

## SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY AND ITS EFFECT ON PERSEVERANCE THROUGH QUEERPHOBIA

---

Author:

Roshni Dave

Faculty Sponsor:

Ira Halpern

*Department of English*

---

### ABSTRACT

Various characters in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* (2021) and *Giovanni's Room* (1956) face homophobia, racism, and sexism. The characters in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* have support systems in place that help them through the attacks on their identities or seek them out when needed. For the characters, this is a form of resistance through joy and love. The support received allows the characters a reprieve and a space to find joy in traumatic times. Much of the hardships they endure are a result of harmful societal messaging, therefore, any support they receive from characters who do not share the same identities is an act of resistance on their part, as well as joy as an act of resistance on the part of the targeted characters. Giovanni and David from *Giovanni's Room* do not receive support from one another resulting in a decline in their mental health. This paper compares the support the characters do and do not receive in conversation with bell hook's theory surrounding love as an act of resistance, from her book *All About Love: New Visions* (1999).

### INTRODUCTION

A community's support of an individual, especially surrounding the discrimination marginalized identities face is crucial to their propensity to persevere through the plight. This idea is applied in this paper through the support the LGBTQ+ characters in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* and *Giovanni's Room* do and do not receive from members of their community amidst life-changing queerphobic-based challenges. In the case of the characters in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, characters were supported through rejection and failures to fulfill hegemonic standards. On the other side, without a community to support individuals in *Giovanni's Room*, the characters faced similar challenges based on discrimination but had a significantly different experience enduring it because of the lack of support. In particular, Lily and Lana from *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* seek out and have support through moments of homophobia and racism and Giovanni from *Giovanni's Room* faces homophobia without support from family or friends, resulting in a decline in Giovanni's mental health. The support the characters receive invokes the idea of love as a form of political resistance from their supporters, and the support they receive invokes the idea of joy as a form of political resistance from the individuals.

This essay focuses on the need for community and personal relationships to support and uplift members when needed, hinging greatly on the theory of "love as an act of resistance." Prominent scholars in this field include bell hooks, adrienne maree brown, and Audre Lorde. The idea of love as a form of political resistance was introduced by theorist bell hooks in her book *All About Love: New Visions*. In the book, hooks explores love and how it is misrepresented and warped in modern society by indicating how love should be performed. She notes the importance of recentering platonic and familial love and romantic love to not undermine the importance of non-romantic love to the point of self-alienation from one's community. In the book, she also remarks on how love can be a transformative point in which equitable relationships and communities can be built to allow space for organization and support to be expressed.

Specifically, from *All About Love: New Visions*, I will focus on the chapter "Community: Loving Communion" to understand how the characters in these novels are affected by their community or lack thereof. Hooks denotes love to be at the basis of community- what it is based in, as well as what it is

based on— as a means to decenter romantic relationships and center platonic and familial love as they are the bonds of community.

Throughout this paper, I will be using the term “homosexual” to refer to Lily and Lana Jackson. I am using the language used in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* to refer to the characters. I will not be imposing modern labels and language onto characters that existed in a different period. In the cases of Giovanni, David, and Aunt Judy, I will be using the word “queer” as an adjective, rather than as a noun or label. At the time that *Giovanni’s Room* was published and *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* takes place, the term was used as a slur, however, because David and Giovanni do not have labels, and Aunt Judy is being queered, using the term homosexual would not be an apt label or description for these characters. Therefore, I will be using “queer” as an umbrella term, not as a label for these characters.

### SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY

---

*Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, by Malinda Lo, follows the story of Lily Hu, a Chinese American homosexual teenage girl in 1950s San Francisco, in Chinatown, as she explores her sexuality and falls in love. In the novel, Lily grapples with the seemingly opposite sides of her identity: being Chinese and homosexual. She knows that if her Chinatown community finds out about her homosexual identity, she will be shunned and ostracized and is, therefore, forced to keep it a secret. She faces pressures from her family and community to portray the part of a “good Chinese girl” (Lo 365), and being a homosexual does not fit into this image.

As noted in the novel, Lily’s Chinese American community, as many Asian American immigrant or diasporan groups are, is a site of homophobia and intolerance. This is ironic because, historically, as in many Asian cultures, Chinese culture has been notably tolerant of queer sexual and gender identities pre-colonization and globalization. As described in Rupp’s “Sapphistries:”

Where there seems to have been little idea of a persona with same-sex desires as a “kind of person” was outside Europe. In China, the Taoist tradition envisioned two forces, *yin* (associated with femininity and passivity) and *yang* (a masculine and active force), which need to exist in harmony. What mattered was not the biological sex of sexual partners but the preservation of *ch’i*, the life energy found in semen or vaginal secretions. Since women’s *yin* is limitless, no sexual activities between women could sap *ch’i*.... sexual relations between women as well as between men did not meet with condemnation, nor did they mark a woman engaged in sex with other women as a particular kind of being. (Rupp 38)

The idea of homosexuality did not exist in Europe in the same capacity as it did in China and, therefore, was not tolerated and marginalized because they were invisibilized through their experiences being ignored. This invisibility reinforces the heteronormative narratives that people of queer gender and sexuality identities do not exist. Therefore, homophobia, as an ideology, was transplanted and reproduced through globalization, making it a side effect and reproduction of colonization.

Within the context of the novel, there is dissonance between being Chinese and being a homosexual, and there is a belief that the two identities cannot intersect. Lily’s friends impose the idea, and it lives within her. She feels this separation between her two identities because of her community’s lack of understanding surrounding intersectionality. Lily’s best friend, Shirley says, “Chinese people don’t go to places like that. Chinese people aren’t like that. I can see that you’re confused. They must have done a number on you— oh, I’m so angry at them for doing this to you!” (Lo 319). Lily echoes this sentiment later, thinking:

She began to feel as if she had been split in two, and only one half of her was here in this living room. That was the good Chinese daughter... The other half had been left out on the sidewalk before Lily had walked in the front door. That was the girl who had spent last night in the North Beach apartment of a Caucasian woman she barely knew. Everything would be all right, Lily understood, as long as she kept that girl out of this Chinese family. (Lo 367)

The two girls grew up in the Chinese community. The community socialized them and taught them their beliefs and values, which they uphold unquestioned here. They echo the sentiments here, contributing to the sentiment that the communities are completely separate, will never support one another, and have no commonalities.

In the same vein, the homosexual community, as portrayed in the novel, is a site of racism and intolerance of Chinese and non-white identities. Lily's place in the homosexual community is questioned through the continual reinforcement of stereotypes, such as the constant questioning of her abilities to speak English and the note that she was singular in her presence- "'We don't see many Orientals around here.' And then: 'Does she speak English?'" (Lo 155)- in homosexual safe spaces like the Telegraph Club. These microaggressions position Lily as an outsider and do not allow her full access to the world that the club offers. E. Patrick Johnson explores this idea in "'Quare' Studies, or (Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned From my Grandmother." LGBTQ+ people of color often do not have access to the same experience of coming out and rejection that white LGBTQ+ people do because they cannot count on the idea that they will find support elsewhere. This is explained through the experience of coming out as it relates to white people versus people of color- white people can reject their support systems because they can rely on the knowledge that they will find outside support that replaces that of their families. As it relates to the novel, Lily cannot let her community in Chinatown find out about her homosexual identity because she cannot find the support she would lose elsewhere, as shown through her exclusion from full acceptance into the Telegraph Club's community.

Despite the bigotry present in both the Chinese diaspora and the queer community targeting one another, Chinatown and the homosexual community had much in common based on their marginalization in the 1950s. They were both targeted by the red scare- being called communists and threatened with deportation and detention (Shibusawa 3). The marginalization that affects the two communities could potentially be sites of community where the two groups come together and support one another. Bell hooks, in "Love as the Practice for Freedom," comments on the power of the civil rights movement, saying, "When masses of black folks started thinking solely in terms of 'us and them,' internalizing the value system of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, blind spots developed, the capacity for empathy needed for the building of community was diminished" (hooks 249). The communities are pitted against each other because of the intolerance and discriminatory beliefs embedded in the two communities. However, because of the intolerance and the discriminatory beliefs embedded in the two communities, they cannot bridge this gap, which is caused by, and furthers a white supremacist heteronormative patriarchal agenda that endorses colonialist beliefs. By holding these beliefs, these communities are in turn weakening themselves, because they cannot organize to fight and dismantle the systems that reproduce their suffering and harm at the behest of white supremacy.

Despite this bigotry, the importance of the Telegraph Club as a space for the community to gather cannot be understated. When looking at it through the lens of Michel Foucault's "Panopticism," the club is a space where people do not need to perform heterosexuality to fit into a hegemonic society, because there are no enforcers of heterosexuality in the club (Foucault 10). Foucault in "Panopticism" theorizes about the relationship between surveillance and individuals' performances in society as they are policed by and police those around them into conformity. The characters are drawn to these homosexual spaces as they offer community and freedom from the constant vigilance necessary in a heteronormative homophobic society. In this space, they are not monsterized for their queer identities and are allowed to express themselves freely. Lily experiences the Telegraph Club's necessity when shopping with friends from Chinatown, and she sees and recognizes Paula, an acquaintance from the club. She thinks:

The idea that Paula from the Telegraph Club had a job as a Macy's salesgirl was astonishing. Was Lily supposed to acknowledge that she knew Paula? And if she did, would Paula acknowledge that she knew Lily? Lily was immediately certain that it was dangerous for them to do so. The midnight world in which they had met did not belong here in the brightly lit public afternoon. (Lo 272)

Lily knows that she cannot highlight the homosexual community that she has built outside of the club. They are relegated to the margins and will stay there until they can come out. The community's support is not tangible outside of the space because they need the invisibility of the space to continue their community. Because of the hidden community, when the police raid and shut down the club, Lily has no one to turn to for help.

The presumed loss of community affects Lily, especially during the novel's climax. Her fears have come true; she is spotted at the club by a Chinatown community member, is then outed to Shirley, her best friend, and is forced by the community gossip to tell her family. This, in turn, forces Lily to run away, stuck in the cold with no coat, no contacts, and nowhere to go. Her worst fears surrounding her sexuality, family, and community have come true at this point— she has no support and has been kicked out of her community. After a while, Lily thinks of Lana Jackson, a friend from the club. Lana and Lily's relationship is different: it left the club's walls. Lily had gone to the apartment Lana shared with her partner and performer, Tommy Andrews, for an after-party. Because they had met outside the club, Lily's connection had been solidified and turned into a kinship she could rely on in a time of need. Lana takes her in, feeds her, gives her a place to stay, and takes care of her. This support is invaluable to Lily as she begins to hope for a seemingly bleak future after running away; she takes solace in Lana's story and allows herself to hope. The love and care that Lana shows is radical— she is grieving and scared in her own right— her partner was arrested during the police raid and was at the mercy of the violent and homophobic police. In *All About Love: New Visions*, "Healing: Redemptive Love," hooks says, "Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion" (hooks 214-215). Lily and Lana need each other's company and take comfort in each other's presence. That night, they had open and honest conversations— Lana used her experiences to help Lily work through her thoughts without judgment. Most notably, Lily realizes that she loves Kath through conversations about Lana's first love, comparing her experience with her and Kath's. This realization is what allows Lily to stand firm in her sexuality when being asked to deny it.

Lana and Lily are literary mirrors, as Lily's coming-out narrative mirrors Lana's; she was also rejected by her parents and forced to leave her home in Detroit to pursue acceptance and community. "I moved here when I was seventeen because I heard San Francisco was friendly to people like me..." Lana spoke dryly, but when she reached for the cigarettes again there was a touch of nervousness to her movements" (Lo 340). In the many years since Lana left her parents, there is still pain in her memories and relationship with them. They have reconnected since, but only by mail and there is an implication that Lana does not speak about her past often through her nervous demeanor. Lana's move to San Francisco was based on the the need for unquestioned community support, which she would receive from people with similar identities and stories, as Lily sought out Lana.

When Lily returns home at the behest of her Aunt Judy, she endures a traumatizing conversation with her family. They do not listen to her and do not offer support or listen to her stating her needs, instead asking her to recloset herself to secure her place in their community. Lily refuses based on her love for Kath, seeing it as a denial and betrayal of their love as well as herself. The joy that Lily finds in her love for Kath is an example of love as an act of resistance, embodying brown's idea that "We can no longer love as a secret or a presentation, as something we prioritize, hoard for the people we know. Prioritizing ourselves in love is political strategy, is survival" (brown 60). She is prioritizing her feelings while being asked not to feel them, creating space for herself, her love, and Kath, thus embedding joy in an awful time.

As a consequence of going to the Telegraph Club, Lily is forced to go live with her Aunt Judy and her husband, as a means to separate her from Kath. Judy tries to make the best of the situation, she knows Lily's family would not allow her to stay in San Francisco, she says, "...maybe we can find you a part-time job or something at the lab. You'd like that, wouldn't you" (Lo 377). Her tone indicates that this is the best outcome possible and that Judy tried to advocate for a better option but ultimately lost to Lily's parents. Later on, in the novel's last chapter, when Lily is leaving San Francisco, Judy says:

"I know it feels like the end of the world now, but it's not... In a few months, you'll graduate from high school, and your whole life will be ahead of you."

*My life is right now*, Lily wanted to retort, and she raised her gaze to her aunt's face to say it, and was stopped short by the expression there. A pleading look, straightforward and earnest. The bright bubbles of tears in her eyes.

"I don't understand what you've been going through," Aunt Judy said, "but you'll just have to put up with me until I do understand."

Aunt Judy squeezed Lily's arm, and then she let go. Lily nodded slightly, just enough for Aunt Judy to notice, and it felt like wrenching a door open the tiniest crack. It was all she could do just then, and she had to turn away to look out the window to avoid seeing the hope on her aunt's face. (Lo 385)

In this moment, Judy is trying to connect with Lily and trying to help her understand that she has the rest of her life to reconnect with Kath and live her life how she chooses. She understands that this has been a traumatic experience, and she wants Lily to know that she is there for her and that she is trying to understand how Lily is feeling. Her attempt works, this interaction changes Lily's perspective on having to leave Chinatown, her home, and Kath; her outlook changes to be more hopeful of the future, sustaining the idea that this change is not the end of the world and that Lily will be able to find Kath again one day. Judy's love and support of Lily in this moment is a form of resistance, while also reassuring for Lily. As established, homosexual people in the 1950s were not accepted by a heteronormative society.

Judy's acceptance and support of Lily is radical because she is directly opposing the systems of oppression that discriminate against homosexual people and encourage and program people to perpetuate that discrimination. She embodies the idea, originally put forth by bell hooks, that "Love, as a form of action, may even demolish systems and structures of hate, domination, and oppression" (Biana 127). The love that Judy shows for Lily is a direct form of dissent against the systems that seek to diminish homosexual people. Judy's love for Lily is so strong that she opposes these systems, showing their weaknesses. The love she shows for Lily indicates a more widespread acceptance of homosexual people and a rejection of the discriminatory systems, starting with her acceptance of Lily.

Within queer theory, there lies an idea that non-normative ways of living are inherently queer and offer queer experiences because of the method by which they are marginalized (Rumens et al. 2). Judy is a queer character in her own right because she does not follow the societal expectations for women in the 1950s:

... She secretly wondered if her reluctance had doomed the unborn baby. She had been planning to apply for Ph.D. programs in mathematics when she got pregnant. She'd dreamed of continuing her studies, not having a baby.

She had been overwhelmed by guilt. She still was. How could she have been so careless? She should've gone to the doctor earlier. She should have known, somehow, that something was wrong. It was probably her fault for not paying closer attention to her body. She'd always been lost in thought, in numbers and patterns and theorems. She'd always been an oddity, not like normal girls who cooed over babies and put all their heart into planning and preparing and waiting for them. She wasn't one to coo; she never had been. Perhaps that meant there was something wrong with her, and her body had known that and had rejected motherhood.

In some ways, the guilt was more painful than the miscarriage. (Lo 306-307)

Because Judy does not want children and wants to continue her career in a time when the idea of nuclear families was the standard, she is a queer character. She pushes against the heteronormative lifestyle and is ostracized and othering for her experiences similar to nonheterosexual people in terms of living her life outside of the roles expected of her. The guilt she feels is a result of societal messaging that categorizes her as a person who should be a mother or a birthing person. Because of her status as a queer

character, she can connect with Lily in a way her direct family cannot and offers a source of hope through the traumatic experience of coming out.

Lily and Judy's connection is partially based on their position as outsiders in their community. Lily and Judy's positions as nonheteronormative individuals within society relate to Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's "Monster Culture: Seven Theses," which positions people who lie outside of societal norms as "the monster" through how they are treated by society, as a monster. He says, "These monsters ask us how we perceive the world, and how we have misrepresented what we have attempted to place. They ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression. They ask us why we have created them" (Cohen 20). Lily and Judy's statuses as monsterized individuals, allow Judy to put aside her implicit biases surrounding sexuality because of her own experiences. Judy's understanding of how society monsterizes people is different, as it is based on gender performance, but still allows her to see how homophobia affects Lily, and inspires empathy and compassion which Lily holds onto. The support Judy offers is still relational as a form of resistance, however, through the understanding that at this time, Judy is not living in the same circumstances as Lily within the context of homophobia and Judy is queer within the context of misogyny.

### LACK OF SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY

David and Giovanni in *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin do not have the support as characters in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*. They are actively detrimental to each other's lives and result in Giovanni's death. *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin follows David, an American man who moved to Paris to escape the social suffocation of his life in America. In Paris, David meets a variety of vibrant characters, most notably, Jacques and Guillaume, two older and influential queer men, and Giovanni, a barkeep with whom David begins a tumultuous relationship. David is engaged to a woman, Hella, throughout his and Giovanni's relationship and is waiting for her to return and meet him in Paris. This creates tension in David and Giovanni's relationship because there is a termination point of their relationship that has not been properly communicated. The relationship is unhealthy for either David or Giovanni, Giovanni is dependent on David, and David is not supportive of Giovanni. When David leaves Giovanni, without telling him, Giovanni is not doing well, he falls into a depressive episode beginning with the loss of his job, and culminating with the murder of his boss, Guillaume.

The story is told in first person point of view, with David speaking in hindsight, reminiscing on his relationship with Giovanni. The novel ends with Giovanni's execution and David leaving Paris, alone. This end signifies the end of David's "freedom" from the suffocating rules of American society through a return to America. When looking at this through "Panopticism," and "Monser Culture," there is a clear commentary on the effects this freedom will have on someone still living with the societal programming that a homophobic patriarchal society offers. While in Paris, as well as a community that holds less judgment surrounding homosexuality, David is struck by the openness with which people would express their desires. This is especially apparent when looking at an interaction between David and a monsterized character:

It looked like a mummy or a zombie — this was the first, overwhelming impression — of something walking after it had been put to death... It carried a glass, it walked on its toes, the flat hips moved with a dead, horrifying lasciviousness... It glittered in the dim light; the thin, black hair was violent with oil, combed forward, hanging in bangs; the eyelids gleamed with mascara, the mouth raged with lipstick. The face was white and thoroughly bloodless with some kind of foundation cream; it stank of powder and a gardenia-like perfume. The shirt, open coquettishly to the navel, revealed a hairless chest and a silver crucifix; the shirt was covered with round, paper-thin wafers, red and green and orange and yellow and blue, which stormed in the light and made one feel that the mummy might, at any moment, disappear in flame... (Baldwin 48)

At this moment, it is critical to note that these are David's internal thoughts and biases that he is projecting onto this character. David is inherently an unreliable narrator, his biases and beliefs bleed into

his narration, as it does here. His narration regarding this character is informed by his social programming that leads him to interpret people performing gender outside of the set binary as monstrous. The person asks David if he likes Giovanni and his initial reaction is to fight the person and get angry, to establish his masculinity, which is being questioned with the challenge to his heterosexuality. David's initial reaction falls within Foucault's theorizing through David's entrapment of this person as the other. "The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the dungeon; or rather of its three functions- to enclose, to deprive of light, and to hide- it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap" (Foucault 6). David is bringing this person's differences into visibility by calling them "it" and comparing them to monsters, thus monsterizing their qualities. He acts as the watchman to make them the other and position himself as the norm. Keeping in mind his position as narrator, this is especially illuminating to how he sees himself- as a "normal" person whose queer identity is made normative through the ways that he rejects it publicly and foregrounds his masculinity.

This interaction occurs at the beginning of David and Giovanni's relationship, foreshadowing the effect David's internal biases would have on Giovanni. Throughout the relationship, David attempts to keep Giovanni at arm's length- he is not letting him in because of the shame David feels surrounding their relationship.

"It's just that she'll be terribly hurt if she does find out, that's all. People have very dirty words for -for this situation." I stopped. His face suggested that my reasoning was flimsy. I added, defensively "Besides, it is a crime -in my country, and, after all, I didn't grow up here, I grew up there."

"If dirty words frighten you," said Giovanni, "I really do not know how you have managed to live so long. People are full of dirty words. The only time they do not use them, most people I mean, is when they are describing something dirty." He paused and we watched each other. In spite of what he was saying he looked rather frightened himself. (Baldwin 84-85)

David tries to bring his internalized queerphobia into the conversation but is quickly shut down by Giovanni. Giovanni has similar fears but tries to downplay them to salvage their relationship; he is willing to put aside his internalized insecurities while David is not, he's weaponizing them as a means to push Giovanni away. It is more interesting to note that this conversation comes up when they are talking about David's fiancé, saying that their relationship will have to end when she returns to Paris, thus making space for the heteronormativity that David is trying to enforce within their relationship. At this moment, David is trying to implement the ideologies that he left America to escape, he has been "caught up in the power situation of which [he] is the bearer. (Foucault 7). David becomes the enforcer of these heteronormative and homophobic ideals, affecting his and Giovanni's relationship for the worse because he is effectively eliminating himself as a person who would unconditionally accept, support, and love Giovanni, creating a distance between them and a point of nonsupport or abandonment for Giovanni. Giovanni has just as much fear regarding the societal view of their relationship, but he is willing to put it aside for the relationship; David wants to put aside his relationship for his fear. Because of the queerphobia David is inserting into the relationship as a means to tear them apart, Giovanni is unsupported from the outset, through the end.

Giovanni was dependent on David in a way that David was not on Giovanni, and there was no respect in their relationship. David said, "He could not endure being very far from me for very long. I was the only person on God's cold, green earth who cared about him, who knew his speech and silence, knew his arms, and did not carry a knife. The burden of his salvation seemed to be on me and I could not endure it" (Baldwin 114), about Giovanni, making his departure that much more destabilizing. Despite knowing this, David left Giovanni abruptly and mercilessly, when Hella returned. He does not tell Giovanni that he is leaving and goes three days without telling him where he is or what has happened. When he does finally see Giovanni and tells him that he is leaving and is back with Hella, it is by chance-

"Hella and Giovanni met by accident, after Hella had been in Paris for three days. During those three days I had not seen him and I had not mentioned his name" (Baldwin 123). Had Hella and David not run into Giovanni, Giovanni would not have known where David was and would have been left in a state of limbo regarding their relationship. This action, or inaction, rather, is indicative of a lack of respect and love, for Giovanni. Love as defined by hooks- "...is the action we take on behalf of our own or another's spiritual growth..." (hooks 54). Their "love" is closer to infatuation and obsession because they do not invest time and energy into the other's growth. The lack of love goes hand in hand with the lack of respect in their relationship. Had David loved Giovanni, he would have had the courage to break up with him directly and make sure that Giovanni was in the right mental state to be left alone. Neither David nor Giovanni was contributing to the others' growth; they did not take action to support one another, or else David would have the decency to break up with Giovanni directly.

Because David was not dependent on Giovanni in the same way Giovanni was, David was able to end their relationship while still retaining the support of the people around him. Hooks says, "Committed love relationships are far more likely to become codependent when we cut off all our ties with friends to give these bonds we consider primary our exclusive attention" (hooks 135), about codependency. As mentioned, at this point, Giovanni spent almost all his time with David and was unable and unwilling to do anything alone. However, during this time, David maintained relationships with Hella, Jacques, and his father, maintaining his community and support outside of their relationship. Therefore, because David does not become dependent on Giovanni, he can leave their relationship and be emotionally sound regarding the decision. Giovanni's mental state before their breakup did not allow him to maintain his relationships with those around him, and he therefore was unable to go to them for support for a prolonged time. Giovanni went to Jacques after their breakup, but that support ran out-

"I hope it's not my fault," Jacques said at last. "I didn't give him the money. If I'd known - I would have given him everything I had."

But we both knew this was not true. (Baldwin 35)

Jacques is a selfish character, but still one that Giovanni has a friendship with. Had Jacques loaned Giovanni money, Giovanni would not have had to go back to work with Guillaume, and would not have been put in the position to continue putting up with Guillaume's abuse. David also knew that he was leaving Giovanni in a place with no support, and how that was negatively affecting his mental health. David said, "I can't help feeling that I placed him in the shadow of the knife. He wanted me to stay in that room with him, he begged me to stay. I didn't tell you - we had an awful fight the night I went there, to get my things. I paused. I sipped my drink. 'He cried'" (Baldwin 156). While their relationship is unhealthy and David is not at fault for leaving, the unexpected way in which David ended their relationship led to the decline in Giovanni's mental health and contributed to his decision to kill Guillaume. Giovanni does not have the support he needs from anyone to get through this rough patch, and consequently, lashes out violently.

## CONCLUSION

Community support is invaluable to an individual's propensity to persevere through their struggles and has the potential to help them heal or lead to their demise. Lily and Lana Jackson need each other, just as Lily needs Judy to get through the traumatic experience of being outed and losing her community, and Lana needs the homosexual community in San Francisco to get through her exile. The love and support that Judy and Lana show are radical in their existence because they are told, by society, not to care- Lana because she does not know Lily well and Judy because Lily is a homosexual. Despite this message, their love and care for Lily equates to love as a form of resistance. The joy that Lily derives from their support is in turn joy as a form of resistance because she has hope, love, and joy in the face of social discrimination stemming from societal rejection based on her sexual orientation. On the other hand, Giovanni and David's lack of support is relational to the lack of love and respect in their relationship. David gives into the societal messaging that tells him to hold discriminatory beliefs and causes distress because of it. Judy and David are given the same choice, to accept and support those that they love, Judy,

however, takes the opportunity. Giovanni's mental health decline at the end of the novel is caused by a culmination of David's actions and a lack of support.

#### WORKS CITED

- Biana, Hazel T. "Love as an Act of Resistance: bell hooks on Love." *Love and Friendship Across Cultures: Perspectives from East and West*, 2021, pp. 127-137.
- brown, adrienne maree. "Love as Political Resistance." *Pleasure Activism : The Politics of Feeling Good*. AK Press, 2019, pp. 59-63.
- Foucault, Michel. "Panopticism." *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 2nd Vintage Books ed. New York, Vintage Books, 1995.
- hooks, bell. "Commitment: Let Love Be Love in Me." *All About Love: New Visions*, HarperCollins, 1999, pp. 50-68.
- hooks, bell. "Community: Loving Community." *All About Love: New Visions*, HarperCollins, 1999, pp.127-144.
- hooks, bell. "Healing: Redemptive Love." *All About Love: New Visions*, HarperCollins, 1999, pp.127-144.
- hooks, bell. "Love as the Practice of Freedom." *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, Routledge Classics, New York City, New York, 2006, pp. 243-250.
- Jerome Cohen, Jeffrey. "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)." *Classic Readings on Monster Theory: Demonstrate*, Volume One, edited by Asa Simon Mittman and Marcus Hensel, Amsterdam: ARC Humanities Press, 2018, pp. 43-54. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781942401209-008>.
- Lo, Malinda. *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, Dutton Books, 2021, New York.
- Rumens, Nick, et al. "Queering Queer Theory in Management and Organization Studies: Notes toward Queering Heterosexuality." *Organization Studies*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2019, pp. 593-612, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840617748904>.
- Rupp, Leila J. "What's in a Name? (1890-1930)." *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love Between Women*, NYU Press, 2009, pp. 142-60. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qg1g0.10>. Accessed 26 Apr. 2024.
- Shibusawa, Naoko. "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2012, pp. 723-52, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2012.01052.x>.