



Fall 2005

The Forum: Fall 2005

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Recommended Citation

Titus, Mary Jo; Frank, Amanda; Langseth, Annie; Wilken, Jenna; Hamness, Adam; Walker, Sarah; Licht, John Gabriel; Lannoye, David; Gieske, Amy; Bouck, Mary; Sher, Jan; and Wright, Carol, "The Forum: Fall 2005" (2005). *UND Publications*. 60.
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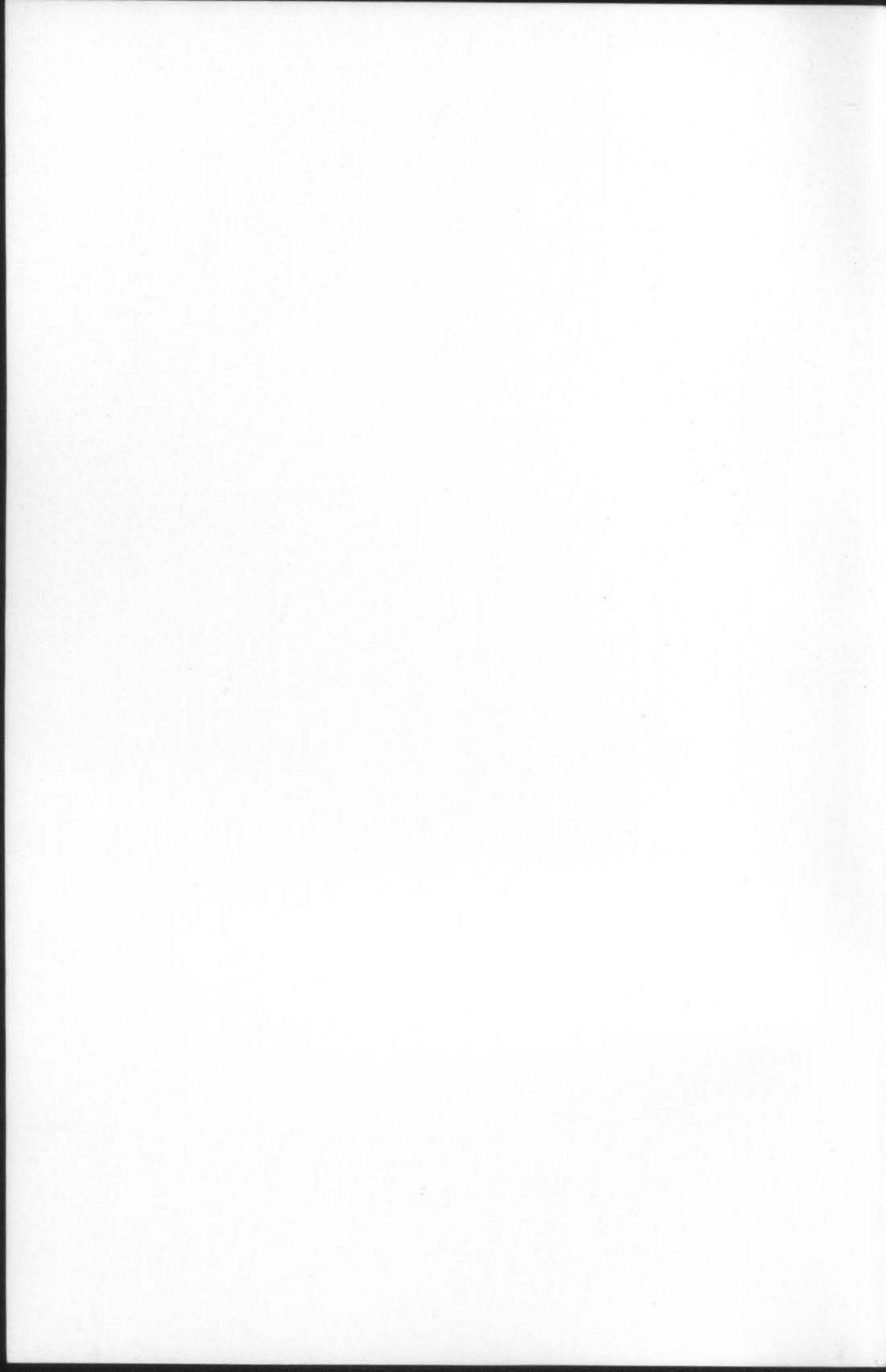
Mary Jo Titus, Amanda Frank, Annie Langseth, Jenna Wilken, Adam Hamness, Sarah Walker, John Gabriel Licht, David Lannoye, Amy Gieske, Mary Bouck, Jan Sher, and Carol Wright

the Forum

Journal of the Honors Program
University of North Dakota

Volume 36, Issue 1
Fall 2005





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The Board of Student Publications is the publisher and primary fund contributor to the Forum. BOSP is a division of Student Government.

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Amanda Frank

Untitled (A Play)

The play opens with James seated at the breakfast table, idly chewing on a piece of toast and reading the newspaper. His wife Audrey is sitting across from him, breaking the silence with her mindless chatter

Audrey: (*Slicing an apple*) You won't believe it. Yesterday I was shopping at the grocery store, and I found these apples on sale for \$1.15 a dozen. "My God!" I said to myself, "\$1.15 a dozen!" You can't beat that price anywhere. Not at the new Economy Mart, anyway. Their prices are so high that I can't believe anyone would ever shop there. To think I'd live to see the day when people will pay more than \$3.00 for the exact same apples that I got for \$1.15! Anyway, I bought two bags of them. Thought I'd keep one out, for you and me. I put the other in the fridge; they should hold out there for a while. I was thinking I could bake a pie and then freeze it. You know, for when the kids come up to see us next month. They love my apple pie. Especially Kevin. Isn't apple his favorite? Or is it pumpkin? I always forget.

James shrugs politely at this question. Audrey continues.

Audrey: That reminds me- did Caroline stop by yesterday?

James: No, were you expecting her?

Audrey: (*A bit annoyed*) Yes, James, she was going to drop off one of her pies, baked with a new recipe she was given. I told you that she was going to come by either yesterday or today, don't you remember?

James: (*Distractedly*) Oh, yes, of course. I forgot.

Audrey: Anyway, she found a new recipe from one of her friends. I told her I'd try her pie, but really, I'm satisfied with my own recipe. I think mine tastes just fine, don't you?

James: Delicious.

Audrey. Thank you, dear. (*She rises and takes the breakfast plates from the table. While she sets them in the sink, she stares out the window, frowning.*) James, I thought you were going to mow the lawn yesterday.

James: I didn't get around to it. Don't worry; I'll take care of it today.

Audrey: Well, you better. It looks like we are trying to make a bad impression. Do you want people to think we are too old to manage our yard? We might as well just hire someone to do it. (*She returns to the table to grab more plates.*) At least that way things will get done around here.

James continues to read his paper in silence, as if he didn't catch his wife's remark.

Audrey: (*From the kitchen again*) Oh, and we're out of fertilizer for the garden as well. You'll have to run out and buy some today. In fact, as long as you're out, you should also pick up some potting soil, and weed-be-gone, and-

The phone rings.

James: (*Cheerfully*) I'll get it. (*He gets up and walks calmly over to the phone that hangs on the dining room wall.*)

James: Langley residence... Yes, this is he.... Oh, hello, Dr. Ellenwood... Fine, and you? (*There is a long pause. James stands silently, listening intently, while his wife works in the kitchen, occasionally muttering to herself. James' expression turns grave suddenly. After a moment he ends the conversation in a much more somber voice.*) Thank you for calling, Doctor. (*He slowly hangs up the phone, and stands still for a moment, his face expressionless. Audrey enters the dining room.*)

Audrey: Was that Caroline? (*She notes James' expression and pauses, frowning. Her voice suddenly becomes serious.*) James, what is it?

James stares at his wife for a moment, and then gently grabs her by the arm and leads her to a chair. She stares up at him, a mixture of confusion and anxiety on her face.

James: That was Dr. Ellenwood with my test results. (*Sighs*) They found a tumor on my brain. (*Audrey puts her hand up to her mouth. She stares at her husband in shock, unsure of what to say.*) It may just be a growth, nothing else. Or, it may be something worse.

Audrey begins to tremble, continuing to cover her mouth while tears fall from her face. James stands silent for a moment, then reaches over and touches Audrey's face with his hand.

James: Audrey...It's going to be okay. (*Audrey shakes her head and closes her eyes.*) Everything's going to be alright. We don't even know if it's serious yet. There's no need to worry. (*He puts his hand on her shoulder and squeezes it.*)

Audrey: (*Shaking her head*) But what if it is serious? What will we do then, James?

James: We'll have to deal with it- take what comes. That's what life is all about, Audrey- learning to accept whatever comes your way. (*He leans over and kisses his wife on the forehead.*) We can get through this, together.

Audrey: You can- you have always been strong, always willing to accept whatever situation is presented with you. But me- I can't. I can't stand the thought of watching you suffer, watching you deteriorate when I can do nothing about it. (*She pauses, taking a deep breath.*) I just can't bear the thought of going on without you.

James stands up again, sighing. Audrey continues to sit on the chair, now with her face buried in her hands.

James: You will be alright. You are a strong woman.

Audrey: (*At this, she loses control and bursts into tears. After a moment she stops and slowly lifts her head, looking at James straight in the eyes.*) No, James, I'm not. I know I appear to be strong- appear to be in control of things. But the truth is- (*sighs*)-the truth is that I am nothing without you. (*She bows her head again and begins to cry, shaking uncontrollably.*)

James: (*James kneels down and holds Audrey's head in both of his hands,*

resting his forehead against it. He pauses for a moment, allowing Audrey to cry. At last he lifts her face up and gives her an encouraging smile.) You will find your strength. I promise. You are much stronger than you think. *(James puts his hands under Audrey's shoulders and lifts her up. He embraces her. Audrey stops crying. She wraps her arms around James and buries her face in his chest. The couple remains like this for a moment.)*

Audrey: *(Lifting her head up and looking at James.)* So now what?

James: I'm going to see Dr. Ellenwood tomorrow morning. He will run some more tests, and then we will figure things out from there. *(James kisses Audrey's forehead.)* In the mean time, we shall have to wait, and pray. What else can we do? This is not in our hands. Stick to hope- it's all we have.

Audrey nods. Slowly she pulls away from James, wiping her eyes with her sleeve. After a moment she straightens up, looking around.

Audrey: Well, I have better finish cleaning up. *(She heads off to the kitchen and begins to wash the dishes.)*

James remains standing for a moment in thought. The house is suddenly quiet. Then a phone call breaks the silence. Audrey pauses and looks up at James; James lets the phone ring a few times before going to answer it.

James: Langley residence. Oh hi, Caroline. Yes, Audrey's been expecting you. Hold on, please. *(James holds the phone; Audrey wipes her hands and then comes to retrieve it.)*

Audrey: *(Softly)* Hello Caroline....Ah...fine, just fine. Are you still coming by today?...Oh, that's ok. You can finish baking this afternoon and then drop it off. I'll be around....What? *(Suddenly enthusiastically)* You have to go to the Quick Mart, they have apples on sale for \$1.15 a dozen!...I know, that's just what I said!...Yeah, so finish baking, then stop by. I may be working in the garden, so just come on back. Which reminds me- *(Audrey pauses and turns to James, covering the receiver.)* You should go by the fertilizer now. I want to get started before it rains this afternoon. Hurry back so you can mow the lawn, too. God knows what Caroline will say if she sees our yard in this manner. *(To Caroline)* Sorry about that...Yes, everything's fine. So I'll see you this afternoon?

Wonderful! Goodbye, dear! (*She hangs up the phone and turns to James.*) Caroline hasn't even started yet. What that woman does with her time I would like to know. Anyway, I told her to go to Quick Mart- for the apples, you know- so she should be over in a few hours. (*Audrey returns to the kitchen and begins to wash the dishes again.*) What are you doing? Don't just stand there- you have to hurry.

James: (*James smiles to himself, and then goes to the closet to retrieve his hat and coat. He walks to the door, and then turns around, facing Audrey.*) I'll be back soon.

Audrey: (*Without looking up*) Don't be gone long. (*James leaves and shuts the door behind him. Audrey continues to wash her dishes for a few moments before pausing. She looks out the window and sighs. Then she repeats in a softer voice.*) Don't be gone long. (*Audrey returns to her dishes.*)

Annie Langseth

Loved

You know you're loved when
the only people who call you are telemarketers
and they don't even know how to say your name.

You know you're loved when
the only mail you receive is credit card offers
and you're already in debt.

You know you're loved when
the only email in your inbox claims it will enhance your manhood
and you're a woman.

Oh yes,
you know you're loved.

Special Features

Heroes



Dimension
Digital Art
Jenna Wilken



Bullfight
Photograph
Adam Hamness

Sarah Walker

Heroes

Certain recurring trends have shown up in the mythos and beliefs of every culture. Across time and space, separate yet universal global floods wipe out all traces of humanity; Earth is formed, people are created, places and animals become named; the phenomenon of death is explained. Archetypal characters of myths and customs, such as those of epics in the Greek and Roman cultures and their more modernized counter-stories, also join this universality. Heroes still live and breathe today as a figment of reality from cultures existing millennia ago. Today, however, the status of these heroes has begun to change as female heroines join their ranks. Either as a reflection of society today or as a reflection of what is longed for in society, the changing of these roles brings a new brand of heroism--a female heroism--that is more accepted and carries universal undertones in its struggle for life.

Heroes have been battling "sea serpents" and the like for years, delighting their audiences with their stories, their nobility, their devotion and adventure. Joseph Campbell, a renowned mythologist, mapped the hero-archetype and the hero-journey in his work.

The cartography, as he drew it, was the geography of the inner or underworld, showing perilous territory to be traversed not by the faint, but by the stout of heart. ...In short the hero's journey: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man." (Cousineau xix)

Homer's Odysseus from The Odyssey demonstrates Campbell's hero archetype. As a result of his pride, Odysseus is cursed¹, and unable to return home. Yet Odysseus uses his cunning and his own devices to emerge as

victor. He and other heroes from other epics all share common traits and hardships. They are not identical; some are wily, some are plain, some are fearless, some are fearful. They have followed similarities, though. Respected and revered, the stereotypical hero generally follows some journey, physically or emotionally; he faces some monster, he saves the day. He is also generally male.

It is rare to find female heroes. Linguistically, heroines are proposed to be such. Their gender is marked by the specific ending, feminizing an otherwise masculine word. However, heroines are incomparable to heroes. Through their physical and mental capabilities, strength and representation, they seem to be a separate category altogether.

The hero, the mythical subject, is constructed as human being and as male; he is the active principle of culture, the establisher of distinction, the creator of differences. Female is what is not susceptible to transformation, to life or death; she (it) is an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance, matrix and matter. (qtd. in Keith: 215).

Aeneas' heroine, Queen Dido in Virgil's *The Aeneid*², is an example of such. "O queen! indulg'd by favor of the gods/ To found an empire in these new abodes, / To build a town³, with statutes to restrain / The wild inhabitants beneath thy reign..." (Virgil Book I). Dido was a heroine. She held power, and as a power-holder she became an active participant in the character-imbedded literary struggle for recognition.

As in so many epics and stories, however, she is stripped of any power and strength she may have possessed when the male hero comes within ten miles of her. When Aeneas comes to her city, the queen becomes his lover, his servant, his chain. She is feminized derogatorily, immediately turned into an object for Aeneas. Venus induces her to love Aeneas, so that he may be safe. She is stripped of her queenly powers while "the hero" Aeneas remains with her. She even loses her humanity. She becomes equated with the city, "an immobile female obstacle" on the "mobile" hero's journey (Keith 217).

Dido gains some of her lost power back when Aeneas departs, leaving her as the sole ruler of the land. However, it is not enough. She is haunted and tormented by the loss of her love. He has left her weakened. "He departed, driven by destiny, leaving the woman behind, bereft, to fall on her sword like a man" (Virgil 284). It almost appears that Dido has attempted to replace him, found herself unworthy, and is left to naught but destruction. She can only accomplish her death, ridding her life "like a man" after her lover has left. She plays make-believe games in her anguish, trying to become a man in her final act of life. The art of falling on

swords was relegated to battles, to times of duress, when there was no other way out. It was nobler in that time period and that culture to do so than to show weakness or to allow torture and the threat of betrayal. However, the nature of Dido's despair seems strictly feminine. Instead of leading her own people against Aeneas, she leaves her future generations the charge to do it (in a curse uttered as she died). Dido is not allowed a battle; like her myth-sister Thisbe⁴, the only battle she encounters is the struggle of her heart. In killing herself, she has shown she has lost.

With old myths as evidence, heroines have been unequal to heroes. "For myth is not a story independent of History, but rather expresses History in colorful accounts that illustrate the major trends of an era. ... As a result, [myths] retained a special relationship to space, time and the manifestation of the forms of incarnation" (qtd. in Schilbrack: 111). This is reflected in our mythos and stories. It has automatically been recorded in our records and in our memories, and has been engraved into the future. Despite speculation that there may have been matriarchal societies on Earth, it is the patriarchal roots that are remembered and recognized. Men worked in the fields, while their wives belonged at home. Queen Elizabeth Tudor of England only kept power because she did not marry. Even today, in America, there has been no female president. Women do not have the strong female role models and power-figures that men do. They fall under the jurisdiction of heroes. They are unable to take part in all that heroes do, are unable to hold the power that heroes do. Historically and mythically, women were generally excluded from battles, unless they were damsels in distress, like Cassandra⁵, or rulers and warriors like Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, and the Amazon⁶ women--that is, the weak or the powerful. In equating these two groups, it seems that the powerful become those who need to be saved--perhaps from themselves. The weak become strong, enticing the male hero to save them.

As time has progressed, though, female heroes have begun to become more common. When I was younger, I loved fairy tales and myths. One of the stories I remember reading was called The Paper Bag Princess, by Robert Munsch. It is a different twist on regular knight-and-dragon stories. A Princess, Elizabeth, must save her betrothed, Ronald, from a dragon who had ravaged the castle, burning everything--even Elizabeth's clothes. Elizabeth does not despair; she clothes herself in a paper bag, and goes off to defeat the dragon. She promptly outwits the dragon, and saves the Prince. Elizabeth does what is noble and heroic. The same with author Gail Carson Levine's leading ladies. Semi-new in children's fiction, Levine wrote Ella Enchanted, a retelling of the Cinderella story that was popularized into a movie in 2004. This story depicts

Ella (Cinderella) as a spirited girl who is cursed into submissiveness, but who breaks the curse on her own. "I had been able to break the curse myself. I'd had to have reason enough, love enough to do it, to find the will and the strength" (Levine 228). Both these female characters have joined the throng of newly emergent female heroes modern society has recently begun to publicize⁷.

Children's books are not alone in this different presentation. Amazon beauty Wonder Woman was raced into comic books in 1941. She is one of the few female super heroes who had no male spring form. Super Girl and Bat Girl both came after Super Man and Batman, as did a plethora of other Super- and Bat- prefixed heroes. Wonder Woman was singular, emerging as a new entity. She was created by Charles Moulton (AKA Dr. William Marston) in an attempt to appeal to girls. She gained a syndicated television show, her own comic book and she got her own product line⁸. Said creator Marston in an interview,

... Women have more emotional power than men, they have greater endurance and more resistance to disease they live longer, and they can endure pain far better. The moment women began doing things to develop their strength, it increased enormously. ... Prior to the first World War nobody believed that women could perform these feats of physical strength. But they're performing them now and thinking nothing of it. In this far worse: war, women will develop still greater female power; by the end of the war that traditional description 'the weaker sex' will be a joke--it will cease to have any meaning. (qtd. in Richard sic)

This change in female status in myth and story reflects a world-view. "The refiguring of myth in this century by feminist philosophers represents their participation in a historical process of identity formation, as well as their struggle to transform the asymmetry of gender hierarchy which the dominant myths in Western philosophy have constituted and reinforced for centuries" (Anderson 103). While it is possible that the roles of women are changing as they change in the world and society, it could be construed that changing gender roles in myths and stories are influencing society. But is this truly a change in gender role, or is it a change in how previous genders were perceived and how they can develop? Anderson writes that feminists can "be conservative in preserving essentially timeless images of women from past mythology... can be radical in agreeing that timeless truths about women can be represented in myth; but the latter unlike the former insists upon the need to reproduce

radically new versions of old myths in order to reverse the reversals of patriarchy" (103). If popular movies and books of today are any indication, society feels a need to produce the new versions of old myths.

The female heroes of myth must still struggle against society's restrictions, though. In The Paper Bag Princess, after Elizabeth saves him from the dragon, Ronald decides that Elizabeth should not be prancing around in a paper bag. It is unfitting--a common response to a female hero. Society has set certain rules into these myths, which are difficult to tear down. Female heroes do ordinary helpful deeds, the same as male heroes; but when female heroes do it, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Women are, in stories and myths, most often depicted as beautiful, while the men are the brave and strong. Often, even if a woman is a singular hero, she becomes "tamed" if--when--she marries. Medea⁹ and Ariadne¹⁰ both betray their family and country, so they may save and marry their heroes. Today, the free-spirited mermaid Ariel of Walt Disney's The Little Mermaid became her strict father, *after marriage*, in The Little Mermaid II. Just so when practically any of the so-named "Disney Princesses" step onto screen. They may be talented, beautiful, and determined, but each spends the movie in search of her true love. She often leaves her hero to fight off all beasts and evils, returning to him unmarred to heal his wounds at the end. Levine's Ella did not become "tamed" in her marriage, but it seems she does spurn the title of Princess so that she could maintain her self's reality. Ella "refused to become a princess but adopted the titles of Court Linguist and Cook's Helper. [Ella] also refused to stay at home when Char¹¹ traveled, and learned every language and dialect that came [their] way" (231).

Wonder Woman was also labeled a hero by her creator, and was a hero in many ways, but in many ways she was still less than one.

Seriously the Doctor responded, "... Wonder Woman is actually a dramatized symbol of her sex. She's true to life--true to the universal characteristics of women everywhere. Her magic lasso is merely a symbol of feminine charm, allure, oomph, attraction every woman ... uses ... on people of both sexes whom she wants to, influence or control in any way. Instead of tossing a rope, the average woman tosses words, glances, gestures, laughter, and vivacious behavior. If her aim is accurate, she snares the attention of her would-be victim, man or woman, and proceeds to bind him or her with her charm." (Richard sic)

Thus the "ever-aiding" male opinion of the "true" power of women: Won-

der Woman is aided in her heroic efforts by powers presented as belonging to women. These powers are not specified as integrity and honesty, but as "charm, allure, oomph". This is only emphasized in the choice of Lynda Carter, the former Miss Universe contestant, as the lead role of the hero in the original ABC TV series. As one online reviewer wrote, "What a fun show this was! Sure the acting was not the best, the plots were weak, the special fx a bit wanting, but it was still fun none-the-less! They don't make 'em like this anymore. No foul language, no indecent plot lines, just good 'ol American fun. And Wow! Lynda Carter sure did look fantastic in her Wonder Woman outfit! Red, White, Blue, Gold and curves that wouldn't quit!" (Anonymous sic)

As long as the gender distinction is made, as long as the effort to change the myths must be made consciously, heroines will never become the female heroes they are meant to be, and female heroes will continuously hit their heads on society's restrictions. To mark the difference in the name, there must be recognition that there is a difference. As long as there is this recognition, there can be no automatic equality between heroes and heroines. "Rather than calling an end to history, to its mythical representations of male sexual identity, the post-structuralism feminist philosophers call for their mimetic refiguring--which disrupts and so transforms history" (Anderson 110).

In a modern retelling of an old myth, female character Iphigeneia states, "We are all the victims of stories in one way or another...even if we are not in them, even if we are not born yet" (Unsworth 192). Stories and myths can rule the way we live. It is not unfitting that the most widely spread saturation of female heroes is in literature youth know. It is they who will tell, through their actions and interpretations, what stories society will live by. It is they who look for the heroes of the past and the future, and find the heroes of the now.

Notes

1 The gods were not impressed with Odysseus when he bragged that it was he who finished the Trojan War. Besides this, he also angered the sea-god Poseidon when he blinded the god's son, the Cyclops Polyphemus.

2 Virgil's account of the beginnings of the Roman Empire

3 Carthage

4 Thisbe, of the myth Pyramus and Thisbe: *"And now she looks around as people thus distracted often do, in search of something to which to fasten her anguished attention, to focus her ache from the universal down to one particular object. She sees the cloak, the scabbard of the sword, and understands what happened, what must have taken place--how Pyramus had inferred from persuasive evidence her violent death and taken his own precious life. And she is at once transformed into the noble heroine of the story she is composing, seeing how it has to go for symmetrical reasons. He had been brave, and she, who loved him so, could do nothing less herself than answer his wonderful terrible gesture with one of her own."*
Virgil, 67-8

5 Cassandra was saved from death by Perseus in Ovid's Metamorphoses; she had been chained to a rock, sacrifice to a monster.

6 Amazons were depicted as a tribe of war-loving, men-hating women. They were very athletic.

7 Particularly in children's and young adult fiction

8 Including swimming suits that looked like her alter ego's crime-fighting spandex--which was more revealing than her line of clothing was.

9 Medea of the myth Jason and the Argonauts. Her efforts on Jason's behalf help him finish his duties. He marries her, but it is revealed later that after he has several affairs, Medea kills their children.

10 Ariadne of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Ariadne helped Theseus defeat the Minotaur, then left with him. He left her on a desert island, in which "No other woman, or goddess, had so many deaths as Ariadne. That stone in Argos, that constellation in the sky, that hanging corpse, that death by childbirth, that girl with an arrow through her breast: Ariadne was all of this" (Calasso 23).

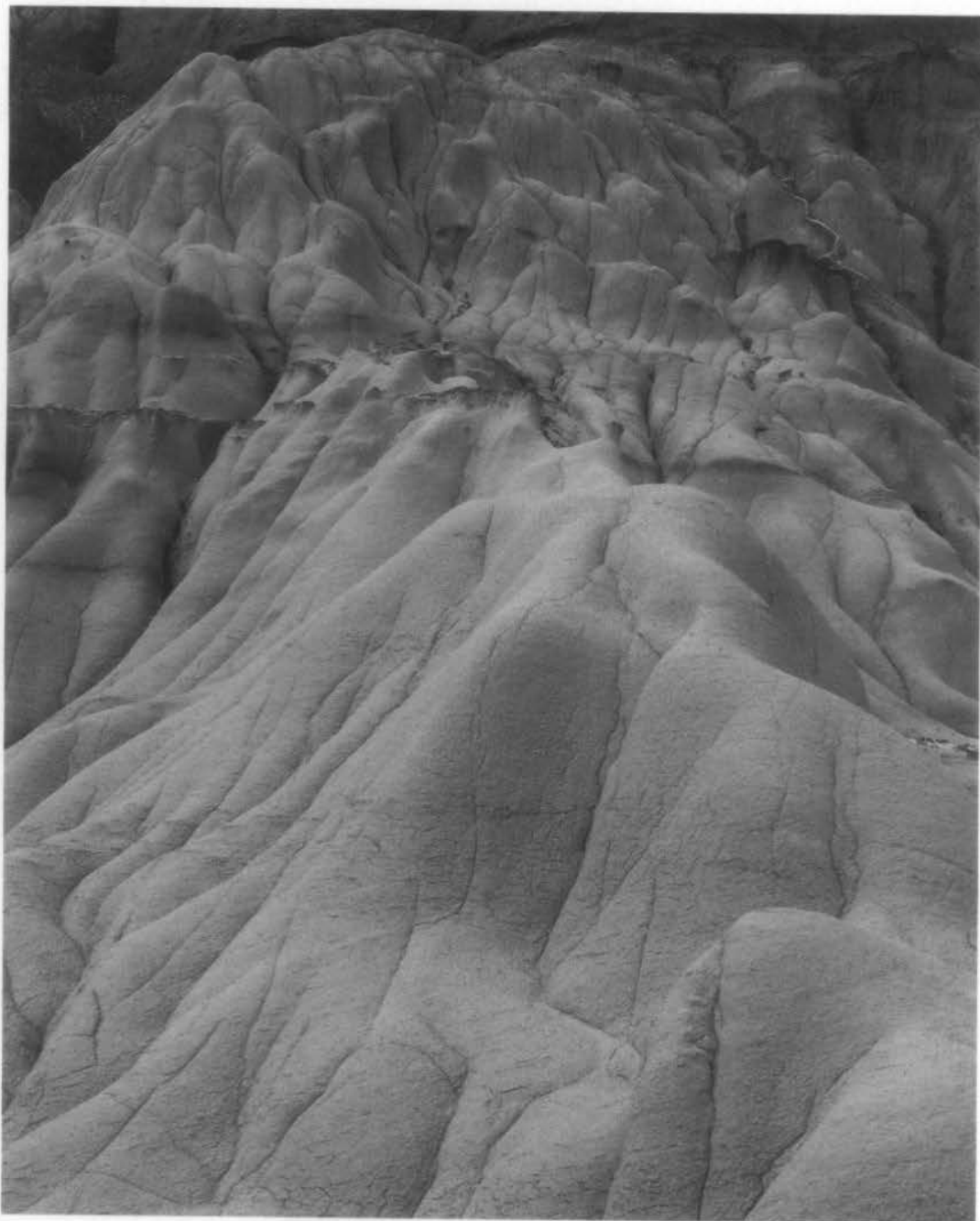
11 Char was Prince Charmont, Ella's "Prince Charming"

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Tooth Parade
Ink Drawing
John Gabriel Licht



Rock Forms
Photograph
David Lannoye

Amanda Frank

Deception

Truth hangs from a tree,
impressing on our hearts the knowledge of
what is certain; a tiny pulse reduced to the dullest corner
of our minds.
Death holds the strings to all our lives,
ever drawing them upwards.

The child escapes his mother's grasp, allured
by the sights that flood his unwary eyes.
And so he drifts from his assurance into the
fluorescent lighting of a soundless world.

Here boys stand, clinking bottles
to the promise of youth, deadening passion and doubt
with the flow of sweet, hot liquid. While

girls weave veils of powder and gloss,
squeezing into tasteless cloths to earn their empty love.

In time he chooses his path, the swiftest and most smooth;
seeking riches to ensure his life,
answers to create his truth,
Another lover to fill his bed and flamingos to fill his lawn.

He stands firm at the end of the road,
delighting in his achievements.
He has pawned the Sword for a .9MM.

But doesn't he understand, the fool, that when the string is drawn up
the tree shall ignite,
all flesh and bone shall melt away,
leaving him with naught but his decision?

Amy Gieske

Untitled

Trained and ready, mission to dawn,
Waiting sound of the breathing crew,
All systems have been checked to go
Last time is gone – main engines on,
Rapid calm of events ensue.

Thundering towards heaven of Earth,
Jolting ride, mind a focused blur,
Still silence suspended in space
Falling around terrestrial girth,
Picturesque job – space adventurer!

Return is soon through glowing skies,
Explorers of dreams gliding home,
Like angels floating on prayers
To touch the ground till next flight flies,
Memories here inscribed in poem.

Aminda Frank

Student as the Mainstay
A Study of 19th-Century Education in America



Moonrise
Photograph
David Lannoye



Acrylic Painting
Mary Bouck

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Broham vs. the Mainers: A Study of Youth Subcultures in Bismarck

It is Friday night in Bismarck, North Dakota. A restless group of high school students decide to pile into a sports car and head over to the only live place in town: Main Street. Here they can socialize with the jocks, preps, and wanna-be's from each high school while they flaunt their car and demonstrate their "cool." The group is now free, able to cruise the small strip as many times as their hearts desire, burning both gas and youth away. They stop at a red light, the car vibrating to the beat of a popular rap song. Suddenly, a burnt-out muffler disrupts their music, announcing the presence of another car. The driver, always poised, does the traditional head turn to evaluate his neighbor. What he sees is a beat up red Festiva with a large pink Jigglypuff hanging from the side window. But he is shocked by the passengers inside: a pirate, a cowboy, a man with a gas mask, and Santa Claus himself. Santa Claus shouts, "Happy Hanukah!" just before the car takes off, leaving the sports car rooted to the cement, its passengers full of utter shock.

What you have just witnessed is my brother's group of friends disrupting the social culture of Main Street in Bismarck, ND. Main Street culture represents the mainstream society of Bismarck's youth, which places its values in appearances and materialism, while my brother's group makes up a subculture based on the unique interests of its members. My brother's group dresses in costume and shocks the students on Main Street in order to make their distinction known. Their excessive behavior makes my brother and his friends a part of the social phenomenon known as subcultures.

Hershel Thornburg defines a subculture as "a distinctive pattern of shared values, behaviors, and ideologies manifested in a style of life significantly different from that of the dominant culture" (218). What causes young people to break away from the dominant culture? According to Mark Tittle in his essay "Youth Subcultures and the Commitment Level Mode," subcultures are a struggle against conformity. Tittle explains that when the mainstream culture fails to meet the needs of all

youth, a subculture is born (par 6). This subculture provides different patterns of living, contrasting those of the behavioral norms.

J. Milton Yinger describes how a subculture gains identity:

They choose instead a negative identity, i.e., an identity perversely based on all those identifications and roles which, at critical stages of development, have been presented to them as most undesirable or dangerous and yet also as most real (71).

Certain youth pursue this identity because they are attracted to the invented or forbidden, while others are creative people who see mainstream ideals as unsatisfying.

My brother's group of friends, known to themselves as "Broham" (for reasons unclear), felt out of place among their peers at an early age. They remained a relatively exclusive group from late elementary school to the beginning of college. They perceived mainstream society from the outside, and finding their ideals unsatisfying, formed a "negative identity" as a creative means of expressing their individuality.

According to Thornburg, the adolescents in subcultures possess ideas in contrast to those of the mainstream culture. This could not be truer for Broham. All of their interests, from their clothes to their music, are in opposition to mainstream culture. They oppose all pop and rap music, along with any type whose popularity springs from the radio. What they do listen to is some rock, which, according to Thornburg, promotes them to think for themselves. This reminds me of a particular line from my brother's Tool album: "Think for yourself, question authority." They pride themselves for choosing music based on personal taste and not popularity. Tittley points out that the musical identity of subcultures often determines their styles of clothing (par 23). Coincidentally, many of my brother's t-shirts contain the name of a band, from his endless supply of Pink Floyd shirts to souvenirs from Perfect Circle concerts.

However, Broham does not exhibit all of the characteristics mentioned by these scholars. Many sources state that subcultures commit illegal acts in order to be rebellious. They associate drugs, alcohol, and vandalism with subcultures, but ignore the fact that subcultures can be rebellious without being harmful. My brother proudly explains that all of Broham's activities are only "slightly illegal." Screaming at cars and walking through Wal-Mart in costume is obnoxious, yet it is not breaking the law. One can be rebellious in a legal manner.

Furthermore, many scholars agree that subcultures are formed by youth who feel the need to rebel against adults. This is not true for Broham, as its members have a strong respect for their parents. They rebel

against their peers in a manner that does not lose their parent's respect. My mom will often shake her head at their crazy adventures, but admits that there are much worse things that they could be doing.

The characteristics of Broham listed above contrast the characteristics of the "Mainers," the youth who cruise Main on Friday and Saturday night. Generally, these adolescents value style, strength, and material possessions. Most Mainers are found wearing designer or trendy clothing. The music they listen to tends to be rap or hip-hop, or anything with a strong beat to demonstrate their expensive speakers. Their cars are their most important identifications, for in order to be "cool," one must drive a fast and sporty car. Many will even spend hundreds of dollars to install neon lights underneath their cars. While most females simply cruise, the males feel the need to demonstrate their strength through racing other males, thus putting themselves at risk in order to achieve status. Therefore, in order to become a Mainer you must wear the right clothes, listen to certain kinds of music, drive a flashy and expensive car, and, in the case of males, be willing to put yourself and others at risk to hold your status. The Mainer's culture is driven by conformity, and there is little room for individual thought or identity.

So how does Broham react against this culture? According to Herman and Julia Schwendinger: "Each collective variety of youth has its own standards for defining individuals as good or bad, better or worse, superior or inferior...Every collective type engages another to some degree"(106). Broham has defined the Mainers as inferior because they choose to conform. They see the Mainers as prisoners in society, unable to express themselves fully or retain their own interests for fear of rejection. But they are not satisfied in merely being different from the Mainers; thus they take desperate measures in order to distinguish themselves. I do not believe that they dislike the Mainers or their tastes themselves; rather, they dislike the fact that they conform to those values in order to earn a pre-constructed identity.

Broham seeks to weaken the components that they dislike by constructing a "negative identity." First, they dress in a totally absurd manner, with costumes ranging from pirates to Santa Clauses. Second, they choose a style of music that is completely unconventional. A favorite of theirs is Mr. Bungle, whose musical style is strange and at times disturbing. Third, they tackle the issue of strength through pretending to race unsuspecting Mainers. When they encounter a lone car at a stoplight, my brother will rev up his engine to indicate he wants to race. As soon as the light changes, he reverses his car. The Mainer's triumph is replaced by confusion when he realizes that he has been tricked.

Is Broham only trying to be different, or do they have deeper motives? To answer this question, I interviewed my brother, "Moofogribbler:"

I think that the goal of Broham has been, from the beginning, to try to wake people up and help them see that there are different ways to think. You don't have to do what everyone else does. We are not saying that you should go to the extremes that we do; we do that to express ourselves humorously and to get people's attention. We hope that we can make at least one person say to himself, "Boy, what am I doing on Main every night? I could be making my own way rather than following the cars in front of me." ... We made people laugh, and laughter is always a good thing.

Broham rebels against mainstream culture to prove that it is ok to be different. When they shout at people, it is if they are saying, "Look, we have rejected conformity, and so can you!" Yet I sense an element of mockery as well. Yinger writes: "I cannot convince myself that I've made the right choice of values just by calling the agents of the establishment pigs, but if I can make them act like pigs, it is easier to repress my doubts" (84). Maybe it is not enough for Broham to be different. They must ridicule the Mainers' choices in style and music in order to feel that their interests are superior.

In addition, Freud writes: "We are so made that we can derive intense enjoyment only from a contrast and very little from a state of things" (qt Yinger 69). Broham cannot have fun by acting like everyone else. Thus they go against the current rather than joining the steady stream of cars. This is how they bring adventure into their lives.

Through my study, I have become enlightened in the various ways people establish identity. Both the Mainers and Broham are striving to define themselves in relation to their peers. The Mainers seek the comfort of conformity; it is easier to conform to a large group than to stand alone. Broham was not satisfied by following a well-trod path, and thus made their own. Yet this requires them to take extreme measures and to act foolishly in public. Is one path necessarily better than the other? All I can say is this: both groups are forced to comply with the regulations of their peers.

Broham is guided by rules of dress and music as much as the Mainers are. However, if you ever journey to Main Street on Friday night, you would probably not remember any single Mainer, but an encounter of Broham would remain in your memory for a long time.

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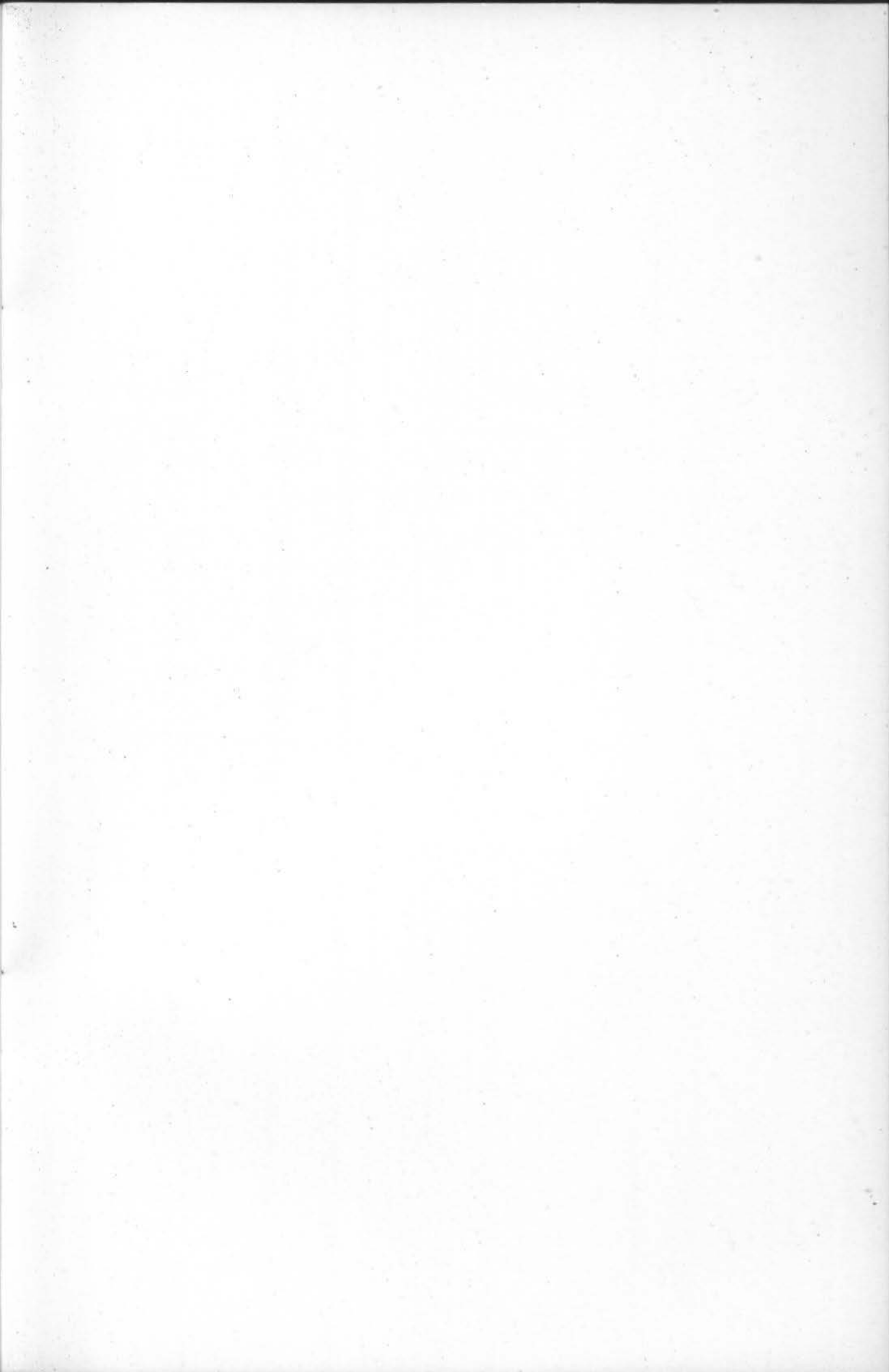
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