Inaugural Edition

Discourse:

The English Academic Journal of Towson University



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About *Discourse* & the English Forum

During the spring semester of 2012, Towson University reinstated its English Forum, an academic club sponsored by the English Department. Since then, the group has met weekly to discuss matters related to majoring in English, including the often deliberated idea of establishing an academic journal. The members initiated further dialogue with faculty advisors which led to the formation of *Discourse: The English Academic Journal of Towson University*. The Forum believes that since the vast majority of the writing completed while working toward an English degree is academic in nature, the creation of *Discourse* will provide a much needed outlet for students and alumni who aspire to see their scholarly work recognized and published.

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Introduction & Forward

~English Forum president, Sydney Chanmugam

This journal is the product of many dedicated students, alumni, and Towson University faculty. Without their assistance, *Discourse* would be little more than some hand-stapled papers. I would like to extend my gratitude to the man with the vision, alumnus Jose Diaz, for leading the English Forum in creating the idea for *Discourse*, bringing us from a word scrawled on a whiteboard to revising and re-revising real submissions from students across the English Department. We would not be here without you. I would also like to thank the Writing Center, for their hard work in assisting the English Forum with the revising process, ensuring that every final submission was at its best. Finally, I would like to thank our faculty advisors, Professors Jonathan Vincent and Jacqueline Shin, for their unwavering support for *Discourse* and the English Forum.

English Forum Executives & *Discourse* Editors

* Jose Diaz, English Forum Founder
* Sydney Chanmugam, English Forum President
* Jordan Wilner, English Forum Vice President
* Laurel Abell, *Discourse* Executive Administrator

English Forum Staff Editors

* Nathaniel Berry
* George Chijioke
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Submission Guidelines

***Discourse***is a nomination-based journal which requires a professor’s letter of recommendation before work will be considered for acceptance.

All nominated work will be considered as long as it is English related. If there are concerns as to whether or not a paper is English related, you may contact the English Forum via email: [tuenglishforum@gmail.com](mailto:tuenglishforum@gmail.com).

**Submission Checklist:**

* Submission is solely for Towson faculty, students, and alumni.
* 20 page maximum, not including citation pages.
* Only one submission per person.
* Only unpublished work considered.
* Simultaneous submission to other journals is acceptable. However, if a paper is to be published elsewhere, the English Forum must be notified so we can remove it from consideration.
* Must be in MLA format with proper citations.
* Deadline for submission: 1 April 2016.
* Hardcopy submissions only.

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**“Turn White or Disappear”[[1]](#footnote-1): Examining the Price**

**of Disparity in Nella Larson’s *Passing***

Laurel Ranveig Abell

*Clare stood at the window,*

*as composed as if everyone were not staring at her in curiosity and wonder,*

*as if the whole structure of her life were not lying in fragments before her.*

*She seemed unaware of any danger or uncaring.*

*There was even a faint smile on her full red lips and in her shining eyes.*

–Nella Larson, *Passing*

Clare Kendry, the id to Irene Redfield’s superego in Nella Larson’s Harlem Renaissance novella *Passing*, is a conundrum. Much like her own indecipherable handwriting, she is difficult to read. As the story begins, Irene opens a handwritten letter from Clare and describes the script in the contradictory terms of “furtive” and “flaunting” which make Clare’s lettering “almost illegible” (9). The words on the page are as surreptitious and ambiguous as Clare herself who, it is eventually discovered, masquerades, altering and concealing her identity through an act called “passing.” She is a mulatto woman with pale enough skin to “pass,” or exist by being visibly identified as a white woman, in a society where race means everything from freedom to privilege. And while her name connotes clarity and brightness, she has been dubbed by her extremely racist husband not with an illustrious epithet but instead with a defaming one: “Nig”[[2]](#footnote-2) (39). He gives Clare this pejorative nickname because he notices the darkening of her skin tone as she ages. Nevertheless, Bellew believes the nickname to be affectionate because “Nig” is white in his eyes, so he does not consider the moniker to be applicable to her. The dramatic irony of Bellew’s ignorance evokes a visceral response, and it prompts readers to consider Larson’s work as an important interpretation of life and the human condition for ambiguously raced Americans in the 1920s.

Because, historically, a biracial woman is automatically viewed to be black, as prescribed by the persistent “one drop rule,”[[3]](#footnote-3) it has been widely argued that Clare Kendry “passes” as a white woman to gain a liberty that would otherwise elude her; that, indeed, she acquires an identity which she creates for herself so that she may live as she dictates. Moreover, due to the classism implicit in the unwritten rules promoted by racial disparity, it is asserted that Clare has no choice but to turn white or fade into social obscurity. However, Larson’s narrative reveals that the opposite is true: that it is, in fact, by turning white that Clare essentially, and in the end completely, disappears. She effectually erases her unique self by abandoning one aspect of her identity because she does not have the liberty to acknowledge her heritage and at the same time live a desirable existence. This form of self-abasement, which Clare perceives as necessary, is the direct result of the antagonistic implications of ongoing, uncontested racial bigotry, an intolerance that comes at a high price for this protagonist. In *Passing,* as Larson examines the exorbitant cost of racial prejudice, she also exposes that while Clare Kendry attains a measure of freedom, to do so she must relinquish her heritage, her security in society, and ultimately her life; however, the most significant loss is that of her unique identity.

The cultural atmosphere of the 1920s provides abundant opportunities for authors, like Larson, who seek to cultivate a new perspective on racial differences. To offer a contemporary lens through which racism in this era can be examined, Larson introduces a real-life scenario that presents a national view of the ideology of ethnic identity. When Larson’s central character, Irene, considers the idea that her husband may be having an affair with Clare, she ponders the implications of their infidelity being discovered: “What if Bellew should divorce Clare? Could he? There was the Rhinelander case” (101). In the highly publicized trial of 1925, Leonard Rhinelander sought an annulment of marriage from his mixed-raced wife, Alice, whom he claimed deceived him by “racial fraud” (Nisetich 345). He lost, ironically, because it was decided that Alice could not have concealed her identity from her husband because her “race” was visibly discernible (Ibid.). By invoking the Rhinelander trial, Larson exposes some of the distinct repercussions of racial ambiguity while also offering a glimpse into society’s definitions of race in 1920s America. Race in this era, Rebecca Nisetich declares, is perceived as a

Visible and incontrovertible fact […] what seems like a casual reference to a contemporary event actually underscores a central theme of the novel: the Rhinelander case and *Passing* both illustrate the problematic ways Americans sought to categorize racially ambiguous individuals in the 1920s. But while the Rhinelander verdict denies the existence of a middle ground between racial absolutes, the novel affirms it. In *Passing,* Larsen explores the conceptions of race as a real physical fact and as an imagined social construct and challenges the logic of “common knowledge”[[4]](#footnote-4) and visibility in assigning racial identity to individuals. (Ibid.)

Nisetich’s comments might dictate a support of Clare Kendry as an implement promoting social change, and she is employed as such a device. But encoded within the text of *Passing* there is also an imperative directing readers to investigate the underlying reality that, in order for individuals to feel the need to move beyond the biological “physical fact” of race and become an ethnicity created by an “imagined social construct,” they must have experienced enormous opposition.

The hostility generated by long-lasting historical racial bigotry acts as an ever-present antagonist to African Americans, and *Passing*’s narrative proposes a commentary on social injustice as it interacts with readers in an instructive dialogue. Larson adds her voice to a long line of authors who seek to dispel intolerance for “people of color.” Perhaps, since it has been asserted that a person’s skin color is usually discernible, an obvious “outward manifestation of race,” observable racial identity has become the benchmark by which individual humans are appraised, regardless of their personal or academic achievements (Burns 16). Thus, the presence of color prejudice can be defined as arbitrary animosity toward one race which is nothing more than a socialized form of contempt exerted by those who consider themselves superior over those deemed inferior (Ibid.). Such derision creates bitter resentment in the ones affronted because of the subjugation they endure.

Larson seems to agree. In fact, as a result of the racism she herself endured, the enigmatic Larson experienced deep psychological scars which are reflected in her character, Clare’s, desire for recognition and validation. In her own life, Larson was denied by her sister, rejected by her mother, and replaced by her husband because of her mixed-raced origins. Biographer Thadious Davis sees Larson’s novellas as a personal quest to free herself from the stereotypes imposed on racially ambiguous people (Davis 10). However, the sad reality remains that as a mulatto chooses to “pass” for one race over the other, something is lost in the translation; for in order to become white, the mulatto must effectually shed and deny whatever “parts” remain black. Likewise, Clare Kendry must abandon her black identity and become totally white because if she wants “to be a person and not a […] daughter of the indiscreet Ham” (26), then she must “accept the demands of assimilation” (Sullivan 384). Hence, by rejecting a portion of her biological and cultural legacy, this “tragic mulatto”[[5]](#footnote-5) erases her identification with blackness so that she can recreate herself as white.

In forsaking her African-American heritage, Clare Kendry violates understood codes regarding unity within her race. She does not maintain ethnic fidelity; instead, she “operates as a kind of cultural turncoat,” and her personal sins of betrayal are perceived by the larger black community as a “traitorous assault” (Jenkins 133). Clare’s original identity is dislodged through personal and social infidelity as she “passes,” even parades, as a white woman. Instead of being appropriately horrified, she is amused that her racist husband calls her “Nig,” and she takes a “risky” pleasure in her performance. But in responding in this manner Clare betrays not only Irene but also part of her cultural heritage. She is disloyal to her past, a history shared with Irene, and she loses the identification that comes with belonging since, culturally and historically, people tend to find community with others of the same race or nationality. Josh Toth concurs, and he suggests that throughout *Passing* Clare is trying to persuade Irene to also relinquish her “ties of race” (63) because the two women are not truly “bound” to any obligation to their people (Toth 65). As a result, Irene considers that she and Clare are “strangers even in their racial consciousness,” for “between them the barrier was just as high, just as broad, and just as firm as if in Clare did not run that strain of black blood. In truth, it was higher, broader, firmer” (63). Clare has so profoundly lost her identity as a black woman that the same invisible wall that separates blacks from whites exists between herself and Irene, two characters who are essentially alike in racial identity. Thus, Clare loses the sense of security that remains intrinsic in ethnic association as she denies a measure of her being.

Through negating her black heritage by existing exclusively as a white woman, it appears that Clare does seem to achieve a degree of security, although unreliable and impermanent. She is mostly free to indulge in the benefits associated with being white. However, with “that dark secret for ever crouching in the background of her consciousness,” she also gives up the real security of being able to rest in her identity since she lives in constant fear of being caught (73). When she steps outside the boundaries that typically define her place in society and becomes an Other[[6]](#footnote-6), she remains precariously in danger of being discovered and exposed. This insecurity causes Clare to be edgy and at times discontented. And whilea fair-skinned mulatto’s decision to “pass” and live entirely as a Caucasian forces society to reconsider the concept of racial identity as a stable condition, because such an individual exists neither inside nor outside established racial boundaries, those who “pass” eliminate, in a way, some of the ground that they need to walk upon (Toth 61). They are essentially unstable because a portion of the indispensable foundation necessary for healthy identity development has been destroyed through an act of self-betrayal. On the other hand, one should find security in fidelity, if it is honored. Whereas Irene faithfully accepts her obligation to protect Clare, because “she had to Clare Kendry a duty. She was bound to her by those very ties of race, which, for all her repudiation of them, Clare had been unable to completely sever,” Clare remains incapable of regarding Irene with the same responsibility (52). Instead, Irene observes:

It wasn’t […] that Clare cared at all about the race or what was to become of it. She didn’t. Or that she had for any of its members great, or even real affection […] nor even [a] slight artistic or sociological interest in the race that some members of other races displayed. She hadn’t. No, Clare Kendry cared nothing for the race. She only belonged to it. (52)

While Clare has chosen to live solely as a white woman and is therefore considered disloyal to her black heritage, even though Caucasian blood runs through her veins as well, she still “belongs” to the black community regardless of her willing disaffiliation. She cannot entirely lose her association with the African-American culture because her biological and ethnic membership remains “utterly unrelated to behavior or allegiance” (Jenkins 140). Therefore, she must, in effect, renounce her race in order to be free of the implications that her blackness would have for her. In essence, Clare doesn’t just become un-black; she must entirely exist as a white person. She crosses the color line as she “passes” from one race to another, and her act foreshadows another form of “passing” that seems inevitable for her: the final act of “passing away” (Sullivan 373).

Clare eventually pays for her transgression when she ultimately finds freedom in death:“Gone! The soft white face, the bright hair, the disturbing scarlet mouth, the dreaming eyes, the caressing smile, the whole torturing loveliness” (111). In the end, the price of disparity proves to be exorbitantly expensive as it ultimately costs Clare her life, “emphasizing the extent of racism’s infringement on African American lives” (Sullivan 379). For it is in death that she actualizes the abstract idea of destruction that was created and imposed on her by a society which cannot (or at least will not) tolerate her divergence. In terms of the narrative, Clare’s act of “passing” causes her death because, as her mask is removed and she is exposed, her fraudulent existence ceases, and she perishes in essence before she actually plummets to the cold, hard ground (Ahmed 91). As Modernist writers like Larson strive to create newness in their work, the movement from Romanticism to Naturalism allows for a narrative fate within the text. Naturalistic works are realistic and attempt to assimilate the dark harshness of real-life into the story. In a manner, reality, as it is perceived, dictates the outcome. So, in essence, Clare dies because she must die. Irene wills it into being to remove the threat Clare poses to her, and Bellew’s public declaration, “No niggers in my family. Never have been and never will be,” hangs in the air as a reigning authoritative decree (40). Again, the societal burden of race identity imposes a prescribed set of ideals and expectations which eventually exposes this ambiguously raced protagonist: “Clare is unmasked [and] her only alternative is death, a final passing” (Harrison-Kahan 127).

Moreover, while her death remains unresolved (murder? suicide? accident?), her fall to the snowy earth mirrors her expulsion from the social heights in which she existed: she inevitably plummets to the masked darkness below, a similar darkness to the one she veiled for so many years. The snow will melt and the whiteness will disappear, exposing the dark “truth” beneath. Again, Clare is negated as she fades away (literally disappears) from the masquerade that once concealed her true identity, causing, initially, the loss of her life in the abstract before ultimately leading to the loss of her physical life (Sullivan 379). In Lacanian psychoanalysis, this total forfeiture of a person’s selfhood is a concept called aphanisis, a condition where the subject is deemed worthless and removed of being as if existing entirely without one’s unique identity (Lacan 38). This “subjective destitution,” or personal impoverishment, describes Clare’s existence, revealing that the most significant loss to Clare is that of her distinctive and at least partly African-American identity (Ibid.).

Marking the onset and conclusion of Clare’s journey, two scenes stand in paradox and further illustrate the dilemma of her masquerade. An early scene takes place in what is essentially a white haven on the roof of the Drayton Hotel where, like Clare, Irene also “passes” and is “wafted upward on a magic carpet to another world, pleasant, quiet, and strangely remote from the sizzling one that she had left below” (13). In contrast, while mirroring this early scene of whiteness and brightness, the opposite is reflected, revealing instead blackness and darkness of night. This finale takes place at a party on the top floor of a building where Clare is escorted by her rediscovered African-American friends to the heights of a penthouse apartment. The encounter occurs far above the snow-covered earth in what could be seen by Clare as her newfound black heaven. Because of her dissatisfaction with living in disguise, Clare has found it necessary to return to her original roots. At this point, she ceases to worry about discovery and instead follows her yearning to "come up" to Harlem and live where she could finally “do as I please, when I please" (106). Remarkably, this new desire contradicts Clare’s previous longing for the liberties she sought through living as a white woman (Harrison-Kahan 134). While Clare once told Irene that her blackness was something “that I once thought I was glad to be free of,” she later admits that she misses the connection with her heritage (11). In fact, Clare announces to Irene that after abandoning her black community she has “been so lonely since! You can’t know. Not close to a single soul. Never anyone to really talk to” (67). Hence, the independence that Clare formerly sought and enjoyed in a white existence she later attributes to realigning with her black heritage (Harrison-Kahan 134). Regarding any act of racial “passing,” Larson’s narrative demonstrates that the price of maintaining a disparate membership in humanity seems to be not only the loss of distinctiveness but also the loss of fellowship because individuals cannot fully exist separated from their selves as well as their community.

The mere exploit of “passing” for one race over another is in itself an aggressive deletion of identity because a biracial individual who decides to live solely as a Caucasian assertively becomes neither white *nor* black (while also remaining both white *and* black). The very definition of the behavior indicates not a position, but rather an action that is unstable, unfixed, and constantly in motion: “derived from the Latin *passus* (‘to step or pace’), ‘passing’ connotes transience, the sense of being between places, of being neither inside nor outside (yet *both* inside *and* outside) a particular space or grouping” (Toth 57). While this blurring of the lines between races can be effective in removing such defining and, therefore, confining boundaries, until antiquated definitions of race identity are supplanted by new perspectives there remains no resting place where a person who “passes,” like Clare Kendry, actually assumes a new identity. Instead, her character is one with an absence of self, like a specter hovering in the air, eerily followed by “that trill of notes that was Clare Kendry’s laugh, small and clear and the very essence of mockery” (21). Although the incorporeal concept of “passing” allows for a free-flowing “mobility” between races (Ahmed 95), the tangible action of “passing” in a physical and mental capacity places the individual in a transient state: one of *becoming* instead of *being* (Toth 57). Therefore, the person who “passes” exists like the child who straddles the border of two states and asks which one he is in. The answer is neither *and* both which evokes a sense of insecurity and impermanence (Ibid.). Because while “this hazardous business of ‘passing,’ this breaking away from all that [is] familiar and friendly to take one’s chance in another environment, [may] not [be] entirely strange,” Irene intuitively realizes, “[it is also] certainly not entirely friendly” (24). As fair-skinned mulatto individuals choose to deny their black lineage by “passing” for white, they continue to not only personally live within but also further generate “transience and instability” in their personal lives and the African-American community as a whole (Toth 57). Since a person like Clare Kendry exists in ambiguity, without relation or connection to any one particular group, she threatens to upend society’s prescribed ideas of identity and community (Toth 55). This disruption further complicates the identification of the “passer” by bringing into question whether or not such an individual can maintain a coherent sense of stability (Ibid.). After all, is it possible for an individual to paradoxically exist as one person in two separate places or as two distinct people yet living one life? This existential straddling of the line between place and identity may seem plausible in theory, but in reality the fluctuation between existences only contributes to personal and public racial abstruseness.

Ultimately, by identifying with one aspect of her race while also repudiating another through the act of “passing,” Clare cannot embrace who she is historically and still preserve a balanced sense of self. Although she intends to lose only one aspect of herself in order to exist fully within another, she instead loses both. Larson’s novella, while fiction, examines the persistent quandary of assigning value to race, and for that reason her narrative becomes an extended commentary on racism and the need for social change relevant to 1920s America and beyond. If society at large had been able to recognize and rescind the dehumanizing effects of racial bigotry through generating a social conversion which accepts all races as equal, such a compulsion to “pass” would not exist. Perhaps to expose how the presence of cultural bigotry acts as a dictatorship, Larson examines the repercussions of prejudice in *Passing* to reveal the deeply personal privation caused by such governing racial biases*.* Throughout this exposé, it also becomes clear—as Clare’s “passing” for white exhibits—that the “impossibility of racial identity being secured through the visual coding of difference” remains as an unresolvable impasse (Ahmed 10). In short, the color of one’s skin cannot be a reliable indicator of race. Moreover, this discovery may further demonstrate that there can be “no absolute criteria” for deciding racial affiliations regarding “identity, property, and belonging” at all (Ibid.). In fact, Larson’s chronicle presents and magnifies the reality that the very act of deciding upon a list of criteria for racial identification is indeed the root of all forms of racism. To further address this, her text creates a dialogue through which readers understand that removing bigotry from society’s mores would promote racial liberty and equality. Then, instead of dark as it is in the conclusion of *Passing*, perhaps everything could be light. Because while Clare may have acquired some of the things she wanted through her act of “passing,” it is only because she “met the great condition of conquest, sacrifice” (108). She even goes so far as to proclaim to Irene, “I think it’s even worth the price” (28). But perhaps Clare does not count on the fact that the requisite sacrifice has cost her not only the security of an enduring legacy but also, eventually, her very life. Perhaps she never realizes that the highest price of “passing” is in losing her identity as she ultimately does turn white and disappear.

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**Fandom as the Rhetoric of Nationalism:**

**How Professional Sports Leagues Influence Our Lives**

Rick James Frankos

It is March 11, 2011. The Los Angeles Dodgers have just survived a narrow 2-1 victory over the San Francisco Giants after Dodgers closer Jonathan Broxton nearly blew a save opportunity by allowing a solo homerun with two outs to go in the ninth (Associated Press). Minutes after the nail-biting finish, Giants fan Bryan Stow is nearly beaten to death by Dodgers faithfuls Louie Sanchez and Marvin Norwood in the parking lot of Dodger Stadium (Lovett 16). Stow went on to spend the following months in a medically induced coma after suffering severe brain damage that would leave him permanently disabled, while Sanchez and Norwood later pleaded guilty to the beating and accepted their sentences with warm smiles before Los Angeles Supreme Court Judge George G. Lomeli (Ibid). In the minds of Sanchez and Norwood, they had done a good deed. Sanchez and Norwood identified Stow as the Other—a man wearing orange and black in a sea of blue and white—and beat him mercilessly, setting an example for any foreigners who may wish to enter their stadium in the future.

The violence exhibited by Sanchez and Norwood is extreme, but the occurrence of violence between rival fans is not altogether unusual. Heated arguments, throwing food, splashing drinks, spitting, fist-fights—these acts of fan violence are not surprising, and could even be considered normal behavior in some particularly hostile sports environments. These acts characterize a need for fans to defend from outsiders the sports community that they identify as their own. This raises the following question: how do we, as fans, come to identify one sports team as our own, while identifying all other sports teams and their fans as the Other? For fans who identify with a nearby sports team, the answer may seem like common sense: *because this is my team, they represent where I live*. But there is more to it than just geographical commonality. There is a force at work that makes the connection between fans and their sports teams—especially local sports teams—seem natural.

The natural connection between fans and their sports teams is reminiscent of a trait of nationalism defined by critical theorist Benedict Anderson in his monograph *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. In his introduction, Anderson notes that the connection between individual and nation is a concept that is taken for granted, stating “in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender” (7). Those with even a passing interest in a particular sport often align themselves with a local sports team, just like those born in a certain country align themselves with a certain nationality. Describing the happenstance of being born in a certain community, Anderson notes that “it is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny” (10). Both nations and sports franchises have a way of turning the randomness of being born in a certain geographic region into a personal connection, but how do they do it? What rhetoric is at work to make these connections come so naturally? According to Anderson, governments invent imagined communities—counties, states, provinces, nations—that bring people together from far and wide, people who will never even meet face to face, to support a governing power (7). My analysis of sports fandom will seek to trace the roots of modern communities by analyzing Anderson’s theories and then situate them in a modern context by applying rhetorical theory from Paul Virilio. Doing this will reveal how sports franchises manage to inculcate a sense of fandom into the minds of individuals through visual rhetoric and the careful regulation of media broadcasting.

**Tracing Nationalism**

Before the age of nations, most individuals had little concept of the world outside their local surroundings. The sense of community for a fifteenth century serf did not extend beyond his or her local village because common people would rarely, if ever, meet people in other villages. They could not establish personal connections with people in other villages without actually meeting them, making it difficult for them to imagine themselves as connected to a ruling provincial body. The challenge for an *imagined* community is creating a sense of connection between people far and wide, people who will never meet face to face because they live in different geographic regions. This is the challenge for nations, and it is here that Anderson picks up his analysis.

Preexisting the imagined communities created by nations were cultural communities based on religion and language. Anderson describes religions such as Christianity and Islam as the original imagined communities, stating “The great sacral cultures … incorporated conceptions of immense communities. Christendom, the Islamic Ummah, and even the Middle Kingdom … were imaginable largely through the medium of a sacred language and written script” (10). Religious ideologies succeeded in creating imaginable connections between people far and wide through the use of religious texts. In the example Anderson uses, two Muslims from different continents find themselves capable of establishing a connection through faith because each of them has read the same religious texts and participated in the same religious ceremonies (Ibid). Their faith transcends geographic location, creating a sense of connection that both individuals can imagine and understand. When one member of a religious community attends a religious ceremony or prays to God, this person can imagine millions of other people across the Earth doing the same. Should two people of the same faith from faraway regions meet for the first time, despite having no personal connections, the two would share a sense of spiritual connection through their common religious interests. This sense of connection, though different, is just as strong as those shared among members of a local community.

For nations, the obstacle to creating an imagined community is connecting diverse communities from distant regions with differing languages, faiths, and cultures, and rallying them to support a central governing power. Early nation-states did this through divine authority, with kingships deriving their power to rule from God (Anderson 13). However, this avenue is obviously not open to most modern day nations, or owners of sports franchises for that matter. To bridge the cultural differences between communities, Anderson argues that modern-day nations instill a sense of *simultaneity*. Anderson describes this phenomenon by explaining how members of a nation can visualize the other members of their nation living, working, and experiencing the same events within their nation at the same time. In his words:

The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history. An American will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 240,000-odd fellow-Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity.” (15)

Everything that happens within a nation happens to all areas and all members of the nation at the same time. Anderson attributes the emergence of simultaneity to the advancement of print technology in the eighteenth century, namely the newspaper, which reports the status of the nation within the confines of the imagined community (16). Newspapers, and by extension all contemporary news outlets, report occurrences within the imagined community as they occur. Citizens who read the news are able to keep abreast of the status of the nation, which creates a national consciousness of current events regarding the nation.

But how does simultaneity and reading the newspaper instill a sense of connection between individuals? First, newspapers reinforce the boundaries of an imagined community by categorizing news from within the nation as local, while categorizing news from outside the nation as foreign. To illustrate this, Anderson cites the story of a young Indonesian man who reads an article about a deceased vagrant: “He does not find the corpse of the destitute vagrant by the side of a sticky Semarang road, but imagines it from the print in a newspaper. Nor does he care the slightest who the dead vagrant individually was: he thinks of the representative body, not the personal life” (19). In this example, Anderson describes a young man who does not think of the vagrant as an individual, but as a generic member representative of his nation. The story is intrinsically important to the young man because it details the death of a citizen of his nation. Even though the young man has never personally met the vagrant, his life is important because he is a fellow citizen in the same community. The concept of simultaneity comes into effect once people throughout the community read this same story about the deceased vagrant. Anderson argues that the simultaneous reading of the newspaper creates a ceremony for the members of the community, one that is duplicated by people across the nation, reinforcing the readers’ perception of the imagined community. Anderson describes the scene in grand fashion: “each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned?” (20). Having each member of the imagined community participate in the daily “ceremony” of reading the newspaper serves the same function as followers of a religious faith reading the same religious texts: both instill a sense of connection between vast amounts of people who will never actually meet, but who are aware of each other’s existence. The advent of newspapers expanded the imaginations of citizens by creating a sense of connection among distant individuals. Where the fifteenth century serf could only imagine himself as a member of his local village, the modern citizen can imagine him/herself as a member of England.

**Simultaneity in the Digital Age**

Not overlooking the terminal decline of the newspaper industry, it is important to analyze how the modern age of digital media has affected simultaneity. Anderson’s theory is still very much applicable today, but it extends far beyond newspapers. Furthering the theory of simultaneity is rhetorical theorist Paul Virilio, whose concepts of *instantaneity* and *telepresence* account for the modern advances in technology lacking in Anderson’s theory. Virilio’s theory is derived from what he describes as a “reduction of distances,” made possible by advances in both physical transportation systems (automobiles, trains, airplanes) and electronic communication systems (the transportation of audiovisual information) (*Negative Horizon* 46). The increasing speed of these two systems and their impact on simultaneity merges in the following excerpt from Virilio’s *Negative Horizon*:

Where there were once still the three terms of the departure, the trip, and the arrival, there now remain only two: the departure and the arrival. With the transportation revolution, the interval has progressively disappeared in the progress of acceleration. With the airlines, for example, the ‘distance-space’ (in kilometers) has been replaced by the ‘distance-time,’ pure temporality where the milieu is done away with as a field of action by the violence of the progress of the machine. But this contraction-collision continues, each augmentation of mobile power reduces this *line* of aerial trajectory, tomorrow no doubt there will no longer be anything but arrival, *the point of arrival*, the departure will have itself disappeared in the instantaneity of the projection. Such is already the case with audiovisual communications where the observer and the auditor are matched up before the screen, *the departure for the meeting has come to an end, it is replaced by the arrival of images* on the screen or even that of the voice on the earpiece. [Emphasis in original] (115)

What Virilio postulates is that ever-advancing physical transportation technologies have diminished the obstacle of spatial distance between places. It is now more appropriate to measure distance in units of time rather than units of physical space. A trip from the suburbs to the city that once measured 20 miles by foot now measures 20 minutes by automobile. As transportation systems increase in speed, the time-distance between vectors decreases, making the world a smaller place, and allowing for larger, wide-reaching communities. Virilio goes on to suggest that the existence of audiovisual communication—radio, television, and video telecommunication technologies—has seemingly overcome the obstacle of distance altogether, making the concept of distance-space irrelevant when establishing connections between people far and wide. There is no departure, no distance, only arrival. When someone views an audiovisual scene on their television or computer screen, their minds instantly arrive at that place as if they were there—they have achieved *instantaneity*.

Virilio’s logic needs further explaining, since viewing a scene on television obviously does not physically transport the viewer to a new location. The question that remains for Virilio is this: does the audiovisual experience provided by a television or computer monitor constitute reality, or are the images provided by these electronic devices merely a representation of reality? (*Open Sky* 37). To answer this question, Virilio identifies the existence of two realties: an “apparent horizon” provided by the concrete, tactile reality of the viewer; and a “transparent horizon” provided by the reality of television, or “telepresence” (Ibid 38). The audiovisual display of television grants viewers a virtual perspective, providing them with a sensory experience comparable to that of someone physically witnessing the event being broadcasted—the viewer has *telepresence* at that scene.

When watching a television or computer screen, we do not focus on the frame of pixels displaying the image. We ignore the presence of the audiovisual device itself and become absorbed into the audiovisual scene. There is a merger of perspectives between the apparent horizon of real life (the television as an object) and the transparent horizon of the television (the televised scene). This merger allows us to become fully immersed in the audiovisual perspective provided by the television:

The *vanishing-point* of the original perspective (geometric optics) … is superseded by the *vanishing of all points* (pixels, data bits) in the second perspective (physical optics) of real time…Here information … becomes the final relief of reality, a reality as calculable as the surface of the painting once was for the original perspectivists, a *virtual reality* that offers every one of us the considerable advantage of being both more ‘real’ than imagination and more easily controlled than concrete reality. (*Open Sky* 66)

Virilio argues that telepresence is made real for the viewer because information is the “final relief of reality.” Sensory information—audio and visual feedback—is made real as it is experienced by the viewer. The telepresence provided by television creates a space in which the “apparent horizon” of real life and the “transparent horizon” of virtual reality meet at a vanishing point. This vanishing point becomes a virtual space, a “virtual reality” in which the images presented by television and internet media are representative of the real thing. The viewer is not present at the place being broadcasted, but is instead experiencing the sights and sounds within a virtual space as if he or she were present. For Virilio, instantaneity bypasses distance through the virtual perspective provided by telepresence.

Simultaneity comes into effect once multiple viewers enter the same virtual space provided by the broadcast, experiencing the audiovisual feedback together as a community. An example of this occurred on May 2, 2011 when Barack Obama approached the podium to announce that Osama bin Laden had been killed. Millions of Americans experienced the same sights and sounds of the broadcast from their televisions at home, and even more from the screens of their smart phones. The simultaneity of this event was illustrated in grand fashion during a late-night baseball game between the Mets and Phillies. As rumors percolated through social media and news outlets, fans in the stands gradually turned to the screens of their smartphones to investigate the news, each entering the virtual space from which the news of the event was being broadcasted, ignoring the baseball game that was being played out before them (Rubin). In other words, these smartphone users turned their attention away from the “apparent horizon” of their stadium surroundings and instead became absorbed into the “transparent horizon” of their smartphone screens. During the ninth inning, at a location hundreds of miles away, Barak Obama approaches the podium to announce that Osama bin Laden had been killed. Fans in the stands with access to the broadcast were able to join in the event through their smartphones, while viewers at home were free to change channels to the live event. Each viewer was witnessing the same momentous event from the virtual space of their broadcast screen, telepresent in the virtual space of the live broadcast, instilling a sense of national consciousness among those who watched—the perfect merger of instantaneity and simultaneity. Ironically, the players and coaches on the field were not part of the simultaneity of the event because they were not accessing President Obama’s broadcast. Likewise, the viewers at home still watching the baseball game were being granted the perspective of a spectator in the stands, while the spectators physically attending the ballgame were telepresent at an event hundreds of miles away. The players, coaches, and fans at home detached from the national event were unaware of the significance of the occasion and confused by the seemingly random eruption of “U-S-A” chants that swept across the stadium (Rubin).

**Tracing Fandom**

Having grounded ourselves in Anderson’s theory of simultaneity and Virilio’s theory of instantaneity, we can now begin to apply these elements to the world of sports, understanding how sports franchises establish imagined communities of their own. To begin, all professional sports franchises associate themselves with a preexisting imagined community through their names: the *Houston* Rockets (the city level), the *Colorado* Rockies (the state level), and the *New England* Patriots (the regional level). Using the labels of preexisting imagined communities establishes importance in that area, since it implies that the people of that region are represented by that franchise, with the team’s success or failure bringing pride or shame directly upon the people of that region. Using the labels of preexisting imagined communities also makes the sports community easier to imagine, although sports franchises are not necessarily limited to these preexisting borders in the way that cities, states, and nations are, as we will find out later. For this reason, it is important to avoid getting too focused on the name and location of a franchise and its implied geographic boundaries when visualizing a particular sports community. Geographic location is a strong, but not totalizing force influencing fan loyalty toward a particular sports franchise.

Regardless of physical location, sports franchises must work the same magic as nations in order to establish and nurture connections within their imagined community. Fans need a simultaneous ceremony in which to participate, just as the Muslims had their Koran, the nations have their newspapers. These connections must transcend differences in location, religion, political beliefs, and even language. Sports franchises accomplish this through the use of multiple mediums of communication, all of which focus on the athletic competition that is played on the field between teams. On game day, the grand ceremony begins as fans filter into the stadium, dressed in the colors of their team, while thousands more are telepresent from home. Even this simple visual component of thousands of fans seated in an arena displaying the same color scheme, the same *uniform*, should not be underestimated. It is what Virilio calls a “delocalizedlanguage,” whereby two or more members in a given space communicate without words that they are members of the same community (*Vision Machine* 6). Virilio cites signal flags, colored pennants, and schematic emblems as examples of devices that substitute language on the battlefield, allowing for quick identification of one’s allies and enemies (ibid). Appropriately enough, all of these battlefield items can be found in the sports stadium, which is itself a glorified combat zone between imagined communities. Delocalized language allows for constant communication between those attending the ceremony. Without it, fans would be unable to discern ally from Other, friend from foe. Seated shoulder to shoulder, faced with the view of thousands of allies participating in the same ceremony, fans are no longer individuals, but members of a collective. Those who wear the same colors, they are all members of a community, one that need not be imagined in that moment. Cheering the good plays, booing the bad plays, chanting the same chants, singing the same fight songs, the sense of community is at its peak. When the home team wins, we, as fans, do not say *they* [the players]won, or *the team* won; we say *we* won, illustrating our sense of community. We see ourselves as part of the team, part of the community, part of something greater than ourselves.

Of course, the physical rallying of the sports community around the field of play is only sufficient at instilling a sense of connection among those who actually attend. During the dawn of organized team baseball in the 1840s, physically attending the game was the only real way to participate in the sports community due to the limited modes of transportation and information technology. Because of this, the earliest professional baseball leagues were largely located on the well-populated east coast and kept somewhat localized, with New York serving as the hub for most professional baseball franchises. The National Association of Baseball, which was established in 1857, linked 60 different teams to the New York City area (Bready 4). It makes sense that the boundaries of the earliest imagined sports communities were much smaller than they are today and required much less imagination. Indeed, during the earliest decades of professional sports history, one could argue that sports communities were not really imagined whatsoever, since the boundaries of sports communities genuinely did not spread beyond the city that the sports team represented with their name. For example, interest in the Baltimore Marylands, the imaginative name of a short-lived franchise headquartered at the now nonexistent Madison Avenue Fairgrounds, would have waned greatly beyond the suburbs of Baltimore (Bready 7). An early baseball enthusiast who missed out on the 1869 47-7 thrashing of the Baltimore Marylands by the Cincinnati Red Stockings would have to settle for reading about the outcome of the game in *The Baltimore Sun* the next day (ibid 9), which falls well short of the connection established by actually attending the game. The shortcomings of newspapers to imbue the same sense of community as nations among early sports fans could be attributed to the lack of games played. The Baltimore Marylands only played six games in 1873, losing all six (ibid 225). Reading about them in the newspaper the following day would not be a reliable ceremony for fans, especially if they did not understand or have interest the game of baseball.

As technology improved, the popularity of professional sports improved with it. Let’s stick with baseball. As long distance transportation became more common, baseball franchises became capable of traveling to more places to play games. Likewise, fans were able to travel from the suburbs to watch their team play in the city. Physical transportation technology was making the world smaller, while allowing communities to grow larger, as touched on earlier by Virilio. Although the more populated east coast was still the most popular baseball region, being home to nine of the sixteen teams in the MLB at the start of the twentieth century, more teams were popping up everywhere (Bready 53). Then, in the 1920s, baseball franchises began to broadcast their games via radio. Take the first game ever broadcasted, which was between the Philadelphia Phillies at the Pittsburgh Pirates on August 5, 1921 (Rader 150). Without attending the actual game, fans in the suburbs of Pittsburgh could connect with their team as the action unfolded, rising and falling emotionally with the people in the stands as the team earned and surrendered runs—if they could afford a radio, that is. There was only one radio in every 400 homes in 1922, which increased to one in every three homes by 1929 (Wenner 59). Nevertheless, the advent of radio broadcasting marked the first time in history when fans located in distant places could all enjoy the same game simultaneously. The instantaneity allowing for a distant, imagined sports community had been invented.

For all that the radio did to expand the imagined sports community, television did so much more. Adding the visual aspect of the game to the sound already provided by radio allowed viewers not only to see and experience the action on a visual level, but also to connect with the people in the stands. Fans at home could now participate in the ceremony of watching the game together, despite being many miles away—professional sports had attained telepresence. The introduction of television media was especially instrumental in exposing the American public to professional football, as commissioner of the NFL Bert Bell was already beginning to recognize by the 1950s (Steadman 7). The 1958 NFL Championship, also known as “The Greatest Game Ever Played,” in which the Baltimore Colts defeated the New York Giants in a sudden death overtime thriller, is largely considered the single greatest moment that vaulted football into America’s spotlight (ibid 148). Football was merely a fringe sport with a small cult following in the 1950s. The 1958 NFL Championship changed all of that, introducing the game to fans in a way that they could see and understand. Had fans been limited to a radio broadcast of the 1958 NFL Championship, those unfamiliar with football would have been unable to visualize and connect with the unfamiliar action that was being narrated by the announcers. The advent of televised games allowed more fans to break through the geographic barriers limiting their ability to witness professional sporting events and establish a connection with a sports community. In the modern age of on-demand television and streaming internet, fans from different states or even different continents can receive televised games from the team of their choice. In a modern setting, the Baltimore Marylands would not be limited to the small pool of people living in the local community of Baltimore; they would have radio, television, and streaming internet capable of broadcasting their games to fans across the globe, allowing their fan base—their imagined sports community—to expand into a global network of fans connected far and wide.

**Official Fandom**

Using the principle of simultaneity, sports franchises control multiple mediums of communication to create a sense of community among fans who will never actually meet. However, creating an imagined sports community requires more than just a sports team, fans, and a media outlet; a “build it and they will come” attitude only works in the movies. Keep in mind that sports franchises are businesses, and like all businesses, they employ certain tactics to mold disinterested individuals into reliable consumers. The goal of each franchise is to guide people into their sports community and away from rival sports communities—they want to naturalize individuals into their fan base. Professional sports leagues do this by controlling the sources of media available to us as fans, enabling our ability to connect with local teams while hindering our ability to connect with others—they are attempting to establish an *official* *fandom* in various regions across the country by allowing fans access to only certain sports broadcasts.

Official fandom seeks to establish a border much wider than the boundaries of the city in which the franchise is located, stretching the franchise’s territory into neighboring cities and states. Doing this allows sports franchises to claim larger fan bases—or consumer bases—to support their franchise. Take a look at the map of the NFL in figure 1, which charts fan allegiance among the 32 individual NFL franchises based on the level of social media interest tracked by Twitter. Each grid represents a specific county, while each color represents the team with the most social media interest in that area.

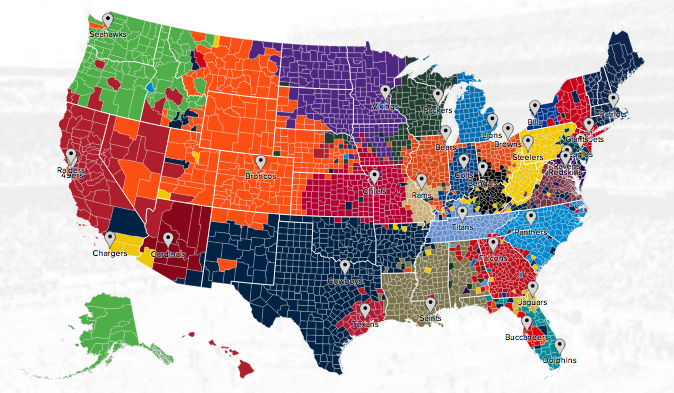


Figure 1. Map of the NFL from Simon Rogers; “#NFL2014: Where Are Your Team's Followers?;” *Twitter Blogs*; Twitter, 2 Dec. 2014; Web; 2 Dec 2014.

Some cities and/or states are without a franchise of their own, while others have multiple franchises headquartered within their boundaries. These sports franchises are like miniature empires, each spreading out into nearby regions to claim fans just outside of their boundaries. The pattern illustrated in figure 1 is not coincidental; it is influenced heavily by the NFL. The question is: how does each franchise go about claiming its regions and asserting its official nationalism, or rather, *official* *fandom*? The answer lies in the NFL’s control of the media.

The most effective way for sports leagues to establish official fandom in specific regions across the United States is to control which regions have access to which games. This relates directly to the media, which provides the public with newspaper, radio, and television access covering specific games from the various sports leagues. Putting newspapers and radio aside, since they offer weaker forms of simultaneity, let us focus on television broadcasting, specifically NFL television broadcasting, which is the most notorious controller of media broadcasting among the major American sports leagues because of their strict blackout laws. It begins with the contractual obligations the NFL imposes on its television affiliates, namely FOX and NBC, who are required to televise certain games in certain regions based on artificial markets created by the NFL. The NFL’s motivation for doing this is to give each of its 32 franchises as even a piece of the football market as possible. To do this, the NFL designates a “home territory,” consisting of the city in which the franchise is located (NFL 12). Within the home territory, all sold out home games must be televised, as well as all away games (FCC 2). In addition, no other game may be broadcasted within a primary market other than that of the home team while that team is playing a game at home (NFL 12). This is done to grant the home team a monopoly over its local consumers and to eliminate competition from other franchises. Ordinarily, such a monopoly would be illegal in the U.S.; however, the Sports Broadcasting Act of 1961 allows such a monopoly, so long as the sports league acts as one entity (Wenner 61). If a home game is not sold out in the primary market, the NFL, in agreement with its broadcasters, will “blackout,” or refuse to televise the game within that market in an effort to force more fans to purchase tickets and attend the actual game (FCC 2). Fan attendance serves as a greater source of revenue than television broadcasting, so it benefits the team with home territory if more fans are forced to purchase tickets and attend the game (FCC 5). In this way, football fans in the area designated as “home territory” are given little choice regarding which games they would like to watch on television: they can watch the home team, or they can watch nothing at all. Of course, football fans in the home territory can watch whichever games happen to be on television the next hour, but having this brief monopoly over the television broadcast for even one part of every Sunday afternoon gives the home territory’s franchise a distinct advantage over all other franchises because their games are the only constant source of simultaneity.

In addition to having a designated home market, each NFL franchise has various secondary markets extending a radius of 75 miles outward from the boundaries of its home territory, as well as other select areas outside of this radius as determined by the NFL (NFL 12). Areas designated as the secondary market of an NFL franchise must televise all away games of their aligned franchise over any other games (Murray 1C), while the broadcasting of the affiliated franchise’s home games is left to the discretion of local broadcasters. Doing this allows the NFL to divide the hinterlands between NFL home territories into secondary markets, giving the franchises a more evenly divided market size. So, without even knowing it, a resident in Delaware is having his or her fandom influenced by the invisible hand of the NFL, which dictates that all Philadelphia Eagles road games be televised in his or her area because Delaware falls within the Eagles’ secondary market. This goes over smoothly in most areas; Delawareans seem to embrace the Eagles according to the map of the NFL. However, the establishment of secondary markets by the NFL often creates conflict among franchises and fans, especially when secondary market boundaries extend beyond state lines and overlap with other rival primary and secondary markets. An example of the conflict created by NFL secondary markets establishing official fandom occurs in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where residents are treated to Baltimore Ravens games in place of more popular Pittsburgh Steelers games (Murray 1C). Pennsylvania legislators are at the forefront of this resistance, representing their constituency by passing a resolution urging the NFL to free areas of Pennsylvania falling within the Ravens’ secondary market from the television laws providing them with Ravens games in place of Steelers games (Murray 1C). The NFL has yet to change its rules regarding secondary markets, making the city of Harrisburg a disputed territory that is still claimed by the Ravens franchise to this day.

**Resisting Official Fandom**

Contrary to the conventions of official fandom, there are certain fans who defy the media marketing strategy organized by the major American sports leagues and their media affiliates. Some fans do this by purchasing premium television packages that broadcast all of their teams’ games for several hundred dollars per year. However, this only further supports the sports leagues and their media marketing systems by buying into a service that would not even exist without the artificial creation and enforcement of official fandom. These consumers are only funding the media marketing system that hurts them by paying the sports leagues a premium for games that fans within the intended media market, presumably “official” fans, receive for free.

The strict enforcement of media markets, coupled with the steep price of premium television packages, has not come without repercussions. As is the case with nearly any digital product, there is often a way for it to be stolen, and the same is true of professional sports broadcasts. Anyone who has watched a sports broadcast has probably noticed a disclaimer along the lines of “any use of the pictures and accounts of this game without the express written consent of [the professional sports league] is prohibited.” This disclaimer essentially warns that the rebroadcasting of professional sports games without the consent of the professional sports league is illegal, and it is precisely this type of product that can be found all over the internet. With the right directions in hand, one can navigate the back-alleys of the internet and find websites that cater to fans who do not wish to pay hundreds of dollars to receive their teams’ broadcasts on television by providing them with illegal broadcasts, otherwise known as *streams*. By accessing these illegal streams, the uninitiated individual can discover a sport on his/her own and establish a connection with whichever team they choose without being influenced by the official fandom established in their area. These expatriates, the true pirates of the sports world, have not only found a way to live outside of the media marketing map, but to do so without paying the fees associated with purchasing a premium television package.

The free streaming of games online poses a serious threat to the structuring of imagined communities. Now, an individual living anywhere in the world can access any game, anywhere, at any time simply by accessing a pirated stream from their computer or smartphone, becoming a fan completely from scratch, uninfluenced by the established official fandom in their region—the dawn of the *nomadic* fan. Where traditional fans were once limited to only the games televised in his or her area, nomadic fans can roam the media marketing map as they please, arriving with instantaneity at any team’s location. Geographic location and official fandom would become obsolete forces for establishing imagined sports communities, as nomadic fans can exist and interact with their fellow fans in the omnipresent virtual space of the internet. Sports franchises would no longer have a monopoly over their local surroundings, as their blackout laws would no longer have any effect when fans can just bypass them altogether with streams.

Nomadic fandom promotes the emergence of loyal fans in regions largely unexposed to American sports. There is great potential for growth outside of the United States for all of the major American sports leagues, and each of the major American sports leagues has already attempted to spread awareness of their sport outside of North America by playing select games abroad. However, establishing a specific official fandom in any one foreign region has not been attempted. Statistician Nate Silver calculated the viability of establishing official fandom abroad in a separate pair of studies analyzing the NHL and NFL and their potential for expansion. In his study of the NHL, Silver calculated immense room for expansion in Canada, with over one million unallocated, self-identified hockey fans living among several major metropolitan areas throughout Canada (“Why Can’t Canada”). Meanwhile, the NFL has roughly three million unallocated self-identified fans up for grabs in London and Mexico City alone (“The NFL Should Expand”).

If the NHL and NFL continue to leave foreign markets free from organized fandom, it is likely that fans in these regions will become nomadic and create bonds with a franchise of their choice. Pirated streams are even easier to access outside of the United States, since foreign entities are not subject to the American laws prohibiting them from broadcasting games illegally. There is really nothing stopping a basketball fan in Europe from accessing live streams of the San Antonio Spurs, for example, and nurturing a connection that may have been elicited by the strong core of European-born players on the Spurs’ roster. This fan would be able to turn on his or her computer, access a live stream, and gain the presence of instantaneity at one of the Spurs’ games without even knowing where San Antonio is located on a map. Simultaneity would thrive solely from within the imagined space of the internet, where the viewer would be able to arrive at the game through a telepresent stream and even communicate with other fans viewing the game by corresponding with them through online message boards or social media. Geographic location, and by extension media marketing tactics, will eventually become an obsolete method for organizing fandom, allowing individuals to form their own imagined connections without artificial influence from sports leagues and their official fandom.

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**The Influence of Economic Culture on Marital Unity**

Miriam Hirsch

Is it possible to consider *The Custom of the Country* a guidebook to the world of economics and commerce of the late nineteenth-century? Although many critics argue that this novel is simply a projection of Edith Wharton’s own negative experience of marriage and divorce, others explore the value placed on such unions during a time when men still maintained the majority of power, and women needed to be married not only to be valued, but had to marry *well,* so that they could maintain—or advantageously climb—their social position.The novel’s opening scene depicts the complex social class in America, in which Undine and her rivals vie for social notoriety in the ruthless world of New York’s nouveau riche. As her marriages are made and unravel, they evolve into a traded commodity in a world where women struggle for survival and raise the question: what value does marriage hold in the late nineteenth-century?

Analyzing the female characters is a practical starting point for understanding the female perspective on marriage with the assistance of author Margaret B. McDowell’s article, in which she explores the difference between the sexes in the novel through a feminist lens. McDowell claims that women are not, “in themselves, free to choose the course by which they can best fulfill their emotional and intellectual aspirations,” but rather, they are expected to follow the unwritten and unspoken rules of the elite (Wharton 524). Perhaps this is true of most females, as they are a product of the social order where public perception—more often than not—stands in stark contrast to one’s real, private self. However, not only does Undine disprove this bold statement by setting into motion the events which lead to her eventual rise in society, but as McDowell asserts, women *need* fulfillment of their emotional and intellectual needs. Is it possible that Undine’s character proves that this simply is not true for women of her time? Wharton creates a seemingly-wonderful, extravagant, and satisfying lifestyle full of travel and the arts for Undine and her peers, and they, in turn, convey the impression of fulfillment.

The female characters appear to place value on being envied and living a life of lavishness far above the attainment of their emotional needs. We are skeptical at first whether Undine is propelled by her emotional desires or even rational aspirations, but when the reader is informed of her secret yet brief marriage to Elmer Moffatt, we are conscious from that point forward that she is unlike her peers. She is instinctually driven to succeed in terms of growing her wealth and reputation. Undine maintains a continual awareness of something greater to aspire to, and although “she had everything she wanted,” she still felt that “there were other things she may want if she knew about them” (Wharton 407). Her unquenchable thirst for greater things, as well as her boldness in disobeying her parents and the oppressive rules of society at every turn, establishes her character as a perceptive social climber. She is a woman with an adaptable nature who *does* choose her course in life, with little regard to the probable negative consequences.

Considering that “each husband offers her some of what she wants, but each also limits her in some way,” Rosemary Erickson Pierce notes in her assessment of Clare Van Degen and the female characters that Undine is not discouraged and deliberately preserves the illusion of grandeur and contentment—that is, until she becomes a divorcée (Pierce 107). While her ‘friend’, the coveted Clare, is “pitied for having an errant husband,” Pierce remarks, Clare is still able to maintain “an unbesmirched social position” (Pierce 108). Pierce expounds even further, emphasizing how even though “a wife with an unfaithful husband is perfectly acceptable in high society, a divorced woman is not” (Pierce 107-08). Pierce gives us a glimpse through the shiny curtain of this ‘perfect’ world to expose how some women must accept immorality within their confined marriages. Even a divorcée, who bravely rids herself of the demeaning behavior of a wandering husband, is often made a pariah. Something is sorely lacking in a society where everyone is a target for swift judgment and where the general sentiment of the wealthy is one of being uncomfortable but affecting quite the opposite.

Could it be the collective deficiency amongst these characters lies within the male perspective of love and marriage? Ralph Marvell, who is “imprisoned by a code of romantic chivalry” that “prevents him from honestly evaluating his wife until it is too late,” is a man whose intentions towards marriage are refreshingly honorable (McDowell 529). Nevertheless, his eagerness to put his wife on a pedestal inevitably causes a backlash of anger and resentment from Undine. Ralph is a product of the predetermined, narrow-minded environment that engulfs him, where expectations for a well-made marriage are high and family obligations must be met. He is unable to successfully break free from his fated world, regretfully falling into Undine’s trap of luring him down the aisle. Unfortunately, he is largely ignorant about marriage, only knowledgeable of the fact that “a husband exists to bestow lavish gifts” and, in turn, will “continue to receive his wife’s affection” (McDowell 529). Marriage, therefore, signifies benefits and shortcomings between a husband and wife in a system where it is made easy to keep an account of who is ‘winning’ in this apparent game called matrimony.

McDowell further explains how “the bargaining implicit in *The Custom of the Country* demeans women and men alike, but also gives women power over men if they choose to exert it” (McDowell 529). Ralph is uncomplicated, yet naive to a fault, and fails to understand his role and power within his marriage and his social circle. In contrast, Undine knows precisely how to exert power. She decides her fortune would best be served by divorcing Ralph, as she not only looks for material goods from men, but also power through marriage which is “the only means at her disposal,” suggests Richard Lawson in his review of the novel, “to get where she wants to go” (Lawson 46). Furthermore, Undine desperately seeks a reputation which connotes wealth and importance. She is only able to grow her power by taking advantage of those around her and is willing to utilize what little influence she has almost immediately upon her arrival in New York in search of a husband. McDowell perceptively summarizes Undine and all of Wharton’s heroines as “women [who] usually prevail” often by “sheer endurance,” but Wharton does not idealize them, understandably so, since she writes from her own arduous experience as a divorcée (McDowell 528). Furthermore, “destructive women in [Wharton’s] fiction gain power because they manipulate to their advantage the hypocrisy and pretense which characterized, in large part, the relations between the sexes,” an

idea so well exemplified in *The Custom of The Country* (McDowell 528)*.* In essence, although Undine wins the smaller battles, her damaging, manipulative behavior leads to unsuccessful, unfulfilling marriages.

To help examine the New York marriage market presented to Undine on her arrival, it is useful to explore the prevalence of the “upward mobile divorcées” as defined by Debra Ann MacComb in her article regarding the leisure-class (MacComb 767). The concept of divorcées becoming upwardly mobile marries well with the upward expansion of the nouveau riche—everyone within society is presented with the opportunity for development and expansion. The newly wealthy businessmen, made rich by post-Civil War opportunities, are amassing their fortunes at an astonishingly rapid rate; there is hardly time to acknowledge the value of their efforts and have a real sense of accomplishment. Most important, as demonstrated by the Van Degen and Marvell families, is for their wealth to be broadcasted and displayed for their peers so that society deems them important members of the elite social circles. Multiple houses and a mass accumulation of material goods are essential, as the nouveau riche ascend to the top tier of consumers. Wharton may be expressing this expansion of material consumption through the way in which Undine obtains, uses for maximum benefit, and then discards her husbands for the next, more valuable option. Perfectly exemplified when asked why the institution of marriage survives with her, Undine brazenly responds: “Oh it still has its uses. One couldn’t be divorced without it” (Wharton 212). Marriage, and by default divorce, is a valued commodity to her and for her survival. MacComb observes that “The divorce industry must have seemed particularly galling to Wharton because [of] its reputation for encouraging ‘rotary marriage’ along the lines of the period’s pervasive ‘rotary consumerism’” (MacComb 767). Just as material goods are obtained then disposed of, marriages, too, are placed in a similar cycle. MacComb’s economic terminology used for evaluating the formation and exchange of marriages gives insight, just like McDowell, into the mindset of the male-dominated labor force and how marriage becomes synonymous with the manufacturing of a product.

American inventions and technological innovations are rapidly transforming the economy of the late nineteenth-century. Emerging is a trend in American advertising “that emphasize[s] the benefits derived from consumption of a product rather than the qualities of the product itself” (MacComb 768). This idea manifests itself in Undine’s marriages, where she consumes all that she can. Exemplified most notably in her second marriage to Moffatt—after he becomes a man of great wealth and influence—she carefully considers the union and weighs the benefits of it, rather than determining the ‘quality’ of the person. Likewise, Moffatt weighs the benefits to him as “he manages his interest in her life as a stock investment” and greatly “desires to add her as his wife to his collection of ‘unmatched specimens’ of ‘the best’ the market has to offer” (MacComb 768,782). Undine, who views herself as a highly valued and unique offer to men she deems worthy, is acquired by Moffatt, as if she is an expensive purchase to simply be viewed along with his other prized possessions. However, her second marriage does seem to have the making of an equal partnership, as it is made under no pretenses. Consuming a product (i.e. marriage), therefore, is more beneficial for Undine—although at what cost exactly is uncertain—than the quality of a person, perhaps giving reason for Ralph’s behavior when he appears willfully ignorant of Undine’s true nature and motives, and simply wants to be married to her.

To understand this concept in its entirety in relation to Wharton’s novel, it is necessary to examine how the economy is able to develop at this time and to determine how marriages become a commodity in the first place. The market economy is being secured through advertising where greater attention is placed on benefit over product, reformulating the “necessities of life” (MacComb 768). Essentially, advertising is now able to direct people’s focus on what should hold value for them. Advertising is relying on the assumption that people’s desires are able to be provoked through the creation of fantasies, and in this case, a fantasy of what marriage entails. In *The Custom of The Country*, marriage is an institution “forever unrealizable because [it is] constructed on an ever-receding horizon of grand, illimitable abstractions” (MacComb 768). A lifestyle is being sold, not a union of two people with similar beliefs and goals, and therefore, people have limited ideas of what marriage should be based upon. Rather, they are mainly consumed by the alluring delusions being sold to them. Exemplified in Wharton’s own words: “[Undine’s] entrances were always triumphs… but they had no sequel” (Wharton 375). Undine is the epitome of the fantasy being sold to the men, but there is no depth beyond her superficial beauty. The solid foundation for her marriages to stand on is lacking since men are merely “the means by which she can advance up the social ladder to wealth and comfort” and because she, too, is a victim of advertising (Lawson 46). Undine and the other characters live in a cyclical world of continual renewal of material things. Therefore, happiness is not determined by the ownership of a few extravagant items—as was the custom of the original wealthy families who settled in New York—but the standard of living is measured by how quickly one determines that he is finished with those items, and is ready to move onto the next. Thus, the expanding divorce market helps to create a product, advertised as granting freedom and mobility, and assists in keeping the marriage economy expanding because spouses turn into dispensable items in the “rotary system of consumption” (MacComb 771).

Adding further depth to the argument, and to help to decipher this dilemma, it is productive to consider Laura Johnson’s evaluation of how marriage is linked to the economy in the novel. When women assume their new “marital privileges,” Johnson explains, they inadvertently accede “to their inferior economic position,” thereby participating “in their deepening commodification” (Wharton 951). In essence, women place themselves into the ‘marriage market,’ thereby buying into the industry. Wharton seems to have a vast understanding of the legal system of marriage and lays bare her economic analysis of marriage throughout this novel, insisting “that modern marriage law actually structures marriage as a market relationship” (Johnson 951). This is, perhaps, a radical idea, yet, with this perspective in mind, Undine’s presumed schemes are not wholly that, but rather they compose her *modus operandi*, method of operation, in order to solidify her survival. What Undine lacks is the knowledge that when women assume “the position of contractual partners, they accepted an illusion of equality that lack[s] substance” (Johnson 951). Wharton subtly expresses that if one cannot offer substance of character, one cannot expect to receive it. Once again, the foundations on which her marriages are made are flawed and merely an illusion, for there is no equality, but in reality, a fabricated relationship and sense of repression.

On the other hand, although constrained by marriage, there appears to be no other reliable way for women like Undine to have an income. Johnson suggests that financial security can only be obtained for women of this time through one method, since they are untrained in marketable skills, and the only plausible career for them is to be married. Johnson further explains that “economic pressures continually encourage her to marry for money,” and Undine’s best attribute is her proficiency at accomplishing just that (Wharton 951). Realizing that she alone cannot obtain her desires, Undine sacrifices her individuality within marriage in order to gain economic security. Further noting that “affiliating marriage with commerce also aligns it with competition,” Johnson reinforces the notion of marriage being a rotary item in the market of rotary consumerism (Wharton 954). Women are at a disadvantage and experience inequality from men and competition from other women, ultimately presenting Undine as a woman to be admired. Her narrative describes a course of success as she engineers her station in life from monogramed pigeon-blood note paper used only by the smartest women of the day, to receiving a tiara of pigeon-blood rubies, once belonging to Queen Marie Antoinette, as a bridal gift from Moffatt. She is driven by market necessities to consume and be consumed, even though she is caught in the spiraling circle of ceaseless renegotiation for her survival.

Through the experiences of the characters, then, are we to understand that marriage is unable to give women and even men what they long for and is merely a means of sustaining one’s very existence? Do marriage and divorce inevitably waste people’s time and finances, or has it always been a union that requires some measure of gambling and risk, just like future contracts are used in investing in other commodities? Wharton seems to shed light on the social inability to fix the contradictions within marriage and suggests that the greatest chance one has for fulfilling one’s personal beliefs is to break free from perceptions based on societal beliefs. And while the novel constantly critiques marriage, it simultaneously demands its importance in social life, almost as a necessary evil.

But perhaps this concept is one which a modern reader can relate to well. Technology, cars, jobs, and even spouses have become things which are easily recyclable for someone with misguided values searching for something bigger, better, bolder. One may even take a lesson from Undine who transitions from a consumer and makes herself a valued commodity in the marriage market. Marriage itself is viewed as a commodity and the transition launches her social climb. Perhaps the only way for Undine to play and succeed is to become part of the ‘game.’ Conversely, since divorce determines her worth and class, Undine is valued by extrinsic forces that are vulnerable to fluctuation and instability, as are her marriages. Unfortunately, stability is not something afforded to her or her son, leaving both of them dissatisfied, confused, and resentful with each passing divorce.

Divorce rates have come full circle in the past century, creating an even larger rotary system, with 50% of marriages ending in divorce. This statistic is disheartening and questions the continuity and sanctity so long valued within the union of marriage. During the past 100 years, marriage has been a constantly-evolving social structure; what was once traditional now represents the ‘old-fashioned’ values of a lost generation. Expectations have also evolved as women are no longer only expected to raise children and become homemakers, but rather, act as equal partners and in many cases, often contributing a much-needed second income. In the United States, equality is fought for and desired by many and now appears to be the common foundation for a successful marriage. While there will always be those who are instilled with time-honored beliefs in traditional family values, perhaps there will also remain those who seek the acceptance of the continuously-evolving roles of men and women within marriage. Society should work toward preserving the values inherent in the institution of marriage for the well-being of future generations because while marriage may be viewed as a risk, rewarding things in life do not always come easy.

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**Word Choice, Ideology, and Story-Telling**

**in *Death Comes for the Archbishop***

Kristen Magnani

Willa Cather’s *Death Comes for the Archbishop* follows two characters, Jean Marie Latour and Joseph Vaillant, as they spread Catholicism to Mexicans and Native Americans. Despite sharing a religion and a mission, these characters are set up against each other with distinct differences in their backgrounds, approaches to the practice of their religion, nuances in their Euro-centric behavior, and use of language in structuring their personal realities. Cather makes use of these differences not to judge human behavior, but instead to show a variance in it. Within this human behavior is the tradition of story-telling. The work makes use of this tradition, and careful attention to word choice and values reveals how speakers construct meaning to make sense of the world. The characters’ use of language in ideology and story-telling shows how people both create and impart meaning through structuring of their realities. Whether existing consciously or subconsciously, this structuring forms the individual’s behavior and affects, through sharing of meaning, others’ structuring of their realities. In this way, *Archbishop* imparts a meaning which demonstrates that reality is relative; reality is subjective; reality is malleable. The differences between Latour’s and Vaillant’s experiences and the way they articulate them through word choice and story-telling demonstrates this variety and use of meaning in human behavior. This demonstration is even more effective because these many differences exist even while both characters share the same faith and goals.

Latour comes from a wealthy family, and Vaillant is the son of a baker. They are different in mood, in demeanor, and in disposition -- with Latour’s scholarly, and Vaillant’s eager to work for the good of others. The narrative provides many examples of the ways these characters act as foils for each other. The main characters contrast in their interactions with others and the way others view them. An interaction in which the distinction between their approaches is immediate is when each attempts to convince Madame Olivarez to reveal her age to the court to keep her husband’s property and money, some of which was to be donated to the Church. Vaillant is the first to try speaking to her and asks her directly to do what he wants and soon loses his patience (Cather 189-190). When Latour intervenes, he begins “gently” and less directly (Cather 190). He presents the points which she is more concerned with rather than those which are most important to himself and Vaillant (Cather 190-191). It is Latour’s tactic that convinces her. Latour is better able to discern which values Madame Olivarez holds dear, and look past his own opinions. Latour shows a flexibility in being able to perceive meanings that others perceive, as well as his own. He is then able to manipulate her behavior to suit himself and Vaillant.

The same beliefs and understandings that affected the characters’ debate tactics also present themselves in Latour’s and Vaillant’s more subconscious behaviors. The narrator directly addresses the thoughts of Jacinto, Latour’s Native American guide, on the subject of differences in behaviors when it is stated that “in his experience, white people, when they addressed Indians, always put on a false face... Father Vaillant’s, for example, was kindly, but too vehement. The bishop put on none at all” (Cather 93-94). This “false face” is representative of a part of Euro-centrism. It is part of the behavior of treating non-Europeans as unintelligent, or as if they were like children. Demeaning the intelligence of others is characteristic of many prejudices.

This behavior is seen when the narrator addresses the use of the word “boy.” When the guide, Jacinto, has stopped them to camp one night, the narrator notes that when the Bishop references Jacinto in his mind, he refers to him as a “boy,” and that “one called the young Indians ‘boys’” (Cather 93). Not only is this a habit of Latour, but a practice kept by most whites as indicated in the word “one” in the quote. The next sentiment is that it was “perhaps because there was something youthful and elastic in their bodies. Certainly about their behaviour there was nothing boyish” (Cather 93). But Latour’s speculative understanding of this practice does not remove the meaning found in the word “boy.” A boy is, of course, a child -- not an adult. A child is presumed to be less intelligent and less capable than an adult. It is implied that if Jacinto is a “boy” even in his adulthood, he will never be capable of possessing the intelligence of a European adult. Latour knows that Jacinto is not a boy, but calls him one. This behavior is characteristic of ideology as defined by Slavoj Žižek, who ascertained that “ideology is, strictly speaking, only a system which makes a claim to the truth – that is, which is not simply a lie but a lie experienced as truth, a lie which pretends to be taken seriously” (Žižek 719). Reality is structured and communicated largely by language, including word choice and story-telling. When Latour calls Native American men boys, he has usurped his own knowledge in favor of an ideology. One who does not have the first-hand experience which Latour does, would latch onto the meaning of the word “boy” as it exists separate from the Native Americans it is representing. For example, in the prologue, the Cardinal, who has never met a Native American, states that “I see your redskins through [the works of] Fenimore Cooper, and I like them so” (Cather 13). Despite having no personal knowledge, the Cardinal has accepted a literary interpretation of an entire group of people as his fact and as a part of his reality.

In Cather’s work, word choice is also shown to favor the status quo. Another word commonly used when referencing Native Americans is “savage”. The implication is that those who call others savages are not. In Cather’s work it appears many times, despite the contradictory elements of events which Latour and Vaillant experience firsthand. The reader is introduced to two characters who can be considered savages: Buck Scales, the domestically abusive murderer, and the genocidal Kit Carson. The narrator is always careful to tell the reader the ethnicity or nationality of a new character. Buck was directly identified as an American and his crimes were clearly stated, but briefly and clinically. Kit Carson, also American, is presented as kind and gentle in his interactions with Magdalena, and described as “misguided” when the narrative addresses his own string of murders (Cather 74, 291). These instances, which challenge the stereotype of who is a savage and who is not, are not acknowledged as examples of such; Buck and Kit Carson are not called savages. Here, importance is placed on the connection with race rather than behavior. Each use of the word “savage” in *Archbishop* is used to describe a group of people, namely the Native Americans, rather than an individual. Meanings of prejudice are easily carried through this generalization; the generalized nature of the connotation of this word excuses individual instances, such as Buck and Kit Carson, which do not match up. In this way, the ideology maintains its structure and place within the minds of those who regard it as truth.

Surpassing Euro-centrism as the most prevalent ideology in Archbishop is Catholicism. Like in many other things, Latour and Vaillant are different in their approaches to Catholicism as it exists as a world view, as well as the way it exists as a practice. Latour applies Catholicism to events -- a Catholic-recessive view, so to speak -- and Vaillant applies events to Catholicism -- a Catholic-dominant view, and both have the same goal, even if different means of reaching it. This is seen when Vaillant is going to perform marriage and baptism ceremonies for people “who were living in concubinage” and their children (Cather 53). Without a priest in the town, the people had married without a proper ceremony. Vaillant did not want to accept bread and wine until he had done his duty, but the men were working, and the children were available (Cather 55). It was suggested to him that he perform the baptisms first, and then the marriages, but Vaillant refused, responding that, because one would normally marry and then have children, his “order was but Christian” (Cather 55). In this example, Vaillant puts religion first and all other aspects, including convenience, follow after. Latour, on the other hand, is willing to “[smile] at his mixed theology” when he considers the value and service of the goat and its products to Christians, despite its pagan connotations (Cather 31). Rather than being troubled by the goat’s place in contrasting religions, Latour is amused. When comparing the reactions of Latour and Vaillant to the two events, it is unlikely that the outcomes would be the same if Latour had been the one performing ceremonies and Vaillant had found himself thinking on goats.

Another ideological difference between them is that “Latour tries to curb excesses while Vaillant uses lax means for good ends” (Skaggs 402). When Vaillant acquires the mules, Contento and Angelina, from Lujon, this philosophy of the ends justifying the means and his Catholic-dominant view are clear. When Lujon offers Vaillant one of his prized mules because his horse is not adequate, Vaillant refuses on the grounds that “the Bishop works as hard as I do, and his horse is little better than mine” (Cather 62). When Lujon offers any horse for Latour, Vaillant refuses this offer as well:

Having seen these mules, I want nothing else... I will raise the price of marriages until I can buy this pair from you’... Senor Lujon sighed and looked around his barnyard as if trying to find some escape... Father Joseph turned to him with vehemence. “If I were a rich *ranchero* like you Manuel, I would do a splendid thing.” (Cather 62)

By the time Vaillant had finished, he was leaving with both of Lujon’s valuable and beloved mules, and Lujon “believed he would be proud of the fact that they rode Contento and Angelica. Father Vaillant had forced his hand, but he was rather glad of it” (Cather 63). Vaillant had convinced Lujon into relinquishing both mules with religious values. Few people would consider this interaction completely moral on Vaillant’s part; even fewer would consider it so if he were not a missionary. That he has an admirable goal, and that his “devotedness” is not in doubt, allows the interaction to end with both parties pleased, even if the means was questionable. Vaillant does not believe he has done anything wrong because of his view of events occurring within a religious ideology. His belief is that religion, and therefore his religious goal, is most important, and Lujon’s happiness and ownership of the mules is secondary.

Of course, this ideology is an inflexible one, and Cather has Latour comment on this when Vaillant adapts his soup for lack of its usual ingredients. This excerpt “[traces] the confrontation of an Old World with a New World landscape” (Thacker 203-204). Latour describes a recipe as “the result of a constantly refined tradition” (Cather 39). Vaillant’s response, however, does not align him with Latour’s observation: “how can a man make a proper soup without leeks... We cannot go on eating onions for ever” (Cather 39). He makes the same sentiment regarding beans instead of salad and says that one day he will have a garden to supply him with what he currently cannot get (Cather 39). For Latour, the soup was still a soup, regardless of the specific vegetables in it. For Vaillant, this is not an alteration to the recipe of the soup, but a temporary substitute. The notion is the same in regard to culture and religion. Latour has been shown to be more flexible and is willing to meld aspects of his nationality and faith with what he finds in his travels, while Vaillant is only bearing the differences until he can later avoid them. He is not willing to have an open mind regarding others’ cultures and religions; more than that, he has not even considered it an option. Here, Vaillant shows an inability to understand another’s views; he cannot see past his own ideologies and history. In this episode about the soup, Latour and Vaillant show us, once again, different approaches to, reactions to, and structuring of reality and behavior through inherited ideologies.

While Vaillant tends to use language as it exists as an inherited tradition, Latour uses language to express what he sees, thinks, and feels on a realistic level; they can similarly be described as “a man of action” and “a man of reflection” respectively (Skaggs 402). Latour seems to be more separate from ideologies which those around him unquestioningly follow, and this is telling in the way they handle story-telling differently. This is not to say that Latour is not a devout Catholic or does not engage in Euro-centrism, but that he is slightly more aware of their workings within the human mind. Vaillant views events through the lens of Catholicism while Latour views events and then applies Catholicism to them.

One of the most telling examples of the different effects of these lenses is Vaillant’s recount of his and Latour’s first encounter with Magdalena. Its meaning is fundamentally different from Cather’s telling as a narrator. Here, Vaillant combines his use of word choice and ideology to form his story. Because of the drastic differences between the two accounts, there is little doubt that Cather not only intended for Vaillant to change the meaning, but for this act to provide a view of his structuring of reality, and so enable the reader to make inferences on how humans in general structure realities as individuals and groups. The first account is carefully constructed by the narrator through a sequence of logical events:

Before the hour was done they did indeed come upon a wretched adobe house [...] As they rode up to the door, a man came out, bareheaded, and they saw to their surprise that he was not a Mexican, but an American [...] The priests dismounted and asked him whether he could put their mules under shelter [...] Their host made an angry partition, and a woman came out of the next room. She was a Mexican [...] With her finger she pointed them away, away! –two quick thrusts into the air [...] They hurried out of the house [...] “Poor woman! He will suspect her and abuse her.” (Cather 66-70).

Later, Magdalena escapes her husband and makes it to the next town, which the priests had moved on to. She tells the authorities that her husband, Buck, had murdered travelers and her children. Buck is hanged, and Magdalena is taken in by the Sisters of Loreto. The difference in meaning in Vaillant’s retelling of the story is haphazardly summed up in one sentence: “Who would think, to look at her now, that we took her from a place where every vileness of cruelty and lust was practiced!” (Cather 210). Vaillant has reconstructed a crucial part of the story. In the original version, Latour and Vaillant fled after her warning, and made no attempt to help Magdalena. In using the word “took,” Vaillant has changed the story to mean that he and Latour were directly instrumental in Magdalena’s departure from the house. He repaints them as brave and effective heroes.

Not only does he bolster his and Latour’s importance, Vaillant’s following words paint, by extension, Catholicism as effective in its goodness. Vaillant says immediately after the previous quote that “not since the days of early Christianity has the Church been able to do what it can here... Here she is safe and happy” (Cather 210). Vaillant has by-passed any detail which detracts from his view of the world, which is that God is present first, and everything follows after. He has conveniently forgotten the lasting effects that such trauma must have left on Magdalena, and which still must plague her. He has altered his view of himself as an individual as well as within Catholicism using story-telling because “identity is a function of the story that we construct about ourselves” (Battersby 27). Latour, however, characteristically takes note of the reality of the situation, despite its detraction from the black and white view which Vaillant employs, when he points out the “tragic shadow in her eyes” (Cather 210). While Latour did not correct his friend’s retelling, he was aware that word choice and ideology were being employed through story-telling. This perception shows that he does not follow entirely without question.

In her work, Cather has shown how ideologies resist being broken down, how they are structured, how they are spread, how they create and reflect meaning, and how they mold reality for individuals and groups. The importance of these observations of human behavior and use of language exceed the importance of the work as it exists as a story. It has been noted that the plot structure of Cather’s work does not match up with the usual: “moments of danger in the present end as soon as they begin” which prevents the momentum of the story from progressing as one would expect (Fisher-Wirth 36). This is because the meaning of Cather’s work should garner more attention than the plot. Words and the connotations, rather than denotations, they carry form the reality of an ideology. In turn, an ideology will appear in a story, which is meant to provide transport for an ideological meaning to others. *Archbishop* shows how Latour and Vaillant, and thus people in general, construct and use their own relative and pliable meaning, through the use of language, ideology, and story-telling.

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**High-Society Hypochondriacs: Spa Mania Satire**

**in Christopher Anstey’s *The New Bath Guide***

Miles McQuerrey

*Of all the gay places the World can afford,*

*By gentle and simple for pastime ador'd*

*Fine balls, and fine concerts, fine buildings, and springs,*

*Fine walks, and fine views, and a thousand fine things,*

*Not to mention the sweet situation and air,*

*What place, my dear Mother, with Bath can compare?* (Letter VII 1-6)

Christopher Anstey’s first and most well-known work *The New Bath Guide or, Memoirs of the B-R-D Family. In a Series of Political Epistles* comprises fifteen familial letters written in anapestic tetrameter by English siblings visiting Bath from the northern part of the country in 1766. Members of the group include Simkin, a young squire, and his sister Prudence who have both been ordered to travel to Bath in Somersetshire because it is a place of apparently renowned healing benefits. They are accompanied by their cousin Jenny and Tabitha Runt, their maid. Their letters are rhymed poems that satirize social customs and traditions in Bath and also poke fun at the activities of the people who travel to Bath for health reasons among other things like fashion and status.

Eleven of the fifteen letters are written by Simkin who most often addresses them to Lady Blunderhead, his mother, who is revealed in Letter I from Jenny to have sent them to Bath to drink the spa waters. Simkin’s letters give a humorous account of life in the eighteenth century and especially in Bath, an incredibly social city and spa in which the prominence of daily life unfolded in public places. Simkin gives his mother an abundance of information concerning his bowel movements and of all the doctors who populate the city of health. These doctors seem to be a device for Anstey to shed some commentary on his own contemporary political views because the physicians are more concerned with making money and discussing national affairs than actually curing people.[[7]](#footnote-7) In fact, the healing power of the mineral waters in Bath seems to be an illusion. Simkin begins only to recover once Jenny throws his medicine out of the window at the quack doctors. Unlike the popular belief, his health’s improvement was also not attributed to drinking the tepid water that people simultaneously bathe in and drink. *The New Bath Guide* is an extremely popular narrative poem that gives readers a window into Bath during its heyday, showcasing its virtues and vices, and Anstey’s humorous verse and mild satire are still enjoyable two centuries later.

This research paper will begin with a generic criticism of the qualities of the verse epistle[[8]](#footnote-8) and mock heroic conventions and relevant biographical information of Christopher Anstey that inspired *The New Bath Guide*. Once these contexts have been established, a formalistic approach to criticizing the interior of this vastly popular work in its day will support my claim that Anstey viewed the city he loved with a certain degree of lover’s contempt. Next, the spa city of Bath itself will be investigated through textual analysis of Anstey’s work along with other interpretations from the novelists Jane Austen and Tobias Smollett and the scholar Martin S. Day.

Anstey’s Bath is not the place of healing that it was advertised to be.[[9]](#footnote-9) The reasons that so many were attracted to Bath in the eighteenth century was its perpetual sense of delightful social debauchery, its high fashion, and exciting gambling scene. Bath’s reputation for being the city of health was only a façade created by droves of greedy, misleading, and uninterested doctors and the “miraculous” spa waters that were, in all likelihood, more hindrance than a help to one’s physical health. The healing that actually took place there was a physiological recovery. Rejuvenation that so many received by resorting in Bath did not come from the placebo pills, absent-minded doctors, or squalid spa waters; vitality was regained through an exciting social atmosphere that reinvigorated one’s mental state of being and liveliness. Anstey suspected this and by creating a mock-guide for Bath, he showed travelers what to really anticipate and expect from a city of high-society hypochondriacs.

Born on Halloween 1724, Christopher Anstey was the only son of his father, vicar of Brinkley, Cambridgeshire, and of his mother, the daughter of the squire of Trumpington.[[10]](#footnote-10) Therefore, the young Anstey was brought up in a family of country gentry and considerable wealth. Later in life he married Ann Calvert, the third daughter of Felix Calvert. Anstey, taking additional advantage of marital social prominence obtained from landowning and brewing, was able to lead a relatively comfortable life of raising a family, managing estates, and writing poetry.[[11]](#footnote-11) What eventually brought Anstey to Bath, and thus to write the *Guide* was his sister’s death in 1760, which “aggravated a bilious fever.” Drawn to Bath at the height of its popularity under the guise of being an oasis of rejuvenation, Anstey went and returned annually until he eventually decided to reside there permanently. While in Bath, he produced *The New Bath Guide* and transcribed Thomas Gray’s *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Gray thanked him later by writing a glowing review saying, ‘New Bath Guide? It is the only thing in fashion, and is a new and original kind of humour.’[[12]](#footnote-12) This overwhelmingly positive critical reception led the copyright of the second edition to be sold to the major publisher, Dodsley, for £250 who then later returned it to Anstey, having profited so well from it.[[13]](#footnote-13) He attempted to match the comedy of the *Guide* by publishing *An Election Ball* (1776) with less success. Anstey grew more conservative and ill-tempered later in life due to the Gordon Riots and the French Revolution, and his less important writings reflect these sentiments.[[14]](#footnote-14) He was buried in the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey in 1805 near Shakespeare’s monument. *The New Bath Guide* had many imitations over the next fifty years, and has more than forty editions itself, including a strong influence on Smollett’s *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* published in 1771.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The city of Bath, located approximately 97 miles west of London and 13 miles south-east of Bristol in Somerset, was first used for spa purposes in the year 60 C.E. when Romans capitalized on the natural hot springs by building baths and a temple in the River Avon valley.[[16]](#footnote-16) Since then, the city’s popularity, population, and public spa have grown tremendously; now nearly five million tourists visit Bath each year.[[17]](#footnote-17) Many famous authors, including Jane Austen, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Mary Shelley, and Charles Dickens to name a few, were either from or frequented Bath, finding it to be, like its natural hot springs, an unrelenting source of amusement, inspiration, and livelihood.[[18]](#footnote-18) A change occurred in the eighteenth century in Bath when Beau Nash, the city’s Master of Ceremonies, transformed the city from 1705 to 1761 from an underdeveloped resort town into a social hub of transportation, tourism, and recreation. The city now epitomized “spa mania,” a phenomenon that swept throughout Europe beginning in the late seventeenth and not subsiding until the early nineteenth-century. This mass enthusiasm for the spas can be primarily attributed to the new medical importance place upon mineral waters, and all the innovative social changes that the resort towns facilitated. Bath became a place that challenged the pretentiousness nature of social life brought about by the Enlightenment. Water deriving from the symbolic “bowels” of the earth intermixed with people whose literal bowels were in questionable states. “Healing” occurred either through a bath in or a drink from the squalid waters, and these strange yet popular practices begged for social commentary, especially from the English authorship.

Daniel Cottom describes the literary representations of Bath in the eighteenth-century in his article “In the Bowels of the Novel: The Exchange of Fluids in the Beau Monde.”[[19]](#footnote-19) Cottom argues that the fanaticism towards Bath and spa culture was directly tied to the body politic ideals that derived from the Enlightenment. From an empiricist standpoint, every speck of knowledge derives from experience.[[20]](#footnote-20) That being said, the body politics coupled with empiricism created a notion in the public that if *their* bowels were to be reconciled (or any physical or psychological ailment) then they should do so at the spa, where waters from *the* bowels of the planet reached the surface. That is not to say that this same method of equating the political body to the human has stopped in anyway. The President is still considered the “head” of state with the House of Representatives and Senate serving as the branches or “arms” of the legislature. Cottom puts in other words: “this growing preference for an ‘interior bath’ as following inevitably from the general Enlightenment turn toward the inner workings of mind and body.” The upward progression of these Enlightenment tendencies naturally led to the equivocation of the natural springs of the spa becoming the natural remedy for completely unrelated health afflictions. Thus, Anstey’s *Guide* keeps in line with scholarly opinions that Bath was simultaneously a place of high fashion and culture and a carnival of baseness and nonsensical medical practices. Simkin illustrates this juxtaposition of high and low cultures in his conclusion to Letter VI: "So while little Tabby was washing her rump, / The Ladies kept drinking it out of a pump" (113-14). The Ladies of Bath believe themselves to be of a superior pedigree than the servant class in which Tabby belongs; however, Anstey cleverly uses the Bath waters to reverse the hierarchical order as the wealthy unknowingly ingest the rump water of the poor. He again phrases this social class violation in a Horatian tone that makes for a comical reception instead of a repulsed one, illustrating that in Anstey’s Bath status is seen more as a continuum than a ladder.

The verse epistle of the eighteenth-century is unique because of its focus on the internal audience of a poem, typically a recipient of a letter along with the external audience, the reader. William Dowling, in *The Epistolary Moment: The Poetics of the Eighteenth-century Verse Epistle*, argues that The Epistolary Moment “was an attempt to solve in literary terms the dilemma of solipsism[[21]](#footnote-21) as raised by Locke and Hume.” The most famous verse epistle of the eighteenth-century is Alexander Pope’s *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* in which Pope employs the interior audience of Dr. Arbuthnot who serves as adversarius to him, the speaker.[[22]](#footnote-22) This literary technique creates a dual audience, the recipient of the letter and the reader of the poem, which enhances the author’s credibility, counteracts solipsism, and rebukes anticipated criticism. Pope certainly uses this technique effectively while simultaneously ridiculing his attackers and himself as a mechanism for defense, self-humanization, and for curbing the biting tone of his satire.[[23]](#footnote-23) Anstey also creates this affect in Letter XII entitled “A Modern Head Dress, *with a little* Polite Conversation.” That “little polite conversation” between “sensible women” includes a direct attack on *The New Bath Guide* and its author:

‘Have you read the *Bath Guide*, that ridiculous Poem?

‘What a scurrilous Author! Does nobody know him?’

‘Young BILLY PENWAGGLE, and SIMIUS CHATTER,

‘Declare ‘tis an ill-natur’d half-witted Satire.’ (100-104)

Although the recipient of the letter is not the direct recipient as in Pope’s *Dr. Arbuthnot*, the meta-poeticism granted by the epistle enables Anstey to defend and laugh at himself in a similar manner. Furthermore, Anstey’s use of the familial epistle parodies how people would most commonly hear about Bath – through letters. This broadens the scope of potential readership for the *Bath Guide* and gives Simkin, the addressor of most of the letters, the role of the mock-hero.

As previously mentioned, *The New Bath Guide* also possesses undercurrents of a mock-heroic that add another layer or ridiculousness to Bath satire.[[24]](#footnote-24) Although the convention of a great battle is absent, several other mock-heroic qualities are present. First, instead of dividing the long poem into books or cantos,[[25]](#footnote-25) Anstey uses fifteen epistles to segment the work, potentially as a method to satirize his own stunted epic. Another convention is the participation by a variety of deities in the city of Bath. Finally, in the opening of Letter I, Jenny suggests that the Muses have been invoked to create the inspired city of Bath:

Sure, next to fair CASTILLA’S Streams

And PINDUS’ flow’ry Path,[[26]](#footnote-26)

APOLLO most the Springs esteem,[[27]](#footnote-27)

And verdant Meads of *Bath*.

The Muses haunt these hallow’d Groves (7-11)

The introduction of the god Apollo and the Muses is a purposeful technique to enhance the mock-heroic tone of Anstey’s satire. This is yet another example of Anstey’s parody of Pope’s style, as Pope is also credited with writing the most successful mock epic of the eighteenth-century, *The Rape of the Lock* (1717). There is even an echo of travesty of this Popeian masterpiece in Letter XII as Anstey writes:

Some Runaway Valet, some outlandish Shaver

Has spoil’d all the Honours that Nature has gave her;

Her Head has he robb’d with as little Remorse

As a Fox-Hunter crops both his Dogs and his Horse: (23-26)

The haircut being depicted as a heinous crime of theft and defilement against a woman’s honor draws a striking comparison to Belinda, who after being trimmed of her precious Locks “E’er felt such rage, resentment, and despair, / As thou, sad virgin! For thy ravished hair.”[[28]](#footnote-28) Why then does Anstey strive to be recognized in the company of the great writers through classic and contemporary imitations? Although he is not canonized, Anstey does achieve a “silver satirist” status, falling short of the “golden satirist” esteem that transfigures Pope and his contemporaries.

While Anstey saw Bath as a social sanctuary of culture, entertainment, and relaxation that one should never need to leave despite its minor shortcomings, Jane Austen provides conflicting perspectives of the spa city in her novel *Northanger Abbey* (1816). To Austen, Bath is a breeding ground for subjectivity based upon its visitor’s origins, be they urban aristocrats or country gentry. For the country gentry who vacation there, the city appears to be an unrelenting source of enjoyment and sophistication compared to the laborious routines in a relatively dull rural setting that they are accustomed to. In Chapter 10, Catherine is at a ball in Bath and engages in a conversation with John Thorpe, her dancing partner, about their respective opinions of the city, offering a more colored distinction between the opinions city and country folk:

Bath, compared with London, has little variety, and so everybody finds out every year. ‘For six weeks, I allow Bath is pleasant enough; but beyond that, it is the most tiresome place in the world.' You would be told so by people of all descriptions, who come regularly every winter, lengthen their six weeks into ten or twelve, and go away at last because they can afford to stay no longer.

In this excerpt, Catherine undermines the reluctance of Londoners to admit to their adoration of a country cultural epicenter. Thorpe, on the other hand, freely professes that Bath is far more interesting than his normal life:

Well, other people must judge for themselves, and those who go to London may think nothing of Bath. But I, who live in a small retired village in the country, can never find greater sameness in such a place as this than in my own home; for here are a variety of amusements, a variety of things to be seen and done all day long, which I can know nothing of there.

Thorpe’s residence in a “small retired village in the country” evokes pastoral sentiments that the high-brow urbane class of English want to distinguish themselves from. However, as Austen illustrates, both groups could not help but be swept into this rampant spa mania that made its headquarters in eighteenth-century Bath. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Catherine and her family need to leave Bath because, as time progresses, their metropolitan identity is threatened by the sophistication of county culture.[[29]](#footnote-29) Austen uses Catherine to mock this inexhaustible excitement for Bath since her character’s actions contradict her rhetorical declaration, “Oh! Who can ever be tired of Bath?” This echoes the introductory quotation from Simkin, who asks, “What place, my dear Mother, with Bath can compare?" This subtle difference marks Austen’s *Abbey* as being more biting in tone than Anstey’s *Bath Guide*, which is a safe assumption since she has her satirical sights set on more than the absurdities of Bathian fanaticism.

Anstey addresses the pseudo-superiority to London culture over Bath in Letter XIII “A Public Breakfast” in which Simkin writes about a Lady Bunbutter, a redende name with elitist implications, who represents a Lady Bellaston[[30]](#footnote-30)figure touring Bath:

You’ve heard of my Lady BUNBUTTER, no doubt,

How she loves an *Assembly, Fandango,* or *Rout*;[[31]](#footnote-31)

No Lady in *London* is half so expert

At a snug private Party, her Friends to divert;

But they say, that of late, she’s grown sick of the Town,

And often to *Bath* condescends to come down: (13-18)

Lady Bunbutter is instantly established as a fictional personage with great esteem from London, as “you’ve heard of [her], no doubt.” Anstey then tricolons her three favorite activities, the assembly, fandango, and rout, which all essentially mean the same thing, a social gathering usually involving a dance, but he parses them in high-society jargon to inflate her hobbies to things incomprehensible to average country Englishmen. Even though she is an expert in these affairs in *London* (Anstey intentionally italicizes “London” and “Bath” for emphatic purposes), she still grows sick of “the Town” or London, and “condescends to come down” to Bath. On the surface level this last phrase seems to indicate her physically traveling to Bath, but this is not the case. It’s common in England to “go up” to London, Oxford, and Cambridge; to all other places, one “goes down.” No matter how much metropolitan pride she attempts to maintain, the undeniable allure of Bath’s more stimulating and diverse social atmosphere inevitably draws her into spa mania. Anstey also implies that ladies in *London* are somewhat lacking in social expertise compared with the ladies in *Bath* because Lady Bunbutter is the crème of the former city’s crop.

Returning to *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, an epistolary novel of 1771 that capitalizes on and borrows from the success of Anstey’s *Guide*, Tobias Smollett reinforces the notion of the symbiotic relationship between the refined and the grotesque, the high and the low, and city mentality in a country setting. Austen’s Catherine espouses the inadequacies of Bath when held up to the shining light of London culture. Smollett’s character, Jeremy Melford, the nephew of Matthew Bramble, the father responsible for the trip to Bath, is just a young man looking for entertainment in the resort and he certainly finds it.[[32]](#footnote-32) In a letter to Sir Watkins Phillips of Jesus College,[[33]](#footnote-33) Melford highlights Bath’s unique sense of community and variety that is the center of its appeal, and even suggests this is a superior quality that London lacks:

I am, on the contrary, amazed to find so small a place so crowded with entertainment and variety. London itself can hardly exhibit one species of diversion, to which we have not something analogous at Bath, over and above those singular advantages that are peculiar to the place. Here, for example, a man has daily opportunities of seeing the most remarkable characters of the community. He sees them in their natural attitudes and true colours; descended from their pedestals, and divested of their formal draperies, undisguised by art and affectation—Here we have ministers of state, judges, generals, bishops, projectors, philosophers, wits, poets, players, chemists, fiddlers, and buffoons.

The passage begins with “on the contrary,” and is Melford’s (thus Smollett’s) response to the pretentious urban personalities seen in *Northanger Abbey* who would argue that Bath’s entertainment is somewhat limited by repetition – Melford would quite disagree. In the second sentence, Melford completely reverses the Austenian sentiment by suggesting that it is in fact *London* that is the place of monotonous entertainment that can “hardly exhibit one species of diversion,” or leisure, with Bath being anything but analogous.[[34]](#footnote-34) Smollett then continues to describe the diffusion of social class caricatures that, over time, let their true colors be shown as they “descended from their pedestals.” Bath symbolizing a social oasis from strict class categorization and behaviors is seen throughout Anstey’s work, especially in the public bath houses where the waters flow unbiased throughout the estate society that is so deeply entrenched in London during this time.

It is in the mineral waters of *Humphry Clinker* and the other works where the line between social progressivism and disillusioned hygienic regression becomes blurred. Matthew Bramble, the father who comes in closest contact with the waters due to his “spleenic” issues, is the one who questions their sanitation in a letter to Dr. Lewis:

But I am now as much afraid of drinking, as of bathing; for, after a long conversation with the Doctor, about the construction of the pump and the cistern, it is very far from being clear with me, that the patients in the Pump-room don't swallow the scourings of the bathers. I can't help suspecting, that there is, or may be, some regurgitation from the bath into the cistern of the pump. In that case, what a delicate beveridge is every day quaffed by the drinkers; medicated with the sweat and dirt, and dandriff; and the abominable discharges of various kinds, from twenty different diseased bodies, parboiling in the kettle below.

This unsettling description of the disgusting realities regarding the contents in the waters stems from what seems to be an engineering folly in the piping systems that run between the pump and the cistern.[[35]](#footnote-35) What is ironic here is that Bramble does not address this concern to the proper authority, an engineer, but instead mentions it to his doctor. Anstey again mocks the doctors in Bath as being quacks who care more for politics and simply treat all their patients with the miraculous healing waters. After listening to the doctors discuss the Stamp Act during their consultation, Jenny decides it would be a better remedy to literally throw all their prescriptions out the window:

Declar’d she was shock’d that so many should come

To be Doctor’d to Death, such a Distance from Home,

At a Place where they tell you that Water alone

Can cure all Distempers that ever were known. (*Bath Guide*, IV 58-61)

As seen in both *Humphry Clinker* and the *New Bath Guide*, the doctors in Bath are completely disconnected from the profession of medicine – only their titles, not their diagnoses, are grounded in the medical field. Furthermore, it is almost as if the doctors know intrinsically that the mineral waters are a farce, yet they are happy to oblige and get paid for their “services,” while essentially enjoying a holiday with suffering patients. The reason for this intentional obliviousness to science and medicine is because all the authors were writing during a period of great repulsion from Enlightenment ideals. Thus, if word spread that the healing waters of Bath could remedy all afflictions, there was little reason to do any scientific investigation to attempt to locate the source of its supposed renewing qualities. While the populace who had not attended medical school found this suspension of belief easy to digest, the medical professionals in the city, all of whom *should* have received a medical degree, simply turned a blind eye to this glaring inaccuracy and went about collecting fees, talking of politics, all the while abstaining from ingesting the waters themselves.

Anstey laid the groundwork for Bath satirists with *The New Bath* *Guide*; he inspired Smollett to further explore the familial epistle form, which was ultimately how word spread about Bath’s popularity (although his epistles were written in prose, not verse), and he set the stage for Austen to eloquently capture the setting’s subtly obvious peculiarities, attractions, and grotesqueries that flowed from the pump-rooms into the bustling streets during the resort town’s renaissance. Yet, as Martin S. Day illuminates, this is not all that Christopher Anstey can be credited with establishing. In his article, "Anstey and Anapestic Satire in the Late Eighteenth Century," Day hails Anstey’s most popular work for reintroducing anapestic tetrameter to the eighteenth-century couplet, even universally renaming them to the “Anstey measure” or “Bath-Guide verse.” Day references the *Critical Review* that remarked in 1780: “‘Ever since the appearance of the celebrated Bath Guide we have been pestered form time to time with vile imitation of the inimitable Anstey, by gallopers in verse, who have aped the familiar tittup[[36]](#footnote-36)’” (126). This tittup, or sing-song pace, that the *Critical Review* condemns as amateur can easily be created phonetically as the anapestic tetrameter’s meter stresses every third syllable – thus, a line of anapestic verse would read da, da, DUM, da, da, DUM. Modern authors and artists that have used anapestic verse successfully are Clement Clarke Moore, author of “Twas the Night before Christmas,” and most Dr. Seuss in most of his books. However, not all renditions of this difficult meter are light-hearted nursery rhymes; parts of Lord Byron’s *Don Juan* and rapper Eminem’s hit song “The Way I Am” are both examples of darker toned anapests. Let it be noted that these most popular descendants of “Anstey measure” did not live during the eighteenth century. Day meticulously categorizes the Anstey imitators of the latter half of the eighteenth-century, most of who have now fallen into obscurity:

Anapestic satire for half a century after the New Bath Guide is almost entirely the result of Anstey's influence. This voluminous versifying falls into three large groups: (1) Epistolary satire on modish follies, closely patterned after Anstey in form and subject; (2) Epistolary satire on politics, employing Anstey's ironic technique for a more violent and controversial subject; (3) Non-epistolary satire, usually upon typical Anstey material in the style of the New Bath Guide. (127)

The sheer breadth of works that Day catalogs is certainly staggering, making it clear that Anstey set the anapestic epistle in vogue, yet none were able to surpass his dominance in that form. He also sparked trends that mimicked his content, targets, and style, essentially monopolizing the genre of light, anapestic verse. Day concludes his article with this indisputable statement, “The anapestic epistle of the last third of the century is obviously his offspring, while anapestic satire in other forms was almost equally indebted to him until well into the nineteenth century” (146). Although Anstey does not reside in today’s edition of the *Norton Anthology*, he was certainly a pioneer for a niche audience and gained rampant popularity during the eighteenth century, and scaled itself alongside the spa fanaticism which gripped many English for decades.

*The New Bath Guide or, Memoirs of the B-R-D Family. In a Series of Political Epistles* is not what it claims to be. The title of “Guide” is, at its core, a satiric ruse used to draw readers into the popular and profitable circle of guide and travel literature. The guide was just a domestic version of the travel literature which was satirically immortalized in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) and Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).[[37]](#footnote-37) The title also betrays the familial memoir genre because the vast majority of letters are written by only one member of the family, Simkin. Even the name of the Blunderhead family is concealed by hyphens, and while the book is a series of epistles, they are anything but political. On the contrary, Day attributes some of the *Bath Guide’s* success to Anstey’s apolitical writing:

Anstey's irony was successful because it was conservative, light, and obvious. His victims were those people and practices disliked by the landed gentry and other respectable citizens. Studiously avoiding politics, he also avoided picturing any shortcomings the readers might find too closely applicable to themselves. Satire always provides enjoyable reading when we are confident that others talk and act foolishly, that not we but others are wrong. (123)

By gently curving his satire away from his readership, Anstey ensured a level or acceptance and popularity that surpassed his expectations. The *Bath Guide* quickly became a best-seller and was reprinted over forty times in the following years. Even though he plays it safe with his audience, he makes comic ridicule of subtypes of people (similar to estate satire) and the bizarre behaviors that the culture readily accepted. Bath is a place that can lead the senses and morality astray to gambling, convoluted love as Prudence finds, and from these two, an inevitable depletion of finances. But to Anstey, Bath is worth all of its minor squabbles and questionable waters, for within this place lives an essence of community, infatuation, and general revelry which he chose to spend his retirement. Spa mania may have drawn him into Bath like so many others, yet it quickly developed from a retreat resort to a home where Anstey felt in his element both satirizing and defending. In this revitalized eighteenth-century Roman Bath house, he began a legacy that would spring forth a stream of literary imitations and adaptations. At the same time, the gentle-hearted satirist discovered in that same city a final destination suited him, a sanctuary where he could peacefully keep his pen, his humors, and his wit sharp. Simkin concludes the final letter with this bittersweet yet ironic farewell to Bath:

*Farewell then, ye Streams,*

*Ye poetical Themes!*

*Sweet Fountains for curing the Spleen!*

*I’m griev’d to the Heart,*

*Without Cash to depart,*

*And quit this adorable Scene.*

*Where Gaming and Grace*

*Each other embrace,*

*Dissipation and Piety meet: -*

*May all, who’ve a Notion*

*Of Cards or Devotion,*

*Make Bath their delightful Retreat. (Letter XV 81-92)*

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Contributors:

**Laurel Ranveig Abell**

Laurel Ranveig Abell graduated summa cum laude from Towson University in 2014 because she had the enthusiastic, never-ending support of her family and friends. Now that she has received her coveted English/writing degree, Laurel plans to write novels, attain an MFA, and teach others the joy of writing.

**Rick James Frankos**

Rick James Frankos is currently an MA student at the University of Maryland at College Park studying Rhetoric and Composition. Rick graduated from TU in 2014 with a BS in English and then attended TU's Professional Writing Program before transferring to UMD.

**Miriam Hirsch**

Miriam Hirsch is a senior, studying English with a concentration in writing at Towson University. When she is not busy reading and writing about British literature, one of her favorite subjects, she is a full-time paralegal at a law firm in Pikesville. After graduation, Miriam will be headed to law school.

**Kristen Magnani**

Kristen Magnani graduated from Towson University in 2014 with a degree in English.

**Miles McQuerrey**

Miles McQuerrey is an English undergraduate preparing to attend graduate school. Like many others, he enjoys long walks on the beach. When he's not reading or writing, he's fighting crime at the local Target -- literally, he works security.



1. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, an explosive and provocative indictment of the dehumanizing racism inherent to colonial domination, psychiatrist Franz Fanon contends that the imperative to “turn white or disappear” remains absolutely implicit in all interracial dialogue, 1952. Translated into English, 1967. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Thadious Davis explains in the novel’s introduction that while originally “entitled *Nig* in the working draft as a play upon Carl Van Vechten’s Harlem novel *Nigger Heaven* (1926), *Passing* raises the volatile issues of skin, color, and race without using the inflammatory epithet as a title.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the “one drop rule” as “designating an ideology in which a person is regarded as black if he or she has even the smallest degree of black African ancestry.” Ironically, the reverse is not also true: the same individual is still black even if most of his or her biological lineage comes from a white heritage. This illogical philosophical concept has been historically prominent in the United States as the mode for sociological and legal classification of race. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Unlike the deemed objective “scientific evidence” which was also used by early Americans to identify the race of immigrants, “common knowledge” justified the assignment of race by referencing common, popular beliefs about what constitutes racial distinction, i.e.: skin color. Excerpted from Ian F. Haney Lopez, “White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race” (New York: New York University Press, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. While by definition Clare Kendry is a mulatto—a mixed-raced individual, she is “tragic” in that she does not assimilate well into either the black or the white world, and she is also ultimately eliminated through a fittingly ambiguous demise. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. An individual who is regarded by a larger group as not belonging, as different in some fundamental manner, and as strange or in violation of the accepted norm. Perceived as lacking essential characteristics possessed by the group, the Other is almost always seen as a lesser or inferior being and is treated accordingly. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Jonathan Swift expresses similar sentiments of medical physicians in *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, “The doctors, tender of their fame, / Wisely on me lay all the blame” (169-176). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. A letter, esp. one of a literary, formal, or public nature. Now freq. literary or humorous. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Bath was originally the Roman settlement of Aquae Sulis which developed where a number of thermal springs erupted from the floor of the Avon valley around 60 B.C.E. *Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* (*OEBL*) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Father named Christopher Anstey (1680-1751) and mother named Mary Thompson (d. 1754). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Anstey had a remarkable thirteen children as reported by John Anstey, his son. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Anstey also received praise from Horace Walpole, The Critical Review (21, 1766, 369), The Gentleman's Magazine (36, 1766, 241), and The Monthly Review (34, 1766, 472) (*ODNB*). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. James Dodlsey was a London bookseller and publisher based out of Nottinghamshire who also published works by [Frances Sheridan](http://www.jamesboswell.info/biography/frances-sheridan-author-memoirs-miss-sidney-bidulph), [Oliver Goldsmith](http://www.jamesboswell.info/biography/oliver-goldsmith-author-vicar-wakefield), and [Samuel Johnson](http://www.jamesboswell.info/biography/samuel-johnson-great-cham-lexicographer). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Gordon Riots were violent, anti-Catholic protests directed towards Catholic people, businesses, homes, and chapels. They are known as the Gordon Riots because Lord George Gordon marched on the House of Commons with 60,000 followers calling for a repeal of the Catholic Relief Act of 1778, advocating for continual Catholic repression. Eventually, order was restored when King George III had to call in the army and issue a proclamation (National Archives). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Humphry Clinker* is also an epistolary novel about a comical family satirizing spa towns that was published four years after Anstey’s *Bath Guide* in 1771. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Britannia: Short History of Bath (Somerset). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Statistics based on data collected by “Visit Bath” tourism website. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Jane Austen, although setting two of her six novels in Bath, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, did not love Bath. Joan Aiken, writer and expert on Austen and author of *Manifest Revisited*, reports that when Austen found out her family was moving to Bath “she fainted dead away.” [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Beau Monde* is French for “Beautiful World.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. ### Empiricism: Med. Originally: medicine as practiced by an empiric (in various senses: see empiric n. 2) (now chiefly hist.); †a form of this (obs.). In later use: medical treatment based on clinical experience, judgment, or diagnosis (esp. as opposed to treatment based on the results of laboratory investigations or of formal clinical trials) (*OED*).

    [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. ### Excessive regard for oneself and one's own interests, to the exclusion of others; preoccupation with oneself; extreme selfishness, self-centredness, or self-absorption; (also) an instance of this. Also in neutral sense: isolation, solitude. *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*).

    [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Alexander Pope. *An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot*. London [i.e. Edinburgh: Printed by J. Wright, for Lawton Gilliver, 1734. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. When directly alluding to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in line 101, Dr. Arbuthnot interjects saying, “Hold! For god’s sake – you’ll offend. / I too could write, and I am twice as tall; / But foes like these! – P. One flatterer’s worse than all.” In this instance Pope directly acknowledges the first quip his enemies would have – his height, and instantly removes that power over him while demonstrating self-humility. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “Mock-epic, also called mock-heroic, form of satire adapts the elevated heroic style of the classical [epic](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/189625/epic) poem to a trivial subject” *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Mock-epics parody classical epics by borrowing the same conventions of the classical form, but reworking them to suite a humorous tone. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. From the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Pindus Mountains, Modern Greek Píndos, also spelled Píndhou,  principal range and backbone of mainland [Greece](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/244154/Greece), trending north-northwest–south-southeast from [Albania](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/12472/Albania) to central Greece north of the [Peloponnese](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/449351/Peloponnese) (Modern Greek: Pelopónnisos).” [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Apollo is the Olympian god of prophecy and oracles, healing, plague and disease, music, song and poetry, archery, and the protection of the young. Fitting that he would be introduced with Bath. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Alexander Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock*,Canto 4, Lines 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The English “county” denotes a higher status than “country.” [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Lady Bellaston is a malicious London lady from Henry Fielding’s novel *Tom Jones* (1749). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Fandango -- A social assembly for dancing, a ball. In 18th c. common in English use; now only U.S., or with reference to foreign countries. Interestingly, the *OED* references Anstey’s passage in the epistemology of the word. Rout has a nearly identical meaning. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Summary information obtained from gutenburg.org, an online database of literary works in the public domain. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. A college founded by Elizabeth I in Oxford. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Characterized by correspondence to; resembling, or bearing comparison with; parallel, equivalent; comparable, similar (*OED*). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. “Cistern -- an artificial reservoir for the storage of water; esp. a watertight tank in a high part of a building, whence the taps in various parts of it are supplied” *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. “Tittup -- A horse's canter; a hand-gallop; also, a curvet. Etymology: apparently echoic, from the sound of the horse's feet” *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. “*Gulliver’s Travels* was a controversial work when it was first published in 1726. In fact, it was not until almost ten years after its first printing that the book appeared with the entire text that Swift had originally intended it to have. Ever since, editors have excised many of the passages, particularly the more caustic ones dealing with bodily functions. Even without those passages, however, *Gulliver’s Travels* serves as a biting satire, and Swift ensures that it is both humorous and critical, constantly attacking British and European society through its descriptions of imaginary countries.” [↑](#footnote-ref-37)