "this is the first generation of children that will not outlive their parents." (13)

Children and teens with Type 2 diabetes are at increased risk for developing hypertension, high cholesterol, and metabolic syndrome. Long term complications of the disease, particularly in cases where it has not been well controlled include heart disease, vision impairment, stroke, and kidney damage.

Once a child is diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, lifestyle adjustments including weight loss, exercise and dietary changes are implemented. If these measures are not sufficient to



manage the disease, and control blood sugar levels, oral glucose lowering medication might be used. Metformin is often chosen because it has a low risk of hypoglycemia, and side effects that subside within weeks. If this treatment is inadequate, insulin management may become necessary. (14) Doctors and researchers are constantly looking for ways to help kids manage their disease in more effective ways. New devices such as the insulin pump, which can be programmed to deliver insulin as needed have helped children cope with the problems of living with diabetes. (15)

Understandably, children with chronic illness often feel “different” from their peers. This tends to be magnified in the case of a child with Type 2 diabetes where constant monitoring of diet, blood sugar levels, and insulin injections/pumps makes it virtually impossible for the patient to keep the disease private. Feelings of isolation, depression and confusion are part and parcel of the psychosocial issues newly diagnosed pediatric patient’s experience. For an athletic child who is part of a team, it can be devastating to hear that his sports activity may need to be modified or temporarily curtailed because of blood sugar issues. Parents, too must come to grips with the diagnosis, and learn to be a source of emotional balance and support for their child instead of giving in to overprotective impulses. An understanding pediatric medical team can play an important role in helping patients and their families make the difficult yet necessary emotional adjustments. (16)

Although there are far too many children who suffer from Diabetes Type 2 worldwide, the silver lining in this dark cloud is that we can do much to prevent this disease through education. Children must be taught to incorporate healthy eating habits and daily exercise into their routines. Of course, it is not realistic to assume that every child will eat the perfect diet or engage in aerobic exercise such as swimming or skating, but simple changes can also result in huge rewards. Encouraging children to eat foods that are high in fiber and low in sugar, use the steps instead of an elevator, share in housework, limit computer games, and walk whenever it is feasible, can result in the development of healthy habits that can halt this disease in its tracks.

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**TRACY FRANCOIS**

## **Women's Progress in Music throughout the Ages<sup>8</sup>**

**T**he progression of women in music has come a long way from the days of the Middle Ages where women were only allowed to sing at convents, compared to women of the twentieth century and beyond, who were able to enjoy notoriety and affluence. Inequality between men and women in music began centuries ago and we see the obstacles women composers had to overcome throughout the ages, as they strived for the same recognition as men. Because men were always at the forefront of music, it is even more imperative to highlight the journey of women composers and their accomplishments, because in spite of their early setbacks, women composers are now getting the recognition they deserve. Throughout this paper, the lives of some of the most influential women composers and musicians from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century will be highlighted, as well as the social and economic impact these women had on the status of women throughout history.

In the Middle Ages the status of men and women were very different. The Catholic Church had all the power in Europe (?) and sacred music sang by men and boys was the norm. Women were forbidden to sing in churches. Most women pursued music at convents and “these female communities offered women an opportunity for self expression and some slope in leadership and education” (Bates, p. 6). One of these women was a German nun, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), who was the only female composer of sacred music from the Middle Ages. She composed seventy-seven religious songs which survived throughout the ages, and is still recognized today. She was a mystic and a teacher. She wrote music as well as poetry, and the first musical drama “Ordo virtutum (Play of the Virtues)”.

During the Renaissance period the Catholic Church continued to dominate in Europe(?), and as in the Middle Ages, the role of women in music remained almost non-existent. Although the Renaissance was considered a “rebirth”, this rebirth was aimed at men, while women continued to be over shadowed in this period. By the year 1600, women aspired to positions as court musicians or opera singers, but the professions of instrumentalist or church musicians

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<sup>8</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Marvin Williams for Music 31.

would remain almost exclusively male (Pendel, p. 91). Pendel also acknowledges that although women were not able to be at the forefront of music, they played a very active and influential role by creating texts, musical settings and manners of performance that were not only part of the artistic mainstream but were even in its vanguard. Maddalena Casulana's (ca. 1540-ca. 1590) role in music was a stepping stone for many other women composers. She was recognized as the first woman known to have published her music, as well as the first to consider herself a professional composer. Casulana wrote mostly madrigals which are poems set to music. She was respected and honored as a composer, and gave private lessons in compositions. Casulana made her living as a composer which meant she was being paid for her craft.

When the Baroque period came along, more women musicians were forming their own identity. "As the seventeenth century progressed and the musical world went mad over opera, women solo singers were in great demand as the impresarios fully realized the sales value of a beautiful female voice" (Drinker, p.232). Two of these women were Francesca Caccini and Barbara Strozzi, Italian singers. Francesca Caccini (1587-1640) was a singer and composer born into a musical family; her father was also a singer and composer. She was only thirteen years old when she sang her first opera *Euridice*, and by the age of eighteen she was active as a composer writing sacred and secular songs, as well as operas. "Francesca composed several ballets and dramatic entertainment for the court where she was reputed to be the highest paid court musician" (Jezic, p.18). Barbara Strozzi (1617-1664) was a singer and composer from Venice, Italy. She was one of the best composers of secular chamber music and published more works than some male composers during that era. With Caccini reaching the position as highest paid court musician, things started to change for women composers. They started to realize they could make music a possible and lucrative profession.

As time went by, so did the recognition of women composers. During the eighteenth century, Vienna was very popular among musicians, including women composers who now had more social recognition and economic opportunities. "In the latter part of the eighteenth century Viennese women composers cultivated many musical forms: concertos and sonatas for piano, chamber music, oratorios, Masses, operas and other large works and a few symphonies" (Pendle, p.131). One of those prolific talented composers was Marianna von Martines (1744-1812) who composed music in almost every genre. She was also a pianist and harpsichordist who studied with Joseph Haydn. In 1761, one of her masses was performed at St. Michael's Church. This was quite an accomplishment since in earlier periods women were not even allowed to sing in churches. Martines also opened a school in 1796 where she trained women to become professional singers.

In the Romantic period, "the political, social, and economic events that followed in the tumultuous aftermath of the French Revolution offered women many opportunities in musical life" (Pendel, p.147). Audiences were now paying to see shows which made it possible for women composers to reach a bigger audience. Families, who now considered music as a way to climb the social ladder, were paying for music lessons for their daughters. Although very few schools accepted women as music students in the beginning, by 1868, the Leipzig Conservatory graduated 445 women. This was quite an accomplishment for women composers. Teaching opportunities were more readily available for women musicians and teachers, like Mathilde Marchesi (1821-1913) who achieved a huge feat by opening private studios both in Vienna and Paris.

Clara Schumann and Pauline Viardot were two women composers who contributed to music during the Romantic period. Clara Schumann (1819-1896) was considered the most important woman pianist of her time and was trained at age five by her father who was a musician. "Her concert programs and her high musical standards changed the character of the

solo piano recital in the nineteenth century, ..... and was also the first pianist to perform many of Beethoven's sonatas in public" (Bates, p.91). She composed piano works and songs which were performed and published while she was still alive. Clara also published her husband's, Robert Schumann's, work. Pauline Viardot (1821-1910) was from a musical family and from a very young age was surrounded by opera singers. She became an international opera star, a composer, a pianist of concert rank, and a voice teacher. "Viardot composed German Lieder, French chansons, opera and operettas, short works for piano, and several interesting arrangements for voice and piano" (Pentel, p. 157).

The twentieth century brought about even more changes for women in European classical music. More women were being recognized for their craft both socially and economically. With technological developments, the gap was getting smaller between male and female composers. Music now reached a wider audience through radio, television, and recordings. The audience now had a choice as to whom to listen to, which benefited women musicians. According to Kamien (2007), more women than ever before became active as composers, virtuoso soloists, and music educators. In the years after World War II, women joined professional orchestras as instrumentalists and conductors. Women were also playing a major role in the new forms of music in the United States including jazz, and rock. African American women composers and performers were also finding their place in various musical genres. Marian Anderson, for example, sang with the New York Philharmonic at Lewisohn Stadium in 1925.

One other woman who contributed significantly to classical music during the twentieth century was Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (b.1939) was the first American composer to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1983, for her Symphony No. 1. By receiving the highest American award in music, Zwilich sent the message that women were finally on an equal playing field with their male counterparts. The history of "women's music has documented many cases over the past decades of outright refusal and rejection of women applying to departments of composition for admission, Zwilich was accepted into the doctoral program in composition at Juilliard" (Lepage, p.343). She was the first woman to be awarded such a doctorate from Juilliard, and she was the first appointee to the Carnegie Hall Composer's chair. Zwilich has composed a large number of musical works in a variety of styles, and has written for large, prestigious musical institutions and performers. With all the accomplishments of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, we see just how far women composers have come from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century.

Although women were never at the forefront of music, colossal changes have taken place from the Middle Ages, when women were not allowed to sing in churches to the twentieth century, where their influence as well as their contributions in music is acknowledged. Women are now able to enjoy more of the social and economic status that men have always enjoyed. Women can now be composers, opera singers, pianists, teachers and conductors. Composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich receiving the Pulitzer Prize in Music Composition was a feat her peers, centuries ago could never have imagined. This shows the progression of women in music.

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**RALUCA E. TOSCANO**

## **The Mathematics of Art<sup>9</sup>**

*A mathematician, like a painter or poet, is a maker of patterns.*

*If his patterns are more permanent than theirs,*

*it is because they are made with ideas.*

**– G. H. Hardy**

### **WHAT IS ART?**

**O**ur world has become a very visual one - we have art all around us. Understanding art is understanding our world. A good first step is to try to be aware of what we mean by art. The only way to understand art is to look at it and respond to it in our own way. We will then come to appreciate the rich variety of materials and mediums used. Art is no longer just about oils, acrylic and canvas but lighting, sound, ideas and all the other tools of our world used in order to communicate the artist's thoughts and messages.

Technically, art is a combination of perspective, light, color, form, motion, proportion, symbols, and lines. Perspective is the way in which artists create an illusion of depth on a flat surface. For hundreds of years painters have tried to represent accurately a scene that exists in three dimensions on a two-dimensional canvas. For example, one of the ways to create this illusion is to make the objects that are far away smaller than those that are closer to the viewer. Just as stage designers use lighting to spotlight a performer, painters will often highlight important elements in paintings. The use of different colors provides emphasis, importance, emotion, various ideas and feelings. Often colors highlight parts of an image to draw specific attention to it. By using light and shadows, artists give volume to their subjects. According to Palazuelo, "colors evoke feelings and formal emotions that can either raise or depress the composition; they are symbols of the soul"(Palazuelo 53). I can say that the colors all depend on our capacity to think, to imagine with them, and on the feelings and emotions they evoke in us. To me colors symbolize the deep dynamism between psychic and material energy. One way one can give figures three-dimensional

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<sup>9</sup> Written under the mentorship of Professor Manel Lledos.

form is to reflect light off their bodies and paint shadows. Illustrating motion is a technique painters use to keep our attention focused on the picture. Another very important element is proportion which usually refers to the way different elements in a painting relate to each other in terms of size. Then, many artists include items that symbolize other items, emotions, beliefs, ideas, etc. Lines are also essential in an artwork because they represent an identifiable path of a point moving in space. They can vary in width, direction, and length. Therefore, these elements are a set of techniques that describe ways of presenting an artwork.

Art cannot be defined as an activity which produces only beauty because beauty itself cannot be defined objectively, and therefore cannot be used as a criterion to define what is, or is not, art. The aim of art is not merely to produce beauty, or to provide pleasure, enjoyment, or entertainment. Art is a means of communication, and is an important means of expression of any experience, or of any aspect of the human condition.

Tolstoy defines art as “an expression of a feeling or experience in such a way that the audience to whom the art is directed can share that feeling or experience” (Palazuelo 78). Art is a universal language that encompasses all forms of communication to express a variety of viewpoints and ideas. Art can take many forms - visual, musical, or performance – but for me a work of art is something created by the human mind that has the capacity to move me - it has a real aesthetic, emotional and spiritual element. In other words, art is something that is created to affect your feelings and thoughts it is a matter that moves you, excites and challenges you; it is something that inspires you. Many times a painting pleases our eyes, brings joy to our spirit, and gains artistic value while it beautifies a wall, a room, a home, a building or an outdoor space. This happens because art consciously transforms reality and creates a philosophical and emotional exchange between the artist and the viewer.

## **WHAT IS MATHEMATICS?**

Mathematics is present in everyday life; it surrounds a person wherever one goes. It is involved with purchases, computers, and inventions used on a day to day basis. People sometimes do not realize the amount of math that surrounds them and the amount of math that they use everyday, but I know for sure that math helps us to think methodically and analytically as well as figuratively.

Mathematics is the art and science of abstraction; it is the systematic study of quantity, structure, space, and change. To paraphrase Newton, “it is the language in which the universe is written” (Palazuelo 84). The study of mathematics provides the abilities to analyze data, discover patterns, and reason logically. For life, now or in the future, you should learn some mathematics because it teaches you to think clearly, to reason well, and to strategize effectively. In fact, mathematics teaches people to recognize patterns in everyday things, and view things more critically. It teaches us not to be tricked by packaging, but to be able to see through to the essence of things.

Mathematics studies structures and relationships between objects of our thinking (numbers, variables, etc.), and patterns. Mathematics is not just about formulas and logic, but about patterns, symmetry, structure, shape and beauty. Mathematics is indispensable to the understanding of structural concepts and calculations. It is also employed as visual ordering element or as a means to achieve harmony with the universe. Therefore, the application of math can be seen everywhere throughout the world, and without it a majority of things would not be possible.

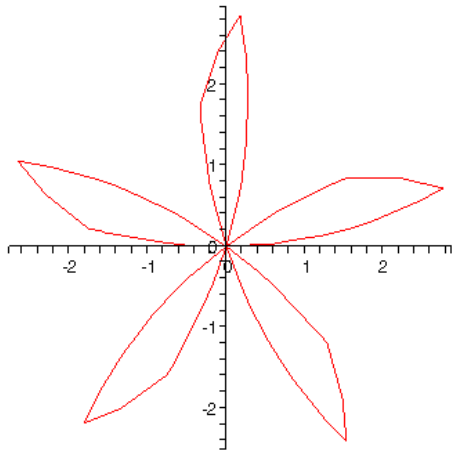
## MATHEMATICS IN ART AND ART IN MATHEMATICS

Mathematics and art have a long historical relationship. The **ancient Egyptians** and **Greeks** knew about the **golden ratio**, regarded as an aesthetically pleasing ratio, and incorporated it into the design of monuments including the **Great Pyramid**, the **Parthenon**, and the **Colosseum**. The golden ratio is used in the design and layout of paintings such as *The Roses of Heliogabalus*. Recent studies show that the golden ratio also plays a role in the human perception of beauty in body shapes and faces. Indeed, many mathematicians are driven by a strongly aesthetic sense of creativity: “There is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics”, as the mathematician G.H. Hardy once said (Palazuelo 12).

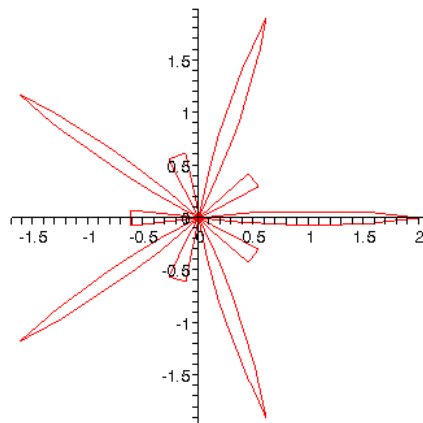
Art is something that stimulates an individual's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, or ideas through the senses. Many times when we look at a piece of art, we get a special mood. We are more relaxed, and our minds are free of stress. But how many of us think about the connection between mathematics and art? This goes back thousands of years to times when mathematics has been used in the design of Gothic cathedrals, rose windows, Oriental rugs, mosaics and tilings. Mathematicians and artists continue to create stunning works in all media and to explore the visualization of mathematics: origami, computer generated landscapes, fractals, anamorphic art, and more. Besides, mathematics and architecture have always enjoyed a close association with each other, not only in the sense that the latter is informed by the former, but also in that both share the search for order and beauty, the former in nature and the latter in buildings.

Here I have a simple exercise that can explain the link between mathematics and art. What shape do you expect to see by graphing the following equations?

a).  $r(\theta) = 3\sin(5\theta)$



b).  $r(\theta) = 2\cos(10\theta)$



As you can see, the graphing of petal roses in polar coordinates, in fact, demonstrates not only a simple connection between math and art, but also that art lives in mathematics (see more examples in Fig.1).

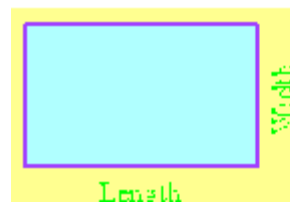




Almost any artist will tell you that there is some kind of mathematical or symmetrical pattern involved in creating pictures. Art does not necessarily require addition, subtraction, division, or multiplication. There is, however, a great need for geometric shapes and figures. If you notice the picture on the right, there are some triangles, squares, rectangles, and parallelograms found in each example of the images.

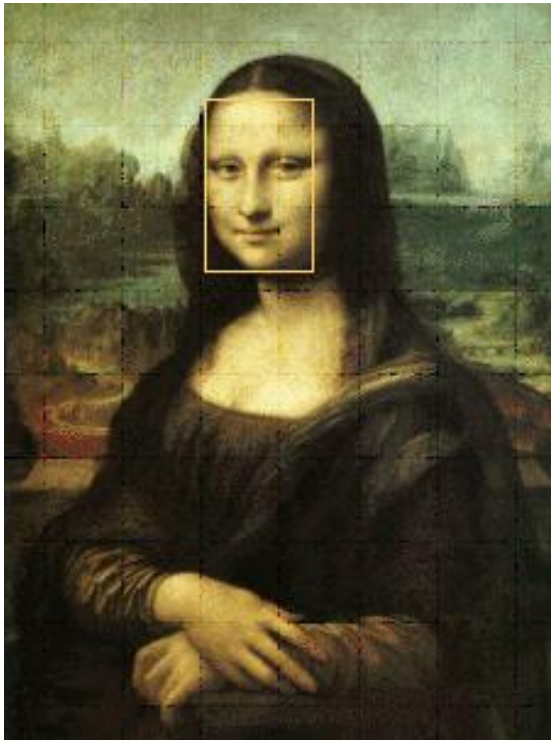
Indeed, art and math may at first seem to be very differing things, but people who enjoy mathematics tend to look for mathematics in art. They want to see the patterns and angles and lines of perspective. This is why artists like M.C. Escher appeal to mathematicians so much. There is a large amount of math involved in art, not to mention basic things like measuring and lines, but the intricacies of art can often be described using math.

For example, the Golden Rectangle is a unique and a very important shape in mathematics. The Golden Rectangle appears in nature, music, and is also often used in art and architecture. The special property of the Golden Rectangle is that the ratio of its length to the width equals to approximately 1.618, and has been coined as *golden*.



$$\text{Golden Ratio} = \frac{\text{Length}}{\text{Width}} \approx 1.6$$

The Golden Rectangle is considered to be one of the most pleasing and beautiful shapes to look at, which is why many artists have used it in their work.

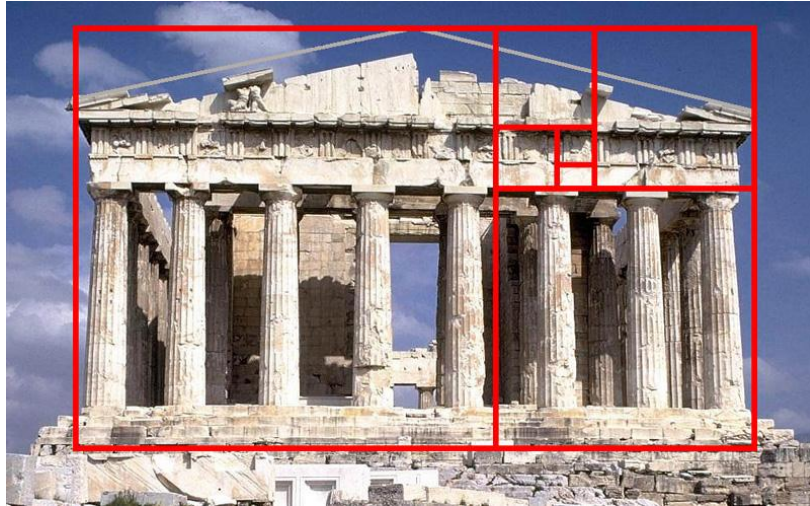


One very famous piece, known as the *Mona Lisa*, painted by Leonardo Da Vinci, is drawn according to the golden ratio, for example. The golden proportion can be found throughout the human body. The *Mona Lisa* has many golden rectangles throughout the painting. By drawing a rectangle around her face, we can see that it is indeed golden. If we divide that rectangle with a line drawn across her eyes, we get another golden rectangle, meaning that the proportion of her head length to her eyes is golden. There are other golden rectangles that can be drawn on the rest of her body, like from her neck to the top of her hands.

Leonardo Da Vinci created other pieces that were also drawn according to the golden ratio such as *The Last Supper*, *Old Man*, and *The Vitruvian Man*. *The Vitruvian Man* (or *Man in Action*) is the drawing of a man inscribed in a circle. The height of the man is in golden proportion from the top of his head to his navel and from his navel to the bottom of his feet. *The Vitruvian Man* illustrates all of the divine proportions

within the human being. Therefore, Leonardo da Vinci's talent as an artist may well have been balanced by his talent as a mathematician because he incorporated geometry into many of his paintings, with the Golden Ratio being just one of his many mathematical tools in order to make his paintings more attractive.

However, he was not the only one to use Golden properties in his work. Pythagoras' discoveries of the proportions of the human figure had a tremendous effect on Greek art. Every part of their major buildings, down to the smallest detail of decoration, was constructed upon this proportion. The Parthenon was perhaps the best example of a mathematical approach to art. Once its ruined triangular pediment is restored, the ancient temple fits almost precisely into a golden rectangle. As you can see, further classic subdivisions of the rectangle align perfectly with major architectural features of the structure.



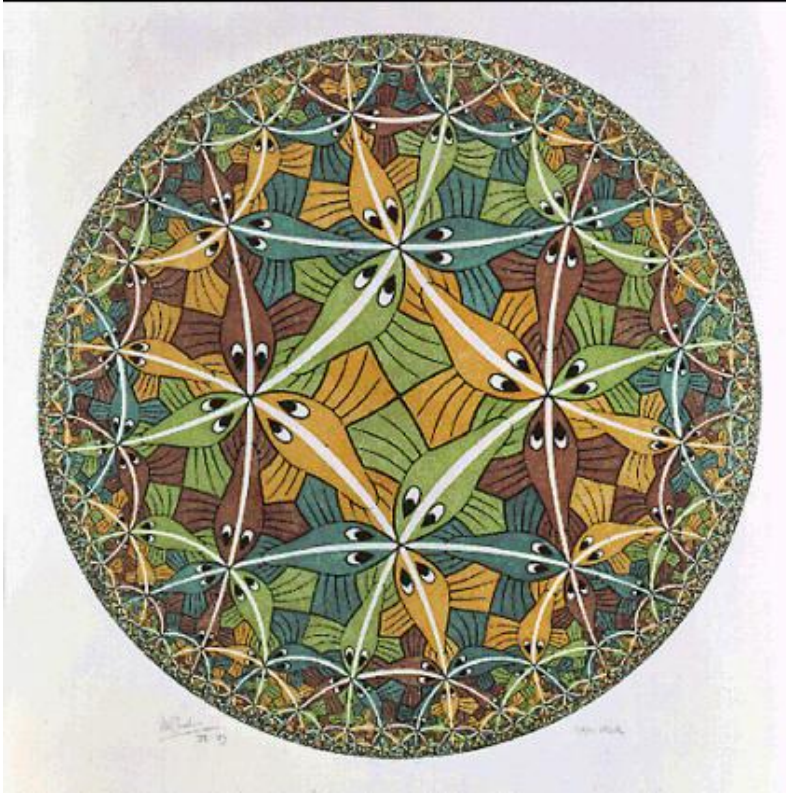
## THE ART OF M.C. ESCHER

A good example of the connection between art and mathematics is the amazing work of a Dutch artist called **M.C. Escher**, a famous artist who created mathematically challenging artworks. He used only simple drawing tools and the naked eye, but was able to create spectacular mathematical pieces. He focused on the division of the plane and played with impossible spaces. The challenge Escher overcame was to build the shapes with familiar animals and things. He produced polytypes, sometimes in drawings, which cannot be constructed in the real world, but can be described using mathematics. His drawings caught the eye and looked possible by perception, but were mathematically impossible. Escher represented infinity, Möbius bands, tessellations, deformations, reflections, Platonic solids, spirals, symmetry, and the hyperbolic plane in his works without knowing any mathematical concepts. As his work developed, he drew great inspiration from the mathematical ideas he read about, often working directly from structures in plane and projective geometry. He was also fascinated with paradox and "impossible" figures, and developed many intriguing works of art. Thus, for me as a student of mathematics, Escher's work encompasses two broad areas: the geometry of space and what we may call the logic of space.

Escher saw the beauty in structure and infinity. He forced the idea of meaningful lines into the mathematical framework of regular plane division. He likes to challenge the logic of seeing. You can see the white birds and regard the black as background or you can see the black fish and regard the white as background. When the mind jumps back and forth, you are seeing

two things existing together as interlocking shapes. Escher also created many interlocking figures that seemed mathematically incorrect.

Regular divisions of the plane, called “tessellations”, are arrangements of closed shapes that completely cover the plane without overlapping and without leaving gaps. Typically, the shapes making up a tessellation are polygons or similar regular shapes, such as the square tiles often used on floors. Tessellations of n-dimensional hyperbolic space include M. C. Escher's



*Circle Limit III*, which depicts a tessellation of the hyperbolic plane with regular  $p$ -gons meeting in  $q$ 's whenever  $\frac{1}{p} + \frac{1}{q} < \frac{1}{2}$ ; *Circle Limit III* may be understood as a tiling of **octagons** meeting in threes, with all sides replaced with jagged lines and each octagon then cut into four fish. This particular artwork contains tessellations that were drawn completely freehand and yet are mathematically correct to the millimeter.

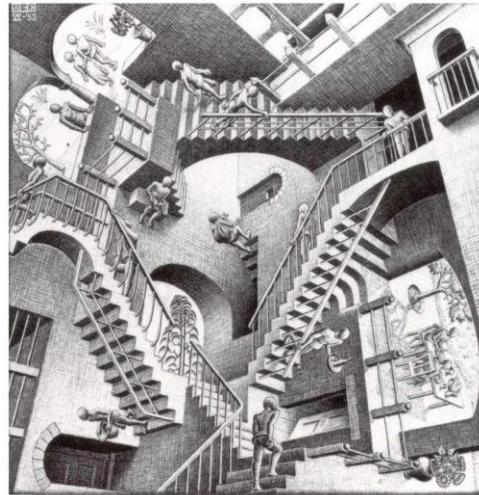


In *Ascending and Descending*, one of his masterpieces, Escher creates a staircase that continues to ascend and descend, which is mathematically impossible, but the drawing makes it seem realistic. *Relativity* is another example.

By using black and white, he was able to create different dimensions to make the mathematically impossible seem possible. Escher often combined two and three dimensional images into a single print, like his piece entitled *Reptiles*, where the reptiles themselves come out of a tessellation and walk around and then go back into the two dimensional picture.

Many artists use math without realizing it. Escher did not use any mathematical tools while creating his pieces.

In art, mathematics is not always visible, unless you are looking for it. But there is much symmetry, geometry, and measurement involved in creating beautiful art. In addition, many artists take advantage of mathematical findings, such as the golden ratio to make their artwork realistic and beautiful. Angles and perspective can also be described using math. Palazuelo said once that, “geometry lies at the heart of life, which is the most inventive and endless thing we know” (Palazuelo 67). I believe that geometry helps us to see forms, and to experience new matters. Perhaps math and art are quite intricately linked. In fact, Escher’s artwork shows us that math is being involved in art by drawing from the world of imagination, the world of mathematics, and the world of our waking life.



*Relativity* by M.C. Escher

## APPLICATION –LANDSCAPE PAINTING

In this part I will apply to a landscape painting all the rules and ideas I have gotten from this study by showing that my motivation for doing math and my inspiration to create art come from the same place, a place full of inspiration and creativity. There is the same kind of fascination for me in both math and art. It is all about expressing ideas, and sometimes math works better and other times it is art. I believe that math and art are just two different languages that can be used to express the same ideas of geometry, visualization, and perspective related to



the world. For example, this snowflake is based on equilateral triangles.

In the same time, a landscape painting illustrates scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, and forests where sky is almost always included in the view, and weather usually is an element of the composition. A landscape itself can also be a medium which carries social,

geological, historical messages or it can be considered a medium of exchange and social practice expressing visual appropriation, identity and power.

However, a painter should try to paint his own impression of what his mind sees and not a copy of it. By narrowing your eyes you can observe the landscape as a series of shapes, lights and darks, as opposed to seeing every detail. You can accomplish some amazing things that you never thought were inside you if you just relax and let the painter inside come to the surface. Further, you should follow some steps in order to paint a landscape.

You should decide about what things to include and what to leave out. The first rule of thumb in landscape painting in general is to avoid trying to include everything you see in the scene. Just because an element like a barn or a brook appears in reality does not mean that the artist has to include it if it will distract the eye from the painting's true focal point. You need to select the parts of a scene that you think will work best in your landscape painting and work from the image that you see. By the same token, you can rearrange elements in a landscape painting, or you can combine parts of a couple of different scenes. Unless you are working on a well-known or easily identifiable scene, you can create any natural image that you choose.

You should add dimension to your picture as well; a landscape painting is most interesting when it incorporates a foreground with a scenic background. By adding detail to the objects that are closer to the foreground, you will draw the viewer's eye to the focal point that you are trying to create in the scene. Background items can be painted with less definition and detail so that they appear to fade into the distance.

Actually, one should not stop painting after the first artwork; once you have found a landscape that you enjoy painting, it is fun to try to recreate that scene with different lights and seasons. The shadows and colors of your landscape painting can vary considerably by looking at the area from different angles and at alternate times of the day and year. To continue to create art from a single scene, you can snap a photo of the area so that you have a consistent model for your work.

Consequently, how I see and understand the world is also very important, and it does not matter what I see first the math in art or the art in math because both are based on the same idea. On the other hand, mathematics helps us relate to our world. Who does not feel good when confronting beauty? Our ancestors sought to capture beauty through analysis. They found beauty in both nature and man using math. What does it feel like, being an artist and a mathematician at the same time? Does proving a theorem feel very different from creating a piece of art? Of course, when you are doing mathematics, you are bound by rules much more than when you are doing art but landscape painting can be fun for anyone, because the possibilities are as infinite as nature and the benefit is in spending plenty of time in the fresh outdoors.

As a result, for the application itself I have the following plan:

- (1) I have chosen a landscape based on Kingsborough's surroundings.

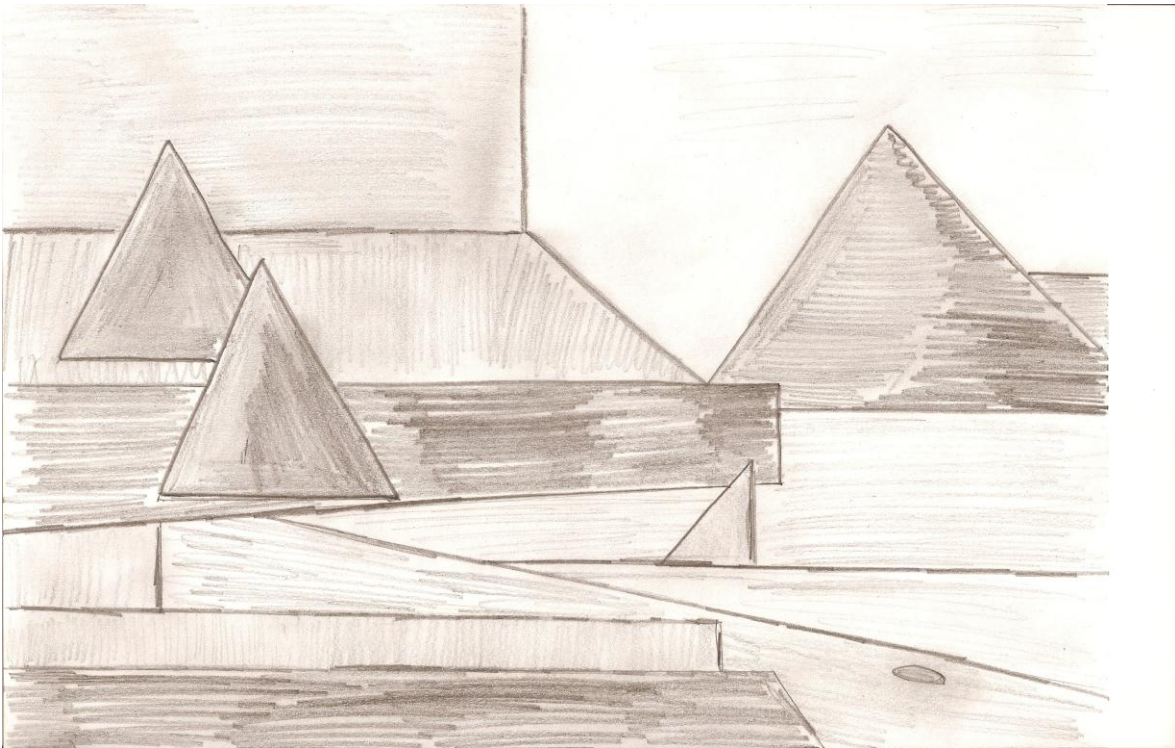


(2) I have created several compositional drawings establishing the most important points of attention, and chosen one of them.



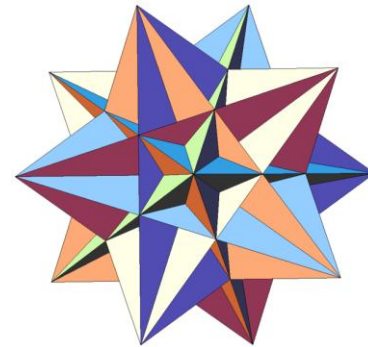
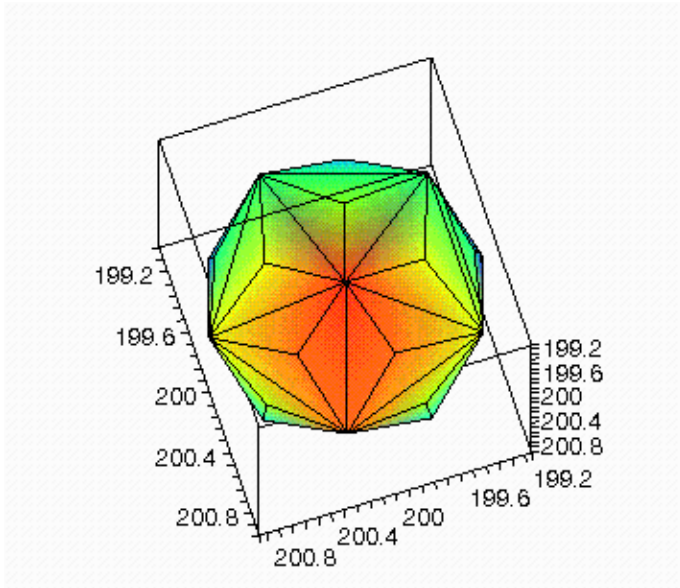


(3) I have geometrized the chosen drawing by reducing every area and point of attention to a geometric shape.



(4) I have chosen a mathematical sequence, and at this point abandoned the original landscape as a subject matter, letting the geometric shapes play at the rhythm of the mathematical formula. For this part I have discovered two particular ideas:

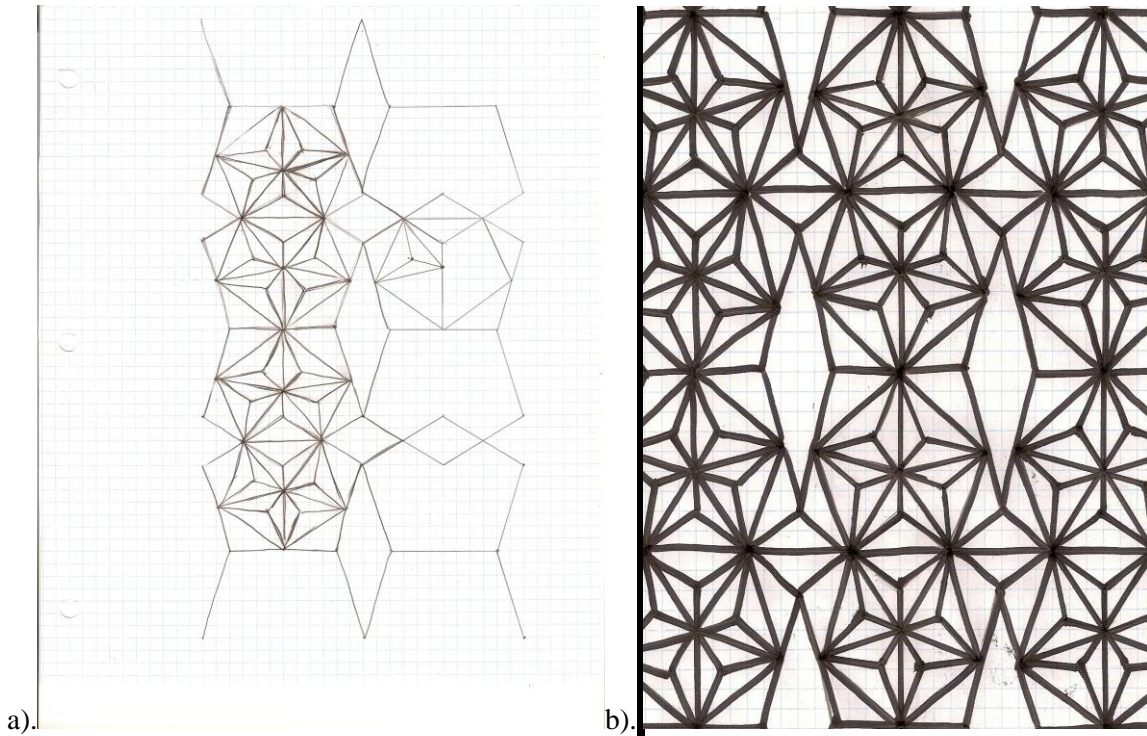
(A) Polyhedra as a technique of painting. Polyhedra have an enormous aesthetic appeal and the subject is not difficult to learn on your own. A convex polyhedron can be formally defined as the set of solutions to a system of linear inequalities  $\mathbf{m} \mathbf{x} \leq \mathbf{b}$ ,



where  $\mathbf{m}$  is a real  $s \times 3$  matrix and  $\mathbf{b}$  is a real vector.

At this point I have designed several sketches in order to illustrate the shape of polyhedra on two-dimensional paper as follows:





(B) Abstract painting. Graphing different mathematical functions on  $xy$ -plane:

$f(x)=x$
$r(t)=t^2$
$f(x)=-x+2.5$
$f(x)=-x+5$
$f(x)=4$
$f(x)=6$
$f(x)=-x-4$
$f(x)=-8$
$f(x)=-8+\sin(x)$
$x(t)=t, y(t)=t$

Graph Limited School Edition

(5) You can appreciate the beauty of polyhedra (A) or abstract painting (B) by using acrylics on canvas as follows:

(A) *Another Kingsborough*



(a)



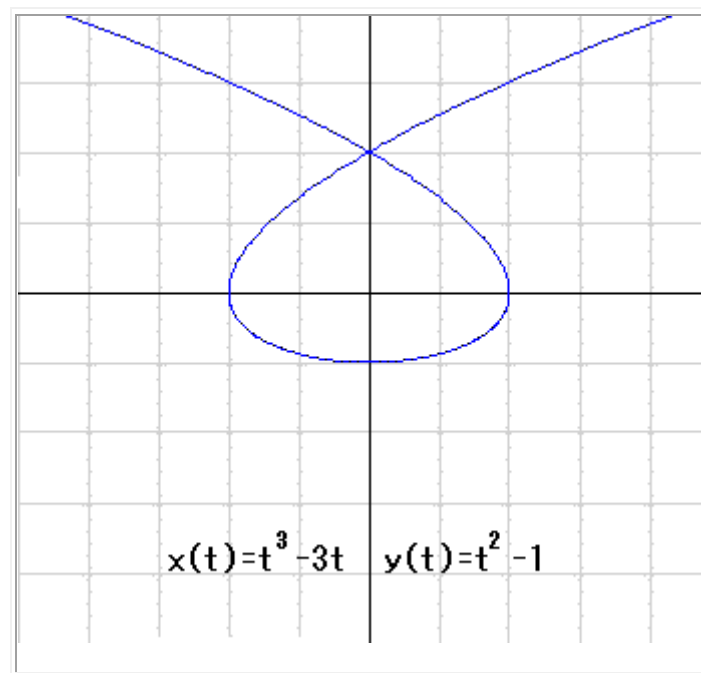
(b)

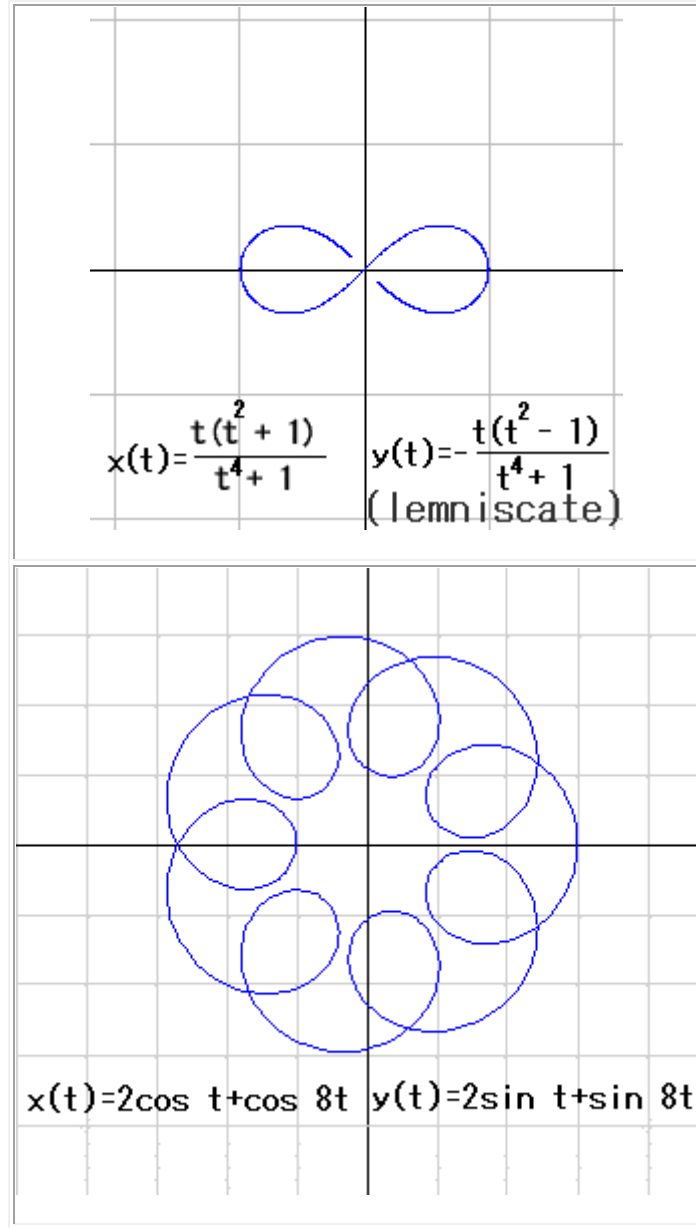


(B) *Colorful Life at Kingsborough*



**Fig. 1**





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RONIT LAVI

## Francis Bacon: The “Black Hole” of the Mouth<sup>10</sup>

Controversial and shocking, the painter Francis Bacon, is widely known for his artworks united by the evasive qualities to penetrate the viewers' private space, to disarm and hypnotize the observer by putting him in a state of horror and dread. No doubt, the first encounter with the painter's work is unforgettable. The intensity and the sensation of the images are striking and strikingly powerful. They mesmerize the viewer in front of the canvas, make him freeze, vulnerably exploring the painting. The main object of Bacon's inspiration is an abused or abusive, convulsively tensed figure enclosed in the claustrophobic environment. The colors of a wounded flesh are practically dripping from the paintings, causing the observer to cover his eyes from the painful sight.

Perceived as a realist painter for his outstanding ability to transfer emotions, Bacon deforms the figures rather than depicts them in a credible way. The painter represents the moment of physical transformation, catches the instant of mutation, changing the look beyond recognition. Often in his works, this dehumanization doesn't leave a trace of a human being except for the distinct preserved features, like the mouth. A presentation of the oral interiors is a leitmotif that has obsessed the painter since the beginning of his artistic career and for the remainder of his life (Ades and Forge 13). Distorted in a cry or a painfully stretched, exposing or hiding the teeth – the mouth is the focus of many of his artworks. What is the origin of this compulsively repeating image? What motivates the painter to expel the body and make the mouth a content of the extreme emotions? How can an artistic inspiration and legacy can be enclosed in one seemingly diminished feature? For Bacon, his image of a mouth is the universal symbol of a human being, bearing ambivalent irreconcilable traits of morality and corruption, humanity and bestiality.

Bacon unfolds the mystery of the repeated appearance of the mouth referring the art critics to the origin of this fascination – a book illustrating the close examination of the various mouth diseases as well as the image of the screaming nursemaid from Sergei Eisenstein's film “Battleship Potemkin”. The film presents an historic event that occurred in 1905 in Russia, when the crew of the battleship rebelled against the Tsarist regime. The scenes, or images from the film

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<sup>10</sup> Written for Professor Tina Orsini for English 24.

that “has been called one of the most influential...of all times” was assimilated into Bacon’s artistic vision:

[A] thing that made me think about the human cry was a book...  
with beautiful hand-colored plates of diseases of the mouth...  
and the examination of the inside of the mouth...they fascinated  
me and I was obsessed with them...then I saw the “Potemkin” film...  
and I attempted to use [it]...as a basis. (Wikipedia)



From Sergei Eisenstein’s ‘Battleship Potemkin,’ 1925

It seems that the repeated use of “the mouth” outcries the symbolism, invites the viewer to speculate on its mystery. Bacon is “loathing” to give an interpretation of his works (Wikipedia). The painter’s unspoken intentions remain hidden, leaving the viewer to hypothesize and make assumptions. Bacon liberates the viewer’s associations, enabling him to freely explore the depth of his own unconscious. At the same time, Bacon’s consistent refusal to explain and ‘narrate’ his works, to give a meaning to the repeating motives for his inspiration tease art critics and drive them to dig deeper in an attempt to investigate painter’s works. Although these “educated guesses” assist the audience with a better comprehension of Bacon’s world, they hardly compete with the emotional content existing independently of the informational one. Strongly opposing to the narrative painting Bacon clarifies, “ ‘Illustrational form tells you through the intelligence immediately what the form is about, whereas a non-illustrational form works first upon sensation and then slowly leaks back into the fact’ ”(Ades and Forge 8). Inspired by the ‘accidental’ creativity Bacon strives to paint by chance and emotions as opposed to rationalizing and intellectualizing the paintings, “He disliked the illustrative, the “literary” and the narrative as much as he did abstraction. It was the gap between these poles that he occupied” (Meades 38). To

Bacon, the illustrational, meaning narrative is not only an unnecessary effort, it is his personal enemy, distracting and challenging at once. “ ‘The moment the story is elaborated, the boredom sets in; the story tales louder than the paint’ ” – says the painter (Alphes 21). Used to name, categorize, reduce the object to its ‘true’ essence, the observer limits the perception, demolishes ambiguity and ties the emotions. Thus, Bacon aims to “ ‘give a sensation without the boredom of its [story] conveyance’ ” (28).

Are we obliged to satisfy a painter’s will and view his artworks independently of the narrative of his times? Can we truly detach his creation from the passions and obsessions of his life? After all, he is a representative of his generation. His life is filled with emotional and physical perturbations. From the conflicting and deteriorating relationship with his father to the stormy love affairs; from the depth of the poverty to the peak of admiration, he is a witness of industrial progress, the war, and its consequences.

One of his major works, “Painting”, is an embodiment of the main traits and characteristics of Bacon’s artistic and personal statements. Created after the World War II, the painting is devoted to the image of an anonymous figure sitting on a throne, hidden by the dark shades of his formal suit. A yellow boutonniere flirtingly peeps from the suit pocket. His face is half-obsured by an umbrella, disclosing an ugly, animal like toothed mouth stretched in a spasm of a smile, or a cry. The viewer’s eyes are drawn to the pale stain of a tremendous chin emphasized by the heavy shade of a dark suit and an umbrella. The frozen stiff position of a depicted figure puts in question its vitality. The cold, non living colors of the flesh along with the blood dripping from the hidden wound towards the wide opened mouth add to the impression of a crime scene presented to the observer.



Painting, 1946

The slaughtered and crucified animal stretched behind the figure reinforces the association with the violent murder and victimization. Nevertheless, the abused figure doesn't evoke sorrowful emotions. In fact, its massive heavy, and dominant presence ambivalently alludes to being the victimizer himself. The background of Bacon's works is highly important, elevating the tension, transmitting the atmosphere of the event. The setting and the subject interfere, compete and complement each other at once; the dark shading dissolves the animal corps, eats up the monolithic figure on a throne. Obviously, the scene offers the viewer to contemplate the unambiguous issues of death and life, human and animal, victim and victimizer.

Similarly to Bacon's other works and in spite of the painter's anti narrative intention, the depicted objects are easily recognized. Nevertheless, Bacon transforms the familiar image into a new one sensual, aggressive and provocative. The distortion of the figure perceived as muscular contraction or spasm does not minimize, but enhances the striking realism of his paintings. In the "Painting" the image of the mouth depicted apart from the other features stands out against the background. The row of exposed teeth implies the predatory nature concealed in a human body. A dreadfully opened mouth disclosing inner void captivates and strangely attracts in its atrocity. What is the nature of painter's obsession with the image of a mouth? Is it a cry for help? A physiological need to ease the pain? Or maybe it is a threatening display of a toothed pharynx? Is it a scream itself or a horror that produces the scream that fascinates the painter?

In the search for the answers, art critics turn to any source that potentially leads to the understanding. Bacon's biography reveals facts that can't be easily discharged. Undoubtedly, a person's perceptions are rooted and formed in a childhood. Certainly, Bacon's early years are not a collection of pleasant reminiscences and nostalgia. He was born in Dublin to English parents. His mother, Christina Winifred Loxley Bacon did not seem to be greatly involved in Francis' childhood. His father, Anthony Edward Mortimer Bacon was a retired Army Captain who was focused on his career as a trainer of horses. Perhaps the same technique used for training horses served him to bring up his child that was frequently beaten for the educational reasons. His family moved from Ireland to England several times "leading to a felling of/ displacement that would remain with the artist throughout his life" (Wikipedia). Suffering from the asthma attacks and allergies, Bacon was given morphine.

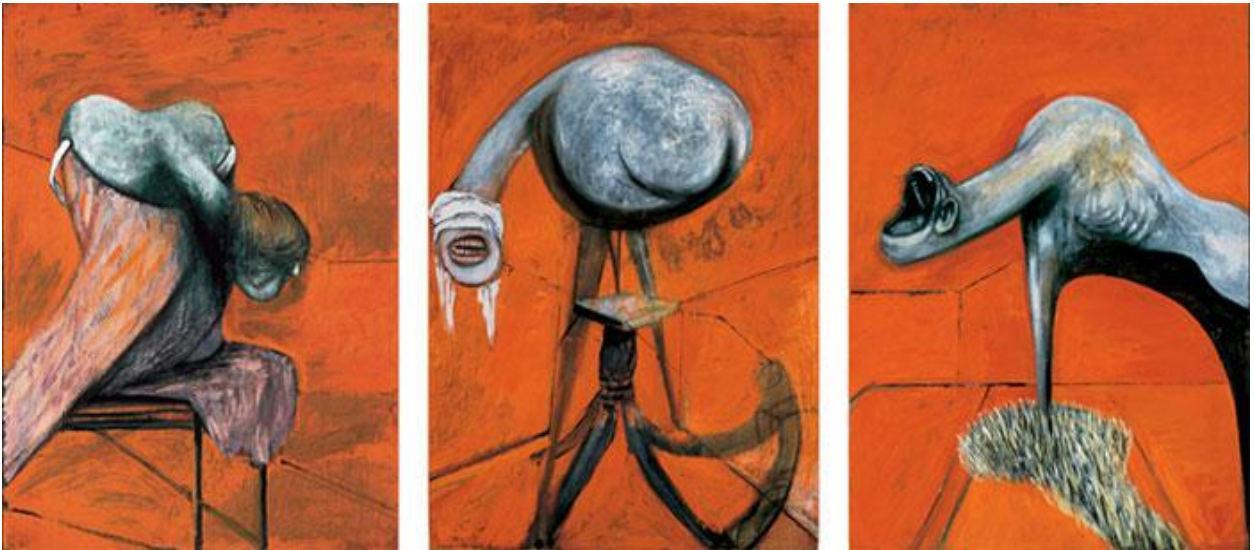
The painter admits to being constantly threatened and viciously whipped by his father. Besides, as a young boy, Bacon was frequently locked by his nanny in a cupboard, screaming and weeping for hours. Maliciously abandoned and confined in the dark void of a cupboard, screaming his fears out, a little boy's perceptions of the surrounding and himself within it were damaged, perverted for good. According to the painter, this engraved forever experience not only impacted his personality but shaped his identity: "That cupboard...was the making of me" (Wikipedia). Bacon's sickness together with his openly emerging homosexuality continuously diminished him in his father's eyes until "matters came to a head when Captain Bacon caught his son trying on his mother's underwear... Bacon's humiliation was heightened by a strong physical attraction towards his father, first realized through sexual encounters with stable hands" (Francis-Bacon.com). Violently expressed frustration didn't help his father with his attempt to 'fix' his son, so seventeen year old Francis was expelled from the house to start his independent life.

It seems that this childhood cruelly deprived of innocence was a continuous and abundant origin for an artistic inspiration. Most probably that terrible childhood sensation echoes in the portrayal of a shouting figure enclosed in claustrophobic suffocating space, which appears in his multiple works. In spite of the absence of the facial features, the mouth alone succeeds to express states of agony or excitement. Display of emotions controlled by the society norms is restricted to



a limited body language of a restrained “cultural” conduct. In the “Middle England, that beige vacuum of dry niceness where all that’s interesting is beneath the carpet” (Meades 38), a closed mouth is perceived as a symbol of a well behaved human being’s noble manners, while a repulsively opened mouth is associated with barbaric animal behavior. In his presentation of teeth, Bacon bridges between a human being and his ancestor – an animal. A shut mouth hides a man’s animal essence while an opened one, perceived as a vestigial organ transmits it from the depth of the repression to the outside world.

Suppressed animal instinct will remain dormant as long as a human being is able to cope with his desires, censoring and locking them in the innermost layers. In Bacon’s works sexuality or fear cause a beast to emerge. Bacon’s truthfulness with the frequent representation of an anatomy with the body’s unspeakable functions of sexuality and excretion opposes to the hypocrisy of human kind: “eating meat but complaining about the bull fighting; wearing fur but averting the eyes from the slaughterhouses” (Ades Forge 23). Perhaps, Bacon criticizes the pretence of a civil person when portraying him as a predator wearing an official suit as it appears in the “Painting”, or his other works. “It is not that man in his scream sinks to the level of animal, but that this animal element is necessary and a part of him, and without it he is restricted...” (15). The painter reinforces the sense of an animal incarnation that deprives human existence by distorting the images and twisting the bodies in the impossible positions. Does a man become an animal, or an animal possess the traits of a human? What is meant by the juxtapositions and parallels, oppositions and contrasts present in Bacon’s artworks? Undoubtedly, unambiguous answers will not resolve contradictions or deliver understanding. The artist turns the questions to the observer, allowing him to manipulate the meaning and evoke personal feelings while exploring the paintings. “Three Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion” – have no other features except the mouths and a hyper extended animal-like neck.



Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion, 1944

oil and pastel on cardboard, 94 x 74 cm (each)

The Tate Gallery, London

In “Head I” and “Head II”, a mouth filled with animal teeth clearly belongs to a decomposing and disappearing human in a background (Head I, 1948; Head II, 1949). In “Three Figures and a Portrait” (1975) the body is so “Vague... that the mouth/teeth are the only clear feature...” (16). In the “Studies for the Human Body” the distortion blurs the body leaving the teeth and sexual organs that are distinctly painted.



Head I, 1948

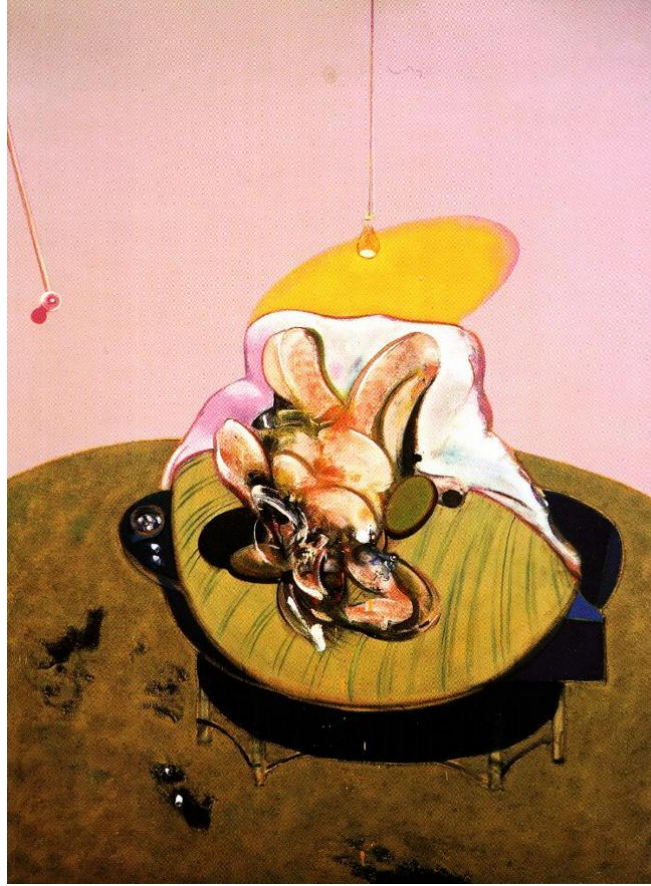
oil on canvas, 80.5 x 65 cm  
collection Ulster Museum, Belfast



Head II, 1949

oil and tempera on wood, 100.3 x 75 cm  
collection Richard S. Zeisler, New York

Incredibly personal in their emotionality Bacon's works discover "propensity for self-cannibalization" representing "humans as a piece of meat" (Meades 38). His sadistic approach to the human body slaughtered by him without mercy, raises association with the abusive impact of his father's hands on his boy's fragile body. Discrete in regards of the commentary on his art works, Bacon has no limitations in discussing his intimate life. His confession of being sexually attracted to his father not only allows the critics to analyze Bacon's works from the Freudian perspective of Oedipus complex, but perceive his violence in the painting as a sadistic and torturous sexuality. Bacon often expresses the "transposition of lower and upper parts of the body" when he portrays the nude images turning their heads and mouths towards the genital areas (Ades and Forge 16). For example, in the "Lying Figure" Bacon inverts the body so the head and the mouth are found at the lower part of the painting, while the genitals are placed at the center and towards the upper part.



Lying figure, 1969.

Noticing this intriguing inversion, art critics imply the impact of Freudian theories on Bacon's artistic vision. Nevertheless, aware of Freudian ideas and the symbolism of a toothed mouth, Bacon denies the connection of his obsession with the theory of psychoanalysis, " 'People say that these have all sorts of sexual implications, and I was always very obsessed by the actual appearance of the mouth and teeth... ' " (15).

In spite of Bacon's repulsively disturbed imagery of a human body, the distortion is not rooted in disgust or hatred of it. The painter romanticizes physiology, beautifies the 'ugliness' of an exposed flesh and nerves. He hopes " 'to be able to paint the mouth like Monet painted a sunset'" (15). Bacon's artistic nature and creative mind is captivated by the colorful and textural substances of a living organism, "He makes the flesh look like a whipped -up action... a blood beaded hunk of meat, a knob of flesh perched on a rail, a screaming mouth colored with the florid extravagance of medical illustrations..." ( Di Piero 238). Similarly to a surgeon Bacon aims to unfold the external layers to uncover bare inner compartments in order to search for the raw, true and authentic composition of the objects. The excruciating realism of Bacon's inspiring works concealed in his ability to "Hit the nervous system" (van Alphen 11). In fact, this talent "Makes him the most famous painter of our time"(239 Di Piero). In a vivid, truthful manner Bacon dehumanizes a human body depriving it not only of a shape, but a human spirit. As a non-believer and not religious person, Bacon never refers to a soul but to the physical dimensions of a human body. In his figures, "We don't see mind... but rather a condition of nerves" (239).



In spite of his ‘physicality’ and ‘materiality’, the painter turns to religion as one of the powerful sources of his inspiration. In a “Painting,” a cow carcass suspended in a crucified shape evokes a direct allusion to the Crucifixion. The triptych “Three Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion” is a lending of a traditional format representing religious scenes in three panels.

The series of “Screaming Popes” is devoted to the image of a religious authoritative figure, frighteningly screaming at the viewer. Never suspected in ‘religiosity’, Bacon recreates a traditional scene when portraying a clergyman sitting on a throne. Apparently, the religious content of Bacon’s works does not imply an interest in spirituality. The painter rather subjects religion with its ascetic and restrained norms to the same urges and instincts of a human kind. Bacon admits, “I’ve always been very moved by pictures about slaughterhouses and meat, and to me they belong very much to the whole thing of the Crucifixion. . . . [As] a non believer [in God], it was just an act of man’s behavior, a way of behavior to another’ ” (Ades and Forge 19).



Head VI, 1949

93 x 76.5 cm

Arts Council collection, Hayward Gallery, London



Untitled (Pope), 1950

oil on canvas, 198 x 137 cm

The Estate of Francis Bacon

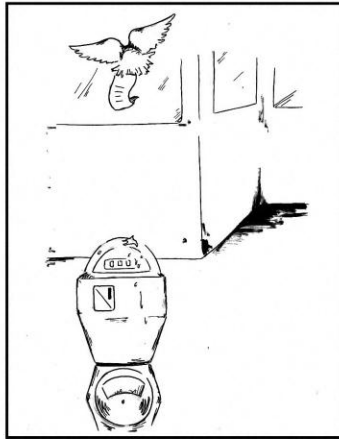
Bacon’s childhood experience and “fascination with butcher shops” (Di Piero 240) combine with the Sainted images to create ambiguous work of art to vandalize the ‘untouchable’ and reject taboos. Similarly to other paintings representing a clerk or official figure as an embodiment of the civil rules and norms, Bacon challenges morality and humanity covering a subdued predator. Perhaps the complex notions of childhood memories overwhelming Bacon’s mind with the images of himself tortured by his father, butcher houses exposing ‘tortured’ animals, crucified for the sake of the sale combine to create a horrific image of the mouth engulfing the viewer with its powerful inevitability.

Francis Bacon’s art that “Came from nowhere and led nowhere” (Meades 38) can barely belong to the specific artistic trend. The painter that “didn’t even have precursors” (38) created his own school of art, celebrating his personal world filled with horror and brutality. Seen once, Bacon’s images will stay imprinted in the viewer’s memory, physically transcending the painful

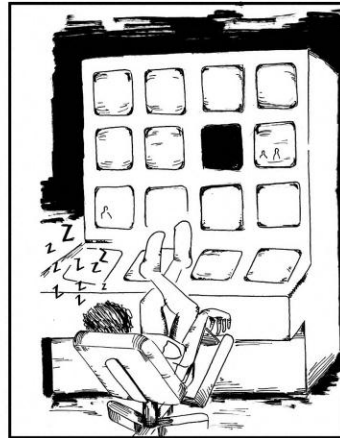
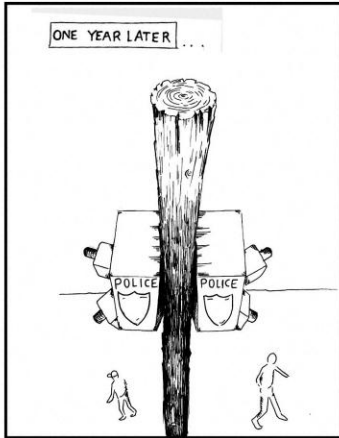
sensation of a body slaughtered for the sake of truth and revelation. The wide opened mouth that invites and repels at the same time is the painter's instrument, his main organ reflecting his inner self, releasing the repressions. In spite of this personalization, Bacon's art is applicable to the observer that confronting the paintings forced to face his own hidden but existing essence composed of ambiguities. Bacon's image of the open mouth bears the global all-inclusive qualities existing peacefully under the deceiving umbrella of a social beast.

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# DISTINCTIONS

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