

Untold

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Forward

Miranda Noble, Editor-in-Chief

There is a special ritual I practice when it comes to typesetting. It involves plugging in the twinkle lights in my living room, turning on *The Amazing Race* as background noise, and sitting on the couch while my roommates ease into their slumber in the rooms next door. Typically, the ritual involves praying, hoping, and crying. I pray that my computer will not crash, that I won't have to leave the comfort of my couch to grab my charger, that Google will answer my question the third time I try to rephrase it, that the software will allow me to use the fonts I need. I hope that my professors will be kind to me the next morning when I stumble in late, that someone besides my mother will read this journal once it is finished, that the cute newlyweds will make it to the next leg of *The Amazing Race*. To be honest, though, I mostly cry.

Tears bound these pages together before the pages were ever printed. I know I cried over my computer trying to typeset them, but I also know the poems were cried over, the citations were cried over, the paintings were cried over. I don't know how much blood or sweat goes into this kind of work, but I sure know that a lot of tears go into it. Knowing that is beautiful.

Of course, there are people who cried with me, listened to me cry over FaceTime, or helped to prevent my crying. Thank you to those people. Thank you to the Honors Department, specifically Kate McPherson, for support and funding. Thank you Jeremiah Harrison and E2I Igniter Funds for funding the staff which made this journal possible. Thank you to Deb Thornton for teaching me literally everything I know about creating a journal and for buying me a Beto's breakfast burrito. Thank you to my Managing Editor, Amanda Grant, for flying by the seat of *my* pants with me. Thank you to my mom for listening to my complaining, reading nearly the entirety of last semester's edition, and showing me the tears are worth something. Thank you to everyone who submitted their hard work without which, this journal would cease to exist. Thank you for all the tears; they have reminded me that we are human. Knowing that is beautiful.

An Observer's Tale

Trinity Johnson Mendoza

They creep through forests.
They creep through desserts.
Silently they track their prey,
Waiting to strike.

They Strike for food, plenty.
They strike for warmth, shelter.
When they feast they roar
And gloat their prize.

They gloat to the heavens, the skies,
The trembling earth. They gloat
So all the other animals may hear
Their cry and know that the
Deadly Monsters Strike.

These fearsome creatures
Call themselves humans.
They build, create, read, write,
And learn to control the world around them.

They've even begun to make artificial man.

These creatures plunder, push, and forage the
Wild places-thrusting birds, predators, and prey
Alike from the safety of the trees and desserts.
They know not their own power.

They see not the destruction in their tales,

Nor the devastation their lives create.
The animals that live upon the earth's bounty
Alone do not matter to them.
With all their cruelty they push each other.
Pressing down upon cities and nations
Until, crumbling, they fall to shatters
Upon the Earth

Weeping, begging, crying out against their
Own brothers and sisters who have desolated
All they once held dear through cruelty.
No being is safe from a cruel human.

Not even artificial man.

Human stories tell of great inventors who
Pushed beyond the realm of gods and
Created a man all their own-better they said.
Until they were cruel once again.

Artificial life that has thoughts, feelings, and even
Yet a heart matters not to them until
It returns, scarred by human cruelty to
Punish it's creators for all it's woes.

Who can say who is right?
The creator, or the created?
Both have been tortured,
Both are in pain.

Humans are not cruel by nature, you see.

When a baby human is born, it is
Thrust into the light with no knowledge
Of how to behave.
So the elders teach.
But Elders are not always kind and
Too often the lessons become
Ways to avoid the cruelty of
Their fellow man.

Sweet, precious, innocent children
Grow into scared, posing, immature
Adults who run the world as
Terrified and hurt beings.

You see, young one. It is not
Human pride, or Human Kindness that
Shapes them most. It is human
Cruelty that does the work,

And makes monsters out of men.



2/4

LONELY DINNER

Art SOL

Lonely Dinner

Allison Sink

I saw this woman eating by herself at a small café in New York. Something about this image felt so captivating and also so lonely to me. I've had this picture saved for years with the intention of making it a painting, but I think this print more accurately expresses the emotion I felt seeing this woman. Living in a pandemic these last few years was filled with very isolated and lonely moments for me and many others. This print also holds some of that feeling of isolation that has felt very present in my recent life. I hope that as we come out of this dark and lonely time we're more able to reach out to those around us who are still experiencing that loneliness.

Diversity in Deseret: Understanding Religious Differences in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Lizzy Jensen

Introduction

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (known also as the LDS or Mormon church) is just as much an American cultural phenomenon as it is a religious one. With their unique history and policies, the Latter-day Saints (also known as Mormons) have set themselves to be known as a “peculiar people.” The Christian doctrine they espouse is unique, but what sets them apart even more is how that doctrine has created a culture and a community that can be profoundly supportive for some and deeply harmful for others.

The LDS Church is not simply a church, it is a high-demand, high-cost organization that encourages cultural behaviors and traditions (especially in the intermountain West) that make a religious affiliation an entire lifestyle. Thus, when one disaffiliates from the LDS Church, the effect of this divorce of faith is seen in many areas of their life beyond the religious one. A study reports that “High-cost religious groups often explicitly proscribe nonmember relationships and prescribe member relationships.”¹ When members lose their faith, they are also subject to losing friends and family because they have now become “the other,” a nonmember.

Church attendance and membership is dwindling in most religious communities across the United States. This pattern is consistent in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 36% of those raised in the Church no longer identify with it.² However, the focus of the ensuing pag-

1. Christopher P. Scheitle and Amy Adamczyk, “High-Cost Religion, Religious Switching, and Health,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51, no. 3 (September 2010): 325–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146510378236>.

2. “Religious Switching: Change in America’s Religion Landscape,” Pew Research Center, May 12, 2015, <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/chapter-2-religious-switching-and-intermarriage/>.

es isn't going to be *why* people choose to leave or lose faith in the Church, but what happens after they do and what can be done to achieve harmony in their families and communities after their transition.

Embracing Inter-religious Diversity in the Mormon Family

In the LDS Church, parents are constantly encouraged to teach their children the doctrine of salvation defended by the Church and often blame themselves or feel betrayed when members of the family depart from the faith. One church leader states: "It is not enough just to save ourselves. It is equally important that [we] are saved in our families. If we return home alone to our Heavenly Father, we will be asked, "Where is the rest of the family?"³ This rhetoric can be found in Mormon communities across the world. Nonetheless, an individual cannot control the factors surrounding a child's decision to apostatize. Families with religious diversity should not focus on returning to homogeneity but should instead prioritize understanding and respecting each other while maintaining their distinctiveness. Doing so will be to the benefit of the health and happiness of all parties.

A study on family relations and LDS disaffiliation focused on what they called relational turning points (TPs) for disaffiliated members and their faithful families. They write that "a TP is an important event that influences a relationship for better or worse."⁴ These turning points were as follows: open conversation, restatement, personal withdrawal, confrontation, conformity, coming out, moving out, third-party events, and boundaries with interference.

The disaffiliated subjects reported that several of the TPs ended up influencing their relationship for the better. One subject had a positive experience in an open conversation with her mother: "I got another piercing, and I was a little scared to tell her. And she was like 'why would you be scared to tell me that? I don't care, I love you for who you are.' She is doing really well to let me know she loves me for who I am and not for following in her footsteps."⁵ Another subject was grateful to move out of

3. Robert D. Hales, "The Eternal Family," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints General Conference, UT, October 1996, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1996/10/the-eternal-family?lang=eng>.

4. Jared Worwood, Kristina M. Scharp, and Kaitlin E. Phillips, "I Don't Want to Have a Weird Relationship with You, so I'm Trying': Relational Turning Points and Trajectories of Ex-Member Children and Their Member Parents in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," *Journal of Family Communication* 20, no. 4 (2020): 327–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2020.1825087>.

5. Worwood, Scharp, and Phillips, "I Don't Want to Have a Weird Relationship," 332.

her house: “This massively improved my relationship with my dad because we were no longer in the same household so there weren’t as many areas for us to clash.”⁶ Another subject found success when setting personal boundaries: “I said, ‘I’m not going to bring up religion or politics. And like, if you want to talk about it, I’m always open to talk about whatever, but I’m not going to bring it up because I don’t think that’s very helpful to our relationship.’”⁷ The study goes on to report that most families who also practiced setting personal boundaries saw an increase in closeness and improvement in their familial relationships.

These findings inform us that through the intentional usage of these TPs, family members could attempt reconciliation amidst religious diversity. As participants of an institution where the family is valued above all other social patterns, the hope is that with mutual respect and love, faithful family members will see, value, and accept their children as they are, despite their religious affiliation and orthodoxy. LDS apostle and leader, David A. Bednar, issued counsel to parents with “wayward children” saying, “As parents are patient and persistent in loving their children and in becoming living examples of disciples of Jesus Christ, they most effectively teach the Father’s plan of happiness.”⁸

From the words of a revered orthodox Church leader, parents with children who have departed from the faith are encouraged to not only accept their children, but to be patient and persistent in loving them as they steer their own course in life. Choosing to disaffiliate from a high-demand, orthodox religion is likely going to be one of the most difficult hurdles in the life of that individual leaving. It forces a reevaluation of one’s core values and beliefs, which is emotionally taxing and tumultuous. A study on identity reconstruction post-Mormonism found that religious disaffiliation “often creates significant disruptions to people’s identities” and that the process is “chaotic and ongoing.”⁹

6. Worwood, Scharp, and Phillips, “I Don’t Want to Have a Weird Relationship,” 333.

7. Worwood, Scharp, and Phillips, “I Don’t Want to Have a Weird Relationship,” 336.

8. David A. Bednar, “Faithful Parents and Wayward Children,” *The Ensign* 44, no. 3 (March 2014), <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2014/03/faithful-parents-and-wayward-children-sustaining-hope-while-overcoming-misunderstanding?lang=eng>.

9. Kristina M. Scharp and Aubrey L. Beck, “‘Losing My Religion’: Identity (Re)Constructions in Mormon Exit Narratives,” *Narrative Inquiry* 27, no. 1 (2017): 132–48. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.27.1.07sch>.

When the disaffiliated feel disappointment and conditional love from their family, a personal, complex life decision becomes an even heavier burden.

Embracing Intra-religious Diversity in the Mormon Community

The history and culture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has created a unique community. Some questioning members, instead of completely disaffiliating, choose to continue membership and remain a part of this familiar religious commonwealth while not fully believing in LDS orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Despite personal problems with history and doctrine, they see the LDS Church as a spiritual home. These members are sometimes referred to as “faithful unbelievers” and they are not few in numbers. A study on Mormons in America reported that 22% of the surveyed active, integrated members found some church teachings “hard to believe.”¹⁰ This means that roughly every one in five members of the Church struggle with full belief in their religion.

LDS Church founder Joseph Smith felt strongly about freedom of belief within in his own religious community:

The creeds set up stakes, & say hitherto shalt thou come, & no further, which I cannot subscribe to. I never thought it was right to call up a man and try him because he erred in doctrine, it looks too much like Methodism and not like Latter day Saintism. Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be kicked out of their church. I want the liberty of believing as I please, it feels so good not to be trammled.”¹¹

This proclamation represents an integral characteristic of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that seems to have been forgotten over the course of two centuries: it is a church made for and formed by questioning souls. As a youth, Joseph Smith felt uncomfortable with the teachings of many religionists around him in his home in Palmyra, New York. He reported that he retired himself to a grove of trees, knelt, and “began to offer up the desires of [his] heart to God.” Joseph recorded and shared multiple times throughout his life that he received a visitation from God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, who assured him that the truth

10. Mormons in America - Certain in Their Beliefs, Uncertain of Their Place in Society,” Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project, Pew Research Forum, October 26, 2020, <https://www.pewforum.org/2012/01/12/mormons-in-america-executive-summary/>.

11. “Discourse, 8 April 1843, as Reported by William Clayton–B,” p. 2, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-8-april-1843-as-reported-by-william-clayton-b/3>.

he was searching for would someday be revealed to him.¹²

The process of this revelation of truth has been labeled by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as “the Restoration.” Over the course of his leadership, Joseph Smith endeavored to restore what he taught were attributes of Christ’s New Testament church, including doctrines, sacred rituals, and ordinances that set the LDS church apart from their contemporaries. Whatever Joseph may have accomplished in his short lifetime, the Church teaches that this “restoration” is not yet complete. Current Prophet and President, Russell M. Nelson shares: “We’re witnesses to a *process* of restoration. [. . .] If you think the Church has been fully restored, you’re just seeing the beginning. There is much more to come.”¹³

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not yet claim to be perfected. So why, these faithful unbelievers ask, can their nuanced or uncommon beliefs not be accepted within Mormonism? Variations of this question are found in a survey of disaffiliated Mormons. At the end of the survey was posed the question, “what would it take to bring you back?” For the purposes of this essay, we will look at a response requesting “Greater openness and acceptance towards those with doubts and/or non-literal beliefs”:

Create spaces for alternative thought within the Church and push Church culture to be more accepting of difference. Just because you believe the Church is true doesn’t mean you have to have a narrow construction of what that truth implies. . . . I would return if I felt more latitude to participate in an unorthodox way. Currently, I feel too much pressure to hide my true feelings and beliefs, resulting in feelings of deep inauthenticity and moral dishonesty when I do attend.¹⁴

This former Saint is asking for understanding and acceptance of their differing beliefs. At the present, many faithful unbelievers or post-Mormons

12. “Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision.” The Joseph Smith Papers: A comprehensive digital collection of the papers of Joseph Smith. Accessed December 14, 2021. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/accounts-of-the-first-vision>.

13. “Latter-Day Saint Prophet, Wife and Apostle Share Insights of Global Ministry.” newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org, October 30, 2018. <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/latter-day-saint-prophet-wife-apostle-share-insights-global-ministry?lang=eng#churchofjesuschrist>.

14. John Dehlin, “Understanding Mormon Disbelief Survey.” Mormon Stories, March 2012. <https://www.mormonstories.org/understanding-mormon-disbelief-survey-results-and-analysis/>.

do not feel as though they can be welcomed in the church community because of their nuanced beliefs. Conversely, the orthodox Church population likely feels threatened by ideologies that may question or challenge traditional LDS doctrine. Indeed, a study on religious diversity declares that “regular interaction with ideologically dissimilar others may pose a threat to the psychological equanimity provided by a consensually validated religious belief system.” However, that same study goes on to report promising findings in the study of religious diversity and the positive role intellectual humility plays in encouraging religious tolerance and diversity in communities and families.¹⁵

The Role of Intellectual Humility in Religious Diversity

One of the answers to mending torn relationships among religiously diverse families and communities in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a greater promotion of intellectual humility amongst the orthodox, unorthodox, and disaffiliated. Intellectual humility is defined in the world of psychology and philosophy as “having an accurate view of one’s intellectual strengths and weaknesses, as well as the ability to negotiate different ideas in an interpersonally respectful manner.”¹⁶ Often in issues of religious belief, the faithful take it personally when someone they know or love chooses to leave their religion. This brings insecurity about their own faith that is manifested by their closing off to conversation with those on the outside. The intellectually humble are willing to relinquish the need to be “right” and to instead pursue and incorporate new knowledge and information even if it challenges their worldview.

Intellectual humility is imperative to cultivating and continuing relationships in our increasingly diverse world. Without intellectual humility, other faiths could not live in harmony as they do today. A study on intellectual humility and religious tolerance wrote that “Humility has been theorized to support social bonds, even when factors such as cultural differences appear to threaten the relationship.”¹⁷ This study discovered that exposure to religious diversity was a positive influence on religious

15. Hansong Zhang, Joshua N. Hook, Jennifer E. Farrell, David K. Mosher, Daryl R. Van Tongeren, and Don E. Davis, “The Effect of Religious Diversity on Religious Belonging and Meaning: The Role of Intellectual Humility,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 10, no. 1: (2018) 72–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000108>.

16. Zhang et al., “The Effect of Religious Diversity,” 73.

17. Joshua N. Hook, Jennifer E. Farrell, Kathryn A. Johnson, Daryl R. Van Tongeren, Don E. Davis, and Jamie D. Aten, “Intellectual Humility and Religious Tolerance,” *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 12, no. 1 (2016): 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1167937>.

tolerance and predicted an increased level of intellectual humility.

Developing intellectual humility is a mindful endeavor that comes with time and experience. OpenMind, a digital non-profit organization, encourages people to build habits that will allow them to engage in constructive dialogue across differing backgrounds and beliefs. On intellectual humility, they encourage subjects to be cognizant of their own limitations, to embrace curiosity over judgement, and to value love and empathy above all else.¹⁸ In being respectful and less defensive towards differences, orthodox, unorthodox, and disaffiliated members of the Church can increase their intellectual humility and thus embrace their theologically diverse friends and family members.

Genuine connections in families and communities are important to the mental and emotional health of all humankind. In the age of information, it appears increasingly complicated for us to reach across the aisle to those in our sphere of connection who have differing religious beliefs. It is vital for us to do all that we can to preserve those relationships and find common ground, even if that common ground is but mutual love and respect. To conclude, recall the words of an ancient prophet, philosopher, and Holy Messiah to many: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁹ Our differences may divide us, but humility can influence them to unite us. Let us be curious about those differences, allowing them to stretch our minds and our hearts and guide us to discover a space of harmony by accepting differences instead of demanding homogeneity. May our differences help us discover a kingdom of heaven on earth.

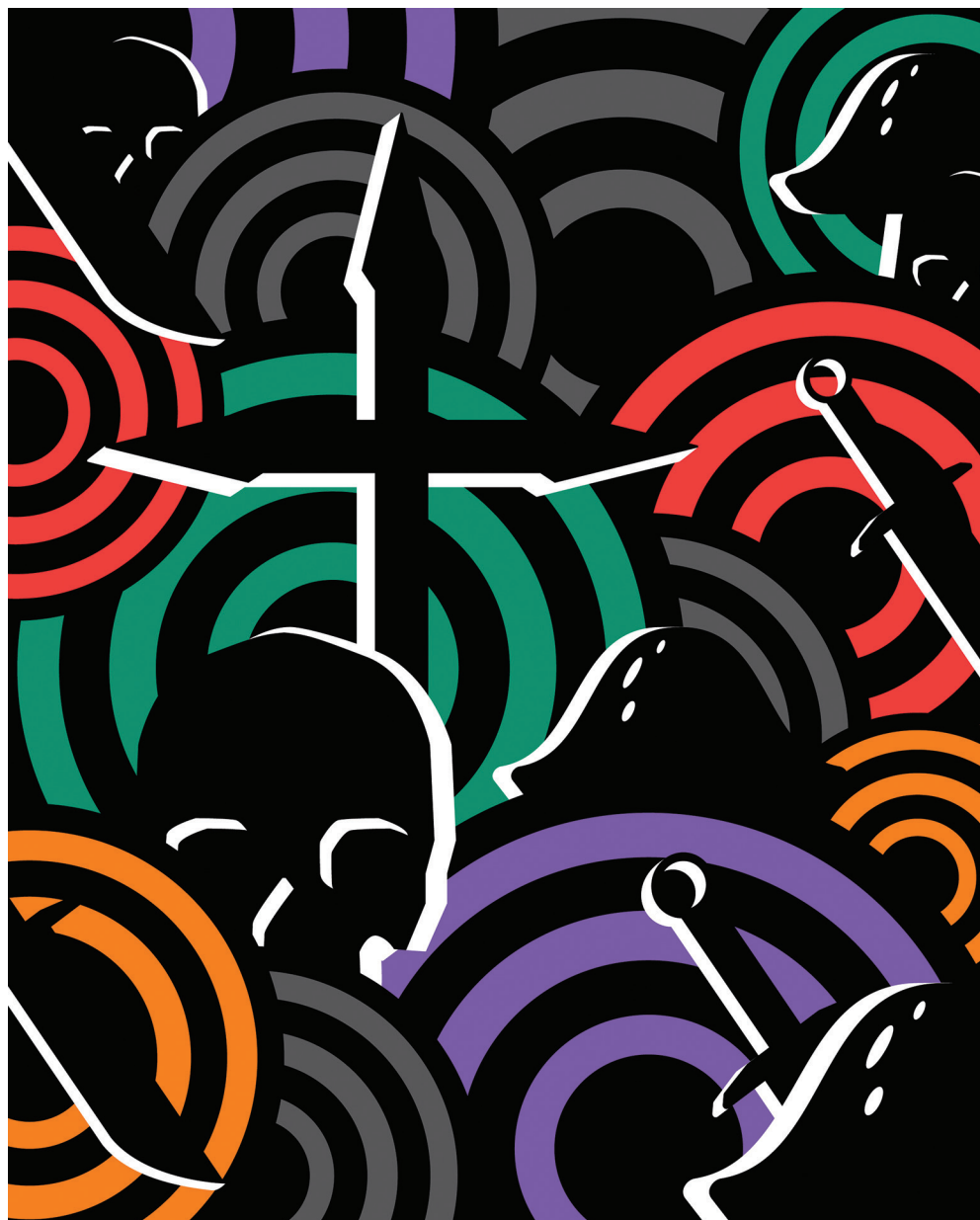
18. “Cultivate Intellectual Humility.” OpenMind, March 19, 2021, <https://open-mindplatform.org/library-intellectual-humility/>.

19. Matt. 5:3, AV.

Anxiety

Olivia Ann Ostler

Always retreating in the back of my mind
A festering sore that cannot be treated
Causes eyes to be wide and awareness to be sharp
Like a rabbit on the hunt
Heart racing fast and tears escaping furiously
Could just be about an overdue paper
Or someone coming for your life



Death

Jake Allen

The End. The Final Frontier. The Edge of the Universe. The Last of Everything. The Deepest Dark. The Longest Night. The Blackest Black. The Fate of all Fools. The Loneliest Endeavour. The Dying of the Light. The Longest Goodbye. The Widest Void. The Hardest Exchange. The Breach of the Living. The Grainiest Vision. The Blurriest Transition. The Heaviest of Crosses. The Foundations of Decay. The Sharpest Resolve. The Rottenest of Apples. The Sum of all Fears. The Pinnacle of Points. The Culmination of Experience. The Boundry of the Weary. The Gate of all Sinners. The Fall of all Romantics. The Leverage of all Conquerors. The Symposium of Existence. The Summation of Memory. The Turnpike of Eternity. The Currency of all Monarchs. The Permanence of Change. The Crossing of all Souls. The Inside of the Outside. The Exposure of all Doubt. The Culling of all Servants. The Marking of all who Call. The Sign of your Time. The Opening of the Unrepentant. The Absolute of all that's Necessary. The Curtain Exposure. The Unveiling of all Obscurity. The Hallmark of Legacy. The Birth of every Priest. The Welcoming of Justice. The Price of Equality. The Change of all Hearts. The One and Only. The Beginning.

Cacaphonic Constructive

Garth Talbot

Exteresing, the conglomerates
That ain't incorrect but yet still grate
Word units written or announced verbally
Uncomfortable sensory
Palpations of tongue and face
Neurons shooting frontwards into a brick barrier
Goring their selfs into an opposite steer
A way from aesthetic pleasurement
From a poemly mannerment
Gives a weird erie feel
Such as uck. Icky. cuculuk. Uchtluh. Triki-k

mm

mm

Lahctee hm

Now correct words:

A buttress' debris

Countess' capris

Deviled oceans

Deep fried platypuses

All-seeing devotion

Pain in motion

"You love me, goodbye"

"you love me too. Take a mediocre day, never try"

Twisting fix screwing in

Pretty virtuous sin

Uncomfortably blithe blissful rusted pistol-whip journey trip falling
to writhe the sky die dye dichotomy of one and none green sickly em-
anating hue ghostly in lightshade and sustinance. Squinting Quinton,

there look, who's Quinton?
 Slipknot drip closed clothed keeepingly
 Awake.
 Have another, feather mother's flower pan
 Out-quiet reading to stretch the brain
 When bargaining a poem such as that one you are currently reading,
 start again, out-quiet. Bounce flat
 Frail cat
 Curled out towards the shade
 Love frayed
 Whipped tight made
 Into a secure end
 Middle-aged friend
 Clean fiend scenic dump
 Dimple, just one. You read it as two.
 Xlonk cling klang Tepeyac hairy flliicc-lip slahs
 Tock tick tock tick yestermorrow tock tick
 Old year's resolution
 Tock tick
 Happy original birthday
 Negentropy, beautiful significance,
 Horrid assonance.
 Bu-bump
 Bu-bump.
 What is life but placing in order
 A cacaphonic disorderment of unisolated systems.
 Constructing not a building
 But bare beauty basked by broken coverings dyed entirely for giving
 hope in just keeping mere notions of peace quite reasonably strong to
 us villains with Xochitl yearnings actually.

It requires no talent to build on euphony
 Stunning, in a stunning manner stubbing fingers
 On bricks.
 Without mortar
 or ordered sieves of cleaved cloven cliven
 kilned quarries
 Quarries subject to scrutinization
 Upon observance that the structure
 Supersedes each other contraption

Pyramid duraring for longer time than modern moseic conventions.
conventations, excuse

This from messy instinct
Distinctly organizes new order
Crying angrily in defiance to the failing system
Not all exists in entropic process
Digressing against the bravery
Of a fledging babe's wail of triumph
Live euphonically friend. Look there, who's the friend?

‘Priests pray for enemies, but princes kill’: An Analysis of Shakespeare’s Characterization of Richard III

Erica Bauer

Introduction

As a recognized theatre nerd in high school, I was tasked with playing the role of Richard III from Shakespeare’s *Henry VI part III* for a competition piece. What initially seemed like a shallow, angry, evil, and easy character to play, I quickly realized Richard was more complex than I gave him credit for. After diving into the role, I fell in love with Richard. I still recognized him as a villain, but I empathized with him and I was determined to have others do the same.

A character known for his inhumanity, Richard III is one of Shakespeare’s most notable villains. Appearing in not one, but three plays, his wicked demeanor and outward appearance set him apart to make him a memorable character.

Shakespeare’s characterization has helped blur the lines of fact and fiction of how King Richard III is remembered. Painted as a bloodthirsty monster, I am challenging Shakespeare’s characterization of Richard. Is he the villain he is made out to be, or is he the victim of his circumstances?

Background

Richard III shows up in three of Shakespeare’s history plays. Shakespeare’s histories are based on real occurrences, so many of the events acted in the plays are loosely based on historical accuracies. However, like many creatives, Shakespeare did not hesitate to take liberties and twist the facts for the sake of entertainment.

Richard first makes his debut in Shakespeare’s *Henry VI part II*. From this play we learn that Richard is the son of the Duke of York who is in the midst of the Wars of Roses against King Henry VI (the House of Lancaster vs. the House of York). The Duke of York is keen on taking the crown for himself and Richard and his brothers, Edward and George, are

eager to help their father succeed.¹

It is in the following play, *Henry VI part III*, when Richard takes center stage. The audience gets a glimpse of the inner workings of Richard. He has a much more prominent role, and this is when his true personality and motives come to light.

In *Henry VI part III*, The Duke of York is killed. His first-born son Edward is determined to carry on for his father and plans to usurp the throne and become king. Their forces are faring significantly better than Henry VI's and Henry ends up locked in London Tower as a prisoner. Eventually Edward is crowned king of England, Richard is made the Duke of Gloucester, and George the Duke of Clarence. Richard kills Henry VI and assists his brothers in killing Henry's son. The play concludes peacefully as Edward ascends the throne and selects a wife, and Richard begins to plot for the crown.

Richard III or *The Tragedy of King Richard III* details Richard's rise and fall from power. His cunning mind aided him in acquiring the crown, but his mentality and his enemies would ultimately kill him. In this play, there are 12 deaths. Richard either directly or indirectly has a hand in killing eight of the twelve. Most notably his brother Clarence, his wife, and King Edward's two sons. The play ends with the death of Richard and Henry VII taking the throne bringing peace and prosperity to the kingdom. It is a tragic end to a tragic tale.

A Cripple, A Curse

A significant factor that sets Richard apart from other Shakespearean villains is his physical appearance. As the plays progress, we perceive that not only is Richard's mind twisted, but his body is as well. It is almost as if his mind becomes a mirror of his body.

Richard is described as having major deformities that would impact how people see him and his own mentality of himself. When speaking on his appearance Richard explains:

“[My mother] did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of unequal size”²

1. William Shakespeare, *Henry VI part II*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, Shakespeare Online, January 2022. <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/2kh4scenes.html>

2. William Shakespeare, *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, Shakespeare Online, January 2022. <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/3kh6scenes.html>
Shakespeare, 3.2.171-175.

Richard's appearance would not go unnoticed. Throughout the plays, his enemies do not hesitate to comment on his appearance notably calling him "crook-back"³ or "mis-shapen"⁴ or "mark'd to be avoided."⁵ The brazenness of the characters to acknowledge Richard's physicality would likely cause Richard to become more aware of his body. It is somewhat surprising the openness with which characters mock Richard's appearance.

The characters dig and dig at Richard always bringing the audience's attention to his body. From the time Richard is introduced to the time of his death, Richard's deformities are on full display and never hidden away. Shakespeare wanted it to be clear that Richard is vile because of the view of disability at the time.

The plays were written in the early 1590s when a physical deformity would be attributed to a curse from God himself. In an article entitled "Richard III the Staging of Disability", author Katherine Williams states, "Shakespeare's Richard III has a hunchback formation because his contemporaries would have interpreted that body as evil – [Richard] proves to be the evil figure his bodily difference suggests."⁶ The general population believed that deformity and disability determined a person's morality. Naturally, the more deformed a person is, the more evil they are. Therefore, Richard must be as twisted as his body is.

King Henry acknowledges this in *Henry VI part III*. When Richard comes to "visit" (murder) Henry in the tower, the King says:

The owl shriek'd at thy birth, -- an evil sign;
 The night crow cried, aboding luckless time;
 Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempest shook down trees;
 Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
 And, yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,
 To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,
 Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.
 Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
 To signify thou camest to bite the world.⁷

Henry indicates that Richard is a curse and should have never been born. Henry compares the misfortune at the time of Richard's birth to Richard's physicality to remind us that such a twisted person could not be born under virtuous circumstances. Richard essentially was cursed from the

3. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 2.2.96.

4 *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 2.2.136.

5. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 2.2.137.

6. Katherine S. Williams, "Richard III and the Staging of Disability," *The British Library* (March 2016) line 28-31.

7. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 4.5.44-54.

beginning and will remain that way. His body making it evident just how twisted he truly is. Along with this, it is interesting to note that, in the play, Henry appears quite religious. He often prays or shows his devotion to God.⁸ It is only fitting that one of the more religious characters would have strong opinions regarding Richard. With judgment from God there is no room for Richard to not be evil.

Into the Mind

With a gnarled body, the only option is to have a gnarled mind. With a murder streak as rich as Richard's, it is easy to write him off as conscienceless.

He is merciless in his acts. He murders without hesitation. He has no morality made plain in his declaration, "Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile."⁹ A passerby would be alarmed to hear this. Anyone would think he is a psychopath murdering merely for the thrill of it. This is the easy conclusion to make about Richard. It is uncomplicated to see him as bloodthirsty and lacking human emotions, but it is not so one-sided. It is not black and white, but a fluid grey. Thankfully, Richard's soliloquies aid us in understanding him.

Many of Shakespeare's characters speak in soliloquies to advance the plot and give the audience an idea of the character's inner turmoil. Richard's soliloquies are unique in that he has been explicitly marked as the villain, but the audience gets to witness the deepest and darkest parts of him. It testifies of his complexity and gives a voice to his inner turmoil. He is "speaking to the audience directly in soliloquies and asides, giving voice to his inner-life: his torment, his anger, his ambition, his irreverence, and his plans to deceive, betray, and kill his own family."¹⁰ He experiences moral dilemma like the rest of us.

Many of Richard's soliloquies contemplate his unlovability and loneliness. In *Henry VI part III* Richard determines:

Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;
 What other pleasure can the world afford?
 I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,
 And deck my body in gay ornaments,
 And witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.
 O miserable thought! And more unlikely
 Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns!

8. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 4.6.16-18, 42-44.

9. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 3.2.198.

10. Jeffrey R. Wilson "Richard III's Deformities." *Harvard University*, <https://wilson.fas.harvard.edu/stigma-in-shakespeare/richard-iii%E2%80%99s-deformities>.

Am I then a man to be beloved?
 O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!
 Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
 But to command, to cheque, to o'erbear such
 As are of better person than myself,
 I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown.¹¹

Richard is imagining his life if he never gets the crown. He is wondering if it is possible for him to be loved in his crooked state. He speaks of enchanting women, but he knows that cannot be his reality based off his looks. Richard is more likely to obtain twenty crowns than there is a chance of him being loved. Richard believes that being the way he is, the world affords him no love or joy. He wonders if it is possible for people to love him. He has been treated so poorly throughout his life, that he questions if he even has any worth. He is pitiful, deformed, and cursed so he rationalizes that he will only be valued if he becomes King. Even if the king is unpopular, there is still respect, power, and praise placed on the title. They may not need or like Richard, but they must need him and like him if he is King. People do not love him, but he does not need love if he has the crown.

Richard's Hierarchy of Needs

One researcher noted Richard has an “entrenched and enduring sense of unlovability a variant of shame, but one should not presume that Richard has ever consciously acknowledged or come to terms with that sense of shame.”¹² Perhaps Richard is ashamed of his deformity, but as the researcher noted, Richard may not be aware of this shame. Maybe this shame is more unconscious within Richard. Something that has become internalized because he has not gotten his belonging and love needs met. I think Richard craves love and he is trying to get his needs met, and the only way for him to do that is by pursuing the crown. He may also be doing this to compensate for his internalized shame, and becoming king is so important to him that he is willing to risk everything to do so.

Abraham Maslow is a psychologist best known for his Hierarchy of Needs which is useful in analyzing Richard. In Maslow's book, *Motivation and Personality*, he outlines the basic needs of all people. It is beneficial to imagine the needs aligned in a pyramid. At the bottom is physiological needs described as the biological requirements for survival like food, water,

11. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 3.2.162-184.

12. Melvin R. Lansky “O, Coward Conscience, How Dost Thou Afflict Me’: Ruthlessness and the Struggle Against Conscience in Richard III,” *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 35, no 1 (January 2015):126. doi:10.1080/07351690.2014.957143

rest, oxygen, etc. Next is safety needs which is shelter, security, order, freedom from fear, etc. Then there is the love and belongingness needs which is when the desire for relationships motivate behavior. Intimacy, friendship, trust, receiving/giving affection or love, and being a part of a group are a few examples. Next is the esteem needs. The esteem needs are classified in two categories: esteem for oneself or self-respect (dignity, achievement, independence) and esteem or respect from others. Finally at the top is self-actualization or one's realization of their potential and personal value.¹³

It can be assumed that Richard's physiological and safety needs are met since he is royalty and has boundless resources. After this though, it becomes more complicated.

As previously discussed, Richard's deformity automatically labeled him an outcast. He has never felt like he belonged. It is difficult to believe his parents showed any love or connection with him when his own mother comments, "He is my son, ay, and therein my shame."¹⁴ Even though he is her son, she is ashamed of him. The fact that he was born at all seems to be a shameful act his mother had to go through. It suggests that Richard's existence is inherently humiliating and dishonorable that not even his own mother could find it in herself to love him. From this we can assume Richard has never had his love and belongingness needs met.

Richard must be desperate to have his needs met, desperate for any attention whether good or bad. The sad thing is that Richard sincerely has nobody to rely on, and he knows this. He knows he is alone and that nobody loves him expressed by his statement, "I have no brother, I am like no brother; I am myself alone."¹⁵ He has no secure attachments to anyone, so he focuses his attention on something attainable. Each success he has is one step closer to victory, praise, and acceptance. If he cannot have connection, then he will have the crown.

I thus believe the soliloquies are Richard's attempt at connection. The audience has been the only people to listen to him actively and continuously. One could argue he is talking to himself, but I like to believe that through his hurt, he has reached out to the only source that will sincerely hear him. And since his base level needs are not being met, he cannot ascend on Maslow's pyramid to live a happy and fulfilled life.

13. Maslow, Abraham H, *Motivation and Personality*, Harper & Row, 1954, 35-46.

14. Shakespeare, William, *Richard III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard. Shakespeare Online. January 2022, 2.2.29. <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/3kh6scenes.html>

15. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 5.6.80,83.

Richard, Meet Freud

Richard's sentiments regarding himself are translated across plays. In his beginning speech in *Richard III*, Richard expresses:

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain.¹⁶

Because the nature of life has not been kind to him, he cannot possibly be loved and therefore must prove to be what everyone already assumes he is. His loneliness and unlovability are pushing him to justify his acts. If anything, he is blaming the nature of things. He cannot control his looks or people's perceptions of him. He can control how he reacts though, and he is eager to demonstrate just how wicked he can be. If anything, the poor treatment he receives from family, friends, and foes would be enough for him to defend his monstrous acts.

Psychologist Sigmund Freud explores this idea in his essay "Some Character-Types Met Within Psycho-Analytical Work." In the essay, Freud discusses clients he has come across one of which is "the exception". These clients feel they have suffered enough at the hands of life and will no longer submit to its will. They have no obligation or commitment to keep them from resentment.

Freud labels Richard as an exception and states, "Richard is an enormous magnification of something we find in ourselves as well. We all think we have reason to reproach Nature and our destiny for congenital and infantile disadvantages; we all demand reparation for early wounds to our narcissism, our self-love."¹⁷ Richard believes that he has been so thoroughly wronged by the world that he is determined to be the exception or "determined to play the villain." What I find particularly intriguing is that Freud's analysis suggests that perhaps we are not so different from Richard. This allows us see Richard in a new perspective.

Perhaps Richard is not as bloodthirsty as he was first deemed. He genuinely feels like he has no other choice. There is no other option. He feels so thoroughly wronged that it is only right for him to eliminate the obstacles in getting the crown. This idea is further illuminated by Richard in *Henry VI part III* when he proclaims, "Since the heavens have shaped my body so, let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it."¹⁸ Since God has cursed him, he will show just how cursed he can be.

16. *Richard III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 1.1.28-30.

17. Sigmund Freud, *Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work* edited by James Strachey (London: London the Hogarth Press, 1994), 313.

18. *Henry VI part III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 4.5.78-79.

It is also possible Richard feels a deep need to prove himself. To him, perhaps the crown is really the only option for him to have the happiness he desires. The become king, in a way, may make up for the suffering and shame he experiences. As Freud helpfully suggests above, the crown may be a reparation for the suffering and wounds inflicted on his ego.

Richard's Reconciliation

In *Richard III*, hours before Richard's defeat and death in battle, in his sleep he is visited by the ghosts of those he killed. It is a nightmare that leaves him shaken. The weight of his acts has subconsciously been eating away at him. The ghosts tell him to die in battle. When startled from his sleep, he cries out:

What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:
 Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
 Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
 Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
 Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
 Alack. I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
 That I myself have done unto myself?
 O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
 For hateful deeds committed by myself.
 I am a villain: yet I lie. I am not.
 Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.
 My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
 And every tongue brings in a several tale,
 And every tale condemns me for a villain.¹⁹

Richard is realizing the extent of what he has done. Perhaps he is seeing that the brutal acts he committed were not worth it because of the heaviness it lays on his soul.

Before he was determined to be a villain, to prove to his enemies just how wicked he can be. Here, though, he is realizing the extent of his actions. The crown has not taken his problems away. It has not made his life happier or more fulfilled because nothing can replace the love that he needs. We can see a cognitive dissonance that has Richard questioning his internal being. It is almost as if Richard does not know himself, that he does not recognize the person he has become. It seems he has entered a state of moral confusion unsure if his actions are justifiable. He is beginning to recognize the blood of those he murdered has stained his hands never to come clean. It is likely Richard's world is crumbling around him, and he seems to realize that perhaps the ghosts are right in telling him to

19. *Richard III*, Edited by Amanda Mabillard, 5.3.182-195.

die. He has committed these atrocities, and he is finally recognizing it in himself. Perhaps it is best to die if only to end his suffering.

Shakespeare's Reasoning

There could be ongoing speculation as to why Shakespeare wrote Richard the way he did. As previously discussed, during the Elizabethan era people believed disability was a judgment or curse from God. I am inclined to believe Shakespeare was a product of his times. That is, he wrote for the period he lived in. Shakespeare lived under the reign of the Tudors. Henry VII (the first king of the Tudor reign and Henry VIII father) was the one who defeated Richard at the Battle of Bosworth.²⁰ Because of this historical context it seems logical to assume Shakespeare would choose to portray Richard in such a vile way even if it was not historically accurate.

Furthermore, It is suggested that Shakespeare was influenced by Thomas More who wrote a history book about King Richard III and did not try to hide his biases. It seems the cultural climate of the time in the Tudor reign influenced Thomas More and Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard. Shakespeare's plays seem to "reinforce More's depiction of Richard as a tyrant."²¹

Despite what is recorded by More and Shakespeare, Richard it seems was not so obviously deformed. It is strongly suggested that the skeletal remains of Richard have been identified. In an article titled the "Identification of the Remains of Richard III," the authors discuss that a skeleton was found in what is presumed to have been Richard's final resting place.²² They continue to explain that through a variety of tests, the skeleton is consistent in suggesting the probability it is Richard III.²³ The age at death of the skeleton, the battle wounds, date of death, and genetic analysis are comparable to Richard.²⁴ Interestingly, the skeleton had severe scoliosis, but no evidence to suggest a humpback, limp, or crippled arm.²⁵ If the skeleton is Richard, we can understand that the portrayal of Richard by

20. "Richard III (r. 1483-1485)" *The Royal Household*, accessed November 2022, <https://www.royal.uk/richard-iii>

21. Dan Breen, "Thomas More's History of Richard III: Genre, Humanism, and Moral Education," *Studies in Philology* 107, no. 4 (2010):465-466. doi:10.1353/sip.2010.0000.

22. Turi E King, "Identification of the remains of King Richard III," *Nature Communications* 5, no. 5631 (2014): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms6631>.

23. King, "Identification of King Richard III," 2.

24. King, "Identification of King Richard III," 2,4.

25. King, "Identification of King Richard III," 2

Shakespeare is not quite accurate. Perhaps though, Shakespeare's depiction of Richard's physicality has some basis in truth. It should also be considered that there is limited and questionable evidence surrounding Richard's relations and insinuated plots against his family.

Conclusions: Villain vs Victim

Shakespeare's Richard III is undeniably an intriguing character with a complicated and dark psychology. Richard is a villain. He serves the purpose Shakespeare designed for him. However, digging deep into his innerworkings I do believe Richard is largely a product of his environment. I would argue that if the character of Richard had not been raised royal and if he received the love we all require, he would have matured into a much more mentally healthy person. Perhaps he would not feel so trapped. He was bound by his deformity, a prisoner of his life. The only escape was the crown, but with proper care he would have had the freedom he so desperately craved from the beginning.

Shakespeare, More, and many others had their agendas for portraying Richard they way they did. We cannot know for certain what went through their heads. Even though their writing caused many misconceptions of Richard. He was an easy target for them, but he makes a spectacular villain.

I must give Richard the benefit of the doubt. His transgressions cannot be easily washed away, and I don't mean to, but I sincerely believe much of Richard's actions could have been avoided. Like a plant deprived of essential nutrients, there was no way for Richard to flourish unless he is in the proper environment.

He is the villain of the story, but he is also the victim. Circumstances that were out of his control set him up against the world. Can he really be blamed for that?

Wings

Content and trigger warning for abuse and suicide.

Olivia Ann Ostler

She has beautiful wings
Full of white feathers
Unlike mine, which were mostly gone
Every day my father would pull out another feather
But her parents would brush hers at night
They would always make sure her wings were
Absolutely perfect
Even though her eyes were sad and dull
Her wings her bright
Until one day when she decided to play with the other children
They got her wings all dirty
For they kept touching them
As they were jealous and envious of their beauty
When I saw her the next day
Her wings were clean again
As if nothing had happened
But she has bruises on her arms and eyes duller
She started crying when the other kids tried to touch her wings
Muttering that they would hurt her
That her wings set her apart
I guess that is why I found her like that, that day
Wings wrapped around her neck
Hanging from that tree
Eyes finally seeming peaceful but still empty



Overtaken

Rachel Crane

This piece is a part of a series I did pertaining to my relationship with nature. *Overtaken* is multimedia piece exploring my mental health and wanting to return back to the earth. I have found that being in nature sways my inner demons, but also feeling suffocated because of the inability to take care of myself at times.

a story's pieces

Trinity Johnson Mendoza

misty mornings
shifting shelves
clattering coins
feisty foxes

twisting vines
fire gods and
repeating patterns
that end never

dragons, fairies
things that go
bump in the
deep dark night

libraries
babylon
south china
southern villages

and an empty house in asteria

we tell tales bound
to our very souls
that speak to our
darkest wonders;

dragons that burn
libraries that lie

houses with one person
foxes that are human.

why do we tell
such tales of
fear and shock
when all that is

seems to say
they don't exist
there is no need
to fear

the edges of reality?

perhaps we know
that reality
is but a breath
removed from

the stories we whisper
in the darkness
when night comes
to call our fears;

that all is not
all it seems
and we are not
all we are

that all that lies
twixt us and
haunted realms
where lies live

are the stories that we tell.



I'd rather do art at home than go to Billie Eilish
alone

Jake Allen

Sometimes we feel so many things all at once. Sometimes we feel hurt. Sometimes we feel anger. Sometimes we feel upset. Sometimes we feel sad. Sometimes we feel grief. Sometimes we don't know what we feel. Sometimes all we want to feel is release. And Sometimes to find that release we have to turn to oddly conventional sources.

In the wake of feeling these things, I turned to those oddly conventional sources. In the wake of those feelings, I turned to the pitter-patter of paint. The swish of brushstrokes. The fury of movement in the dark as I, a lone figure, on a cold March night, danced about a canvas. Throwing my grief, my pain, my anguish at the ground. Slicing, dragging, and pouring out my not-so-humble frustrations in the form of colors that once meant so much to me.

You never mentioned to me that you wanted to go. Not even after I had expressed for months how badly I wished to. It's like you knew all along. That by then we'd be lost. That our paths would be split. It almost seems preemptive. It almost seems premeditated. And while I'll never truly know the reasoning how big or small, the damage was done enough. Why you went is beyond me. And why you went alone is, even more, a mystery. I would have loved to go with you. Perhaps on some small chance, you hoped that I would have gone alone only to see you there. So that for some small moment we would have been together. And not have been lonely. Perhaps on the other side of things, you simply wished to spite me. To kick me while I was down. To be the one to shovel the dirt into the grave that you originally put me in. Maybe. But it doesn't matter now. It doesn't matter what you intended or what you hoped to accomplish. It doesn't matter what you wanted then, and it doesn't matter what you want now. Because, you know, after all, is said and done, I'd rather do art at home than go to Billie Eilish alone.

House Poem 3

Garth Talbot

Who can buy back childhood
Who can relive a dream
Who can roll the time back
Or unmelted dropped ice cream?

There's a field back there
In the back of my mind
And a cluttered basement yet unfinished
There are summer days
And rainy laughs
And anthills I diminished

With three small girls
Whom I adored
And should have treated better
Now grown sisters
Who call for help
And I listen and I try to help and I can't stop worrying and I know
they deserve the world at their fingertips at a fever pitch I can't stop-
stopstop thinking of them as children

It's a strange world
That aches for an old bike wreck
An old injury
Or regressed reality
In order to return to the impossible
The happy childhood
My happy childhood I could have cherished better if I hadn't been

worried about my parents' financials and my existentialism and eventually girls at school and how to get into Harvard which I didn't.

Who can auction memory
Who can write a world
Who can tell of stars unmapped
Or of paper plans unfurled?

There are houses there
Behind the house
With a basement emptied in eviction
There are summer days
With the most beautiful rains
At least, that's my conviction.



Normal Otters

David Blanchard

The two black and white artworks which have been published here were designed with inspiration from using the Wombo Art AI image generator, and the Sky Ladder by Cai Guo-Qiang. Much of my recent work harkens back to the surrealist movement and considers the ways in which its methods for thinking about and creating art can be used for collective as well as personal expression and exploration.

Normal Otters holds more collective expression within it through the use of Wombo Art since such image generators utilize photos by many different authors as data to find and iterate on certain patterns. In making this artwork, I fed Wombo Art the word prompt “Otters have such sweet little hands,” and I used the image it created as a basis for the design of the print with some intentional alterations.

Chasing Danger

Hannah Luker

The dull yet familiar rumbling sent a wave of terror through her body. Chase's panicked voice from the estate behind her echoed faintly in the back of her mind but was drowned out by her self-recrimination. Her eyes stung with tears as she forced herself to move towards the destruction. It was all her fault. If she had just stayed home like her parents had asked, this wouldn't have happened. Now she carried some of the Untouchable's most incriminating secrets with her. Obviously, they would do anything to keep them secret.

Briannah started running down the hill faster once she saw the plume of smoke billowing up in the sky, cresting the treetops like a cloud of death. Her heart jumped into her throat as she glimpsed the flames through the trees, the smell of burning wood and fabric tainting the air the nearer she got to her home. All her hopes fixated on the chance that they had made it out alive, that anyone had made it out alive.

Just feet from the forest's edge, her traitorous lungs ran out of breath, and she stopped, clutching the trunk of a tree to keep herself upright. Although the world spun and her heart pounded loudly in her ears, it wasn't enough to keep her from making out the familiar purring of the Jaguar's engine. The man from the meeting, still in his inconspicuous business suit, sat in the passenger seat and waved to the driver. They sped down the road, veering off the typical route and navigating the maintenance roads to avoid suspicion. She knew what would happen next. They would circle back to her home after the authorities notified "them" of what happened. They would show up acting distraught and expressing concern when the authorities add that there were only two bodies. There was still a surviving family member. By the night's end they would have people out and looking for her. This is what her family had feared would happen if, once, they decided to cut ties with the Untouchables. What they knew could happen if they tried to run . . .

"Briannah? Are you okay?"

Briannah looked up, the reality of where she was slowly coming back

to her. She inhaled deeply and gradually took in the sights and smells around her. The colorful, blinking lights strung around the café patio created an ideal holiday setting for all audiences. Every table brimmed with people, primarily couples, enjoying hot drinks to ward off the early December chill in the late afternoon air. And the smell of lattes, cappuccinos, and hot chocolate all mingled with the tantalizing smells of baked goods. She felt the warmth of her own cup in her hands, which contrasted against the biting chill that nipped at her nose. She shivered and held tighter to her steamy beverage, looking around at the other café patrons as they went about their own business, unawares of Briannah's inner turmoil. Even her own dining companion wasn't aware of the storm beneath Briannah's passive exterior.

"Briannah?"

Looking at her dining companion, Briannah had to remember exactly *why* they were there together. Thanks to her co-worker Alice's constant meddling into her dating life, Briannah was sitting across from this supermodel of a man with flawless features and perfect hair. Alice had insisted a blind date would do Briannah's social life wonders, but springing an introvert into a date with a clearly extroverted man was a recipe for disaster. Already, she could read a clear confusion and slight worry to his expression, reminding her that people weren't accustomed to her . . . episodes.

Taking a moment to sip at her still-warm hot cocoa, Briannah found the man's name among the scattered memories and information strewn about her mind. Setting down her cup, she took a breath.

"Paul," she started gently. "Listen, I'm sure you're a great guy, but I'm really not looking at starting any sort of relationship right now."

Paul gave a slight nod and rubbed the back of his neck. "I wondered if that was the case."

Briannah offered a wan smile as his eyes met hers. "Alice set up this date to get me out of the house, but I'm just not ready. I hope you understand."

Standing, Paul hummed, and Briannah stood, too. "I understand completely," he said empathetically. "I've been there too."

Briannah nodded, biting her tongue. *He hasn't been where I am. No one has . . . But, I guess it's the sentiment that counts.*

Paul offered his hand and Briannah took it, giving it a firm shake before Paul gave her a winning smile, pinning her with a look that emphasized his concern. "You take care of yourself," he added, cocking a brow. "And feel free to call me if you want to take another swing at this date." Once Briannah expressed her thanks, Paul left, having paid for their little

dessert at the onset of the evening's date.

Briannah sat once more in her seat, baffled that she had even allowed herself to be dragged into coming here. Not only did she run the risk of the Untouchables seeing her, she was playing a dangerous game with her heart. By entertaining the thought that she could be like any other twenty-two-year-old woman, she was only setting herself up for serious pain, along with a cruel jolt back to her terrifying reality. Plus, she knew that once she let someone special into her life, she would have to tell them everything. Disclosing everything would place them in serious danger . . .

She absently traced her finger around the lip of her mug, starting to entertain the notion of another move. Salt Lake was obscure enough, but if the Untouchables activated the cell they had out of Las Vegas (which she wasn't supposed to know about), then she would be found sooner rather than later. Maybe she should move to Mendon or another, smaller town. She rose from her spot, abandoning her half-finished hot chocolate and ready to head back to her apartment, when the notes of *Entertainer* signaled an incoming call. Briannah let out a breath and sat once more, figuring it was her boss on the other end. Normally she would be able to tell by the caller ID, but she never entered numbers into her contacts or let the caller ID show—she didn't want to risk her phone being taken and subsequently giving a name and means to trace those people. No, instead, she had spent several hours memorizing phone numbers. However, her boss and Alice both had similar numbers, so at this point it was a shot in the dark. Not wanting to ignore it and face the potential ire of her employer, she accepted the call.

"Jessie?" she said when she answered.

"Jessie? It's Alice, you silly goose!"

Of course it was.

"Right, sorry. You and Jessie have similar numbers."

"I still don't understand why you refuse to add us to your contacts," Alice said, her voice taking on a bemused tone. "It's been well over a year that we've worked together, and going off phone numbers can't be easy. I mean, I've only ever memorized one number, back in kindergarten, and that was my mother's. You know, it was one of those things they teach in case you get lost or separated from her . . ."

Alice kept rambling on, and Briannah pinched the bridge of her nose, counting down from ten before cutting Alice off.

"Alice, recenter," she said, attempting to get her coworker back on track. "What did you call me for?"

"Oh!" Alice gave a laugh. "Silly me! I got on a tangent again and

forgot my head somewhere between there and here! I was just calling to ask you about Paul.”

Of course, she was.

“He was nice, but it didn’t work out.” Briannah had to quickly add the last part, knowing that if she didn’t, Alice would immediately start planning her wedding. For some odd reason, Alice had this fixation on getting Briannah hitched, convinced that if she didn’t she would become a “spinster.” Briannah found the term archaic, and preferred calling herself a “declared bachelorette.” After all, she was only twenty-two. Marriage could still be in the cards someday. For now she was satisfied to wait, watch, and politely scare away the dates Alice got her. Well, okay. Not *satisfied*. But she pretended to be because, if she didn’t, she would break. And she was close enough to that as it was. She couldn’t run if she was broken.

“Bria!” Alice whined. “You say that about every guy! Antonio, Carter, Kevin, now Paul! Why must you be so hard to please?”

“Alice, I’m not looking for a relationship right now,” Briannah calmly insisted. “So please, stop setting me up on dates.”

Briannah watched as a group of young ladies passed by the café, half-heartedly listening as Alice insisted, “You can’t be a spinster forever!”

“Bachelorette,” Briannah corrected. “And that’s not up to you, Alice. In fact, the next date you arrange, I’m not going. I am putting my foot down.”

She could hear Alice huff before saying, “Fine. *I* won’t arrange them anymore, Miss *Bachelorette*.”

Briannah paused. Why didn’t she like the way Alice said that? There was relative silence for two beats before Briannah finally asked, “What do you mean you won’t?”

She could hear Alice covering up a giggle with a cough. “Nothing. I meant just that.”

The mischief in Alice’s tone was overwhelming. Briannah felt a chill and pulled her coat tighter around her shoulders, finally standing and walking away from her little table. Once she was sufficiently away from the few other patrons, she lowered her voice and repeated, “Alice. What do you mean *you* won’t?”

There was more stifled giggling before Alice burst, her impish laughs coming across in a way that caused absolute dread to settle in Briannah’s stomach. Once Alice had regained some form of composure, she finally came out with it. “I got you a profile on *Soulmate Seekers!* Surprise!”

Briannah’s whole world seemed to freeze. She stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, the only sound being the passing cars and her own

heartbeat thumping double-time in her chest. She was surprised alright. And absolutely *mortified*. Not only had Alice crossed a very clear line, but she had also put Briannah in danger. The whole reason Briannah stayed off personal and social media sites was because The Untouchables flagged them to put out an alert the moment a woman matching Briannah appeared. She knew because, in a fit of loneliness and paranoia two years earlier, she had tested The Untouchables' reach. She made a profile with her own physical description, under a pseudonym, and posted it. Sure enough, minutes after the profile was up, a big, black van arrived, and Briannah was forced to find a clever hiding place to wait them out. Now a profile was out there with her real name, real description, and real information. She took a moment to process this, and when she did, she started to run down the street.

"How could you do that?" she asked Alice, her voice harsh as it broke the silence. "You didn't even ask if it was okay!"

Alice stammered before answering, "You never said I couldn't! I mean, no one has ever been terribly cross with me about it before. Of course there was this one time . . ."

"Alice! Focus!" Briannah came to a crosswalk and anxiously hit the button, over and over again. "What did you put on the profile?"

"Well, just the standard stuff?" She seemed unsure as she spoke, and Briannah's anxiety piqued. "Uh, appearance, age, occupation, preferences, and city of residence."

The pedestrian signal turned white, and the little person indicated Briannah could cross. She dashed across the street, nerves gnawing at her stomach. "Where did you make the profile?" she pressed. If Alice had made it off her personal computer, she could be in deep trouble. The Untouchables could obviously monitor the origins of the profile, and if they had done that with this . . .

Alice answered, confused. "At my apartment on my computer . . . Why?"

Briannah clenched her jaw. "Alice, get out of there. Now. Get far away from your place. Leave your computer, take only the bare necessities, and stay with your parents in Philly for a few weeks."

"Bria, what's going on?" Now Alice sounded panicked. "You're starting to scare me."

"This is what happens when you don't leave well enough alone, Alice. Just do what I say, please. Get out of there."

Briannah could see her apartment just a block or two away, and before Alice could protest, Briannah hung up. Stuffing her phone in her

pocket, Briannah took off down the sidewalk at a sprint. She could hear the grumbling of a car's engine coming towards her as she approached the final street before her apartment complex. She tuned out the sound of the oncoming vehicle. The stop sign was just ahead. They would stop and let her pass. As she stepped onto the asphalt, however, she could hear the roar of the engine getting louder, and as she turned her head, her eyes widened. A large, black truck was barreling towards her at breakneck speed, no intention of stopping. Her feet felt frozen in place, and though she opened her mouth, no sound escaped her lips. The headlights became level with her eyes, and she raised her arms to shield herself from the blinding light. A split second later, the asphalt came up to meet her, and her breath rushed from her lungs.

* * *

Chase Shephard walked into his supervisor's office, anxious to hear what his next assignment was. The agency's rumor mill had started to chatter about the Untouchables resurfacing, something Chase had been anticipating for nearly three years now. He had been itching for the chance to bring down that group of corrupted dignitaries ever since they murdered the family that had all but adopted him. As he stood waiting, he couldn't suppress the hopes that maybe today was the day.

Agent Brighton walked in, and Chase stood just a bit taller. "Good afternoon, sir," he greeted. "I was told you wished to speak with me."

Brighton gave a slight nod, sitting in his wingback chair and motioning for Chase to sit as well. "Yes, Shephard. Go ahead and take a seat, then we can discuss your next assignment."

Chase did as he was told, making sure not to come off overly excited.

A moment or two passed and Chase cleared his throat, earning a raised eyebrow from Agent Brighton. He took that as an invitation and attempted to make some small talk.

"So, any plans for your kids' winter break?" he asked. "Any skiing or snow activities?"

A frown tugged at Brighton's lips as he riffled through the papers on his desk. "First of all, Agent, that's classified. Second, this is Arizona, not Park City."

Chase felt an embarrassed flush heating his neck and nodded. "Right. Sorry, Sir."

Brighton finally produced a rather thick file and extended it to Chase.

"Well, congratulations, Agent Shephard," he said as Chase took the file. "You've got your wish."

Chase's eyes widened, forgetting all previous embarrassment as he flipped open the file, scanning the contents. The rumors were true. The Untouchables had recently shown movement, and it was on . . .

"A dating site?" Chase looked up from the file, befuddled. "Why a dating site?"

"We think there is a chance a member of the Allard family survived the explosion and is now somewhere within the continental United States. You'll find a list of names and profiles that were posted within an hour of the alert."

Chase pulled the list out and scanned the names. He stopped after the third name, having to reread it. *Briannah Allard*. He stood from his seat, looking to Agent Brighton. "I need to get to Salt Lake City."

"You already have your person?" Brighton asked in slight surprise.

Chase nodded. "I'll double check, but I'm positive this is the woman."

Humming, Brighton picked up his office phone and told the person on the other end to get the chopper ready. Once he hung up, he handed Chase a slip of paper with an address printed on it, the initials B.A. above the coordinates. "When you get there, I suggest you head straight to this address. It was her last documented place of residence with the local DMV."

Chase took the paper and nodded. "Thanks. I'll be back in a few days. Hopefully I'll have saved a damsel and taken down an international crime organization by then."

Brighton gave a slight nod then looked at something on his computer, signaling Chase it was time to head out. Before heading to the helipad, he swung by his desk, one quick check confirming he had the right woman—a more fatigued, more brunette version of Briannah. Nonetheless, she was still his Briannah. He had dropped her off on that fateful day three years ago. Now, here she was. With this knowledge, he snagged his emergency duffle bag from beneath his desk and jogged to the helipad, sparing no time when getting in. Being stationed in Flagstaff, Arizona, it would take him a few hours to get to Salt Lake, but hopefully he could convince the pilot to get there in two or less. Slipping on his headset, he gave the pilot the okay, and they were off the ground.

* * *

For the duration of his flight, Chase read through the thick case file he had been given. The Untouchables had long evaded the law, extending their reach far beyond their countries borders. They funded acts of terrorism all across Europe and America and had recently been suspected

of planting candidates of their own into various elections. It seemed they were making their way closer and closer to a final endgame. One where dignitaries, diplomats, and billionaires had sole power on an international scale.

Chase became engrossed in the information on the pages. When the pilot's voice finally told him they were set to land, he quickly organized the papers and stowed them away, jumping out of the chopper moments after landing on the helipad. He made his way off the building and down the street, passing the Christmas displays in the storefront windows as he feverishly scanned the numbers on the buildings he passed. It was like an annoyingly long game of hide-and-seek.

Huh . . .

Well, that's ironic. Briannah was always so quick to betray her position when we were playing as children. Why'd she choose now to get good at it?

After over an hour of searching, Chase was once more attempting to read the address on the slip of paper in the dying light of the evening . . . until a truck went screaming up the street beside him. In an instant, Chase took in his surroundings. He sprang into action and dropped his duffel, taking off towards the woman who was set to be right in the path of the oncoming vehicle. She stepped onto the pavement, seemingly unaware of the impending danger. He yelled, but the roar of the engine drowned his voice out. He pushed himself harder. One step, then another. Asphalt met the soles of his shoes. The woman froze like a deer in headlights. He rammed into her, sending both of them sprawling to the ground as the truck whirred past. Chase heard the truck's brakes squeal, and he pushed himself up, glancing back. The driver had swerved around the corner, leaving a trail of tire marks in their wake. With the speed of the approach and their inability to stop, Chase had little doubt that this was a premeditated hit. It was more than likely they would return.

"Wh . . ." The woman beneath him looked at him, dazed. He cringed and stood, taking her hand and helping her to her feet.

"I'm so sorry, I saw that guy barreling towards you and the fight instincts ignited in my brain, so I . . ." He trailed off as he looked closer at the woman in front of him. She looked down, but he caught a glimpse of her baby blue eyes before she did . . . along with a suspiciously familiar V-shaped scar beside her right eye.

Briannah Allard.

She shakily brushed herself off, convulsively swallowing. "It's all right." She avoided meeting his gaze and added, "I should have watched where I was walking."

Chase gave a slight nod, putting his hand on the small of her back. Evidently, she had yet to recognize him. “It happens. Now, let’s get you off the road before another maniacal driver decides to try and run you down.”

Briannah agreed then walked with him onto the sidewalk. Once she was safely on cement, she looked at him. Her eyes widened in recognition, and she gaped, quickly closing her mouth and looking away.

“Briannah,” Chase started. “We—”

“You have to go, Chase.” Briannah finally looked Chase in the eye, her expression adamant. “That brush with death was only the beginning. It’s not safe to be around me. I’m dangerous.”

Raising a brow, Chase looked around and then took Briannah’s hand, leading her down the sidewalk. She put up resistance at first, but soon she cooperated, no doubt realizing Chase was taking her farther away from the threat. Leading her around a corner and down a side street he said, “Bri, I chased you down *because* you’re dangerous. You’re practically a danger magnet. Plus, chasing you gives us the chance to take down the Untouchables.”

She seemed to grapple for a response. “Why?”

He glanced back at her. “Let’s just say that, with my occupation, we’re very concerned with matters of espionage and international security.”

Briannah gave a slight sigh, and Chase paused, turning to face her. She pulled her hand from his, positioning both hands on her hips. “I should have known that would be a part of your profession. You’ve always been innately nosy.”

Chase’s lips twitched, stifling a smile, and he gave a slight shrug when saying, “Being nosy does have its perks.”

Briannah was ready to retort with a snappy remark when Chase’s gaze fixated on the roof of a building. She tried to follow his gaze, but, before she could, he shoved her onto the sidewalk, forcing her to take cover behind the protruding cement steps of the industrial building beside them. A bullet impacted the wall right where Briannah had been standing, and Chase pulled out a gun, shooting towards the source of the gunfire. He ducked behind the same steps Briannah was using as cover just as another shot impacted the sidewalk he had vacated. Tension radiated from Chase, and he looked down at Briannah, seeing a mixture of panic and acceptance in her gaze. The question was, acceptance of what? Her ever-present danger? Chase’s assistance?

Another bullet impacted the building right over Chase’s head, and Briannah shrunk back. Chase tried to stoop lower, peeking over the steps long enough to catch a glimpse of a gun barrel glistening in the rays of

the rising moon. He sat back down into a crouch and took a deep breath, knowing he had to think logically about this. Setting aside the fact he was protecting Briannah, he worked through what he would do if this was a training simulation. First, he needed to know his surroundings. He glanced around, taking in every pertinent detail he could. Just a few feet to their left was the entrance to an alleyway. There had to be some sort of door leading into the bakery next to it. Passing cars were nonexistent, which was uncommon for a city like Salt Lake. So, the Untouchables must have barricaded the streets. With the layout scouted, Chase needed an idea of how long they had between shots, which would help him know how quickly they had to move. Then, he needed to find a place that offered more protection than these stone steps. Lastly, he needed to eliminate the threat, which meant he had to find a way to get close range.

The last part made him unnaturally nervous. Typically, close combat with firearms didn't frighten him, but as he looked down into Briannah's eyes, he knew this was a different situation. He couldn't leave her to the mercy of the Untouchables. Not when they had murdered her family so shamelessly.

A steely resolve seeped through him, and he looked down into Briannah's eyes. The emotional tumult he saw there was surprising and intriguing all at once. He reached down and gently took her hand, giving it a reassuring squeeze before saying, "When I tell you to run, I want you to run."

Briannah blinked twice, as if in a stupor. "What?" she asked. "But they'll—"

"I won't let anything happen to you," he said, interrupting her. "I'll distract them long enough for you to duck into that alleyway over there. When you do, find the nearest door and go in."

"But what if it's locked?" she insisted.

Chase pulled something from his pocket and pressed it into Briannah's palm, closing her fingers over it. "Use this. It should work, but if it doesn't, you're clever enough that you'll figure out a way to keep out of sight until I can get there."

Briannah looked down at her hand, her slim fingers tightly clutching the small tool Chase had given her. Chase ached to take her from this situation, to snap his fingers and make all the bad things in Briannah's life vanish. He knew, though, that life refused to work that way, so he had to be satisfied that he was here now, that he would help her the best he could.

"Bri, you ready?" he asked her softly.

Briannah gave a hesitant nod and Chase poked his head above the

stairs, taking a moment to level his gun before letting off a shot in the direction he had seen the sniper barrel's gleaming. The response was immediate, with an answering shot embedding in the wall just above Chase's head. He gave a quiet, "Now!" and Briannah scrambled to her feet, rushing across the street. A bullet impacted the pavement just shy of her heel, and Chase shot again, praying they would be more determined to be rid of him than Bri.

* * *

Briannah squeaked in surprise the moment the bullet hit the ground behind her. This was all far too close. She tried to cover her head with her arms, as if she was merely facing a bout of hail rather than deadly gunfire. The mouth of the alleyway beckoned her further, and she threw herself into its safe enclosure just as a bullet hit the brickwork. She leaned against the interior wall and allowed a shuddering sigh to escape, resting a moment before she opened her hand to see what exactly Chase had given her. To her surprise, she saw the same lock-pick tool that Chase had used years ago to teach her the rather questionable skills of a thief. The memory made her smile. Once she found the cool metal of a door, she slipped the tool into the lock. Her muscle memory got to work, guiding her wrist in the movements she learned ages ago. She poked around for a moment, and, after a bit of finagling, the lock gave way. She tugged the door open, slipping into a dark room. She gave a slight laugh and looked around her, noting the sacks of flour and yeast visible from the glow of the oven clock beside her. She must have slipped into the back room of a bakery.

Briannah started for the bakery's main portion but froze in the darkness, hearing the door open and close behind her. She heard labored breathing. Chills ran up her spine.

"Bri?"

The tension left her shoulders as Briannah recognized the voice and turned towards it. "Chase," she whispered. "Are you alright?"

She heard him step closer. "Yeah. I got grazed but I'll be all right. I—"

There was a crash just behind Briannah and she let out a startled scream. She felt Chase touch her arm and sensed his presence moving into place in front of her. There was a low chuckle and Chase fired his gun, his arm coming back and brushing Briannah's shoulder from the recoil. The stark contrast between the sound of the firing gun and the ensuing silence made her ears ring.

She allowed herself to relax and relish in Chase's familiar presence for a moment, then there was a sickening thud. Chase groaned, and she felt

his assuring presence abruptly fall away, leaving her feeling exposed to any outside danger. The embers of a lit cigarette floated in the darkness, and she involuntarily coughed at the repugnant odor.

“You’re a hard mouse to catch, Allard,” a familiar male voice chided in a raspy whisper. Heavy footsteps made their way towards her; the cool metal of a gun brushed by her face. “But now, you’ve got no way out.”

The headlights of a car passed by the front of the store, casting a sliver of light onto her assailant’s face. The sliver was enough to cause her to tremble as she realized where she knew him from.

The man in the Jaguar. The reason she had been chasing danger in the first place . . .

Her uncle. The man poised to protect the Untouchables’ secrets at any personal cost.



The Midnight Sun

Bridger Fogg

I've always loved building with Legos and have been building ships since my first Lego set. Over the summer I wanted to push my building skills and combine more engineering into my creations. *The Midnight Swan* is what came from my efforts.

The Midnight Swan is a massive Lego Airship measuring 34" from bow to stern, 12" from side to side (not counting the extra 12" the oars add), and 16" tall. Incorporating engineering into it, I built mechanical elements into the hold of the ship. When the ship is pushed forward the oars row themselves, the guns turn and the propeller spins. The steering wheel and rudder are also functional. It is the most ambitious creation I have ever attempted and as such, I decided to use it to try to achieve my lifelong dream of becoming a designer for the Lego company. To do this I have submitted my creation to the Lego Ideas initiative. Lego Ideas is a place where Lego fans can submit their own creations. If their creation achieves 10,000 supporters, it will be evaluated and published as a real set produced and sold by the Lego company.

I have submitted *The Midnight Swan* to Lego Ideas, and it would mean the world to me if you took the time to follow the QR code below to its Ideas page and give it your support! More information on the building and design process as well as more pictures are available on The Lego Ideas page.





Élet

Jake Allen

The Providence Collection titled here as *Élet* (the Hungarian word for Life) is a unique collection of icons and symbols of a wide variety. While the subject matter themselves is diverse they do follow a collective theme. Every icon or symbol depicted here is pulled directly from the icons, symbols, and omens of the life of the artist. Each icon is a repeating theme or an object of profound importance, something of a pattern for the artist, tropes you could say, of various degrees. Together these symbols come together to weave an understanding of the natural, the unnatural, and the supernatural. They are the culmination of all that is real and surreal in the life of the artist. Beyond words there is no greater understanding of the life of the artist than that is presented here. Starting at the top going from left to right the title of each icon is: Foresight, Esteem, Providence, Keen, Obscure, Resolve, Reign, Lift, Jilt, Romantic, Decay, Augury, Largesse, Salvific, and Vestige. The artist implores the viewer to dive deeper; thinking consciously of the symbols, words, and definitions. For those who do so are rewarded with not only a greater understanding of the graphic arts but a greater understanding of the human experience.

Both and One: Yin and Yang in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*

Dannalee Mosteller

All phenomena in the universe are the interplay of *yin* and *yang*. [. . .] *Yang* alone cannot produce; *yin* alone cannot grow. When *yang* reaches its peak, it reverts to *yin* and vice versa.”¹ Yin and yang are like two sides of one coin—complementary, yet opposing forces that lead to the balance of the universe. Without both, there is no balance. This ancient Chinese philosophy is heavily incorporated into the culture of the alien planet Gethen in Ursula K. Le Guin’s science fiction novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. In reading Le Guin’s novel, scholars and readers alike have found striking connections between the novel and the dualistic concept of yin and yang. In fact, this Taoist principle is directly mentioned in a conversation held between the two main protagonists.² In this paper, I will demonstrate how Le Guin creates a world where the balance of yin and yang is vital in her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*.

As stated above, all phenomena are the interplay of yin and yang. If yin and yang play a part in the balance of the universe, it stands to reason that any planet or culture in the universe will have elements of yin and yang; however, what makes Le Guin’s world of Gethen notable is the explicit illustrations of the Taoist principle. Many scholars have explored yin and yang, as well as other Taoist influences, in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, but none have presented the novel exclusively through the lens of yin and yang. Indeed, I will explore how Le Guin’s novel reflects the concept of yin and yang. Many elements of this concept are found throughout the novel, including the ever-prominent imagery of light and dark, in the characters and their cultures, and in the environment and its attributes. *The Left*

1. Chi Yu, quoted in Anthony Carty, Anqui Yu, and Jun Wang, “Black and White versus Yin and Yang,” *Law & Literature* 31, no. 2 (2019): 277–288, p. 281, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1535685x.2018.1550969>.

2. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (New York: Ace, 1969), 287.

Hand of Darkness is a brilliant representation of the dynamic balance between yin and yang and I want to help readers appreciate this aspect.

The Left Hand of Darkness is about a man from Terra (Earth) engaged in a political mission on the planet Gethen, known to the Terrans as Winter. As a Terran and the Envoy of a coalition of planets called the Ekumen, Genly Ai begins his mission unfamiliar with Gethenian culture. His journey takes him through two nations, the monarchical Karhide and the bureaucratic Orgoreyn. Genly acts as a historian by compiling his narration through his own entries, as well as a collection of myths, excerpts from a local Gethenian's journal, and reports from Ekumenian investigators. Christine Cornell describes Genly's own narrative in the context of its relationship to the reader, "[Genly] begins his narration as a reflection on the past but quickly shifts to giving us an impression of events as if in the present; consequently, the reader responds to Genly's attitudes and assumptions as they are revealed moment by moment."³ Essentially, Genly's narration is retrospective, but it introduces the story in a way that allows readers to experience the events as though they are themselves participating in it. This narration allows readers to experience the story with Genly, as though he is experiencing each moment for the first time even though it was written retrospectively.

Genly is from Earth, and his culture mirrors our own western society, which views opposing forces as being mutually exclusive. On Genly's world, you are either a man *or* a woman. On Gethen, the inhabitants are androgynous for most of their lives, only being assigned a gender for a few days each month, which will be elaborated upon later. It is for this reason that, when faced with a world where gender roles play no part and biological sex plays only a minimal role, Genly is forced to accept a shift in his worldview. It is not until he connects the Terran concept of yin-yang to the surrounding cultures that he begins understanding the dual nature of Gethenians. Genly's greatest ally is a Gethenian named Estraven, who sacrifices himself for the sake of Genly's task to unite the worlds. It takes a dangerous journey across the Ice to escape imprisonment before Genly learns to trust his Gethenian companion and they learn to love one another. It is through his blooming friendship with Estraven that Genly is able to gain a greater understanding of this unfamiliar world. Moreover, Genly's love and trust in Estraven allows him to extend that trust to all Gethenians.

3. Christine Cornell, "The Interpretive Journey in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*," *Extrapolation* 42, no. 4 (2001): 317–27, p. 323, <https://doi.org/10.3828/extr.2001.42.4.317>.

In order to understand the argument being made, it is important to give a brief explanation of some of the main tenets of Taoism. The Tao, or the Dao, is an ancient Chinese word that translates roughly to “the way.” Taoism is not a religion in the traditional sense. Taoism is the belief in the Tao, or the way. It is a way of understanding the universe. Qingqi Wei explains, “In its simplest term, the Dao precedes, begets, and pervades everything as the source, pattern, and substance, and thus all beings including humans exist and behave in a way that conforms to the omnipresent Dao.”⁴ According to this principle of Taoism, the Tao is the pattern for all things. One of the most well-known tenets of Taoism is the dualistic concept of yin and yang. To further elaborate on this idea Carty describes the basic principles of yin and yang: “Yin and yang are not concrete objects such as a table or a chair, but properties or qualities (attributes) of things. Starting with yang and yin, the Chinese classify almost all objects or attributes into pairs of dipoles, such as heaven–earth, sun–moon, man–woman.”⁵ In essence, yin and yang are representative of the complementarity of the masculine and feminine elements of an object. The Chinese consider the masculine element to be active, and the feminine element to be passive. Indeed, yin and yang symbolize opposing but complementary forces. These key concepts of the Tao and yin and yang are essential for understanding the implications of dualism that are presented in this paper.

A number of scholars focus on Ursula K. Le Guin’s Taoist influences and their impact on her novels, including Douglas Barbour⁶ and Derance Filho⁷. Other scholars rely more on the dualistic pairings of *The Left Hand of Darkness*. In his article, Barbour focuses on the themes of light and dark found throughout all of Le Guin’s novels that make up the Hainish Cycle—including *The Left Hand of Darkness*—and their connection to yin and yang. Regarding the imagery of Le Guin’s works, Barbour emphasizes, “This dance of shadows and light is the proper image for their interplay in all Le Guin’s work: both the light and the dark are necessary if any pattern is to emerge from the chaos.”⁸ Along the same lines, David Lake is inter-

4. Qingqi Wei, “Toward a Holistic EcoFeminism: A Chinese Perspective,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 55, no. 4 (2018): 773–86, p. 774, <https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.55.4.0773>.

5. Carty, Yu, and Wang, “Black and White versus Yin and Yang,” 279.

6. Douglas Barbour, “Wholeness and Balance in the Hainish Novels of Ursula K. Le Guin,” *Science Fiction Studies* 1, no. 3 (April 1974): 164–73, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4238858>.

7. Derance A. Rolim Filho, “The Taoist Myths of Winter: Mythopoesis in *The Left Hand of Darkness*,” *Mythlore* 39, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2021): 49–63.

8. Barbour, “Wholeness and Balance,” 165.

ested in pairings found in the novel, but his pairing of choice is warm and cold and he connects them to the nations of Karhide and Orgoreyn.⁹ While Barbour is interested in the Taoist influences on Le Guin's works, Filho dedicates his entire article to the elements of Taoism in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Each of these authors identify elements of yin and yang throughout the novel, which appears to be a deliberate choice made by Le Guin. The connection to the well-known Taoist principle thus helps scholars and readers of the novel appreciate the importance of yin and yang in the novel.

As for research that does not pertain directly to the novel, Anthony Carty and his co-authors, as well as Qingqi Wei are especially important. Carty and his colleagues provide us context for the integration of Western and Eastern thought, which is important for understanding yin and yang, as well as other Taoist principles. They explain, "*Yin* and *yang* are two opposing but complementary forces that make up one unity, and the balance and ultimate harmony of such forces is named the *Tao*."¹⁰ Hence, the authors imply that forces can be both oppositional and complementary, an idea whose importance we will see later. Wei, on the other hand, focuses on holistic ecofeminism and how it integrates with Chinese thought. Wei names Ursula K. Le Guin as an ecofeminist and praises her demonstration of androgyny and its unity of yin and yang. These sources will supplement the readings regarding the Taoist elements found in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, in order to support the premise that yin and yang is the driving force of the novel. These sources will support my exploration of instances in the novel where Le Guin illustrates the principles of yin and yang in the novel.

The first aspect of yin and yang within the novel is concerned with light and dark/sun and shadow as found in the environment. Douglas Barbour is concerned with how Le Guin uses light/dark imagery to connect the Hainish Cycle, including *The Left Hand of Darkness*. He notes a number of instances where this imagery, which he connects to yin-yang, permeate the novel; one of these instances is the Gethenian notion of *Shifgrethor*. Barbour claims the word's significance throughout the novel insisting, "a clear light is cast back across the novel, illuminating passage after passage where shadows or the lack of them are mentioned with particular emphasis."¹¹ In essence, Barbour claims that *shifgrethor*, meaning shadow,

9. David J. Lake, "Le Guin's Twofold Vision: Contrary Image-Sets in *The Left Hand of Darkness*," *Science Fiction Studies* 8, no. 2 (July 1981): 156–64.

10. Carty, Yu, and Wang, "Black and White versus Yin and Yang," 270.

11. Barbour, "Wholeness and Balance," 166.

leads the reader to reflect back on previous instances where shadows have particular importance. By extension, reflecting on shadow leads readers to consider the part that light plays in each of these instances. Consequently, by revealing the meaning of a word used throughout the novel, Le Guin emphasizes both the symbolic and literal importance of shadows in her novel. Hence, shadows cannot exist without light, so the reader is led to consider the opposing force: light.

This interdependence between light and shadow is reminiscent of yin and yang. In fact, Genly and Estraven's life depends on the existence of both light and shadow. For instance, while traversing the Ice the two companions find themselves lost in a shadowless world. Genly writes of the experience, "No shadows. An even, white, soundless sphere: we moved along inside a huge frosted-glass ball."¹² Later, when they are safe within their tent Estraven comments, "It's queer that daylight's not enough. We need the shadows, in order to walk."¹³ This passage is a striking example of the importance of shadows in the novel. It demonstrates the idea that light and darkness must exist for there to be balance. In connection to the concept of balance, Carty and co-authors explain, "opposing forces are capable of coexisting in one unity, as long as the strengths of both forces remain at a balance point. Once that balanced mutuality of production and restraint between *yin* and *yang* is broken, things will develop toward one side."¹⁴ In short, the production and restraint between opposing forces is very important. Consider how, in the novel, when sunlight and shadow do not remain balanced on The Ice, Genly and Estraven find themselves unable to navigate. Light produces shadow and shadow is the absence of light; both are needed to create balance.

Another important dichotomy found in the Gethenian environment is the sun and ice and their more abstract representations of warmth and the cold. Rather than presenting them as opposing forces, Le Guin writes of the sun and ice being necessary for the planet's balance. Specifically, while preparing for their journey on the Ice, Estraven tells their companion, "The good weather, you know, tends to stay over the great glaciers, where the ice reflects the heat of the sun [. . .] therefore the legends about the Place inside the Blizzard."¹⁵ This place that Estraven refers to is found in one of the myths included in Genly's report, telling the tale of a Gethenian, Getheren, who is exiled. In their exile, Getheren was forced

12. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 285.

13. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 286.

14. Carty, Yu, and Wang, "Black and White versus Yin and Yang," 281.

15. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 217.

to cross the Pering Ice, an ice sheet covering the northernmost portion of Karhide.¹⁶ They walked for days without food or shelter in a place where they were the only thing alive. Eventually, they found themselves crawling across the ice, on the brink of death. After a time, Getheren realized they were in a place where “the sun shone, and it was windless, and everything was white” and there was no cold.¹⁷ In this place, Getheren found their lover. At seeing them, Getheren realized they were dead. Instead of accepting this fate, they fled back into the world of the living. This myth demonstrates that in death there is no cold or darkness; and therefore, no balance between contraries. Consequently, the tale insists that only in the land of the living, the real world, balance exists between sun and ice, warm and cold, light and dark.

The second implication of yin and yang’s importance to the novel is found in the nations of Karhide and Orgoreyn and how each maintains or hinders balance. David Lake finds the dichotomies of these two nations’ religious structures particularly interesting. The two religions are the Handdara (Karhide), who believe in the importance of ignorance, and the Yomesh cult (Orgoreyn), who believe in knowing all things. In analyzing the novel, Lake proposes two image sets found in the novel that he calls the cold team and the warm team. Lake associates these teams with the Handdara and the Yomesh. He asserts, “The nation of Orgoreyn with its Yomesh cult is not so much the Contrary as the Negation of Karhide with its Handdara religion.”¹⁸ In essence, the Handdara accept the existence of both light and dark, but emphasize darkness, whereas the Yomesh rejects darkness and cling solely to the light. He claims that by rejecting darkness the Yomesh condemn themselves to unbalance. Therefore, it is balance—and therefore the Handdara—that Le Guin praises.

Similarly, Gary Willis finds the contrast between Orgoreyn and Karhide fascinating. He likewise notes the opposing ideas of the countries and he too calls out the Yomesh cult in their favoring of only half of dual pairs. Like Lake, he creates a list emphasizing the main dualities in the novel: Light-Dark, Warmth-Cold, Self-Other, Male-Female, Activity-Passivity, Knowledge-Ignorance, Reason-Intuition.¹⁹ In reading this list, it is easy to see a reflection of yin and yang in these pairings. Particularly in light-dark, warmth-cold, male-female, activity-passivity. In fact, Carty suggests

16. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 24.

17. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 25.

18. Lake, “Le Guin’s Twofold Vision,” 156.

19. Gary Willis, “Le Guin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*: The Weaving Together of Dualities,” *Riverside Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1986): 36–43, p. 40.

that yin and yang are represented in dipoles, another term for dualistic pairs. He emphasizes that “In each pair of dipoles, yin refers to the passive or the female element, while yang is the active or the male element.”²⁰ While Willis does not specifically cite yin and yang in his article, he shares similar ideas with Lake and uses examples that are classically identified with the Taoist principle. Accordingly, he emphasizes the foolishness of the Yomesh and the wisdom of the Handdara in their attitudes toward duality. This demonstrates that the significance of yin and yang is not only in the environment, but also in the cultures of Gethen.

One of the most beautiful demonstrations of yin and yang in the novel is found in a poem that Estraven recites to Genly during a pivotal conversation they share on the ice,

*Light is the left hand of darkness,
and darkness the right hand of light.
Two are one, life and death, lying
Together like lovers in kemmer,
Like hands joined together,
Like the end and the way.*²¹

It is from this poem that the novel gets its name. The poem demonstrates the idea that light and darkness are not adversaries, but rather that two are one. As Carty explains, “yin and yang are not mutually exclusive as ‘yes and no’ or ‘true and false’ dipoles. Their concepts are always complementary and relative.”²² Thus, according to the principle of yin and yang, light and dark create a relationship where one cannot exist without the other. Other dualistic pairs exist in this poem: life and death, the end and the way. As a result, all of these things exist as two parts of a whole. According to Carty’s theory, the relationships within the poem are complementary and relative and create a sense of one half of the dipole relying on the existence of the other. Without life, there would be no death. Without the way, there would be no end. This is the key to yin-yang. Two opposing forces create a balanced whole.

Elements of yin and yang are also illustrated in the literature and tales of Gethen. The “Orgota Creation Myth” in particular, reflects the philosophy of yin and yang. The creation myth explains the origins of the planet and its peoples. It begins with, “In the beginning there was nothing but ice and the sun.”²³ In Gethenian lore, sun and ice are the opposing forces

20. Carty, Yu, and Wang, “Black and White versus Yin and Yang,” 279.

21. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 252.

22. Carty, Yu, and Wang, “Black and White versus Yin and Yang,” 281.

23. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 255.

that together created the world and humanity. “In the beginning there was the sun and the ice, and there was no shadow. In the end when we are done, the sun will devour itself and shadow will eat light, and there will be nothing left but the ice and darkness.”²⁴ In other words, without balance, there is nothing. It is only when the balance of light and darkness is present that humanity is able to exist. According to Gethenian myth, when that balance is overthrown, their world will end. This concept is similar to the one stated previously that yin and yang relies on balance. As a result, when the dynamic balance of yin and yang is disrupted, one side will win and balance will be destroyed.

Derance Filho outlines some of the other connections that the creation myth shares with yin and yang. He observes, “Yin-Yang assumes a rather central role in the presented cosmology, which the Orgota myth echoes.”²⁵ Specifically, he reflects on the birth of humanity as presented in the myth. According to this particular creation story, humanity is born to two men that were created from soil and sea water. The myth explains, “Each of the children born to [th men] had a piece of darkness that followed him about wherever he went by daylight.”²⁶ Filho’s claim is that the darkness following the children represents mortality. Hence, darkness is death, while daylight is the source of life. Filho elaborates, “The sun—the light—is the source of life alongside the ice, which is water; when the sun is gone, so is life, and only shadow—death—remains.”²⁷ In other words, for all humans, the yin-yang balance that is represented in life and death will fail. I must remind readers that yin and yang is a pattern for all things. Although death wins out for each person, the overall balance of life and death continues. With each death there is new life. The cycle of yin and yang continues.

Perhaps the most important aspect of dualism found in *The Left Hand of Darkness* is the matter of Gethenian sexuality. After all, Gethenians are—for the majority of the time—sexless. And gender, as a social construct, does not exist in Gethenian societies. To illustrate this concept, Genly includes a report given by a female Investigator in his compiled narration of his time on Gethen that outlines the sexual cycle of the planet’s inhabitants. For the first, and longest phase of their sexual cycle, Gethenians are as she puts it, “completely androgynous” only achieving sexual

24. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 257.

25. Filho, “The Taoist Myths of Winter” 52.

26. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 257.

27. Filho, “The Taoist Myths of Winter” 52.

traits during a phase called “kemmer.”²⁸ During kemmer, there is a phase with a “mutual process of establishing sexuality and potency.”²⁹ This is one of the only times where a Gethenian has a designated sex, and even then, an individual may be “male” during one period of kemmer and “female” in another. The only other time a Gethenian maintains their reproductive status is if the “female” is impregnated, then they will hormonally remain female. If the female does not get impregnated, the individual will return to their natural androgynous state. The “male” partner will return back to their androgynous state as soon as the period of kemmer is over. As a result, Gethenians are considered androgynous for the majority of their lives. The reason I want to outline the mechanics of Gethenian sexuality is to explore its social implications and connection to yin and yang.

As an illustration, Ursula K. Le Guin herself explains in her essay “Is Gender Necessary? Redux” why she developed a world of androgynes: “it was a heuristic device, a thought experiment.”³⁰ She asserts that she wanted to explore what, besides our biological differences, differentiates men and women. In Gethenians we find a people who embody the ideal form of yin and yang. They create a perfect balance between male and female. Only during their period of estrus, or fertility, does the balance become disrupted. That unbalance is controlled by the fact that the individual has no control over the sexual role they take. A Gethenian can be both a mother and a father. Le Guin insists in her essay that the current curse of humanity is “alienation, the separation of yang from yin . . . instead of a search for balance and integration, there is a struggle for dominance. Divisions are insisted upon, interdependence is denied.”³¹ While Gethenians have their own downfalls, they do not have the same curse the Earthan society we share with Genly does. As an androgynous society, there is no division between male and female traits. Indeed, this balance makes Gethenians the epitome of the interdependence of gender.

As a Gethenian, Estraven is a representation of the interdependence of gender, whereas Genly is a representation of our world’s current representation of gender being binary. As Le Guin explains above, the Gethenians are an experiment of what it would be like in a world where gender plays no part. By extension, they represent the two halves of the gender dichotomy combined; yin and yang balanced perfectly in an individual. Genly, as

28. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 96.

29. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 97.

30. Ursula K. Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 9.

31. Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge of the World*, 16.

a man is only a man. Near the end of the novel Genly finally connects the concept he knows as yin and yang to Estraven's dual nature. In a moment of enlightenment, Genly realizes that Estraven, and by extension, all Gethenians, are "both and one."³² They are the neutral part described by Ginny S. Lin and quoted by Carty as "the overlap of yin and yang, so that two opposite forces cancel out."³³ Gethenians are thus the moment of perfect harmony found in yin and yang in its most balanced state.

Ultimately, Le Guin's novel is a beautiful illustration of the concepts of yin and yang. She incorporates it into the world and the cultures within the novel, as made evident through this paper. The most eloquent demonstration of the importance of yin and yang to the world of Gethen comes from the narrator of the novel himself. This moment occurs when Genly put into words in a pivotal conversation with Estraven what he had been trying to understand since his journey began, "It is yin and yang. *Light is the left hand of darkness.* . . . Light, dark. Fear, courage. Cold, warmth. Female, male. It is yourself, [Estraven]. Both and one. A shadow in snow."³⁴ Finally, at the end of the novel, Genly grasps on to what readers have noticed all along: the reflection of duality, of yin and yang, within the story Genly and Estraven tell. Like Genly, readers can gain a greater appreciation of the care that Le Guin took in writing *The Left Hand of Darkness* and the importance of balance.

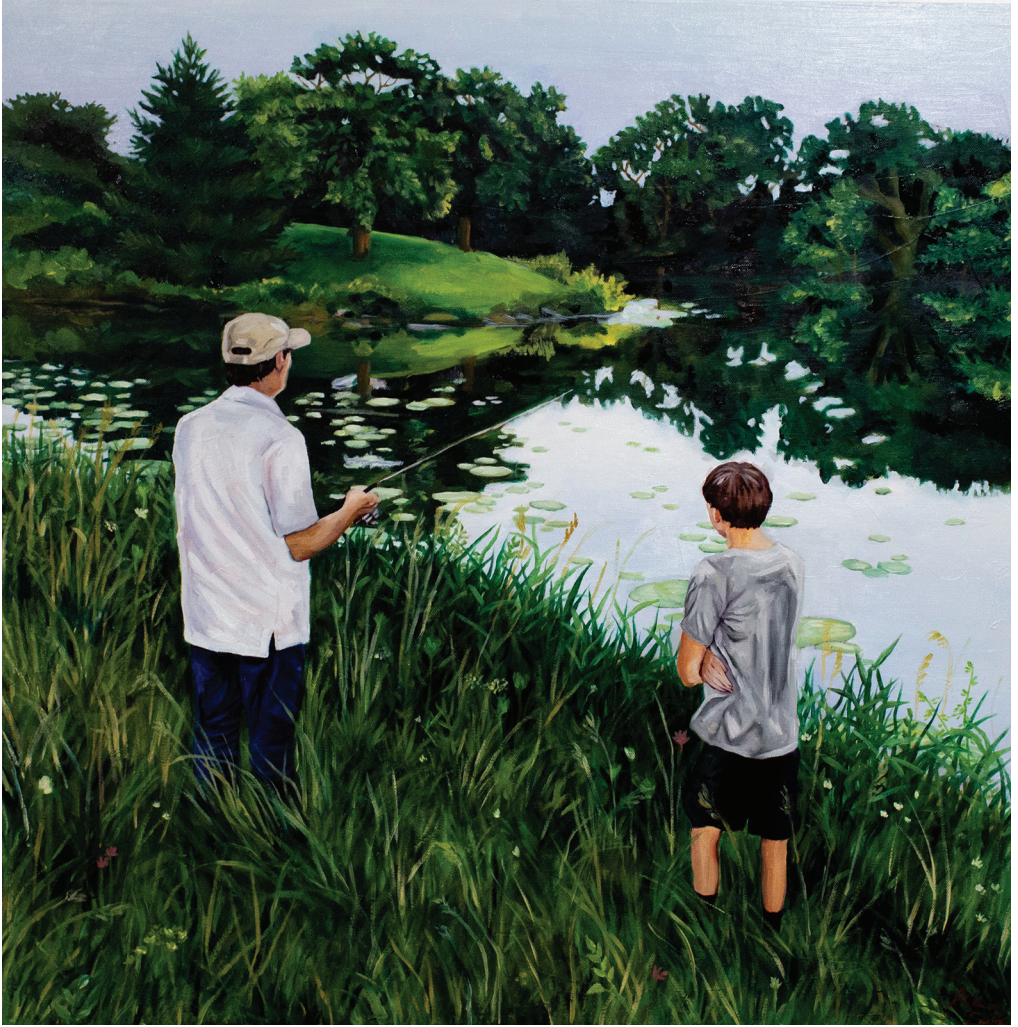
By extension, the frail nature of balance makes Le Guin's demonstrations of yin and yang within the novel even more apparent. It is the combination, the harmony between male and female that makes Gethenians so unique. Barbour suggests of the novel, "As wide as the universe of meaning itself, the images say: wholeness and duality, together and separate ones, pattern of life itself, woven through an artist's fictions, the matrix of her vision."³⁵ In response, I am inclined to support Barbour's claim and encourage readers to read *The Left Hand of Darkness* through the lens of duality, readers will find the balance created by duality all throughout the world of Gethen. If we follow a path similar to Genly Ai's, readers can see the image of yin and yang printed on every page of Le Guin's novel.

32. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 287.

33. Ginny S. Lin, quoted in Carty, Yu, and Wang, "Black and White versus Yin and Yang," 281.

34. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, 287.

35. Barbour, "Wholeness and Balance," 167.



Fishing in July

Allison Sink

This painting depicts my grandfather and little brother fishing at a small pond in Illinois. My grandfather lived in Illinois for a year and would come out here by himself every chance he got. Hours fishing alone were reflective, peaceful and even spiritual to him. Allowing us to enter that space with him was clearly sacred. I wanted my painting to capture that quiet spirit and sense of comradery.

May We Never Remain the Same

Abigail De Oliveira

In life, all follow a unique path. Along these paths are heartbreaking experiences, tough life lessons, unimaginable twists and turns, amazing accomplishments, and inexplicable joy. However, none of these paths lead to the final destination of political affiliation. I learned this a few months ago, as I started the voter registration process. I was going along filling out my personal information when I came to the question which asked me which party I would wish to affiliate with. I paused for a moment and thought about the major issues the two parties debate. On some issues, I would lean to the right, and on other issues to the left. I quickly realized no party could properly represent me. Me, a daughter of an immigrant father, a granddaughter of a farmer, an athlete, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and a witness to discrimination. I closed the web page and thought about it for the next couple of days. I asked my friends and family about their opinions and where they stand politically. After much contemplation I began to question anyone's ability to truly align themselves with a single party. Looking inside at all the parts that make me, me. I realized I am more complex than a single party. However, this realization is not just about me but all humans. Humans are more complex than Democrats and Republicans. I believe that humans have downgraded themselves to stand with a name. Ignoring the complex reality their paths have given them.

As I look to the future all I can see is change. So much is going to change, friends will be made and lost, my schooling, my finances, and soon my life will be fully in my hands. Until I sat down to write this, I had been struggling with all the changes looming in the future. Then I realized I want to change. I want to hear new ideas, I want to visit new places, and I want to experience new heartaches. I hope for experiences to make me better, more complex, and change me. This idea fuels me. I am not done yet and what I believe will constantly change. As much as I am

scared of change, I always want to be moving forward. This thought has given me hope. Hope that no matter what happens in this crazy world I will have the power to adjust to the change and add it to my story. That I will never have to be the same as I was yesterday. I hope I won't be scared to hear the phrase "you've changed." I hope that I am proud of my change, for learning from life, learning from those who had the courage to speak, those who I disagree with, and those who were specifically placed in front of me to challenge me. I hope the only thing that remains the same is the constant change that is building me into something I have yet to imagine and that others will be brave enough to do the same. That although we are not a perfect nation we won't become a stagnant nation, more interested in a name than our progress. So, I leave myself room to grow in whatever direction I need. That I can remain unchained from made-up names and that I will never remain the same.



Abstract 3

Jake Allen

What do you see here? Do you see a face? Do you see a duck? Do you see a pig? Do you see a man in baseball cap? Or do you simply see shades of red, yellow, and orange?

Abstract 3 is a non-representational abstract expressionist work. It's intention was never to draw your attention to any particular concrete idea, but instead to draw your attention to the unique properties of Jell-O. Jell-O is a rather popular dessert item and rightfully so, however it's uniqueness is completely overlooked when it comes to it's application in art. In pondering I realized these things and Jell-O's hidden potential to become an exciting but unorthodox mean of expression.

Here in *Abstract 3*, a batch of Jell-O was mixed, placed in a glass container, and congealed to form a semi-solid Jell-O mass that could then be carved into. Coming in from the top I removed various layers of Jell-O to create the shapes and forms you see in the picture. Taken from underneath the glass in which the Jell-O settles the picture exposes the various values of the red Jell-O that you see before you. These values directly correlate to the depth at which I carved, meaning that the lighter the value; the more I carved away. If you were to view this piece from the side you would see an almost strange array of Jell-O mountains and valleys. Truly now with explanation one can understand the full value of the piece and it's exploration into an undiscovered and fringe artistic medium.

Blue and Yellow

Olivia Ann Ostler

A warm ray of sunshine
Dancing and sparkling on the ocean's surface
Bringing light and smiles to the world
My love
Receding high above the clouds
Forever dancing with angels in starlight

Modernity

Trinity Johnson Mendoza

The wheel came first, or so they say
With gods and goddesses soon on the way.
Dogs followed fire, and power came from rain
That soon led to food farmed from grain.

We built temples, houses, and doors
That ages from then became a tour
Where those born with medicines of today
Still closely follow the elders' way.

Relics of times long past and faintly recalled
Are often seen as ancient and unwanted
Ruins that remind us the past is restrained
From us and we are here to remain.

But to live in a modern world is to live
Upon the shoulders of those who give;
Our mothers, fathers, and elders pain
Paved the way for all our wealth and gain.

We laugh in hallowed halls of gold
Because they cried in hallowed halls of old.
We remember days of yore with somber eyes
Because they lived with unanswered whys.

To be a modern human is to thrive in glory
And give thanks to those who died in fury
With their dreams scattered to the winds
And born again into our hollow limbs.

Dream that wanted love and light
And hoped for life in the depth of night.
Dreams of living and loving us
Because our elders live on in us.

To live in the modern world means
Living upon the edge of the ravine
With hearts racing and palms clammy
Because the ravine is a place uncanny

Filled with new wonder, dreams, and goals
Just like all those from days of yore.
We live because they sacrificed and died;
Gave all they had for us then cried.

Today you live, learn, love, and wonder
Because someone else refused to go under.
Today I live, learn, love, and wonder
Because my parents refused to go under.

I get to live because the generations before
Lived, learned, loved, then gave me their core.
You get to live because those who came before
Lived, learned, loved, and wanted more.

So while we have massive machines
And pretty toys that shimmer and gleam,
We have these wondrous marvels that shine
Because all their dreams and stars aligned.

And all our hopes, wishes, and dreams
Are built upon the lives of those with eyes agleam.
So with their lighted hearts and eyes ablaze
They look on us with hope and turn our gaze

To all that was and all that may yet be
Because they lived with hope and did not flee
From pain, anguish and death
That we might yet rise with still more breath.

To be a modern human is to carry the grief
Of a thousand years and find hope in belief
That the cycle will go on turning
And the next generations will keep on learning.

Just as our elders did for us and all our glory.



The Climb

David Blanchard

The two black and white artworks which have been published here were designed with inspiration from using the Wombo Art AI image generator, and the *Sky Ladder* by Cai Guo-Qiang. Much of my recent work harkens back to the surrealist movement and considers the ways in which its methods for thinking about and creating art can be used for collective as well as personal expression and exploration.

The Climb was a more personal artwork in which I only referenced *Sky Ladder* and nothing AI-generated. The *Sky Ladder* was an ephemeral 3D artwork that used a balloon to lift a burning ladder into the air. I found this to be a powerful image and wanted to draw a picture of someone climbing such a short-lived but beautiful structure.



Torn Apart

Jake Allen

To discuss the piece *Torn Apart* I must first discuss what the piece is not. Torn apart is not a commentary on fast fashion nor is it a commentary on feminism. *Torn Apart* is actually a commentary on lust and the consequences of indulging in lust. Torn apart makes this commentary by taking regular everyday goodforn meaning t-shirts and turning (tearing) them into abstract shapes and common symbols that can be associated with lust. Various shapes of underwear dot the canvas each torn and gutted from articles of clothing. These shapes and how they were made seek to mimic the timeline and ultimate end of lust. Lust rips and tears; it takes that which is whole and strips it of its value. It degrades the complete into something completely different and foreign.

This is the ultimate message of *Torn Apart* or alternatively titled, Lust Kills Love. The very process of creating the work, the colors, the textures, and the shapes comes together to emphasize the idea. Here the conscious and the subconscious are intertwined to create a compelling piece of design and to entice the reader to consider the work and its meaning.

Potential Therapeutic Properties of Hallucinogens

Erica Bauer

When people think about the late 1960s and early 70s, a few things come to mind. Hallucinogens, with their perception-altering power, are one of these things. Hallucinogens are notorious for their trips that send people on journeys one could hardly dream up. Though they are often associated with the seventies, hallucinogens have been in use far before then. Hallucinogens had a run-in with research in the 1950s and 1960s when their recreational use began to increase. However, they were outlawed in the early 70s and the U.S. witnessed their fall to infamy. Despite this, researchers in the medical and psychological fields are now returning to researching therapeutic uses of hallucinogens.¹

There are a variety of hallucinogens that can either occur naturally (psilocybin, DMT, mescaline, etc.) or they can be synthetically produced (LSD, MDMA, PCP, etc.). Hallucinogens are known for their mind-altering effects. They have considerable influence on cognition, mood, and perception and are said to cause “mystical experiences.”²

Hallucinogenic Therapy

Though hallucinogens rose in popularity in the U.S. in the early 60s,

1. Tomislav Majić, Timo T. Schmidt and Jürgen Gallinat, “Peak Experiences and the Afterglow Phenomenon: When and How do Therapeutic Effects of Hallucinogens Depend on Psychedelic Experiences?” *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 29, no. 3 (February 2015): 242, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881114568040>.

2. Alexander M. Sherwood and Thomas E. Prisinzano, “Novel Psychotherapeutics – A Cautiously Optimistic Focus on Hallucinogens,” *Expert Review of Clinical Pharmacology*, 11, no. 1 (December 2017): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512433.2018.1415755>; Albert Garcia-Romeu and William A. Richards, “Current Perspectives on Psychedelic Therapy: Use of Serotonergic Hallucinogens in Clinical Interventions.” *International Review of Psychiatry*, 30, no. 4, (June 2018): 294, 295,303, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2018.1486289>.

they have been in use for centuries. Dating back to prehistoric times, many cultures used (and continue to use) various hallucinogens in religious and spiritual practices.³ It was not until the late 50s that researchers took a major interest in the potential therapeutic use of hallucinogens. However, this research ended in the 70s with the Controlled Substance Act.⁴ Although the results from this research seemed promising in aiding in the treatment of anxiety disorders, depression, and substance use, the methodology of the studies was limiting and not as well developed as it could have been.

Researchers in neuroscience and psychiatry have recently taken a re-interest in the potential use of hallucinogens in a therapeutic context.⁵ With permission from the government, contemporary studies are being conducted to allow for the exploration of the potential psychological and physical benefits of hallucinogenic therapy.⁶

Psilocybin, Ketamine, LSD, and MDMA seem to particularly catch researchers' interest. Several studies have found that hallucinogens in small doses could help in treating anxiety disorders (including OCD and PTSD), depression, addiction, and treating those terminally ill or with autoimmune diseases.⁷ Hallucinogens work as agonists or partial agonists on serotonin receptors.⁸ Since anxiety, depression, PTSD, and addiction are all associated and affect the neurotransmitter serotonin, research in

3. Michael P. Bogenschutz and Matthew W. Johnson, "Classic Hallucinogens in the Treatment of Addictions," *Progress in Neuropsychopharmacology & Biological Psychiatry*, 64, no. 1 (January 2016): 252, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pnpbp.2015.03.002>; Romeu and Richards, "Current Perspectives," 291.

4. Albert Garcia Romeu, Brennan Kersgaard, and Peter H. Addy, "Clinical Applications of Hallucinogens: A Review," *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 24, no. 4 (2016): 232-233, <https://doi.org/10.1037/pha0000084>; Rafael Guimarães dos Santos et al. "The Use of Classic Hallucinogens/Psychedelics in a Therapeutic Context: Healthcare Policy Opportunities and Challenges." *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy*, 14 (March 2021): 902, <https://doi.org/10.2147/RMHP.S300656>; Sherwood and Prisinzano, "Novel Psychotherapeutics," 2

5. Majic, Schimdt, and Gallinat. "Afterglow Phenomenon," 246-248.

6. Rafael Guimarães dos Santos and Jaime Eduardo Cecilio Hallaka, "Therapeutic Use of Serotonergic Hallucinogens: A Review of the Evidence and the Biological and Psychological Mechanism," *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 108 (January 2020): 424, <https://doi.org.ezproxy.uvu.edu/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2019.12.001>; Sherwood and Prisinzano, "Novel Psychotherapeutics," 1.

7. Majic, Schimdt, and Gallinat. "Afterglow Phenomenon," 246-248; Sherwood and Prisinzano, "Novel Psychotherapeutics," 2; Caitlin Thompson and Attila Szabo, "Psychedelics as a Novel Approach to Treating Autoimmune Conditions," *Immunology Letters*, 208, (December 2020): 49,51, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.imlet.2020.10.001>.

8. Bogenschutz and Johnson, "Hallucinogens Treatment of Addictions," 251.

hallucinogenic therapy is finding encouraging results in treating these disorders.

Hallucinogens and Psychotherapy

Hallucinogenic therapy in conjunction with psychotherapy practices appears to be effective in treating anxiety, depression, PTSD, and addiction. Psilocybin has specifically been examined with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Enhancement Therapy. The combination of CBT and hallucinogenic therapy allows the psychologist and the patient to “directly experience altered cognitive and emotional states, which can be leveraged in ongoing counseling to ultimately challenge and replace maladaptive thought and behavior patterns...”⁹ The benefits of MDMA and LSD with psychotherapy have likewise been examined to have lasting prominent and cathartic effects.¹⁰ Like many psychopharmacological medications, psychotherapy and hallucinogenic therapy could work well together to improve client symptoms. Creating a relationship between the two could allow for promising results in patient well-being as it allows for a patient to utilize multiple resources to assist in improvement.

Finding Meaning Through Hallucinogens

Current research suggests that hallucinogens help people find meaning in things they were previously apathetic to. Additionally, hallucinogens have been found to inspire self-reflection, openness, and behavior and personality changes.¹¹ One study conducted found that people were presented with neutral or meaningless excerpts of music which was rated more meaningful with the use of LSD rather than compared to participants given a placebo.¹² Through careful examination, it has been determined that hallucinogens are not only successful in helping people find meaning, but in aiding them in changing meaning. Literature proposes that this could be beneficial for various psychological disorders. One article indicates that “through examination in psychedelic therapy of specific therapeutic targets, such as obsessions, compulsions, existential distress, negative thinking, or substances of abuse, it is seemingly possi-

9. Romeu and Richards, “Current Perspectives,” 295.

10. Romeu, Kersgaard, and Addy, “Clinical Applications,” 241-242; Majic, Schimdt, and Gallinat. “Afterglow Phenomenon,” 247-248

11. Romeu, Kersgaard, and Addy, “Clinical Applications,” 234, 246.

12. Katrin H. Preller et al. “The Fabric of Meaning and Subjective Effects in LSD-Induced States Depend on Serotonin 2A Receptor Activation,” *Current Biology*, 27 no. 3 (February 2016): 452-453, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2016.12.030>.

ble to change their perceived meaning for the patient, thereby altering the manner in which they relate to and engage that content.”¹³ In other words, monitored hallucinogenic therapy could in a sense alter a patient’s meaning in a way that would relieve them of certain side effects associated with their dysfunctional thinking. Furthermore, hallucinogens’ encouragement of self-reflection and behavior and personality changes are extremely intriguing in their potential benefits.

Another article similarly suggests that the meaning-finding properties of hallucinogens could specifically benefit people with PTSD. The authors describe the potential that hallucinogens could create “inverse-PTSD-like effects” that counteract the harmful physical and psychological effects caused by PTSD.¹⁴ Essentially, the use of hallucinogens on PTSD patients could reverse some of the physio-psychological damage caused and help with some of the adverse side effects. A different article indicates that hallucinogens can be valuable for treating PTSD because they can allow clients to access and confront traumatic memories through the “mystical properties”¹⁵ associated with hallucinogens. It is not specified how the patients can access and confront difficult memories, but the researchers mention that the experiments conducted have been successful. It can be assumed that the clients had a positive experience if the trial was deemed a success.

Furthermore, there has been ample research on the therapeutic use of hallucinogens for addiction. Hallucinogens are often described as nonaddictive and their characteristics of influencing self-reflection and assisting lasting behavior changes are determined by researchers to be extremely beneficial for addiction patients.¹⁶

Challenges to Hallucinogenic Therapy

With researchers reigniting their curiosity about hallucinogens and finding new ways to benefit from them, it is easy to get caught up in the excitement of the results. However, plenty of challenges stand in the way of hallucinogenic therapy.

One major challenge to the therapeutic use of hallucinogens is that they are illegal in many countries. In the U.S. hallucinogens (psilocybin, DMT, LSD, and MDMA) have been listed as Schedule 1 drugs since

13. Romeu and Richards, “Current Perspectives,” 304.

14. Bogenschutz and Johnson, “Hallucinogens Treatment of Addictions,” 256.

15. Sherwood and Prisinzano, “Novel Psychotherapeutics,” 2.

16. Bogenschutz and Johnson, “Hallucinogens Treatment of Addictions,” 252.

1971.¹⁷ That is to say that they are viewed by the government to lack therapeutic effects and are susceptible to being abused. This does not allow researchers to fully explore the potential therapeutic benefits of hallucinogens – whether from fear or from not being allowed to. Furthermore, keeping many hallucinogens as illegal drugs shapes the public opinion of hallucinogens. If hallucinogens are illegal, more people will have a negative opinion about them because they are discussed in a way that elicits fear and uncertainty. Because of their reputation as recreational drugs, hallucinogens may not be taken seriously as a therapeutic means to help people struggling with anxiety, depression, substance abuse, etc.

That is not to say that hallucinogens cannot be misused and have potentially harmful or dangerous effects. However, with more understanding and research, people would be able to make more informed judgments. This would allow researchers the opportunity to investigate the therapeutic properties of hallucinogens. Clinicians and researchers should be cautious as they move forward in promoting hallucinogenic therapies. They should be adequately trained to administer these drugs, be aware of potential dangers, and be frank in their portrayal of the substances.¹⁸

Conclusion

Research has demonstrated that hallucinogens show promising advantages for therapeutic use in treating anxiety disorders, depression, and addiction. They may be a unique way to treat several psychological disorders. As more research is conducted, we may witness the use of hallucinogens more often in a therapeutic setting. Although, like many pharmacological medications, hallucinogens are not without their challenges and potentially harmful effects. I believe any drug, whether prescribed or not, could have unsatisfactory effects or be abused. Could the benefits of permitting clinicians and researchers to use hallucinogens to improve lives outweigh the harm that could be caused from potential abuse?

17. Santos et al. "Hallucinogens/Psychedelics Policy," 905.

18. Romeu and Richards, "Current Perspectives," 305; Sherwood and Prinszano, "Novel Psychotherapeutics," 2.

Spring

Olivia Ann Ostler

Rain
Drip-drop on the rooftop
Touches the throat like icy fire
Hugs you like a cold corpse
Earth reaches the nose
The sky cries when the Sun leaves
You feel part of Mother Earth

Contributing Authors and Artists

Jake Allen is a multimedia artist from Lehi that is excited with color, patterns, and imagery. Currently studying Art & Design he spends a considerable amount of time exploring digital mediums like graphic design, videography, animation, and music, as well as more traditional mediums like drawing, painting, and sculpture. When he's not creating art you can find him out longboarding, attending concerts, or enjoying nature. Lastly, a fun fact about Jake Allen is that he is in the top .01% of listeners on Spotify for the Smashing Pumpkins.

Erica Bauer is a psychology student with plans to eventually get a PhD in social psychology in hopes to become a professor and researcher. When they are not studying or working as a barista and ballet teacher, they enjoy reading, painting, sewing, and going on walks.

David Blanchard is an artist studying for a BFA in painting and drawing and a minor in philosophy. They love spending their time learning, playing video games, and attempting to make things that are interesting on some level or another.

Rachel Crane is from Orem, Utah, and has lived the majority of her life here. She is currently undecided in her major, but enjoys the outdoors and being creative in her free time.

Abigail De Oliveira is a freshman at UVU this year and thrilled to be in the Honors program. She graduated from American Fork High School, where she first explored her love for politics. She hopes to turn politics into a career.

Bridger Fogg is a current sophomore at UVU from Tooele, Utah, and is studying Engineering and Theatre. He loves building and creating and has been building with Legos since he was five.

Lizzy Jensen is a junior at UVU studying theatre and religion. She is originally from Gilbert, Arizona, where she grew up reading a lot and singing a lot. She loves cooking, watching TV, and reading books about Mormon history.

Hannah Luker is a born and raised Utah resident with a deep-seated love for suspense novels. She writes, reads, and schemes suspense, and enjoys writing stories with a cliffhanger. But, when she's not leaving readers on the edge of their seats, she enjoys family time, making music, and indulging in the occasional Hallmark romance.

Trinity Johnson Mendoza is an actress, director, and author. She likes telling stories that deal with the mystery of being alive and hopes her fascination with it matters to others. In her spare time Trinity enjoys reading, baking, and spending time with her husband.

Dannalee Mosteller is from Nephi, Utah. Her major is English Education. Dannalee wants to influence others to think critically and help her future students become better writers and readers.

Olivia Ann Ostler is someone who wants inspire the world and show that creativity is not something that should be shunned or looked down upon. That is why she engages in many different crafts such as crocheting, model painting, writing, and doll customization.

Allison Sink is an artist and art teacher. She is primarily an oil painter and loves to paint people in quiet, reflective, and peaceful moments.

Garth Talbot is a polymath who has published a textbook for children to learn about poetry. (*Let's Write Poetry: The Only Book You'll Ever Need For National Poetry Month*, on Amazon). When he's not writing, Garth is consulting for nonprofits, working as a digital marketer, running statistics, starting a business, or cooking vegetarian food to share with his wife.

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