Bowling Green State University

ScholarWorks@BGSU

Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate Projects

English

Winter 11-23-2022

Final Master's Portfolio

Anji Straayer
astraay@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons, and the Secondary Education Commons

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Repository Citation

Straayer, Anji, "Final Master's Portfolio" (2022). *Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate Projects*. 109.
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english/109

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

FINAL MASTER'S PORTFOLIO

Anji J. Straayer
astraay@bgsu.edu

A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English
with a specialization in
English Teaching

23 November 2022

Dr. Susan Cruea, First Reader
Ms. Kimberly Spallinger, Second Reader

Table of Contents

I. Analytical Narrative ……………………………………………………………1

II. "Multimodal Approaches to Teaching English at the Secondary Level"
(Research and Analysis) …………………………………………………………..6

III. *Antigone*: A Unit Plan (Teaching) ………………………………………………30

IV. "Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*: A critique of the
Victorian mindset" …………………………………………………………42

V. "What is Paris? How the City of Light is seen through the eyes of the
flâneur and through film" ……………………………………………………62

Analytical Narrative

In the summer of 2020 I decided to go back to school to get another master's degree. I already hold one in Educational Leadership, but I wanted one specifically in English, so I enrolled at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) to obtain a master's degree in the teaching of English. I currently teach high school English courses, and one of the main goals I had for earning this degree was to position myself to be able to teach at the college or university level. Over the last two years as I have pursued this course of study, I have had opportunities to expand my knowledge of the English language, of teaching strategies and methodology, of various literary criticisms and theories, and of the relationship between a culture and its texts. I have developed as a writer, a critical thinker, a researcher, and a teacher because of the coursework that I have done through this program. The works in the following portfolio represent the broad range of projects I have been required to complete throughout this educational journey and the various forms of literature that I have encountered and engaged with throughout the many courses I have taken. It is a representation of my growth as a writer, a learner, and a teacher.

Throughout this portfolio project I have been given the opportunity to reflect on my time at BGSU and the varied projects and essays I have completed. In selecting four works for this portfolio, I have also been able to reflect on the knowledge I have gained from the original courses in which I completed each piece and the continuing knowledge gained from revisiting each piece for this project. Each piece is one that made a lasting impact on me and ones that I believe reflect my interests, my learning, my literary voice, and my strongest work throughout the courses. One common thread that links them all together is that they are reflective of me as a teacher and as a learner; they show my growth and understanding of content or strategies or

cultural connections that I can practically apply to my own classroom and courses as a teacher of English.

The first piece in this portfolio is a substantive research project entitled “Multimodal Approaches to Teaching English at the Secondary Level” and was done for Dr. Ethan Jordan’s course English 6040: Graduate Writing. I also included additional information from another multimodality project I did for English 6200: Teaching of Writing, also taught by Dr. Jordan. The course goals for English 6040 focused on students exploring scholarly writing from both theoretical and practical viewpoints and understanding current debates within the field. To that end, I had to choose a topic to explore, research, and apply to teaching. I wrote in that essay that as the world changes and the forms of communication continue to change, secondary level English teachers need to be able to adapt and change with the times in order to adequately prepare their students for future studies and future careers. I strongly believe that this is a relevant and pressing issue for teachers, and it is something that I plan to continue to explore as I continue my teaching career. I enjoyed this project because it is both relevant and applicable to my current teaching practices, and I am always seeking ways in which I can help improve and ensure student success. Within this research project I explore teaching methods used in the past, what multimodality is, why teachers should consider multimodal techniques, and what research says about multimodal approaches to teaching. It also all connects to implementing multimodal strategies into my own teaching. In looking to revise this piece for this portfolio, I knew I had to do and incorporate more research on methods and techniques to learn what else is available and what other educators have used. I have included more information in this section of the project to give strong support and a rationale for using multimodality in the secondary classroom. I also wanted to enhance the section on implications for my classroom since I have attempted to use

multimodal techniques for some of my own lesson plans. This section, therefore, has become a bit more personal and more focused on application in the classroom, but there is also the acknowledgement that research is far from complete in this field and that teachers must continue to learn more about it in order to best prepare students for their future studies and careers.

The second piece in this portfolio is a pedagogical sample, a unit plan for the Greek tragedy *Antigone* by Sophocles. This was originally done for English 6090: Teaching of Literature with Dr. Piya Pal-Lapinski. In this class we explored various pieces of literature from a critical perspective. For the final writing assignment, I chose the unit plan option which was to include an elaborate and detailed plan, focusing on a text we had studied in the class; in addition, it was to be accompanied by a two-page analysis on the rationale for the plan and the pedagogical method(s) to be used for the lessons. I chose *Antigone* as my topic for the unit plan because it is an interesting play with practical applications to today, even though it was written centuries ago. I like the characters in this play because they represent family dynamics and real struggles that people still face today. They are real and relatable, and the issues within the story of the play can be easily applied to real life situations that students encounter. The unit plan is detailed and incorporates a variety of materials for students going as they are through the unit. In looking to revise this project for this portfolio, I decided to add more to the activities students do and to the applications to real life, since those are important elements of the unit. I included the worksheets as well at the end of the unit plan document. For each day I included goals or expectations for that day's plan or lesson, and I have added more to the rationale and explanation of the unit plan in order to strengthen it.

The third piece I have incorporated into this portfolio is a critical analysis of a novel within its cultural context. It is entitled "Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*: A Critique of

the Victorian Mindset" and was written for English 6800: Victorian Monsters, with Dr. Piya Pal-Lapinski. In this course on Victorian fiction, we explored the idea of "monstrosity" in Victorian culture and literature and contemporary re-incarnations of these figures in film. This piece explores colonization and imperialism and their effects within the Victorian era. I chose to incorporate this piece for several reasons. First, I really enjoyed the class for which this was written. It was interesting, challenging, and thought-provoking. Second, the book on which I wrote this analysis was one of the most interesting and intriguing novels I have ever read. Third, I think this analysis is a good representation of my voice as a writer and a critical thinker. I believe I engaged the text and the research well in this essay, and it was enjoyable to write. In looking to revise it for this portfolio, I have tried to add my own voice a bit more where it had gotten lost within the researched information. Sometimes my own analysis was not stated clearly enough, so I have worked on improving this. I also cleaned it up a bit in terms of both phrasing and MLA formatting.

The fourth piece I have included in this portfolio is entitled "What is Paris: How the City of Light is Seen through the Eyes of the *Flâneur* and through Film" and was written for Dr. Piya Pal-Lapinski's English 6070: Introduction to Critical Theory course. Throughout this course we studied some major theoretical ideas and influences in current literary studies. We focused on certain theoretical paradigms that have most significantly impacted ways we think about and approach literature. For the final, we were required to choose a film, literary text, or other issue to analyze through the lens of one or two of the theorists we studied. Through Dr. Pal-Lapinski's guidance and direction, I chose to analyze how Paris is portrayed in films and through the eyes of the *flâneur*, the wanderer in the streets. I looked at these films through the lens of Walter Benjamin's theories about the *flâneur* in his work *The Arcades Project*. Of all of the papers and

projects I did over the past two years at BGSU, this last project is probably the one I was most excited to write. I consider Paris my second home, so exploring films and writings about my favorite city did not feel like classwork; it felt like a fun path to discover new insights. This paper shows my critical analysis skills well along with my ability to weave together the theories connected to views on Paris and the *flâneur.* My revisions for this piece have been mostly in cleaning up some of the formatting, clarifying a few points, eliminating the section on my personal experiences in Paris as these seemed less relevant, and separating some of the longer sections into smaller paragraphs.

When I chose to enroll at BGSU and begin my studies for a master's degree in English, I knew I would be challenged and gain new insights and knowledge for teaching. What I did not know was that some of my courses would push me far more than I had expected in terms of what I am interested in, what I can do as a teacher, and what skills I have as a writer. I think my writing skills, style, and voice have been greatly improved and enhanced through the courses and the excellent professors by whom I have been impacted and influenced. As a result of pursuing this degree, I believe I am a stronger teacher as well, having learned new strategies, methods, and approaches to teaching as well as gaining more in-depth knowledge of literature, critical theories, and writing skills. What I have learned at BGSU is relevant and applicable to my own teaching, and I believe what I have studied will have a direct impact on how I approach teaching English literature and composition. The skills I have learned and used are ones I can teach my students, especially those who plan to go to college and need a solid foundation of writing and analysis skills. All in all, my time at BGSU has been extremely beneficial and gratifying, and my learning goals and professional goals have been achieved through my studies over these last two years.

"Multimodal Approaches to Teaching English at the Secondary Level"

Introduction

Teaching with multimodality is an emerging technique within the educational field. No longer do teachers merely use textbooks, pens, and paper to achieve their goal of producing well-educated students. Because technology is expanding and because the need for those who can use a variety of technologies is growing, teachers need to provide their students with the skills necessary to keep up in this technologically diverse world. Simply reading a book or textbook is no longer the only way for students to obtain information. Producing a text-only research paper, divided into paragraphs or sections, is no longer the only way for students to communicate what they have learned. Language is much more complex and not limited to printed words, and therefore a rethinking of communication approaches and techniques is needed for those in the educational field. According to Takayoshi and Selfe, "In a world where communication between individuals and groups is both increasingly cross-cultural and digital, teachers of composition are beginning to sense the inadequacy of texts—and composition instruction—that employs only one primary semiotic channel (the alphabetic) to convey meaning" (2). As the world changes and the forms of communication continue to change, secondary level English teachers need to be able to adapt and change with the times, so to speak, in order to adequately prepare their students for future studies and future careers. Historically speaking, the teaching of literature and composition has not changed much over the last century or so. English composition teachers often continue to teach writing to their students using the typical five-paragraph essay format, and literature teachers often continue to teach novels through assigning reading chapters and a final analysis essay or reading worksheets. However, simply sticking with somewhat limited teaching methods like these because "that is how it has always been done" is not a valid excuse

anymore. Unfortunately, many teachers are probably not familiar with the variety of multimodal approaches to teaching that are out there, which means they may have to spend time learning about them and planning how to incorporate them into their own classrooms. In order to be effective educators, reach students where they are, help students use the tools to which they have access, and prepare students for their futures, secondary level English literature and composition teachers must begin to understand and incorporate more multimodal approaches in their teaching styles. This may seem like a daunting task to some, as many teachers may not even know where to begin. There is a lot of research about multimodal approaches to teaching, and this project will explore what research says regarding how English teaching at the high school level might integrate literature, composition, and multimodal technologies to help students become effective communicators as well as adaptable learners, and present some practical steps teachers can take to begin incorporating multimodality into their own classrooms.

An exploration of the topic of multimodality is important for teachers today. With all of the advancements in technology and literacy, this is a field that needs to be further explored. Much has already been written about it, but it is a constantly changing field, so it seems there are always new things to be learned and studied in it. Communication techniques and language itself are constantly changing, which is part of the challenge facing teachers as "[m]any composition teachers—raised and educated in the age and the landscapes of print—feel hesitant about the task of designing, implementing, and evaluating assignments that call for multimodal texts—texts that incorporate words, images, video, and sound (Takayoshi and Selfe 2-3). The beginning point for teachers who want to change their thinking about and approaches to literature and composition instruction using multimodality must be to first have an understanding of what multimodality is and the various resources available to them and their students. Second, they

have to have an understanding of *why* they should consider multimodal techniques for their teaching. Third, they must understand what has already been researched and learned by other educators and researchers in this field.

What Multimodality Includes

An understanding of what multimodality is should be the starting point for teachers who want to incorporate it into their classrooms. Bezemer describes multimodality as "an interdisciplinary approach that understands communication and representation to be more than about language" and that "multimodality assumes that representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which contribute to meaning." In this way it is not a limiting approach to teaching and learning but is instead rather broad and often open-ended. Within multimodality is an emphasis on teachers and students using a variety of technology and how those tools can "influence and ultimately shape students' encounters with and creation of 'texts'" (Carter-Tod and Fowler 245). The old ideas of text are changing; they no longer simply mean something in print. Cross states, "*Text* now includes film, plays, artworks, music, web sites, and photographs" (qtd. in Douglas-Jones 278). With the definition of *text* expanding to these other modes, literature and composition teachers need to consider how to incorporate some or all of these into their instruction and how to encourage students to think "outside the box" for their own learning. This shift in the meaning of *text* and in the ways in which it is understood and available now have to be considered by any English teacher. According to Mangen and van der Weel, "reading in the narrow sense, that is, of linear, written texts – has also undergone substantial changes, and is now increasingly performed with digital screen technologies such as laptops, smart phones, tablets (e.g. iPad) and e-readers (e.g. Kindle)" (117). While these might

not seem like teaching approaches, it is important for teachers to know how their students are getting access to texts and what kinds of texts the students are reading. Rowsell suggests that teachers incorporate more experiential learning. She claims, “educators need to locate teaching and learning within hands-on, apprenticed, problem-solving environments. Gathering materials, teaching, guiding; then, offering thinking time and critical framing of what the idea is; then, designing and producing an assignment; and then vetting materials and reflecting on the process“ (94). Rowsell claims this approach will benefit students when they find themselves in workplaces in their futures where they will need to use these kinds of skills.

Why Teachers Should Use Multimodal Techniques

A variety of reasons and research exist to persuade teachers to adopt multimodal approaches to their teaching. According to Batchelor, “The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2008) recommends a holistic approach toward teaching writing, emphasizing the process rather than the product. Literacy can incorporate other ways to work within the processes of writing, specifically revision, by using other modes (sign systems) to generate meaning” (136). In her article she discusses how to teach writing revision using multimodality in a classroom with gifted students which can lead students to develop more abstract thinking and new ways of viewing their own writing. Douglas-Jones seems to agree with Batchelor that the benefits of multimodal approaches to the teaching of writing will allow students to see the bigger picture of their own work. Douglas-Jones states, “Multimodal approaches...provide [students with] multiple perspectives, encourage active participation through knowledge construction and reflection, integrate the cognitive and the affective, pose problems, and offer multiple representations of content” (282). This shift is more towards a collaborative and participatory

approach to student learning rather than a traditional approach of teacher-to-student transmission of knowledge. Magnusson and Godhe acknowledge that a new mindset where "[k]nowledge is considered to be collective and distributed rather than centered on individual expertise" (846) is necessary. Carter-Tod and Fowler agree but also take this idea a bit further when they claim that there is a "call for teachers and students to see the movement toward multimodality and multiliteracies as on opportunity for both students and teachers to better connect their social, civic, and academic lives" (247). Not only should the learning process in a classroom be communal and shared but it should mimic how students should think of and approach their own roles in their communities. Looked at in this way, one outcome of multimodal literacy is to help students develop into global learners, global citizens. Douglas-Jones claims that "[l]iterature is often the conveyer of culture in terms of content, politics, pedagogy, perspective, and language" (277). The rise in technology has made the world more connected than ever before, and teachers must prepare their students to function in a global society. Literature and composition teachers are directly impacted because of the changing nature of texts. These technological advancements have "led to a re-conceptualization of literacy" and "[g]iven the changing nature of literacy, there is an urgent need to develop alternative ways of assessment in support of students' new literacy practices in the digital age" (Hung et al. 401). Some educators may question the necessity of changing their "tried and true" methods of instruction and assessment and may even feel some resistance to these new ideas, but the benefits of multimodal approaches seem to outweigh the hesitancy teachers may have over incorporating these approaches. The Center for Academic Success at the University of Illinois Springfield suggests the following student benefits of doing multimodal projects: "1)Promotes more interactivity; 2) Portrays information in multiple ways; 3) Adapts projects to befit different audiences; 4) Keeps focus better since more senses are being

used to process information; and 5) Allows for more flexibility and creativity to present information" ("What is Multimodal?"). These are benefits and skills that most teachers would want for their students, even though it may mean a bit more work on the teacher's part in preparing curriculum and lessons to achieve these goals. Learning and using multimodal composition skills will undoubtedly benefit students while in high school and college English courses, and the techniques they learn can also transfer to other courses and to their future workplaces. According to Dusenberry et al, "By incorporating multimodality in multiple assignments and by using modes together rather than isolating them in a single design assignment, we ask students to become reflective problem solvers who can use technology as one component of their strategy to communicate" (305). Two important skills, reflective problem solving and use of technology, are additional benefits to students when teachers are willing to incorporate a variety of multimodal approaches to assignments and projects. Reflective problem-solving skills are not limited to the English classroom; they are skills that can be applied to a vast array of situations in school and in life, and are therefore valuable tools that may not be the main goal of multimodal teaching but a useful additional benefit for the students. These skills are important for students to develop because "technologisation and globalisation have advanced the need for students to design, produce and present multimodal texts as representations of learning" and "[t]he practical challenge for teachers in everyday classroom life is bridging the learning spaces between third-space capacities and classroom activity. Hence, harnessing and extending student capacity within authentic and generative learning spaces is a crucial goal for contemporary education" (Edwards-Groves 49-50). In addition, teachers should not shy away from pushing students to try something new. Most people do not like to step out of their comfort zones, so to speak, but "exposing students to unfamiliar modes of communication and inquiry

and asking students to interweave modes help them to examine critically and value the process of communication as well as to appreciate the need to adopt multiple communication strategies" and "students should confront the unfamiliar because it improves their ability to learn how to approach new communication tasks" (Dusenberry et al 304-305). They can learn to use and adapt the skills learned in English composition classes to other classes and situations in which they need to communicate in some way. For that reason, it is important for composition teachers to assist "students to become reflective consumers and producers of the digital genres that mark both their college careers and their lives beyond the university by giving them purchase on the topic of digital literacy and practice composing digital genres like blogs and infographics" (Wenger 235). This allows students to begin to see composition in a different light. Because we live in a digitally diverse world, "Beyond the traditional classroom focuses, [teachers] need to help our students deliberately shape their rhetorical decisions and communications strategies to unfamiliar contexts and tasks" (Dusenberry et al. 300). Forms of communication are constantly evolving, and teachers must teach students to keep up with those changes and be able to function in this changing world. Since multimodal skills are not limited to English composition classes, students will be able to transfer their learning to other tasks in other courses or job situations. Wenger agrees, though in the context of a college setting, stating, "when students can draw on the digital literacies of their lives outside of the FYW classroom and put them to use within that classroom, they are invited to rethink what counts as writing and writing expertise" (236). By giving students these opportunities, they may begin to realize that *composition* is more complex and diverse than just writing an essay. In their future careers, students may be faced with many different composition tasks: writing resumes, writing blog posts, designing company websites, controlling social media accounts, and so on. By exposing them to multimodal writings in high

school and college, teachers can better prepare students to be effective communicators who are able to utilize a variety of composition techniques. This will make them valuable employees, people with marketable skills as "multimodality helps students become comfortable confronting unfamiliar modes and engaging in unfamiliar practices" (Dusenberry et al 312). If students learn how to use multimodal communication techniques effectively, it will serve them well when they encounter new challenges in the workplace.

What Research Has Shown

How to approach teaching with multimodality in a high school classroom is a bit of a mixed bag because there are so many elements to consider. An understanding of the previous and current research in this field is necessary for any literature and composition teacher who wants to pursue the incorporation of multimodality in his or her classroom. On the literature side, Douglas-Jones' article discusses how literature can be used to help students discover who they are, how they relate to others, and how to embrace diversity. She has researched and suggested ways for teachers to incorporate "diverse representations of text and the importance of providing activities and experiences that support diversity in terms of learning modalities, personal factors, socio-economic status, and geographical locations" (Douglas-Jones 277). In this time of shifting ideas of ways to approach literacy, Greene claims, "Multimodal expressions, e.g., film, plays, artworks, music, and photographs, encourage learners to think alternatively about the fictional world of literature and the real world around them" (qtd. in Douglas-Jones 280). Teachers have begun to incorporate these multimodal elements into their classrooms, but there is always room for improvement and for more diversity in the methods used.

On the composition side, Orme et al. reviewed a research paper experiment in a high school. The project focused on approaching a research paper by having students tell their stories

in non-traditional ways and through exploring other methods available to them. This allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of their audience as well as explore the variety of resources available. “Students learn to tell stories that they believe need to be heard in a variety of ways for a variety of audiences. Students were challenged to select and pursue research topics that resonated personally” since “research is closely linked to strong storytelling” (Orme et al. 50). In this experiment, the authors claimed that “the problem [with a traditional research project] is how students conceptualize the writing assignment” (51). While this experiment appeared to be a success for this group of students, there are many other factors to consider. Carter-Tod and Fowler suggest that “[t]eachers are discovering the need to redefine the traditional academic modes for creating, communicating, and receiving domain knowledge” (245) but that there is not one right way or one most successful way to do this. The main issues with multimodal composition are how to incorporate it effectively into student experiences in the classroom and how to help students retain the knowledge gained within these multimodal experiences in order to transfer that knowledge to other fields. Researchers and scholars do not yet seem to understand all aspects of multimodal composition yet and therefore it remains a developing area of learning and teaching.

One additional consideration that has been researched and also needs to be researched more in depth is assessment. Hung et al. also explore the results of research on teaching using multimodal strategies. Their article specifically focused on designing a rubric that incorporates multimodal elements in it as part of the grade and how that “formative assessment tool affects English learners’ multimodal text production” (401). In reflecting on a student presentation using some kind of slideshow, they found that “most language teachers assess the students based on their presentation skills with a particular focus on oral fluency and accuracy of language use. In

contrast, little attention is paid to the design of slides, and even if these are included as part of the assignment grading criteria, the emphasis is often placed on their linguistic content, neglecting other nonlinguistic modes of meaning" (401). This involves a rethinking of how to assess any student project which includes multimodal skills. If teachers begin requiring students to incorporate these into their projects and presentations, teachers need to also consider those skills in the assessments and redesign rubrics to account for that. While this is definitely possible, educators still have some things to learn about multimodality. Scanlon recognizes that "our scholarship as well as our pedagogy has fallen short of its aim in understanding the processes behind multimodal texts, particularly collaborative ones" (123). In regards to the need for more research and evidence, Scanlon concludes that "[u]ntil we have more conclusive evidence to guide our engagement in multimodal composition, multimodal assignments should allow for substantial dedication of class time to assisting students in establishing and carrying out several recursive stages of composing in unfamiliar and disorienting modes" (122). Teachers who want to be effective educators in this changing world should not be hesitant to engage in experimenting with multimodality in their classrooms.

Researchers all seem to agree that incorporating multimodality into classrooms is a process and that teachers need to be willing to work hard and think through their course content in new ways. To this end, Edwards-Groves states, "Now with the ubiquitous presence of technology in the textual lives of people, writing practices have changed, and these notions need to be taken forward into contemporary teaching practices" (51) and "To be relevant, there needs to be a multimodal view of the pedagogy of writing...and the writing process itself. Therefore, utilising technology in and around classroom writing events needs to be conducted in a way that overtly demonstrates developing student capacity to learn multimodally and to negotiate and

manipulate the multimodal nature of classroom texts" (62). Likewise, Palmeri states that teachers do not have to "choose one pedagogy over another but rather to consider how we can recombine them—remix them—in ways that can enable us to develop a more nuanced and complex view of what it means to teach composition in the contemporary digital moment" (qtd. in Dusenberry 319). Incorporating multimodal techniques is not an easy task because there are so many different aspects and challenges to it. Rowsell and Decoste acknowledge, "What complicates multimodal teaching is not only the heterogeneity of participant interests and experiences with modes, but also researchers' and educators' lack of experience and expertise with modal praxis and design principle" (258). This is not really an answer but more of a place for exploration for teachers and for students. We just may have to learn by trial and error, realizing that "pedagogical approaches can enliven the teaching of literature, developing deep textual connections and supporting students' understandings of literary devices and digital resources. It is recommended that teachers consider these benefits when planning literature pedagogies while balancing the pressures of time, the need for building students' capacities in linguistic responses to literature, and the availability of appropriate resourcing and accountability structures" (Cloonan 655). Again, this can be challenging but rewarding for both teachers and students! Teachers, though, are not the only ones who must experiment with multimodal strategies; because students do not necessarily understand multimodal texts either,

> [They] must experiment to successfully complete multimodal assignments because they require new processes, challenge old contexts, and emphasize clarity in communication; they require different approaches and thus push new ideas. In many ways, multimodal assignments create opportunities for students not only to try new things but also to reexamine the same experiences through a new lens. Multimodal assignments

> help us do what we have always tried to do as instructors—reveal steps and uncover methods behind communication (Dusenberry et al 319).

Teachers have to model for their students the willingness to try new things and not to be afraid to fail. We often learn through our failures, and we have to be vulnerable enough to accept and acknowledge those failures. A teacher never knows how a lesson plan will work or how a classroom activity will work until she tries it. Teachers should not be afraid to try new things in the classroom; it is exactly the place where multimodal learning trials (and errors) should occur. Reiss and Young posit:

> Language alone may not always represent best our students' thinking and understanding, even when we are teaching language-dependent courses in writing (composition) or reading (literature) or any academic course where reading and writing are important to learning. Fortunately, thanks to computers and the Internet, students have an opportunity to make meaning and demonstrate their intellectual growth in multiple modalities. (169)

Every good teacher knows that there is not one all-encompassing teaching strategy or lesson plan or assignment that will reach every student; students' needs and abilities and interests are very diverse, and teaching strategies and assignments should be designed with that in mind. This is where multimodal techniques can be a huge asset to both the teacher and her students. According to Rowsell and Decoste, "We found that when we shifted to multimodal writing, students were more interested, engaged and invested in activities" (258). This is what teachers want for their students, and multimodality is a pathway to achieve this. Dusenberry et al. recognize that " instructors can also take small steps toward adopting this approach" (318); using multimodal techniques does not have to accompany a reworking of an entire course. Little by little teachers can develop new ideas and ways of incorporating these multimodal writings into their courses

while recognizing that "[a]s usage of new technologies and media to make meaning has increased, frameworks to explore emerging literacies required for online and digital contexts have emerged and continue to be refined" (Cloonan et al 648). There is no one right way to do this as educators and researchers acknowledge that this field is still being explored, tested, and adapted.

Applications and Implications for My Classroom

According to Edwards-Groves, "creating meaningful text is now as much about design, production and presentation. Technology has the capacity to facilitate this dimension of text production and presentation" (51). One way multimodal techniques could be applied to any high school English literature course, such as those I teach, is in the context of a novel study. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is often studied in high school, or Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, and the most common summative assessment for a literature study is the composition of a traditional essay. While there is nothing wrong with this kind of essay assignment, it does not have to be the only composition option. Both of these literary works lend themselves to much reflection, discussion, and introspection. Edwards-Groves claims, "Through collaborative dialogues about text construction and spaced practice, multimodal teaching (which overtly combines sound, space, image and verbal dimensions of teaching) presents us with a new pedagogical backdrop for designing, producing and presenting oral, written and visual texts in today's classrooms" (61). Students can apply this to their own text assignments. Instead of composing an essay about a topic from a novel or a play, a student could create a presentation or slideshow which could include words, phrases, and/or images that are important in the story. The presentation could focus on a theme, a character, or symbols. In the study of *Frankenstein*, for example, a student could trace the Promethean theme throughout the novel and present that in a

variety of ways: slideshow, oral presentation, character diaries, etc. Students could create a comic strip or even sections of a graphic novel to retell the story in different ways. For *Romeo and Juliet*, a student could create a board game about the main details and characters, design scenes (posters or dioramas), act out a scene, or make a video diary as one of the characters who is assessing the plot development or sharing thoughts about the other characters. These options allow for creativity as well as reflection about the situation(s) and character(s) in the story and analysis of the plot or characters; moreover, they also can be used to teach students how to use certain elements of technology to create the project, certain skills of public speaking, or elements of design. Being able to develop video/recording skills, editing skills, and composition within these methods may be skills that students will need in the future; acting out a scene allows practice with performing and speaking in public; and designing scenes allows students to use various artistic tools (paint, pencils, textiles, etc.). Multimodality must allow for some flexibility, and fortunately it is easy for that to occur. Giving students the opportunities to practice any of these varied skills while in high school can give them an advantage for future classes and future projects. Reiss and Young state that there is a need for:

> a pedagogy where students' messages are comprised of both words—sometimes analytical, reflective, or personal, especially reflections on their own learning experiences—and alternative expressions in a modality or multiple modalities of their choice. Giving students a wide range of options for developing and publishing their compositions enhances their engagement with the subject matter and empowers them to make creative and rhetorical decisions. (165)

Students often thrive when given some freedom to choose their own learning methods and also tend to engage more with the material when they are able to take ownership of their learning.

Reiss and Young agree when they state, “When we give students a variety of options for an authentic audience, they respond in sometimes surprising ways that reveal their interests and talents along with their learning” (174). Linking their interests to their learning will potentially increase their desire for learning and give them confidence in their academic abilities. Giving students the ability to connect with an authentic audience is also a component of effective composition instruction. Wenger seems to agree when she states, “The promise of digital composing to help students become more conscious of their writing behaviors and to begin a process of mindful monitoring is great, in part because of the ways digital writing asks students to create new composing scripts and to communicate with real audiences for genuine purposes” (238). Rowsell and Decoste likewise aver: “One problem with writing in high school is that it lacks real-life applications. There are many genres of texts that we read and compose in our day-to-day lives" (252). Although students digitally compose all the time with their social media posts, texts, chats, etc., they probably do not realize that those are methods of composing. If a teacher can tap into those resources and skills that students use to compose in non-formal ways and get them to see the ways in which they can turn those into formal composition tools, students may be able and willing to engage more with the course content.

As an English literature and composition teacher, I can tend to get stuck in the rut of doing the same kinds of lessons over and over without much change in my methodology or my expectations of students. In order to achieve my purposes for teaching in a high school setting, I need to re-evaluate my own teaching of composition and literature. I tend to fall back a bit too hard on the typical essay with a clear thesis and correct grammar. I do so because that is the way I was educated, but I have come to recognize that this is not the best way for *all* students to interact with their learning and to even reflect what they have learned. It may be the best way for

some of them in some situations, but I should not box all students into one learning style. Wenger agrees that “if we limit students to only alphabetic means of invention and revision, we may unnecessarily constrain their ability to think intensively and complexly about their work” (236). It has taken a while for me to come to this realization because it is difficult to change and to even come up with alternatives to the standard essays. After researching multimodality and reflecting on what it means for my own teaching, I have come to the realization that although I do use some multimodal techniques in my classroom, there is always room for improvement and experimentation. I realize I have also fallen short in terms of how I assess projects in which students use multimodal techniques, and I have recognized that “it is not unusual for teachers to encourage the use of different modes and digital media for student work but, as research show, it is more unusual to recognize it as learning both in the assignment and in assessment” (qtd. in Magnusson and Godhe 849). Likewise, Hung at al. agree that “language teachers [must] develop not only adequate instructional strategies for contemporary literacy demands, but also appropriate assessments that can more accurately reflect and measure students’ literacy performance in relation to the multimodal nature of contemporary texts”(401-402). A rethinking of current assessment practices and methods is imperative if teachers want to keep current with the changing demands and needs of their students and within the field of education itself. As a step, I have started to design summative assessments which allow for student artwork to represent their learning, for music compositions related to a unit, for acting opportunities, for video productions, etc. I have also had to explore multimodal techniques in my courses as a graduate student and learn new programs and techniques, which I have been able to pass on, in some part at least, to my students. I do realize, though, that change does not have to happen all at once and also that not everything has to change. Although changing up the methods of

summative assessments can be a beneficial thing for me and for any teacher to do, there can still be a place for traditional essay writing. Edwards-Groves asserts:

> Since classroom texts are becoming increasingly multimodal, so too is the process by which they are written. Retheorising writing in new times demands that pedagogical practices and understandings incorporate ‘designing’, ‘producing’ and ‘presenting’ as key elements of the writing process. To be relevant in the contemporary classroom these new dimensions of writing and text construction need to sit beside ‘planning’, ‘drafting’, ‘editing’, ‘redrafting’ and ‘proofreading’. These new practices have generated the need for the writing process to be reconceptualised as the ‘multimodal writing process’ as students move recursively between and across phases of writing. (62)

She argues that traditional essay writing does not need to be completely eradicated but rather be supported by multimodal strategies and practices. It really begins in the mind with a reimagining of composition. Not every student will know where to begin with multimodal writing, though; “because not all students have the equipment or skills for making their own media, we suggest a pedagogy of choice that encourages students to compose both words and other modalities in ways that appeal to their interests and abilities" (172-173). While I do see the benefits of multimodality and try to provide some opportunities for students to engage with various multimodal skills, I am not ready to fully replace the essay writing portions of my courses. I still believe that there is value in that type of composition, as do most teachers, I am sure; however, I do acknowledge that it is not always the best method nor the most effective for every student or every unit within my curriculum. Nevertheless, I want to do what is best for my students and their futures; therefore, I have to be willing to change, explore, fail, and learn. In some of the units I teach I have begun to incorporate some multimodal techniques and alternatives to what

we have always thought of as *composition*. For any reflection assignment I give in regards to literature, I am thinking of ways in which I can allow students to use resources beyond text. They do not necessarily have to write an essay. They could potentially give a presentation using slides, or they could do an audio or video recording of their reflections and insights. This is a digital age, and as Orme et al. point out, "As any high school teacher knows, students, with their mobile devices, are often recording themselves, yet here [it can be used] with purpose beyond modernity's narcissistic nature" (56). Students can be shown ways in which their near obsession with technology can actually be used for learning purposes rather than just entertainment ones. Giving students more opportunities to choose their own final projects, whether they choose a traditional essay, a video diary, a slideshow presentation, an artistic method (artwork, acting, singing), etc., could lead to what Magnusson and Godhe call "multimodal meaning-making" (127) in order to assist students to succeed in school and in the workplace. Hoffman and Topping argue that "human intelligence is multidimensional --spatial , musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic" (32). This suggests that the learning process in schools also needs to reflect this multidimensionalism. Douglas-Jones believes "Multimodal approaches are preferred because they are more inclusive. They also provide multiple perspectives, encourage active participation through knowledge construction and reflection, integrate the cognitive and the affective, pose problems, and offer multiple representations of content" (282). One of the methods she suggests in her article is using literature circles as a multimodal approach to novels or stories. Citing Daniels, Douglas-Jones writes that literature circles "support true engagement with literatures within a community of diverse readers. Circles are collaborative, reader- centered and owned, heterogeneous in composition, and revolve around literature selected and read by the groups. With no strict formulation, literature circles are as diverse as the learners who inhabit

them. In this 'safe space,' learners clarify understanding of texts as they construct meaning and extend that meaning to other modes of creative and artistic response" (282). Personally, I have used literature circles in some of my English classes, and they have been very successful. I plan to continue using them but also continue to evaluate them and look for more ways to allow students to incorporate multimodal techniques within the literature circles project. I realize that in reevaluating the techniques I use, I also need to, as Douglas-Jones puts it, "sometimes…'park my ego at the door' and co-learn with learners, especially when I need to extend learning" (280). Students have information to teach me how to become a better teacher, and I occasionally need to humble myself enough to accept that teaching so that I can become a more effective teacher and better my own skills. This means that even though I know I still have things to learn about rethinking literature and composition in light of multimodality and teaching for transfer, I have made some small steps. This gives me confidence to move forward and to not be afraid to at least try. It is my hope that my willingness to try will also allow students the freedom to also just try new approaches to their writing and learning. It may not be easy but things that are worthwhile are rarely easy at the start.

Conclusion

While much research has been done and while teachers can begin to incorporate more multimodal approaches in their teaching styles, there is much still to be learned about this topic. There is quite a bit of research about the *need* for multimodal texts, but there is much less research about *how* to do it. It needs to be done regularly and effectively within the English curriculum in such a way as to lead students to be able to transfer the multimodal techniques to other disciplines besides English class; however, that is not an easy thing to do and is not

something that can happen quickly. It is a long process and will take a lot of work. Because technology is expanding and because the need for those who can use a variety of technologies is growing, teachers need to provide their students with the skills necessary to keep up in this technologically diverse world. Though we should not ignore the composition skills that have served us so well for so long, those of us in the education field need to recognize the value of multimodal techniques and be willing to learn about them, evaluate them, use them, and teach our students to use them so that they can become effective communicators. Teachers are learners themselves within the changing field of teaching, and we must all acknowledge our weaknesses and also praise our strengths in regards to our own teaching. As Douglas-Jones states, "Learners require critical skills to resolve complex diversity issues relevant to their personal experiences and their ability to function in our increasingly diverse society. However, used as starting points, diverse multimodal literary and cultural experiences can help to address learners' cultural awareness needs and build cultural competence" (283). Mangen and van der Weel seems to agree that there is not a ready-made strategy for any of this when they state, "We need to understand how such norms evolve in order to improve our understanding of the significance of the move from paper to screen, and of the significance of reading in today's society" (119). The bottom line is that we as teachers know some but we do not know all; therefore, we must continue to be learners ourselves and strive to become the most effective educators we can be for our students.

Works Cited

Batchelor, Katherine. "'My Story Came to Life!': How Multimodality Can Inspire Revision in Writing." *Gifted Child Today*, vol. 41, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 136–148. *EBSCOhost*, DOI:10.1177/1076217518768850. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Bezemer, Jeff. "What Is Multimodality?" *Institute of Education*, University College London, 16 Feb. 2012, mode.ioe.ac.uk/2012/02/16/what-is-multimodality/ Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Carter-Tod, Sheila, and Shelli Fowler. "Multimodal Literacy and Cultural Identities." *International Journal of the Humanities*, vol. 3, no. 9, May 2006, pp. 245–251. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=25038990&site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Cloonan, Anne, et al. "Renewing Literature Circles: Pedagogies for Curated Multimodal Responses." *Reading Teacher*, vol. 73, no. 5, Mar. 2020, pp. 647–656. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1002/trtr.1875

Dusenberry, Lisa, et al. "Filter. Remix. Make.: Cultivating Adaptability Through Multimodality." *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, vol. 45, no. 3, July 2015, pp. 299–322. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1177/0047281615578851

Douglas-Jones, Daisy. "Connecting and Exploring Diverse Cultures through Multimodal Literary and Cultural Experiences." *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities & Nations*, vol. 7, no. 4, Nov. 2007, pp. 277–284. *EBSCOhost*, DOI:10.18848/1447-9532/CGP/v07i04/39436. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Edwards-Groves, Christine Joy. "The Multimodal Writing Process: Changing Practices in Contemporary Classrooms." *Language & Education: An International Journal*, vol. 25, no. 1, Jan. 2011, pp. 49–64. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1080/09500782.2010.523468

Hoffman, Sandra Josephs, and Donna Hooker Topping. "Teaching Grammar Without Sacrificing Reading and Writing." *Journal of Reading Education*, vol. 33, no. 3, Spring/Summer 2008, pp. 32–34. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eft&AN=508060955&site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Hung, Hsiu-Ting, et al. "Multimodal Assessment of and for Learning: A Theory-Driven Design Rubric." *British Journal of Educational Technology*, vol. 44, no. 3, May 2013, pp. 400–409. *EBSCOhost*, DOI:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2012.01337.x. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Mangen, Anne, and Adriaan van der Weel. "The Evolution of Reading in the Age of Digitisation: An Integrative Framework for Reading Research." *Literacy*, vol. 50, no. 3, Sept. 2016, pp. 116–124. *EBSCOhost*, DOI:10.1111/lit.12086. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Magnusson, Petra, and Anna-Lena Godhe. "Multimodality in Language Education -- Implications for Teaching." *Designs for Learning*, vol. 11, no. 1, Jan. 2019, pp. 127–137. *EBSCOhost*, DOI: http://doi.org/10.16993/dfl.127. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Orme, Sarah, et al. "Telling Stories with Research: How a Transmedia Website and Viral Podcast Changed the Research Paper." *Virginia English Journal*, vol. 67, no. 2, Winter 2018, pp. 50–59. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=137072076 &site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Reiss, Donna, and Art Young. "Multimodal Composing, Appropriation, Remediation, and Reflection: Writing, Literature, Media." *Multimodal Literacies and Emerging Genres*, edited by Tracey Bowen and Carl Whithaus, University of Pittsburgh Press; Falmer, 2013, pp. 164–182. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2013301165&site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Rowsell, Jennifer, and Eryn Decoste. "(Re)Designing Writing in English Class: A Multimodal Approach to Teaching Writing." *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, vol. 7, no. 3, Jan. 2012, pp. 246–260. *EBSCOhost*, doi: 10.1080/1554480X.2012.685226

Rowsell, Jennifer. "What Professionals Can Teach Us about Education: A Call for Change." *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 46, no. 1, Mar. 2016, pp. 81–96. *EBSCOhost*, DOI:10.1080/0305764X.2015.1015964. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Scanlon, Molly J. "The Work of Comics Collaborations: Considerations of Multimodal Composition for Writing Scholarship and Pedagogy." *Composition Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2015, pp. 105–130. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh& AN=2016873295&site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 4 Nov. 2020.

Takayoshi, Pamela, and Cynthia L. Selfe. "Chapter 1: Thinking about Multimodality". Aug. 2012, pp. 1-11. http://techstyle.lmc.gatech.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Takayoshi-Selfe.pdf Accessed 3 Dec. 2020. PDF file.

Wenger, Christy I. "Digital Composing in WAW: What Students Learn through Infographics." *Next Steps: New Directions for/in Writing about Writing*, edited by Barbara Bird et al., Utah State University Press, 2019, pp. 234–251. *EBSCOhost*,

search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2019287098&site=ehost-live&scope=site. Accessed 3 Nov. 2020.

"What is Multimodal?" *Center for Academic Success*, University of Illinois Springfield, 2020, www.uis.edu/cas/thelearninghub/writing/handouts/rhetorical-concepts/what-is-multimodal/. Accessed 1 Dec. 2020.

Antigone unit plan

Rationale for this unit of study

In a high school classroom, a study of *Antigone* is best done in a read-and-discuss setting. Students need the teacher to guide them through the reading process and to help them understand the plot, the themes, and the characters. In addition, though, they should be pushed to think deeper and more critically about the issues and themes presented in the play.

It is a play that many students can connect with in some way. Many of them have family difficulties, though probably not to the extent that Antigone's family had, but many have also been faced with ethical and moral decisions. They have, or will have in the future, been faced with difficult decisions on which path, law, principles to follow. It is not always easy to decide. This play is a good example of a character who struggles with making the right decisions. Therefore, it can be applicable to students' lives and is a valuable piece of literature to study. As van den Berge asserts, "The raging way in which Antigone addresses her sister in the opening lines of the play sets the tone for the drama as it unfolds" (217). This sets up a conflict that students can connect with their own lives. They have seen or read about or experienced sibling rivalry, spats with brothers or sisters. Therefore, they can quickly connect to the sisters' disagreement in this opening scene. Another connection to their lives can be made in the gender roles realm, which is a hot topic in society today. Antigone is a woman who is challenging the authority of a male ruler in a time when it was unthinkable for anyone, no matter the gender, to challenge a ruler. Haimon, who is both compared to Antigone and contrasted with her, is described "in the context of a series of insults and rhetoric which emphasizes Haemon's subordination to a woman, Creon makes it clear that there is a gendered component to the specific madness he imagines" (Miller 165). Haimon then finds himself in a difficult position as

Creon's son and Antigone's fiancé. Meltzer agrees with Miller's assertions of gender roles that are inverted when he claims, "Thus the mixture of gendered roles: she is led to her execution like a man, but she hangs herself (already unusual) with a veil of femininity" (184). Because the issues brought up throughout this play are so varied, so deep, and still so relevant, the only way to really take students through it is by discussing these issues, the content of the play, the characters, and moral and ethical issues of today's world. This will prepare students to be better and more effective critical thinkers and critical reflectors.

A combination of teacher lecture, class discussion, written reflections, and time to respond to classmates in writing is really the most effective in getting students engaged in the play and willing to share their opinions.

Unit Plan

Purpose/Goals:

1. Students will be able to:
    a. Understand some of the history of Greek drama
    b. Identify characteristics of a tragic hero
    c. Connect ideals from this play to their own lives
    d. Think critically about / reflect on their views on government/law

Key Concepts:

Conscience vs. Authority
Pride vs. Humility
Right vs. Wrong

Assessments:

worksheets, discussions in class, discussion board posts online, short reflection writings, essay, speech or video project

Resources:

Elements of Literature, Fourth Course textbook containing the play and comprehension questions, supplemental articles, handouts, slideshows, online discussion board platform

Unit Calendar

Day One: Introduction to Greek drama and to *Antigone*

Students will take notes along with the PowerPoint / Google Slides presentation that the teacher will present in class on the history of Greek drama.

The teacher will give an overview/summary of the basic story of *Oedipus Rex* as a background to *Antigone* (details in textbook).

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will understand a bit about the origins of Greek drama, elements of a Greek drama, and the story of *Oedipus Rex* as a background to *Antigone*

Day Two: Introduction to the main theme of *Antigone*

Discussion item: Conscience vs. Authority

Teacher will ask students to respond in writing to this prompt:

"When those in power are morally wrong, do we break their laws, or do we collaborate with them by obeying?" Give your reasons and an example from history.

Time will be given in class to write the response and then to share/discuss the responses first with a partner and then as a class

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will interact with the main themes of the play and get an idea of what to consider as we read it. They will express their opinions and listen to the opinions of others

Assignments: Writing prompt and subsequent discussion
Character chart (due at the end of the unit)

Day Three: Introduction to the characters in the play; Begin reading the play aloud

The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene

Read *Prologue*

Discuss how Antigone and Ismene differ (views on laws, authority, fears, actions, etc.)

Discuss what Antigone's statements in this scene reveal about herself

Read article on "Ancient Greek Burial Practices" (which is in the textbook) to give students some contextual knowledge

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will begin to understand the

characters and motivations of both Antigone and Ismene. Students will gain some contextual understanding of the situation in the play.

Day Four: Read *Parados*

The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What is the purpose of this section?
2. Why is it important that the Chorus is made up of Theban elders?
    a. What have you learned from your elders?
    b. What kind of advice do they give?
3. How does the *Parados* differ in tone and content from the *Prologue*?

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will understand the purpose of certain elements and sections of the play (the *parados*) as well as understanding the Chorus and its connections to their own lives in terms of "elder wisdom".

Assignment: *Antigone* worksheet #1

Day Five: Read Scene One and Ode 1

The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene

Discussion items:

1. Analyze Creon's first speech. What rhetorical techniques does he use? How does the beginning differ from the end?
2. What is the order of events in the sentry's retelling of what happened?
3. What is Creon's reaction to this news? What does his reaction reveal about his character?
4. Does Creon remind you of any other characters from plays, novels, stories, film, or TV shows? Explain.

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will be able to identify rhetorical techniques used by a character in the play and connect the speeches and characters to real-life situations. Students will be able to analyze and assess Creon's character and his motivations.

Assignment: Discussion Board Post

Respond on the discussion board to the following two prompts:

A: From what we have seen of Creon thus far, how would you characterize him as a leader? What are his strengths? What are his weaknesses?

B: In Ode 1, what opinion does the Chorus express about the importance of law in a society? How is that opinion relevant/applicable to our own attitude(s) toward law today? (Or isn't it?)
Post your responses then comment on at least two other classmates' responses. Responses must further the discussion and not just be a "good job, I agree" post!

Day Six: Discuss the discussion board posts from previous day; Read Scene 2 and Ode 2
The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene; once finished, students will work on their worksheets

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will interact verbally with one another about yesterday's discussion board and react to others' posts (to which they did not respond for the assignment).

Assignment: *Antigone* worksheet #2

Day Seven: Read Scene 3 and Ode 3
The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene
Discussion items:

1. Analyze the argument between Creon and Haimon. What is each man's main point? How effective is each one at communicating his point of view? With whom do you agree more? Why?
2. How do their views on rulers/kings/politicians differ?
3. What character flaw(s) is/are revealed in Creon through this scene?
4. How has Haimon's tone/attitude toward Creon changed from the beginning to end of scene 3?
5. Based on what you have read, would you characterize Creon as a good ruler or not? Explain your answer citing characteristics of a good ruler.

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will be able to explain key differences between Haimon and Creon. Students will also be able to explain traits and characteristics of good leaders and give examples from history or personal experiences.

Day Eight: Read Scene 4 and Ode 4
The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene.

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will be able to identify changes in Antigone's character and Creon's character. Students will be able to reflect critically on the consequences of one's actions and articulate how it applies to both Antigone and Creon.

Assignment: Discussion Board Post

Respond on the discussion board to the following two prompts:

A. How is Antigone's tone different from her tone in previous scenes? What do you think accounts for this change?
B. What is the subject of Ode 4? How is it different from the previous Odes?
C. Do you agree with Creon's declaration in lines 47-48 that Antigone is responsible for her own death? Explain.

Post your responses then comment on at least two other classmates' responses. Responses must further the discussion.

Day Nine: Read Scene 5 and *Paen*

The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene

Discussion items:

1. What is the purpose of Teiresias? Why is his blindness significant?
2. How has Creon been guilty of the sin of pride? Is this his fatal /tragic flaw?
3. Why do you think Creon changes his mind about Antigone's fate? What has motivated him?

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will be able to identify the changes Creon has gone through and discuss how he is a tragic figure in the play.

Day Ten: Read *Exodos*

The teacher will assign students to read roles aloud for each scene

Discussion items:

1. How has Creon changed?
2. Is Creon justified in taking all of the blame upon himself? Explain.
3. How would you describe the major conflict in this play? Is the conflict between good and evil, between opposing views of what is good, something else?

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will articulate the major conflict of the play and connect it to real events in history, in the present, and/or in their own lives. Students will understand the elements of a tragic hero and be able to write an analysis of how they fit at least one character.

Assignment: Written analysis

Write a two-page analysis on the following prompt:

Who is the tragic hero of the play? Antigone? Creon? Both? Explain using specific details from the play.

Day Eleven: Tragic hero analysis

Students will be asked to share their tragic hero analysis essays in class, first with a classmate and then each pair will choose one of the essays to share aloud.

Assignment:
Students will read the article "Respect for Community Is as Important as Respect for Loved Ones" by Gilbert Norwood and write a short reflection response to it.
Students will read the article "Destabilizing Haemon: Radically Reading Gender and Authority in Sophocles' Antigone" by Peter Miller and write a short reflection response to it.

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will share their opinions and analyses with classmates and then reflect critically on their views regarding the articles read.

Day Twelve: Discussion of Norwood's and Miller's articles and students' reflections
Final Video Project Explanation

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will interact with the articles and with one another regarding their views or opinions of those articles. Students will understand the expectations of their final project.

Days Thirteen - Fifteen: Work days for their final group project

Goal(s) / Learning Expectation(s) for today: Students will work in small groups on their projects which will be presented in class on Day Sixteen.

Day Sixteen: Presentation of group video projects

Works Cited:

Meltzer, Françoise. "Theories of Desire: Antigone Again." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 37, no. 2, Winter 2011, pp. 169–86. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1086/657289.

Miller, Peter. "Destabilizing Haemon: Radically Reading Gender and Authority in Sophocles' Antigone." *Helios*, vol. 41, no. 2, Fall 2014, pp. 163–85. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lfh&AN=99262871&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

van den Berge, Lukas. "Sophocles' Antigone and the Promise of Ethical Life: Tragic Ambiguity and the Pathologies of Reason." *Law & Humanities*, vol. 11, no. 2, Nov. 2017, p. 205. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=brb&AN=126891304&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Appendix of Resources for the *Antigone* unit:

Antigone character chart

Antigone worksheet #1

Antigone worksheet #2

Antigone Final Project explanation

Print resources for students:

Miller, Peter. "Destabilizing Haemon: Radically Reading Gender and Authority in Sophocles' *Antigone*." Helios 41.2 (2014): 163-185. DOI: 10.1353/hel.2014.0007.

Norwood, Gilbert. "Respect for Community Is as Important As Respect for Loved Ones." *Readings on Antigone*. Greenhaven Press, 1999.

Sophocles. "Antigone." *Elements of Literature, Fourth Course*, Edited by Robert E. Probst and Robert Anderson. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1997.

ANTIGONE CHARACTER CHART

CHARACTER	IMPORTANCE TO THE STORY	PERSONALITY TRAITS	IDEAS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO HIM/HER
ANTIGONE			
CREON			
ISMENE			
CHORAGOS			
HAIMON			

Antigone Worksheet #1

Antigone "Prologue" and "Parados" responses
Please answer the following questions using complete sentences and specific examples or details from the play as needed.

1. What information does Antigone give to Ismene at the beginning of this scene?

2. What does Antigone plan to do? Why?

3. Does Ismene plan to join her? Why or why not?

4. What story does the chorus tell in the Parodos? Why?

5. In their first scenes together, Antigone and Ismene are foils, characters who have contrasting or opposite qualities. How would you characterize each sister? Give specifics.

Antigone Worksheet #2

Scene 2 and Ode 2
Please answer the following questions using complete sentences and specific examples or details from the play as needed.

1. Who does the sentry bring before Creon? How has the culprit been caught?

2. Why does the sentry bring her to Creon despite knowing she will be executed? Is the death penalty a fitting punishment for Antigone's crime? Explain.

3. How does she defend herself? What is Antigone's attitude toward death?

4. What do you think is motivating Antigone in this scene—pride, love, principle? Explain.

5. How does gender bias affect Creon's decision to stand by his original decree? Why does he include Ismene in the sentence? What has he decided to do with the sisters?

6. What does family loyalty have to do with Creon's insistence on carrying out the sentence? What does he hope to prove?

7. In lines 75-76, the Choragos accuses Antigone of being "headstrong, deaf to reason," and unyielding. Later, Creon calls her behavior "barefaced anarchy." Could either accusation

also apply to Creon himself? Which do you agree with more, Antigone's view of herself or Creon's view of her? Why?

8. According to Ode 2, "God's vengeance" looms over the House of Oedipus. What human fault does the Chorus say is responsible for this "curse of heaven"? So far in the play, which characters have shown that they have this fault? Explain.

9. Antigone tells Creon she is obeying the laws of God, not the law imposed by the king. Those can be dangerous words! Where else in history (ancient or modern) have such conflicts occurred? How have these been resolved?

***Antigone* Final Group Project**

In a small group, you will prepare a television news special titled "Tragedy in the Royal Family." Set immediately after the close of *Antigone*, the program should review, analyze, and comment on the facts of the story and on the meaning of these facts for the people of Thebes.

You may have regular news anchors, in-the-field news reporters, eye-witness interviews, etc. You will make a video of your program to show in class. This news content portion of program must be at least 7 minutes in length, not including the titles, end credits, etc. You will be marked down for not meeting the minimum time limit.

You may want to come up with sponsors for the program and to plan commercials in keeping with the interests of the Greeks. You may have no more than 2 commercials which are no longer than 20 seconds each.

You will have to meet with group members to plan and rehearse this production, since you will not be given much class time to work on it. All members must be **active** participants and must appear fairly equally in the news program. You will all evaluate your group members at the end of this project. They will not see this evaluation, but these will affect participation grades of the project, so make sure everyone does an equal amount of work in preparing for this.

Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*:

A critique of the Victorian mindset

The British Empire was one of the major colonizing forces in the world. The British government had their hands on nearly every continent at one time or another in its long history, and the issues stemming from this colonization are still evident today. Because there were present-day concerns of the effects of colonization in the Victorian Era, Victorian writers did not shy away from writing about them. These were relevant, important, and discussed in their time, and Bram Stoker alludes to these effects in his gothic novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars* through exploring the British presence in Egypt and the pilfering of Egyptian antiquities. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* is a representation of and a critique on issues of the British Victorian era: colonization and its effects, a fascination with the past, the changing role of women, the objectification of mummies, and the monstrosity of revivification of a mummy.

The British Empire is known for its colonization of other nations throughout its long history. Colonization is a type of monstrosity in that it often forces people groups into lifestyles they did not choose, destroys civilizations, and, in essence, rapes a culture. The British Empire did this in some sense with Egyptian history and relics. They had an interest in Egypt for trade routes, primarily the control of the Suez Canal, and for antiquities, and these interests are presented in a vast array of British novels during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. According to Baysal, "due to Victorian fascination with mummies, starting with the discovery of mummies in the 1830-40s, mummy fiction became popular for showing the imperial power of Britain in Egypt" (9). Frequently, fiction mimics ideals, issues, and concerns of the present day, and this is evident in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* as the characters display a fascination with all things Egypt. Baysal describes the novel as "a horror story displaying the unfortunate events and the curse

which is brought upon a family during an archaeological excavation" (6). If a curse is the result of removing artifacts from their rightful places, this can be read as Stoker's commentary against archaeological adventures for one's own profit. This also extends to the British imperialist mindset regarding control of Egypt. Baysal writes, "The British Empire had the primary goal of taking control over Egypt through the Suez Canal for strong international connections" (8). In addition to, or maybe because of, this occupation, British explorers and archaeologists descended upon Egypt and began ransacking the country for its antiquities, often sending them back to British museums and private collectors. Too frequently this was done with little recognition of the importance of these items remaining in Egypt where they belonged, as archaeologists were often more concerned with the wealth and recognition they would get for their finds. As Corbeck recounts the tale of his and Trelawny's discovery of Queen Tera's tomb, mummy, and artifacts, and their subsequent removal of these items, he states, "It was no easy task, I tell you, to bring the case with that great sarcophagus over the desert. We had a rough cart and sufficient men to draw it; but the progress seemed terribly slow, for we were anxious to get *our treasures* to a place of safety" (Stoker 131; emphasis added). Corbeck and Trelawny believe that the treasures belong to them because they found them; there is no question of them being reported to the Egyptian government. It is a case of finders keepers. The effect of British imperialism is definitely present through the ways in which the British explorers hire the local guides to lead them to the areas where tombs could be found and then ransack the tombs to bring back artifacts to Britain without thought to whether or not it is right or legal. Bridges posits that "the original *Jewel* reproduces previous fictions' desires to resurrect the ancient world only to offer the dire, even fatal, consequences of those desires as a cautionary tale against immoderate absorption in the study of history and its material remnants" (141). Abel Trelawny is a character who is willing

to risk all for the success of finding and collecting Queen Tera's mummy, relics, and burial treasures. Though many of his hired hands die as a result of his quest, he persists. According to Deane, "A common theme across Egyptianising fiction is the notion that the Western protagonists feel that they are the only ones entitled to enter the Egyptian tombs, claiming that no one else has ever seen, heard, or written about specific archaeological sites or mummies" (265). Colonizing nations seem to have had similar mindsets as they were powerful, knowledgeable, wealthy nations and felt entitled to take over other nations and countries for their own benefit. In discussing archaeologists and those who collect antiquities, Bridges suggests that they often "inadvertently, censor or destroy knowledge by removing Egyptian relics from their proper origins. Although they desire to consume, in the sense of acquiring, knowledge about the mummy's past, archaeologists and curators effectively consume, in the sense of destroying, that very same knowledge" (148). Corriou argues that "archaeology as an imperial activity is itself a form of colonisation, insofar as it shares the same dynamics of territorial occupation . . . exploitation (of the locals as workers on the dig as well as of the land's cultural wealth), and of appropriation of the land's human production–in the case of archaeology, the produce of antique history" (6-7). This is portrayed in *The Jewel* through Trelawny's desire to find the tomb no matter the costs. He hires local guides yet does not care what happens to them; his concern is the tomb and not the people. He exploits them and their knowledge of Egypt for his own purposes, in a sense acting as the colonizer and treating them as the colonized. When Corbeck is recounting the story to Margaret and Malcolm of himself and Trelawny finding the tomb of Queen Tera, he shares how he and Trelawny withheld knowledge from the locals out of fear that they would run off and abandon the place. Corbeck says, "Their ignorance, however, and our discretion preserved us" (Stoker 124). Deane reflects that Trelawny and Corbeck "see

themselves as experts entitled to access tombs and information and, therefore, deem themselves immune to danger" (262). This is eerily reflective of how colonizing nations tended to view the native peoples, and the British Empire was a colonizing superpower for centuries. Deane acknowledges that the "desire to protect Egypt's antiquities might well have seemed naïvely sentimental to scholars more used to seizing or smuggling them, but it was nevertheless entirely complicit with the brutal fact of Britain's imperial influence" (387) and that many "[e]gyptologists repaid the favor to the political system that enabled their work by colonizing Egypt's history as the object of ever more precise scientific scrutiny, developing a form of knowledge which—emotionally motivated or not—buttressed the British understanding of their own imperial power (387-388). Colonization put the colonized countries and people into a forced situation that they often did not seek or desire. Comparing a colonized nation to an Egyptian mummy brought back to England, Corriou states:

> The antique . . . woman is constructed as the object of desire that one must discover and unveil in order to possess her. Thus, from the portrayal of Egyptian antiquity as a female figure transpires a dynamic of conquest, appropriation and even subjugation through sexuality and marriage. [This is] quite obviously reminiscent of the imperial discourse of the Victorian era and of the military and political conquest . . . so that one may contend that the antique female stands for the colonised native, whilst the fictional representation of archaeology suggests its interpretation as a metaphor for colonisation. (6)

Corriou suggests here that colonization is a form of force that is equivalent to rape or to forced marriage. For the British Empire, concerns about "reverse colonization" were also prevalent and often somewhat rooted in the Egyptian archeological explorations, specifically tied to the mummies found in Egypt and brought to London. Corriou explores this, stating:

> The return of the mummy, a creature of colonial origin, invariably constitutes a threat for the main characters. This dramatises the late-Victorian anxiety about the decline of the British Empire, the empowerment of the colonised and, more broadly, a general concern about the empire striking back. The Gothic dimension of texts haunted by living dead mummies and portentous ruins is perfectly manifest as is the imperial motif, as well as the anxieties which are built into the narrative. (6)

As the 19th century was coming to a close, the Victorians were watching an aging queen as well as experiencing a loss of some of their former colonies, and the future of the empire as a world superpower seemed to be fading. It is not surprising that there was a sense of fear about the explorations and a reverting to the past. In fact, "The Victorian anxiety about relapsing into a primitive state that would, as it were, turn the British into the very natives whose territories they conquered, is only one facet of a broader anxiety about a shift in in [*sic*] the balance of power in favour of the colonies. The concern regarding 'reverse colonisation' is another facet of the same fear" (Corriou 8). This is also noted by Baysal, who writes:

> [L]ate-nineteenth century imperial paranoia takes the mummy narratives as their target, reflecting the fear of the empire through horror and depicting the weakest link, Egypt, in the empirical chain. If the chain was to be broken, the whole empire would be in great trouble. This paranoia was closely connected with the *fin de siècle* disillusionment in the latter half of the nineteenth century, which manifested itself with the loss of hope and rise of depressive mode . . . Within this context, the writers of the time tackled the fears and worries of their people. (9)

Stoker was not just writing *The Jewel* as a work of fiction disconnected from reality. He was depicting many of the fears, ideas, sensibilities, and history of the time period. This was a story

with which his readers could connect and to which they could find relevance in their own society. Bridges states, "These [and other similar] stories function as both a metaphoric critique of archaeological practices in the late nineteenth century and a cautionary tale to those seeking knowledge about ancient Egypt specifically and antiquity in general: those who study the ancient world must demonstrate reverence for the past and its material remains" (138). While Trelawny claims at times that he is doing all of his research and explorations for the good of science and progress, he does not demonstrate this reverence for the past that Bridges cautions. Margaret, though, does demonstrate this. Once it becomes clear that she may be more closely tied to Queen Tera's mummy than anyone else, as she is clearly portrayed as the living double of the queen, she takes on some of the queen's characteristics. She tries to get the men to see the importance of respecting the dead, but most, save for Ross, do not pay her much attention and insist the mummy is not human.

The Victorians' fascination with the past, specifically with relics of the past, is also evident in the literature of the era. In *The Jewel* Trelawny is filled with a nearly insatiable desire to find Queen Tera's tomb and use ancient magics to resurrect her. Trelawny states, "I am about to make an experiment; the experiment which is to crown all that I have devoted twenty years of research, and danger, and labour to prepare for. Through it we may learn things that have been hidden from the eyes and the knowledge of men for centuries" (Stoker 163). He takes a very Promethean and Faustian approach to this attempt at resurrection; he is willing to sacrifice, and has to some extent already sacrificed, everything and anything to achieve this special knowledge, knowledge from the ancient gods that will, Trelawny hopes, benefit mankind and make him known. Fleischhack writes, "Ultimately, the scientists' reasons for reviving Tera are rooted in a desire to further their own research and in gaining exclusive knowledge about ancient Egypt and

its advanced scientific and magical lore" (262). While investigating her tomb and attempting to remove the mummy from its sarcophagus, he discovers a ruby gem, the jewel of seven stars, which he plans to use in the ritual to resurrect Queen Tera. His fascination with her story and the possibility of bringing her back becomes an obsession for him, and he seemingly will not rest until the accomplishment of this task, which is ironic considering he lapses into a comatose state for a long period of time and is forced to rest. Corbeck, speaking of Trelawny, states, "Your Father, Miss Trelawny, has a rare knowledge. He sometimes makes up his mind that he wants to find a particular thing, of whose existence . . . he has become aware; and he will follow it all over the world till he gets it" (Stoker 81). This is a glimpse into the obsessive desire Trelawny has for these objects. Even Malcolm Ross finds himself mesmerized by the antique artifacts in Trelawny's home. While wandering through the rooms with Margaret Trelawny and looking at all of the collected pieces, he narrates, "We spent most of the day looking over the curio treasures . . . everything around me began to have a new interest. As I went on, the interest grew; any lingering doubts which I may have had changed to wonder and admiration. The house seemed to be a veritable storehouse of marvels of antique art" (Stoker 90). Ross has become fascinated with these items from the past; at first, they were merely things, but his fascination grows as he and Margaret move through the house, which he realizes is more like a museum. Baysal notes, "in Stoker's *The Jewel*, Queen Tera and her accessories, the jewel and even her amputated hand are narrated and depicted as unique pieces of art reflecting the irrevocable tradition of the past" (9). They are *things* that tell of the past, interesting relics that provide topics for conversation or can be sold to collectors. Trelawny is obviously fascinated with the past, which can be seen through his extensive collection, but he also is interested in more than *things* of the past. As he explains the life and times of Queen Tera to Margaret and Ross, he speaks with

awe and wonder about "that Jewel of Seven Stars which she regarded as her talisman … [and] … The Magic Coffer" which contained her, Egyptian astronomy and its alignment with the queen's birth, and that the "Egyptians knew sciences, of which to-day, despite all our advantages, we are profoundly ignorant" (Stoker 166-167). His fascination is also in the knowledge of the ancient Egyptians; he wants to unlock their mysteries, their secrets. It is partially this desire that originally drives his quest to find the queen's tomb. While the relics Trelawny collects are beautiful pieces and certainly are to be appreciated for their beauty and their history, and the mysteries he learns of are also to be appreciated, even if unknown, Bridges warns against investigating too much of the past. He writes, "This . . . reminds us as twenty first-century readers not to spend too much time or energy delving into questions about a past that might best be left unknown lest we fail to attend to more pressing questions of the present" (160). The past is fascinating, but maybe some aspects and elements of the past should stay in the past.

Stoker lived in an era during which gender roles were changing. There was a queen on the throne for the first time in over one hundred years, who by Stoker's time had been on the throne for decades, leading the British Empire through times of prosperity and change. She was an effective and stable leader, challenging the Victorian patriarchal society which typically viewed men as the rightfully dominant leaders. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, there is also a powerful female ruler, Queen Tera. Corbeck, as he is narrating his and Trelawny's discovery of the queen's tomb, mentions how the queen, when still a princess and the heir-apparent to her father, was looked down upon for her sex and how the priests wanted to overthrow the system when she was to take over (Stoker 128). Queen Victoria experienced some similar skepticism when she inherited the throne at the age of eighteen. Some people believed that she would not be a good leader and would contribute to the downfall of the British Empire. This fear is

represented in some Victorian works, or at least alluded to in terms of skepticism about female rulers. As Corriou writes:

> In Stoker's novel as in many other texts from the late-Victorian years up to the 1920s, the archaeological remains, under the features of the mummy, are endowed with the attributes of femininity achieving, as it were, a return of the dead under the guise of the–often literal–femme fatale. A number of novels and short stories dramatise such a resurrection of a female Egyptian mummy who causes havoc in the modern society in which she awakens through ancient Egyptian magic. (1)

At times, the Victorians wondered if their queen would wreak havoc on their society in some way since she was young and untutored in the ways of queenship when she ascended the throne. While there was some excitement with her ascension as she was symbolizing a new era and was bringing some much-needed youth to a country that had endured antiquated kings and outlooks, there was also much skepticism as to whether she could handle the responsibilities and be an effective ruler. She followed a line of five kings, so the Victorians were unfamiliar with a reigning female monarch and met this change with some uncertainty as to whether a woman could govern as well as a man could. Because of explorations in Egypt and legends of mummies, many Victorians also feared that a type of mummy’s curse could actually occur in their society. Corriou adds to this, “when the male hand of *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, the hand of the Egyptologist, appears as the instrument of manly power, sexual dominance, and perhaps political domination . . . the mummy's severed hand can also implement a revenge with clear sexual undertones, as it strives to bite back the hand that violated the Queen's tomb” (9). This fear of the mummy’s revenge is a prominent feature of a lot of Victorian Gothic literature. However, in many such stories, “the typical mummy of Victorian and Edwardian fiction is a woman, and one

who, perfectly preserved in her youthful beauty, strongly attracts the libidinous attention of modern British men" (Deane 384). It is a more romanticized view on the female mummy that persists. Also embedded in Stoker's critique of the role of women are his male characters' treatment of Margaret and of Queen Tera herself. Though both exhibit strong characteristics and personality traits, they are still patronized in this male-dominated society. Fleischhack writes, "Not only do the men neglect to appreciate Margaret's opinion, but Ross also records the clear patronising tone of her father's reaction. Margaret is to be comforted and dismissed, not to be taken seriously or actually heeded. At the same time, Tera's womanhood and humanity are explicitly and emphatically denied" (261). When Corbeck first arrives at the Trelawny estate, Ross narrates, "Mr. Corbeck looked first at me, with a strong man's natural impulse to learn from a man rather than a woman" (Stoker, 83). He dismisses Margaret as secondary, though she is the head of the house in her father's stead. The sense of fear "which is also triggered by the anxiety of reverse colonisation . . . is frequently translated into the loss of control experienced by Western characters, who are confronted by . . . strong female characters who break free from their normative domestic roles. All of these aspects threaten the strict Victorian and Edwardian social makeup and leave room for criticism of the status quo – criticism which, in Egyptianising fiction, is frequently administered by the Other, that is the ancient Egyptian characters" (qtd. in Fleischhack 258-259). This can be seen through both Queen Tera and through Margaret Trelawny, who is repeatedly described as the living embodiment of the mummy. Regarding the male characters' viewpoint about Queen Tera, Corriou writes, "In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, the characters . . . neglect to notice the signs that the antique woman might have a will of her own, just like the colonised subject" and that "the choice to represent the colonial in the shape of a woman also makes sense in the context of the emergence of the New Woman since this figure

also appeared as a threat to patriarchal Victorian society" (11-12). The failure to recognize the woman's will is reflective of the male-dominated Victorian society, but the emergence of a woman ruler challenges this and appears to threaten the established boundaries between men and women in Victorian England.

The Jewel of Seven Stars also functions as Stoker's critique of the objectification of mummies. The Victorians were extremely interested in Egyptian mummies and the mystery and lore surrounding ancient Egypt, mummy curses, and even mummification rituals. According to Briefel, "Victorians seized on the thought of mummies as commodities in order to avoid thinking of them as things created and with creative capacities" and "were fascinated by the intricate manual labor required to eviscerate, embalm, and adorn the body and ornament its sarcophagus and various accoutrements" (265). These mummified bodies were not given proper respect or recognition as human remains but rather seen as artifacts, as things to be admired. In Stoker's novel, Queen Tera's severed hand becomes the most revered object. When Ross first sees it, he is struck by the look of it when opening the box in which it is contained: "Within . . . rested a mummy hand, so perfect that it startled one to see it. A woman's hand, fine and long, with slim tapering fingers and nearly as perfect as when it was given to the embalmer thousands of years before. In the embalming it had lost nothing of its beautiful shape" (Stoker 94). Margaret then tells Ross that her father claimed this mummy hand "was perhaps the most valuable thing he had, except one" (Stoker 94). Again there is a lack of recognition that this hand is not an object to be ogled or treasured. It is not given respect as a human body part. However, Briefel notes, "At the same time, this graceful appendage displays aspects that infuse it with horror, the most obvious of which—apart from its severed state—is that it bears seven fingers" (267). Trelawny finds it interesting but not horrifying, and his lack of recognition of that may lead to his downfall.

Corriou notes “The motif of the hand is central in [*The Jewel of Seven Stars*] as it acts as a metaphor of the relationship between the scientist and the antique artefact” and this “severed hand is an independent entity that focuses the desire of the Egyptian Queen's suitor. The plot . . . is in great part articulated around the characters' efforts to, literally, win the hand of the mummy” (5). Trelawny wants to do this through possession of the hand and bringing the queen’s body back to life; Ross wants to do this through the literal possession or winning of Margaret’s hand in marriage. Both characters seek to assert a kind of dominance over a woman, and both fail at times to see the women as women. Moshenska notes that “Mummy unrollings were popular, spectacular events in nineteenth-century Britain where mummies acquired in Egypt . . . were subjected to autopsy in front of a paying or invited audience” (452). Again, there is no recognition or acknowledgement of the respect owed the dead or that the mummy had even been human. Moshenska continues:

> Whether they viewed them as curios or as exotic artefacts, as medical or scientific samples, it was unsurprising that European scholars would sooner or later seek to learn more about the lives of the ancient Egyptians by delving into the wrappings of the mummies in their collections. (456)

Apparently, most British people who attended these unrollings looked at the events as scientific and at the mummies as mere objects. Daly writes, “The mummy is the type of the object which becomes a commodity simply because it becomes desirable for consumers, and is thereby drawn into economic exchange” (qtd. in Briefel 265). There is a curiosity for mummies and a demand for them, so archaeologists in nineteenth century Britain took advantage of that. Bridges writes, “Mummies wrapped in their funereal cerements and encased within their sarcophagi certainly exuded a unique appeal to museum goers; however, mummies who became objects of public

striptease were marquee headliners" (152). Stoker seems to critique that practice, as Baysal notes:

> In his trance-like state, Trelawny explains his trades to Ross and depicts the ambitious competition among the Westerners in the eastern trade. It reduces the mummies into objects of sales and exhibition . . . Furthermore, the mummies are clear symbols of the imperial superiority of Britain on Egypt so that Egyptian mummies are brought to England as art and beauty objects. (9)

Trelawny even sets up his own mummy unrolling in *The Jewel*. As part of his plan to resurrect Queen Tera, he sets up her unveiling in a secluded space where only a few select people are allowed to participate in the ritual. Because he plans more than just a mummy unrolling, his plans are not public nor done in a public place. Margaret is the living doppelganger for Queen Tera, and as such she begins to display many qualities and characteristics of the mummified queen. She raises some objections to the unwrapping of the mummy which, in her mind, is almost a sacrilegious event. Margaret, when she realizes exactly what the unwrapping entails, cries out, "Father, you are not going to unswathe her! All you men…! And in the glare of light!" She then continues, "Just think, Father, a woman! All alone! In such a way! In such a place! Oh! it's cruel, cruel!" (Stoker 230). Being a woman herself, she cannot help but feel the degradation that the unwrapping is to a woman, the exposure of her naked body; it is almost like rape, with all these men standing around ogling the body. Trelawny, ever the researcher and archeologist, responds to Margaret's outburst by saying, "Not a woman, dear, a mummy! She has been dead nearly five thousand years" (Stoker 230), and "it was men who embalmed her . . . we men are accustomed to such things. Corbeck and I have unrolled a hundred mummies" (Stoker 231). Trelawny brushes off Margaret's concerns because he is only looking at Queen Tera's body as

that of a mummy, a thing, a commodity, as it were. Yet what he is trying to do--resurrect the queen--will make her a living being again, regardless of whether or not the queen would have wanted that outcome. Fleischhack writes:

> This willful ignorance might be the solution to the question posed by Stoker's fatal ending to the novel as it was first published in 1903, in which everyone except Ross dies, even though Margaret claimed to know that Tera would not harm them. The original ending of the story thereby lends Tera the fatal power to avenge herself and ensure that she is no longer objectified. (262)

This is the fear that many had, a mummy seeking vengeance on those who had disturbed her eternal rest. Of this same scene, Bridges writes, "Margaret's protests before the unrolling procedure underscore the histrionic characteristics of the unwrapping ceremony undertaken by Trelawny while heightening the readers' awareness of the potential reversal of violence that could erupt" and that "Margaret's remonstrations reveal her disgust at the implication of sexual violence inherent in the act of men stripping a female mummy of her cerements—a circumstance not uncommon in real-life unrolling ceremonies" (154). This seems to be Stoker's commentary on the unrolling ceremonies of his contemporaries; he no doubt witnessed or was at least aware of these spectacles, and through the scene of Margaret raising concerns, points out some of the real-life concerns he no doubt witnessed or even held himself. These mummy unrollings are objectionable when viewed from Margaret's perspective yet wholly entertaining to the masses. These exhibitions were immensely popular in Stoker's time, but a careful reading of *The Jewel* suggests he did not necessarily agree with these practices as being ethical. Bridges goes on to state that "Margaret's questioning the ethics of unwrapping Tera's mummy thus reveals her anxiety—*and the novel's intimated critique*—that Egyptological practices are merely an

institutionalized manifestation of pathological necrophilia" (155-156; emphasis added). Nevertheless, mummy unrollings continued to be public spectacles for many years.

Stoker's novel is also a commentary on the monstrosity of revivification of a mummy. Trelawny sets out to bring back Queen Tera through her jewel and ancient magics he uncovers. He believes that the queen was ahead of her time in the sense that she knew of her own future revivification and even planned for it. As he explains to his companions:

> Do you not see the meaning of this? Does it not throw a light on the intention of the Queen? She, who was guided by augury, and magic, and superstition, naturally chose a time for her resurrection which seemed to have been pointed out by the High Gods themselves . . . When such a time was fixed by supernatural wisdom, would it not be the height of human wisdom to avail of it? (Stoker 180).

He believes that he is the one to bring about this resurrection of the queen because it is the time, because he has the knowledge and means to do it, and because his own daughter appears supernaturally connected to Queen Tera. However, he seems to ignore the horror and monstrosity associated with this plan. Smith refers to Queen Tera as a "Gothic monster" as she "is trying to use the group to accomplish her resurrection. However, the true horror lies in Ross's inability to properly 'see' the character of Margaret, and 'the idea that women cannot be properly objectified: that they are not as they appear to be'" (qtd. in Clarke). In the quest to revive her, Trelawny and his companions experience many horrific events. He himself falls into a coma-like state from which his daughter, Ross, the doctor, and servants cannot wake him. He also ends up being attacked by *something* they cannot figure out; he appears to have been dragged out of bed and there are wounds on his arm. At first this is curious but they assume it is a one-time occurrence, until it happens again. After consulting with Corbeck, Ross and Margaret begin to

speculate about a curse possibly related to all of the Egyptian curios Trelawny has in his home. Regarding this, Baysal writes that mummy novels of this time, including *The Jewel*, "employ gothic fiction characteristics by bringing the horror of the mummy into safe British houses" (9), and "Reflecting the horror to a great extent, Queen Tera strangles people for stealing her jewel, which is the key to her resurrection and leaves red finger marks on their throats as she kills them with her amputated hand" (10). Through some kind of curse magic, Queen Tera is able to enact revenge and therefore commit the monstrous act of murder. Baysal also contends that:

> the entrance of the Egyptian mummy into the Trelawny Estate in Notting Hill brings about not only personal conflicts in the characters but also forces them question what they have learned and seen thus far based upon their scientific and social knowledge. Eventually, they are obliged to find a solution together to get rid of the mummy's astral presence (11).

Because of Tera's monstrous behavior while in a type of non-physical form, they decide to restore her to a physical form in the hopes that that act will stop her murderous vengeance. According to Bridges:

> the mummy's transformation from *memento mori* to murdering monster in Victorian and Edwardian fiction expresses real desires and fears about collecting, museum practices, and archaeology—activities that were re-shaping how the present perceived and understood the ancient past . . . the critical significance of the mummy's curse narrative derives from the serious questions it raises about the often-deleterious treatment of the dead in the name of acquiring knowledge about an ancient civilization. (138)

In *The Jewel*, the mummy's vengeance is, in a sense, a monstrous reaction to an already monstrous situation, which is the raping and plundering of Egyptian antiquities that occurred

during the British occupation of Egypt. Bridges writes, “when revivified Egyptian mummies begin to wreak retaliatory havoc on unwitting British contemporaries, the relationship is potentially and dangerously inverted: reviving the past allows the past to ‘consume,’ in the sense of destroying, the present" (139). This is precisely what occurs in *The Jewel* when Trelawny and his small group perform the ritual to revive Queen Tera. In trying to bring her back from the past, they destroy their lives, both their present and their future. They have sacrificed everything and are not rewarded for it. Trelawny is so consumed with this ritual that he really does not take the time to consider its ramifications or if it is even ethical. He wants to control the past, or an element of the past at least, by bringing Queen Tera back to life. Unfortunately, that does not happen, and “the abrupt conclusion disturbingly presumes that the present is powerless to control or even co-exist with the past that it has resurrected” (Bridges 145). In *The Jewel*, Queen Tera herself is described as a woman who was consumed with wanting to know the unknown, to explore the regions of magic and power, and to achieve dominance. This is not that different from Trelawny’s quest to unlock the secrets of the ancient magics, to unlock that which is unknown. Both Tera and Trelawny ultimately fail in their quests. Deane asserts, “The hopelessness of the story’s end might be understood as a vision of the veiled protectorate twisted into nightmare, one in which an incarnate Egypt repays those who have revived and protected her with destruction” (406). Trelawny believed that this revivification ritual would not only revive Queen Tera but also credit him with knowledge, power, and fame. However, it becomes a nightmare as all but Ross fall victim to the vengeful mummy.

While entertaining, Stoker’s novel is much more than a mere story. He was living and writing in an era of great change and scientific progress. It seems he recognized that progress is sometimes achieved with great costs or consequences. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* is a portrait of

the ideals, fears, and general views of the Victorian Era. However, it also serves as a warning to Egyptologists and to the Victorians themselves of the terrible consequences of colonization, an unhealthy fixation on the past, exploitation, gender bias, and revivification rituals, and in "reading Tera as representative of Egypt itself, while she appears to hold out the lure of great power, peril ultimately outweighs the promise as terrible consequences ensue for all imperial Englishmen who become involved with her" (Bulfin 432). Seeking to learn about the past, understanding the ancient rituals, embarking on scientific experiments, uncovering the ruins and relics of the past are not negative pursuits. It is how one goes about these and what one does with the information and finding that can be negatively used or applied or exploited. Therefore, Stoker's novel serves as a warning for his contemporaries and for anyone who seeks scientific progress no matter the costs or its repercussions.

Works Cited

Baysal, Kübra. "Reality Uncovered through the Mummy Legend: Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and Anne Rice's *The Mummy, or Ramses the Damned*." ESSE Messenger, vol. 28, no. 1, Summer 2019, pp. 6–16. EBSCOhost, https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=137843052&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Bridges, Meilee D. "Tales from the Crypt: Bram Stoker and the Curse of the Egyptian Mummy." *Victorians Institute Journal*, vol. 36, Jan. 2008, pp. 137–65. EBSCOhost, https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=36183776&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Briefel, Aviva. "Hands of Beauty, Hands of Horror: Fear and Egyptian Art at the Fin de Siècle." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 50, no. 2, Winter 2008, pp. 263–71. EBSCOhost, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.2979/VIC.2008.50.2.263.

Bulfin, Ailise. "The Fiction of Gothic Egypt and British Imperial Paranoia: The Curse of the Suez Canal." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, vol. 54, no. 4, Oct. 2011, pp. 411–43. EBSCOhost, https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=62252225&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Clarke, Anactoria. "Jewel of Seven Stars". *The Literary Encyclopedia*. 18 December 2019. www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=38927 Accessed 10 April 2022.

Corriou, Nolwenn. "'A Woman is a Woman, if She had been Dead Five Thousand Centuries!': Mummy Fiction, Imperialism and the Politics of Gender", *Miranda* [Online], 11 | 2015, http://journals.openedition.org/miranda/6899 ; DOI:https://doi.org/10.4000/miranda.6899

Deane, Bradley. "Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt: Imperial Striptease." *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2008, pp. 381–410. EBSCOhost, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.2487/elt.51.4(2008)0029.

Fleischhack, Maria. "Possession, Trance, and Reincarnation: Confrontations with Ancient Egypt in Edwardian Fiction." *Victoriographies: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Writing, 1790-1914*, vol. 7, no. 3, Nov. 2017, pp. 257–70. EBSCOhost, https://doi-org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/10.3366/vic.2017.0283.

Moshenska, Gabriel. "Unrolling Egyptian Mummies in Nineteenth-Century Britain." *The British Journal for the History of Science*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2014, pp. 451–77, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43820513

Stoker, Bram. *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. Edited by Kate Hebblethwaite, Penguin Classics, 2008.

What is Paris?
How the City of Light is seen through the eyes of the *flâneur* and through film

Paris. That one word conjures up images of lights, romantic walks, museums, famous landmarks and monuments, cathedrals, a glass of wine at a café, and dozens of other similar images. The city is often perceived as beautiful, marvelous, picturesque, and inspiring. While those descriptions can certainly be applied to Paris, they are not the only descriptions that are appropriate. Filmmakers, though, tend to glorify Paris, to allow viewers to be *flâneurs* in a simplistic way, to be wanderers in the city, a city related to them only through film. While those descriptions do certainly represent aspects and areas of Paris, the city is not all lights, romance, and scenic views. Paris is a diverse, complex, historical, modern, and vibrant city, yet its depiction in film often does not take into account the dirty, gritty, everyday life that is also part of what makes Paris Paris. The films *Midnight in Paris, Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain,* and *Paris, Je t'aime* mostly adhere to this beautified gaze of Paris, yet at some points in these films there are a few acknowledgements or references to the darker side of this magnificent city.

In *The Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin writes about Paris, the Paris of the past and the present and the future. Benjamin posits, "Couldn't an exciting film be made from the map of Paris? From the unfolding of its various aspects in temporal succession? From the compression of a centuries-long movement of streets, boulevards, arcades, and squares into the space of half an hour?" (83). For Benjamin, Paris seems to hold a kind of reverence, a timelessness though it is also ever-changing. In many ways Paris is a city lost in time yet still has a modernity to it, and a deeper understanding of the city comes only when one is willing to explore all parts of it. Those explorers are sometimes travelers, but for those who cannot travel to Paris, the films which are set in Paris become the lens through which the city can be explored. Paris itself becomes a character in the film, a beautiful star of the cinema. According to Eubanks, "Paris is a beautiful

woman—silent, mysterious, and breathtakingly beautiful—a worthy object of our admiration and devotion. And because she does not speak, Paris may have ascribed to her whatever identity an individual may wish to impose; Paris is an empty page that men will want to write on" (170). It seems, in essence, to be something that can never be fully described or understood. One can walk the streets of Paris for days but never really grasp it completely. Boutin claims that "Benjamin sought to define the modern stroller as the avant-garde flâneur" (128). About the *flâneur*, this wanderer in the city who is exploring it and himself, Benjamin writes, "For him, every street is precipitous. . . An intoxication comes over the man who walks long and aimlessly through the streets. With each step, the walk takes on greater momentum" (416-417). This is often what is done through film as the viewers see a city full of constantly changing scenes, a display of optical illusions, an idealized view of the city, an almost-imaginary world come to life.

Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* has this same sentiment for the main character, Gil, who is a writer disillusioned with life and with his work as a successful Hollywood screenwriter. He has come to Paris with his overbearing fiancée and hopes to find some inspiration for the novel he is working on. The film opens with views from all over Paris: cafés, beautiful parks, ornate lamps, wide boulevards, stunning plazas, sunset, the lights of the city, and, of course, the Eiffel Tower. Eubanks writes that Allen shows, "a Paris of monuments and cafés, of rainy strolls and glistening lights, of panoramic views narrated not by words but by music—the familiar, dulcet tones of the traditional French chanson" (170). The city is depicted as clean, bright, magical, and exhilarating. The gardens are beautifully sculpted, and the wine is flowing! With his romanticized expectations and views of the city, Gil goes out walking the streets of the city one evening, engaging in *flânerie*, in a sense. Gil comments to his fiancée, "This is unbelievable! Look at this! There's no city like this in the world. There never was . . . Can you picture how

drop dead gorgeous this city is in the rain?" (*Midnight in Paris)*. Gil has also been caught up in what Benjamin called the "phantasmagorical character" of Paris (17), the wonder of it, the beauty of it, the romance of it. He seems swept up in this intoxication of Paris that Benjamin mentions. Gil visits beautiful places with his fiancée, and he gushes over every aspect of them. His fiancée and her parents, however, always find something negative about the city and its people. As Gil wanders by himself night after night, crossing through some kind of time portal, he finds himself mingling with the great writers and artists of the 1920s. Benjamin's claim that "the street conducts the flâneur into a vanished time…" (416) literally happens in this film. Gil, transported to nearly a century earlier, becomes part of their inner circle, their crowd. He enjoys the Paris of his time but also the historic Paris to which he is transported. He can appreciate the history of it both then and now. Eubanks notes, "Gil's Paris is the very personification of memory and nostalgia, a point further underscored by the fact that the novel he is working on is about a man who works in a nostalgia shop . . . and its products consisted of memories" (171). After his first meeting with the people from 1920s Paris, Gil seeks out these artists and writers night after night, just as Benjamin's "flâneur seeks refuge in the crowd. The crowd is the veil through which the familiar city is transformed for the flâneur into phantasmagoria . . . the crowd inspires a sort of drunkenness" (21). He is intoxicated with Paris and with his experiences in the city. He feels like it is the place that inspires him the most, and he wants to move there. As the *flâneur*, he is a watcher *of* the crowd but also seeks refuge *in* the crowd. He is both part of it yet outside of it at the same time, and he recognizes this paradoxical experience. However, that does not at all diminish his appreciation, his idealized view, of Paris. To a friend who wonders about the beauty of Paris, Gil replies:

> You know, I sometimes think, how is anyone ever gonna come up with a book, or a painting, or a symphony, or a sculpture that can compete with a great city. You can't. Because you look around and every street, every boulevard, is its own special art form and when you think that in the cold, violent, meaningless universe that Paris exists, these lights, I mean come on. (*Midnight in Paris*)

Paris has him spellbound, and viewers of this film are also carried along with him in this outlook on the city. Why wouldn't they be? Benjamin writes, "Paris created the type of flâneur . . . the Parisians have made Paris the promised land of the flâneur–the 'landscape built of sheer life,' as Hofmannsthal once put it. Landscape–that, in fact, is what Paris becomes for the flâneur" (417). The suggestion is that Paris is a kind of Mecca, a kind of holy city for the *flâneurs*, for anyone really. "The 'flâneur is in search of experience, not knowledge. Most experience ends up interpreted as — and replaced by — knowledge, but for the flâneur the experience remains somehow pure, useless, raw'" (qtd in Boutin 130). There is just something special and unique about strolling through Paris, about experiencing the city. *Midnight in Paris* plays into this feeling of wonder and discovery. Murail writes:

> Critics have often compared the flâneur to a camera eye which records everything, and as such have insisted on the predominance of sight over other senses in the cognitive process … Sensory studies have drawn attention to the fact that senses are historically and culturally constructed, and the construction of sight as the flâneur's most dominant sense is a case in point. (162)

Viewers of *Midnight in Paris* become tourists themselves when Gil, his fiancée, and some friends tour Versailles and the Rodin Museum. They see these places as Gil sees them and are swept into these beautiful ornate buildings and stunning well-tended gardens as they listen to

guides tell them the history and significance of these places and the people who lived and worked there. Viewers become *flâneurs* when Gil wanders the city, drinks in the sites, and even visits some of the shops. Viewers are part of the experience yet outside of it as well since they are only seeing it through a lens. They see the beautiful, desirable, sensuous Paris that Gil sees but that is the extent of their experience. The film ends with Gil choosing to move to Paris, and though he is walking through the rain, he is still marveling at the beauty of the city. Viewers are left with a sense of the glory, beauty, timelessness, and wonder that is Paris!

In the film *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, the main character, Amélie, is a young woman working as a server at a café in Montmartre. She has lived a sheltered life in relative isolation, not having many friends and no extended family. She is a *flâneuse* in the sense that she is an observer of other people's lives rather than a wanderer exploring the city. This is a unique perspective as "*Amélie* presents a gendered vision of the city. Women in Paris films are often just accessories, part of the scenery" (Rollet 48). The female Amélie is the lens through which viewers see the city and the people of Amélie's world. Regarding the female viewpoint relating to the *flâneur*, Boutin writes:

> women did walk in the city and wrote of their trespasses as flâneuses . . . [however] women were denied the right to look at passers-by, see, feel, and move about the city, so that they were either hypervisible (as fallen women) or invisible (as flâneuses or reporters). . . In order to report on society, the flâneuse had to practice Masquerade (129).

Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain counteracts this old stereotype by having a female gaze as the predominant one. Although Amélie does want to be somewhat invisible, she starts to come alive when she is finally recognized and appreciated by others: first the old man across the street and eventually her father, and then Nino, the man on whom she has a crush. Amélie is a *flâneuse*

in that she does explore Paris in the sense of taking viewers on short journeys as she goes throughout her day. The small, very typical French café is featured prominently as her work place. Her tiny apartment with a window overlooking the apartment building across the narrow street is also an accurate depiction of a typical Parisian neighborhood street. Amélie is amused by the feelings and sensations people experience and seeks to bring them some joy, happiness, or fulfillment in some way. She has not had any real opportunities to experience life, having been sheltered for much of her life, so she is attracted to things that are beautiful and able to be experienced. She is similar to the *flâneur* about whom Murail writes:

> At first sight, the flâneur seems to be mainly defined by his attraction to the (visual) lures and spectacles of the city. However, the wealth of sensory stimuli which are part of the fabric of the public space of the city transform the flâneur's body into a seismograph onto which the city leaves its many imprints. A sensual reading of nineteenth-century texts reveals that the flâneur (or flâneuse) often dismisses the signs which claim his attention and follows his senses and sensibility to experience the city through his body and/as mind. On the one hand, the city shapes the flâneur's movements; but on the other hand, the flâneur's own sensory experience of the city invents new paths and endlessly reconfigures the construction of the city. (165)

After an alarming incident in the news, she resolves to bring joy to people. As she has observed other people's lives, she knows a bit about their struggles and their desires. She seemingly embodies some of what Benjamin refers to when he writes, "Preformed in the figure of the flâneur is that of detective" (442). Amélie is an observer, a sort of detective who learns about people by observing them and listening to them. She comes across an old blind man who is being ignored by everyone around him. Amélie takes his arm and guides him through part of the city,

describing to him all of the things she can see that he cannot. Paris is presented here as a vibrant, living city with pleasures all around. The old man's smile as things are being described for him is contagious and heart-warming. He is "seeing" Paris through Amélie's eyes, which is also what the film's viewers are seeing. It is again a glorified view of the city. Amélie is both an insider and an outsider to the city, as is Benjamin's *flâneur*; she finds solace in the crowd but also recognizes she is not part of the crowd. She seems to want to break through that barrier and hide behind it at the same time; for example, when a young man she has been observing drops his photography scrapbook as he drives away on his moped, Amélie, who has a sort of crush on him, plans to return it so that she can actually speak to him. However, she chickens out and just hands it to one of his coworkers. She does, however, add a mystery portrait of herself to the book. Is this her way of being part of the crowd/society yet not really being part of it? Later she is seen wandering along the Canal Saint-Martin and skipping stones she has picked up along the way. This area of Paris is shown as peaceful, calm, charming, and idyllic. It seems like a place of innocence, perfect for the young, charming, innocent Amélie and for anyone like her or anyone who wants to be like her.

A third film that portrays Paris in an idealized way is *Paris, Je t'aime*, an anthology film with 18 short films directed by 22 different directors. These short films depict elements of everyday life in Paris. In some ways, this film is a bit grittier than other films about Paris because it does portray some difficult situations, such as a man on the street dying from a knife wound. In the last film, a woman is traveling in Paris on her own and is narrating her reflections on the trip and why she chose to go alone. She seems lonely, wandering the streets by herself, eating alone in a restaurant, sitting alone in a park. But she is also at the same time embodying Benjamin's ideas about the *flâneur* (or *flâneuse* in this case) observing the crowd, being part of the crowd,

but not being one of them. She is most definitely an outsider–she even looks like the stereotypical tourist with her casual clothing, walking shoes, a fanny pack, and very Americanized French pronunciations. But she comes to realize something at the end of her trip as she is sitting in the beautiful calm, sun-filled Parc Montsouris: she has fallen in love with Paris. The city has worked its magic on her, and she is forever changed.

In the first short film in this anthology, a man is searching for a parking spot and having trouble finding one, a very common occurrence in the city. However, he is driving on cobblestone roads near the beautiful, gleaming white Sacre-Coeur Basilica. Though he is frustrated with his situation, the city around him is magnificent, serene, and impeccable. He sits in his car and watches women pass by, wondering why he does not have a woman in his life. All those he sees are obviously in relationships with other men, and he laments his singleness. He believes that he is attractive and has a good job and is a nice guy, so he would be a great catch for any woman. He stays in his car for a bit as he watches people walking by. In this way he is Benjamin's *flâneur*; he watches but is not included. Eventually, a woman passes out next to his car. He gets out to assist her, along with additional passersby, and helps her into his car to rest/recover from her fainting spell. They talk, and she holds on to his hand for support. Eventually, the two are shown together at the end of the entire film, proving once again that in Paris, anything is possible!

In the second short film, three young men are sitting by banks of the Seine and commenting on the women passing by. Their comments are often lewd and sexual in nature. They may be considered *flâneurs* in that they are observing people, yet they are not the ones wandering around the city. They are sitting in one place, disconnected from most of the people around them. According to Boutin:

> The new phenomenon of the boulevards and the urban masses made the flâneur into a 'man of the crowd' whom Benjamin counterintuitively interpreted as a person disconnected from the crowd. He cast the flâneur as an oppositional figure whose pace and leisurely attitude protest the industriousness of the marketplace, a loitering and dilatory posture. (128)

These young men in the film are definitely loitering and do not seem to want to be part of the crowd anyway. However, one of them distinguishes himself from the others when he rises to help a young Muslim woman who has fallen down and been laughed at by passersby. He shows kindness and compassion to the young woman as they sit by the Seine and he helps her readjust her hijab and wipe the dirt from her hands. The beauty that is Paris on the banks of the Seine is not marred but rather enhanced by this interchange. Though the original situation was ugly, the setting never was. Paris still sparkled in the sunlight, the river glistened and flowed calmly, and the birds fluttered through the bright blue skies. After the young woman departed, the young man went back to his friends but refused to participate in their vulgar conversation. Later he sets out to track down the woman, which he does, and is invited by her grandfather to walk and talk with them, thus proving yet again that Paris is a city of endless possibilities.

In another one of the short films, a couple is walking through one of the large cemeteries in Paris, with its large stone grave monuments. Flowers are strewn on gravesites and the sun is shining on the leaves of the trees within the cemetery. Even Parisian cemeteries have beauty! Though this couple ends up arguing and nearly splitting up, they end up reconciling and walking off into the proverbial sunset together. Love abounds in Paris seems to be the theme of many of these short films, and it seems there is never a non-sunny day in Paris. Even the film with an older couple meeting in a café the night before they finalize their divorce is presented in a

somewhat beautiful way. The café is quaint, the wine is delicious, and the proprietor is kind and genial. The woman then goes home to a large, lavishly furnished apartment which, based on its size and location, must be worth a few million dollars. Paris is still portrayed as beautiful and luxurious even in the midst of a couple separating. Rollet asserts, "Paris is one of the most 'cinegenic' cities in the world" and films shot there mostly "illustrate the multifaceted and fantasized dimensions of modern Paris. Each director brings a different attitude to the city and discloses something new" (Rollet 46-47). Though *Paris, Je t'aime* is an anthology film made by several directors, all of them treat Paris as a character, as an always beautiful fantasy-like setting, even when bad things are happening. It is constant.

Unfortunately, all of these descriptions and views of Paris do not present a comprehensive view of what the city is actually like. Is Paris beautiful? Is Paris inspiring? Is Paris idyllic? Is Paris marvelous, wonderful, unlike any other place? The answer to all of these questions is an emphatic yes! That answer, nevertheless, should also be followed by a *but* because Paris has a darker side. Most film viewers and tourists will not often encounter this darker side, but they should be aware that the Paris shown in film is not always the most accurate portrayal. Benjamin writes:

> another system of galleries runs underground through Paris: the Métro . . . the labyrinth harbors in its interior not one but a dozen blind raging bulls, into whose jaws not one Theban virgin once a year but thousands of young dressmakers and drowsy clerks every morning must hurl themselves. (84)

The metro here is compared in part to the Greek underworld, a deep abyss filled with darkness. The *flâneur* does not wander these galleries. Often metro tunnels, when shown in films, are bright and not too busy. In reality, many are dark, dank, and smelly, and they are often

packed with commuters. There are days when one has to wait for two or three trains to pass in order to find one in which there is room to ride. Rush hour in Paris can be very difficult, and squishing oneself into a crowded metro car is a frequent occurrence for locals. There is nothing beautiful and idyllic about the metro, but films do not generally portray this element which is so important in the daily lives of most Parisians. Another negative aspect of the Paris metro not shown in films is the occasional strikes by those who work in the public transportation system. Often because of labor disagreements, metros and buses will be shut down, and commuters and tourists need to find other ways to get around the city or to their jobs outside of the city. In another one of the short films of *Paris, Je t'aime*, a tourist is sitting in a nearly-empty metro tunnel and accidentally makes eye contact with a man and woman across the tracks. This pulls him unwittingly into their relationship issues, and he ends up being beaten up
and left bleeding on the floor of the metro tunnel. Yet, the tunnel itself is fairly clean, bright, and not crowded, though it is on a very busy, popular metro line. This causes problems that filmmakers do not seem to want to show as it breaks the stereotype of the beautiful city in which one never has any major problems that cannot be solved with a little wine and a bit of love.

In *Midnight in Paris,* Gil's and his friends' visits to the tourist sites and monuments are portrayed as awe-inspiring, beautiful, and often informative as they have docents. What is not shown, though, is the long line one has to wait in to get tickets and to go through security. The crowds and tourist lines outside of Versailles can often stretch down the street, and people can wait hours to get into the palace. Films don't have time to show these facts and details about what it is really like to be a tourist in Paris. Crowded rooms in the palaces and in museums are also rarely shown. No film viewer wants to see people getting bumped into, fighting their way to see the *Mona Lisa* up close amid a throng of other tourists.

In *Paris, Je t'aime* the three young men sitting on the banks of the Seine are eating and are not surrounded by pigeons. That is not very realistic, as Parisian pigeons are well-known for hanging around and annoying anyone who has food out! What is also not shown is the result of people feeding pigeons, which is that they leave their bird droppings behind everywhere. Sometimes it is difficult to find a clean bench or curb to sit on. But again, the Paris parks and benches are not usually shown as being dirty. They are clean and shiny, the perfect places to sit down and absorb the atmosphere of Paris.

Paris is also a city that is full of beggars. For those who live in the city, an encounter with a beggar is pretty normal and occurs frequently. Some are more pushy and demanding than others and can be difficult to avoid or encounter, but films in Paris rarely show this side of things. It is not the "pretty Paris" that viewers expect and pay to see, so filmmakers avoid some of the true aspects of the city.

Sometimes films set in Paris actually do include some of these more negative aspects, though. For example, in *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain,* Amélie finds Nino, the man who dropped the photo book, working in a sex shop. There are outfits, sex toys, and other items on display for sale, and there is a room where scantily-clad women are dancing for the pleasure of whoever pays for it. Amélie is a little shocked by it all, but the woman working the counter and Nino himself are so used to it and are seemingly desensitized to it all. Though these kinds of shops can easily be found in certain districts of Paris, filmmakers tend to avoid including them in their sweeping panoramas of the city.

Many of the popular tourist attractions shown in Paris are actually breeding grounds for pickpockets where they prey on unsuspecting tourists. These pickpockets hang around the crowded areas so they can steal things quickly and quietly and then blend into the crowd

seamlessly. They also frequent the metro cars because of the close proximity to the travelers. Yet this side of Paris is not shown in films either. It is a dark, unpleasant aspect of a big city, and no film viewer wants to see that. Viewers want to see films that let them live in a fantasy world for a couple of hours. They do not often want reality.

While films tend to portray Paris as a safe place to wander and explore–and it can be–sometimes young women alone in the streets of Paris are vulnerable. Rollet writes, “Women. . . are often threatened by the predatory urban male seducer: non-domestic spaces are not places for decent women. Paris has its dark side, not only for women but also for other dominated groups (ethnic and sexual “others”) regularly confronted with verbal and physical violence” (48). This can really be true for any woman in any city, but generally in larger cities it is a larger problem. Women walking alone are encouraged to always be aware of their surroundings, and this is especially good advice in Paris.

In light of all of these films and the realities of the city, what is Paris then? In short, it is a beautiful, wonderful city. It is a place for lovers, for wanderers, for foodies, for shoppers, for photographers, for artists, and the list could go on and on. It is a place of experiences and of history. It is a constant monument to the past yet an ever-changing metropolis. Benjamin, in reflecting on Paris, writes:

> Paris is a counterpart in the social order to what Vesuvius is in the geographic order: a menacing, hazardous massif, an ever-active hotbed of revolution . . . [and]the lava of revolution provides uniquely fertile ground for the blossoming of art, festivity, fashion” and that “above all–and we see this again and again–it is from the same streets and corners, the same little rooms and recesses, that the figures of this world step into the light. (83)

Paris is this sort of time capsule that reminds everyone of the past yet also pushes on towards the future. It is picturesque, flawless (sort of), and timeless. It is a type of feast for the senses, and, as Murail claims:

> a sensory approach to the flâneur does not seek to belittle the role of vision, but aims at understanding how sight interrelates with the other senses. Since the flâneur provides us with a window into the workings of urban modernity, a more sensual approach to flânerie might give us a fuller perception of its development...The flâneur's body and mind work together to apprehend and comprehend the city, and sensing the city is a way of processing and thinking about the city. It is through all their senses that flâneurs make sense of the city. (163-164)

It is a city that draws one in through all of the senses. It is, essentially, a full-body experience. As Eubanks notes, "there is no one, true Paris that all observers objectively share; Paris is malleable, a 'moveable feast' as Hemingway famously points out" (170). Paris is whatever one makes of it. Benjamin's *flâneur* is still alive and well and strolling the streets of Paris.

Paris is yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Benjamin reflects, "Few things in the history of humanity are as well known to us as the history of Paris … In a beautiful turn of phrase, Hugo von Hofmannsthal called this city 'a landscape built of pure life'" (882), and so it is. It is a city that has lived and continues to live. It is a city that thrives and breathes and moves and inspires. As the character of Adriana in *Midnight in Paris* states, "That Paris exists and anyone could choose to live anywhere else in the world will always be a mystery to me" (*Midnight in Paris*).

Works Cited

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project.* Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Belknap Press, 1999.

Boutin, Aimée. “Rethinking the Flâneur: Flânerie and the Senses.” *Dix-Neuf*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2012, pp. 124-32. DOI: 10.1179/dix.2012.16.2.01. Accessed 3 Dec. 2021. *EBSCOhost*

Eubanks, Peter. “Memory and Nostalgia in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* / Memoria y nostalgia En "Medianoche En París" de Woody Allen.” *Revista de Humanidades (Seville, Spain)*, vol. 23, Sept. 2014, pp. 167-79. *EBSCOhost,* *https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.bgsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2019302554&site=ehost-live&scope=site.* Accessed 23 Nov. 2021.

Le Fabuleux Destin d’Amélie Poulain. Directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, performances by Audrey Tatou and Mathieu Kassovitz. UGC, 2001.

Midnight in Paris. Directed by Woody Allen, performances by Owen Wilson, Rachel McAdams, and Marion Cotillard. Sony Pictures Classics, 2011.

Murail, Estelle. “A Body Passes by: The Flâneur and the Senses in Nineteenth-Century London and Paris.” *Senses & Society*, vol. 12, no. 2, July 2017, pp. 162–76. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1080/17458927.2017.1310454. Accessed 25 Nov. 2021.

Paris, Je t’aime. Directed by Bruno Podalydès et al. La Fabrique de Films, 2006.

Rollet, Brigitte. “Paris Nous Appartient: Flânerie in Paris and Film.” *Film Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 3, 2008, pp. 46–51. *EBSCOhost,* https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2008.61.3.46. Accessed 12 Dec. 2021.