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Through Tender Opalescence

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Through Tender Opalescence

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
Of Bard College

by

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Through Tender Opalescence is an documentary intimately dealing with the possibilities that unfold when one is able to hold space and fall within themselves. Broken up into sections of abstract videos of water paired with poetry, and analysis of the appropriated and re-worked horror films in popular American cinema, this piece attempts to reinterpret popular media and to highlight what that may say about how we as people have come to understand our own gender. This work finds itself being told by an unnamed narrator who has made it a ritual to go by the river to relieve themselves of the pressure and stresses of the external world. Reading the poems of their elders, they explore the ideas and the importance of sacred space, the power of sight, and community.

In order to engage with the complexities and nuances of gender within the American context, this piece works to analyze the way it is expressed through film in popular media. It is important to note that the identities of the filmmakers are indicative of the cinematic worlds that they create. Their characters, structure, and camera act not only as a lens into their subjective understanding but offer a way to understand the social fabric it was birthed from. As a way of reclaiming these narratives, this project hopes to re-examine and edit the appropriated films in order to subvert the underlying arguments posed to create new and meaningful narratives. The movies used are as follows: *Psycho* (1960), *A Reflection of Fear*(1973), *Dressed to Kill*(1980), and the *Silence of the Lamb*(1991).

I wanted to especially thank my advisor Sayeeda Moreno for supporting me through this project this year as well as my Professor Margaux Kristjansson who provided me with most of the literature used to research this project. Without their support, boundless knowledge, and endless kindness this work would not be at the place it is now.

The works that had great influence over this work are Frank B. Wilderson's *III Red White Black Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*, C. Riley Snorton's *Black on Both Sides A Racial History of Trans History*, and Akwugo Emejulu's *Fugitive Feminism*.