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Are We For Real?
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The Journal of Saint Anna – Reflection

I suppose the most intriguing – and consequently, the most fulfilling – aspect of this project was my decision to unorthodoxly utilize language to narrate my story. That much, upon the idea's inception, I was certain of. Exactly what form the story would take, I was still very much unsure until very late in the game.

I knew that, regardless of everything, this project was going to be an exercise in writing. Regardless of form, structure, and technique, I was planning to make sure that this project would adequately test my ability to write under very strict conditions. Thematically and ideologically this fit into one of the premises of our class: how can the medium of representation of something, in this case, the art form of language (not that I would be so crass as to call this project art!!) inform our perception of the piece itself? How can technology inform our conception of reality, within the space of the piece?

Originally intended as a series of sestinas, I soon realized that the form would overpower the content and would not be conducive for the relaying of the story.

The piece itself deals with an unfurling of reality and a distinct loss of identity as informed by one transformative event: the killing of Larissa. As Saint Anna admits in her journal, this event ought to be mundane and isolated, but really what are the limits of the butterfly effect? How much causality do isolated incidents have, and how large of a role can fate play in the bringing about – or the breaking down – of reality?

I wrote *The Journal of Saint Anna* when I was fifteen. Seven different points of view. Eight different journal entries. Going back to it was certainly an experience in itself, and the writing is admittedly quite awful, but I felt the plot was worthy of salvation. Repurposing an established plot proved to be a very interesting creative endeavor. How do I maintain the integrity of the plot without compromising the new limitations of the form? How do I essentially rewrite the story without giving any of it away in the context of this new form?

I soon realized that the story needed beef, that the limitations, arbitrary as they were, did not do it justice. I therefore repurposed the original Saint Anna account, originally the eighth and last chapter of my little novella, and framed the entire account as an amalgamation, a personal project of amassment and purpose. This allowed me to experiment much more freely with the three-line structure without worrying too much about conveying the story.

I also had a lot of fun giving voice to my characters in the three-line structure. Owen was always a frat bro. Linda was always ineloquent. Medusa was always somber. Terence was always verbose. It was interesting bringing those voices over into a structure that at face value was identical.

Ultimately this was an experience that I definitely needed to have as a writer. Was it successful? I'm not sure. But in the context of a class that was in the business

of exploring the way our use of language could drastically influence our understanding of it, and vice versa, I believe this was the only way I could go about things. Thank you for a wonderful semester, Professor Shin! I hope you feel as strongly about Saint Anna as I do!