

A close-up, vertical view of the pages of a book, showing the texture and color of the paper. The pages are slightly blurred, creating a sense of depth and focus on the central text area.

The Raptor Review

Journal of Academic Writing and Research



The Raptor
Review

*Journal of Academic
Writing and Research*

Montgomery College
Paul Peck Academic and Innovation Building
PK 140
Germantown, MD 20876
Fall 2021 / Spring 2022

The Staff

Michelle Prendergast, Co-Editor-in-Chief

Alejandro Leopardi, Co-Editor-in-Chief

Art & Design

Jennifer Baugh, Creative Project Manager

Table of Contents

1 Eve Elias Stowell, “Fiction or Reality: Exploring Political Concepts in Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West*”

Eve Elias Stowell is a General Studies: SSAH major at MC and following transfer this Fall, she will go on to major in International Studies and Politics. Her academic interests lay in the intersection of global politics and cultures, human rights, and displaced communities. In the future, she plans to pursue a doctoral degree.

8 Alexzander Baetsen, “To Blame the Sword: Examining Social Media in the Context of Social Change”

A graduate of the Montgomery Scholars program, Alexzander Baetsen is a student at Montgomery College majoring in elementary education who is interested in teaching students with disabilities. Later in their career, Alexzander intends to pursue a Doctor of Educational Leadership and secure a position where they can shape educational policy.

16 Adedokun Jagun, “Politics in Literature Analysis: Nigerian Society as Portrayed in ‘Half of a Yellow Sun’”

Adedokun Jagun’s major at MC is International Relations, though he is transferring this year to UMBC to study Political Science. He is also a member of The Advocate student newsletter at the Rockville Campus.

24 Dustin Duby-Koffman, “Amy Tan and Emily Dickinson: Metaphors of Hope”

Dustin Duby-Koffman plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree in English. He would like to publish poetry and stories for young people. He is the author of two chapbooks, *Eating Broccoli on the Moon* and *Dedicated to the Seekers*.

38 Ajay Khalsa, “*Beowulf and Paradise Lost*: British Epics”

Ajay Khalsa was a General Studies STEM major at MC. He graduated in Dec 2021.



Eve Elias Stowell

December 10, 2021

POLI 211

Professor Jennifer Haydel

Fiction or Reality:
Exploring
Political
Concepts in
Mohsin Hamid's
Exit West

Mohsin Hamid's bestselling novel, *Exit West*, tells the fictional love story of a young couple, Nadia and Saeed, and their growing relationship amidst a country teetering on the brink of civil war. *Exit West* uniquely offers the invitation to glimpse the future as it one day may be: a dystopian world aflame with a global refugee crisis. In this fictional work, Hamid provides a critical perspective that is often overlooked in contemporary work: a crisis that extends to the affluent countries of the Global North, rather than being confined to the Global South. The novel journeys with Nadia and Saeed through several prominent cities, describing both the panic and aggression of the residents therein – referred to as 'nativists' – when faced with the influx of millions of refugees, as well as the fear and uncertainty experienced by the refugees themselves. At face value, *Exit West* is a story of love and loss, but closer examination reveals themes of violence, insurgency, migration, and global politics.

Though fictional, Hamid's imagined refugee crisis resembles a refugee crisis that is very much tethered to this reality: the Syrian refugee crisis. As the largest surge of refugees to enter Europe since World War II (DePillis et al.), the displacement of millions of Syrians provides a chilling taste of the crises our future may continue to provide, such as the imaginary one penned by Hamid. The duality of *Exit West* as both a fictional story and a mirror of reality offers a unique evaluation and prediction of the crises the world has already experienced, and those on the horizon.

Exit West centers around Saeed and Nadia, a young man and woman who meet unexpectedly at a night class, and quickly develop feelings for one another. The beginning of their relationship is paced and sweet, even while chaos and violence erupts around them. As Nadia and Saeed's relationship grows, tensions in their city do as well, descending into a civil war. The dichotomy of a blossoming new relationship against the backdrop of a city aflame with violent conflict and turmoil is stark. In her review of Hamid's novel for *The Atlantic*, Sophie Gilbert summed this component up: "*Exit West* is a story about how familiar and persistent human existence is, even at the edge of dystopia." After the sitting government is overthrown by a religious militant group, cell service and internet are restricted, food and water rationed, panic fills the streets, and violence escalates beyond reason. Nadia and Saeed are among the hundreds who narrowly escape their war-stricken home through seemingly magical doors, which can transport across seas and borders (Hamid).

The different settings of *Exit West* are some of the key elements that lend this novel to work as a medium through which to study politics. Throughout the entirety of *Exit West*, the fictional city where Nadia and Saeed begin their relationship goes unnamed. Through the mention of various elements of the Islamic religion, such as robes for women, going to pray – at, presumably, a mosque – it is assumed this is a city in a predominantly Muslim country, and therefore is most likely modeled after a city in the Middle East, North African, or East Asian regions. Author Hamid himself is from Lahore, Pakistan, and many parallels to Pakistan appear in the novel, giving small hints as to what and where the real-life counterpart may be. Hamid has admitted part of his vision for the novel's city was his hometown and country, though he declines to give a definite answer, preferring this element to remain unspecified (Gross). The absence of a definitive location gives this novel a sense of proximity and intimacy to the reader. It removes the visualization of a location far from oneself and reinforces the notion that this novel straddles the borders of reality and fiction.

The political regime in Nadia and Saeed's country is never discussed in depth, nor given a label or description. What *is* mentioned is the growing political tension between the sitting government and the religious '*militant*' group at the start of Nadia and Saeed's relationship. This rising tension quickly descends into political violence and a full-fledged civil war, carrying negative impacts for Nadia and Saeed. While Hamid deliberately shies from discussing the religious militant group directly, given his background and home in Pakistan, it would not be a far cry to assume this group is loosely based on fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban, an ultraconservative Islamic group that emerged in Afghanistan in 1994, and has been afflicting Middle Eastern countries with violence for decades. Pakistan has its own faction of the Taliban, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has been at odds with the Pakistani military since its emergence in 2007. Closely associated with both the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda, the TTP has maintained three central goals: enforce Shariah law in Pakistan; establish unanimity to organize against the US-led forces in Afghanistan (no longer relevant as of August 2021); and conduct defensive jihad against Pakistani military forces (Mapping Militant Organizations). There are descriptions in *Exit West* depicting that this militant group is uncouthly vicious, neither foreign nor small, and it is implied that they have some form of religious affiliation: one day as Saeed and his father go to pray, it is mentioned that the preacher "urged all the congregants to pray for the righteous to emerge

victorious in the war but carefully refrained from specifying on which side of the conflict he thought the righteous to be," (Hamid 52). This quote brings the TTP to mind, as one of their primary goals is to enforce Shariah law in Pakistan; their beliefs stem from the Wahhabi branch of Islam, which is markedly orthodox, and used by Islamist militant groups as a rally for devout religious authenticity (Johnson). Thus, keeping the TTP in mind when reading *Exit West* helps provide a visual and real-life example of the militant group in the novel.

Correspondingly, political violence is one of the biggest themes in the first half of *Exit West* and serves to guide the plot as it builds in momentum and pressure. O'Neil et al. defines political violence as: "violence outside of state control that is politically motivated" (119). In *Exit West*, both political violence and state violence are extant via the internal war between the sitting government and militant group. Both parties conduct air strikes, bombings, occupations, and artillery combat to gain and defend land as the militant group's pursuit of complete control of the city matures. As sections of the city fall under militant control, bringing panic and curtails to freedom – both internal and external to the occupied neighborhoods – the government imposes strict "antiterrorism" measures: a city-wide cut-off of internet and cellular services, dusk-to-dawn curfews, and rigorous travel restrictions. Initially, citizens, including Nadia and Saeed, are of no importance amid the ever-escalating violence swallowing their city; they were merely casualties who just happened to be living amongst a civil war that placed their lives in extreme danger. An example of this is exhibited through the death of Saeed's mother, who was killed by a stray heavy caliber round that hit her as she rummaged in her car for a misplaced item (Hamid). She was not in any overtly dangerous place, nor caught in the crossfires of a militant group division and government army force; she was simply getting something from the car parked in front of her building, and greatly misfortunate to have been struck by a stray round from a battle ensuing elsewhere.

However, as the violence escalates, ceding power to the militant group, citizens of the city shift from existing on the peripherals of the war into direct contact and danger. The militant group invokes terrorism as they begin to hunt and execute those of certain denominations. In one such instance, the neighbors who live above Saeed's apartment are found to be of a particular sect, and resultingly, the father is executed, and his wife and daughters hauled away (Hamid). O'Neil et al. defines terrorist acts as "the use of violence by nonstate

actors against civilians in order to achieve a political goal" (128). In *Exit West*, terrorist acts by the militants are used to secure the city once and for all. Public executions of those whose religion is not aligned with that of the militants are frequent, and cruel punishments for even minor violations of one of the many newly implemented laws are mercilessly upheld. Saeed's father, on a brief excursion to the outside one day following the militant takeover, nostalgically watches a group of young men playing soccer, only to realize they are not kicking around a soccer ball, but a human head (Hamid). The inclusion of this scene gives a chilling sense of the violence that has been normalized in Nadia and Saeed's city following the militant takeover and provides further urgency to the reader of impending danger for Nadia and Saeed. It is shortly after this scene that Nadia and Saeed begin to plan their escape.

Nadia and Saeed begin to investigate the possibility of escape through one of the mysterious doors that has been relayed to them through whispers of rumors. The detection of the mere idea of such an audacious act would result in their immediate and gruesome deaths, as travel to and from their city had been permanently forbidden. Nadia and Saeed manage to find and brazenly solicit the services of an underground 'agent' who promises to secure their exit from the city via one such door for an exorbitant sum. Their first door takes them to a small hillside in Mykonos, Greece, where a large encampment of refugees has already taken residence. Little by little, Nadia and Saeed come to find that it's not just their city that was experiencing a massive underground exodus, most of the less-affluent countries in the Southern and Eastern Hemispheres were as well. These unique transport doors were popping up across the globe, and thousands of people were journeying across borders in the hopes of a better life beyond (Hamid). A worldwide refugee crisis was blooming.

Nadia and Saeed's journeys from Mykonos to London, England, and from London to Marin, California, on the West Coast of the United States, only serve to reinforce that much of the globe was migrating, predominantly those of the Global South: the less affluent countries of the world. Small pockets of violence imploded everywhere, as nativists – those native to the countries that were experiencing a massive influx of refugees – resisted the wave of migrants that descended upon their cities and showed no sign of stopping. Countries in the Global North scrambled to accommodate the millions of refugees that were rapidly flooding their interiors (Hamid). The dystopian novel continues to follow Nadia

and Saeed throughout their cross-continental journey, giving further insight to the global crisis and its implications.

Hamid's imagined refugee crisis startlingly resembles a real-life crisis that has resulted in the migration of over six million refugees out of Syria and into neighboring countries and those across the world. Beginning in 2011 with the Arab Spring uprisings, Syria experienced a civil war that has lasted for over 10 years and is still in effect today. Young Syrian revolutionaries initially rebelled against the totalitarian, personality cult regime under President Bashar al-Assad over unemployment. These revolutionists were former university students; they were educated, skilled, and unable to secure employment due to the socioeconomic aspects of Assad's Syria. When protests became unsustainable, these students left their studies and took up arms, becoming the Free Syrian Army (Haydel). Over the course of a few years, the revolution grew into a civil war between the Assad regime and the opposition forces, which were made up of a diverse range of groups, many of those being radical, Islamist groups (Al-Haj Saleh). One such group was the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, known as ISIS (Haydel). Syria's war, though internal, drew international attention and action to address the humanitarian crisis that has infected the country since the revolution's beginnings. As the Assad regime and opposition forces continued to battle for control of the state, over five million refugees were forced to flee the violence and instable living conditions, in the pursuit of peace and safety in foreign countries (Haydel). International organizations such as the United Nations have charged the Syrian government, ISIS, and a score of other militant groups with atrocious human rights abuses and crimes (Fisseha). In *Exit West*, however, Nadia and Saeed's city is merely one of many countries aflame. As Hamid strives to emphasize, *Exit West's* entire world is in crisis.

Hamid's refugee crisis so closely resembles the Syrian crisis, in fact, in that there has been a significant migration of Syrian refugees into Greece, where they created encampments and small communities (Baker, et al.), similar to the one that Nadia and Saeed found themselves in after their audacious journey through their first door. Turkey and Germany have been the recipients of some of the largest inflows of Syrian migrants since 2011. Turkey, with its neighboring border to Syria, has become the largest refugee-holding state, receiving over 2.7 million Syrians as of 2017 (Fisseha). As of 2016, Germany has received nearly 2 million Syrian refugees, causing both negative and positive societal, economic, and

political effects within the country as a result (O'Neil et al.). One of the positive effects to come from the Syrian diaspora community in Germany is the contribution of vibrant arts and culture within German society. Mey Sefan, a Syrian dancer and choreographer in the diaspora, exemplifies this phenomenon. Amid the civil war, Sefan used the traditional Syrian dance, dabke, as a form of protest against the Assad regime. Now living in the diaspora in Berlin, she utilizes her dancing as a platform for political discussion and continues protesting on behalf of her homeland from afar (Martin). She describes her life as an artist in exile: "artists are the makers of new myths. I might not be in Syria anymore, but I am still a Syrian artist, responsible for making a new Syrian history," (qtd. in Martin, p. 242). Sefan's story and legacy are a brilliant example of how those who suffer from unthinkable horrific events can still gift beauty and art to the world.

Exit West is a story of love, contrasted by violence and global chaos. Through the story of Nadia and Saeed, author Hamid provides a look into the future that is rapidly approaching our doorsteps: a global migration crisis. Climate-related disasters, political violence and anarchy, and greedy abuses of our limited natural resources are pushing humanity to a dangerous tipping point, displacing millions, and carrying grave consequences to global society. *Exit West* paints an alarming glimpse of the future that we are speeding towards, and the frightening implications it holds.

Works Cited

- Al-Haj Saleh, Yassin. *The Impossible Revolution: Making Sense of the Syrian Tragedy*. Translated by Ibtihal Mahmood, Haymarket Books, 2017.
- Baker, Aryn, et al. "Exit West." *TIME Magazine*, vol. 190, no. 27/28, Dec. 2017, pp. 94–103. EBSCOhost, search-ebSCOhost-com.montgomerycollege.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN=126860949&site=eds-live&scope=site.
- DePillis, Lydia, et al. "75 Years of Major Refugee Crises around the World." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/historical-migrant-crisis/>.
- Fisseha, Mehari. "Syrian Refugee Crisis, from Turkey to European Union - Methods and Challenges." *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, vol. 17, no. 3, Oct. 2017, pp. 34–57. EBSCOhost, search-ebSCOhost-com.montgomerycollege.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=128356305&site=eds-live&scope=site.
- Gilbert, Sophie. "'Exit West' Finds Dystopia in the Refugee Experience." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 8 Mar. 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/03/exit-west/518802/>.
- Gross, Terry. "From Refugees to Politics, Mohsin Hamid Writes the Change He Wants to See." *NPR*, NPR, 9 Mar. 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/03/09/592158501/from-refugees-to-politics-mohsin-hamid-writes-the-change-he-wants-to-see>.
- Hamid, Mohsin. *Exit West*. Penguin USA, 2018.
- Haydel, Jennifer. "Understanding the Syrian War." *YouTube*, 11, Apr. 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jh6kcBX9uQc>. Accessed 7, Dec. 2021.
- Johnson, Toni. "Sharia and Militancy." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 30 Nov. 2010, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/sharia-and-militancy>.
- Mapping Militant Organizations. "Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan." *Stanford University*. Last modified July 2018. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/tehr-i-taliban-pakistan>
- Martin, Rose. "Dancing in Exile: Performance, Protest, and the Syrian Civil War." *ASAP/ Journal*, vol. 3 no. 2, 2018, p. 242-246. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/asa.2018.0017.
- O'Neil, et al. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics: An Integrated Approach*. W.W. Norton, 2018.
- Preston, Alex. "Mohsin Hamid: 'It's Important Not to Live One's LIFE Gazing towards the Future.'" *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 11 Aug. 2018, www.theguardian.com/books/2018/aug/11/mohsin-hamid-exit-west-interview.



Alexzander Baetsen

November 6, 2020
Montgomery Scholars
Capstone Course Project

To Blame
The Sword:
Examining
Social Media in
the Context of
Social Change

Although many are familiar with the fervent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in June of 2020, it is less widely known that another crucial social movement was experiencing a quiet revival within Montgomery County, Maryland. Toward the final weeks of June, an Instagram account known as 'metoomoco' surfaced, claiming itself as a page dedicated to being "a voice for survivors of sexual assault and harassment in MoCo" (@metoomoco). Within mere hours, the account began to post anonymous screenshots of direct messages from alleged victims of sexual harassment, describing how they had been harassed by male students and even male teachers within Montgomery County Public Schools. Many often ended their messages with an expression of gratitude that the account had given them a platform to share their stories anonymously and without judgment, adding that they felt relieved to know that they weren't alone in their struggles. As the account grew in numbers and more stories accumulated, the movement even managed to garner the attention of the Montgomery County police department and Montgomery County Public School officials, including superintendent Jack Smith, who vowed to launch investigations into the allegations and continue to protect students within Montgomery County (Peetz). While the account undeniably served as a safe space for survivors to share their stories and receive support from others who endured similar experiences, as the Instagram account grew and the news of allegations spread across social media, the movement began to falter slightly as the account's power began to be abused. After seeing the posted Instagram stories on the account, many accused perpetrators and their friends sent harassing messages to alleged victims telling them to retract their accusations, some going as far as to threaten violence if they did not concede. Additionally, it was revealed that some individuals had come forward with false stories in order to frame individuals that they did not like and that rumors were being spread amongst rivaling friend groups. While the 'metoomoco' movement eventually slowed down as a result of these misuses of influence, the account is still active today, posting resources for survivors of sexual assault and accepting messages from anyone who wants to share their story.

Many individuals often doubt that social media can be utilized to create real social change, asserting that social media may actually be hindering social progress by freely giving global platforms to hatred and intolerance. However, this opinion seems to be the equivalent of blaming the sword for the actions of its wielder. The truth of the matter is that

social media itself is simply a channel for communication and a method of disseminating information: it can be a tool or a weapon depending on the intentions of those who utilize it. Social media can absolutely function as an agent of social change; so long as those utilizing it have the genuine intention of working toward social justice and equity. However, the opposite is just as true: social media can indeed hinder social change if those utilizing it bear the intention of defending bigotry and oppression. The dynamic role of social media in relation to social change is directly characterized by the outcomes of the #MeToo movement, a social-media-born movement dedicated to raising awareness about sexual harassment and assault. Although the social media impact of the #MeToo movement motivated severe backlash against those speaking out in the form of harassment, defamation lawsuits, and arrests, the movement also served to inspire critical social changes such as increased awareness of sexual assault, legislative reform, and worldwide resignations of accused predators that are still reverberating today. While often known for its success in recent years, the “me too” movement was actually set in motion over a decade ago in 2006 by a Black woman named Tarana Burke, a sexual assault survivor and activist (Burke). In 2017, amidst the flurry of sexual assault, harassment, and rape allegations against the Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein, the grassroots movement suddenly went viral. On October 15th, American actress Alyssa Milano published a tweet that encouraged those of her followers who have been sexually harassed or assaulted to reply ‘me too’ to her post. The goal of this, she described, was to “give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem,” referring to the issue of sexual harassment and assault among women (@Alyssa_Milano). The next day, over 30,000 people had used the now-famous hashtag #MeToo. From there, the movement gained global recognition, with over 2.3 million people using the hashtag from eighty-five countries by the beginning of November (Powell). However, just because a movement is born through social media does not negate its real-world power: the impact of the #MeToo movement went far beyond the veil of electronic screens to create real social change.

First, it is important to define what exactly counts as “real social change.” For the sake of this paper, “real social change” will be defined as observable, progressive changes within a society that serve to further the ideals of social justice and equity. The first examples of such changes that were inspired by the #MeToo movement can be seen within America,

where the movement first originated. The most notable shift caused by the widespread social media posts was the disintegration of barriers surrounding the issue of sexual assault, a rather taboo topic that tends to hold connotations of shame and promiscuity. With more and more individuals coming forward to share their stories and discuss their experiences, open dialogue about sexual assault was encouraged rather than silenced. Another breakthrough fostered by this dialogue included the fact that it was not just women coming forward with their stories, but male survivors of sexual assault as well. The development of this nationwide conversation opened the doors for raising awareness about the actions that can be considered sexual harassment, as well as the prevalence of sexual assault and how it impacts survivors. This increased awareness specifically applied to men, many of whom had not developed an understanding of how common the issue was until they saw how many women had come forward with their stories (Powell). The impact of this awareness can be demonstrated by the increase in sexual harassment complaints reported to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which saw an unprecedented twelve percent increase in filed claims compared to the previous year. Additionally, human resource offices also saw a notable rise in harassment complaints, indicating that more employees feel empowered to come forward about sexual harassment in the workplace (Chiwaya). A final concrete change that was documented in the wake of the #MeToo movement was that resources for sexual assault victims, such as the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault hotline, noted a dramatic increase in activity, particularly when there were spikes in media attention to sexual assault cases (Chiwaya). This increase in resource activity implies that following the national conversation started by the #MeToo movement, victims of sexual assault have been accessing critical resources and support at a level never seen before.

However, social changes were not just felt in America, but in a multitude of other countries. This became possible due to social media's unrivaled scale of global connection, which has allowed social progress and change to develop a contagious nature. As the American achievements of the #MeToo movement spread widely across social media, thousands of women across the world were inspired to uphold the momentum of the movement within their own countries. In France, a similar hashtag inspired by the #MeToo movement went viral, #BalanceTonPorc, which translates to "expose your pigs" in an effort

to encourage individuals to come forward with their stories of sexual harassment. The hashtag gained overwhelming traction across the country, inspiring Marlène Schiappa, the Minister for Gender Equality, to compose a bill refining the definition of sexual harassment to include offenses such as street harassment and “upskirting,” as well as detailing stricter consequences for offenders (Vogelstein). The bill passed in August 2018, demonstrating how the #MeToo movement’s social media impact translated into legislative power. Another striking triumph for survivors of sexual assault arose in South Korea, where the #MeToo movement was ignited by the bravery of the lawyer Seo Ji-hyun, who came forward during a televised interview to discuss the sexual misconduct she endured at the hands of her former boss, the senior prosecutor Ahn Tae-geun. As a result of this public accusation, not only was Ji-hyun’s aggressor jailed for two years, but hundreds of other South Korean women followed in her steps and spoke out about their experiences, leading to the resignation of several prominent figures accused of sexual misconduct (Vogelstein). Finally, an unprecedented victory was also achieved in Nigeria in 2018 after Monica Osagie, a 23-year-old student, challenged her professor in court after he threatened her with course failure if Osagie would not engage in sexual activity with him. Osagie presented a recording of the conversation as evidence, leaving little room for school officials to deny or dismiss the allegations in the way that similar cases had been handled historically. As a result of her legal action, her recording went viral and the professor was ultimately suspended, landing a victory for Osagie and all of the young women who had come before her. Further, the case inspired a national conversation about sexual harassment that brought increased awareness of sexual misconduct within academic settings across Nigeria and set a foundation for future court cases (Vogelstein). These examples serve to illustrate the numerous victories that were achieved for sexual assault survivors across the globe as a result of the prominent social media presence of the #MeToo movement, demonstrating that social media can play a key role in driving significant social change within society.

However, just as social media can be used as a potent agent of social change, it can also inspire others to counter these progressive achievements, as is demonstrated through the backlash of the #MeToo movement. As women and men across the world came forward with their stories and shared their experiences with sexual assault, many alleged victims faced severe consequences, ranging from censorship to targeted harassment and

arrests. These consequences are well illustrated in China, where any social media posts relating to the #MeToo movement are erased within mere minutes from Weibo, a popular Chinese blogging platform. Further, any individuals who are believed to be supporting or participating in the #MeToo movement are monitored by the government and frequently arrested for speaking out about sexual harassment (Vogelstein). Similarly, in Egypt, taking part in activity related to the #MeToo movement was declared an act of sedition by the government, leading to the arrest of at least two women who spoke out on social media about sexual harassment. In other cases, women who accuse an individual of sexual misconduct may be subject to vicious slander and smear campaigns, as was the experience of May El Shamy, who is reported to be one of the first Egyptian women to file a police report against her supervisor. Following the submission of the report, Shamy was falsely branded as a member of the terrorist organization Muslim Brotherhood in an effort to ravage her reputation and destroy her credibility (Raghavan). Despite both of these deeply disturbing cases of injustice, they are not isolated events, nor are they the only ones to have occurred in the wake of the #MeToo movement. While it is unquestionably important to acknowledge the progress that has been ignited by the #MeToo movement's global scale of influence, it is equally necessary to realize that its social media presence has also enabled individuals to maliciously target survivors of sexual assault and push back against the social change being driven by the #MeToo movement.

It is important to understand that the negative outcomes that arose in the wake of the #MeToo movement are not due to a failure of the movement itself or its social media presence. As demonstrated by the diverse global reverberations of the #MeToo movement, it is clear that depending on who exploits it, social media can be equally utilized as a potent agent of social change and a tool of resistance against social progress. It is impossible to truly characterize social media itself as a positive or negative force in relation to social change, as it is the actions of its users that determine its fate. This is especially true in today's globalized world, where social media has enabled individuals to construct massive online platforms through which they can spread and amplify messages to an audience of millions of connected individuals across the globe. With such power comes an immense responsibility to maintain control over one's social media influence and use it wisely, a responsibility that many users are prone to disregarding. It is important now more than

ever that social media users remain diligently aware of the influence their online voices carry, thinking critically about the impact that their posts and retweets may have on their audience. While social media's globalized nature has provided numerous benefits in terms of engaging and connecting individuals from around the world, it is essential to realize that this greater scale of influence and connection simultaneously increases the potential for the weaponization of social media platforms and online content. However, instead of placing blame on the applications and modes of communication that develop in the online environment that characterizes social media, it is far more productive to direct accountability to the real perpetrators: those taking advantage of social media with the purpose of resisting and hindering progressive social change. To identify the true cause of our society's wounds and develop the long-term means to prevent them, it is imperative that our eyes look beyond the sword and judge the wielder.

Works Cited and Consulted

- @Alyssa_Milano. "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet." *Twitter*, 15 Oct. 2017, 4:12 pm.
https://twitter.com/alyssa_milano/status/919659438700670976?lang=en.
- @Metoomoco. "A voice for survivors..." *Instagram*.
<https://www.instagram.com/metoomoco/>.
- Burke, Tarana. "Get To Know Us: History & Inception." *Me Too. Movement*, 16 July 2020, metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/history-inception/.
- Chiwaya, Nigel. "New Data on #MeToo's First Year Shows 'Undeniable' Impact." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 13 Nov. 2018, www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/new-data-metoo-s-first-year-shows-undeniable-impact-n918821.
- Mahdavi, Pardis. "How #MeToo Became a Global Movement." *Foreign Affairs*, 16 Mar. 2018, www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-03-06/how-metoo-became-global-movement.
- Peetz, Caitlynn. "MCPS, Police Investigating Dozens of Sexual Assault and Harassment Claims." *Bethesda Magazine*, 26 June 2020, bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/schools/mcps-police-investigating-dozens-of-sexual-assault-and-harassment-claims/.
- Powell, Catherine. "#MeToo Goes Global and Crosses Multiple Boundaries." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 14 Dec. 2017, www.cfr.org/blog/metoo-goes-global-and-crosses-multiple-boundaries.
- Raghavan, Sudarsan, and Heba Farouk Mahfouz. "In Egypt, a #MeToo Complaint Can Land a Woman in Jail." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 30 Oct. 2018, www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-egypt-a-metoo-complaint-can-land-a-woman-in-jail/2018/10/24/3a2fe5a0-d6db-11e8-a10f-b51546b10756_story.html.
- Vogelstein, Rachel, and Meighan Stone. "Celebrating #MeToo's Global Impact." *Foreign Policy*, 7 Mar. 2019, foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/07/metooglobalimpactinternationalwomens-day/.
- Wildman, Sarah. "#MeToo Goes Global." *Foreign Policy*, 22 Jan. 2019, foreignpolicy.com/gt-essay/metoo-goes-global-feminism-activism/.



Adedokun Jagun

December 10, 2021

POLI

Prof. Jennifer Haydel

Politics in
Literature
Analysis:
Nigerian Society
as Portrayed in
“Half of a Yellow
Sun”

There is a Nigerian proverb, “Only the thing for which you have struggled will last.” Though in the case of the Nigerian Civil War, this is false. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie follows several characters as they live through this temporal event in her novel “Half of a Yellow Sun.” The characters followed are Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard. Ugwu and Olanna have a relation with Odenigbo, a fiery pan-Africanist that works at a local university. Ugwu works as Odenigbo’s houseboy and comes from a rural, traditionalist background. Olanna is Odenigbo’s lover, who, alongside her twin sister Kainene, comes from a wealthy business family background. Richard is starkly different from the two, as he is not Nigerian but is British. He comes to develop a relationship with Kainene as the novel progresses.

The livelihoods of these characters collapse as the story progresses. It started with the anti-Igbo pogroms, leaving Olanna traumatized and Ugwu distressed. Ethnic divides exacerbated by the former colonial presence of the British come frothing to the surface. Mistreatment towards the Igbo led to intensified ethnic nationalism and secession. Richard, too, finds himself buoyed by this wave of nationalism. This nationalism and hope sustain them, even when Olanna, Odenigbo, Ugwu, and their child have to relocate. Such hope comes crashing in the end, with the fall of Biafra and the disappearance of Kainene. All characters do not come out unscathed. Ugwu emerges with trauma and physical injuries. Olanna maintains her trauma, and she shares the same shattering of the soul with Richard due to the unknown state of Kainene. As a post-colonial state in which the strings of primordialism were pulled by European colonialists, this novel highlights not only that but the development of nationalism amongst the Igbo around a Biafran identity.

Nigeria is one of many lands ruled by Europeans, and this former colonial status shaped its development. However, the land had a history before the arrival of European colonialists. There was the Sokoto Caliphate, the Kingdom of Benin, and more. British colonialism began with the annexation of Lagos, which came “under the direct political control of a British governor” (Patrick et al., n.d., para. 15) after the previously throned ruler (who was sat by the British) failed to stabilize the region. After the Berlin Conference in 1845, the British continued their colonization inwards from Lagos. With the guidance of the Royal Niger Company, the British would come to dominate the region. After the deposition of the Royal Niger Company, Britain would later conquer Sokoto, “setting the boundaries of the British Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria.” This marks the emergence of the colony that would be now known as simply Nigeria.

As a colony, the British imposed their system of rule on the land. Although the British expanded Nigerian markets, “they were prejudiced by policies which restricted (for the benefit of outsiders) their participation in these markets” (Charle 1967, pg 81). Exploitation was a driving point for the colonial enterprise, especially during WWII. In fact, it can even be said that the British ran Nigeria akin to a corporation (Maiangwa et al., 2018). Even education within Nigeria focused on satiating the British idea of what Nigerians should be. They were focused on producing “clerks for government or mercantile work, and catechists and teachers for the missions” (Zachernuk 1998, pg 487). The idea of being a “New Man” took root, meaning to be “a reformed, pro-Western and educated Nigerian” (Imhonopi et al., 2013, pg 10), something that would cause many Nigerians to take a dismissive approach to their traditional practices and beliefs. Overall, Nigeria was noted for its highly decentralized administrative nature, “Such policies helped limit local resistance but increased the power of some ethnic groups over others, giving them greater authority within the imperial administration” (O’Neil et al., 2020, pg 737). After Nigeria gained independence, the legacy of colonialism still affected its society. The decentralized administrative structure paved the way for certain ethnic groups to be more dominant in the political sphere. The ethnic divide would become exacerbated, and those of a more “Westernized” background would look down on their brethren.

Though the ethnic divide in Nigeria was exacerbated by the British colonial structure, it has always existed in the region. There are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria and over 500 languages spoken. The most numerous and dominant groups have been the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa-Fulani. Several kingdoms and empires have existed in what now makes up Nigeria, with varying degrees of centralization. The Yoruba people had a high level of political centralization (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2013) and the Hausa-Fulani had several powerful city-states (O’Neil et.al, 2020). The Igbo in the southeast was less politically centralized compared to the other two groups. Prior to colonialism, these many kingdoms and empires interacted with each other. Although wars were indeed fought, interactions extended to cultural diffusion, inter-group marriages, trade, language, and more (Okpeh, 2007). Throughout the many societies of pre-colonial Nigeria, markets were a hotspot for this type of interaction. These markets “ provided functional platforms for economic and social contact which in turn ramified into a plethora of other relations.” Such interactions

run contrary to the ideals instilled by the British before the events of the Nigerian War, particularly in British (and Western) news. Regarding the anti-Igbo pogroms, news organizations such as the Herald wrote about “Ancient tribal hatreds” (Adichie, 2007, p. 161). Even Times magazine wrote an article titled “Man Must Whack”, misconstruing the word “whack” to mean violence, although in Nigeria Pidgin English “whack” means “eat”. These would be just a few instances in which there was a disconnect between the West and the citizens of Nigeria in understanding the situation going on.

The British colonial administration exacerbated the ethnic divide through its administrative structure. This is covered in the novel, in the second part of “The World Was Silent When We Died”. Ugwu writes here that the British favored the North (which mostly comprised of Hausa-Fulani people), viewing them as more civilized and superior to those in the South due to their Muslim adherence. A system of indirect rule dominated in the north, as “local leaders were allowed to keep their positions and so were absorbed into the new state bureaucracy” (O’Neil et al., 2020, pg 737) and allowing Sharia law to remain dominant. Meanwhile, in the south, Igbo resistance was more commonplace, reaffirming the British idea of the Igbo being less “civilized”. As power devolved down to the local level, this only reaffirmed regional tendencies amongst the people of Nigeria coupled with political parties that were mostly divided along ethnic lines. Many Nigerians adhered closely to their own ethnicities, even Odenigbo expresses such sentiment in the novel when he says “I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed black to be as different as possible from his white. But I was Igbo before the white man came” (Adichie, 2007, pg 32). Primordialism and the post-colonial status of Nigeria go hand in hand when examining the nature of the country as depicted in the novel. In a review of the novel, the reviewer describes Olanna and Kainene’s relationship as akin to the state of Nigeria, as “both they and their nation must choose between a fractious unity and a fraught secession” (Nixon, 2006). This volatile combination paved the way for ethnic violence and heightened tensions, especially in the aftermath of the primarily Igbo-led coup.

In the aftermath of the Igbo pogroms, a new sense of nationalism emerged in the battered peoples. The anti-Igbo pogroms occurred after the primarily Igbo-led coup that occurred in 1966, though there were killings of Igbos prior to this point in time. The Igbo

were negatively viewed by not only the Hausa-Fulani, but the Yoruba, and even the British. The British perception of them can be seen in Susan's (Richard's ex-girlfriend) statements, specifically when she equates the Igbo to Jews. Through her, one can see how many Westerners view the situation in Nigeria and Nigerians. The coup was simply the straw that broke the camel's back. In the aftermath of the coup, a countercoup occurred, crushing the budding hopes and aspirations of Nigerians, which is shown in the novel. Anti-Igbo hatred exploded after this, particularly in the northern region of Nigeria. There, many Igbos were slaughtered, initially starting with just Igbo soldiers and those involved with the coup, before extending to all Igbos. In the novel, Olanna herself loses her Aunt Ifeka and Uncle Mbaezi to Igbo persecutors in the north and witnesses many Igbos leaving the north as a result. This systemic persecution strengthens the cohesive identity of the Igbo, who go on to secede and form the nation-state of Biafra led by Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu. Even Richard, despite not being ethnically Igbo, feels a sense of national pride in Biafra and its stance against the Nigerian government, though he comes to realize he is not truly Biafran, he is still a British man who lives in Biafra. Despite the hardships the Igbo inhabitants of Biafra go through, they still maintain this strong sense of nationalism, even as they are air raided multiple times as shown in the novel, and run out of food.

There are two interesting developments in the novel regarding this nationalism, one is from Ugwu and the other is from the perspective of non-Igbo minorities of Biafra. Ugwu is Igbo, and through his own fault ends up conscripted to fight on the Biafran front. Initially, Ugwu was like Olanna and Odenigbo, maintaining a strong sense of Igbo nationalism and pride in Biafra. During the events of his conscription, this changes. While conscripted Ugwu encounters High-Tech, a 13-year-old Biafran soldier who carries himself as though he were older. Though Ugwu initially does not mind being involved in the fight, even taking a small sense of pride from it, this changes as he kills, fights, and witnesses the corrupt acts of the soldiers, eventually coming to partake in such actions himself when he rapes the bar girl later on. After all of this, Ugwu expresses distaste for Biafra and the war effort. While others view him as having fought proudly for the cause, Ugwu is aware of the truth behind the soldiers and the corruptness of it all, the corruptness that people are starving to death over.

The belief of other ethnic minorities runs contrary to that of the Igbo and is primarily represented through Alice. At the refugee center where Olanna and Odenigbo have to stay,

the other Igbo residents are suspicious of Alice simply due to her not being Igbo. Mama Oji expresses this when she claims that Alice thinks she is better than all of them and is working against the Biafran cause. Alice is disconnected from the fight for Biafra, as a non-Igbo, and simply views herself as someone caught in the crosshairs of a conflict not concerning her or her people. Yet, they still end up victims all the same.

In “Half of a Yellow Sun” the complexities of Nigerian life after independence are explored. The lives of Nigerians were shaped by the past, from pre-colonial to colonial, and came to a head in the Nigerian Civil War. Despite the war, decades of strife would still continue under military rule and the continuation of ethnic conflicts. The Niger Delta would become a hotbed for conflicts between other ethnic minorities and the Nigerian government, particularly concerning the influence of Royal Dutch Shell in the region. Today, Nigeria is no longer ruled by the military, but many problems still remain. The efforts of Nigerians are a tried and continued force that will continue to bring about change, whether that be for better or worse. An analysis of the complexities of Nigeria presented in the book provides a better understanding of where the future of the country might head and an enlightened way of perceiving the state today.

Works Cited

- Adichie, C. N. (2007). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Anchor.
- Patrick, E., Toyin, F., & The Centenary Project. (n.d.). *Birth of the Nigerian Colony*. *Google Arts & Culture*.
https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/birth-of-the-nigerian-colony-pan-atlantic-university/ARi_MKdz?hl=en
- Imhonopi, D., & Urim, U. M., & Iruonagbe, T. C. (2013). Colonialism, social structure and class formation: Implication for development in Nigeria. In D. Imhonopi & U. M. Urim (Eds), *A panoply of readings in social sciences: Lessons for and from Nigeria*. Pp. 107-122.
- Zachernuk, P. S. (1998). African history and imperial culture in colonial Nigerian schools. *Journal of the International African Institute*, 68(4), 484–505.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1161163>
- Charle, E. G. (1967). English Colonial Policy and the Economy of Nigeria. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 26(1), 79–92.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1536-7150.1967.tb00991.x>
- Taiwo, O. (1993). Colonialism and Its Aftermath: The Crisis of Knowledge Production. *Callaloo*, 16(4), 891–908. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2932216>
- Maiangwa, B., Dan Suleiman, M., & Arthur Anyaduba, C. (2018). The Nation as Corporation: British Colonialism and the Pitfalls of Postcolonial Nationhood in Nigeria. *Peace and Conflict Studies*. *Published*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2018.1438>
- O'Neil, P. H., Fields, K. J., & Share, D. (2017). Nigeria. In *Cases in Comparative Politics* (6th ed., p. 737). *W. W. Norton & Company*.
- Michalopoulos, S., & Papaioannou, E. (2013). Pre-Colonial Ethnic Institutions and Contemporary African Development. *Econometrica*, 81(1), 113–152.
<https://doi.org/10.3982/ecta9613>
- Okpke, O. O. (2007). Patterns And Dynamics Of Inter-group Relations in Nigeria, 1800 - 1900 AD. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 17, 123–137.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41857151>
- Nixon, R. (2006, September 22). Half of a Yellow Sun - By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie - Books - Review. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/01/books/review/Nixon.t.html>
- Korieh, C. J. (2013). Biafra and the discourse on the Igbo Genocide. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 48(6), 727–740. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909613506455>





Dustin Duby- Koffman

December 10, 2021

Honors Seminar: American Culture
and Identity

Professor Prendergast

Amy Tan and
Emily Dickinson:
Metaphors of
Hope

The novelist and essayist Amy Tan and the poet Emily Dickinson do not at first seem like literary sisters. Tan is a second-generation Chinese American from California, while Dickinson was a seventh-generation American from a Calvinist family in Amherst, Massachusetts. Tan was influenced by women novelists, especially Louise Erdrich; Dickinson read the Transcendentalists, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson. Tan is engaged with many facets of public life while Dickinson was known to choose a quiet life at home. However, they used figurative language in similar ways. Separated by a century and completely different family circumstances, Tan and Dickinson invented American identities for themselves by wrestling with cultural and personal tensions through their writing. For Tan, the question was how to understand her mother's hopes for her in America, her mother's adopted country. For Dickinson, the question was how to find hope for an independent spiritual and intellectual life in Puritan New England as a woman. Tan and Dickinson approached their themes through metaphor. The theme of hope reflected their different American stories. The prologue of Tan's first novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, and Dickinson's poem "'Hope' is the thing with feathers" both center on metaphors of hope and birds. A comparison of the two shows both how similar their strategies are and how different their views. They wrote themselves into the American literary canon and even American popular culture with their complicated metaphors and hopes.

Both Tan and Dickinson use metaphor in unmechanical ways to express inner feelings, create new images, and highlight the indeterminate meanings of particular concepts. Tan explains that, in her novels, "If you do a Venn diagram of the metaphoric imagery and the situation at hand, the overlap is emotional memory" (*Where the Past Begins* 32). Through metaphor, Tan arrives at "the revelation of my spiritual twin—the intuitive part of me made conscious. That was what I sensed while writing *The Joy Luck Club*" (Tan, *Where the Past Begins* 39). In addition to expressing emotion, Tan's metaphors are a vehicle for creativity. In an interview for the National Endowment for the Arts, Tan called metaphor the centerpiece of a writer's imagination (Tan, *Conversation* 9:35-10:01). Finally, and most importantly, Tan's metaphors are explorations rather than conclusions. In her memoir *Where the Past Begins*, Tan goes into a deeper description of her metaphors, emphasizing how they deal in uncertainty and change:

They do not follow the definition of metaphors learned in school—one thing being similar to another based on traits, like size or movement. They are not like those packaged homilies, e.g., the early bird gets the worm. Instead, they are often linked to personal history, and some of those autobiographic metaphors are ones that only I would understand. They arise spontaneously and contain an arc of experience. In effect, they are always about change between moments, not about a single moment, and often about a state of flux that leads to emotional understanding of something from my past. Those that are clearly linked to personal history could be described as autobiographic metaphor. (Tan, *Where the Past Begins* 26)

At several points in *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan inserts short parables, prose poems essentially, that contain complicated images rooted in metaphor, all circling the theme of mothers, daughters, and hope. A young girl falls off her bike, too angry about her mother's warnings to make it to the corner, presumably not understanding her mother's hopes to keep her safe (Tan, *Joy Luck* 96). The metaphor here contains a whole story about flux, as the child tries to stay balanced between her own independent desires and her mother's pull on her. A mother gives her daughter a mirror that, when placed properly, will reverse bad omens, double the daughter's luck, and fulfill her hopes for a grandchild (Tan, *Joy Luck* 176). This metaphor again deals with both emotions and change, as the mother sees into the future while the daughter cannot. A grandmother, hearing her granddaughter laugh, wonders whether she was wrong to protect her daughter by teaching her to be fearful or suspicious of others. She tells the baby, whom she names Queen of the Western Skies (perhaps in honor of her American birthright), "Then you must teach my daughter this same lesson. How to lose your innocence but not your hope. How to laugh forever" (Tan, *Joy Luck* 264). Here the metaphor shows an "arc of experience" across generations. These metaphorical interludes demonstrate Tan's interest in images that can be puzzled over but never pinned down. They interpret and reinterpret aspects of the mother-daughter bond. The book actually begins with a parable about a mother, a bird, and hope. Tan has said that she wrote this last and that it sums up the whole book for her (Tan, *Conversation* 17:56).

Dickinson also uses metaphor to express emotion, create novel images, and deal with complex ideas. Dickinson is terse where Tan is expansive, but her metaphors are still rich

with feeling. For example, in "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain (280)" (Dickinson 128), Dickinson writes of mourners essentially stomping on her heart:

And then I heard them lift a Box
And creak across my Soul
With those same Boots of Lead, again,
Then Space - began to toll (9-12)

In "I dwell in Possibility (466)," Dickinson teases at feelings about poetry as her home, her hope for the future, but also creates an Escher-like image of an impossible building:

I dwell in Possibility –
A fairer House than Prose –
More numerous of Windows –
Superior – for Doors –

Of Chambers as the Cedars –
Impregnable of eye –
And for an everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky –

Of Visitors – the fairest –
For Occupation – This –
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise – (Dickinson 224)

The images created are almost prismatic. The house is both open and "impregnable of eye." The roof is the sky but also has the specific shape of "Gambrels." The house is the site of both "This," i.e. gripping a pen and writing, and the open-handed gathering of "Paradise." As Suzanne Juhasz, who has written extensively about Dickinson and was the founding editor of *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, explains, "That the analogies compound one another rather than fit neatly, that the definitions never quite dovetail, is the point. The mastery, and pleasure, comes from the repetition, that is not only recreation but transformation" (213).

In fact, Dickinson writes about poetry, hope, and home in a number of poems, as discussed below. Finally, like Tan, Dickinson works over big concepts with multiple metaphors. Noting

the “centrality of analogy to [Dickinson’s] poetics” (Juhasz 206), Juhasz argues, “Analogy is repetition with a difference. Telling it again and again but in the process recreating it is at the crux of her artistic endeavor” (Juhasz 215). The dashes and other discontinuities in Dickinson’s work themselves can be seen as a metaphor for her seeking and creating with words as her material, as Roxanne Harde, a professor of American literature, observes: “Indeterminacy of form, diction, narrator, and meaning is constant in her canon and operates as a steady, subtle metaphor for the unanswerable questions that most vex her, a metaphor that underpins the models of body and soul that she posits as the means to understanding spirituality.” Therefore, though Tan and Dickinson have very distinct styles, their ingenuity with metaphor unites them.

Hope is the subject of metaphors explored by both writers. Though crystallized in the prologue and “Hope is the thing with feathers,” their different ideas about hope are examined throughout *The Joy Luck Club* and in a number of Dickinson’s poems. For Tan, hope means striving toward the American Dream that immigrants like her parents embraced, but it also means approaching an understanding of the past. Tan’s mother had fled China just after World War II, leaving behind three daughters (Tan, *Where the Past Begins*, 84). Since Communist China and the United States did not have diplomatic relations until 1972, what was left behind was mysterious to Tan’s generation. At the same time, America had a long history of discriminating against Chinese Americans. The immigrant’s hope and her child’s reality were different, and Tan’s first novel focuses on the meaning and transmission of an immigrant’s hopes. The subject of hope is a happy life, assimilation into American society, and family understanding.

Tan’s explorations of hope throughout *The Joy Luck Club* reflect the experiences of first- and second-generation Americans in the mid-twentieth century. Tan writes of hope that is active, deliberate, and complicated. As Migali Cornier Michael, an expert on contemporary American literature, has pointed out in an essay on *The Joy Luck Club*, for someone who has boldly left behind a birthplace, “hope is a choice.” In this analysis, “the characters’ sense of hope, derived from a blend of the Chinese notion of fate and the American dream, both of which contain and celebrate a participatory element, provides the impetus for their developments as agents within the context of the collective” (Michael). Were hope passive or automatic, the four mothers in *The Joy Luck Club* would not struggle so hard to pass

hope to the next generation. In fact, Jei-Lin, one of the daughters, speaks of hopes the older generation cannot express in their new language (Tan, *Joy Luck* 5) and hopes that could be inherited if only they were understood (Tan, *Joy Luck* 34). Hope is also deliberate in *The Joy Luck Club*. Lindo, one of the mothers, wanted a way out of an arranged marriage. According to Chinese custom, the marriage was not fated if a candle did not burn through the night.

So Lindo's hope saved her:

I was not thinking when my legs lifted me up and my feet ran me across the courtyard to the yellow-lit room. But I was hoping—I was praying to Buddha, the goddess of mercy, and the full moon—to make that candle go out. It fluttered a little and the flame bent down low, but still both ends burned strong. My throat filled with so much hope that it finally burst and blew out my husband's end of the candle. (Tan, *Joy Luck* 61)

Finally, in Tan's world, hope is complicated. One of the daughters, Rose, explains how fate and faith and hope could be confused or perhaps were the same thing all along. Importantly, she has trouble understanding her mother's way of communicating about her beliefs:

My mother believed in God's will for many years. It was as if she had turned on a celestial faucet and goodness kept pouring out. She said it was faith that kept all these good things coming our way, only I thought she said "fate," because she couldn't pronounce that "th" sound in "faith." And later, I discovered that maybe it was fate all along, that faith was just an illusion that somehow you're in control. I found out the most I could have was hope, and with that I was not denying any possibility, good or bad. I was just saying, If there is a choice, dear God or whatever you are, here's where the odds should be placed. (Tan, *Joy Luck* 140)

Hope is faith, fate, and a gamble. This aligns with Tan's description of her mother's beliefs. Her mother believed in everything from miracles to ghosts, "whatever would give her the most hope" (Tan, *Conversation* 21:57-23:20).

For Dickinson, writing about hope also involved tackling matters of deep belief. The Second Great Awakening's revivals and the ideas of Transcendentalists who found God in nature both influenced Dickinson's wrestling with the old Calvinism of her heritage. The Calvinist belief in an authoritarian, demanding God was challenged to some extent by the Second Great Awakening. The religious revivals of Dickinson's time "were in part shaped

by romanticism and sentimentalism and relied on intuition and feeling to access spiritual knowledge,” according to Dickinson scholar Elizabeth Petrino (35). However, Dickinson did not join the Church, and was one of the few students in her 1847-48 class at Mount Holyoke College who was therefore “without hope” (McLean 32). Dickinson’s family had high social status in Amherst, allowing Dickinson the freedom to question Puritanism: “In fact, her entire body of work might be interpreted as a rebellion against the structures and dictates of Puritanism” (Petrino 33-34). Dickinson’s familiarity with Transcendentalists’ writings encouraged her to look for divinity in nature. A scholar of both poetry and divinity studies, Nadean Bishop, observes that Dickinson’s spirituality is “marked by negation of the existing religious dogmas and a decision based on Self-Reliance to remake God and to create her own Heaven.” For Dickinson, hope had spiritual meaning, bound up in her desire to find a heaven on Earth and to serve God with a language of her own—since the Calvinist ways of communicating divinity did not feel true to her. The subject of hope is salvation or transcendence.

Thus, while Tan writes of hope that is active, deliberate, and complicated, Dickinson writes of hope that is easy, natural, and universal. In “Hope is a strange invention (1392),” hope is a machine, it’s work unending, “never wearing out,” and effortless, “electric,” and belonging to all:

Hope is a strange invention—
A Patent of the Heart—
In unremitting action
Yet never wearing out—

Of this electric Adjunct
Not anything is known
But its unique momentum
Embellish all we own— (Dickinson 597)

In "The way Hope builds his House (1481)," hope creates a house without the hard work of actual construction; his home is made of ethereal stuff and his aim is the heavens:

The way Hope builds his House

It is not with a sill –

Nor Rafter – has that Edifice

But only Pinnacle –

Abode in as supreme

This superficialities

As if it were of Ledges smit

Or mortised with the Laws – (Dickinson 625)

In "Had I presumed to hope (522)," hope does not fail but rather is the opposite of despair in contemplating an afterlife that is not assured:

Had I presumed to hope—

The loss had been to Me

A Value—for the Greatness' Sake—

As Giants—gone away—

Had I presumed to gain

A Favor so remote—

The failure but confirm the Grace

In further Infinite—

'Tis failure—not of Hope—

But Confident Despair—

Advancing on Celestial Lists—

With faint—Terrestrial power—

'Tis Honor—though I die—
For That no Man obtain
Till He be justified by Death—
This—is the Second Gain— (Dickinson 255)

Unlike Tan's difficult hope, which is demonstrated through life choices, Dickinson's hope is therefore a simple part of life; to the extent Dickinson's hope is a choice, it occupies one's inner life.

The prologue to *The Joy Luck Club* and Dickinson's "Hope' is the thing with feathers" show most starkly how the two writers use nuanced and novel metaphoric images in parallel ways but to very different ends. In Tan's prologue, a woman buys a bird that represents luck and thus hope. She takes it with her to America where it is taken from her; she is left with just a feather to give to her daughter (Tan, *Joy Luck* 2). Patricia P. Chu, Professor of English and Director of Asian-American Studies at George Washington University, explains, "The story ends with the immigrant mother poised between hope that her daughter may still be brought to understand the world of meaning symbolized by the swan's feather and fear that the moment for transmitting that legacy may never arise." In Dickinson's poem, a bird again stands in for hope, but it could not be more different from Tan's bird. In this definition poem, hope sits in the soul and sings:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –
And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me. (Dickinson 116)

Tan's bird is dynamic and part of the material world; Dickinson's bird is eternal and part of the spiritual world. Tan's bird is expensive; Dickinson's bird asks for nothing. Tan's bird has transformed itself from duck to goose to swan by striving; Dickinson's bird is generic. Tan's bird is a means of communication between generations; Dickinson's bird sings but neither communicates nor carries messages. Tan's bird is yanked away from the mother, and one feather is a reminder of hope meant for someone else. Dickinson's bird is indestructible, and it is and always will be, apparently, "the thing with feathers." Both metaphors are slippery. In Tan's prologue, the bird is hope but so is the remaining feather. The bird represents luck but also love. The bird changes itself but is also an object that can be destroyed. Birds sing, but this one listens. Dickinson's metaphor is also ambiguous. Hope is in quotation marks, as if its name is uncertain. The bird is a thing, not an animal. It does not seem to fly. And why does the poet's hope not have words? The two pieces of writing encapsulate the attitudes toward hope of Tan and Dickinson. Tan's hope is caught up in personal relationships and the opportunities offered by America to immigrants. Dickinson's hope reflects an internal sense that God is with her and that her soul can provide the words to hope's tune.

In her interview with the National Endowment for the Arts, Tan says that her mother taught her:

there's no one set of beliefs that govern the way the world works, for me, and that I have **to find the answers by asking my own questions.** My mother believed in all possibilities. She believed in miracles, she believed in God, she believed in curses, she believed in ghosts, she believed in fate, she believed in luck and ancestors and reincarnation. She believed I was the reincarnation of someone she wronged in a past life because I had come back to torture her. She believed in so many things and that's not to say she was inconsistent and she was crazy. It was more that she believed in whatever was —what would give her the most hope. **She taught me the qualities of hope.** (Tan, *Conversation* 21:50-23:00)

Tan figured these things out through writing, as she explains:

Spontaneous epiphanies always leave me convinced once again that there is no greater meaning to my life than what happens when I write. It gives me awareness so sharp it punctures old layers of thought so that I can ascend—that’s what it feels like, a weightless rising to a view high enough to survey the moments of the past that led to this one. (Tan, *Where the Past Begins* 39)

For Tan, “Every book is about that [self-identity] and it’s about who we are and how we became that way” (Tan, *Overheard* 00:02-00:25). Tan’s parents expected her to be a doctor and concert pianist. However, only by writing her autobiographic metaphorical stories did Tan come to understand her mother and show her mother that understanding (Tan, *Joy Luck* xvii). In the process, Tan became a writer who transcended the expected quiet role of an Asian American woman, satisfying inadvertently her mother’s desires for her.

Dickinson also invented herself through writing. She examined and re-examined her beliefs on the page, trusting that her words mattered and would one day be read. In “This is my letter to the world (441),” Dickinson expresses her confidence:

This is my letter to the world,
That never wrote to me,—
The simple news that Nature told,
With tender majesty.
Her message is committed
To hands I cannot see;
For love of her, sweet countrymen,
Judge tenderly of me! (Dickinson 211)

She refused to accept the Calvinist views of a patriarchal God and predestination. She wrote of “Possibility” with the hope that creates space for prayer through writing.

Tan and Dickinson have both become literary and cultural icons. As E.D. Huntley has written in *Amy Tan: A Critical Companion*, “[I]f the number of master’s theses and doctoral dissertations, professional journal articles, and book chapters written about *The Joy Luck*

Club and even *The Kitchen God's Wife* is any gauge of literary merit, then Tan already has earned herself a berth in the canon of contemporary American literature" (40). Of course, Tan's books have been tremendously popular as well. *The Joy Luck Club* stayed on The New York Times bestseller list for more than six months. It became a Hollywood movie, the first major production with an all Asian American cast, and is now a part of the US National Film Registry (H. Chu). Tan is featured as a presenter in Master Class, joining the ranks of Serena Williams, Yo Yo Ma, and Neal Gaiman. Many children know her work through the PBS cartoon *Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat*. Though Tan has resisted being pigeonholed as an ethnic writer, she has inspired many Asian Americans. As a young contemporary Chinese American author has written, "Becoming a published author — as far-fetched as that seemed — entered the realm of possibility, with the proof of her [Tan's] books in my hands. ... Tan inspired me and so many others who followed to write the stories that only we could tell" (Hua). Tan has inspired other writers because she writes about the universal through a very specific lens, showing others how that is possible.

Dickinson wrote herself into the American pantheon. As poet Ruth Stone explained, "In her cryptic inventions, she broke the tiresome mold of American poetry. We still stand among those shards and splinters" (Qtd. in Smith). Dickinson is still the subject of scholarly debate and popular interest. A fictionalized television series inspired by her life has won her new attention, and the internet offers T-shirts boasting lines of her poems, with many boldly pronouncing "Hope is the thing with feathers." Dickinson's works have been claimed by many, including feminists. As stated in *The Hollywood Reporter*, of all places, "Her slant rhyme schemes inspired generations of female writers to break boundaries, personally and creatively" (Lambert). In that publication, seven contemporary writers, including 2018 Pulitzer Prize finalist Evie Shockley, bestselling Young Adult author Colleen Hoover, and poet, critic, and essayist Deborah Landau, talk about Dickinson's influence in their work. A more scholarly treatment of this subject was published in 2006, *A Door Ajar: Contemporary Writers and Emily Dickinson* by Thomas Gardner.

Tan and Dickinson are sisters in literature, having succeeded by asking their own questions and writing answers that do justice to the big American questions we are free to pose. What do we hope for? What do we believe? Where do we fit in? Both remain popular because they avoid easy answers.

Works Cited

- Bishop, Nadean. "Queen of Calvary: Spirituality in Emily Dickinson." *Literature Resource Center*, Jan. 1999. EBSCOhost, search-ebSCOhost-com.montgomerycollege.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjglr&AN=edsjglr.1420026904&site=eds-live&scope=site.
- Chu, Hau. "Why 'The Joy Luck Club' is the most interesting – and frustrating – addition to the National Film Registry this year." *The Washington Post*, 14 Dec. 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/national-film-registry-2020-library-of-congress-joy-luck-club/2020/12/13/7a473a8c-3b18-11eb-98c4-25dc9f4987e8_story.html
- Chu, Patricia P. "'That Was China, That Was Their Fate': Ethnicity And Agency In The Joy Luck Club." *Critical Insights: The Joy Luck Club*, edited by Robert C. Evans, Salem, 2009. Salem Online, online.salempress.com. Accessed 18 Oct. 2021.
- Dickinson, Emily. *The Complete Poems*. Fabre and Fabre, 2016.
- Harde, Roxanne. "Who Has Not Found the Heaven–Below–/Will Fail of It Above–': Emily Dickinson's Spirituality." *Things of the Spirit: Women Writers Constructing Spirituality*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2004. Rpt. in *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* (Vol. 171).
- Hu, Vanessa. "How Amy Tan 'inspired me and so many others who followed to write the stories that only we could tell.'" PBS, 28 Apr. 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/american-masters/how-amy-tan-inspired-me-and-so-many-others-who-followed-to-write-the-stories-that-only-we-could-tell/17842/>.
- Huntley, E.D. *Amy Tan, A Critical Companion*. Greenwood Press, 1998.
- Juhasz, Suzanne. "The Irresistible Lure of Repetition and Dickinson's Poetics of Analogy." *Critical Insights: Emily Dickinson*, Oct. 2010, pp. 205–216. EBSCOhost, montgomerycollege.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebSCOhost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=prf&AN=57419913&scope=site.
- Lambert, Molly. "Tell It Slant: Modern Women Writers Reflect on Emily Dickinson's Influence." *The Hollywood Reporter*, 1 Nov. 2019. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/tell-it-slant-modern-women-writers-emily-dickinson-planetv-1250744/>
- McLean, Sydney R. "Emily Dickinson at Mount Holyoke." *The New England Quarterly*, Mar. 1934, pp. 25-42. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/359265>
- Michael, Magali, Cornier. "Choosing Hope and Remaking Kinship: Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club." *Contemporary Literary Criticism Select*. EBSCOhost, search-ebSCOhost-com.montgomerycollege.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjglr&AN=edsjglr.1100083909&site=eds-live&scope=site. Accessed 31 Oct. 2021.
- Petrino, Elizabeth. "Emily Dickinson and Her Culture." *Critical Insights: Emily Dickinson*, Oct. 2010, pp. 31–50. EBSCOhost, montgomerycollege.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebSCOhost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=prf&AN=57419905&scope=site.

Smith, Martha Nell. "American Women's Poetry and Dickinson's Legacy." Inaugural Lecture of the Emily Dickinson Lectureship in American Poetry, Octo. 1999, Pennsylvania State University. <http://www.emilydickinson.org/titanic-operas/folio-one/introduction>

Tan, Amy. *A Conversation with Amy Tan by Lawrence Bridges*. National Endowment for the Arts, 5 June 201. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zuRO4M6D_Y

--- *The Joy Luck Club*. Penguin Books, 2006.

--- *Overheard with Evan Smith*, PBS, 6 Jul. 2015,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6L5878y6A8o>

--- *Where the Past Begins: Memory and Imagination* (Kindle Edition). Ecco, 2017.



Ajay Khalsa

November 3, 2021

ENGL 213: British Literature I

Professor Christina Devlin

Beowulf and
Paradise Lost:
British Epics

For centuries, Britain's writers have felt the absence of a comprehensive national mythology—the ubiquitous stories that define a country's spirit, like Homer's epics or the Norse sagas. Many, from the uncredited authors of Old English manuscripts to the likes of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, have contended with this lack of a national mythology—especially in comparison to the richness of it in other places, such as Italy or Scandinavia—and tried to fill that gap with their own attempts at a defining British myth. Two of the most prominent examples of British epics are the 8th-11th century poem, *Beowulf* and John Milton's 1667 epic, *Paradise Lost*. Both poems find their Britishness in their shared theme of religion, rather than in portrayals of British heroes and history, though only the latter can truly be considered a Christian epic, and even then, with some political caveats. Despite their differences in purpose, both poems find commonality in plot and characterization due to the British heritage that formed them.

Despite the final subject matter of his epic, Milton originally set out to write a poem that would be uniquely British. In his essay, *The Reason of Church-Government*, he states “That what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above, of being a Christian, might do for mine” (book 2 para. 1). It was Milton's intention from the beginning to include religious themes in his epic—Christianity was an integral part of the British identity and Milton himself was deeply religious. However, his primary drive was a nationalistic one, to create for Britain what the Greeks and Romans had in their Pantheon, a legendary history to inspire a sense of pride and unity in their people—even as they lived through times of strife and political upheaval, such as Britain did in the mid-seventeenth century. To Milton, the obvious choice was to write about King Arthur, and he dedicated himself to separating fact from fiction in Arthurian legend, combing through countless obscure manuscripts in old monasteries. The search left him unsatisfied however, often doubting the veracity of the sources he found and detesting the sensibilities of the monks who wrote them (Jones 906-908). Milton instead found solace in the Bible, which he felt he could trust implicitly: “Whereas heretofore we have heard about the darkness, the difficulty, the tortuousness of the way among the human sources ... the Scriptures are clear and intelligible: they are eternal, they are certain” (Jones 908). In order for his epic to have the desired effect, to become the mythology he felt his country sorely lacked, its subject had to be something Milton felt was true and enduring.

Milton's experience of the English Civil War also colored his perception of kingly stories, especially those of Catholic influence like King Arthur. He was a staunch supporter of the British Commonwealth and Oliver Cromwell, even writing in support of the regicide of Charles I. After the restoration of the monarchy, Milton narrowly avoided punishment, but did not give up his belief in a meritocracy (Carey). Thus, *Paradise Lost* was his way to "justify the ways of God to men" (1.26); to explain why God was a deserving and true monarch who should be followed obediently, unlike any man who proclaimed himself as such. Milton's rejection of the British monarchy further permeated his epic in his characterization of Satan, who is at times so charismatic and eloquent in his cause to rebel against the tyranny of God and heaven, that William Blake noted in his book, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, that Milton was "of the Devil's party without knowing it" (10). Though at its inception *Paradise Lost* was meant to be the epic of Britain, exemplifying its people and national identity based on events from its history, Milton's life experiences and uncompromising opinions turned it into something different: a principally Christian epic and a political one. Where it still concerned Britain was in the language he chose to write it, and in his aspirations for the future of his country; that its people would live obediently in the word of God and accept no other monarch as their divine ruler.

The identity of the *Beowulf* poet is unknown, so we cannot say for certain what his intentions were in writing it, or even why he ended up choosing that particular story—of pagan kings and monsters, rather than heroes closer to home. For much of its history, the *Beowulf* manuscript had cultural significance only as a historical document. In it were kings and countries that were known to have existed, and the poem provided further, if meager, evidence of the events of their rule. In his 1936 lecture, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," J. R. R. Tolkien argued that "Nearly all the censure, and most of the praise, that has been bestowed on *Beowulf* has been due either to the belief that it was something that it was not ... or to disappointment at the discovery that it was itself and not something that the scholar would have liked better." The poem was written in English and contains Christian themes so it could not be a pagan epic. *Beowulf* also does not pay strict attention to the accuracy of the events and customs it depicts, so neither can it be classified a history. According to Tolkien, the *Beowulf* poet "brought probably *first* to his task a knowledge of Christian poetry, especially that of the Caedmon school, and especially *Genesis*" but "literal

historical fidelity founded on modern research was, of course, not attempted.” In these ways the *Beowulf* poet is both like and unlike Milton: Like him, in his affinity for Genesis and belief that elements of the story therein would befit an epic, and unlike him in his indifference towards in-depth research on the subject matter.

Where the *Beowulf* poet saw fit to take aspects of Christianity and apply them to his imagined, fantastical version of sixth-century Scandinavia, Milton discarded all historical speculation, claiming the Bible as his sole authoritative source. However, the *Beowulf* poet was not lazy or ignorant; the knowledge he possessed of native stories would have been the result of great study: “to his task the poet brought a considerable learning in native lays and traditions: only by learning and training could such things be acquired” (Tolkien). Furthermore, the poet’s merging of Christianity, pagan heroes, and monsters is not a confused mashing of disparate themes, but purposeful and vital to the effect of the poem, being that “man, each man and all men, and all their works shall die” (Tolkien). Unlike *Paradise Lost*, *Beowulf* was never meant to be an English epic, nor did it become a Christian one. Instead, it is a poem about human impermanence—of a hero who was righteous and brave, who slew literal monsters in the name of loyalty and God, but in the end still failed, and saw that his legacy would wane.

Though *Beowulf* and *Paradise Lost* are different in purpose and come from vastly different time periods, the shared nationality and Christian values of their poets have led to similarities in structure and details. Jennifer Smith of California State University points out that “Both God and Hrothgar are king figures who call on their heroes (Christ/*Beowulf*) to defeat the evil (Satan/*Grendelkin* and the dragon) that threatens to destroy the paradise each has created (*Paradise/Heorot*).” In *Beowulf*’s formal boast to Hrothgar, he says that he means “to perform to the uttermost / What your people wanted or perish in the attempt, / In the fiend’s clutches. And I shall fulfill that purpose, / Prove myself with a proud deed / Or meet my death here in the mead-hall” (634-638). In *Paradise Lost*, the son of God makes a similar offer: “I offer: on me let thine anger fall; / Account me Man; I for his sake will leave / Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee / Freely put off, and for him lastly die / Well pleased; on me let Death wreak all his rage. / Under his gloomy power I shall not long / Lie vanquished” (3.237-243). The parallels between the heroes are striking, both possess characteristics of their respective lords: *Beowulf*, the nobility and bravery of a younger Hrothgar, whose past

exploits built the hall of Heorot; and Christ, who is a reflection of God's wisdom and vessel for his divine plan. Both offer their services in defeating their king's great nemesis, and both are willing to give up their lives in the attempt. Despite these close similarities, Milton could not have been influenced by or even aware of the existence of the *Beowulf* manuscript, which only became available in 1815 (Smith). Instead, it is the poets' shared heritage that makes aspects of these poems so alike. It is the lineage of histories and religious texts that scholars in Britain would have been exposed to—even separated by centuries—that makes these vastly different poems so similarly British in their identity.

Beowulf and *Paradise Lost* are both vastly different and remarkably alike; one, the poem of a man contemplating his impermanence; the other, a product of political disappointment and religious motivation. Neither concern is Britain explicitly, yet both are integral to its literary history. These epics set the precedent for what would become the mythology of Britain, not the legendary histories of British heroes and Kings, but stories of the spirit of its people and the issues that concerned them most.

Works Cited and Consulted

Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Project Gutenberg, 2014.

Carey, John. "Milton." *In Our Time*, BBC, 7 Mar. 2002.

Heaney, Seamus. *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000.

Jones, Putnam Fennell. "Milton and the Epic Subject from British History." *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1927, pp. 901–909., <https://doi.org/10.2307/457543>.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Project Gutenberg, 1992.

Milton, John. *The Reason of Church-Government*. Rothwell, 1641.

Smith, Jennifer. *Paradise Lost and Beowulf: The Christian/Pagan Hybrids of the Epic Tradition*, 15 Feb. 2001, <https://home.csulb.edu/~jsmith10/miltbeow.htm>.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*. British Academy, 1936.

A close-up, vertical view of the pages of a book, showing the texture and color of the paper. The pages are slightly aged and have a warm, yellowish-brown tone. The binding is visible on the left side.

montgomerycollege.edu | 240-567-5000

