

Anonymous Student

Dr. Gades

Engl-489

December 8th, 2024

Portfolio Essay

Capstone has been one of the most beneficial courses I've taken at Frostburg State University as an English Major. Not only has the class strengthened my rhetorical awareness skills through ensuring my papers' purpose and target audience are better defined, but my research and editing skills have also improved through the aid of course material. This portfolio references 5 papers that faced major revisions through ways of implementing new research, scholarly evidence, and decluttering for a successful rewrite.

To highlight my growth in rhetorical awareness, I'll be referencing my original and revised edition of my English 101 research paper entitled "The Misunderstood Land: Baltimore's Openness to a Diverse City." In the original, there were several instances where my tone of voice came off so strong that my paper's thesis of destigmatizing Baltimore was unreliable. When revisiting this paper during peer review, I realized 18-year-old me didn't know what rhetorical awareness was, misinterpreting the point of an argumentative research paper. My peers stated that while they liked the original paper's passion, they could see how a reader would feel uncomfortable by the tone and snarky comments I included—which was *not* a solid direction to take if the paper's thesis was to positively shift people's notions of a City.

A great example of this strong tone is found in the original conclusion: "Baltimore City is NOT a place of hate, it is not a place of robbery's, it is not a place of murder, it is not ghetto, or ratchet, or whatever microaggression you want to throw at someone who proudly reps their city,

it is love, now run and tell that at your suburban brunch.” (Original Misunderstood Land, 4). This segment comes off insulting to the audience, especially if they do happen to be from a suburban area with an interest in learning about Baltimore.

My thesis had this know-it-all approach as well, but lacked the explanations it needed to make the paper stronger. I close the introduction with a weak thesis, “Think you know everything there is to know about Baltimore? Take a pencil and get ready to erase the negativity you’ve got placed in your mind, read along to see all the positive aspects Baltimore has to offer that many tend to turn a blind eye to.” (Original Misunderstood Land, 1). In this thesis I didn’t clearly state what positive aspects the paper would highlight, potentially leaving the audience confused on what to expect.

Just like a conclusion wraps up a paper's points, I learned from Gregory Colon Semenza’s “The Seminar Paper” that defining your papers goals in the introduction is just as important—Semenza states, “Tell your audience what you wish to prove in your paper.” (Semenza, 103) as he often would “find (himself) reading paper after paper that lacks a clearly articulated claim.” (Semenza, 103). This segment influenced me to reflect on my own work, realizing that crafting clear introductions was something I struggled with consistently throughout my academic career. I used Semenza’s words to guide me through my writing process, and I’m glad I did as my papers became more defined as a result.

In the revised edition of this piece, with a clearer title, “The Misunderstood Land: Breaking Down Charm City’s Stigma” I edited the tone in a more informative fashion, shifting the paper's voice from bashful and argumentative to *appropriately* breaking down preconceived notions people have of Baltimore. In this version, the reader isn’t made out to be the bad guy—the media is. Even with the guided direction, the revision is not harsh, it simply presents

facts without bias. Amidst these shifts, It's important to note that I implemented them while still including the passionate voice. In my edited thesis, the explanation for the paper is explicitly stated and lets the audience know what to expect: "Through highlighting the loved attractions, respected schools, and community-led initiatives the city has to offer, I plan on redefining Baltimore as a misunderstood city with a passionate community that actively is working towards change." (Revised Misunderstood Land, 1). This introduction is more effective as it doesn't come off as intimidating to a reader, but clearly articulates what the paper's goal is, per Semenza's suggestion.

My revised conclusion wrapped up the piece in a thoughtful manner, stating that through highlighting positive aspects of Baltimore: "The stereotypes that have affected the city's reputation could be dismantled and bring in a new perspective, one that shows Baltimore is not inherently murderous; *it's inherently misunderstood.*" (Revised Misunderstood Land, 4). What seemed like a small decision of reframing the paper through shifting the tone and target audience made for a much better and successful rewrite.

In addition to Semenza, I followed "Genre Features of Scholarly Articles: John Swales's 'Create a Research Space' (CARS) Model of Research Introductions by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs to help serve as a guideline for establishing the research in my papers. As mentioned before, I struggled with forming introductions, but pairing Semenza with the CARS Model enhanced my writing *so* much more. I learned the significance of establishing my territory and niche: Wardle and Downs define establishing one's territory as "Setting the context for research by providing background" (Wardle and Downs, 21) and establishing a niche through "arguing that "there is an open "niche" in the existing research, a space that needs to be filled through additional research" (Wardle and Downs, 22) In each paper I aimed to follow this

process of establishing my territory through continuing the tradition of earlier studies—and occupying my niche or stance through “indicating the structure of the research article” (Wardle and Downs, 22) per the CARS model with giving my audience a preview of the papers organization.

The revision of my paper “Feminine Revenge: An Analysis of Women’s Treatment in Greek Mythology and Today.” reflects the usage of the CARS model and Semenza’s process greatly. This original paper’s goal was to explore the harsh expectations placed upon women in ancient Greece as referenced in the plays *Agamemnon* and *Medea*, stating: “This essay will explore the sexism which fueled the female outrage in these plays... Additionally, it will draw upon historical insights from author Suiran Cai’s essay, ‘Medea’s Rise in Feminist Consciousness,’ to demonstrate how this outrage is timeless.” (Original Women’s Treatment, 1). While the thesis had the potential to be strong, stating the paper will highlight women’s treatment in ancient Greece even before Semenza and CARS, it lacked the inclusion of a source that could serve as a historical guideline for what women in Greece *actually* endured. This inspired me to find another source that could strengthen my essay entirely and help me establish my territory more definitively: Mark Cartwright’s “Women in Ancient Greece.”

The inclusion of this source not only helped strengthen each point, but made my thesis hold more weight—essentially reframing the entire paper along with a revised title: “Feminine Revenge: Women’s Treatment in Ancient Greece as Reflected in Greek Mythology.” My revised introduction states: “This paper will explore the gendered dynamics that women faced in Greek society and address how these characters could resonate with the women of today, drawing insights from Suiran Cai’s ‘Medea’s Rise in Feminist Consciousness’ and Mark Cartwright’s ‘Women in Ancient Greece’ to emphasize the timelessness and significance of both Medea and

Clytaemnestra's experiences.” (Revised Women's Treatment, 1). This thesis displays the connections between the plays and how they reflect history—strengthening the paper's purpose while displaying the new research methods I've developed over the course of the semester.

I also improved with statistical research. In my article “The Cost of Beauty: Exploring the Flawed Side of the Beauty Industry and Its Exploitation of Child Workers,” Dr. Gades and my peers suggested I add more numbers to make this already strong article more informative and a bit less vague. My original introduction to Mica was simple: “Mica is a mineral that is primarily sourced in India due to the pigment and shimmer it provides into everyday products like blush, lip liner, eyeshadow, and lip gloss among many others.” (Original Mica, 1) I realized in this defining section that I could add some data to solidify the paper's purpose, editing it to: “Mica is a pigmented and shimmery mineral that is primarily sourced in India, and according to CTPA.org, 18% of the mined mica is used in the cosmetic and care industry.” (Revised Mica, 1) In addition, I removed the list of products and simply said “cosmetic and care industry” for concision. These edits are another instance of a small shift making for an effective rewrite, solidifying the paper's goals of spreading awareness.

Although the revision of my English 300 paper “Uncovering Hazel's Unconscious Mind: A Psychoanalytic Analysis” was the first and admittedly the most challenging revision I faced prior to capstone, I chose to talk about it last in this Portfolio Essay. This piece was one of my strongest papers ever before Capstone, written at a time where I truly started to thrive as a writer. Because of my lack of revision knowledge at the time, I struggled with identifying what to fix. The feedback I received suggested removing distracting material, adding more textual and scholarly evidence to support my points, and carefully editing wordy sentences to declutter.

In addition, my peers suggested that I include Hazel's identity as a Black girl in the introduction, as they were unaware until the middle of the original paper, editing it from the original: "Toni Cade Bambara's 'Gorilla, My Love' is a short story about having distrust in adult figures as told from the perspective of a young girl named Hazel." (Original Psychoanalytic Analysis, 1), to the more defined: "Toni Cade Bambara's short story 'Gorilla, My Love' highlights the experiences of Hazel—a young Black girl living in New York, notably after the Civil Rights Movement." (Revised Psychoanalytic Analysis, 1). This revision places importance on Hazel's identity early on, which made the paper's points connect without confusion on the reader's end.

While my original introduction paragraph included no reference to outside sources that could place me in the scholarly conversation, I included some in the revision: "Scholars like Mary Comfort and Elizabeth Muther highlight the psychological implications of Hazel's upbringing as a Black girl post-Civil Rights Movement." (Revised Psychoanalytic Analysis, 1). Upon receiving feedback and strengthening my revision skills on several more papers after this one, I realized including clearer details about the scholars main ideas as they relate to my thesis earlier on would've made for a much stronger paper. Even though this was the one paper I struggled with initially, I find comfort in the fact that today I can look back on a piece from 3 months ago and be able to clearly point out what could've made the revision even stronger, making it a testament of my growth and passion for writing.

I started off relatively nervous in my ability to make these papers even stronger than what they were to begin with, and after spending a semester revising papers in four different areas, I am more confident than ever in my writing abilities. Through editing each of these samples for audience awareness, and implementing definitive research methods to sharpen my thesis and

purpose, I believe I have effectively proved myself as an English major and overall writer. I can now recognize nominalizations, and sentences that lack style and concision, along with understanding the writing process way more. I hope you enjoy reading through this portfolio! I have never been more proud of my work now that I have gained the skills to be successful.

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Engl-489

September 23rd, 2024

Uncovering Hazel's Unconscious Mind: A Psychoanalytic Analysis of *Gorilla, My Love*

Toni Cade Bambara's short story *Gorilla, My Love* highlights the experiences of Hazel—a young black girl living in New York, notably after the civil rights movement. Throughout the story Hazel struggles to maintain respect for “grown-ups” due to the belittling interactions she tends to have with them. Hazel's interactions with adults coupled with the intersectionality of her race play a part in the development of her psychological need for mutual respect and honesty. Bambara's works are no stranger to being analyzed on this scale with scholars like Mary Comfort and Elizabeth Muther highlighting the psychological implications of Hazel's upbringing as a black girl post civil rights movement—With that context in place, I plan to add to the ongoing scholarly conversation surrounding Bambara's writing through the use of the psychoanalytic approach, as referenced by Lois Tyson, with Hazel.

The psychoanalytic approach as explained by Lois Tyson within her work *Critical Theory Today* argues that people are impacted by their childhood experiences whether it be positive or negative. Tyson explains that everyone possesses “A psychological history that begins in childhood experiences in the family and each with patterns of adolescent and adult behavior that are the direct result of that early experience” (12). Elaborating on this, Tyson argues that a child's interactions with parents or guardians are pivotal as these interactions are what contribute to the overall development of a person's mind and identity. When using this approach with a

story such as "Gorilla, My Love" that focuses so heavily on a child expressing disdain for how adults tend to treat children, much can be uncovered about Hazel's personal identity and growth.

When Hazel finds out her uncle Hunca Bubba is getting married which contradicts a previous promise he made, she expresses her feelings, "What I mean is you said you were going to marry me when I grew up. You were going to wait," (19) He replies "Hazel, you just a little girl, and I was just teasin" (19), ultimately dismissing her feelings and blaming it on her being young herself. Hazel hearing this rejection from someone she admired at such a young age, regardless of his intentions, directly impacts the way she trusts the people around her. This shows her that despite someone making a promise, like her uncle in this scenario, words are not bond. As Hazel continues to tell stories about these negative experiences which highlights her sharp, snappy personality, the psychoanalytic approach—which again argues that people are shaped by their childhood experiences—is further revealed.

Although she lacks trust in other adults, Hazel still reflects the positive attributes of her parents like being strong willed and brave. When Hazel goes to the theater to watch "Gorilla, My Love", a movie about God (and to Hazel's surprise, not Gorillas) Hazel explains that she values her parents more than God, "My daddy wouldn't stand for nobody treatin' any of us that way. My Mama Specially" (15). Her parents' reactions to moments of unfairness inspire her to address problems with others in similar ways. Her parent's behavior translates to Hazel that she can and should stand up for herself and address a problem when she sees it, like how she confronted her uncle for breaking his promise and had no issue confronting the theater management as well for what Hazel felt was a false advertisement—She asserts, "I march myself up the aisle to deal with the manager who is a crook in the first place for lyin out there sayin Gorilla, My Love playin"

(16). This again reveals the point at hand, that one's behavior is shaped by their childhood experiences.

As you look through Bambara's catalog of stories, the role racial identity plays for her main characters is revealed too. Bambara's "The Lesson" is another story told from the perspective of a young black girl named Sylvia who dislikes the adults around her, specifically the educated and wealthy ones. Sylvia and Hazel share similar traits and time periods—using the psychoanalytic approach for Sylvia can also reveal that she is hostile because of the way she was raised as a black girl in Brooklyn, *also* post civil rights movement. It's even plausible that Bambara as an author could relate to both characters, which is why she keeps the theme of troubled children up throughout her writing—perhaps Bambara dealt with things as a young black girl too.

Most scholars analyze Bambara's work with the role that race plays in mind—In Mary Comfort's *Liberating Figures in Toni Cade Bambara's "Gorilla, My Love"*, Comfort analyzes the experiences Hazel goes through and states that Hazel is an empowering character for black girls as she stands up for what she feels is right. Comfort states Hazel and her family are "Fighters for racial equality" (91). Similarly in a work by Elizabeth Muther entitled "Bambara's Feisty Girls: Resistance Narratives in *Gorilla, My Love*" Muther talks about the racial portrayal of different characters within the story, starting with Thunderbuns, what Hazel calls the "colored matron" (15). Muther argues that Thunderbuns is "the enforcer of racially charged capitalist treachery." (447), as she works for the theater in a way that reinforces racial inequality—In simpler terms? Muther feels she was hired because she's black, and because of that mutual identity, and can put younger black kids, like Hazel, in check better than a white person could. Living in a time where Hazel must specify to her audience that a black woman has an authoritative role to begin with

proves that instances like societal factors *do* in fact impact her development and further shape her personality—Another instance that emphasizes the importance of this theory.

Had Hazel not been raised by her strong willed parents, she wouldn't have the witty, confrontational personality we see displayed. Had she not been a black girl growing up in the 70's, she wouldn't have gone out her way to emphasize the race of the matron—And finally? Had she not been offered a false promise by her uncle at a young age, perhaps she'd hold more trust for adults moving forward—By now, it should be no surprise that Hazel's ongoing childhood experiences and upbringing have shaped her into the young girl we see in the story, and without those key influences, the Hazel we see displayed would be much different.

In conclusion, the psychoanalytic theory is a very fitting approach for analyzing the works of Toni Cade Bambara, *Gorilla, My Love* in particular. This approach helps readers understand the complex interaction between forming a child's identity, like Hazels, as well as her relationships with others. By the end of the story, it should be no surprise that Hazel's responses to the adults in her life like her parents, uncle, and even Thunderbuns, reflect her unconscious need for mutual respect. Hazel's story stresses the impacts adults have on a child's life from a young age and uncovers why her parents impacted her on a much deeper level.

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Engl-489

October 12th, 2024

The Misunderstood Land: Breaking Down Charm City's Stigma

The media has long stigmatized the city of Baltimore for its bad reputation of crime, addiction, and poor education—Essentially arguing those flaws are all the city is known for. Publications like the Economist label Baltimore as solely an “exceptionally murderous city” (Crime & Despair) a statement that erases the city's culture and community and denotes it to nothing. Even former Maryland Governor Larry Hogan often contributed to Baltimore's discrimination despite having the power to change that, referring to members of the population and victims of police brutality as “Thugs” (Cashin) and “Gang-Members” (Woods) without any evidence of gang relation. While it's undeniable that the city is flawed, the notion that Baltimore is nothing more than a hub for violence, gangs, and addiction is far from the truth. Through highlighting the loved attractions, respected schools, and community-led initiatives the city has to offer, I plan on redefining Baltimore as a misunderstood city with a passionate community that actively is working towards change.

Baltimore has been dealing with the backlash of a poor educational system for a while now; Garion Frankel and Cooper Conway allege in their article “Misery, Thy Name is Baltimore City Public Schools” that “Unfortunately for students, Baltimore's school system is so consistently bad that there may be no coming back” (Frankel and Conway). But implying that each school in the district has an equally poor structure is a harmful misconception that only instills fear in outsiders.

Contrary to the beliefs of Frankel and Conway, Baltimore City is home to prestigious schools like The Baltimore Design School and The Baltimore School for the Arts, which is home to successful alumni like Jada Pinkett and Tupac Shakur. Out of 250+ schools in the entire state of Maryland, these schools ranked 14th and 35th (U.S. News & World Report). —surely if Baltimore City Public Schools were a central place of “misery,” they wouldn’t be outranking schools in traditionally “safer” areas of Maryland. Apart from high schools, it’s important to note that Baltimore City houses one of the most respected universities as well: Johns Hopkins University, ranking #6 out of 436 universities in the nation with thousands of students coming to Baltimore City from different states yearly. (U.S. News & World Report).

It’s worthy to admit that sometimes even residents themselves believe that Baltimore doesn’t have much to offer. One resident expressed in an interview to CBS, “There used to always be something downtown. Now you look at downtown, and it’s dead now,” (Albert) but this belief is also far from the truth. According to Al Hutchinson, CEO of Visit Baltimore, 27 million people visited Baltimore, and 79% of visitors returned in 2022. (Halford) The Inner Harbor (AKA, downtown), is home to many tourist attractions. You’ve got M&T Bank Stadium and Oriole Park @ Camden Yards for sports fans, several waterfront restaurants serving delicious Maryland seafood, and even a multitude of waterfront activities like water taxis, kayaking, paddle boating, and educational sailing tours—All of the above serve as a fun experience for tourists and natives alike.

Just a few minutes shy of the Inner Harbor is Fells Point: a historical neighborhood with tons of learning opportunities during the day, and fun pubs and taverns to visit at night. Rumor has it the city’s oldest bar “The Horse You Came in On Saloon” was Edgar Allen Poe’s last stop before his death (“A Tour of Fell’s Point”). Downtown Baltimore has also become a frequent

concert destination in the past year, with celebrities favoring a stop at Baltimore's CFG Bank Arena over Washington DC's Capital One Arena. Baltimore Sun sharing in an Instagram post "CFG Bank Arena for the win? Pop rock priestess Billie Eilish, who comes to Baltimore on Friday, is among the big musical acts who will perform in Charm City this year while bypassing the nation's capital." (Lam), Clearly resulting in a huge influx of visitors from out of the state to the once labeled "exceptionally murderous city." (Crime & Despair)

Although we debunked the exaggerated stereotypes behind education and revealed the typically overshadowed sources of entertainment for millions of tourists and natives alike, Baltimore still struggles with violence and crime. Unlike the media portrays however, residents have not become complacent. One of the most notable initiatives to combat the violence is Safe Streets, aka Baltimore's flagship gun violence reduction program since 2007 ("Safe Streets") In Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement official violence prevention plan of 2021, Safe Streets gathered hundreds of Baltimoreans of different backgrounds. This group included LGBTQ+ community, Baltimore's youth, and returning residents to discuss what needs to be done. ("Baltimore's Violence Prevention Plan") As of April 2024, 38 of the initiatives in their plan have been completed, and 24 are in progress. ("Baltimore's Violence Prevention Plan") Mayor Wes Moore revealed in the 2024 update, "In 2023, homicides and non-fatal shootings were down 20.3% and 8% respectively. As of April 22, 2024, we're building on top of that reduction, reducing homicides by another 33% and non-fatal shootings by 20%,". ("Baltimore's Violence Prevention Plan") proving that Baltimore statistically is on a much better path to safety than what the media portrays.

In addition to Safe Streets, which aims to target violence, INSPIRE (Investing in Neighborhoods and Schools to Promote Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence) is another

initiative that targets strengthening Baltimore City public schools for the better. (“INSPIRE”) As of January 2024, fifteen plans have been reviewed and adopted by the Planning Commission, and nine plans are in progress. (“INSPIRE”) INSPIRE’s motives are similar to Safe Streets, as they work with the community of each school to learn what needs to be improved.

Finally, The K.O.D. (Kids Off Drugs) School Program is also an intersectional effort to stop the amount of drug abuse in the city and to prevent kids from exposure. They explain, “The program helps young people learn about the history of drugs in Baltimore and the cultural norms that lead to substance use. Our program integrates Hip-Hop and Baltimore culture—including language, arts, and history—into a social, cultural, and contextual framework for addressing substance use.” (“K.O.D. School Program”) Through the combination of culture and education, this program works to positively influence the youth, which makes Baltimore’s future that more promising.

When all is said and done, Baltimore at its core is a place whose community is working tirelessly through methods of community outreach and discussions plans to tear down the beliefs stirred by the media and outsiders alike. Through continuously highlighting Baltimore's entertaining attractions, its constantly growing education system, and the passionate initiatives taken by organizations like Safe Streets, INSPIRE, and K.O.D. in response to media scrutiny, the stereotypes that have affected the city’s reputation could be dismantled and bring in a new perspective, one that shows Baltimore is not inherently murderous; *it’s inherently misunderstood*

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Dr. Gades

ENGL-489

November 11th, 2024

Feminine Revenge: Women's Treatment in Ancient Greece as reflected in Greek Mythology

In *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus and *Medea* by Euripides, the phenomenon of women seeking revenge for how men mistreated them is the most common theme. This paper will explore the gendered dynamics that women faced in Greek society and address how these characters could resonate with the women of today, drawing insights from Suirán Cais "Medea's Rise in Feminist Consciousness" and Mark Cartwright's "Women in Ancient Greece" to emphasize the timelessness and significance of both Medea and Clytaemnestra's experiences.

In *Agamemnon*, Clytaemnestra's plots to kill her husband, Agamemnon, for the offering of their daughter Iphigenia to goddess Artemis. While this act of immolation was done for what Agamemnon may argue a valid reason, expressing to the chorus: "Desert the fleets, fail the alliance? No, but stop the fleet with a virgin's blood, feed their lust, their fury? Law is law!--Let all go well." (Aeschylus, 213-217) His actions can still be interpreted as a result of the power dynamics that differ between men and women.

Artemis chose the *eldest* daughter, Iphigenia, despite Agamemnon having a son as well. Regardless of being a woman herself, historians would allege this is because men held more importance—Mark Cartwright explains, "As in many other *male-dominated* and *agrarian cultures*, female babies were at a much higher risk of being abandoned at birth by their parents than male offspring." (Women in Ancient Greece). With this historical context in mind, Artemis could have considered Iphigenia's death to hold less importance in comparison to his son's death.

The chorus proves this notion when referencing Iphigenia as “A woman trembling young, all born to die.” (Aeschylus, 138) insinuating she was born for this reason. After all, when you consider the limited freedom young women had in this period, Cartwright affirming even further that “Women in the ancient Greek world had few rights in comparison to male citizens. Unable to vote, own land, or inherit, a woman's place was in the home and her purpose in life was the rearing of children” (Women in Ancient Greece)--The most a young girl like Iphigenia could offer besides a child was one thing: *herself*.

Moreover, Clytaemnestra's lines throughout the play emphasize the insignificance attributed to women and how she feels as a result. In one quote directed at Agamemnon, she highlights the traditional role of women "When a woman sits at home and the man is gone, the loneliness is terrible, unconscionable..." (Aeschylus, 848-850). Confirming the idea Cartwright explored that women, especially in ancient Greece, had nothing to look forward to outside of their partners returning, resulting in the feelings of isolation.

More instances of double standards can be seen when the chorus (*ironically composed of older men*), completely defend Agamemnon's offering to Artemis, only to condemn Clytaemnestra's revenge for Iphigenia's death. The chorus reacts to her without considering that while Agamemnon may have had a solid reason for his actions, Clytaemnestra still has every right to be angry, as that was their child and the choice was made without deliberation or consent. This reaction poses a question: had gender roles been completely swapped and Clytaemnestra sacrificed Agamemnon's son to a Greek god in order to save the ships, it's likely the chorus could defend Agamemnon's revenge on her.

Despite warnings however, Agamemnon himself dismisses the chorus's word and even the word of his mistress, Cassandra: a cursed prophet who attempted to warn him about

Clytaemnestra's plan to murder him. Cassandra even confirms that nobody is taking her seriously when pleading: "Am I a fraud, a fortune-teller babbling lies from door to door? Swear how well I know the ancient crimes that live in this house." (Aeschylus, 1199-1202) Perhaps he believed that a woman would be incapable of an act like murder, and if that case proves true one? One could argue Agamemnon's sexism, whether consciously done or not, ultimately leads to his downfall: death.

In *Medea*, Medea sacrifices nearly everything for her partner Jason. Undeterred by Medea betraying her country on his behalf, Jason abandons her to marry Glauce, leaving Medea both heartbroken with a tarnished reputation. Unlike Medea, Jason had the privilege to move on and remarry without guilt. Cartwright pointed out this double standard, explaining "Women were expected to be faithful to their husbands, but the reverse was not the case as husbands could freely engage the services of prostitutes, live-in lovers, and courtesans" (Women in Ancient Greece) Despite men having the freedom to sleep with whoever, Women would be found guilty of *moicheia* (aka, adultery) if they dared to do the same, Cartwright including: "Any woman who did not preserve the honour of the family was guilty of the serious crime of *moicheia*" (Women in Ancient Greece)

Like Clytaemnestra, Medea is aware of her role in Greek society, addressing it throughout the play. Medea recognizes that women in her society are helpless, alleging "We women are the most unfortunate creatures" (Euripides, 229) likely because of the limitations that are placed upon them. She points out the limitations in question, like her right to marry, arguing that: "For a woman, nor can she say no to her marriage." (Euripides, 235). Even though she understands what is expected of her, Medea still believes that regardless of societal restrictions: she can still use her intelligence for evil, telling herself in an inner monologue: "You were born a

woman, and women, though most helpless in doing good deeds, are of every evil the cleverest of contrivers" (Euripides, 404-406). Emphasizing the cleverness she possesses to plan or "contrive" plans like revenge.

Medea's intelligence leads her to enact her revenge through killing not only Glauce and Glauce's father Kreon, but her and Jason's children, ironically two sons. Circling back to Cartwright's claim of young girls being abandoned over sons in Greece, Medea knew that Jason losing a woman wouldn't have the same impact on him as losing his bloodline, particularly a bloodline of sons.

Medea and Clytaemnestra had to act dramatically for their revenge to be taken seriously, but women seeking revenge for the inequality they face is not exclusively fiction. In scholar Suiran Cai's essay, "Medea's Rise in Feminist Consciousness," Cai argues that Medea's revenge can be seen as a symbol of women's fight for freedom today as well: "Medea represents the change and development of women's self-consciousness. Although her love story ends in tragedy, the story implies the evolution of the feminist spirit, reflecting the struggle between women's rights and men's rights." (Cai, 153). Medea may have started off heartbroken because of Jason, but she quickly transforms into a woman who fights for justice and accountability through presenting him with the very heartbreak he gave her, which accentuates the very purpose of the feminist spirit that Cai mentions.

Cai also makes an interesting assertion that can apply to both authors: He explains that these playwrights produced these plays with the values of their society in mind, this wasn't done without inspiration. He states, "Euripides molded the image of Medea with complex and profound historical and cultural connotations" (Cai, 153). Meaning that both plays are far more than just a tragic story of revenge; it's a slightly dramatized version of the real world these

authors lived in, which we have already defined with the help of Cartwright that the world was male dominated and riddled with double standards. This is a factor that deserves more insight and review than it's currently given.

Whether Euripides and Aeschylus intended to create these plays with the purpose of giving their audience the woman's perspective on life's issues, *Medea* and *Agamemnon* serve as strong reflections of power dynamics and double standards, and will undeniably continue to contribute to the discussion of women's suffrage for years to come.

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December 2024

Fast Fashion: Creating an Eco-Friendly Runway

Fashion has become a key element of self-expression. Whether it be through graphic tees from our favorite artists or crop tops with relatable slogans, everyone participates in it a little differently.

Despite the significance and fun that comes with fashion, the spread of *Fast Fashion* has taken over the industry, negatively impacting the planet. Continue reading to learn all about the topic, and more importantly: how to steer clear!

What is fast fashion and why is it harmful?

Fast Fashion, as defined through Investopedia, is considered “Low-priced but stylish clothing that moves quickly from design to retail stores to meet trends, with new collections being introduced continuously.” (Investopedia) And it pulls a serious profit—According to Uniform Market, “fast fashion is a \$136.19 billion industry as of 2024, it has grown by 10.74% from the previous year and is further estimated to reach \$291.1 billion by 2032.” (Uniform Market)

Yes, we know what you’re thinking: “Low priced? Stylish? New collections constantly? How exactly is this bad?” While fast fashion’s prices are low, the negative impacts of it on society are high.

The garments made through top fast fashion brands are not only detrimental to the environment due to the use of synthetics—Which, according to Investopedia, over 60% of the clothing is synthetic—and poor materials, the clothing can't even be recycled once it's begun to wear and tear—leaving consumers in a cycle of buying clothing, wearing it for under 6 months, and trashing it because of its poor quality, only to begin the cycle right after.

Uniform Market also reported that “The fashion industry is responsible for 10% of the total annual carbon footprint, surpassing the emissions from all international flights and maritime shipping combined.” (Uniform Market)

To add, most fast fashion brands have unethical labor practices that demand their employees create the clothes at a fast, robotic-like pace—only to be compensated poorly. There's no transparency about who is responsible for the creation of these garments.

And, due to the attempt to copy trends, fast fashion brands often steal designs from the original creator with no credit given. This results in consumers seeking out the copied design (typically referred to as a dupe) for the affordable price, leaving the original creator without credit or compensation.

Finally, investing in a durable wardrobe with slightly pricier items will be more worth it to your pockets in time as frequent fast fashion shopping sprees can end up costing more—While that \$4 crop top and \$10 pair of jeans might seem like a steal at first, the low price is an indicator of even lower quality fabric. You don't purchase a dress with the goal of it's strap snapping after 4 months of wear.

Brands that aren't hot!

Now that you know what fast fashion is and its impacts, what brands are considered fast fashion? According to Uniform Markets, the most popular brand taking up a 50% market share in the U.S. is **Shein**. Followed by **H&M** with 16%, **Fashion Nova** with 11% and **Forever 21** with 6%. Each of these brands are guilty of producing cheap, poorly manufactured clothing with the goal of making money off of poor quality, synthetic infused clothing.

Trustworthy Alternatives:

So what brands should you buy from? Here's a few:

1. Proclaim

Proclaim uses recycled materials that boost longevity in its undergarments, have regular supplier visits, and are transparent in their labor regulations.

2. WE-AR4

WE-AR4 Is a brand founded by industry natives, the clothes are stylish and are developed through thrifting high quality materials rather than poor, synthetic infused ones.

3. Anchored

Anchored is a New York based minimalist brand, like Proclaim, they use recycled materials while ensuring the employees are working under fair conditions

4. Hyer Goods

Hyer Goods is a brand that upcycles trash into stylish handbags, resulting in less greenhouse gases that impact the environment.

While these brands are great to shop from, we understand that not everyone has the \$65 for a fashion item—if you're short on funds but want to do your part, shopping second-hand through thrift stores or buying (AND selling your old clothes) on resale websites like Depop is a great way to cut back your carbon footprint.

It is, however, important to recognize that there are also disadvantages of getting your clothes just second hand. If you can afford to spend \$200 on a few pairs of jeans and a t-shirt, then you should. Thrift stores exist for people who cannot afford those prices—Taking from them will result in them supporting fast fashion as well.

Now that you know the ins and outs of fast fashion, you can be your most sustainable and eco-friendly-fashionable self! Walk that eco-friendly runway with pride!

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December 5th, 2024

The Cost of Beauty: Exploring the Flawed Side of the Beauty Industry and its Exploitation of Child Workers

Though the colorful shimmer of a cut crease or subtle sparkle of a lip gloss may entice the eye, the origins of these desired products are far from flawless. Best selling companies like MAC, Estee Lauder, Too-Faced, and many others all have one thing in common: They incorporate the shiny mineral Mica into their products.

What is mica?

Mica is a pigmented and shimmery mineral that is primarily sourced in India and according to CTPA.org, 18% of the mined mica is used in the cosmetic and care industry. (CTPA) This mineral is typically mined using child labor due to the small height and width of the mines. Despite the unethical approach of exploiting children to extract it, mica remains a common yet hidden part of the beauty industry.

How is it extracted?

In India, children as young as 5 years old spend the entirety of their day venturing into dangerous man-made mine shafts to gather mica.

A girl from Jharkhand shared her experience mining mica in a video with Refinery29, explaining, “When we go into the mine, it’s very dark in there, and we are terrified of all the

rocks falling on us. I saw a lot of children get hurt, and I saw a kid's head split open.” Revealing the harsh reality these children experience everyday.

As mentioned earlier, the mines are typically too small for an adult to venture into—forcing young children to do the work, ultimately risking their life for another eyeshadow palette or lip gloss on the Sephora shelf.

According to the Study on Child Labor in the Scrap Mica Supply Chain in India, “A worker can collect approximately 15–25 kilograms of mica per day and sell the mica to a buyer at the rate of 5–15 Indian rupees per kilogram. This equates to \$0.06– \$0.18 USD per kilogram and a daily wage of \$0.90–\$4.50 USD.” (Study on Child Labor)

Not only does the mining of this mineral pose a threat to these children's lives, but it robs them of their childhood while further feeding into greedy expectations of name brand companies, leading into a cycle of supply and demand.

How can we help?

Thankfully, there are alternative ways to source this mineral. Ethically sourced mica traced back to fair labor exists, and many companies use it—Lush and Elf being two of the most popular brands to ethically source it.

With social media on the uprise and influencers holding the power behind which brands get traction, it's important for consumers to broadcast brands that are transparent on the production of their makeup.

Final Thoughts

As consumers, it's important that we advocate for stricter labor laws, fair wages, and ethical sourcing while staying up to date on what products we're using on our skin. The more we support responsible brands, the more we can trigger a positive change in the industry.

Research, advocate, and stay informed

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