

# SUMMIT

—2023—

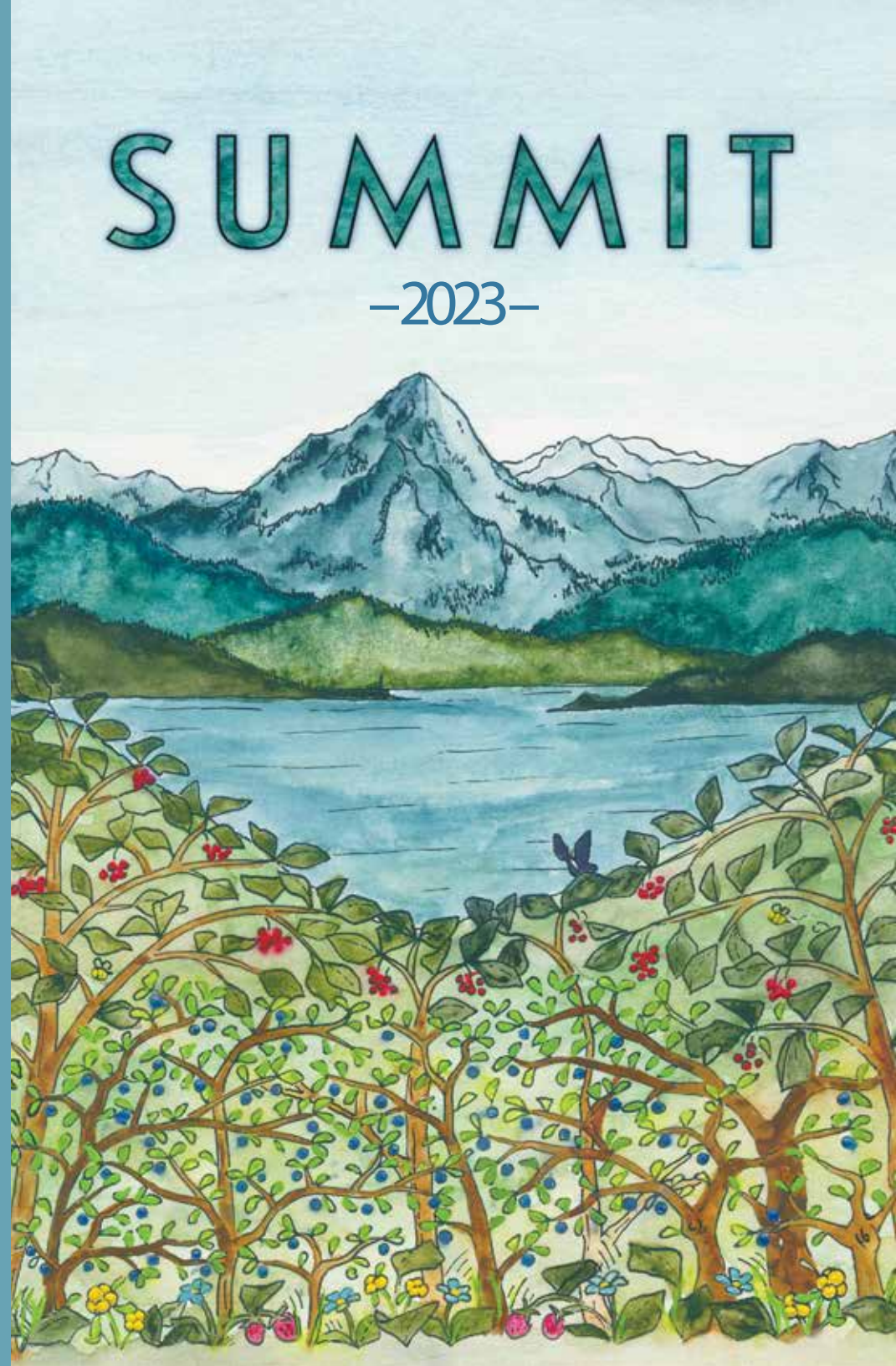
*Summit* is an undergraduate journal published by the UAS Juneau Writing Center which aims to showcase examples of exceptional academic work produced within the academic year. *Summit* is an interdisciplinary avenue for students of all majors to proudly display their finest essays as the “summit” of their work.

SUMMIT 2023

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST



UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
SOUTHEAST



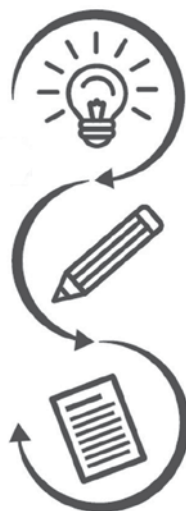
*Summit 2022/2023:  
University of Alaska Southeast's  
Collection of Exceptional  
Academic Works*

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Academic works from  
UAS undergraduate  
students, presented by  
the UAS Writing Center.

# THE WRITING CENTER

The place  
to plan,  
organize,  
and revise  
your writing.



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*Editors and Production: UAS Juneau Writing Center Student Tutors  
Autumn Daigle, Sophia Gimm, Francesca Johnson, Shaelene Grace Moler,  
Adonis Scalia, and AJ Schultz, and UAS Egan Library Dean  
Elise Tomlinson*

*Contributors: Past UAS Juneau Writing Center Student Tutors  
Catie Miller and Emily Bowman*

*Faculty Judges: JoMarie Alba, Éedaa Heather Burge, Forest Haven, and  
Heidi Pearson*

*Student Judges: Selah Judge and Sean Price*

*Staff Advisor: UAS Juneau Writing Specialist Jessy Goodman*

*4th Edition Cover: Autumn Daigle and Daanaa Keet Casey Lee Moats*

The UAS Writing Center dedicates this journal to Shaelene Moler in recognition of her hard work and years of dedication to the Writing Center. Her influence made *Summit's* publication a reality. She will be dearly missed by our team when she graduates and moves on to her next adventure.

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## A Note from the Writing Specialist

Last year's edition of *Summit* was the first time the Writing Center released a physical copy of the journal, and we are so excited to offer you another one for 2022/2023. For *Summit's* forward last year, I wrote about how proud I was of the writing tutors who put this journal together and of all the UAS students they serve. Not much has changed on that front, except that I am somehow even more proud of what these students have accomplished and what I know they are capable of going forward. Every year, they blow me away with their talent, passion, and knowledge. I've learned so much from all of them. Every year, they reach a new summit—and while this journal is meant to represent that high peak of academic achievement, I see our students and tutors continuing to ascend, reaching greater altitudes of success. We have a small student body, but their accomplishments will be many. I don't have to be a psychic to know that the passion with which our students approach their interests will lead them to great things—and great impact on others.

After working at UAS for more than two years now, I am beginning to have to say goodbye to students I've gotten close with as they prepare to move on to the next mountain to climb. I'm thankful to have this book to hold in my hands, to remember them and all the wonderful things they care about.

Jessy Goodman  
Writing Specialist and *Summit* staff advisor

## Acknowledgments

We would like to start by acknowledging all of the wonderful undergraduates who submitted to us this year and their dedication to research, scholarship, creativity, and interdisciplinary activity. It is our honor to display and celebrate their academic achievements as a testament to their hard work and brilliance.

We would also like to acknowledge that the production of this journal was achieved *Áak'w Kwáan Aani káx'* [on Áak'w Kwáan land]. We are immensely grateful to the stewards and innovators of this land –the Lingít. We also want to acknowledge the other Indigenous nations across Southeast Alaska: the Tsimshian and Haida peoples. *Aatlein gunalchéesh!*

This journal would not have been a success without the support and encouragement of Chancellor Karen Carey, Provost Maren Haavig, and Dean of Arts and Sciences Carin Silkaitis.

A huge thank you to our faculty and student judges JoMarie Alba, Eedaa Heather Burge, Forest Haven, Heidi Pearson, Selah Judge, and Sean Price. Their diverse insight and writing expertise has been indispensable in curating this academic journal.

We are also grateful to Jonas Lamb, Mary Glaves, Kaia Henrickson, the rest of the library staff, Mike Flunker, Rosemarie Alexander-Isett, Mallory Nash, and Alison Krein for their social, technological, artistic, and overall support during the promotion and production of *Summit*. Thank you to Student Government for their generosity in funding the UAS Ernestine Hayes Award for Excellence in Essay Writing, and congratulations to Jack Imel, the 2022/2023 recipient of the award!

Congratulations to all the professors whose students' work

is published in this year's journal: Jay Szczepanski, Dr. Daniel Monteith, Kevin Petrie, Dr. Ali Ziegler, Forest Haven, and Dr. Heidi Pearson. We would like to extend a special thanks to Jay Szczepanski, as his continued support of *Summit* inspired many of his students to submit to the journal. His students make up nearly half of the 2022/2023 publication.

This journal would not have been possible without Elise Tomlinson, the Egan Library Dean, and Jessy Goodman, our Writing Specialist, for the support, expertise, and resources they provided in creating *Summit*. In addition, thank you to the UAS Writing Center Support fund and its donors for enabling this publication and for funding a second physical edition!

We hope you enjoy this edition of *Summit*, and that it resonates with you as much as it does with us.

Autumn Daigle, Adonis Scalia, AJ Schultz, Francesca Johnson, Sophia Gimm, and Shaelene Grace Moler

UAS Writing Center Tutors



## Ernestine Hayes Award for Excellence in Academic Writing

In an effort to promote the academic excellence of students and to highlight their writing, the UAS Writing Center held its first student essay writing contest in 2019. The essay contest, now named after Professor Emerita Ernestine Hayes, strives to honor the commitments she made toward student achievement and the craft of writing. Our fourth edition of *Summit* once again features the Ernestine Hayes Award for Excellence in Academic Writing. As before, students were invited to submit exemplary essays they composed for courses in a bachelor's program at any campus in the UAS system. A board of student and faculty judges unaffiliated with the Writing Center, rated the essays, given to them anonymously, to determine which would be published and which would be the recipient of the Ernestine Hayes Award.

This year, the UAS Writing Center congratulates English major Jack Imel on receiving the 2022/2023 Ernestine Hayes Award for Excellence in Academic Writing. His essay was selected by the judges for its insightful critique of pop-culture media as literature and for its unique perspective on the navigation of American racial struggles.

Jack Imel is a sophomore student in the UAS English program. He aspires to write astute cultural criticism, enticing fiction, and visceral poetry, all without starving to death. A lifelong Juneau resident, Jack enjoys outdoor activities such as skiing and hiking, as well as reading fiction, playing and listening to music, and watching movies with his friends. He plans on graduating with a bachelor's degree in spring 2025.

# **“We’re Cursed Too”: Whiteness, Class Struggle, and Reparations in Atlanta**

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Jack Imel

University of Alaska Southeast

WRTG 211

Professor Jay Szczepanski

The institution of slavery haunts America with historical traumas and contemporary inequities that often appear insurmountable. However, the historical baggage of slavery weighs heavier on descendants of the enslaved than descendants of slave owners. As a result, a rift in collective memory has become a dominant influence on often-polarized national discourses around slavery, institutional racism, and the prospect of reparations. As a television series, Donald Glover's *Atlanta* has a tradition of portraying nuanced, uncomfortable issues of race and class in a confrontational yet non-pontifical manner. Season three's "The Big Payback" earns its place as perhaps one of the most archetypal instances of this tradition by exploring the dilemma of reparations through an uncharacteristically humorless vignette. The episode interrogates the viewer through inversion, challenging current assumptions about the implementation of reparations by illustrating a world in which descendants of enslaved people gain legal footing to sue descendants of slave owners for monetary amends. This results in a reversal of the privileged/persecuted dichotomy of whiteness and blackness to a significant extent. The narrative argues that confronting our history of slavery is inevitable, while challenging the commonly-held belief that this history is a curse that can only affect black Americans.

“The Big Payback” centers around Marshall, a white, middle-aged, middle-class father providing for his daughter in the context of a dual-custody arrangement. His characterization is best described as a clichéd portrait of an inoffensive, center-liberal brand of male whiteness. The apolitical inoffensiveness typified by Marshall is consistently juxtaposed against the rest of his milieu. While his white coworkers express indignation and incredulity about a landmark court case that sets the legal precedent for personal litigation for reparations, Marshall appears unperturbed, musing, “Whatever, I mean it’s not like he’s even gonna notice, he’s rich” (06:05). Marshall’s attitude towards the case gives the impression that he is not opposed to reparations as a concept, but is also not invested in it; he is apathetic. This all changes when Marshall is confronted by Shaniqua, the great great granddaughter of a man enslaved by Marshall’s great great grandfather. Shaniqua leads a campaign of confrontation, successfully suing Marshall for three million dollars.

Through this whole process, Marshall maintains his inoffensive demeanor without giving even a hint of aggression. To the extent that “Payback” can be interpreted as an indictment of whiteness, it is unique in its focus. It is easy to imagine an alternative story arc where untapped evils buried deep within our

apparently respectable white protagonist gradually come to a boil as he is confronted by a world that judges him as guilty for his great grandfather's misdeeds, culminating with a violent outpouring of frustration that forever effaces the facade of proper liberal whiteness with the acid of white nationalism. Yet, "Payback" sidesteps this obvious narrative strand entirely. The episode shifts focus away from well-trodden archetypes of incorrect white maleness typified by the rampantly performative "woke" white guy who inadvertently displays his deficient understanding of social issues (exemplified by "Socks" in season three's "The Old Man and The Tree"), the opportunistic capitalist industry-bro (think Steve Lift in *Sorry to Bother You*), and, of course, the stereotyped, slur-slinging "hillbilly/redneck" whose blatant racism often "justifies" their ritual slaughter on screen. The epistemological deficiencies of these archetypes are well-understood and have been explored extensively in TV and film. The deficiencies of Marshall's strand of whiteness are less blatant. Although he has genuine empathy and perhaps the best understanding of the suffering caused by slavery that he can have as an isolated white guy, his understanding is still abstract, and passive.

In the opening scene of the episode, Marshall patiently waits in line at a franchise coffee house, listening to *Radiolab* as a black

customer in front of him talks on the phone. Notably, the audio throughout this scene is rendered from Marshall's perspective; as a result, the verbal content of the conflict is obfuscated by the podcast audio, leaving the viewer with only a rough silhouette of the conversation unfolding in front of him. Ultimately, the scene culminates with the cashier directing Marshall to the front of the line as the man in front of him forfeits his place in line for an unknown reason. Marshall makes a meek protest, suggesting the black man order first, but the man follows the cashier's direction, stating "it's whatever," before going to the back of the line. The audio design of this scene may be interpreted as an allusion to the inability of mainstream liberal-centrist white culture to "hear" black perspectives, or possibly, the choice to tune out critical perspectives that necessarily attribute culpability to whites. In this framework, the cafe scene foreshadows Marshall being prosecuted as a reckoning with this culpability. The social dynamics that take place in the coffee shop foreshadow the proceedings in a different way. The implicit symbolism of "standing in line" and "line cutting" has great bearing on the rest of the work and on the conversation around equality and government aid in America. The position of power that the white cashier in the coffee shop uses to send the black man to the back of the line while

advancing Marshall forward symbolizes agents of racial oppression. Furthermore, the most logical reason that black man is sent to the back of the line is because the cashier believes he has “cut.” In this sense, the cashier emulates the enactment of policies that satisfy emotional inner narratives held by certain conservative whites who believe that black beneficiaries of affirmative action, welfare, or any redistribution of wealth are “line cutters.” Marshall, however, is clearly not someone who subscribes to this ideology. His reaction to the situation points out that he is not one to embrace or abuse his privileged status— after all, he doesn’t seem happy to cut ahead, and the black man seems unconcerned. Yet, Marshall is still a beneficiary of this arrangement, and this will not be without consequence. The entire framework of “the line” is divisory; it is impossible to foster trust between demographics when one group can only advance at the expense of another, or wait patiently and hope that their trust in a biased system is not taken advantage of. How could we blame anyone for cutting in line? In this case, Marshall’s fate has less to do with guilt and more to do with the oppressive, cutthroat system in which he exists. The price of his systemically endowed, unearned privilege is Shaniqua’s justifiable choice to “cut in line.”

After Marshall has been run out of his workplace and home

by Shaniqua and her family, he encounters “E,” an apparitional figure who first appeared in the season three pilot “Three Slaps.” In this prior episode, E has a pointed monologue about the definition of whiteness, where he says, “It’s social. White is where you are. It’s when you are. Armenians are white as hell till they ain’t” (3:10-3:25). Much of the content of this monologue foreshadows the themes covered in “The Big Payback,” where the temporal relativity of whiteness is elucidated as Marshall’s coworkers rush to preemptively exonerate themselves by taking genetic tests that verify their status as non-white. This also occurs when Marshall visits his estranged wife, who has little sympathy for his dilemma. Their conversation transpires:

‘Seriously Natalie? Have you checked your background?

This could’ve easily happened to you.’

‘I’m Peruvian. This would never happen to me?’

‘Peruv- You were white yesterday!’ (“The Big Payback,  
20:45-20:52)

Natalie relinquishes her connections to Marshall and with her whiteness to avoid financial repercussions, inverting traditional notions of “passing.” E offers a few more pertinent thoughts on whiteness (in “Three Slaps”), drawling, “The thing about being white



is, it blinds you. It's easy to see the black man is cursed because you've separated yourself from him. But you don't know. You're enslaved just like him. Cold whiteness. You're hypothermic. You lose logic. You see the blood, and you think someone else is bleeding... We're cursed too" ("Three Slaps" 4:00-4:40). Marshall sees the proverbial blood when he hears about multiple reparations cases, including one that his employer and results in layoffs, yet, due to his acclimation to privilege, he is blinded, and cannot comprehend that this systemic cataclysm might affect him until after Shaniqua comes knocking at his door. Whiteness allows individuals to forget that they are subject to societal forces that affect their entire demographic. Marshall's curse is fundamentally being white; he doesn't need to be a hateful or ignorant person to receive it, and being understanding and empathetic doesn't free him from it. The "enslavement" that E speaks of is a reference to the fact that white people, however privileged or well-intentioned, are still subject to a ruthless sociopolitical system that is essentially social Darwinism. If "the line" is an accurate metaphor for the struggle for power in America, it is clear that one group being endowed with privilege by authority incentivises minority groups to take means into their own hands, and step on others in order to get to the place in line

that they would rightfully inhabit if the system were not biased. As this process plays out in the episode, Marshall's position of privilege is inverted. Privilege becomes his downfall, even though he never asked for it, or abused it.

The point at which Marshall encounters E in "Payback" marks an abrupt transition that sees Marshall go from running from his fate to accepting it. After Marshall explains his situation, E responds:

'I don't know. My grandfather used to tell me how his father built everything we had from the ground up. Pulled himself up by his own bootstraps, y'know. Turned out he didn't. Turns out he had a lot of help... Maybe it's only right.'

'E, we don't deserve this.'

'Well what do they deserve? We were treating slavery as if it were a mystery buried in the past, something to investigate if we chose to. Now that history has a monetary value, confession is not absolution. (...) To Shaniqua, to them, slavery has not passed. And it's not a mystery. It is not an historical curiosity, it is a cruel, unavoidable ghost that haunts in a way we can't see. None of us are perfect. So now here's why you're separated from your wife, she's taken your kid,

now she has to be raised without a father. She has to build wealth and success from the ground up. Similar to the position we put them in. We're gonna be ok. Your daughter's gonna be ok. The curse lifted from her; all of us. We were running from it; now we're free.' (27:25-29:50)

Slavery results in one group's material progress at the cost of another's dignity, well-being, and freedom. It is, in a sense, the biggest "line cut" that can be made. As E says, the effects of Marshall's debt function as a reversal of this line cut. Although some may interpret the comparison of Marshall's situation to slavery as a diminishment of history that jeopardizes the morality of the episode, the validity of this interpretation rests on E being an omnipotent narrator. Certainly, E's public suicide—which immediately follows his conversation with Marshall—calls the reliability of his prior statements into question. After all, suicide is generally associated with feeling trapped, not free. So, the inclination to reject the equation proposed by E is not without value. It is clear that Marshall becoming estranged from his family and becoming financially indentured is not at all equivalent to slavery, and moreover, the focus on the punitive effects on Marshall and his daughter altogether undermines the morality of this version of reparations. Reparations

are by definition rooted in the ideal of restorative justice, but what we see in “Payback” is heavily reliant on punishment. The restitution Shaniqua receives may be well-deserved, but it depends entirely on Marshall’s damnation.

“The Big Payback” places reparations in a litigatory framework. Though Marshall stays composed throughout the episode, it is easy to see how “Payback’s” version of reparations could lead to embitterment, resentment, and possibly even violence; not everyone is as level-headed as Marshall. For *Atlanta*, the choice to use a white character as a proxy for the viewer is unusual, and notable. The curse of whiteness as articulated by E is an acclimation to privilege, and the difficulty that it takes to see that we, indeed, are cursed too. The episode may be interpreted as a warning, or more positively, a call to action for white people to get invested in the concept of reparations on a structural level. Otherwise, we may as well accept the same fate as Marshall, because our nation’s reckoning with slavery is inevitable.

## Works Cited

- “The Big Payback.” Atlanta, written by Francesca Sloane, directed by Hiro Murai, Disney-ABC Domestic Television, 2022.
- “Three Slaps” Atlanta, written by Stephen Glover, directed by Hiro Murai, Disney-ABC Domestic Television, 2022.

# Queering Quake Lake: Liminal and Historical Geology in The Miseducation of Cameron Post

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Olive Brend

University of Alaska Southeast

ENGL 418: Queer Literature

Professor Jay Szczepanski

On a hot August night in 1959, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake rearranged the southwestern Montana landscape. The west side of the Madison Fault fell twenty feet, and rockslides battered the southern Madison Valley. Hebgen Lake spilled over its dam and rushed towards the small town of Ennis. A rockslide in Rock Creek Campground dammed the water, however, keeping the town safe from the deluge. Behind the slide, water from Hebgen Lake filled the basin, washing over cars, picnic tables, and tents in the campground. The quake killed twenty-eight individuals, mostly campers in Rock Creek, now 180 feet beneath the surface of newly formed Earthquake Lake (Jehle).

Emily M. Danforth's novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* (2012) is as immersed in Earthquake Lake as Rock Creek Campground. The lake is a private symbol for alternate timelines, past lives, and the Montana lithosphere—negligible or even invisible to human observers, but an active part of the state's environmental history. In the novel, Cameron Post's mom and family friends the Keenans barely survive the '59 earthquake. Thirty years later, though, Cameron's parents drive off a cliff and into the lake, leaving Cameron orphaned. Earthquake Lake—exclusively called Quake Lake in the novel—is just one of the many liminal and historically charged

places Cameron explores. Two others take precedence: Miles City, a small town on the high plains of eastern Montana; and God's Promise Christian School & Center for Learning, a conversion therapy camp in the Madison Valley. Miles City and God's Promise use religion and chosen narratives to hide and sterilize the places' histories and Cameron Post's sexuality. However, Cameron finds the ability to explore her sexuality through these hidden histories themselves. This comes to a head at Quake Lake, where Cameron submerges herself into the intimate connection between her personal history and Montana's environmental history in order to find healing and move beyond her past violence and trauma.

### Miles City

At the confluence of the Yellowstone and Tongue Rivers, the place called Ma'xemâho'évé'ho'èno in Cheyenne has been used as an annual meeting spot for Tsétho'é (Cheyenne) and other Indigenous nations for centuries (Vekepete'a). In August 1876, General Nelson A. Miles settled the Tongue River Cantonment on this spot, part of the Army's vicious colonial tactics on the Great Plains following the United States' embarrassing defeat at the Battle of Little Bighorn



(Danforth 109). In the 1880s, the cantonment was renamed Miles City for the general who founded it, and it grew rapidly through the 1900s (Danforth 109). By the 1940s, however, Billings, 130 miles southwest of Miles City, became the predominant Montana town (“History”). Today, Miles City is known for “vast stretches of plains and badlands,” the annual Bucking Horse Sale, and its authenticity as a “true Western town” (“Miles City”).

In *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, Cameron attempts to navigate her queer desires at the same time as she navigates the run-down, ultra-religious streets of Miles City and the miles upon miles of highway that make up the rest of the state. Cameron’s first kiss, for instance, takes place with her best friend Irene Klauson on Irene’s family ranch, forty-five miles outside Miles City. The day of the kiss, Cameron’s parents fall to their deaths, and not a week later, Irene’s father discovers dinosaur fossils on his ranch. Researchers flock to the area, the Klausons strike it rich, and the pasture becomes “a hotbed for specimen recovery. A gold mine. A treasure trove” (Danforth 45). Like explorers with aquifers, oil, minerals, and dinosaur fossils—the exploitable resources of the Great Plains—Cameron and Irene conduct research to examine specimens, document treasure troves, and uncover their own skeletons in the mud

(and in the closet).

Like Irene, Coley Taylor grew up forty miles outside town, and like Miles City itself, “Coley didn’t need to cowgirl-up her persona. She was the authentic version” (Danforth 116). Just after the 1992 Bucking Horse Sale, Coley takes Cameron out into her pasture to feed the cattle, and while messing around on the bed of the pickup, Cameron kisses Coley on a whim. They are together for a moment, and when they pull away, Cameron is stuck in the mud, her boots sunk in deep enough that she can’t wrangle herself out (Danforth 174-5). Like the fossils on Irene’s ranch, Cameron is a part of the lithosphere, locked into semi-liquid rock. The two spend the rest of summer meeting up in secret places—the back of the movie theater, the pasture late at night. Once again, the queer is siloed to places hidden in darkness and transition. Out of the gaze of Miles City residents, highways and pastures become the main setting for queer encounters.

On the third anniversary of Cameron’s parents’ deaths, Cameron invites Coley over for dinner. Coley finds a picture of Cameron’s mom at Rock Creek Campground on the day of the ’59 quake and tells Cameron, “She was really pretty. Miles of style” (Danforth 190). This description calls back to an earlier scene when

a family friend visits town. Margot Keenan had been camping at Rock Creek with her family the night of the 1959 earthquake, and her brother died in the disaster. In fact, the Keenans had been the ones to convince Cameron's grandparents to leave Rock Creek that night, saving them from the rockslide and flood. When she visits Cameron in 1989, Margot is unquestionably queer: a photo from Cameron's parents' wedding shows Margot with an undercut in her bridesmaid's dress, looking "pretty uncomfortable in her gown and long gloves, much how [Cameron] imagined [she] might have looked in the same getup" (Danforth 54). Margot tells Cameron that she always stuck out for her height, saying, "At school, they called me MoM for years and years—it stood for Miles of Margot" (Danforth 55). The connection between Coley's "Miles of style" and Margot's own "Miles of Margot" (not to mention the motherly nature of both of these nicknames) incriminates Cameron's mom as queer and draws an even greater link to Miles City itself.

Besides settling the Tongue River Cantonment, General Miles is responsible for the surrender of Geronimo, the fall of the Nez Percé Nation, and the slaughter of over two-hundred Lakota individuals including Sitting Bull at Čankpé Opí—also known as Wounded Knee, South Dakota—in 1890 (Patterson; Engel). More-

over, the name “Miles” connotes distance, which is present throughout the novel: Irene and Coley both live forty miles from town, and much of the story takes place during “endless trip[s], silence filled only with the thick roll of tires over cracked highway” (Danforth 32). The name’s violent history combines with the imperial, artificial concept of “miles” as a unit of measurement, a way to ideologically document and grid each and every bit of the Great Plains. “Miles” not only queers Cameron’s mom and Margot, but also defines the colonial history and queer space of Montana’s highways.

Historically, Americans have regarded the Northern Plains as having “few redeeming features. [Prominent missionary] Bishop Hare’s Dakota Territory begins as ‘an uninhabited wilderness,’ and his railroad carries future settlers across a ‘waste’” (Cronon 1354). US and State Highway Systems, and later the Interstate Highway System, followed the railroad in taking settlers and travelers over this “uninhabited wilderness”—what might today be called “flyover country.” From these capitalistic perspectives, the Great Plains seem ahistorical, but this is just a further denial of the violent colonization that the fence, railroads, highways, and even General Miles himself represent. In the novel, Cameron colonizes this space and puts queer use into places which she was taught to view as useless, only meant

for transition and travel.

Cameron's first long-term lesbian encounter takes place in pit stops along these highways with Lindsey Lloyd, a girl from Seattle who spends her summers in Roundup. Cameron and Lindsey are swimmers, two of the best in eastern Montana, and throughout the summer of 1991, Cameron and Lindsey compete at meets across the state, celebrating their wins with a make-out session behind the changing rooms. As the tension builds, Cameron characterizes her feelings for Lindsey through a far-off thunderstorm and Irene's ranch: "Our bare arms touched as we ate, our thighs, and it felt like heat lighting, it felt like a quick brush against the electric fence at Klauson's Ranch, like the promise of something more" (Danforth 89). The fence, a colonial symbol on the Great Plains (Cronon 1355), becomes a boundary symbolic of rigid gender and sexuality for Cameron to cross. Even Cameron's last name Post conjures images of fences.

Liminality comes to the forefront with these highways and fenced-in settings. Generally defined as a place of transition, though also often related to emptiness or uselessness, liminal spaces are intimately connected to the experiences of marginalized peoples. In *Butch Queens Up in Pumps* (2013), a first-person analysis of Detroit

Ballroom culture, Marlon Bailey defines the geography that queer Black and Latin@ Ballroom members create as “a collective realm, a betwixt and between place, a liminal space, where such transformation is at least possible in ways in which it is not believed to be in the larger heteronormative world” (180-1). White, heterosexual, and capitalist values of production pressure queer people and people of color from all sides, and as Bailey describes, urban queer people of color form their own spaces, taking what is seen as empty or useless to the hegemonic norm. The same rhetoric applies to physical geography. In the groundbreaking article “Sex in Public” (1998), Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner describe the shift in coastal urban spaces from heterosexual geographies to homosexual, and possibly homonational, geographies, following the mythological Great Gay Migration from rural to urban as an answer to the homophobia that is latent in public spaces (558). Berlant and Warner leave rural flyover country—the “waste” through which Americans travel from coast to coast—unexamined. The queer and rural liminality combine in Cameron Post. While Lindsey eventually returns to her winter home in “a city on the Pacific Ocean that she painted as chock-full of flannel-clad, Doc Martens-wearing, out and proud lesbians” (Danforth 95), Cameron is left in Montana with the liminal high-

ways and lithosphere. Hetero-capitalist society considers Cameron's sexuality as useless as her highway spaces, but Cameron (though she isn't Black or Ballroom) creates a new space for herself, colonizing the "waste" of the Great Plains to rurally recreate "a betwixt and between place" somehow outside the heteronormative world.

Lindsey's perspective remains coastal, which is clearest when she tells Cameron, "You gotta get the fuck out of eastern Montana," at their final meet of the season (Danforth 97). During this final goodbye, a storm on the horizon is imminent. While Cameron awkwardly hugs Lindsey goodbye, "[They] were right in the middle of the maybe twenty minutes before the storm would hit, when it was only just promised, and every single thing in its path—from the strings of multicolored turn flags over the pool to the sheen of the oily puddles in the parking lot to the smell of fried foods wafting over from the Burger Box on the corner—was somehow more alive within that promise" (Danforth 103). A callback to the heat lightning that promised something more, this moment before the storm is itself a liminal connection to that promise. Finally realized, the promise becomes a representation of both Cameron's sexuality—subversive, "unnaturally" destructive—and her "born again" Aunt Ruth's forthcoming discovery of Cameron's queerness. Cameron,

like the “oily puddles” and burger joint, feels more alive with this promise/threat so electric on the horizon.

### God’s Promise

In Part 3 of the novel, Coley Taylor rats Cameron out and Aunt Ruth sends her to God’s Promise, a conversion therapy school in western Montana run by ex-gay evangelical Reverend Rick. A veritable Garden of Eden, the compound itself is in a contradictory wilderness, at once on the border of Yellowstone yet still surrounded by ranchland. Upon arrival, Cameron describes the sublime but still-pastoralized landscape:

The grounds at Promise had a little of everything that western Montana is famous for, things that the state tourism board makes sure show up on postcards and in guidebooks: golden-green fields for archery or horseback riding, densely wooded trails dotted with Indian paintbrush and lupine, two streams that, according to [fellow disciple] Jane, were just aching with trout, and a so-blue-it-looked-fake mountain lake only a mile and a half’s hike away from the main building. Both sides of the campus (the compound) were bordered by the grazing land of cattle ranchers sympathetic to the holy cause



of saving our souls from a lifetime of sexual deviance. (Danforth 252-3)

This landscape's perfection models the disciples' (God's Promise refuses to call its attendees "students") transition into heterosexuality. In contrast to the clearly violent history of the Great Plains, God's Promise is a sterilized and arranged environment—it is good enough to appear in postcards, removed from any past except that of a single god.

Danforth further represents the liminality of the queer experience through another disciple, Adam Red Eagle. Yanktonais Dakota and winkte, Adam grew up on the Fort Peck Reservation with his Assiniboine father, a real estate developer with mayoral ambitions "recently converted to Christianity 'for political reasons'" (Danforth 279). Adam's father sends him to God's Promise because, "We're not savages anymore. And for Chriss sake we're not women, either" (Danforth 343). The ideological colonialism and generational trauma that Adam describes—the first time such violence is directly mentioned—is jarring to Cameron and fellow disciple Jane Fonda. While God's Promise attempts to make heterosexuality seem normal, the base way of being, and therefore apolitical, Adam's presence is a reminder of the intense connection between the church's

teachings and its colonial motives. While Cameron is hiking with Adam and Jane, Jane mentions that Adam's father had described him as a "fairy," as "gay," and he corrects her:

'Two-souls person,' he said, not looking at me, concentrating, instead, on the long pine needles he was braiding. 'It's a Lakota word—well, the shorter version of one. Winyankteh ca. But it doesn't mean gay. It's something different.'

'It's a big deal,' Jane said. 'Adam's too modest. He doesn't want to tell you that he's sacred and mysterious.'

'Don't fucking do that,' Adam said, throwing some of the nonbraided needles from his pile at her. 'I don't want to be your sacred and mysterious Injun. [...] My dad's version is easier to explain to every single person in the world who doesn't know Lakota beliefs. I'm not gay. I'm not even a tranny. I'm like pre-gender, or almost like a third gender that's male and female combined' (Danforth 194-5).

This description of the ideological colonization of Adam's identity recalls the colonial history in all the book's settings, and it points to the Euromerican desire to label and constrain sexuality within fences and gridlines just like it has done with the state of Montana itself. Furthermore, the "sacred and mysterious" mythology

surrounding Indigenous peoples stems from the same ideas that settlers and Romantics used to paint the Great Plains as a “waste” and this mountain environment as sublime. Adam’s dispelling of these myths dismantles the perspective of sublimity both at home on the Plains and at Promise in the Rockies.

However, this is a flawed portrayal. Debbie Reese, Nambé Pueblo director of the American Indians in Children’s Literature organization, critiques Danforth’s representation of Adam and the winkte identity, explaining that the term “two-souls” (as opposed to “two-spirit”) traces back to Marjorie Schutzer’s widely disparaged work about Indigenous LGBTQ people. Reese writes, “Though Schutzer identifies as Lakota, the writing sounds very much like someone who speaks of their identity, not through a life lived within a Native community, but through a search done later in life, driven by a romantic disposition of what it means to be Native.” While some aspects are accurate, much of this exchange (and Danforth’s other representations of Adam) ultimately comes from what seems like a “pretendian” perspective, or at least one that does not have the authority to report on—or provide a source for—two-spirit identities. Reese concludes, saying, “Those who identify as winkte (or that identity and its word in their own nation) do not, to my knowledge,

have a single character that looks like them in the thousands and thousands of young adult books out there right now.” While Adam does respond to numerous harmful myths and is useful for my analysis of queer Montana liminality, he is a flawed caricature that may in fact buy into some of these myths.

Oddly, Danforth also places conversion therapy in liminality. The healing practices at Promise occupy uncertain space, combining science and religion, reality and falsehood. Cameron admits that, even though one of the counselors has a degree in psychology, weaving the therapy with religious dogma is far from helpful for the disciples. She reflects, “I don’t think it was necessarily so organized, so planned out as a means to manipulate us. I just think it really was the Wild West out there and they were making shit up as they went along” (Danforth 401). The most common myth the counselors at God’s Promise wield is the nonexistence of homosexuality. The school’s promotional material proudly displays, “The opposite of the sin of homosexuality is not heterosexuality. It is holiness [emphasis original]” (Danforth 238). This erasure of homosexuality naturalizes heterosexuality, making it seem as untouched as the campus’ sublime mountain landscape. If heterosexuality is holiness and homosexuality sin, then heterosexuality is implied to have existed first; homosex-

uality is simply a perverted copy.

God's Promise claims that the "cure" for this perversion comes from each disciple's history: just like Miles City's dilapidated structures and pastoralized ranchland materializes the history of the Great Plains, each disciple's homosexuality or transsexuality materializes the history of their broken families. For the counselors at Promise, the problems that lead to homosexuality are not native to the disciple's body, but rather, "All the 'support sessions' were designed to make you realize that your past was not the right past, that if you'd had a different one, a better one, the correct version, you wouldn't have even needed to come to Promise in the first place" (Danforth 296-7). The counselors claim that trauma leads to homosexuality, so they urge the disciples to examine their history, to discover an "incorrect" timeline that led to their queerness. Contradictorily, the pseudoscientific rhetoric the counselors use both harms and heals the disciples. Through their self-reflection, disciples inadvertently uncover trauma and work through it in a group setting. In support sessions and group meetings, Cameron finds the "feeling like we all had shared history, somehow. That understanding somebody else's path to Promise would help me make sense of my own" (Danforth 261). Like with the fossils, highways, and toponymy

of the Great Plains, it is in uncovering history that is supposed to be hidden—drug abuse, sexual abuse, the loss of a parent, homelessness—that the disciples find a more accurate understanding of the self in the temporal and geographical landscape. The work through trauma with fellow queer people allows them to cultivate an identity just as settlers cultivated the “useless” plains, a process necessary for survival in a hetero-capitalist society.

American historians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries succeeded in marketing Manifest Destiny as the natural, true history of the Great Plains, often recounting that survival through battles with Indigenous residents, droughts, and dust storms points to the American settlers’ resilience and proper claim to the land (Cronon 1356). However, contemporary historians are analyzing other layers latent in these narratives: Indigenous presence as agricultural and ecological agency; settlement as genocide; pastoralization as ecocide. Though much work is still needed to redress the harm of Manifest Destiny, these and numerous other histories, simply put, are the Great Plains—they are literally constructed into the landscape. The Church is doing the same thing with queer folks as American historians have with Manifest Destiny: they claim we are unholy, unnatural, a product of the Satan-inspired gay rights

movement. In recent times, though, queer historians have unearthed myriad narratives about our individual lives and queer lives in general to reconstruct queer and trans history.

Cameron, Adam, Jane, and the other disciples do the same in response to the different histories the counselors preach to them. Within these alternate histories, counselors claim that there is one, true, holy, heterosexual history (and therefore one, true, holy, heterosexual future). For Cameron, they blame her parents. She is told, “Your gender troubles began [...] at the hands of your parents, and focusing on your most recent sinful behaviors is only part of a complicated picture” (Danforth 428). Cameron, though, suspects her parents had nothing to do with her homosexuality whatsoever, that they would have been supportive had they survived. Indeed, her first kiss is nearly simultaneous with their deaths. The blame placed on her parents leads Cameron to obsession with understanding their roles in her early life, for good or for bad. This is part of what drives her, Adam, and Jane to escape God’s Promise.

### Quake Lake

Danforth does not mention the meaning of the name of

God's Promise, although it almost certainly refers to the covenant the Christian god made with Noah following the Great Flood: "I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth" (*New American Bible (Revised Edition)* Gen. 9:11). It is important to remember that this flood originated from the "wickedness of human beings," for "every desire that their heart conceived was always nothing but evil" (Gen. 6:5). Not only is the conversion camp God's Promise meant to remove the earth of the "wickedness of human beings," but the flood at Quake Lake represents a new Great Flood, one to wash away the sinful humans at Rock Creek Campground. It is a miracle that Margot, queer (and therefore wicked), survived this flood; the parallel queer incrimination of Cameron's mom with the "Miles of style" / "Miles of Margot" comparison perhaps led to the deaths of Cameron's parents in the lake thirty years later.

Danforth never explicitly mentions the exact location of God's Promise, either, although multiple clues suggest the campus is a short drive from Ennis (Danforth 370), a long commute from West Yellowstone (Danforth 282), and a day trip to Bozeman (Danforth 285). Importantly, it is also approximately fifteen miles



north of Quake Lake (Danforth 437). Between Quake Lake and God's Promise, the entire second half of the novel takes place in the Madison Valley, near the tri-corner of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. This is an extremely geologically active area: the Yellowstone Caldera is not more than forty miles east as the crow flies from Quake Lake and Promise. This geological activity not only spurred the 1959 quake, but also maintains the connection of Cameron's queerness to the Montana lithosphere.

Catastrophism, the idea that massive events guided by godly hands inform natural processes (the Flood, for instance), was the dominant understanding of geologic and biologic forces until the Enlightenment. Eighteenth century Scottish geologists James Hutton and Charles Lyell abandoned the narrative of catastrophism in favor of uniformitarianism, the idea that processes are slow and predictable, that "nature does not make leaps" (Ghosh 26). Later studies of paleobiology, evolution, and continental drift confirmed this theory. Recently, though, the quick action of climate change represents an uncanny and horrifying reanimation of catastrophism (Ghosh 40). Though not a result of the modern climate crisis, Quake Lake and the Yellowstone area are worlds where mountains may fall and rock may liquefy at any time. Quake Lake's catastrophic 1959

events deny uniformitarianism's sublime theory and find a liminal space that is not uniform but still fails to reconnect the landscape to godly hands. Furthermore, Quake Lake's interspersed appearance throughout the novel opposes Miles City and God's Promise, which remain in their respective spaces. Not only does Quake Lake occupy more narrative space, but it also engages an uncanny agency like the climate crisis. Hetero-capitalism views sexuality through the same geological lens: if heterosexuality is considered natural and normal, stable as the uniformitarian lithosphere, then homosexuality catastrophically shifts this perspective. Like the fossils on Irene's ranch and the mud on Coley's, Quake Lake's unstable landscape and narrative agency connects Cameron's sexuality to the lithosphere. All this is not to mention Danforth's explicit use of the colloquial "Quake Lake" instead of the official Earthquake Lake and the clear auditory connection between quake and queer.

At the end of the Spring 1993 semester at God's Promise, Cameron researches Quake Lake in depth to aid in her, Jane's, and Adam's escape. She finds a photo of twelve-year-old Margot Keenan just after the disaster and says, "Looking at that picture was like looking right into Margot's memory, something that should have been completely private" (Danforth 406). Cameron guesses that

Margot is unaware of the photo, and she wonders “about [her] own parents and all the photos of their Quake Lake death that might very well be around: their car being pulled from the lake; their bodies being pulled from the car; their IDs being pulled from [her] dad’s wallet, [her] mom’s purse” (Danforth 407). These alternative histories and futures queer the occasions; just like historians’ perspectives of the Great Plains and Yellowstone area differ, Margot’s memory of the occasion differs from the picture. Cameron’s perspectives of her parents come in various images, perhaps real, perhaps untrue, perhaps only real in narrative form.

When Cameron, Adam, and Jane arrive at Quake Lake, they search for the exact spot where Cameron’s parents plunged into the water. Cameron recognizes some dead trees from a newspaper clipping—Jane calls them “ghosts of trees,” and Cameron calls them “skeleton trees”—and prepares for a “ceremony” (Danforth 434; 436). She strips naked and swims into the lake, frigid from late-spring snowmelt. Her body becomes an extension of the lake as she describes her “gnarled feet [pointed] toward the gnarled trees and the arching cliffside and road [her] parents had toppled from behind those trees” (Danforth 442). She pleads with her parents, erasing the blame the counselors at God’s Promise had put upon them,

and identifies Quake Lake as “this place to which it seemed like everything in [her] life thus far had somehow been tied, somehow, even things that shouldn’t have been, and [she] wanted to soak in it” (Danforth 445).

This healing ceremony in Quake Lake connects queerness and death. Her nakedness is a removal from all but her own delicate, mortal body—as happens with death—and an ecosexual connection to Quake Lake. In mourning her parents and the morbid history of the place, Cameron realizes the way God’s Promise similarly attempted to kill her queerness, and she understands the future in which she will be resurrected, no longer tied to Quake Lake or God’s Promise. Cameron lets go of all the alternate histories “tied, somehow” to the lake and focuses on her future. She escapes the water and observes “there was a whole world beyond that shoreline, beyond the forest, beyond the knuckle mountains, beyond, beyond, beyond, not beneath the surface at all, but beyond and waiting” (Danforth 445-6). The denial to submerge into the lake like her parents removes her from the liminal space between life and death, between queer and straight, but still works her towards beyond—beyond the fence of sexuality, beyond the gender roles in which she had been entrenched her whole life. A secondary meaning for

her surname appears: besides fence pickets, Post as a prefix can refer to something after, something following, something beyond. While Quake Lake is itself a liminal space in a geological sense—a connection between death and life, between uniformitarianism and catastrophism—it is also a boundary between Cameron's realities—a boundary between heterosexuality and homosexuality, between the time pre-conversion therapy and post-God's Promise. For the first time in her life, there are countless possibilities, all just beyond Quake Lake.

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## Yellow Cedar as Deep History

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Felix Nolan

University of Alaska Southeast

ANTH 314: Anthropology of Southeast Alaska

Professor Dr. Daniel Monteith



## Abstract

Exploring the post-glacial distribution of yellow-cedar (*Callitropsis nootkatensis*) in Southeast Alaska provides key understanding of the cultural heritage of the region and may offer evidence to support the idea of coastal migration to the Americas. The significance of yellow-cedar should not be overstated -it played a significant role in the origins of the Pacific Northwest Coast Cultures with its broad and overarching material use. The goal of this paper is to provide a summary of the natural history, Indigenous knowledge, and the competing theories on human migration of the Southeast, overlaid with the known ethnobotanical, genetic, and ecological characteristics of yellow-cedar. Genetic evidence and population patterns show that the sources of modern cedar populations persisted in numerous glacial refugia along the length of their current range, rather than migrating from southern source populations as was previously believed. This has several implications. Firstly, it lends support to the view that the story of human habitation in this region is not one of fragmented cultural evolution, rather it is a deep and persistent one. Secondly, it is evidence that areas of coastal refugia during the last glacial period had the necessary materials for a coastal migration route through the Alaskan coast.

## Introduction

While learning about the glacial and climatic history of Southeast Alaska and the implications on the scale and chronology of human habitation and cultural development, I began to have many more questions than answers: how did intricate cultures arise with such deep ties to woodworking emerge, when large trees were supposedly absent until a few thousand years ago? It was initially assumed by anthropologists that the “cultural evolution” of the Northwest Coast Peoples was slow, gradual, and bound to the emergence of the temperate rainforest in the postglacial period (Hebda 1984). There is a contradiction: the complex material tradition of the region and the clarity of oral histories, many of which trace the chronology of the glacial period with precision, do not speak to a slow and gradual development. With yellow-cedar, it seemed improbable that it would have achieved its present range and cultural usage having arisen from southern points of refuge. I was introduced to the work of Dixon and Moss, anthropologists who explored the possibility of an early coastal migration to the Americas and the persistence of Northwest Coast Cultures throughout deep time. I first theorized that there was a possibility that the ranges of yellow-cedar and western red-cedar were spread northwards by

early cultures, and potentially cultivated. Then, I began to look into the ecology and postglacial distribution of yellow-cedar, and was surprised to learn that they were not driven out by glaciation but remained on numerous points of coastal refugia. My research was greatly helped by the work of Paul Hennon, a Forest Service plant pathologist, whose 2016 report provides a clear and concise summary of the natural history of these important and imperiled trees.

### Cultural Value

The greatest use of yellow-cedar, both past and present, has been because of the durability and strength of its wood. It has a remarkable ability to resist rot, to the point where fallen trees have viable wood for decades. There is an unusual uniformity between the spring and summer growth rings, which grants carvers the option of making lateral cuts through the wood without a risk of structural damage or fray. The inner bark peels off in great lengths along the tree, which has been used for weaving clothing, baskets, and blankets. Withes have significant utility as tool handles and aides in construction. Yellow-cedar was among the primary resources for the housing, clothing, storage, toolmaking, and transportation needs of Northwest Coast Peoples. Due to its density and relative scarcity,

yellow-cedar was not generally used as watercraft apart from scattered instances of smaller, personal craft, but it is the primary source that canoe paddles are constructed from (Hennon 2016). Tlingit north of the range of Western red-cedar primarily used spruce for canoes and procured the large cedar war canoes from peoples further south. In addition to its utility, yellow-cedar plays a significant part in the spiritual and ritual practices of Indigenous peoples. The creation of totem poles, ceremonial masks, speakers' staffs, and blankets are among the items deeply linked to these trees. Thus, knowledge of their life cycles and ecology was tantamount to the spiritual value of the item. Oral histories and traditions often mention yellow-cedar as both an immaterial concept and from a more utility-based perspective. It is important to recognize that while considerable, the use of yellow-cedar was not all encompassing. Peoples inhabiting areas without substantial yellow-cedar populations, like the northeastern area of the panhandle, simply used other materials for their needs. Spruce root baskets, hemlock totem poles, and cottonwood canoes are several examples.

### Ecology and Characteristics of Yellow-Cedar

Yellow-cedar is a member of the cypress family, Cupressa-

ceae, whose present day distribution can be traced to the break-up of Pangea. They subsequently have a near global presence, and have adapted to a number of extreme environments. Cypressess are distinguished by their scale-like foliage and thin, peeling bark; they range in form from largest trees on earth, Sequoia, to the widely distributed alpine Junipers.

There has been contention on the classification and genetic relations of yellow-cedar as long as it has been known to western science (it's not uncommon to see it described under a number of different genera, and it also isn't a true cedar). It was initially classified in the genus Cupressus, in 1859, the "standard" placement for North American cypressess at the time. It was soon recognized to have significant morphological differences from other Cupressus species, and was moved to its own genus, Callitropsis, with its exact relations phylogenetic relations remaining unknown. In 2002, a previously undescribed species of cypress was classified from Vietnam, *Xanthocyparis vietnamensis*, which bears close genetic affinity to yellow-cedar. It was undecided whether yellow-cedar should join *Xanthocyparis* until the 2011 International Botanical Congress, where its placement in Callitropsis was upheld (Hennon 2016). It is important to note that Callitropsis is currently believed to form

a sister group with *Hesperocyparis* as well, which is a genus comprised of North American cypresses which generally have extremely limited ranges in the West and Southwest of the continent.

Yellow-cedars arose from an undoubtedly long-lived and adaptive lineage and possess unique environmental adaptations and ecological characteristics. As Paul Hennon describes, “Yellow-cedar has a defensive ecological strategy, in that it survives on harsh sites with limited competition from other species, invests less time in reproduction or fast growth, and outlives competitors by accumulating defensive compounds in heartwood and foliage (Hennon 2016).” They rarely achieve an overall dominant position in forest-associations but conversely reach their greatest stature in areas of higher competition due to its aforementioned ability to outlive its competitors. Yellow-cedars are not bound to specific plant associations as well, and they cohabit the mosaics of elevation and water permeability and soil depth gradients that characterize the temperate coastal rainforest. Their main strategy is to outlive competitive species until stands of 15-200 individuals can reach the canopy. Then, younger generations remain under the shade for an opportunity to gain more light. This ability to survive in a “cryptic” shrub-like form grants it a level of ecological flexibility that could aid in the explanation of its

recolonization of new lands following the last glacial period.

### Yellow Cedar Postglacial History

My initial hypothesis on the origins of these trees turned out to be wrong -geologic, ecologic, and most importantly genetic evidence strongly indicates that yellow-cedar persisted in numerous points of refuge throughout the entirety of the last glacial period. A 2001 study by Carol Ritland surveyed the allozymic and isozymic variations of yellow-cedar and found a “striking” level of genetic diversity, as well as an unexpected affinity between Alaskan cedars and more distant populations. Further studies indicated that yellow-cedar populations found that genetic variation is not based on geographic or ecological factors, but, as Hennnon says in his 2016 report, “Instead, the distribution of genetic variation appears to be patchy and heterogenous, as if each population were founded by a moderate number of unrelated individuals that subsequently increased their population size through mostly sexual reproduction.” These findings directly link the source of present populations to glacial refugia, and an incredible 2015 study by David Roberts and Andreas Hamann reconstructed the refugial history of 22 North American tree species by comparing paleoecological records with

the allelic diversity of tree species along their present day distribution. For yellow-cedar, it was found that they persisted in 44 points of refugia in Southeast Alaska and 45 points along the southern coast.

This is clear evidence that there were considerable areas of habitable land along the length of the coast that could have supported sea-faring peoples' arrival to the continent.

There are several other points to consider to help bring this into a full frame. Namely, the distribution and migration of Western red-cedar (*Thuja plicata*), which had an arguably more intensive use in the Northwest Coast, and importantly, a very different postglacial history than that of yellow-cedar. Modern red-cedar populations emerged from a single point of refugia, and their arrival in the southeast of Alaska is quite recent, it's estimated to be within the last two thousand years (Roberts et al. 2016). Red-cedars display a startlingly low level of genetic diversity, to the point where there are practically 300 distinct individuals (Shalev et al. 2022). I believe this line of inquiry and research could hold greater implications than that of yellow-cedar because it is evident that the present-day range and historical cultural usage reached its maximum quite recently. Some have used this recent cultural use of red-cedar as evidence



that the social complexity of Northwest Coast Peoples developed gradually and recently -in line with the development of the current temperate rainforest ecosystem (Hebda 1984), which is a perspective I hold many contentions with.

Another important piece in this story could be the Prince William Sound yellow-cedar populations, which do not display significant distinct genetic distance from the contiguous population (Hennon 2016). Hennon speculates that the source of the populations could be a disjunct point of glacial refugia, but importantly considers that native peoples could have been responsible for their spread to the isolated region. I believe that this is entirely possible, if not likely, when considering the level of knowledge on the ecology of cedars, and the amount of trade and movement that happened in this region. This appears like another opportunity for further research and inquiry.

### Conclusion

I believe that the continuous inhabitation of yellow-cedar in coastal Alaska throughout the glacial period is evidence supporting the coastal migration of humans into the Americas, and it is a branch of research I have not seen much serious inquiry into. Much

of the cited evidence supporting these suitable points of glacial refugia comes from research into bear and small mammal fossils, which is important as humans can likely survive in environments that support animals as large as bears. I believe, though, that cedar's material value would have been recognized almost immediately and could have aided in the construction and repair of watercraft. This likely supports the idea of an early coastal migration, but it does not necessarily tie the cultural origins of the region to these trees.

These questions branch from a fundamental problem about theories of cultural origins and evolution, and the materials that bring about this change; it isn't quantifiable. How can one determine if it was the use of a material, deep in time that was the origin point for a present and evolving culture? It is as disingenuous to posit that the virtues of a culture are linked to the presence of a tree as it is to say the same in the case of their absence. There are oral histories dating back to before the last glacial maximum that describe largely treeless landscapes (Harris 1997). The endurance of this cultural knowledge speaks for itself - with or without trees, the people remain. The presence of yellow-cedar populations in points of refugia surely has its meaning, but putting too much weight into this could further the material essentialism that previous academics have

viewed these intricate cultures.

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## **Surrealism: Bridging the Gap from the Past to Today**

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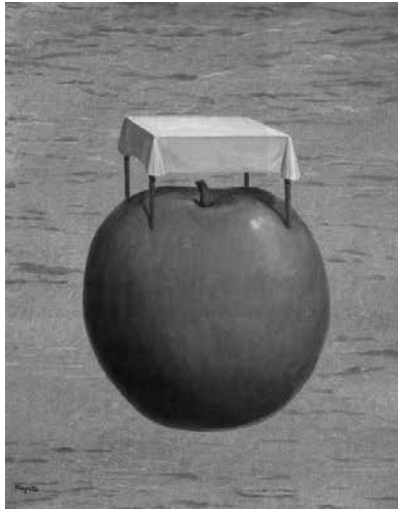
Darby McMillan

University of Alaska Southeast

ADM 103: Key Themes for Art, Design and Making

Professor Kevin Petrie (through the UAS exchange program)

Through 1920 to 1960, artists were captivated by the dream-like qualities of real life: artists including Yves Tanguy, Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, and Leonora Carrington (Woodhouse, 2022). They reveled in their imaginations, automatism, and spontaneity. During the movement of Surrealism, there was little evidence a unified entity other than that the artists' connections and ideals existed, which could not necessarily be traced through each individual's work.



**Rene Magritte (1964) Fine realities [Painting].**

One such artist was Rene Magritte, although his thoughts as an artist also swayed from what was popular during his time. He found comfort in the mundane, ordinary objects of real life and used them to form questions through his paintings. He never meant to answer the many questions and mysteries left in his works, and

instead wished for them to never be deciphered by any person. The problem is the human brain constantly works to solve these puzzles and make sense of the unsolvable. Coming into the 21st century, his works are finally being appreciated for what they were always meant to evoke, the mysteries of life itself.

Through contemporary artists today, the themes of Surrealism can still be found. Some believe our society today is living in a post-Surrealist world, with modern tastes for the uncanny and unexpected to elevate our human experience. One contemporary example of this progression includes Julie Curtiss, who “works with ideas of narration from her imagination to create psychological artworks that raise questions without an answer” (Pérez, no date). She comes from a diverse background, “born in France to a Vietnamese father and French mother” and studied at l’Ecole des Beaux-arts in France and currently works out of a studio in Brooklyn (Pérez, no date). Her use of human figures and day-to-day objects in her paintings emulates those predecessors of Surrealism while she puts on her own modern twist, including bold-clashing color combinations.



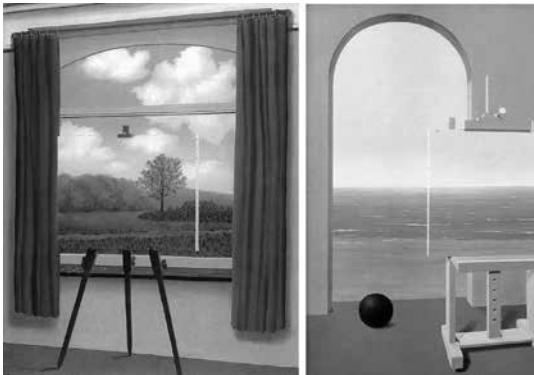


**Julie Curtiss (2019) *The Mirror* [Acrylic and Oil on Canvas].**

The themes and strategies of Magritte can be traced through Curtiss' contemporary works over the last few years. The artists share many similarities, like their description of ideas through objects and spaces, evoking a feeling of unfamiliarity through common items, and their use of juxtaposition and mystery. Magritte worked through a time of great political and social change which shaped his ideas, while Curtiss currently practices through a time of social equality and ambiguity. These changes through history gave Magritte the incentive to dissociate from society while Curtiss has proven to support and uplift many communities through her work. Both artists take pride in their work and the efforts they put into creating meaning and importance; through this essay the similarities and differences of their ties to Surrealism will be mapped and analyzed.

One connection between Magritte and Curtiss is their use

of objects. For the historical Magritte, just about anything can be found in his paintings. There was a lot of repetition of similar objects throughout his works “creating the distinct styles which other artists did not” possess nor understand (Rene Magritte Biography, Paintings, and Quotes, no date). Magritte was a creature of habit and “much of the work he created depicted similar scenes, and recurring themes. Some of his favorites were floating rocks, or creating a painting within a painting, and he also used many inanimate objects like fruit, furniture, and instruments (Rene Magritte Biography, Paintings, and Quotes, no date). Two examples of his hidden paintings within paintings include *The human condition* from 1933 and 1934.



**Rene Magritte (1933 and 1934) *The human condition* [Painting].**

For Magritte, these objects were simply meant to disturb and perplex the human mind, a sort of illusion much like many

Surrealists of his time. Such artists, like Joan Miro and Salvador Dali, held an “interest in the unconscious as a source of creative activity and as a repository of evil and dangerous tendencies in man” (Gablik, 1970). However, for Magritte, he tried not to rely so heavily on the unconscious, instead sourcing the inspiration of his works in the things he observed throughout his days and from previous memories.



**Julie Curtiss (2016) Red-faced [Acrylic and Oil on Canvas]. Julie Curtiss (2017) Witch [Acrylic and Oil on Canvas].**

Observing Curtiss’ work, she employs objects very similarly; relying on recurring images of feminine features like long painted nails and heeled knee high boots. Her paintings often also include food items with a hair-or cord-like texture which is both “hypnotic and satisfying” to look at and has become a stylistic trademark for the contemporary artist (Julie Tuyet Curtiss – Bushwick, 2017). This texture also appears in the hair of her subjects, like Red-faced from 2016 and Witch from 2017.

Just as Magritte, Curtiss employs these objects to unsettle her audience and create a sense of wonder and dreaminess. For both artists “it is the unexpected ... which provides information, since what is fully expected tells us nothing” (Gablik, 1970). The clash of seemingly normal items in unfamiliar situations create “a ‘bewildering’ poetic effect” for both artists works; they each took the power of a single object, or in some cases multiple, and took away all of its meaning, leaving them only for observation (Gablik, 1970).



**Rene Magritte (1965) The blank signature [Painting].**

Looking further into these paintings, the objects' relation to the space around them is also very important. The two artists apply an array of spaces throughout their works, from wide open rooms and outdoors, to paintings where the objects obscure the space around them and hoard the majority of the canvas. During Magritte's time, there was “a departure from the concept of space subject

to the projection of perspective” (Hammacher, 1995). Signature in blank (*Le blanc-seing*) from 1965 provides a beautiful example of backgrounds and perspectives. Space is just another tool to enhance the themes of Surrealism, creating familiar landscapes just to put them off by instilling dreamlike qualities and distorting what the viewer perceives as normal.

To Magritte, the “use of ordinary objects in unfamiliar spaces is joined to his desire to create poetic imagery” (Rene Magritte, no date). Within his paintings the spaces all have a believability that they are real and true; no space comes from otherworldly realities. Through the viewing of “Magritte’s paintings, ... do not pretend to imagine a world that proposes to be truer than the world itself” because the places are just as they seem, even though unfamiliar through its application (Gablik, 1970). As the creator of his work, he desired to instill a sense of wonder in his audience without the need for explanation or interpretation, his unique poetic style unlike most of his Surrealist counterparts. For Magritte, “he considered his work successful when no explanation of causality of meaning can satisfy our curiosity” and our own connections cannot make sense of the surreal spaces and images (Gablik, 1970).

In this way, Curtis sways away from her historical equivalent.

Although she similarly uses common spaces and makes them unfamiliar, hers hold meaning and do leave room for interpretation. There are trails of meaning through Curtiss' work "focused primarily on the female body and psyche" and she is not afraid to associate a deeper theme to her contemporary work (Sloway, 2019).



**Julie Curtiss (2019) *The House Maiden* [Acrylic and Oil on Canvas].**

Her spaces are often familial settings, carpeted rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and other small humble places of the average household, like the living space of *The House Maiden* from 2019. These rooms are often quite simplified with bright colors and basic furniture, unlike Magritte who puts an immense amount of detail in his backgrounds. By simplifying the environments, Curtiss places a deeper emphasis on her figures and their roped, woven details, giving her works the ability to speak louder on themes of the feminine and domestic. With the use of her spaces and objects she creates "abnormal situations that deal with different aspects of the female

identity” and provides the viewer with a bit more analytical freedom to deconstruct her paintings (Pérez, no date).

Bringing these artists back together and reassuring them in their links to Surrealism, Curtiss and Magritte mutually employ juxtapositions in their work as a means to create contrasts and confuse the mind. The most obvious of all juxtapositions used by Surrealist artists was dreams versus reality, but these two artists blur the line between these themes. For Magritte, the unconscious was never in the picture, figuratively and literally. Instead, this historical artist enjoyed employing the stark contrasts of light and dark, as well as grotesque and beautiful. For the artist, these “juxtapositions which were mysteriously related rather than completely unrelated” offered the necessary confusion and mystery Magritte wished to inject in his audience (Matthew Gale).



**Rene Magritte (1948) Rape [Painting]. Julie Curtiss (2020) Uppercut [Oil and Vinyl on Canvas].**

In the same way, Curtiss’ works “offer contemporary view-

points on [Magritte's] abstract fixations" and are composed of like juxtapositions (Rene Magritte, no date). Rape from 1948 shares similar placement and attention to the details of beauty and grotesque just as Uppercut from 2020 does. Curtiss also has a collection of gouache paintings that have the same striking contrast of light and dark just as her historical counterpart does.



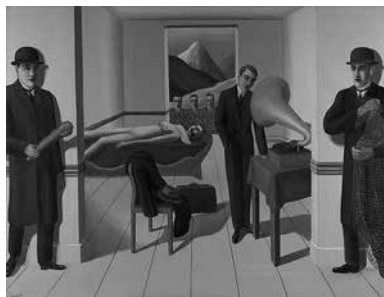
**Julie Curtiss (2020) Cloud [Acrylic and Gouache on Paper]. Rene Magritte (1954) The empire of lights [Painting].**

Another theme through her works is the contrast between the feminine and masculine. The idea heightens through her use of female characteristics like long pointed fingernails, breasts, and long glossy hair; then she adds the beastly details of twisted body parts, boniness, and muted blue grey tones. By drawing these two unlike ideas together, "Curtiss has given the female identity an innovative, grotesque, and utterly human overhaul" unlike any artist before her time (Moore, no date). This modern Surrealist has evolved the tradi-



tions of the art movement to capture the desires of the present-day audience and empower the people of her time through these works.

Surrealist work captures the human mind and unfolds mysteries in front of our eyes. Magritte and Curtiss' art "carries into the world an image of paradox which undermines expectations and, eventually, poses philosophical questions about the nature of existence and of reality" (Gale, 1997). Mysteries and untold stories hide within the objects and spaces they use. The traditional techniques of the Surrealist practice gave Magritte the opportunity to build questions into his paintings, and "in order that this mystery be invoked, means for doing so must be found. 'Realism', he has said, 'is something vulgar, ordinary; but for me reality is not easily attained'" (Gablik, 1970).



**Rene Magritte (1927) *The menaced assassin* [Painting].**

Realism in itself became a mystery to the historical artist because what is real is defined by each individual. "For Magritte, all the possible acts of the mind (displacement, explanation, etc.) are

indifferent if they do not directly evoke mystery” and he succeeded in creating these feelings through the employment of common objects in unexpected settings (Gablik, 1965).

Today, Curtiss continues the mysteries as the successor of Magritte and other Surrealists of his time. These obscurities will never have a definite answer or meaning, and that is just as Magritte wanted. Through common objects and familiar spaces, we transport ourselves to alternate realities where what we already know makes no sense at all. Through juxtaposition and mystery, we engulf ourselves in the secretcies of these artists’ minds.



**Julie Curtiss (2020) Drain [Oil on Canvas].**

I chose this topic because to me Surrealist artwork provides an escapism from our own reality. Through viewing these works, my mind travels far and wide, to places where things are not always as they seem, nor are they expected. I’m thankful these artists had the talent and imagination to create a way for the mind to wander and explore and have a chance to feel freedom unlike the strain reality

places on us. I encourage you to look into your own life and find ways to play with your own existence and welcome the surreal and unimaginable.

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# Psychology Through the Lens of Normativity

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Milagro Darby

University of Alaska Southeast

ENGL 418: Queer Literature

Professor Jay Szczepanski

The American Psychological Association defines psychology as “the study of the mind and behavior.” The emerging scientific practice of psychology is traced to the mid-1800s with scientists Gustav Fechner and his breakout publication *The Elements of Psychophysics* in 1860, or Hermann von Helmholtz’s *Handbook of Physiological Optics*. Overall, Wilhelm Wundt is accredited for establishing the discipline of psychology as a scientific practice separate from philosophy with his publication of *Principles of Physiological Psychology* in 1873 because of his directly stated intent to do so, and how his laboratory and research were perceived by other scholars (Mueller 11). An explosion of groundbreaking ideas and publications emerged over the next thirty years and began collecting into definable schools of thought. Edward Titchener’s Structuralism, William James’ Functionalism, and Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalysis are well-known early examples. As the field expanded and more research and ideas came out, some disciplines, like Structuralism, died out and, in its place, grew Watson’s Behaviorism. Other concepts like Psychoanalysis became further cemented and continued to heavily influence the growth of psychology as well as other art, literature, and popular culture.

It is incredibly significant to note that all of the mentioned

scientists were white, well-off men. It is not too far of a stretch to imply that the foundation of psychology and the formative-centric ideals were built with inherent sexism, classism, and racism. This was easily seen when the first edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)* was voted on and created in 1952. It was filled with untested theories and diagnostic criteria attempting to explain abnormal psychology.

Because of how psychology and its practices initially developed, it cannot help being influenced by the social construct of beliefs held by its creators. Given the social disparity between men and women at the time of conception, most of those beliefs were supremacist and sexist. Those views influenced the depictions and conceptualizations of the “abnormal.” Therefore, diagnosis and treatment of the abnormal are viewed through the lens of returning to, moreover conforming to, each practitioner’s individual characterization of normality.

Psychology’s origin, and evolution, have grown within a web of individual influence and preference and are thus implicitly normative. Due to time and capacity restrictions, this paper will focus on analyzing the influence of normativity within the realm of psychological practice, with particular emphasis on the creation and



use of the *DSM*.

What is the *DSM*?

The concept of having standardized diagnostic criteria and treatment emerged after the U.S. Census Bureau wanted something to help them estimate the prevalence of mental illness for the 1920 census. A very rough manual called the *Statistical Manual for the Use of Institutions for the Insane* was developed. This manual outlined twenty-one psychiatric disorders, with nineteen related to some form of psychosis. Despite being updated nearly ten times by 1942, the psychiatric communities largely ignored it. Instead, diagnosis and treatment standards were interchangeable depending on the institution (Surís et al. 2). Trust was placed in practitioners despite the consistent lack of regulation, both for the prospect of recovery and the fear of not. At the time, the overall opinion on the cause and presentation of mental illness was correlation equals causation. If two patients presented with the same symptoms and shared experiences, they must have the same underlying cause. While it is understood now that the original *DSM* manual was not at all accurate or representative of mental illness, and therefore should not be used, previous practitioners actively chose to ignore a resource available to them and proceed with their own best judgment.

Individual biases towards normativity could flourish, and patients were victims to their providers at varying degrees.

The beginning of standardization came when Adolf Meyer, an early 20th-century academic psychiatrist, transmitted a few ideas and classifications originating from Europe back to American psychiatry. The main idea was the need for a dedicated and consistent source for diagnosing and differentiating psychiatric disturbance. He adopted work from Emil Kraepelin, who heavily focused his research on the classification, categorization, and description of psychiatric disorders. Kraepelin also initiated much work under the hypothesis that psychiatric presentations could have an underlying biological basis. In particular, he insisted that they should be treated like medical diseases and categorized as distinct entities with definable symptoms and prognoses. Meyer's goal was to establish American psychiatry as a more rigorous and structured practice and compete with other more precise branches of medicine.

Practitioners began to fall away from the methods of systematically defining each and every symptom in order to correlate them to a specific diagnosis when Sigmund Freud's ideas of psychoanalysis dominated American psychiatry from 1930-1960. Freud's emphasis on the effects of the unconscious steadily grew in popularity but

found solid ground with the rise of the average patient, particularly war veterans experiencing psychiatric disturbances after returning from WWI and II. The theory that psychiatric disturbances were caused by the interrelationship between inner turmoil and external stress was a rational explanation for the many similarly presenting veterans. The categorical difference between mental health and mental illness began to be described, and mental health services, as opposed to strict institutions, were emerging nationally in response to the veteran health crisis. This is especially true after soldiers returned home from WWII and the Veterans Health Administration and newly created National Institute of Mental Health provided government support to patients and practitioners. While social awareness and stigma were improving, and more services were being readily offered, the shift away from a systematic definition and diagnostic process can be seen as a regression. The implementation of Freudian concepts immediately removes the possibility of scientific detachment and purity because everything is centered on the idea that mental illness is simply a visible representation of internal psychic conflict. This can be due to improper development or poor life adaptations.

The lack of information on the diagnosis and treatment of the

widely varied presentations of war veterans led to the development of more standardized descriptions of “post-war psychopathology.” It did not make sense to have such a large volume of otherwise healthy soldiers presenting with severely distressing symptoms after returning from war. Surely not that many young men “in their prime” would be acting as if they belong in an institution, right? Practitioners needed a better and less damaging way to describe and diagnose veterans that did not stigmatize them the same way as before. Diagnoses, symptoms, and treatments were developed and organized to “normalize” patient presentations. This prompted the publication of the first edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, the *DSM-I*, in 1952 by the American Psychological Association (APA) after a very brief, rushed year of development. The manual and its contents were voted on by a selected group chosen by the APA and did not follow any type of scientific process recognizable today. Johnson describes it well by stating, “The first edition of the *DSM* was not prompted by a purely scientific need for a more standardized system of classification but by a social and clinical concern on the influx of veterans with psychiatric distress whose disturbances were not fully described in existing psychiatric nomenclature” (156). He further describes the book as “heavily influenced

by the psychodynamic theories that described disorders not in terms of observable symptoms but in terms of conflicts between biological drives and external pressures” (Johnson 156). This made psychological practice as reliable as reading tarot cards because it relied entirely on the provider’s interpretation of importance and meaning. It assumes a complete understanding of an individual’s biological drives and how external pressures affect them. It leaves no room for scientific objectivity and is an exaggerated projection of how each provider believes life should be lived or experienced.

The *DSM-II* was published in 1968 and is overall remarkably unchanged from its predecessor. The significant difference was the expanded number of accepted diagnoses, rising from 106 to 182. The publication process was the same, and again Johnson sums it up nicely, saying, “...the *DSM-II* reflected the same theoretical spirit as the first edition, casting symptoms as reflections of underlying intrapsychic conflicts or stressful life conditions” (157). The book was a feeble attempt at masking many surfacing critiques about psychiatry, which would only continue to grow.

### *DSM-III*

The process of updating the manual into a new addition grew from the extreme crisis of legitimacy that psychiatry and psychology

underwent from 1950-1970. There were multiple reasons to explain why psychiatry's validity was being questioned, beginning with research studies that undermined the "understood" effectiveness of the professions themselves, along with a rise of other effective drug interventions to alleviate symptoms that had little to no connection to the base theories of psychiatric disturbances. Why would an anti-psychotic, a drug designed to change brain chemistry, help psychosis if its assumed cause is psychic disturbance or a poor reaction to external pressures? Psychiatry's standing as a medical profession was also under critique. The inhumane, degrading conditions of inpatient institutions came to light, and the opposition was evident. Critiques compounded from everywhere and eroded the trust in the efficacy of psychiatric practice and treatment. This pressure and conflict created space for the *DSM-III* to be made, which was influenced by the need to stabilize the profession before it lost hold completely. The third edition aimed to be based on scientific and systematic criteria and content to separate itself from past assumptions.

The *DSM-III* was published in 1980. It succeeded in its attempt to reestablish verity in psychiatry, both academically and clinically. The third edition no longer described diagnoses in terms of maladaptive reactions related to intrapsychic or unconscious

turmoil. Instead, it provided rules referred to as “operational criteria” in order to standardize how and why a diagnosis is made. They focus on and detail an illness’s necessary features and symptoms and provide other limiting criteria like age, duration of illness, potential predisposing factors, and possible differential diagnoses. Removing the classically psychodynamic term neuroses and its related diagnoses and symptoms from the *DSM-III* was a pivotal shift in the centric paradigms of psychiatry. It represented the overall internal change from heavily psychoanalytic theories and definitions to “science-based psychiatry.” Freud is credited with the significant development of the concept of neurosis and focused on defining psychoneurosis, which he referred to as the repression of inner conflicts that manifest in symptom formation like anxiety, obsessions, or phobias. He felt that the reactivation of infantile conflict triggered by adult stress caused psychic regression and symptom formation as a defense mechanism (Townsend and Martin 2). Simply put, if you have anxiety, you fail as an adult because you are not reacting to situations appropriately. Of course, a reaction will occur regardless, but the interpretation of “appropriate” is solely the perception of said reaction. A practitioner’s response to an inappropriate reaction could be to encourage a more “normal” reaction to the initial problem.

Imagine a twenty-two-year-old housewife and mother of three experiencing anxiety and episodic anger because her husband is never home, suspecting him of having an affair. During an episode, she cuts off all her hair to spite him and ends up with weekly psychotherapy visits instead. A doctor assesses her and decides the best treatment is to correct her behavior to avoid another incident. Her life is perceived as otherwise “normal;” her reaction to it is the only abnormality. Similar types of thought processes contributed to the growing distrust in psychiatry that led to the extreme paradigm shift from the 2nd to 3rd editions of the *DSM* as described.

A specific but relevant example is how the diagnosis of persistent anxiety has changed. The *DSM-II* describes Anxiety Neurosis strictly as “...anxious over-concern extending to panic and frequently associated with somatic symptoms. Anxiety may occur under any circumstances and is not restricted to specific situations or objects. This disorder must be distinguished from normal apprehension or fear, which occurs in realistically dangerous situations” (39). Comparatively, the *DSM-III* lists its systematic, operational criteria for each individual diagnosis. The newly termed Generalized Anxiety Disorder is defined as:

A. Generalized, persistent anxiety is manifested by symptoms



from three of the following four categories:

(1) motor tension: shakiness, jitteriness, jumpiness, trembling, tension, muscle aches, fatigability, inability to relax, eyelid twitch, furrowed brow, strained face, fidgeting, restlessness, easy startled

(2) autonomic hyperactivity: sweating, heart pounding or racing, cold, clammy hands, dry mouth, dizziness, light-headedness, paresthesias (tingling in hands or feet), upset stomach, hot or cold spells, frequent urination, diarrhea, discomfort in the pit of the stomach, lump in the throat, flushing, pallor, high resting pulse and respiration rate

(3) apprehensive expectation: anxiety, worry, fear, rumination, and anticipation of misfortune to self or others

(4) vigilance and scanning: hyperattentiveness resulting in distractibility, difficulty in concentrating, insomnia, feeling 'on edge,' irritability, impatience

B. The anxious mood has been continuous for at least one month.

C. Not due to another mental disorder, such as a Depressive Disorder or Schizophrenia.

D. At least 18 years of age. (223)

The updated manual obviously provided much more clearly

defined, systematic definitions and reasonings than previous editions. Melvin Sabshin, the APA's executive officer at the time, said, "The publication is the victory of science over ideology." The third edition was also the first time public scrutiny and lobbying had any influence on the manual's formation. The different neuroses diagnoses were taken out of the manual and reformulated as previously described, but more significantly, the diagnosis of homosexuality was officially removed before publication. The protests and lobbying of gay and lesbian activists at the 1970 and 1971 annual APA meetings led to major breakthroughs in connecting practitioners to the social realities and implications of specific diagnoses. This led to the APA's vote to remove the diagnosis of homosexuality from the *DSM* in 1973. The newly printed editions of the *DSM-II* did not have the diagnosis but instead replaced it with "Sexual Orientation Disturbance" and later "Ego Dystonic Homosexuality" in the *DSM-III*. The process was challenging but showed the significance and need for a more comprehensive range of research, advisors, and members to formulate the most effective and accurate manual in a highly impressionable field.

The *DSM-III-R*, a revised but not fully updated manual, was published in 1987 and primarily refined the existing criteria in the

3rd edition. It incorporated significant suggestions from practicing clinicians and researchers to make it more operational. The *DSM-IV* was published in 1994, and according to Suris, the most far-reaching change in the update was the addition of the phrase “clinically significant distress or impairment” across the diagnostic criteria (6).

### *DSM-V*

The developmental process for the *DSM-V* stands out in comparison to previous editions because of the extensive lengths taken to be thorough and inclusive in its revision. The APA launched an investigation into the strengths and weaknesses of the *DSM* based on new research that did not support the criteria or boundaries of some existing mental health conditions. It began in 1999 with the goal of revising the official definition of a mental disorder, adding multi-dimensional criteria to existing disorders, adding the option of separating impairment and diagnostic assessments, and addressing how an illness can express itself across a lifespan and how it is influenced by gender and cultural characteristics (Regier et al. 646). They partnered with the World Health Organization (WHO) Division of Mental Health, the World Psychiatric Association, and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The investigation results were published in the

2002-2003 monographs *A Research Agenda for DSM-V* and *Age and Gender Considerations in Psychiatric Diagnosis: A Research Agenda for DSM-V*, which set the stage for establishing accurate focus groups. The American Psychiatric Institute for Research and Education collaborated with WHO and leaders of the World Psychiatric Association to develop a NIMH research conference grant application to fund a review of the collected research base. The 5-year grant supported the formation of the *DSM-V* Task Force and 13 domestic and international *DSM-V* research and planning conferences, referred to individually as work groups. The work groups reviewed available world literature related to their specific areas and diagnoses to prepare proper revisions from 2003 to 2008. In 2006, the *DSM-V* Task Force nominated chairs to lead and oversee each workgroup, as well as incorporating more multidisciplinary task force members to lead general development. At the same time, the APA Board of Trustees established a more thorough vetting process to disclose sources of income and avoid conflicts of interest among the workgroup members (APA 5th ed 6). Despite this, in 2013, Cosgrove and Krinsky found that 69% of *DSM-V* task force and work group members reported having ties to the pharmaceutical industry (1). This is a 13% increase in conflict compared to their

2006 analysis of *DSM-IV* group members, which reported 56% had some pharmaceutical tie (Cosgrove et al. 156).

The *DSM-V*'s development finally allowed more non-practitioner input and review. Research reports and preliminary drafts were posted three times on the *DSM-V* website, [dsm5.org](http://dsm5.org), for public comment and review. It provided space for non-professionals to have a voice in the revision process, which had previously never been done. Published in 2013, the *DSM-V* is a self-described “living document” (13) in that it would include regular online updates and revisions that do not necessitate a whole new edition. This decision brought considerable criticism because it creates space for unreliability and inconsistency in diagnostic and assessment criteria and, thus, a diagnosis itself. For example, if a clinician assesses a patient and diagnoses them with “Illness A” but is unaware of the online updated criteria that might have changed the assessment, is that diagnosis still valid? Conflict of interest also continues to be one of the major complaints about the formation of the *DSM-V* due to the high percentages reported. The APA requiring disclosure of conflict does not eliminate the conflict itself because transparency alone cannot mitigate bias.

2022 brought the publication of the most updated version

of the manual, the *DSM-V-TR*, which provides text revision (TR) to the *DSM-V*. The new edition is largely unaltered, and the most significant changes include new diagnostic entities and minor modifications of existing diagnostic criteria and definitions (First et al. 218). The new entities include Prolonged Grief Disorder, Unspecified Mood Disorder, and Stimulant Induced Mild Neurocognitive Disorder. Specific terminology was also updated to conform to current preferred usage, particularly within the area of gender dysphoria. Replacing “desired gender” with “experienced gender,” “natal male/natal female” with “individual assigned male/female at birth,” and “cross-sex treatment regimen” with “gender-affirming treatment regimen” (First et al. 219) is seen as a significant improvement of psychiatry incorporating and respecting evolving socio-political definitions and experiences of patients.

The *DSM* remains the ultimate defining source of psychiatric conditions utilized by mental health practitioners, legal professionals, researchers, and educators. While 70 years of updates and revisions from the *DSM-I* to the *DSM-V-TR* have significantly improved its content and quality, it is still heavily critiqued for many of its diagnoses and criteria and for the creation process itself. The manual’s authority in “the real world” is unchallenged and allows the

possibility of negatively impacting a person if used or interpreted incorrectly.

### Implications

A thorough *DSM* history allows for a better understanding when comparing and contrasting previous problematic normative diagnoses and diagnostic criteria. The easiest example is the pathologization and stigmatization of homosexuality within medicine and psychiatry. The diagnosis of homosexuality first appeared in the *DSM-I* under “sexual deviations,” along with fetishism and transvestitism. The manual did not give any other diagnostic criteria or treatment information, just a specifically coded number. It allowed a practitioner to make a diagnosis for any reason based on their own personal knowledge, experience, and morale. There is even a diagnosis for “unspecified sexual deviation,” leaving room for each person’s individual interpretation of what constitutes sexual deviation. A categorical description was added when the APA published the second edition, but it is still the only thing written and in itself is highly problematic. On page 44, it says:

This category is for individuals whose sexual interests are directed primarily toward objects other than people of the opposite sex, toward sexual acts not usually associated with coitus, or toward

coitus performed under bizarre circumstances as in necrophilia, pedophilia, sexual sadism, and fetishism. Even though many find their practices distasteful, they remain unable to substitute normal sexual behavior for them. This diagnosis is not appropriate for individuals who perform deviant sexual acts because normal sexual objects are not available to them.

Given that homosexuality falls under this descriptor, we can assume that homosexuals are victims of their unnatural desires despite their attempts to correct themselves. If someone partakes in homosexual (deviant) behaviors only because there are no heterosexual (non-deviant) options available, then it does not qualify for diagnosis and is considered not deviant. The sliding scale of acceptability is not made and enforced on anything other than societal perceptions of good and bad behavior, which also follows the perceptions and enforcement of a gender binary. Having same-sex relations is frowned upon but not pathologized, situationally, when there is no opportunity to have opposite-sex relations. It has to be unwillingly, even desperately, homosexual to be perceptually allowed.

The diagnosis was removed before the publication of the *DSM-III* but was replaced with “Ego-dystonic Homosexuality,” which falls under the ‘Other Psychosexual Disorders’ sub-section of



Psychosexual Disorders. 'Gender Identity Disorders' and 'Paraphilias' also fall under Psychosexual Disorders. The evolution of diagnostic criteria and descriptors from the second to the third edition is significant. However, it creates this odd sense of irony and disbelief regarding the "causation" of homosexuality and in which instances it is "bad." The term "ego-dystonic" refers to one's thoughts and behaviors that do not adhere to one's fundamental beliefs or personality but are distressingly unavoidable. Therefore, "Ego Dystonic Homosexuality" can be defined as homosexual thoughts or behaviors that a person is disturbed by and wants to change. The *DSM-III* describes and thus continues to pathologize homosexuality in a convoluted, turn-around way that still approaches it in a normative manner. It says the "essential features are a desire to acquire or increase heterosexual arousal so that heterosexual relationships can be initiated and maintained" (281). The autonomy to choose which ideologically enforced normative life is finally available; live as an open homosexual, outcast from life and society and the joys of a heteronormative nuclear lifestyle, or self-identify as a broken heterosexual with the hope of one day being fixed so you too may finally participate in the joys of reproductive capitalism. You can't have a white picket fence, two kids, and a housewife if you like sleeping with men, right?

The *DSM-III*'s descriptions are almost self-aware and on the verge of admitting the argument, this paper attempts to make. It states under 'Predisposing Factors' that "homosexuality itself is not considered a mental disorder" (282) but two sentences later describes the factors that predispose Ego-Dystonic Homosexuality to be those "negative societal attitudes towards homosexuality that have been internalized...features associated with heterosexuality [like having children] and living a socially sanctioned life may be desirable and incompatible with homosexual arousal." The book responsible for directing the conversation about psychiatric disorders in the United States blatantly and unapologetically describes and endorses the role of societal normative standards in psychological disturbance. Somehow, though, the description still manages to make the problem individual, not collective. What is a poor psychiatrist to do but treat a patient troubled by their homosexuality and continue to enforce the standards of compulsory heterosexuality within our heteronormative society? There is no denying the social impact of removing the homosexuality diagnosis from the *DSM-III*, but the remaining placeholders continued to create distorted perceptions of homosexuality. It took time, but the manual no longer references homosexuality in a pathological sense. However, this does

not mean the entire undercurrent of heteronormativity within the *DSM* is erased.

Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (FSIAD) and Female Orgasmic Disorder are diagnoses remaining in the *DSM* that pathologize a woman's response to sex. FSIAD is a new diagnosis within the *DSM-V* that combines the previous diagnoses of Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD) and Female Sexual Arousal Disorder (FSAD) from the *DSM-IV*. The *DSM-V* notably replaces the word "desire" with "interest" for FSIAD and conceptualizes interest as the motivation, or lack thereof, to engage in sex. The argument for removing desire from diagnostic criteria is due to the varying definitions of desire and its individual subjectivity (Thomas and Gurevich 2). In reality, it entirely removes desire as an important part of female sexual functioning, especially since the term is still included in the parallel diagnoses for men. This reaffirms sociocultural perceptions of gender differences in sex and what a woman's "role" is. Women do not have to experience desire in order to participate in heterosexual relationships and copulation, just a willingness to do so. Thomas and Gurevich explain that most research on female desire focuses on dysfunctional desire (i.e., low levels of desire and desire discrepancies between partners) and

particularly the experiences of Western, heterosexual women in relationships in the context of penetrative sex (4). Thus, women's sexual encounters and desires are mostly interpreted through the success of sexual acts with heterosexual male partners. A lack of interest can be categorized in a few ways, which are listed in the diagnostic criteria for FSIAD. The *DSM-V* criteria are as follows:

[A] lack of, or significantly reduced, sexual interest/arousal, as manifested by at least three of the following: 1. Absent/reduced interest in sexual activity, 2. Absent/reduced sexual/erotic thoughts or fantasies, 3. No/reduced initiation of sexual activity, and typically unreceptive to a partner's attempts to initiate, 4. Absent/reduced sexual excitement/pleasure during sexual activity in almost all or all (approximately 75%–100%) sexual encounters (in identified situational contexts or, if generalized, in all contexts), 5. Absent/reduced sexual interest/arousal in response to any internal or external sexual/erotic cues (e.g., written, verbal, visual), 6. Absent/reduced genital or nongenital sensations during sexual activity in almost all or all (approximately 75%–100%) sexual encounters (in identified situational contexts or, if generalized, in all contexts). (433)

It reads more like a guidebook for what correct and normal sex is rather than the diagnostic criteria for a psychiatric condition

in psychology's most highly regarded text. The first criterion, "absent/reduced interest in sexual activity," speaks to a reduction in the willingness mentioned above to engage in sexual acts rather than a decline in wanting or desiring sex. The pathologization of willingness, better defined as consent, creates a space where a woman is considered dysfunctional if she does not want to participate in sex. The *DSM-5* seems to be self-aware of the significance of social constructs of normativity when it states, "Unrealistic expectations and norms regarding the 'appropriate' level of sexual interest or arousal, along with poor sexual techniques and lack of information about sexuality, may also be evident in women diagnosed with [FSIAD]. The latter, as well as normative beliefs about gender roles, are important factors to consider" (434). The "important factor to consider" is the hypocrisy of understanding the potential damage of medicalizing sexual interest and activity while continuing to pathologize women's engagement with sex. The self-awareness obviously does not extend to the manual's inclusion and perpetuation of Western, heterosexual normative beliefs about sex.

The *DSM-V* provides the first official definition of a mental disorder, saying it is a "...syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or

behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning” (APA 5th ed 20). The inclusion of “poor sexual techniques and lack of information about sexuality” as common factors among women diagnosed with FSIAD further portrays the mockery of the diagnosis. It makes the diagnostic criteria feel intentionally pathological. If a woman does not experience desire, arousal, or orgasm due to poor personal or partnered sexual techniques, how does that fall into the defined category of ‘mental disorder’? That could be attributed to less sexual experience or engaging with arrogant partners. Why would a lack of information about sexuality be correlated to women with FSIAD? It seems like the cart is coming before the horse in these examples. A woman is probably not going to enjoy sex unless appropriate stimulation is used, and a potentially closeted lesbian woman is obviously not going to desire men or want to participate in sexual acts with them. Why is a diagnosis the first thing to approach when a female patient presents with sexual difficulty and not addressing the possible causes? Similar to homosexuality, the basis of diagnosis does not fit into the social-normative roles the way medicine wants. The previous diagnosis of homosexuality and its run-off diagnoses, as well as the current diagnosis and criteria for

FSIAD, show that sex and sexuality are easy to pathologize and are a way to gain societal control.

### Conclusion

The *DSM* was designed to be the ultimate unifying source of psychiatric description but has instead become a power system guilty of pathologizing its subjects. The discourses that have emerged since the manual's initial publication are social structures of knowledge that are organized around the functions of control and exclusion. Knowledge and power are synonymous in that those that possess the most power are the ones that make the knowledge. This can be seen with the initial creation of the *DSM-I*; the collection of psychiatric knowledge created a structure in which power can be sourced. As detailed, the origins of American, and thus Western, psychology were founded on the social and cultural beliefs of wealthy, educated white men who built the foundation for how the *DSM* would be initially created and used. The resulting formation cannot help but be influenced by those same beliefs and, in turn, create a self-fulfilling ideology. Power cites itself as its own justification, which is easily seen when analyzing the hierarchy of psychiatry. In the case of FSIAD, a woman could reach out to her doctor for help in addressing her sexual dissatisfaction and be referred to a psychiatrist. The

psychiatrist would assess her and potentially diagnose FSIAD or Female Orgasmic Disorder. When diagnosed, the woman immediately becomes a patient, better defined as a subject, to the psychiatric system. A psychiatrist does not hold authority or power if there are no patients to treat, and in order to maintain authority, power must be exercised. Therefore, patients must be created. Psychiatrists use the *DSM* to justify their decisions and diagnoses, but the manual itself is not reliable or justifiable. The power within specifically collected and organized knowledge creates positions of authority that are used to maintain and exercise the original source of power. Ultimately, the *DSM* has been shown to not serve the patient but to serve the construction of power and control it inherently creates.

The diagnostic category of Sexual Dysfunctions must be removed from the manual altogether. Those diagnoses include FSIAD, Female Orgasmic Disorder, Genito-pelvic Pain/Penetration Disorder, Delayed Ejaculation, Erectile Disorder, Male Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder, Premature (early) Ejaculation, Substance/Medication Induced Sexual Dysfunction, Other Specified Sexual Dysfunction, and Unspecified Sexual Dysfunction. A person's reaction, interpretation, or feelings about sex and reproduction must not be pathologized. Eliminating it as an option would decrease



the patient population and some of the resulting power provided. It would also restore some of the stolen dignity of being sexually broken to past and present patients.

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# **Postsecondary Education Programs in Prison: Equitable Measures of Success and the Argument for Pell Grant Access**

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Courtney MacArthur

University of Alaska Southeast

SSCI 300: Research Methods in Social Science

Professor Dr. Ali Ziegler

## Dedication

This research proposal is dedicated to Professor Sol Neely, as well as his friends, family, and the Flying University.

## Abstract

Prison education, specifically Postsecondary Education Programs (PEPs), are extremely beneficial in a number of ways, both to incarcerated individuals and to society as a whole. However, Pell Grant access fluctuates, and with it, access to these PEPs. Politicians often hinge their Pell Grant access policies upon arguments over recidivism rate. Yet there are wider social benefits to PEPs beyond just recidivism rate, such as a willingness to engage in democracy. Furthermore, for a more equitable perspective, benefits to the individual should hold just as much weight as the benefits to the state do. When only recidivism rate is considered, then it is all too easy to dismiss PEPs as beneficial when the rate falters. However, many times recidivism rate falters due to systemic issues involving racism. When the entire scope of the benefits to society as well as to individuals are considered, there is a compelling and holistic case to be made to allow for permanent access to Pell Grant funding for incarcerated individuals. This research proposal aims to add to the

body of work documenting the benefits of PEPs beyond recidivism rate by surveying current and former PEP students about their experiences. With these results, we build a case for permanent access to Pell Grant funding for incarcerated individuals.

### Postsecondary Education Programs in Prison:

#### Equitable Measures of Success and the Argument for Pell Grant Access

Prison education is that instruction administered to an individual in prison which imparts any level of schooling to individuals that are currently incarcerated (Dewey et al., 2020). Many incarcerated individuals left the public education system before graduating high school, while a small number have some postsecondary education. Prison education often focuses on General Education Degrees (GEDs) for incarcerated individuals, but some prison education even includes doctoral programs. For the purposes of this research proposal, Postsecondary Education Programs (PEPs) are any of those courses administered in prison that are at the college level.

Prison education first made its debut in the United States in 1876, at Elmira Reformatory in New York, and gained popularity throughout the country. By 1930, most prisons in the United

States had some form of prison education (Linden & Perry, 1983). However, most of the prison education administered was not at the postsecondary level. That would not come until decades later. By the time Linden and Perry published their report titled “The effectiveness of prison education programs” in 1983, most states had postsecondary education in prisons. These programs have not necessarily grown steadily, though. PEPs have endured successes and failures in different iterations around the United States, oftentimes directly linked to prisoner access to Pell Grant funding.

PEPs have expanded and contracted based on a number of variables including location, university funding, and the individual student’s financial resources—which are specifically linked to Pell Grant access most cases. For the vast majority of incarcerated individuals, the Pell Grant is a critical source of funding. Without it, they cannot afford to pay for courses. In 1965, the Higher Education Act of 1965 allowed for prisoners to access Pell Grant funding. In 1994, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (VCCLEA) outlawed that funding, thus making educational attainment for most prisoners financially unfeasible. In 2013, a program called the Second Chance Pell Pilot permitted a small number of prisoners to begin receiving Pell Grant funding again. The pilot

program was recently expanded for the 2022-2023 academic year through the FAFSA Simplification Act. At the height of Pell Grant access, before the 1994 Pell Grant ban, there were 772 PEPs in the United States; by 1997, only eight remained (Martinez-Hill, 2021). Throughout these ups and downs, a lack of Pell Grant access has been a major barrier to individuals accessing PEPs (Cantora et al., 2020). With no Pell Grant access, the ability of students to purchase courses is significantly diminished, and the postsecondary institution cannot justify the resources dedicated to a PEP for only a few students. While the FAFSA Simplification Act now allows for all eligible federal and state prisoners to access the Pell Grant, the programs that dwindled without Pell Grant access still need to be built from the ground up again (Cantora et al., 2020). This will take some time, but PEPs are expected to expand once more; and with that, the opportunities for incarcerated individuals to enrich themselves.

### Recidivism as a Measurement of Success

Prison education can lower the recidivism rate. Recidivism is when a formerly incarcerated individual reoffends, and recidivism rate refers to the percentage of individuals that reoffend after reentry into society. The higher the recidivism rate a prison has, the higher



percentage of the prison population is finding themselves convicted of a crime again after attempting reentry. A lower recidivism rate is an obvious measure of success for a PEP even to those outside of university and prison systems, because the benefits of a successful reentry are clear: the strength of the workforce, civic participation, solid family structures, and an individual's sense of purpose (Hlavka et al., 2015). In a 2021 study by Curtis, Evans, and Pelletier titled "Developing social capital through postsecondary correctional education," factors that contributed to a successful reentry and lower recidivism rate were explored. The authors assert that the subjects completing PEPs showed "self-efficacy, hard and soft skills, and connections to positive social networks" as well as other attributes important to finding employment, such as increased self-awareness and better communication skills (270). They concluded that engaging with postsecondary education not only provides direct academic benefits, but also builds the social capital needed for life after prison, employment being a critical component of that. Another team conducted a meta-analysis in 2013 that looked at how PEPs affect recidivism rate, employment, and learning. They found that the recidivism rate was lower, the chances of employment were higher, and that prison education was cheaper than recidivism (Davis et al.,

2013). From the standpoint of an unconfined public, PEPs offer a way for the formerly incarcerated to benefit both populations.

### Benefits Beyond a Lower Recidivism Rate

There are, of course, benefits to PEPs that exist that are separate from recidivism rate. The incarcerated students themselves will tell you: Dave Evans, a student in a PEP for currently incarcerated individuals published an article in *Critical Education* called “The elevating connection of higher education in prison: An incarcerated student’s perspective.” In it, Evans argues that the purpose of engaging with PEPs should be to elevate incarcerated students as individuals. Evans explores the ability of PEPs “to shift the perspectives of its incarcerated students, aid in their personal development, and prepare them for their futures whether in or out of prison” (Evans, 2018, p. 1). Here Evans opens the reader up to the idea that PEPs are useful even if the incarcerated individual never leaves prison. He does concede that a lower recidivism rate is a welcome side-effect for society as a whole, but he argues that it need not be the end goal.

When the Pell Grant became available again to a small number of prisoners through the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program in 2016, the Obama administration justified its existence by reason-

ing that the recidivism rate would decrease. While that argument makes sense politically, stances like these can be a lost opportunity to engage the public in dialog around the bigger picture to society and to the individual. The authors of a 2019 article titled “Beyond recidivism: Identifying the liberatory possibilities of prison higher education” argue that by focusing solely on recidivism, the importance of education to democracy and to “peaceful and just communities” is ignored (McCorkel & DeFina, 2019, p. 1). They submit that the real value is not in a lower recidivism rate, but instead the increased likelihood of political and social action. Even with laws in place preventing some formerly incarcerated individuals from voting, they could very well choose to engage in politics in roles such as a community organizer or officer at a nonprofit. Thus, there is societal importance to PEPs in regards to political action and social justice, which are arguably just as important as a lower recidivism rate.

An argument must be made at this point that the benefits of PEPs to the individual matter just as much as the benefits to the state. A 2019 meta-analysis of existing literature on the subject of PEP benefits found that academic pursuits in prison contribute to an overall prosocial experience that has many positive benefits for formerly incarcerated individuals in regards to their personal lives.

On the benefits of PEPs, interviews with the participants “highlighted the development of personal skills and attributes, prosocial networks, and prosocial bonds to social institutions” (Pelletier & Evans, 2019, p. 49). When we as a collective focus on recidivism rate alone, we prioritize our collective gains above the individual’s quality of life. As citizens of a nation founded on the idea that an individual’s pursuit of happiness is worth fighting for, we should be just as concerned with the benefits of PEPs to the individual: fulfillment, self-esteem, satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, and personal achievement.

Prioritizing the state above the individual can be problematic in another way as well. “Racism, the language of reduced recidivism, and higher education in prison: Toward an anti-racist praxis” was published in 2018, two years into the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program. In it, the author details how measuring recidivism as the most important outcome of PEPs means depending upon a flawed, racist system to cease existing for individuals attempting reentry. Castro argues that if the measurement for justifying Pell Grant access is reduced recidivism, then that measurement is faulty because people of color continue to be targeted at higher rates “by mechanisms of the state” post-incarceration just as much as pre-incarcera-

tion (Castro, 2018, p. 9). Since people of color are disproportionately imprisoned and re-imprisoned, pointing to a lower recidivism rate as a justification for the existence of PEPs and for Pell Grant access means that the state's mass incarceration of people of color undermines that very justification. To expand on this, Castro states:

When higher education must prove itself valuable because it keeps people out of prison in a context where great incentives exist for keeping people in prison, college-in-prison programs are at a disadvantage from the outset. Other social forces are pushing for broader rates of incarceration, specifically targeting communities of Color, and higher education cannot be held responsible for that expansion. Nor should higher education in prison be framed as having a single negative good (that is, something that prevents something else: e.g., keeping adults out of prison) but rather we should also realize this is an opportunity and responsibility to expand our understanding of higher education in prison as a positive good, such as opening critical conversations and projects, providing conceptual tools for self and community enhancement, reconnecting people to their own projects involving thought and creativity, among related social projects promoting social healing, civic engagement, and human flourishing. (p. 13)

Limiting the argument for Pell Grant funding to recidivism rate is reductive, and ignores the effects of systemic racism on incarceration and recidivism rates. Doing so also focuses the attention narrowly upon a benefit to the state (recidivism rate), when the individual's quality of life is just as essential. In addition to that, PEPs benefit the social relationships and dynamics that differentiate a state from a society. Pell Grant access is a vital connection to PEPs for incarcerated individuals; without it, almost none of them can afford courses. Pell Grant access must be permanently secured for incarcerated individuals. In order to help build the case for permanent Pell Grant access, this research proposal suggests a way to document the benefits of PEPs by surveying current and former PEP students about their experiences.

## **Methods**

### Participants

Participants are recruited through contacting various PEPs throughout the United States. Participation is voluntary, individuals are not compensated for their participation. The participants consist of current and formerly incarcerated individuals that have partaken in a PEP. The goal is to have at least 10,000 respondents. Current

prisoners may be more difficult to access than former, so selection from a representative population includes taking care to penetrate equally into various institutions rather than simply working with whatever prisons are most cooperative or have fewer barriers. This may be accomplished by targeting PEPs in one low-security facility, one medium-security facility, and one high-security facility in each state. In addition, prisoners in solitary confinement may be more eager to participate in an activity to reduce monotony, so these numbers will be monitored to ensure the sample is representative of general prison populations.

Participants will be informed about the purpose and scope of the survey so that they may give informed consent. Incarcerated individuals are considered a vulnerable population, so care must be taken to give clear information at an accessible level that reviews any potential risks and benefits. It is critical that they understand that participation is voluntary, and will not affect parole or other carceral programming. A statement of consent is required.

### Materials and Apparatuses

The materials include accessible scripts, a consent form, and a survey about the various benefits of PEPs. Scripts are provided to

PEP administrators reading, “Research participants are wanted for feedback about [the PEP that they are currently or formerly in]. Can I provide the researchers your contact info for further information?” Other scripts introducing the research, the consent form, and the survey questions are provided (see Appendix I). Laptops are used to log anonymized results into a spreadsheet via a Google form.

### Procedure

The procedure is to utilize PEP administrators (faculty and prison employees) to contact current and former students of PEPs. The PEP administrators ask if they would like to participate, and if they agree, their contact information is forwarded on to researchers. The survey will be sent out via email, with tracking software that tells whether or not the email was received, opened, and the survey filled out. People that received and at least opened the email are then filtered out from the next round of contact, as it can be assumed that they have read the email and are not interested in taking the next step to click the link and fill out the survey. Next, those that did not open the email will be mailed the survey via the US Postal Service. Those that return the survey via mail will also



be filtered out from the next round of contact. Those unresponsive to email and postal mail will be contacted via phone until a similar number of responses are garnered through that method as well. The phone calls will be made last since they are most resource and time intensive. It is important to seek out responses from all three contact methods so that the results aren't skewed by the most responsive participants. While it is possible that even more participants could be reached if the researchers visited in person, the study attempts to recruit participants from all over the United States, and this method would require too much travel to be practical.

To operationalize the variables, positive and/or negative outcomes will be coded into broader categories so that trends may be identified as they emerge. Results will be broken down by gender, race, incarceration status, age, and level of educational attainment.

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## Appendix I

### Script A:

“Hello, my name is [researcher name] and I’m conducting research on Postsecondary Education Programs. This research is funded by [Grant name] and will be used to inform the public on the outcomes of Postsecondary Education Programs, whether positive or negative. Your Postsecondary Education Program administrator, [name of administrator], forwarded your contact information on to us. As I understand it, you participated in [name of PEP]. Are you still willing to answer some questions about your experience with [name of PEP]?”

### Script B:

“Great, thank you for your willingness to participate. Before we proceed, a statement of consent is required. Participating in this research is anonymous, you will not be quoted by name. Participation is totally voluntary, and you may opt out at any time if you change your mind. Participation will not affect prison time, parole, or other carceral programming - neither positively nor negatively. The potential benefits are simply helping to gather more data on Postsecondary Education Programs. The potential drawbacks are

simply the amount of time the survey takes to complete. What questions do you have about the information I just stated?”

If none:

“Is there anything you are not sure you understand, such as any of the words or concepts I just presented? Please let me know if so, I’m happy to explain.”

If none:

“Great. In that case, do you give your informed consent to participate in this survey research for the purpose of collecting data about your experience with [name of PEP]?”

If yes, continue. If no, say, “Ok, thank you for your time, have a great day.”

Script C:

“Thank you for taking the time to answer some questions today.

On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being the best, how would you rate your experience with the PEP?”

Why do you rate it that way?

Probe if necessary: academic rigor, relationships with peers, relationships with program administrators, intellectual stimulation or curiosity, something else?

Were the outcomes mostly negative or mostly positive with this program?

What were the negative outcomes associated with this program, if any?

Probe if necessary: Mental negativity such as frustration, monetary negativity, time waster, something else?

What were the positive outcomes associated with this program, if any?

Do not prompt, the most untouched answers are sought here.

What could have made it even more positive?

Recidivism rate is when a formerly incarcerated individual finds themselves back in the system again by being convicted of a crime. Would you say the program positively or negatively impacted your recidivism rate?

Only if reentry was attempted:

Was your recidivism rate more or less important than the other positive outcomes you listed?

Only if reentry was attempted:

Overall, what about the program added the most value to your life?

Follow up: How did the program specifically impart that value?

Would you recommend a program like this to a friend?

What is one thing you would change or improve with this program?

Probe if necessary: academic rigor, relationships with peers, relationships with program administrators, intellectual stimulation or curiosity, something else?

That concludes our questions. Thank you for your time and candor. We will forward the study on to your PEP administrator when it is complete in about 18 months.”



## The Progression of Grief and Acceptance

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Sophia Gimm

University of Alaska Southeast

WRTG 211: Writing and the Humanities

Professor Jay Szczepanski

The slow crawl towards expiration haunts us all, especially the remnants left behind for those who grieve. Death continues to morph our idea of how we must mourn, creating a constant remembrance of the corpses we carry on our backs. These pieces of grief are carried inside a heavy bag that is only growing with each wish for something more. In the poem “What the Living Do,” Marie Howe dives into the sentiment that draining and somber environments are the very things we must appreciate. These are the things that the dead have given away, and Howe describes these in an epiphany that comes after an unexpected loss. These newfound thinking patterns revolve around the crumbling human experience: spilled coffee, food-encrusted dishes, and a desperate need to jump from one accomplishment to the next. Howe suggests that this is the yearning we must instead adopt. The departed have taken this for granted, but we should not make this grave mistake.

Most people wonder about their life’s purpose and the meaning behind it. Although for most there is no definitive answer, there is truth hiding within the folds of the insignificant aspects of everyday life. Throughout the poem, this battle between acceptance of what is present and what is missing is highlighted. This acceptance comes with the absence of prolonged grief, what Howe describes as

“A cherishing so deep for [her] own blowing hair, chapped face, and unbuttoned coat, that I’m speechless: I am living. I remember you” (15). This line contains the fundamental idea that the simple acts of breathing or peering at a reflection are tributes to the deceased. Small moments like these are deceptively insignificant, but possess a deep tie between the living experience and unconsciousness felt in death. In that regard, it is clear that they must not go unnoticed. These typically fleeting moments are now viewed as moments of remembrance, a sliver of acknowledgement that these mediocre events are connected to those we have lost.

Another idea looms in the text. As suggested in the line “This is the everyday we spoke of. It’s winter again: the sky’s a deep, headstrong blue, and the sunlight pours in” (4), there is a repetitive element to our perception of living. This deep fixation on the glum everyday we are all subjected to, whether one can ignore dissatisfaction or not, is being reflected in the environment. Seasons of unrelenting winds, the bite of frost pinching at hands and noses, wishing for just a sliver of warmth to wash over, this is “that yearning” (10). With this in mind, a connection forms between what is enduring and what is a craving within life. There is an undeniable urge to make existence bearable, or as Howe describes as “What you

finally gave up” (11). A suggestion arises in the phrase “given up,” that it is possible to break from this cycle of wishing; a sentiment that satisfaction is found only through death.

There is immense continuity between grief and the overbearing mechanical descriptions of life. This undying yearning, as previously mentioned, is an unrelenting ping-pong of hope to no avail. Intertwined together, grief then tightens its grip onto the unsuspecting. A sudden loss allows for “improper” mourning: simply living on. This is not improper. Howe is suggesting that there is true solace in treasuring the present reality, no matter how monotonous it may become. In reality, “We want the spring to come and the winter to pass” (11). There are moments where this all becomes synonymous with grief: when the yearning diminishes, and the relief of living blankets each hardship. These waves of comfort come crashing unexpectedly, soaking our perception of mourning in a newfound light. There is no true ending to the process of grieving, only the embrace of silent admiration.

The central concept that Howe demonstrates is that a life pulled downwards into the whirlpool of grief is still one well-lived, and putting it in the context of loss. Despite the spouts of disengagement and lack of achievement felt regularly, the motivation to

persist cannot be wasted. The human desire to prosper and thrive is integral to the continued cognizance of death. The threat of forgetfulness and disintegration of those who have passed is always impending, and must be fought with internal acknowledgement. This text is undeniably important in the concept of what we consider a properly lived life, and an adequate moment to die. Instead of the juxtaposition of life and death, Howe is contrastingly explaining their similarities. It is ingrained in humanity to present empathy and bear the weight of mortality, and to withstand the preconceived notion that there are stages to grief. Howe is pulling the curtains back and opening the coffin that everyone is packed into –being alive is only the beginning of death.

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## **Tourism: Modern Day Resource Extraction**

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Carolyn Marie Trebian

University of Alaska Southeast

ANS S101: Introduction to Alaska Native Studies

Professor Forest Haven

“So How Long Have You Been Native?: Life as an Alaska Native Tour Guide” written by Alexis Bunten, published in 2015, is an insider’s look at the tourism industry in Sitka, Alaska, and exposes the obstacles and difficulties that tour guides face as they essentially put themselves on display and perform for group after group of tourists. The author discusses her identity and family history as well as a variety of relevant historical events such as the Russian fur trade and the purchase of Alaska in conjunction with a report highlighting her personal experiences working for Tribal Tours throughout the tourist season in Sitka. The author found that as tourist season peaked, she and her coworkers had developed stage personas, and although the author would adapt each tour to the responses and needs of each group, there were hard topics that they learned to avoid in order to not make their customers uncomfortable and maintain a positive attitude to earn the best tips. Despite their best efforts to de-escalate and refocus, the author and others experienced harsh encounters with racism and classism which took a large emotional toll, especially in a setting where personal feelings must be swallowed to maintain the image of the company and tribe. Cultural tourism requires the members of the culture on display to forgo boundaries and perform emotional labor in order to preserve



the culture and also to make ends meet, illustrating how tourism is a form of modern day resource extraction resulting from settler colonialism. This study would have been more impactful if the author had been able to provide her insider perspective while working in her own ancestral homeland under the tribe she belongs to, rather than having to travel to a different tribe's community.

The author wrote this book after working through two tourist seasons at Sitka's Tribal Tours, an Alaska Native-owned and-operated tour company, catering to tourists arriving via cruise ship. The author was a graduate student at the time and applied for the job with the intent of recording and analyzing the cultural and emotional labor required of workers within the tourism industry for her dissertation and this book. The author herself is not Tlingit; she addresses how, although she shares some common experiences with the Tlingit people having ancestry of Yup'ik origin, she felt like an outsider and chose to stop giving her introduction in Tlingit to tourists on the principle of personal authenticity. The author also includes many key history lessons throughout the book as they apply to how society functions and how the tourism industry operates in conjunction with colonization and white supremacy. The book flows in chronological order following the experiences of the author

through the hiring stages, the training period, the first tours given, creating and refining the “authentic Native tour guide” persona, the burnout, and the end of the tourist season. Alexis Bunten recorded these experiences in order to provide an insider’s look at the tourism industry, to demonstrate the emotional labor being extracted from the descendants of the colonized for the profit and entertainment of outsiders, as well as to provide a brief analysis of the non-native monopoly within Sitka’s tourist industry, Tribal Tour’s competition: Sitka Tours and the Russian Dancers, whose tours focused on Russian colonization and resulting landmarks.

The history of colonization, as the author explains, is painful and ongoing, and the best way to move forward is to spread the truth and create awareness with a positive outlook in order to avoid triggering the audience into a defensive non-receptive mindspace. The author provides several specific examples of how the tour guides had learned to pair explanations of hard history with a joke at the end; making the audience laugh right after speaking on painful histories proved to be the best way to keep the group comfortable, upbeat, and tipping. This performance tactic bypasses the negative emotional response that typically results from internalized “white guilt,” and keeps the tourists engaged and positive; however, playing

off hard histories of colonization as a thing of the past and feeling compelled to follow certain topics with a joke takes a large amount of emotional labor and emotional regulation on the part of the performer. In her lecture, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz explains how the genocide of Native Americans is usually sugar coated because of both guilt and unwillingness to admit the truth about our history. The real history of Alaska is hard to swallow, yet spreading awareness and truth should take precedence over coddling those who already benefit from certain privileges. Tour guides feel forced to mask their pain and trauma on top of performing the opposite emotion in order to entertain groups of tourists for tip money; after facing colonization, genocide, and cultural genocide, forcing locals to perform in this manner is insulting. Wanting to share real history and preserve our culture with visitors should not mean feeling forced to mask our truths with the threat of not making enough tips to survive; rather, honesty and authenticity should be rewarded and payment should be given regardless of whether the tourists were emotionally coddled or not. The fact that guides feel forced to perform their very personal culture and history in a certain tone in order to make ends meet is a clear indicator that colonization persists to this day and illustrates how tourism operates as a form of

resource extraction, siphoning our emotional labor for the benefit and entertainment of outsiders.

At the time the author was writing this book, Sitka's Tribal Tours employees were all Native Alaskan, with people hailing from various tribes across the state. The employees, while they were all tribal members, looked different from one another, having mixed ancestry; additionally, those who looked "more Native" or "authentic" were generally favored or even fetishized by tourists. Employees had to cope with microaggressions like this and more from tourists with internalized racism, responding with grace and patience in order to maintain peace and positivity within the tour groups. The author herself even begins to adopt stereotyping practices as a way to cope with the abuse and maintain some sense of control over her tour groups; she explains how certain groups of people tend to want to barter or refuse to tip, while other groups might have a tendency to behave differently and tip more generously. The author proves that stereotyping, whether it is used as a tool of self-preservation or self-gratification, is rooted in personal bias and can be performed by anyone regardless of their ethnic background. The author and other tour guides also experienced many instances of stereotyping rooted in ignorance and misinformation; the best coping mechanism they

found was after hours banter and storytelling, exchanging their favorite stupid questions asked by tourists, such as: “Do you live in a house?” and, the famous question which became the title of her book: “So, how long have you been Native?” (135). The latter question implies that one can choose to be or not to be Native, which, while comical because no one is not in control of their ethnic heritage, is also harmful as it relates to identity politics, assimilation, and modern day “pretendians.” Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer write about the politics of identity and define “traditional ethnicity” and “civic ethnicity” in “Evolving Concepts of Tlingit Identity and Clan,” explaining that traditionally, there was no option other than to embody one’s culture to survive; but in modern day, those with tribal heritage can choose to connect with their cultural heritage, or one may choose to assimilate into the colonizing powers’ cultural norms and practices, forgoing the old ways for the safety and well-being of themselves and their families (262). Depending on one’s context and surroundings, it may be beneficial to present as non-Native; however, in the context of Sitka’s Tribal Tours, the author and other tour guides found it more beneficial to play into Native stereotypes, such as being very close to the land, in order to provide a seemingly more “authentic” and entertaining tour performance. The tour guides had

to learn how to balance authenticity, cultural identity, self-respect, and performance in order to meet tourists' expectations.

The author had initially learned how to give an introduction in Tlingit for her tours; however, because she is not of Tlingit heritage, she felt it was inauthentic to continue to present herself in Tlingit. She explains how the tourists most likely would not know the difference if she spoke in Tlingit versus her heritage language, being unable to differentiate between the different First Nations and their languages, but that it felt wrong to present in Tlingit when, although she was accepted into the tribe and offered membership, she was inherently an outsider, a guest on Tlingit land. Throughout the book, she is forced to face her outsider status while simultaneously recognizing the commonalities she shared with her coworkers as fellow Native Alaskans. She chose to pursue this job at Sitka Tribal Tours because it is one of the few Native-owned and -operated tour companies in Alaska; however, it would have been an even more meaningful and personal study if she had been able to work under her own tribe and her ancestral homeland, rather than being a guest in another tribe's land and organization. All in all, she shared enough commonalities as a Native Alaskan tour guide, in addition to holding a high amount of respect for the original stewards of the

land she was a guest on, that she was able to provide an authentic in-depth look at the tourism industry in Alaska, despite being of another tribe.

While it may have been more meaningful if the author was able to complete her observations within her own tribal community, being an Alaskan Native, sharing that history of colonization and cultural erasure, and working as tour guide two years in a row provided Alexis Bunten with an abundance of first hand experiences which illustrate the emotional labor being extracted from natives by the tourism industry. Settler colonialism is ongoing; resource extraction by non-Native powers continues within the structure of the tourism industry, and, in the case of Sitka Tour's Russian Dancers, oftentimes the Indigenous population does not receive any benefit at all as money goes directly from tourists back into White men's pockets. Sitka's Tribal Tours, the Alaskan Native-owned and -operated company which Bunten worked for, attempts to combat these issues by employing Native Alaskans and having them share their authentic and personal histories as a way to spread authentic cultural awareness and to facilitate monetary gain of their native employees. Taking back the narrative and creating native owned and operated tour companies is a good start; hopefully in the future,

more tribes will take control of their local tourism scene so that money is returned to each tribal community rather than being siphoned out by already rich white men in suits. The tip-based economy, however, is predatory and forces guides to mask their emotions and perform an incredible amount of emotional labor; increasing pay to the living wage would provide the support and stability employees need to thrive, and would therefore facilitate a more authentic experience and overall better work environment.



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# Dissapearing Dolphins: Is the Common Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) at Risk?

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Holly Hoffbauer

University of Alaska Southeast

BIOL 384: Marine Mammalogy

Professor Dr. Heidi Pearson



**Photograph taken by Holly Hoffbauer while working at Dolphin Quest Oahu.**

### Abstract

The common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) is arguably one of the most well-known of all cetaceans. However, while this charismatic species often appears to be “smiling,” they face a growing number of anthropogenic stressors that impact their overall health and survival rates. Some of these stressors include, but are not limited to interactions with fishing gear, habitat destruction, and biotoxins. Yet, because of their widespread distribution and relatively large population size, they are of least concern for conservation management strategies than other more critically endangered species. As a result, a growing number of local populations are threatened, and others are data insufficient all together. That is why it is imperative that more emphasis is placed on conservation

efforts that will minimize the impacts of these various threats before dolphins begin disappearing on a global scale.

## Introduction

The common bottlenose dolphin is known for its charismatic nature and high level of intelligence. Their name can be attributed to their short, thick snout, also known as their rostrum, which resembles a bottle. These cetaceans are counter-shaded: typically, light grey to black on their dorsal fin to almost white or pale pink on their belly. They range in size from 6-14 feet and can weigh 600-1,400 pounds. Bottlenose longevity ranges in years as survival rates may vary based on local threats, yet they are known to commonly reach 45 to 50 years old. Like most dolphins, the common bottlenose is highly social with a dynamic group composition in which bonds form between mother-calf pairs, and males will establish alliances with other males. Evidence supports that they have life-long social memories, communicating through echolocation and able to recognize each other through their signature whistles (Bruck, 2013). This enhanced cognitive capacity and other adaptations, such as their ability to echolocate, may be what has allowed this species to inhabit a variety of habitats around the world.

## Distribution and Habitat

The common bottlenose is found throughout the world, in both tropical and temperate seas. They have been observed as far north as the Faroe Islands and as far south as Cape Horn, South America. Their range is likely limited by distribution of prey which can be attributed to temperature, either directly or indirectly. Eco-types include (1) offshore, which prefer areas such as deep waters over the continental shelf or in the open ocean and (2) inshore, which inhabit areas such as bays, gulfs, harbors, estuaries, nearshore coastal waters, and occasionally river inlets for brief periods. Shallow water inhabitants make brief and frequent dives, while less is known of pelagic inhabitants but they have been reported to dive to depths of up to 1000m (Klatsky, 2007). Some populations prefer to remain locally, others are seasonally migratory, and some have a combination of local residency and long-range movements. Unfortunately, little is known regarding the distribution patterns of pelagic dolphins likely due to the difficulty of locating and tracking their movements.

## Conservation Status

There are an estimated 600,000 animals worldwide (Randall, 2018), however it is unclear how this number was derived. It is

suspected that this statistic may be an overestimation or underestimation of the true population size. While the worldwide population trend is unknown, they appear abundant and widespread, and there does not appear to be a concern of global population decline. As such, the species has been classified as “Least Concern” since 2008 by the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species (Wells, 2019).

Within the United States, bottlenose dolphins are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. This requires that all stocks (a group of the same species in common spatial arrangement) must be reviewed at least every three years to provide information such as minimum population status, threats, and annual human-caused mortality. Of 61 stocks in the United States, five are depleted (below optimal sustainable yield), all of which are in the Western North Atlantic.

### Primary Threats

Conservation plans often prioritize endangered and threatened species, and subsequently “Least Concern” species are dependent on the effectiveness of local management strategies. As a result, these species, including the common bottlenose dolphin, are overlooked, and there is a little emphasis on local population decline. Yet, there are an increasing number of populations at risk

from human activities, becoming threatened and in some cases endangered (Currey, 2009). The ecological effects of the downward trend in populations are not adequately understood at the regional level, but it is expected that there will be negative top-down effects as bottlenose dolphins are apex predators (Vermeulen, 2015). Some of the primary threats bottlenose dolphins face include (1) interactions with fishing gear, (2) habitat destruction and degradation, (3) and biotoxins.

Effects of fishing gear on bottlenose dolphins are becoming a bigger threat than previously supposed. Dolphins and many other marine mammals are at risk of entanglement, bycatch, and ingestion of nets. In many cases, these interactions can severely inhibit a dolphin's range of motion, ability to eat, and in the worst cases lead to death by strangulation (Jerbi, 2021). External scarring can be used as an indicator of fisheries interactions. Within Maui Nui, Hawaii, alone, 27% of dolphins displayed fishery related scarring (Machernis, 2021).

Habitat destruction and degradation is another big concern for coastal populations. This can come in the form of shoreline development, contaminants from run off or oil spills, or polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from plastic pollution. For example, the

recent Deepwater Horizon spill in the Northern Gulf of Mexico, has resulted in the multigenerational health consequences for this population and decreased immunomodulation for this population (Guise, 2021).

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has reported an increasing number of unusual mortality events (UMEs) in recent years. These UMEs are often attributed to harmful algal blooms (HABs). Dolphins are impacted indirectly by HABs when they eat fish who have ingested the toxins or directly if they swim through a HAB. Respiratory irritation may occur as seen by explosive exhalations from a dolphin's blowhole (Spencer, 2020) and in some cases mass stranding, and die offs have been observed because of HABs. As climate change continues, warmer surface temperatures favor these events and as a result they are predicted to become more common.

#### Conservation Actions

Conservation actions currently taking place include research & monitoring, implementation, and intervention. Research and monitoring are a vital piece of conservation, because the more we know about a species, the more we will be able to protect them. Topics being studied include, but are not limited, to population size, habitat



use, behavior, and the effects of anthropogenic stressors. Organizations such as the National Marine Mammal Foundation, have been working to develop non-invasive survey methods for wild dolphin populations. This could be a game changer for collecting data from bottlenose dolphins and provide much needed baseline data on many populations.

Implementation involves taking the knowledge we do have and responding to it in a way that produces solutions or tangible change. This may take the form of lawmaking to protect a habitat vital to bottlenose dolphins or proposing certain technologies to fisheries to prevent bycatch. Educating the public is also another way communities have been able to make a positive impact on marine life. This may mean going into schools and teaching young children, opportunistically talking to tourists on a beach during a stranding event, or visiting local fisherman and sharing information they may not know about the importance of marine life.

For profit companies are also able to make a difference, such as Dolphin Quest, which allows the public to interact with bottlenose dolphins under human care. This is a great opportunity for marine mammal trainers to share what they know about the species and meanwhile protects local wild populations from being

harassed by an unknowing public. Finally, when these efforts don't always succeed, intervention is required. This means active rescue and rehabilitation of bottlenose dolphins that may have fallen victim to one of the many threats described.

Research shows the most promise as an effective conservation strategy because it provides the information/proof needed so scientists, lawmakers, and the public can enact change and make the best-informed decision based off the data gathered. If it wasn't for research and monitoring efforts, certain at-risk populations of bottlenose dolphins might be neglected and disappear over time. By understanding bottlenose dolphin population status, current threats, as well as which conservation actions are effective, will we be able to protect the bottlenose dolphins for many generations to come.

## Conclusion

The common bottlenose dolphin may not be at risk...yet. However, that does not negate the fact that there is a growing number of anthropogenic threats they face every day. These stressors have demonstrated to have many negative consequences for local populations. Effective conservation of this species should not be overlooked, and more efforts should be taken to minimize the effects of the threats that they face daily.

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## Writer Biographies:

**Jack Imel:** Jack Imel is a 21-year-old lifetime Juneau resident and current sophomore student at UAS. He recently switched his major from Environmental Science to English. In his free time, Jack enjoys outdoor activities such as skiing and hiking as well as reading fiction. This semester, he is excited to learn more about critical theory in order to improve his literary analysis.

**Olive Brend:** Sh yáa wudanéix'i, gunalchéesh yee gaawú ax\_ jeet yeeteeyi! Scríobhann Olive Brend faoi éicea-chritic agus staidéir trasincneach. Is as Contae Thiobrad Árann dá sinsir. D'fhás siad suas i dTir Hinono'eiteen agus Tsétséshéstáhesé, ach anois, tá cónaí uirthi i Áak'w Kwáan Aaní.

Kashxeedí sitee, Olive Brend áwé. Contae Thiobrad Árann Kwáanxx\_sitee, du léelk'w hás. Hinono'eiteen ka Tsétséshéstáhesé Kwáan Aaní' kudzitee, yeedát ku.aa, Áak'w Kwáan Aaní káx'yéi yatee. Sh kalneek sh tóo altóow. Sh kalneek áwé, haa daaneidídaat ka K'atxáan sateeyidáat akshaxéet.

**Sophia Gimm:** Sophia Gimm is a freshman at UAS studying English with an emphasis in creative writing. She is loving all of the English and writing courses that she has had the opportunity to take thus far and is stoked for the rest of her degree. She hopes to eventually attend film school and pursue a career in screenwriting.

**Felix Nolan:** Felix Nolan, originally from Anchorage, is pursuing a bachelor's in biology at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau, Alaska. His interests generally revolve around plant science and ecology, but he has broader interests in anthropology, history, music, and literature. Felix is hoping to earn a masters degree in botany after his time at UAS. His favorite foods are unusual fruits and odd spices, and he puts cardamom in his coffee every morning.

**Carolyn Trebian:** Carolyn Trebian is a Tlingit multimedia artist with a Bachelor of Arts from Cardinal Stritch University. They decided to move to Juneau, Alaska, in order to be closer to their grandmother as well as to study their heritage, focusing on Northwest Coast Design. This semester, they are furthering their studies in formline, woodcarving, ceramics, and Indigenous performance arts.

**Darby McMillan:** Darby McMillan is a fourth-year student at the University of Alaska Southeast. Last year, she studied abroad in England at the University of Sunderland. While there, she built connections with students from around the world and gained a better cultural understanding from many other exchange students. Once Darby completes her studies in Juneau, she would like to continue traveling, learning, and indulging in creative experiences.

**Milagro Darby:** Milagro is an undergraduate student at UAS Juneau majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies with a primary concentration in psychology and a secondary concentration in biology. She plans to graduate after the spring 2024 semester and pursue a master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Alaska Anchorage, and to become a licensed therapist (LPC) in Alaska. Milagro is particularly passionate about working with women and minorities within the mental health system and addressing the disparities they face.

**Courtney MacArthur:** Courtney MacArthur is a senior in the BA Social Science program at the University of Alaska. She lives and works with gratitude on the unceded territories of the Sheekká Kwáan on Lingít Aaní. After graduation, she intends to continue in her current field, increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within postsecondary educational institutions. She is passionate about eliminating barriers to educational access for all individuals, especially incarcerated individuals.

**Holly Hoffbauer:** Holly Hoffbauer is a current senior majoring in Marine Biology with a minor in mathematical sciences. She has a passion for marine mammals, which she attributes to wildlife encounters she has had living in Hawaii. After graduating, she plans on conducting marine mammal research and working towards the conservation of underrepresented species. When Holly is not in class, she has a strong campus presence as a Resident Advisor and often organizes events such as self-defense classes. In her free time, she enjoys training her double-doodle puppy Maverick and running long distances.

## About the UAS Writing Center...

The Juneau Writing Center is ready to help you! We can assist you at any stage of the writing process, from understanding prompts to making final revisions and everything in between. Our services are free to all UAS students, including distance learners.

### **Who we are:**

The Writing Center, located downstairs in the Egan Library, Room 105, advises students from all disciplines on writing projects. We are a team of strong writers who believe writing is a crucial form of communication for any class and any profession. We aim to help you master your writing skills through attentive, supportive assistance and a genuine interest in what you have to say.

### **What we do:**

We discuss your writing with you. After all, we think that's what writers need most—readers who are interested in their writing and who want to respond to it. We hope you will visit us often, with anything from your biology paper to the poem you wrote last night. You are also welcome to come see us if you're working on a scholarship application letter, a short story on your own, or even a thought-provoking post on social media.

We can help at every stage of the writing process, from understanding a prompt (no draft required!) to helping you with the final polish of your assignment.

We also provide a variety of study guides to help you organize your essay, create a thesis statement, write your first analysis, master citation styles like MLA or APA, and more.

The Writing Center is a judgment-free zone. We want to help you regardless of your skill level or experience! We will assist you in editing your own papers and help you develop your own editing skills by locating grammar errors and teaching you how to self-correct your sentences. We work hard to explain grammatical concepts in plain words that you can understand. We don't tell you what to think or write but instead help you determine how best to respond to your writing assignments. We also provide feedback on content and organization. This attention to detail means we may only cover a short portion of your paper during

your appointment, but you will leave with tools to apply to the rest of your revision. We also welcome you to make multiple appointments to work on any assignment.

### **Contact Us!**

You can contact us through email, phone, or social media.

**Email:** [uas.writingcenter@alaska.edu](mailto:uas.writingcenter@alaska.edu)

**Phone:** 907-796-6188

**Instagram:** @uaswritingcenter

**Facebook:** @uasjuneauwritingcenter

You can also visit our website at <https://uas.alaska.edu/juneau/writing-center/>

### **Want to submit to next year's edition?**

Submissions for the 2023/2024 edition of *Summit* will open December 1st, 2023, and be accepted through February 1st, 2024. *Summit* will consider submissions from any current undergraduate student taking courses through any of the three UAS campuses. Submissions must be coursework completed in spring or fall of 2023 and up to the submission deadline in spring 2024.

### **Accepted Works:**

Due to the nature of the journal, *Summit* will only be accepting academic works that meet the following criteria:

- Qualify as academic (no creative works)
- Do not exceed 15 pages (double spaced), excluding references
- Present a clear thesis
- When appropriate, utilize scholarly references

### **Scoring:**

Each submission will be judged with the same rubric, which analyzes each paper for how well it reflects scholarly writing and the UAS core competencies of:



- Information literacy
- Critical thinking
- Professional behavior reflected in writing

### **Essay Contest:**

The paper that exhibits the strongest mastery of the core competencies will be the recipient of the UAS Ernestine Hayes Award for Excellence in Essay Writing, will receive a monetary prize, and will be featured with a dedicated page in the journal.

### **Support *Summit* and the UAS Writing Center!**

Would you like to donate to the UAS Writing Center to help fund student projects, activities, and resources? You can donate directly to the Writing Center, and help continue the production of *Summit*. You can visit our donation site at <https://tinyurl.com/2djd2sdf>, visiting [engage.alaska.edu](https://engage.alaska.edu) and selecting the UAS Writing Center, or by scanning the QR code below with your phone camera in your regular camera app!

