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Introduction

According to Raymond Williams (in his very useful *Keywords*, a text that I recommend to all students in Humanities), culture is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language." Nature is another, he says. "Culture" is commonly thought to mark our distinction from "nature:" nature is what human beings can't escape, "culture" is what we change (using fire to make metals, for example) and how we shape and make meaningful the inescapable natural imperatives, such as procreation and death.

Today, we use culture primarily, I would say, in two plus different ways: (1) the anthropological view that all groups have a set of behaviours and beliefs that govern their way of living together; this view is "neutral" in the sense that it recognizes the coherence of specific groups or cultures. The Aztecs had their worldview, modern Canada has its; we might recoil at the idea of human sacrifice, but such acts made sense within the Aztec worldview and we should at least try to understand it. (2) Writers like Matthew Arnold, in his well-known *Culture and Anarchy* of 1869, thinks of culture as "the best that has been thought and said," on the basis of which (who gets to choose the best he doesn't say) many countries, including Canada, construct a curriculum for schools and colleges.

Beyond these two views of culture – as what people in a particular society do and believe, and the *best* aspects of what they create – there are many extrapolations of the term, many of which are reflected in the essays that make up this first edition of *Culture*. Among the implications of these new ways of thinking is the rise of identity forms of culture: Canadian culture is not a single thing but consists of many cultural attachments and identities. People in Canada, and elsewhere, are creating or recalling their own cultural attachments and using them to influence the politics of the larger entity to which they belong. Gender identities and cultures would be an example of this. And there's the use of the term in regard to "office culture," for example. Sometimes the term gets stretched beyond usefulness, perhaps, although I wouldn't be willing to give up on it yet.

The cover page of *Culture* (Cher and Charlie Chaplin, Putin and the Pope, Walt Disney and Drake, Beyoncé and Beethoven, Mandela and Mickey Mouse) and the range of articles within it – progressive and edgy - are worthy in themselves of a cultural-studies-style analysis. The journal as whole shows that culture, although and because it is a contested concept, is useful to young people today; they, like their ancestors, are dealing with the tension between continuity and newness that Raymond Williams and others have highlighted as the key to successful … well, cultures.

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Getting Fucked Can Get Fucked Up: The Problems in Porn

MJ Wright

In this essay, I will be discussing pornography, and the problems that exist within the medium. As a male in his late teens, it is probably not surprising that I have at least a passing interest in pornography, but by my own admission I feel as though my interest goes deeper than casual porn use. I identify as bisexual, and throughout my life I have consumed both gay and straight porn, and have often been struck by the differences in the both the general styles and industries. This became evident when I discovered a major studio gay porn film titled *Scared Stiff*. When researching the film, I discovered promotional photos of the actors. They were not only in sexy poses, as to be expected, but were also shown casually hanging out together and with the director; this is something that I have never seen in straight porn promotion. Thus, began my interest in investigating the differences in gay and straight porn operation and by extension, their effect on the users' consciousnesses.

From my research, I have seen that straight pornography typically has more of a sexual imbalance between genders, which are contain negative depictions of sex and sexuality in contrast to the sex often seen in gay porn. Gay depictions of sex are typically free of power imbalances and inherent objectification. From these differences, we can see the real problems that exist in pornography, accompanied by some proposed solutions to these problems. To prove this, I will be critiquing texts with two contrasting positions on pornography, one from feminist scholar Andrea Dworkin and the other from sex therapist Marty Klein. Numerous studies on pornographic content and the business of porn will also be discussed. In addition, I will be breaking down a straight and gay porn comparison written by Tom Waugh, to in the end apply Martha Nussbaum's definitions of objectification to pornography.

To understand how the medium of pornography effects people, it is important to understand how any media or art form can affect its consumers. Exactly what the effects of a form of media are can be quite hard to pin down and can differ wildly from person to person. For example, reading a piece of writing can accelerate one's understanding of a social issue, but if one refuses to make any effort to interpret its meaning, it may simply broaden one's vocabulary. However, if anyone is persistently confronted with a certain style or message presented through a medium, they will slowly lose their ability to identify that they are even being affected by that media. Marshall McLuhan describes this as numbness; as a media becomes ubiquitous in one's life, it becomes difficult to identify its effects. In McLuhan's words, "[w]e are as numb in our new electric world as the native involved in our literate and mechanical culture" (McLuhan 8). It eventually can become impossible to disassociate ourselves with the media itself, it is intertwined in our consciousness.

This concept can be directly applied to pornography. If one frequently surrounds oneself with explicit sexual content, this is going to shape how one perceives the world, perhaps without their knowledge. This is not to say that this shaping is positive or negative, as that would depend on one's personal belief as to what kind of messages porn sends out (and the content itself). Although it may be assumed that there is an easy answer to that question, the complete lack of consensus in the world of academia and beyond shows clearly that the answer is anything but clear. To gain a sense of how varied those perspectives are, I will investigate two conflicting essays on pornography, "Pornography is a Civil Rights Issue for Women" by Andrea Dworkin and "Pornography: What Men See When They Watch" by Marty Klein. These are both extreme positions on either side of the argument, but the essays show the diversity of thought on the topic, and exactly how far (perhaps too far) some may go to defend or attack it.

Within feminist philosophy alone, there are many shifting perspectives as to whether pornography is an important part of a sex positive society or, as Andrea Dworkin puts it, "a civil rights issue for women" (62). That quote, and the following ideas are from a testimony Dworkin gave decrying pornography. She is notorious for having an extreme anti-pornography viewpoint, and this testimony is no exception. From the beginning of the testimony she expresses humiliation over living in a country where, "millions of pictures are made of [women] in postures of submission and sexual access so that our vaginas are exposed for penetration" (55). She describes various niche genres of pornography including that of "mentally and physically disabled women, women who are maimed" (55) and "concentration camp pornography" (56). She discusses, at length. the various degrading acts she believes women are forced to do by pimps and pornographers, and that films of real murder and real rapes are regularly passed around in the porn marketplace. She also claims that pornography is a direct cause of crime worldwide, "especially in rape and battery, in incest and child abuse, in murder [and even] suicides of teenage boys" (64). By the end of the testimony, she calls for civil rights legislation aimed at preventing production and distribution in efforts to protect women specifically.

From reading her statements above, it may surprise Dworkin to learn some simple facts about pornography. First, women both willingly participate in its creation (Griffiths 528) and consume it in the very same way men do, even if their numbers are fewer. According to a report on the porn business and porn use, 18% of women 18-30 admitted to using pornography at least once a week (Covenant Eyes 17). Secondly, pornography without any female involvement exists. This is not to deny mass exploitation existing in the porn industry, but this is a problem that is not saturated throughout the whole of pornography. In addition, her claim that this exploitation consistently only effects women and that "the major motif of pornography . . . is that women are raped and violated and humiliated until [they] discover they like it" (55), is both an oversimplified and misinformed statement, as I will discuss more in depth further into the essay. To say that porn is the cause (or even a cause) of crime world-wide is to ignore that the vast majority of porn users are not violent rapists and murderers. Porn users represent a very large majority. A study on pornography usage estimated that every second over three thousand dollars is spent on porn and over 20 thousand internet users are viewing porn. 12% of the internet is dedicated to porn and 40 million adults in the United States alone report that they regularly view Internet pornography (Ropelato 2007). If what Dworkin claims about porn's effect on its users were true, then this mass of consumers would be a horde of violent thugs wreaking havoc on society, and this is, of course, untrue.

Dworkin's position is not the consensus in studies of porn, as sex therapist Klein shows in his essay: "[The conventional] critique . . . assumes that porn consumers are involved in an esoteric activity on the fringe of society. On the contrary - pornography is America's conventional entertainment" (Klein 245). His view of pornography is one of positivity, stating that the amount of well-adjusted and satisfied porn customers is a clear counterpoint to Dworkin's sentiments. Furthermore, what is depicted in pornography is actually an incredibly positive thing for society. Klein believes the lack of realism in porn, "the instant vaginal orgasms, the lack of kissing, the sex in physically uncomfortable positions" are akin to the unrealistic portrayals of violence and action in a Hollywood superhero film (Klein 248). They not are meant to be taken literally, but instead represent other themes just like any depiction in media. These themes include ones that Klein sees to be positive: consent, validation of sexual fantasy, self-acceptance, and abundance. He claims that "[abundance] is the ultimate erotic fantasy of most viewers - not actress A or B, not position A or B, but a world of erotic surplus in which all choices are possible, the desire for these choice is validated, and the acceptability of desire and the wholesomeness of eroticism is validated over and over" (Klein 249).

While this viewpoint of copiousness being the primary fantasy of the porn consumer is definitely close to the truth, there is a major problem in Klein's mostly valid take: the abundance and validation in porn does not exist for everyone. Due to the primary audience of porn being men, the excess and access is geared primarily towards what pornographer's perceive to be male desire. This comes out in male domination over females, which is a part of most straight pornography. Dworkin summarizes this problem when she states: "pornography sexualizes inequality" (62). Despite Klein's optimistic view of the medium, the inequality of the sexes in porn is clear and problematic.

Pornographic scenes often end with the male orgasm, the cum shot, showing that the male orgasm is the end goal of all sex in this fantasy world (Bridges 1069). Showing the woman's pleasure is not the motive of most of these films; what is most important is for the man to ejaculate, most often on the woman herself (Bridges 1074-75). However, women *are* pleasured: they moan and scream in a way that can become absurd, to the point that “any touch or position by one actor to another is met with near orgasmic pleasure” (Bridges 1067). This is clearly included to service the male’s pleasure. Even a casual viewing of mainstream straight porn can easily show an under layer of male domination and aggression. Women are "slammed," "pounded," and "fucked." A study of aggression in mainstream pornography found that 88.1% of scenes in mainstream porn included some aggressive behaviour, most commonly spanking, gagging and slapping (Bridges 1075). Although it's rare for the actresses to not enjoy the men's aggression (Bridges 1080), (and of course many women can and do enjoy male domination in their sex lives), to imply that there is no power imbalance in pornography is ludicrous. Put bluntly, women are all too often the objects in straight porn, and men the sexual beings who wish to use them. This is a sexist, toxic ideology that is hard to escape from when viewing straight pornography of any kind.

Ultimately the problem in straight pornography is not that women are coerced into participating in fetishistic acts. This does occur, but the clear majority of acts are done consensually, and in fact women in pornography report high enjoyment of sex, more than the average women (Griffiths 528). Moreover, their enjoyment is completely okay! The problem is that even in porn that attempts to portray typical couples or balanced sexual acts, there is a subtext of power imbalance, skewed in favour of the man. It is the norm for men's sexual pleasure to be of the upmost importance, while women's pleasure merely falls to the wayside, or is shown only to pleasure men.

Were this aspect merely a portion of the general porn content, there would be little problem. Unfortunately, as discussed, this power imbalance is epitome of straight porn. One must be suspicious and even concerned of the sexual consciousness of the regular straight porn consumer: a person who is being told (perhaps daily) through this media that the male is the most important and valued portion of a sex act, no matter how innocuous, and that women are merely there to satisfy the males' needs. This ideology is more horrifying to me than any consensual scat porn that Dworkin condemns. It's no wonder that fewer women than man have any interest in porn: an industry which is constantly telling them (whether explicitly or implicitly) that although they are certainly valued and deserve an orgasm here or there, their sexual needs pale in comparison to the needs of the man, which they are made to service.

Ironically this leads us to the most male-dominated genre of porn that exists, gay pornography. Although many women are not interested in mainstream pornography which feature women, they of course are still sexual beings who enjoy getting off now and again. What could be their media of choice, aside from steamy romance novels? In fact, many women, both straight and queer, have an affinity for seeing gay men have sex on camera. One woman described gay porn as "different to any other porn I had seen, with real, intense chemistry and models that were obviously having a good time” (Welsh 2014). In addition, I have had many discussions with my female friends over the years who have said they prefer gay pornography to straight, and not just because of the sexy guys who are plentiful throughout the genre. This is only surprising until one spends some time learning about and consuming both gay *and* straight porn. They are entirely separate industries and entities. On the surface level, condom use is much more common in gay porn than straight (Grudzen 52), but there are other deeper differences.

As discussed, much of straight porn by only being made for one half of the genre's participants has an inherent power imbalance. This imbalance cannot exist in gay pornography, and because of this, the genre is produced in entirely different ways. In straight porn, the "spectator's position tends to be rigidly gender determined; ... [the] straight male spectator looks at female image-object" while in gay porn "the spectators position [is] in relation [and] the representations are open and in flux ... [the] spectators position [can] fluctuate or is simultaneously multiple, among different characteristics and types" (Waugh, 1985). In addition, in straight porn "women frequently are active partners (i.e. aggressive fellators) as well as passive insertees, but the range of roles is quite rigidly prescribed" (Waugh, 1985). To contrast gay men can experience sex "in a wide range of combinations and roles not determined by gender" (Waugh, 1985). It is no surprise from these descriptions why some women are more interested in gay porn rather than straight porn.

This contrast could be blamed on the gender differences that are inescapable in straight porn, but I must question that sentiment. Why is it possible for there to be no prescribed gender roles in actual, healthy sex lives and not in media depictions of them? There is a problem, one that exists in much of media portrayals of human relationships, but specifically exemplified in pornography. Although Marty Klein's view is optimistic, it is far from accurate and should be held up as an ideal of what we could accomplish with the media, rather than what we currently have.

A solution to this problem can be found by applying the style of gay porn to that of straight porn. Gay pornography can easily allow the participants to be on a level playing field, equally devoted to providing each other pleasure and satisfaction. It typically does not focus on objectifying and idealizing the traits of one of the men, and instead allows sex itself to be idealized. This is entirely at odds with typical straight pornography, which is very much devoted to showing the features of the women and what the viewer can get from (or do to) her. This is objectification, the root of the negativity in straight porn, but is something I believe the medium can do without entirely. This may seem like a strange statement, given that objectification seems the de facto goal of porn. However, if one considers the definition of objectification, as provided by Martha Nussbaum, it is clear that just as sex can exist without it, so can media's depiction of sex.

Nussbaum's definite investigation of objectification was provided in her book *Sex and Social Justice*. She proposes that objectification has seven rigid indictors, which are as follows:

> 1. *Instrumentality.* The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her own purposes.
> 2. *Denial of autonomy.* The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.
> 3. *Inertness.* The objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and perhaps in activity.
> 4. *Fungibility.* The objectifier treats the object as interchangeable with other objects of the same (or other) type(s).
> 5. *Violability.* The objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary integrity, as something that it is permissible to break up, smash, break into.
> 6. *Ownership.* The objectifier treats the object that is owned by another, can be bought, or sold.
> 7. *Denial of subjectivity.* The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings need not be taken into account. (Nussbaum 218)

Nussbaum discusses that to objectify someone, one only has to do one of the above, and they are not inclusive to each other: one can treat someone as a tool to his or her own purposes without treating them as an object that can be broken. She also states that objectification is not necessarily a negative thing; a parent must treat their small children as inert and deny them subjectivity to protect them from potential danger (221-222).

However, the way people, mainly women, are objectified in porn is what leads to the negative domination-centered sex that exists in it. Most often what is seen in straight porn is a combination of instrumentality, denial of autonomy, fungibility, and frequently violability. Women are treated solely as a tool for men's desire, unable to make their own decisions about what they want and need in sex. They are regularly traded around in a scene, with no value placed on them beyond what their vaginas can do in that moment. They are also dominated aggressively and treated roughly, which again, is not wrong on its own in the context of consensual sexual experience, but as it is the way sex is mainly depicted in porn, it becomes problematic. By constantly depicting women being objectified in this way, either through what is occurring in the films or how they are produced, straight porn perpetrates sexual negativity in the belief that male sexuality and desire is the most important (and sometimes only) factor in sex.

From seeing exactly what leads to negativity and inequality in porn, it can be understood that just as objectification is not needed for sex in life, it is not mutually inclusive with porn either. If we can envision and experience a lack of objectification in our sex lives, why can't depictions of sex in media be the very same way? The truth is, it already can! Aside from the gay pornography that I've discussed, straight feminist pornography, like the kind produced by websites like Bright Desire and others, intends to produce porn that focuses on sexual positivity, fluid gender roles, pleasure and satisfaction for all participants and validation. Although the porn can still depict more fetishistic sexual content that Dworkin may despise, it does so with an aim for equality and mutual pleasure, and through this, stop the true exploitation that exists in the genre. Even if the actors could be objectified by the viewer, this is not intended by the porn itself, which shows a massive shift from the negative ideologies that can be found in much of mainstream porn.

There is a practical, simple approach to helping us confront the negative ideologies of porn in daily life. When we consume porn, whether it is mainstream, amateur, gay, straight, or whatever else we happen to be into that day, we need to analyze what is behind the attempts to turn us on. This is the very same approach we should be taking we any media. Unless one is working inside the porn industry to change it, being analytical and self-reflective is the one thing we can do to fight against becoming numb to the ideologies that are presented to us. If we enjoy watching porn that has a bent towards objectification, male domination and sexism, the only responsible thing to do is to question why that is appealing and whether that is effecting how we see the world in a potentially damaging way. In addition, we shouldn't give gay or feminist porn a free ride; it is important to critically think about what is going on beneath the surface that could be negatively influencing us in any medium. Doing this is the only true way to confront the problems that porn, and media in general, presents us with.

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the place itself, while enabling viewers to virtually navigate through the fantastical setting. A collection of commodities available to purchase online include: party packages, cakes, loot bags, costume sets or pieces, and jewelry. Everything is princess themed. The website for Fairytale Land was selected for this paper as it depicts and emphasizes the extent to which media consumption has led to this desire of becoming a princess. As Buckingham expresses, fads are a product of children’s media consumption (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2003). Fairytale Land not only enables this fad but promotes it.

The girls are entertained by their Fairy Godmothers in Fairytale Land. They dress up as their favourite princess at the Fairy Godmother Salon. Face painting, makeovers, and tea parties are popular activities once could participate in, as the photos on the website illustrate. As transformed princesses, the girls learn about royal ball etiquette, take part in a royal fashion show, and show off their dresses, wands, tiaras, miniature heels, and glamourous makeup in front of an audience. Prior to the show, girls paint their nails and choose fancy jewelry pieces to wear including. One of the ‘enchanted birthday party’ options, “Glitz&Glam”, includes hair extensions for girls to wear. There are about twenty cakes to choose from when planning a birthday party at Fairytale Land. All but two or three cakes are princess themed. This highlights the stringent craze with princesses. All the rooms at Fairytale Land are painted in colours society has normalized with being a girl. The website does not display any rooms painted a colour other than pink and purple. The venue looks like a palace itself: large rooms with elaborate, detailed furniture. The Fairy Godmother Salon appears to be a large closet filled with costumes, heels, and tables covered in the jewelry.

Fairytale Land is an artifact of children’s culture. However, it pertains solely to young girls. There is only a single photo of a boy posted on the website. The boy is seen playing a guitar and it appears as if the photo is retrieved from the internet and pasted onto the website, rather than a photo taken of an actual boy present at Fairytale Land. This indicates that very few boys visit this venue. It is fascinating to consider how children’s culture has fixated on the motif of princesses, but not princes. The website does not advertise an option for boys to host birthdays at Fairytale Land, to become princes.

Very few aspects of the original fairytales are retained or reciprocated within venues such as Fairytale Land. Take for instance Grimm’s *Little Snow-White.* The story was written in the beginning of the eighteenth century and was initially not intended for children. Grimm’s tale of Snow White is a much more horrifying and less fantastical version of Disney’s *Snow White,* of which most are familiar with. Although Grimm’s *Little Snow-White* endorses gender distinctions - implying that women are vulnerable and in need of a man to save them - the motif of princesses is not depicted the way it is at Fairytale Land. In *Little Snow-White,* Grimm implies that a woman needs a man. At Fairytale Land, the transformation from girl to princess implies that a woman needs to be “prettified”, and it promotes this fixation on ideals of beauty. The motif of princesses within Grimm’s version pertains solely to the princess status itself. Meanwhile, the idea of princesses is redefined at Fairytale Land into one that constitutes an obsession with the process of beautification. Grimm’s short story concludes with, “Snow-White and the prince lived and reigned happily over that land, many, many years later” (Grimm, 1922). It is crucial to note that we do not get any insight of what life as a princess is in Grimm’s version. Similarly, in Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the story concludes with the prince and princess living happily ever after when Snow White marries her prince. Therefore, living the life as a princess by indulging in dress-up and makeovers is not based on Grimm or Disney's stories, but rather has emerged into a story of its own.

However, a few features are retained from Grimm's, *Little Snow White*. In Grimm's version, Snow White is happiest when she marries her prince at the end. In Disney's *Cinderella*, Cinderella becomes free from her evil stepmother and is happiest at the end when she becomes a princess. Prior to becoming a princess, Cinderella spends her life upset over being unable to do anything other than cleaning the house and follow the orders of her evil stepmother. Likewise, Snow White spends her life cleaning a house for seven dwarfs until she marries her prince and becomes a princess. This promotes the idea that becoming a princess is a yearning fulfillment. However, in contemporary children's culture, becoming a princess is exaggerated. Exaggerated at Fairytale Land is what comes with being a princess and how much greater it is perceived as a princess rather than just as a girl, even if it is for an hour or two. When girls become a princess at the venue, a sense of uttermost happiness is gratified. It is almost as if the transformation from girl to princess is a metamorphosis from mediocre to fabulous. This can be very damaging to the girls' self-esteems and sense of identities. Tiffany Pelton further analyzes the motif of princesses in her work titled, "Thematic Analysis of the Disney Princess Franchise." She states:

> The feminine beauty ideal and the representation of the ideal in fairy tales has been a continued theme of many Disney movies especially among the Disney Princess Franchise. Its portrayal and maintenance in children's literature has spanned a 150-year period. This ideal was a "socially constructed notion that physical attractiveness is one of women's most important assets, and something all women should strive to achieve and maintain. (Pelton 23)

This socially constructed concept around physical attractiveness that Pelton refers to is a notion that exists in contemporary children's culture, which Fairytale Land promotes and facilitates.

Fairytale Land depends more on the Disney versions of fairytales, rather than the original Grimm stories. Fairytale Land holds onto the fairy godmother character, present in most Disney stories. Outfits princesses wear in the Disney films, such as the recognized blue dress worn by Cinderella or the yellow dress worn by Belle, are retained. In terms of the themes of gender distinction taken from the original story, Fairytale Land enforces these while hauling feminism centuries back. At Fairytale Land, the girls are represented as objects of beauty. Girls step out of their reality into a fantastical world to become someone else. The girls enjoy this transformation and indulge in fixating on female ideals of beauty.

The next section of this paper explores the larger ideological causes behind Fairytale Land. As highlighted so far, the venue enforces contemporary ideals of beauty. The temporary satisfaction of being a princess at Fairytale Land is a nonpermanent state of lust. The stepping out of reality into a couple hours of pleasure becomes a state to which girls always crave to be in. This may be because they feel 'free' to indulge and enjoy themselves. However, this kind of freedom is mediated. Everything is done through and by the fairy godmothers. The events and activities offered to the girls are organized, structured, and surveilled. Also, the fairy godmothers are all adults. Therefore, this freedom is mediated by adults. To become a princess, the girls go to the Fairy Godmother Salon. The tea parties, fashion shows, and royal ball etiquette learning experiences are all hosted by the fairy godmothers. They own the venue, as noted on the website. They are the ones who are giving makeovers to the girls, and providing their costumes. This mediated freedom highlights children's agency present at Fairytale Land: the girls at the venue are always under adult supervision. This mediated freedom is not present in Grimm's *Little Snow-White,* or in Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In both stories, Snow White becomes 'free' when she marries her prince. As a princess- she is not under adult supervision, even though her age, in both versions, indicates that she is a child.

It is important to consider what the girls would change about Fairytale Land if they had the opportunity to do so. This is because Fairytale Land is created by adults for children. It is without a doubt that the girls are enjoying themselves at Fairytale Land. However, if children were to create their own 'fairytale land,' would it be any different? In "Cinderella Ate My Daughter: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the New Girly-Girl Culture," Shuler states:

> Even when parents try to limit their children's exposure to the Disney marketing enterprise, the princesses seem to creep in; Disney Princesses are often a girl's first foray into popular culture without the guidance of her parents. Orenstein's daughter, and mine, learned from friends at preschool the names, hair, dress styles, and basic story of all the princesses. (Shuler 97)

The marketing of princesses is difficult to escape from, as Shuler emphasizes. However, when thinking about exposure and the marketing enterprise it must become clear that what children are being marketed, and what children are being exposed to, is adult generated. Fairytale Land itself is a business being run by adults. From a larger perspective, this demonstrates that while children's culture is a product of media consumption, it is highly controlled and manipulated by adults. Although Shuler argues that this popular culture is without guidance of her parents, the details the child becomes occupied with about princesses are in some way or form a result of adult inventions such as books and films of princesses. This section of the paper can conclude with the significance that female ideals of beauty are promoted at Fairytale Land, but more importantly through and by adults. Children are absorbing these notions, but at its root adults have created the fixation of becoming a princess.

This paper will proceed to analyze the character's present at Fairytale Land, as displayed on their website. As shown, the fairy godmothers are white, and the all the ones displayed on the website have blonde hair. All the fairy godmothers wear long identical white gowns and do not look a day over the age of twenty-five years. Their makeup is done, their faces are clear from any blemishes, and their hair is beautifully styled. In comparison to how a fairy godmother appears in Disney adaptations, the ones present at Fairytale Land are quite different. In Disney's *Cinderella*, the 'fairy godmother' is not young but rather is an old lady who wears an oversized blue cloak and holds a magic wand. Her face appears larger, rather than slim, demonstrating she is a woman on the heavier side. In Grimm's *Little Snow-White*, a fairy godmother is nonexistent. In the most recent *Cinderella* adaptation released in 2015, the fairy godmother's costume is an enormous white dazzling sparkly dress. She holds a wand in the film and her makeup is extravagant. She is a much younger fairy godmother than Cinderella's fairy godmother in the film adaptation made in 1950. Fairytale Land mimics their fairy godmothers to look like the one in the recent

Cinderella version, appearing more glamorous. However, their Cinderella costume for the girls to wear is not altered in any way. It looks exactly like the one Cinderella wears in the 1950 adaptation. Fairytale Land has taken the 'best of hits' of all Disney fairytales. In this case, they grasped the concept of having a magical fairy godmother character to make all dreams come true. Consequently, the young girls undergoing the process of becoming a princess at Fairytale Land enter a world by which beauty is glorified and worshipped. Fairytale Land displays what beauty is, from whom it can come, and the steps to becoming beautiful. Beauty, then, is defined by makeovers and oversized dresses, which comes from young women bedazzled in white gowns with long luscious blonde hair.

The final step of becoming a princess involves showing off their looks at the royal fashion show. The little girls become a product of these fairy godmothers and look similar to them at the end of the transformation. Fairytale Land homogenizes young girls in the process of becoming a princess. David Buckingham discusses what contemporary children's culture has become and how we have drifted from the original stories into an outcome much more complex in his work "Dissin' Disney: Critical Perspectives on Children's Media Culture." He states: "The 'Disneyfication' of this original is seen to result in oversimplification, sanitization, repression and ideological mystification. Yet in the process, there seems to be little recognition of what the text might be attempting to achieve in its own right, and its relation to its actual target audience" (290). The main idea to grasp from Buckingham here is that there is little recognition of what the original text aimed to express. An altered or misunderstood version of what these stories are trying to say has developed. As mentioned earlier, not much has been retained from the motif of princesses in Grimm's *Little Snow-White* and from various Disney stories. Fairytale Land has taken concepts from these original stories but has molded them into a story of its own. Grimm's *Little Snow-White* concludes with the queen becoming overly consumed with her obsession to be pretty to the point where she eventually dies from it. Fairytale Land has decided not to focus on the basic lessons conveyed within the original story. Instead, it promotes the opposite of what Grimm attempts to warn readers: that fixating on ideals of vanity is grueling and is in fact not the path to obtaining happiness.

To conclude, this paper has expressed how becoming a princess at Fairytale Land depicts how children's culture has distorted Disney's focus on becoming a princess into a process whereby young girls can live that life of luxury and in the process, fixate on contemporary female ideals of beauty. Buckingham argues that crazes exist within contemporary children's culture. However, a craze is understood to come and go, but the obsession with princesses has yet to go. The untangling of such a craze appears to be impossible as this fixation seems to only be rapidly growing and expanding. Places like Fairytale Land will always make money, if this craze survives. Adults will continue to keep this craze alive, as it has made corporations like Disney billions of dollars in revenue. Society must recognize how damaging the fad of becoming a princess is for young girls. If there is one thing from the original Grimm's *Little Snow-White* that should be retained, it is the basic lesson that fixating on ideals of beauty is consequentially harmful. Places like Fairytale Land must reassess what they decide to promote for young girls because the long-term consequence to this fairytale does not comprise of a happy ending.

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Bippity-Boppity-Boo!; Becoming a Princess at Fairytale Land

Gina Jibran

Once upon a time becoming a princess occurred only when marrying a prince. Nowadays, the yearning to become a princess satisfies more than obtaining the status. Pretending to be a princess is seen to be just as fulfilling. What is it about being a princess that brings contentment? Specifically, what is it about wearing an oversized dress and a tiara that makes life more fascinating for young girls? Disney fairytales such as *Snow White* and *Cinderella* have helped popularize the motif of princesses. Girls can buy Cinderella costumes or visit their favourite princess at Disneyland. This helps create the notion that becoming a princess is something to be desired. It is important to note, that life as a princess is hardly ever visited in stories such as Grimm's *Little Snow-White*, or even Disney's *Cinderella*. In fact, these tales end right after a girl marries prince charming and obtains the princess status. The sole insight readers gain about life as a princess is that, 'they lived happily ever after'—a sentence stated at the end of many Disney fairytales. The company Fairytale Land, demonstrates how contemporary society recreates the princess motif. The ability to facilitate the transformation of a young girl to become a princess is promoted at Fairytale Land. Fairytale Land, however, distorts Disney's focus on *becoming* a princess into a process whereby young girls are allowed to live that life of luxury. In the focus on being a princess, one then fixates on contemporary female ideals of beauty.

Preparatory to proceeding, it is important to gain an understanding of contemporary children's culture and see how Fairytale Land is indicative of it. There is no firm understanding or definition of children's culture, as it varies across time and place. However, children's culture is increasingly being understood as a product of media consumption. David Buckingham highlights how the age of digital technology has changed children's cultural environment:

> Children's 'crazes'-typically entail a high degree of 'interactivity,' not just in the texts themselves but also in the communication that takes place as children move between one cultural form and another, from the television series to the card game to the books and the toys (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2003). In the process, the gathering of specialist knowledge - much of it impenetrable to adults - becomes inextricably entailed in the purchase and collecting of commodities (Kehily 129-130).

Within the context of this paper, the prevalent 'craze' within contemporary children's culture is the desire to become a princess. In this following section, I will show how this fixation is expressed through Fairytale Land. Fairytale Land is a venue for young girls to celebrate their birthday (www.fairytaleland.ca). The website serves to represent

Guileful Empresses of the Heart: Miss Representations in the Poetry of Marvell and Barbauld

Zaynab Ali

"I crave your mouth, your voice, your hair."
~ Pablo Neruda

If English poet Andrew Marvell had lived to hear Neruda's words then he would have tipped his hat in agreement. The image of the stereotypical woman - the embodiment of grace and beauty - is embedded deep in the minds of individuals, for even Aristotle believed that "[t]he relation of male to female is by nature a relation of superior to inferior and ruler to ruled" (*The Politics* 40-41). As women tried to climb their way out of this box brimming with inferiority they were mocked not only by men, but also women. In response to Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (a proto-feminist work that advocated for women's strength and intellect over weakness) "The Rights of Woman" by Anna Barbauld was written to protest against the rise of women over men. Through textual analysis of the genre, tone, and imagery of "The Rights of Woman" by Anna Barbauld and "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell, one can decipher the contrasting yet similar views these two poets have in regard to the role of women. As shown in the crude, shallow attitude the speaker in Marvell's poem has towards his mistress, and the sarcastic manner in which the speaker in Barbauld's poem speaks of women who she feels wish to rule men. From the woman's perspective, love will untangle the misunderstandings between men and women. While from the man's view, women are little more than a reprieve from the inevitability of death, and the saviors of his crumbling lust. Both poets, one male and the other female, represent women by using the standard guidelines provided by patriarchal societies in which women will never "kiss the golden scepter of . . . reign" (Barbauld 8).

Anna Barbauld's poem "The Rights of Woman" and Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" are written in genres that correspond to the messages incorporated within each poem. "The Rights of Woman" is a poem of protest, and "To His Coy Mistress" is a lyrical poem. Barbauld's poem begins by protesting the suffering of women under patriarchy. The line, "Woman! too long degraded, scorned, opprest;" (2) appears to bemoan the state of women whom it calls to revolt. This strophic poem contains eight stanzas, the first six are dedicated to the speaker's protest against the oppression of women. A volta occurs in the seventh stanza, revealing the speaker's loyalty shifting and illustrating their resistance to a world dominated by women: "But hope not, courted idol of mankind, / On this proud eminence secure to stay;" (25). The speaker suggests that ruling over men may end in women's favour, but it will never result in their freedom (20). For the speaker, attempting to unshackle oneself from patriarchal rule by twisting the handcuffs on the oppressors is not the answer; instead the answer lies in the true love between men and women (32).

At first glance, it appears that both speakers in "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Rights of Woman" are advocating for love between men and women, but as Barbauld uses the genre of protest, Marvell employs the lyrical genre to uncover another layer to the poem. A lyric, the most general of all poetic forms, conveys the idea of intense emotions. In Marvell's poem, the speaker's desire to convince his mistress to lay with him are the intense feelings around which the poem is organized. This stichic poem has three parts which, in this poem, combine to express not only the speaker's attitude towards his mistress, but also his constant fear of running out of time. The sound of his mortality ticking away elicits a helpless emotion in Marvell's speaker that leads to his fear of his lust dissipating "into ashes" (Marvell 30). The speaker's emotional distress can be sensed in the lyrical poem, but the shallow fear of his lust crumbling is not the crux of this fear. Rather the speaker's genuine fear lies in his inevitable death symbolized by "time's wingèd chariot" (22). Throughout history women have been used as objects to increase a man's pride, wealth, or political status. In keeping with this tradition, Marvell's speaker uses his mistress to mask his own fear of death; by perusing and pressuring her, by reminding her that she must hurry before her time runs out, the speaker projects his own fears onto his interlocutor. The parallel between the two chases (man and woman, death and man) portrays the way men continue to exploit women for their own needs; whether it be for money, politics, or security.

Furthermore, the connection between the women in both poems is revealed when women are told to, "Resume thy native empire o'er the breast!" (Barbauld 4). This line can be interpreted as a command for women to gain control over their emotions, or it may also be seen as an order to rule over the emotions of men. If one were to take either of these analyses into account, then one may conclude that Marvell's speaker's despair over running out of time is soothed by a woman who was demanded in "The Rights of Woman" to take control of the heart of the matter. Although this theory creates an image of a woman ruling over a man, there is an ironic twist that lies in this notion: no matter how hard women try to become stronger they are only given jurisdiction over the matters of the heart.

Andrew Marvell and Anna Barbauld use mocking tones in their poems in order to ridicule women. In "The Rights of Woman," the speaker begins by stating, "Yes, injured Woman! rise, assert thy right!" (Barbauld 1), and continues to urge women to claim the empires they rightfully deserve (13). From the first to the sixth stanzas, women are described as conquerors, however as stanza seven is revealed, the speaker adds a new colour to a woman's empire: loneliness. Women assume that ruling over men will bring them joy, but according to Barbauld's speaker, they are unaware of how "subdued" their lives will be once their passion withers away (27). Barbauld's diction which comprises of "breast," "angel," and "pureness," reemphasizes the stereotypical woman who is pristine and virtuous, and more fit to rule over the emotional aspects of life (4-5). The poem begins with women courageously ruling over men and ends with the speaker insisting that they should "abandon each ambitious thought," and merely love the men they are with (29-30). This shift sarcastically shows women that what they desire is not feasible.

Barbauld's sardonic tone mirrors the tone in Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress." Like Barbauld, Marvell uses diction to create a scornful tone in the poem. From Marvell's title, one can instantly grasp the speaker's mocking tone from the word "coy." By using "coy," Marvell's speaker is implying that his mistress is pretending to be shy and modest when, in reality, she is neither of these things. The mistress is depicted as a calculating woman who uses the *pretense* of modesty to appear enticing. Marvell's speaker also states that although the mistress' beauty deserves a hundred years of praise, he can hear, "Times wingèd chariot hurrying near" (22), and soon her beauty will fade away. Thus, the speaker insists that the mistress should abandon any notions of chastity, and join him while she is still beautiful with a "youthful hue" (33). The reminder of the mistress' beauty fading over time accentuates the notion that a woman's value is heavily weighed on her physical appeal, her virtue (which, if left intact, will be feasted on by worms) and her honour, that will "turn to dust" (29). The word "dust" amplifies the speaker's derisive tone and strips "virginity" of its essence, crassly turning it into an object that, like her, will soon fade away if unused. While Marvell uses a sarcastic tone to persuade his mistress to join him, Barbauld uses a mocking tone to demolish women's dream of rising up.

The imagery in "The Rights of Woman" and "To His Coy Mistress" echo the two central themes of the poems: women symbolized as divine beings of pure essence, and women portrayed as ephemeral objects used as distractions from the eminent fear of death. In "The Rights of Woman," Anna Barbauld alludes to divine concepts to characterize women as celestial and soft creatures. In the poem, the speaker calls out for women to "Go forth arrayed in panoply divine" (5), and paints the image of angelic women peacefully gathering to rule. The religious imagery in "The Rights of Woman" corresponds to the biblical reference in "To His Coy Mistress." The speaker in "To His Coy Mistress" states that he would, "Love you [his mistress] ten years before the flood, / And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews." (8-10). The flood the speaker alludes to is the story of The Great Flood, and the conversion of the Jews is used to emphasize the point that if they had more time (from the time of The Great Flood to the conversion of the Jews) he would pursue her and she could continue in her coyness, but in the speaker's reality they do not have that much time.

In addition, in "The Rights of Woman" women are described in a dainty fashion with the words "soft" and "blushes" (Barbauld 9,10). The description of women's physical characteristics in "The Rights of Woman" connects to the way the speaker in "To His Coy Mistress" claims that he would spend years admiring the mistress' physique: "Two hundred to adore each breast, / But thirty thousand to the rest;" (Marvell 15-16). Furthermore, Barbauld's speaker creates images of war and of conquest, which contrast against the "angel pureness" of the women who are trying to win the war and rule the empire (6), to highlight the impossibility of the women's dream. The speaker instructs women to "gird thyself with grace;" (9) which, once again, associates women with grace, and shows that Barbauld's speaker remains attached to the typical image of a woman. In addition, this delicate and beautiful woman is portrayed as the mistress in "To His Coy Mistress," and although these poems are written by a man and a woman, they still contain the conventional descriptions of women.

The other imagery in "To His Coy Mistress" consist of time, dust, and tide—all three of which are fleeting images and symbolize an end. Man, and woman (with her beauty) will eventually die down just like the tide. "Ashes," "dust," and "grave" are used to remind his mistress that death is near and she should abandon her coyness before it catches up to them (Marvell 29-31). Marvell's imagery highlights his fear of death, and the manner in which he views women is echoed in the words of Barbauld's speaker. Both poets see women as soft beings whose minds are never discussed and whose beauty and "pureness" is praised.

"To be feminine is to show oneself as weak, futile, passive, and docile…Any self-assertion will take away from her femininity and seductiveness" (de Beauvoir 348). A woman's role is confined by society. She is seen as a caregiver, and as a wife. Her name is attached to a man's, and her identity is recognized through his. She is regarded for her beauty and fertility rather than her intelligence and her skill. She is the empress of sentiments, but her empire lacks the strength to stand on its own. Anna Barbauld, was a woman who lived in the 18th Century and believed these notions to be true and her poem, "The Rights of Woman," portrays her reluctance in supporting women who wished to detach themselves from these stereotypes. A woman's beauty and virtue are objects of desire for men like the speaker in "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell. The genre, tone, and imagery of both poems reflect the poets' regard for women. Barbauld believes that the differences between men and women will vanish in the face of true love between the two thus, women have no need to rule over men. A female poet renews the classic image of a woman being ruled by her emotions, while a male poet uses this classically beautiful woman as a reprieve - an escape from running out of time in his life. His mistress is used as a shield to deflect him from pondering about the deeper fears of life; she is used for her body, for her face, and to satisfy his needs. Men are established as the superior sex in both poems, while females are deemed 'coy' and 'cold' when they exhibit an ounce of personality. The universal representation of women is still in the process of developing, and will continue to improve as time flies by on its chariot. But at least, presently, one can sigh in relief at the sight of men and women changing enough to allow a woman to be the sovereign of her own empire.

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Green License Plates and Blue Identity Cards: Arab-Israelis Negotiating in a Majority Culture in *Dancing Arabs*

Tommy Herman

In this essay, I will be examining Sayed Kashua's novel entitled *Dancing Arabs* – a contemporary analysis of the complicated and conflict-ridden relationship between the Palestinian-Arabs and Jewish citizens of Israel. This relationship is one that has been controversial on both sides, as there has been a deep and time-worn divide between these two groups since the rise of the Zionist Movement in the late 1800's. The conflict became further compounded in 1948, when the region formally known as 'Palestine' became the Jewish State of Israel and in 1967, when Israel began its occupation of the Gaza Strip and The West Bank, during the '6-Day War'. Although these events are looked upon as 'groundbreaking' in a Jewish historical context, they have also been plagued by on-going international criticism, namely, that Israel's Arab citizens have been the victims of harsh discriminatory treatment, abuse, and lack fundamental human rights in various areas. The Arab citizens are even subject to several methods of identification based solely on their Arab ethnicity, such as Identity Cards and conspicuous automobile license plates, which many have compared to the mistreatment of Jews in Nazi Germany. Moreover, many of these Arab citizens have claimed that much of their land had been misappropriated by the Israeli government and, as a result, were compelled to reside in sub-standard dwellings and endure meager living conditions. The novel, *Dancing Arabs* offers a thought-provoking perspective into the lives of Arab citizens, residing in both the Occupied Territories and within Israel, and how they manage to survive as members of an ethnic minority, living within a majority culture.

Before I proceed further, I must introduce the subject matter of *Dancing Arabs*, and give proper context to the underlying themes of the book. The novel follows the life of an unnamed, Arab-Israeli boy from adolescence to adulthood, who also acts as the narrator. Much of the content focuses on his education at an Israeli boarding school for gifted students and how his failure to excel academically, affects the rest of his life negatively. Furthermore, the life of the narrator's family appears to reflect the lives of those similarly situated Arabs. For example, the narrator has a very strong bond with his grandmother, with whom his family resides. In the novel, she recollects how in 1948, much of her family's land was seized and how the family was left with a considerably smaller tract of land, shortly after the State of Israel was established. This land dispute is a topic, which is raised several times, as the grandmother is frustrated and haunted by it. In effect, the theme of space itself is prevalent throughout the novel, and provides the impression that the Arabs residing in these areas generally lack space.

Another important relationship in the novel exists between the narrator and his father. This father-son relationship is complicated, as his father, a former radical spokesperson for Palestinian nationality, had spent time in jail when he was a young man for apparently being tied to an alleged bomb plot (something which he denied). His father is now working for the town City Hall, issuing Identity Cards. Since the Six Day War of 1967, the Israeli government has imposed and enforced very strict laws and regulations, whereby all citizens of Israel and the Occupied Territories (Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem) must carry ID cards. The different colors of the ID cards provide its bearer with certain rights over other citizens. This regulation is contentious as it further legitimizes the deep division between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens.

As far as ID cards for Jews go, they are issued a Blue card, which permits them to reside freely within any area or region of Israel. On the other hand, there are various categories of ID cards relating to Palestinian residency, which are dependant on one's status in Israel and the Occupied Territories. There is a different Blue Card from the aforementioned, which is issued to Palestinians. This card allows for Palestinians residing in Israel to live in 68% of all towns in Israel, but it must be approved by a Committee. This particular ID card is what the narrator of the story and his family all possess. The next level of ID cards is a lighter shade of Blue, which are issued only to Palestinian citizens of East Jerusalem, overtaken by Israel in 1967. At the time, the Israeli government permitted most Arab citizens residing in this area the right to apply for Israeli citizenship, but many declined, as they did not wish to be exposed to Israeli sovereign power. As a result, most of the Arab citizens residing in East Jerusalem are merely Permanent Residents, with very few possessing Israeli Citizenship. Permanent Resident status for these individuals grants them access to most areas within Israel, but they risk revocation of such status if they are discovered residing outside of Jerusalem. The next level of ID cards is produced in the colour Green, which creates one of the major divisions between Arabs and Jews. The Green ID cards only apply to those residing in either the West Bank or the Gaza Strip and the holders of these cards are not permitted to reside in any other area but these Occupied Territories.

Other strict conditions that accompany these cards include the lack of voting rights in Israel, which apply to the three latter categories of ID cards. In the novel, an important scene occurs when the narrator and his friend Adel, are traveling on a bus to visit the narrator's family in Tira. Eventually, the bus approaches a roadblock and an Israeli soldier enters and asks to see all the passengers' ID cards. When the soldier approaches the two young men, they explain that they were never issued ID cards since they are still under sixteen years of age. The soldier then proceeds to ask them to exit the bus so that he can search both of the boys' personal belongings. The narrator becomes so humiliated by this event that he refuses to return to the bus, leaving the boys stranded in an area of which they were unfamiliar. This is a critical moment of the book, as it may be construed as representative of how young Arabs generally feel about being raised within a society where they exist as members of a minority group. At this point, the narrator feels so ashamed of the fact that he had been ethnically profiled, at such a young age.

An issue that is raised on various occasions throughout the book, which concerns the narrator's father, is whether the harsh lifestyle that is portrayed in the book has been imposed upon all Arabs by higher forces or as a means to advocate for change. There is a clear difference in ideology between the narrator and his father, as his father had fought against the system at a younger age so that he and other Arabs could gain what they believed was fair and just. The book presents this on-going sense of optimism which suggests that change for Arab-Israelis is in fact on its way. On the other hand, there is the narrator, who does not display any such optimism throughout the book and is presented as someone who would rather make his best efforts to assimilate into Israeli society and culture. One example in the novel, relates back to the bus incident, where the narrator and Adel were singled-out. Eventually, the narrator contacted his father who arrived to pick-up the boys. On their way home to Tira, the narrator becomes visibly upset and begins to cry, after which his father inquires about his behavior and why he would comply with the soldier's demands. The narrator then responds defiantly to his father's queries in the following manner:

> Nobody ever told me to get off. They didn't notice I was an Arab. Every time the soldiers told an Arab to get off, I'd get up and shout, 'Take me off too, I'm an Arab!' and I'd hold up my ID card and was it proudly. (Kashua 101)

The father responds with the following, "What's the matter with you? What a jellyfish you are. Some soldier jerk can make you behave like this? Just look at yourself" (101). This event emphasizes the divide between the narrator and his father and how differently they view their Arab ethnicity in society.

There are many similar examples of this theme throughout the book. Moreover, the narrator believes that he has a significant advantage in life because he looks more Israeli than Arab. He is proud of this. For the narrator, appearing more Israeli rids him of the prejudice that accompanies one's Arab identity. I can personally attest to this fact, as I have witnessed, first-hand, the divide between Arabs and Israelis during my many visits to Israel. While reading the book, I found it surprising that the main character would feel this way, that he would almost rather be Israeli than Arab, however, it is understandable under the circumstances. When one resides within a society where he/she is disenfranchised, based solely on ethnicity and, at times, religious background, one tends to desire a change that will help them align with the norm or the majority. In addition to appearing 'Israeli', the narrator also resorts to further extremes by attempting to blend into Israeli society and culture in order to avoid any type of profiling when traveling to different regions of Israel. This includes driving a Subaru, which the narrator describes as a very Israeli car and he ensures that when he is driving, Israeli radio stations are blasting at a very high volume, making it less likely that he will be pulled over by Israeli authorities.

This brings me to my next point, which concerns an Arab's freedom of movement throughout Israel and the Occupied Territories. Depending on one's status, Arabs have varying rights, in regards to their freedom to move throughout the country. Similar to the ID card disparity, there are two different types of automobile license plates issued for Jews and Arabs, depending on one's status in Israel and the Occupied Territories. To illustrate, all Israeli citizens are issued Yellow license plates, where on the other hand, all Palestinians are issued Green license plates. For those issued Green license plates, they are only permitted access to roads that are located within the Occupied Territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip) and are not permitted to travel elsewhere. However, Israeli citizens have access to all roads within the country together with a few select roads within the West Bank, but not the Gaza

Strip. Similar to the ID Cards, this has resulted in considerable criticism from many throughout the world, comparing Israel's discriminatory treatment of Palestinians to South Africa's former apartheid system.

While the narrator's family members do not reside in either of the Occupied Territories and are able to travel freely throughout Israel, they may still be subject to profiling while traveling. As I previously noted, the profiling may be so extreme in certain cases that the narrator will attempt to adopt an Israeli persona while driving to avoid the humiliation of being pulled over. Conflict is once again witnessed when the narrator's parents were stopped in their car at the border, while returning home from a trip to Egypt. The narrator goes on to describe the following:

> Mother says the soldiers at the border crossing called up his name on the computer and screamed at him in the most disgusting way. She's shaking, tying hard to contain the water that's collecting in her eyes and to keep the tears from forming. They ordered him to sit on the side. Children screamed at him, "Shut up!" and took him to another room. Mother says Father wouldn't have minded so much if it hadn't been for the other people who saw it happen and felt sorry for him. (Kashua 224)

This event captures the intimidation and trauma that many Palestinians are forced to endure in profiling situations and why they believe that the behavior of the Israeli Government is disrespectful and abusive.

Arguably, the most important theme throughout the book is education, which relates to the majority of the narrator's internal and external conflicts, from adolescence through to adulthood. From the outset, we observe how both the narrator and his family consider education and schooling to be integral parts of his life. His parents hope that the narrator and his brothers will be more successful in life than they ever were and will have greater opportunities to study. The narrator describes himself as the smartest student in his class, as demonstrated when as a young teen he was given the opportunity to apply for admission to an Israeli boarding school for gifted students. Attending a school of this stature is a considerable accomplishment for an Arab national, as very few are ever given this opportunity. This school provides the narrator the opportunity to write the school's admission test, which it offers to only the very brightest of Arab students, and the narrator succeeds in passing the test. As the narrator begins his school curriculum, he already senses the deep division between himself and his Israeli peers. He relates his initial experiences, as follows:

> I didn't know the Jews put gravy on top of their rice, instead of putting it in a separate bowl. I cried when my roommates found out I'd never heard of the Beatles and laughed at me. They laughed when I said *bob* music instead of *pop* music. They laughed when I threatened to complain to Principal Binhas – instead of Pinhas. "What did you say his name was?" they asked, and like an idiot I repeated it: "Binhas." They laughed at the pink sheets Mother had bought me specially. They laughed at my pants. At first, I even believed them when they said they really wanted to know where they could buy such pants. "Do they make special pants for Arabs?" they asked. (Kashua 93)

It is evident that a deep division exists between the Jews and Arabs at the school, making it increasingly difficult for the narrator to become accustomed to sharing the same environment and assimilating with the Jewish students. In any case, unlike his father, the narrator never felt a strong connection with his Arab roots and had mentioned that he wishes he was a Jew. Now that the narrator finds himself in an environment where he can interact with Jews, his fellow students do not welcome him.

These circumstances result in the narrator eventually leaving his assigned dormitory, in favour of living with another young Arab named Adel. The relationship between the narrator and Adel is integral to the story, as their lives and personalities are very different. For instance, Adel exhibits qualities that display no sign of his pride being disparaged by his Arab ethnicity. He also comes from a very inviting community where Jews and Arabs appear to have lived in harmony. This is explained in the book as follows;

> [Adel] came from a village in the Upper Galilee, four hours away by bus. They'd made a film about him once for Israel TV. Showed him dribbling on the basketball court, to prove that Arabs and Jews can live together. Pinhas said about him in the film, "Adel brought his whole village on his back," and Adel said it was a compliment. He was a very good student and didn't need to study much. He answered in class and wasn't shy. (Kashua 93)

There are obvious differences between the narrator and Adel. Adel stands for the secure and stable life that an Arab can enjoy while living amongst the majority, as opposed to the narrator, who has been struggling all his life with this same concept and resorting to great lengths to fit in. After the narrator has reached adulthood, events occur which are specific to the relationship between he and Adel that cement this idea. Adel had successfully completed his studies and is now a practicing lawyer. The narrator visits Adel, and the reader is able to envision how Adel's standing and lifestyle could have been adopted by the narrator. Unfortunately, the narrator failed to secure a better life for himself. Moreover, we can discern how Adel has reconnected with his Islamic roots and by becoming an observant Muslim. No doubt, Adel has had a much less difficult time assimilating into Jewish-Israeli culture, while maintaining his Muslim faith, which is something that I believe the narrator would have desired for himself.

While attending the boarding school, the narrator also becomes acquainted with a female student named Naomi, for whom he has developed feelings. The fact that Naomi is Jewish, however, places them both in precarious situation. Initially, Naomi neither wished to accept the narrator's interest in her nor her own feelings for him, as her mother made it very clear that she did not want her daughter involved in a relationship with an Arab. However, because they were both attending a boarding school, being together was relatively simple and they did not have to worry about being separated by their ethnicity and culture. Though, towards the end of their studies, Naomi made it known that her relationship with the narrator would be impossible once they completed school, resulting in their inevitable breakup. This was perhaps, the most important experience for the narrator in the entire novel, as his life spiraled downwards afterward.

The narrator attempted to maintain some type of connection with Naomi, just by a simple overture like "Hello", if he saw her in public. However, she was never responsive, which resulted in the narrator falling into a deep depression. This depression would go on to jeopardize the completion of his studies. As a result, he was later hospitalized for a drug overdose on anti-depressants during his exams. While his family was devastated that he failed to complete his studies, his father was particularly angry at the fact that the narrator's problems came about as a result of his relationship with Naomi. The relationship between the narrator and Naomi is symbolic of the relationship between Jews and Arabs, although it was romantic. The narrator was focused on trying to make his relationship work with Naomi and neither cared about her inflammatory Israeli background, nor the ensuing friction he would face from his family and from Israeli society in general. Unfortunately for the narrator, Naomi allowed their ethnic, cultural, religious differences to override her genuine emotional feelings for him. Not unlike the relationship between the narrator and Naomi, many Israelis and Arabs cannot seem to cast aside or ignore their perceived differences.

While writing this paper, it occurred to me that I am acquainted with a recently married, 'mixed' couple, consisting of an Iranian-Muslim male and a Canadian-Jewish female. As a young man raised with very strong Jewish and Israeli roots, I am aware that even in a multi-cultural city like Toronto, such a relationship can be very challenging and cause conflict within each spouse's respective families and inner circles. However, this couple seems to have overcome the inherent problems associated with such a union and have accepted one another on the basis of who they are as individuals, instead of their conflicting backgrounds. The relationship between the narrator and Naomi unfortunately reflects how, at this point in time, it is still near impossible for Arabs to fully enjoy security, comfort, and acceptance, while residing in Israel or the Occupied Territories, where the divide between Israelis and Arabs remains so prevalent. I can think of nothing better than for Arabs and Jews to live in peace and harmony, but until that end is realized, it will continue to be a struggle for the Arab minority to live amongst a majority. Sayed Kashua's novel, *Dancing Arabs*, presents insight about the many struggles facing Arab-Israelis and Palestinians in Israel and its Occupied Territories, while its main character remains nameless throughout the entire book – a stark reminder of the reality and a representation of all individuals in this culture.

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Mui Tsai Issue as the Embodiment of Innate Ambivalence in Colonial Hong Kong

Danlu Li

"Mui tsai" refers to young girls who are sold to, and brought up in better-off families and serve as family bondservants until they get married. This practice prevailed in 19th-century China and continued in Hong Kong well into the 1930s. As the British Empire primarily saw Hong Kong as an entrepot serving for economic ends, the Hong Kong government consciously refrained from intervening in Chinese affairs or bothering with social projects. Nevertheless, the idealized principle did not save Hong Kong from a destined dilemma, since a piece of the colony inherently bore the paradox between poverty and wealth, between Chinese traditions and European cultural values, as well as between the imperialist pursuit of self-interest and the universal advocate for freedom and equality.

In this context, the colonialism in Hong Kong was far more complicated than onefold oppression, exploitation, or indifference. As shown in the case of the mui tsai problem, the Hong Kong government had to deal with the outcries from multiple groups including the local poor, Chinese elites, colonial officials with various opinions, feminist activists both in Hong Kong and Britain, and critics from other Western countries (especially the US.) Therefore, the lengthy negotiation on the mui tsai issue since the late 19th century showed how the Hong Kong government was confronted with mixing pressures from the local, British, and global contexts, which reflected the irreconcilable ambivalence innate in colonial Hong Kong.

As the majority of female children who were sold to the better-off families as domestic servants were from poor households, the mui tsai issue primarily reflected the confrontation between colonial Hong Kong and the local lower class. According to Miners, since "the mass of Chinese…in the colony of Hong Kong lived in conditions of grinding poverty and were always liable to be brought to the brinks of starvation by floods, drought, or pestilence," (Miners 464). Selling daughters to the wealthy could not only reduce the poor parents' economic pressure, but also secure a better life for their daughters. Sometimes the living standards of a servant in an upper-class household were better than that of families of a lower socio-economic background, which made many lower-class girls consider the mui tsai system as "the very heaven and highroad to fortune." (Carroll, "A National Custom" 1478). Hence, the popularity of mui tsai mirrored the huge wealth gap and the harsh situation of the poor in colonial Hong Kong, where the rich mercantile class coexisted with peasants, immigrants, and refugees, together creating the steady demand and supply of domestic servants.

In some way, the mui tsai system functioned as a “charitable institution” that provided the disadvantaged groups, namely the lower-class “surplus female children” and their impoverished parents, with necessary social aids (Yip 311). According to Carroll, in many cases not only were these girls “taught” and “tended” in the wealthy households, but they were also patronized to marry free men when they reached adulthood “A National Custom” 1475). Although not every mui tsai lived such an easy life, the system was indeed one the few social institutions that contributed to sheltering the vulnerable groups in the 19th-century Hong Kong, which pointed to a vacuum field in the colonial administration. Since “the aim of the occupation” was predominately “for commercial purpose,” (Chiu 13) the early Hong Kong government saw little need to provide any social service that did not produce economic profits, thereby largely alienating the disadvantaged groups and preventing them from sharing the prosperity of the entrepot economy. Therefore, without adequate governmental investment to social welfare, the abolition of the mui tsai system caused a growing possibility of infanticide and abandonment. According to Miners, as the regulation of the mui tsai system got increasingly strict since 1929, more wealthy families chose to employ maidservants rather than buy a mui tsai (475). As a result, from 1927 to 1929, the number of children’s corpses collected by the Sanitary Department rose from 1185 to 1851 (Miners 475).

In addition to the charitable function, the mui tsai system was also a major institution that absorbed and organized the lower-class girls to exchange their manual labor for daily necessities (but not wages). Since Hong Kong was primarily designed as an entrepot, “industrial development was not under any form of government control nor did it receive any official encouragement” (Chiu 33). Under this background, the lower-class females in 19th-century Hong Kong did not have as many opportunities to be wage laborers in factories as their counterparts did in modern industrial cities like London or Shanghai.

Consequently, girls from poor families were likely to be prostitutes if they were not or could not be a mui tsai. The 1876 census proved this, showing that “five-sixths of the almost 25000 Chinese women in Hong Kong were prostitutes” (Carroll, “A National Custom” 1470). In short, the mui tsai system meant a sense of social and economic security for the lower class in the 19th-century Hong Kong. Thus, the attempts to abolish the system evoked the pre-existing tensions between the colonial government and the poor masses, which reflected the ambivalence embedded in the entrepot nature of the colony, such as that between wealth and poverty, between economic profit and public investment, between the government and the governed.

While many poor families found female children burdensome, local Chinese elites (mostly merchants) regarded keeping mui tsai as a necessary part of their domestic life and a form of charity according to Confucian values. These merchants, due to their intermediary position at “the border of the British and Chinese,” (Carroll, *Age of Empires* 59) could, on one hand, intervene with the colonial administration of Hong Kong and on the other hand take the responsibility of defining the Chinese cultural identity. Hence, the Chinese merchants proved to be both essential co-operators and huge obstacles for the colonial government. In this context, the lingering debates and negotiations about the mui tsai problem is indicative of the ambiguous relationship between Hong Kong government and the Chinese elite class, which reflected the administrative and cultural ambivalence rooted in colonial Hong Kong.

The administrative ambivalence referred to the fact that, in spite of the title of the British Crown Colony, the administration of Hong Kong was fundamentally inseparable from cooperation with local Chinese elites. The reason for this governance structure, according to Carroll, traced back to the "colonial ignorance, indifference, and incompetence" between the 1840s and 1860s when "the British had no grand design for Hong Kong" and made little efforts to construct the civil service (*Age of Empires* 60). In this context, the Chinese merchants' role in the governance of Hong Kong society was especially significant in terms of social care and public security. Take the Tung Wah Hospital as an example; stimulated by the "colonial government's failure to provide suitable medical facilities for its Chinese subjects," (Carroll, *Age of Empires* 61) Chinese merchants established this public institution and successfully shaped their image as the savior of the disadvantaged groups. More profoundly, with the rise of the merchants' reputation, many Chinese who felt insecure about the "unfamiliar British law" even resorted to the hospital's committee to help with their "civil and commercial disputes" (Carroll, *Age of Empires* 62).

Unofficially legitimizing the merchants as the authority in the public field. The Chinese merchants moved even further when they engaged in regulating the public security. They established the District Watch Force at the point when even Governor Bowring admitted that the police office under the colonial government was "costly, dislocated, and inefficient" (Carroll, *Age of Empires* 63). Consequently, the District Watch Force not only won the hearts of the local Chinese and Western residents but also "attained legal status" in 1891 (Carrol, *Age of Empires* 65). The two institutions for medical care and public security demonstrated how the vacuum in the colonial governance gave the prominent merchants an opportunity to shape themselves as the protector of the Chinese subjects and the helper of the British colonizers. Gradually, their growing power created a dilemma of Hong Kong government: not only did the Chinese elites become an indispensable force to help deal with local matters, but they could even overshadow the authority of the colonial government based on their legalized status or public reputation.

Within this administrative situation, the mui tsai problem became a battleground where the colonial government and the Chinese elites intensely argued and negotiated about who was the ultimate authority over this issue. When Hong Kong Chief Justice John Smale condemned wealthy mainland merchants for bringing the mui tsai custom to Hong Kong, which he saw as "slavery for the purpose of prostitution" and the cause of kidnapping, he explicitly asserted his as well as the British Empire's legal power to judge this Chinese practice as "violating British and Hong Kong laws" (Carrol, "A National Custom" 1463). Based on this judgment, certain aspects of the merchants' engagement in Hong Kong was accused as being both immoral and illegal, which undoubtedly offended their image as the savior of the Chinese communities and the guard of local social order, an image that they so hard constructed by investing in public projects like the hospital and the police force. Moreover, the attack on their habitual practice in Hong Kong triggered their "fear that the British would dominate the local administration," (Chin 137) which threatened the Chinese leaders' growing desire and ability to manage their own affairs in the colony.

Ironically, since the governance of Hong Kong was, from the very beginning, inseparable with the Chinese elites' mediation, these Chinese leaders were able to respond to the attack on their engagement by further engaging in the administration of Hong Kong and reemphasizing their authority. Shortly after Smale's open criticism, a group of Chinese merchants proposed to establish Po Leung Kuk, which aimed to "stamp out the crimes of kidnapping...and provide relief for prostitutes” (Chin 135). As soon as Governor Hennessy approved this proposal and appreciated the “bona fides of these Chinese gentlemen,” the Chinese merchants not only succeeded in distinguishing their custom of keeping mui tsai from crimes like kidnapping and prostitution, but also once again displayed their significance in assisting the government to protect the weak and keep the social order (Carroll, “A National Custom” 1472). The debate reflected how the colonial government and the Chinese elites tended to mitigate but never completely solve their in-between incompatibility through negotiation, compromise, and cooperation. Thus, perpetuating the ambivalence embedded in the administration of Hong Kong.

In addition to the ambivalence of the administrative power, the debates between the government and the Chinese elites, as well as the debates within each side, also exposed their diverse visions about the “Chineseness” of Hong Kong, (Yuen 96) thus, co-creating the cultural pastiche of the colony. While Smale’s passion for banning the age-old Chinese custom reflected a kind of colonial concern that tried to reshape Hong Kong into “a model of British good government” and “a living exhibition of European civilization,” (Carroll*,* “A National Custom” 1469) many other officials in the Hong Kong government preferred to “respect Chinese customs” rather than enforce radical reforms (Pedersen 168). This confrontation laid the foundation for the ambiguous cultural identity of the colony. On the one hand, the majority of the population was Chinese and most of their social matters were taken care by the Chinese elites; on the other hand, it was fundamentally under the rule of the British Empire, whose imperial ambitions involved not only the territorial and commercial expansion but also the diffusion of its culture and civilization - which was bound to challenge local Chinese traditional values.

The Chinese elites reacted to these colonial narratives in multiple ways, which further complicated the notion of “Chineseness” in Hong Kong. Most of them attempted to convince the Governor that the mui tsai system was “a respectable Chinese custom that should be allowed to continue,” (Carrol, “A National Custom” 1464) since the practice not only rescued the poor girls from starvation or prostitution, but also constituted part of the order of the elites’ domestic life. This potentially resonated with the Confucian concepts of benevolence and ritual. Unlike these elites who considered the mui tsai system representative of the ideal Chinese way of thinking and behaving, some Western-educated Chinese like Dr. Yeung Shiu-chuer advocated the banning policy due to a different attitude toward the shaping of “Chineseness” (Smith 99). When Dr. Yeung claimed that the abolition was “in the interest of humanity, the prestige of China,” which could help the Chinese “keep pace with the advancement of civilization,” (Smith 99) he framed colonial Hong Kong within a Eurocentric hierarchy in which Hong Kong preserved the Chinese identity but should develop its civilization in a modern Western manner. Hence, for these reformist Chinese elites, banning the mui tsai system meant the emancipation of oppressed Chinese women, thus symbolizing the reconstruction of Chineseness in Hong Kong, which was based on the Western values while enhancing the Chinese prestige. As mentioned above, the government and the Chinese elites’ various ideas about the mui tsai system derived from their multiple perspectives about what to do and how define the Chineseness of Hong Kong, perspectives which participated in blurring the cultural identity of colonial Hong Kong and further complicating the cultural ambivalence.

Throughout the mui tsai issue, the Hong Kong government not only had to deal with the local lower class and elite class but was also were entangled with multiple British groups in Hong Kong, ranging from missionaries to feminists to anti-slavery activists. Due to the administrative and cultural ambivalence rooted in colonial Hong Kong, the government did not come up with a clarified decision about the mui tsai system until 1923. The government's ambivalent attitudes, plus the typical Chinese-style custom against Western values, thus inspired local British individuals and organizations to turn Hong Kong into an arena where they could exercise the ideologies and movements that prevailed in the modern Western societies. It was their participation that added more complexity to the ambivalent nature of colonial Hong Kong. Mrs. Haslewood, the wife of a British naval officer in Hong Kong, was one of the most significant participants in the mui tsai issue. According to Hoe, Mrs. Haslewood not only published her "strongly worded" critique of the mui tsai custom in the local press, but also continued her campaign back in England through the medium of famous newspapers like the *Spectator* and *The Times* (Hoe 240). The influence of her voice was more than embarrassing for the Hong Kong government. Under the propagation of critique by Mrs. Haslewood, along with other activists such as Miss Pitt and Mrs. Smale, Hong Kong was no longer a "leased trading post" out of the sight of the "proto-nation," which was built upon and maintained by the precarious balance between the colonial government and the Chinese communities (Pedersen 164). Instead, as Hong Kong became the new focus of feminists and anti-slavery activists. This British colony on the periphery of Far East came to represent the extended battlefront of the soaring human right movements in the late-19th-century Western world.

However, the Hong Kong government was opposed to Mrs. Haslewood's suggestion of abolishing the mui tsai system immediately. As Hong Kong officials explained the issue to London as an "alien culture" and warned of "the dangers of listening to ignorant cranks" both at home and in the colony, it became clear that the growing call for freedom and inequality in Britain was fundamentally contradictory with the essential nature of Hong Kong, since the colony was seized for the economic purpose and run by the elastic cooperation rather than democratic principles (Pedersen 169). Although the pressures from the radical British communities did push the Hong Kong government to pass the Female Domestic Service Ordinance in 1923, the mui tsai problem was yet far from eradication. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the negotiations and confrontations between the colonial government and the British activists complicated the mui tsai issue both in practice and in ideology, thus serving as another proof of the irreconcilable ambivalence rooted in colonial Hong Kong.

When positioning Hong Kong into the global context between the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the mui tsai issue would have more implications. According to Carroll, "with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1870, the colony was becoming a popular destination for European and American tourists," which to some extent rewrote the colonial identity of Hong Kong ("A National Custom" 1478). No longer a monofunctional entrepot, it attracted the worldwide gaze from various perspectives. Hence, not only was Hong Kong known for its exotic, Chinese-style nature and culture, but it also served as a multifaceted representative of the British Empire that displayed the imperial glory, or exposed its shameful stain. Hong Kong's new role as an imperial representative especially drew the attention of those upper-class English women who joined Mrs. Halsewood's campaign. As they particularly emphasized on "the fact that slavery existed in a British Colony when it had been abolished internationally," (Hoe 241) the urgency of banning the mui tsai system was connected to Hong Kong's international image, thereby linking to the worldwide reputation of the British Empire.

Furthermore, since the second half of the 19th century was a unique period in America when anti-slavery movements were of the first importance, the mui tsai practice in colonial Hong Kong appeared to be a potential threat in a broad sense. When American consul general David Bailey pointed out the possibility that “Chinese immigration to America would lead to the same kind of slavery practiced in Hong Kong,” (Carrol, “A National Custom” 1483) his concern lay not in Britain’s global reputation but in the social and political situation of America. In this way, due to the mui tsai issue, Hong Kong entered the world stage not only as a representative of the British Empire but also an increasingly important node in international relations, which was fundamentally contradictory with its essential identity as a colonial entrepot.

In conclusion, the abolition of mui tsai system was such a long and twisted process that it seemed like an example of incompetent social reforms. However, the significance of this issue, as well as the entire history of colonial Hong Kong, lies exactly in its ambiguity and unsettledness. As can be seen from the manifold debates revolving around the issue, every stance was rooted in a specific political, economic, or cultural landscape, which cannot be reduced to a unified conclusion. Today, many age-old questions embodied in the mui tsai issue, such as those about wealth gap, cultural identity, and democratic rights, continue to trigger intense discussions in Hong Kong. Instead of judging right or wrong, we may learn from the historical ambivalence and unfold the social complexity inherited from the colonial period.

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Differentiating Chinese from Western Modernity: The Modern Reconstruction of Transnationalism in Chinese Cities from 1850 to 1950

Giordan Kazemi

When examining the relationship between any form of socio-political organization and the concept of modernity, scholars ought to be careful. The scale of entity one chooses to evaluate in terms of what is modern and what is not might reveal certain biases projected by that author. Joseph Esherick in his chapter titled "Modernity and Nation in the Chinese City" in *Remaking the Chinese City*, discusses the tension between nation and modernity, making the claim that perpetual change as a consequence of constant capitalist transformation of space threatens to dismantle those spaces occupied by symbols of national heritage in which the myths of an imagined community manifest themselves (1). But it can often be problematic to adequately define modernity in such a way that there is a popular consensus, as reflected by a proceeding look at Meng Yue's work. By evaluating Esherick's and Yue's discourses on modernity, we can see attention given to different aspects. Esherick and Yue both offer critical analysis of modernity and national identity in the context of Chinese cities. But Yue's observations offer a crucial dynamic by separating Western colonial narratives from narratives on Chinese identity and modernity. By doing this, we find that transnationalism and cross-cultural influences are not new to Chinese cities, but are actually an integral characteristic of an existing Chinese identity.

Esherick seems to place a greater focus on "modern capitalist production" and its relationship with the "economic and political spheres" (6); whereas Yue, in *Shanghai and the Edges of Empire*, challenges notions of modernity by explaining the metropolitan "transnational" character of imperial Yangzhou, despite the belief amongst many that these are traits particular to the West (169). Both authors focus on the scale of the city. This is an ideal scale of social, political, and economic organization because the city comfortably belongs in both antiquity and in modernity. This is unlike the nation, where tensions between the past and present are always far greater. The authors share many of the same points on changing landscapes of Chinese cities by the late imperial Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) to the final days of Nationalist China on the mainland (1912-1949) and how the use of space fundamentally changed. Both indicate the tension between the nation and modernity in these spaces and how the modern city came to form out of this tension. However, Yue offers critical insight into the scope of colonialism and imperialism allowing readers to separate colonial preconceptions from narratives regarding modernity and the reconstruction, rather than introduction, of transnationalism, which facilitated modernity in Chinese cities.

Esherick begins by noting the observation amongst Westerners in the later years of the Qing dynasty that all Chinese cities were close to the same in appearance and functionality (2). It is implied that these cities are the pre-modern or traditional Chinese cities, defined by controlled movement, regulated spaces and retro linear grid layout (Esherick 1). Following political-economic incursions into China by Western imperialist powers (1839-42 and 1856-60), the collapse of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), the subsequent birth of Nationalist China (1912-1949), and the efforts to industrialize that came to follow, we see a variety of categorically similar cities arise, variegating the Chinese landscape.

It was around this point when questions began to arise over what is modern, what is Chinese, and what is modern Chinese. As earlier noted, "modern Chinese" is a loaded statement because its conceptual basis is being constantly constructed and reconstructed. Facilitating movement, capitalist production, public hygiene, and *internationalism* are primary components of the modern city in Esherick's analysis (7). The modern city should have a fundamental purpose in serving the public with the establishment of various public works projects, and architecture should now serve economic productivity and practical function (Esherick 9). Some of these points constitute transformative breaks from the traditional Chinese city, but Yue posits that some ideas, most importantly early transnationalism as a precursor to later internationalism, can be found in the so-called pre-modern Chinese cities as well.

Yue describes the Imperial City of Yangzhou as an example of a transnationalism that existed within Chinese society before the arrival of Western conceptions of modernity. Describing interiors of the urban gardens owned by wealthy merchant-officials involved in the salt monopoly, Yue notes the diverse transnational tastes in design and décor originating from various corners of the known world (143). "This 'Yangzhou before Shanghai' formula highlights the existence of an earlier, Asia-based cross-cultural urban space that thrived a century or more before the flowering of 'world cities' in the heart of modern capitalism" (Yue 140). It is on this basis that we must be careful in delineating our notions of modernity from European colonial preconceptions. To say that Chinese cities were closed off from external cultural influences would be disregarding the transnational spaces curated by an elite Chinese class fascinated with the exotic and foreign. To an extent, the internationalization of Chinese cities was already in process long before the adoption of Western influenced modernization campaigns. One might assert that transnationalism is an integral part of Chinese identity and pre-modern history, rather than just a component of Western modernity, and this transnationalism would be a precursor to a later internationalism. It is in this capacity that Yue's discourse separates European colonial narratives from narratives regarding modernity and Chinese identity by mending past Chinese identities with the present.

Apart from pointing out the biases intrinsic in colonial conceptions of modernity, Yue also contributes to the defining factors facilitating reconstruction in the modern Chinese city.

Utilizing the Zhang garden in Shanghai as an example, Yue distinguishes pre-modern Chinese cosmopolitanism and transnationalism from what transformed into a modern form of political awareness and internationalism. Beginning as a space emulating the spirit of the transnationalism in earlier Yangzhou gardens, owner Zhang Honglu captured the European "essence" as the foundation of his garden's design (Yue 158). As colonial aggression and political upheaval reshaped the Chinese polity profoundly in the early twentieth century, this private space transformed into a public space and became a host to political activism steeped in nationalistic fervour (Yue 163-164). It was this transformation that would define a new type of public space to be found in the modern Chinese city. In these spaces, Chinese people would gather to advance political goals that were predicated on a modern Chinese nation, rather than dynastic imperialism. Colonial influence was rejected in favour of terms akin to "self-governing" and "freedom" (Yue 165). Public spaces once purposed for entertainment and past imperial expressions of transnationalism transformed into political activism propagating modern notions of nations and identity. Transnationalism, itself, was not new to Chinese cities, but the transformation into self-awareness of nation and place under a paradigm of internationalism in the contemporary world order was.

This transformation of transnationalism in the Chinese city sheds light on the modern Chinese dilemma. Modernity cannot be understood as the propagation of ideals disseminated through agents of European civilization in the context of colonialism. If we are to consider the validity of the existence of transnationalism and, by extension, other characteristics of modernity to have existed in the Chinese polity before incursions by European empires, then we can logically deduce the pre-existing relationships between modernity and China. It is through this lens we can grasp a more complete picture of the transformations that have occurred in Chinese cities. There is no question that ideas of nationalism and nation-state were diffused through foreign concessions in Chinese cities. However, by recognizing conceptions of modernity to have existed in imperial Chinese cities, the nature of interactions that would transform the constitution of Chinese cities can be better understood as endogenous and relational, rather than imposed and/or wholly foreign.

By examining Chinese modernity through a paradigm of relational endogenous growth as opposed to the often stark dichotomies of pre-modern and modern, academics will utilize a less reductionist conception of modernity in China and understand transformative phenomena in Chinese cities as a process that was far more dynamic. This will be achieved by observing not only the diffusion of modern ideals from colonial empires, but also the transformation of pre-existing components of modernity through a relational process of reaction and interaction that had taken place in spaces of transition. Informed by Esherick's discourse on the content of modernity and Yue's study on pre-existing elements of modernity in Yangzhou, the transformative processes in Chinese cities could thus be identified as *reconstruction*. Modernity was not a substance that had filled a void in Chinese cities, but was a relational concept that was (re)constructed amidst the tensions and interactions that had long existed in public spaces.

Esherick and Yue both offer critical analysis of modernity and national identity in the context of Chinese cities. But Yue's observations offer a crucial dynamic by separating Western colonial narratives from narratives on Chinese identity and modernity. By doing this, we find that transnationalism and cross-cultural influences are not new to Chinese cities, but are actually an integral characteristic of an existing Chinese identity. Instead, what is uniquely modern in this scope would be the transformation of the relationship between space, people and the international; pre-existing elements of modernity manifested in transnational spaces in Chinese cities were reconstructed into an awareness of nation and relationships among nations. This is not Esherick's internationalization, but the reconstruction of an existing transnationalism predicated on the idea of a modern Chinese nation-state and its position in the new colonial world order. The example of Zhang's garden helps us understand how the modernization of public spaces in Chinese cities was not only an effort to emulate the advanced European nations, but also a reaction to their social, political, and economic clout.

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God, Save the Faith; The Modernization of the Relationship Between Faith and Certainty

Emily Mastragostino

Certainty, within the modern era, has become increasingly rare. Even when reliable evidence is presented, opposition is not far. Myth is no exception to opposition either. In this essay, I will argue that the modernization of the West has created an uncertainty of myth, which has altered the interpretation of what it means to have "faith". This is seen through the loss of an psychological and epistemic certainty of faith. This claim will be justified by Charles Taylor, and Karen Armstrong and exemplified by Saint Anselm of Canterbury, Søren Kierkegaard, and Saint John of the Cross.

In this analysis two types of certainty will be considered: psychological certainty and epistemic certainty. In psychological certainty, the individual's conviction is the validator of certainty. This certainty encompasses the feeling of truth that may not be justified universally, but is considered undoubtedly valid by the individual (Reed). Psychological certainty is a subjective feeling of truth. In epistemic certainty, logic, reason, and falsification are used to universally prove claims (Reed). Epistemic certainty encompasses objective truth that is secure from error and empirical skepticism. Epistemic certainty can lead to psychological certainty but epistemic certainty is not necessary for psychological certainty to be felt (Reed). Either kind of certainty can validate faith, in that they provide convictions for belief.

For this essay, I will define faith as being a trust and strong belief in a claim or theory. Faith is often questioned when it relates to myth, including: God, gods, and religion. In reading this essay the negative connotation of "myth" and "mythology" should be displayed, placing focus on these terms as they relate to mythos, as explained further below. As seen with Saint Anselm of Canterbury, Kierkegaard, and St John of the Cross, the place of certainty within faith of the mythical has been of great debate.

In the process of modernization, society experienced a shift in certainty as it is related to faith. In the pre-secular age, faith in God was a default because it was unchallenged (Taylor). Thus, the question of certainty in God was irrelevant. In modernity, faith and religion have moved from the unchallenged "objective" to subjective claims. Charles Taylor states that the "conditions of belief" have changed since the sixteenth century. In what he calls the secular age, multiple paths of transcendence are available (Taylor). Society now has many platforms to invest faith in, including various mythological theories. However, the various paths to transcendence can conflict from the vast difference. The claims and truths, often fundamental statements, offered by the paths cannot all simultaneously be true. This conflict makes each option fragile because it is constantly contradicted by another option (Taylor).

The availability of multiple paths to fullness and the fragility of each path can affect the psychological certainty of the faithful. The reliance of psychological certainty on feelings of certainty makes it vulnerable to sway by contradicting statements, including evidence, opinions, and faith. To believe in a specific path of transcendence in the secular world one must deny or ignore the doubt caused by the knowledge of alternative options. Dedicating one’s self to a specific belief does not dispel the alternative options, thus the doubt caused by the availability of the other options will also continue to exist. This doubt undermines the feelings of certainty associated with the belief.

Taylor explains that he is personally confronted by paths to moral and spiritual fullness that counter his own. Taylor states, “I may find it inconceivable that I would abandon my faith, but there are others, including possibly some very close to me, whose way of living I cannot in all honesty just dismiss as depraved, or blind, or unworthy, who have no faith.” In this passage, Taylor admits the potential validity of a subversive lifestyle, thus, confronting the fragility of modern faith. The acknowledgement of an alternative lifestyle inclines Taylor to attempt to confirm his certainty of his faith by stating that losing his faith was “inconceivable”. The combination of the confrontation with alternative lifestyles and Taylor’s need to validate his feelings towards his own faith shows an existing personal doubt.

Similarly, the scientific revolution brought about an alternate path to fulfilment. Science offers individuals another system of which they can govern their beliefs. For instance, falsification theory sets conditions of belief and regulates the consumption of claims. This lifestyle brings fulfilment through empirical evidence. The existence of this path, and the claims it has brought, conflict with many other paths to fulfillment. However, falsification based fulfillment is in constant conflict with each non-falsification based fulfillment method, and vice versa. This undermining of each belief system weakens the individual’s psychological certainty of their system of belief by destroying the feeling of certainty that accompanies an unchallenged belief.

The scientific revolution brought another challenge to the certainty of many faiths. With advances in science much of society has grown to consider it the only path to truth (Armstrong 83). Armstrong states that it is common for individuals to attempt to intellectually comprehend myth before having faith in it (73). This can be viewed as an attempt to validate faith through epistemic certainty. The problematic nature of combing myth and epistemic certainty can be seen through Armstrong’ analysis of *logos* and *mythos.*

Logos is reason. *Logos* includes rational thought. It forges a path forward and tried to discover new things (77). Using empirical evidence, *logos* corresponds with mundane reality which facilitates the individual’s effective functioning in the physical world (77). It can provide epistemic certainty because it bases knowledge on universal truths. An example of modern *logos* is science, which prioritizes empirical evidence in the creation of its ideology. This ideology can become a lens through which the world is experienced and perceived. In contrast to *logos*, *mythos* can also guide the understanding of the world.

Mythos originates from the Greek term “musteion” (75). “Musteion” is associated with the obscure, and what is not rationally demonstrable (75). *Mythos* gives meaning to everyday life (much like Taylor’s concept of fullness), explains the origins of life and culture. Unlike the rational, however, the stories of mythos are not intended to be taken literally because they do not represent mundane reality. For example, one of the doctrine's creators, Gregory of Nissa describes that the mythological Holy Trinity as "terms we use" (qtd. in Armstrong 85). He says that the Father, Son, and Spirit do not denote three objective factual bodies (Armstrong 85). Instead, these terms described the "unnameable and unspeakable" (qtd. in Armstrong 86). The Holy Trinity represents that which is beyond reason.

Comparatively, *logos* and *mythos* are ways of understanding different aspects of the world. In relation to the individual, *mytho*s explains the interior, whereas *logos* explains the exterior. Traditionally both areas were necessary in life: one gave life meaning, and the other moved society forward. However, the two are not meant to be combined, rather, it is traditionally considered impossible to combine the two (Armstrong 76). This attempt to combine *logos* and *mythos* can be dangerous to each other, as they are not complimentary.

Despite the different intentions of *logos and mythos* as society modernizes, there have been attempts to combine them. Of these attempts include those of St. Anselm of Canterbury and Søren Kierkegaard. Anselm prays "*credo ut intellagam"* ("I have faith in order that I may understand") showing a refusal to blindly submit to faith. Instead he searches to understand it (qtd. in Armstrong 73). Anselm exemplifies an early shift towards the modern necessity to accept *mythos* as objective truth before placing faith in the it. In his ontological argument, Anselm attempts this through a demonstrating of the existence of God through logic and rationality. Anselm believes this argument is needed because he believes faith causes uncertainty. Reason and logic are his proposed remedy for the uncertainty. Reason and logic, however, are the cause of his uncertainty in *mythos. Logos* cannot validate *mythos*. The combination of *logos* and *mythos* leads to *mythos* appearing senseless through the lens of *logos* as well as the inherent misinterpretation of both (Armstrong 83).

Kierkegaard arrives at a similar conclusion. In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard tries to rationalize myth. However, he ultimately resigns that myth cannot be rationalized, a step towards the "leap of faith" (Kierkegaard 17). Rather, human logic hinders the devotion to a belief, which subverts faith (Kierkegaard 63). Combining logic and mythos creates the absurd. In the absurd, meaning is searched for where there is no meaning. Instead, as Camus notes, rationality must be delayed to reach faith (35). This leap by faith is a complete, and lasting commitment that forgoes rationality and certainty (Camus 29). The commitment is made based on individual, rather than universal truths (Kierkegaard 97). This concept relies on the paradox of faith. The paradox posits that individual truth is higher that the universal truth. The individual truth, like *mythos*, is interior and subjective, whereas the universal truth, like *logos*, is exterior and objective. In making the leap of faith, one devotes his or her self to an individual belief, regardless of universal truth, thus forgoing *logos* to maintain belief in *mythos*.

A contrast between Armstrong and Kierkegaard is that Kierkegaard differentiates that the inability to combine *logos* and *mythos* is not because it is "logically impossible", rather that it is "humanly impossible" (17). However, Armstrong and Kierkegaard both state that the logical rationalization of myth creates uncertainty, through myth either appearing senseless when interpreted by *logos* (Armstrong 83), or despair caused by the absurd (Kierkegaard 63). As exemplified by St. Anselm, the feelings of senselessness and despair stem from a search for greater understanding and certainty. The approach of combining *logos* and *mythos,* however, suggests that faith should be understood as the acceptance of mythological claims as objective facts. This denies the metaphorical nature of myth. In practice, this attempts to combine *logos* and *mythos.* The inquiry suggests that epistemic certainty is possible. This raises questions of the rationality and logic of faith in search for epistemic certainty. The questions introduce doubt of logical certainty that, when are noticed to be unanswerable through rationality, undermine epistemic certainty.

In his analysis of Kierkegaard's "leap of faith", Camus explains this undermining well when he says, "it is nature to give a clear view of the world after accepting the idea that it must be clear" (32). Camus explains that we only expect things to be logically or epistemically valid after accepting the idea that they should be. Thus, if an individual accepts the idea that *mythos* should be epistemically valid, then he or she will only be certain of that claim when it is proven. Despite logic being irrelevant to the debate of myth, the doubt that it creates when it is considered meaningful affects epistemic certainty, and subsequently psychological certainty.

The decreased certainty of the Western population is represented in statistic reports. The Pew Research Center reports that in the seven-year timespan between 2007 to 2014 there has been an eight percent decline in the number of adults, of all major God-believing faiths, that report that they believe in God with "absolute certainty" ("Religious Landscape Study"). Subsequently, reports of belief in God in all levels of lesser certainty have increased ("Religious Landscape Study"). It should be noted that having faith in a single "God" does not represent all individual's mythological faith. Additionally, the sample size, although large and religiously diverse, only represents adults in the United States of America. However, the statistics represent a growing trend among the most popular *mythos* based faiths in the West, as well as one of the most diverse and influential nations, suggesting similar trends in other Western nations. The personal measures of "certainty" the participants refer to is, at the simplest notion, the feeling of certainty caused by psychological certainty. Epistemic certainty can influence this feeling. The decreasing certainty in *mythos* will undoubtable effect society.

Two effects are likely to occur in relation to faith: decreased societal faith, and modified qualifications for faith. If atheism is the ultimate lack of faith in *mythos*, based on its denial of the existence of a mythical presence in the physical world, then the modern landscape should show an increased atheist population as a representation of decreased certainty in *mythos* leading to loss of faith in *mythos*. Pew Research Center reports that in the seven-year timespan between 2007 and 2014, the percent of anonymous adults in the United States of America reporting to be atheists has nearly doubled ("Religious Landscape Study"). This has either occurred due to an increasing conversion rate of religious and unaffiliated individuals to atheism or to a change in the social climate in which it has become acceptable to claim atheism. In either case the statistics address an acceptance of loss of faith within the modern West that would not have occurred before the modernization of certainty in faith.

Further, the increasing climate of uncertainty pertaining to religious faith should lead to a modification of the qualifications for claiming "faith" in myth. St. John of the Cross demonstrates an early justification of uncertainty in faith. In *the Dark Night of The Soul*, St. John suggests that uncertainty is what defines true faith in God. *The Dark Night of the Soul* is a temporary spiritual crisis in which the individual feels he or she has been abandoned by God. From this it can be read that this uncertainty in God leads to a nihilistic despair that purges everything he or she previously knew about God. By purging the preconceived notions of God, the individual becomes more connected to God. This is a justification that validates faith through uncertainty. By validating uncertainty people are allowed to continue to feel faithful without being certain. The uncertainty becomes a search for connection to the myth that faith has been placed in. Thus, rather than abandon the myth in the face of uncertainty, this style of thought rewards and encourages uncertainty through promises of stronger feelings of faith. Although the uncertainty accepted in this faith risks damaging the trust in the myth, this definition allows “faith” to survive a climate of challenged certainty.

In the modernization of society, myth has been challenged by the addition of a multitude of conflicting paths to transcendence as theorized by Taylor, as well as the introduction of validation through logic and rationality as necessity to maintain faith in a *logos* centric society, as theorized by Armstrong. To combat the psychological and epistemic uncertainty that this has caused, the qualifications of faith have evolved to adjust for the loss of certainty that through traditional thought would have lead to loss of faith. This loss of certainty is not limited to mythological faith; nor are the implications it has on society. Society will continue to experience loss of certainty in traditional thought as it clashes with modernity. What will define humanity is how society adjusts for these clashes. In relation to faith in mythos the modernization of society will require faith to modernize if it is to remain relevant.

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The Many Faces of Zulaikha

Hana Ayoob Khan

The Safavid dynasty is responsible for many magnificent Islamic manuscripts. Of those that have survived, the *Haft Awrang*, commonly known as the *Freer Jami*, is a lavishly decorated volume created during the 16th century that documents and illustrates a series of seven poems written by the famous mystical author Jami (Simpson 105). One of these seven poems is the popular love story of Yusuf and Zulaikha, an epic that reframes previous traditions and the Quranic story through the Sufi mystic lens. For this essay, the focus will be on the role and representation of Zulaikha from three perspectives. Namely, how the Quran represents Zulaikha, and how Jami's epic changes the Qur'anic story. This will be related to several miniature illustrations from the 15th to 17th centuries that chose to illustrate the story in reference to Jami's epic. The comparative analysis on the subject of Zulaikha's representation will be roughly divided to five different episodes in the storyline.

Before exploring the implications of Zulaikha's representation in relation to the Persian miniatures, some context and background into the Quranic and Jami narrative of the story is in order. The majority of Jami's material is unrelated to the Quran and draws on other circulating narratives during that time period. This is partly due to the fact that the Quran tends to be concise and does not give much detail in its narrative. The Quranic representation of Zulaikha has themes of female desire interwoven with that of love, repentance, honesty and fidelity, thus making this tale embody the worst and the best in a woman's nature (Stowasser 50). In the Quran (*Yusuf*, 12:21), which is considered infallible by Muslims, it is the Aziz who buys Yusuf; Zulaikha is the wife of the Aziz of Egypt. Whereas in Jami, the roles are swapped and Zulaikha is the one who buys Yusuf at a great cost. The change adds dramatic effect, but it also paints Zulaikha as a more involved protagonist. In fact, the Aziz plays a far more prominent role in the Quranic version, whereas Jami's story switches the weight onto Zulaikha, with the Aziz being a mere plot device that allows for Yusuf and Zulaikha's ultimate union.

Though Jami does refer to Zulaikha's guile and cunning during her various attempts to seduce Yusuf throughout the poem, it is important to note that the qualities he chooses to highlight before she meets Yusuf are positive rather than negative:

> None like Zulaikha loved. far above
> All women's her immeasurable love!
> To age from childhood, love's unconquered flame
> In wealth and poverty burnt on the same.
> When after age, infirmity, and pain,
> Her youth, and strength, and gladness came again,
> She never turned from love's true path aside. (Jami 28)

She is exemplary in her love, someone that women should look up to. Jami frames the story so that she is the primary lens through which the story is going to be narrated. The purpose is to show Zulaikha’s earthly love for Yusuf as a manifestation of love for God, therefore it is appropriate that her love occupies the story from beginning to end (Merguerian 497).

Though Zulaikha is not converted to Islam till the very end, when the poem talks of Zulaikha’s pain when she realizes the Vizier is not the man from her dreams. She is visited with a message from the angel Gabriel: “Then the Bird of Comfort came near, and there fell / On her ear the sweet message of Gabriel: / ‘Lift thy head, sad maiden, and cease to repine.’” (Jami 92). In the Islamic tradition, this is an honour reserved almost exclusively for the best of humankind, mainly the prophets of God. By having Gabriel intervene, Jami reminds the reader that she was chosen for her life of love and suffering by a higher authority; that what she does and what happens are preordained and out of her control. This removes some of the blame from her future actions.

Before Zulaikha gives in to her baser emotions, her characteristics are nobly portrayed: “Oh save me from being another's bride. / Preserve the pure name of the hapless maid, / No polluting touch on her vesture laid. / made a vow to my lover, mine own, / To keep my love ever for him alone.” (Jami 91). In this quote, her resolve to stay pure for Yusuf is something that would be considered commendable by Jami’s audience. She wants to preserve her virtue and virginity for the one man she loves. Though her later attempts are anything but virtuous, her redeeming quality is that she does not deter from being faithful to Yusuf.

When Zulaikha finally acquires Yusuf into her household and showers him with everything she could materially offer, she starts to yearn “for a sweeter prize” (162). Though she is finally given a chance to have Yusuf by her side, she starts to yearn for more of a physical affirmation of her heart’s wishes. But as the story goes, Yusuf does not give into her numerous attempts to seduce him. He remains obstinately cold and unmoving, while Zulaikha’s attempts and pain simultaneously increase in intensity (163-171). When Zulaikha despairs because of her failed attempts, her nurse is sent to Yusuf to mediate and convince him on Zulaihka’s behalf. In reply, Yusuf breaks his silence and explains why he would not return her affections. Though he is grateful for all that she has done for him, he fears God and does not wish to cause the Vizier any harm or bring shame to his household (171). This is similar to his sentiment in the Quran, where he reminds Zulaikha of the harm her actions would cause to the Vizier, who has been kind to both of them: “‘...Come on now!’ Joseph answered: ‘May Allah grant me refuge! My Lord has provided an honourable abode for me (so how can I do something so evil)? Such wrong-doers never prosper.’” (*Yusuf* 12:23). In the earlier commentaries of the Quran, the chapter is more about the strength and humility of a prophet tested by God, and Zulaikha’s role in the narrative is as a figure of temptation. Merguerian explains that it is only in the later commentaries that the story ceases to be the story of Yusuf and becomes the story of Yusuf and Zulaikha: “Not only are new details added that give Zulaikha a more active and willful presence, but, more important, the addition of punishment brings into the narrative a moral dimension” (Jami 493).

Both Figure 1 and Figure 2 (on the next two pages) illustrate when Zulaikha's initial efforts to seduce Yusuf fail, and she starts concocting other ways to fulfill her wishes. In this scene, she lures him into a garden where he is to be entertained by a group of beautiful women. Hoping that Yusuf would desire at least one of them, Zulaikha plans to change places with the woman he chooses to spend the night with. Contrary to her plans, Yusuf spends the night preaching to them about divine wisdom (Jami 180-181). In the illustration, the incident takes place in front of a large garden pavilion not mentioned in the text. Fig 1 is taken from the *Haft Awrang* of Jami, Fig 2 is from another manuscript illustrating Yusuf and Zulaikha's story according to Jami. Both paintings use the same materials - opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper. Both portray Yusuf with a golden flame around his head to show his prophetic status, and portray a hill in the background. The maidens surrounding him in a circle, listening to him preaching about God, just as Jami describes. Both Fig 1 and Fig 2 also show Zulaikha with her hand on her head in regret, but on different upper corners of the painting, isolated from the rest below in the garden: "Neath the palm-tree's shade she would watch and wait, / And count herself blest with a stolen date." (Jami 182). The biggest distinction is that Fig 1 from the *Haft Awrang* includes the palace in the background, with Zulaikha looking below in dismay as her plan unravels.

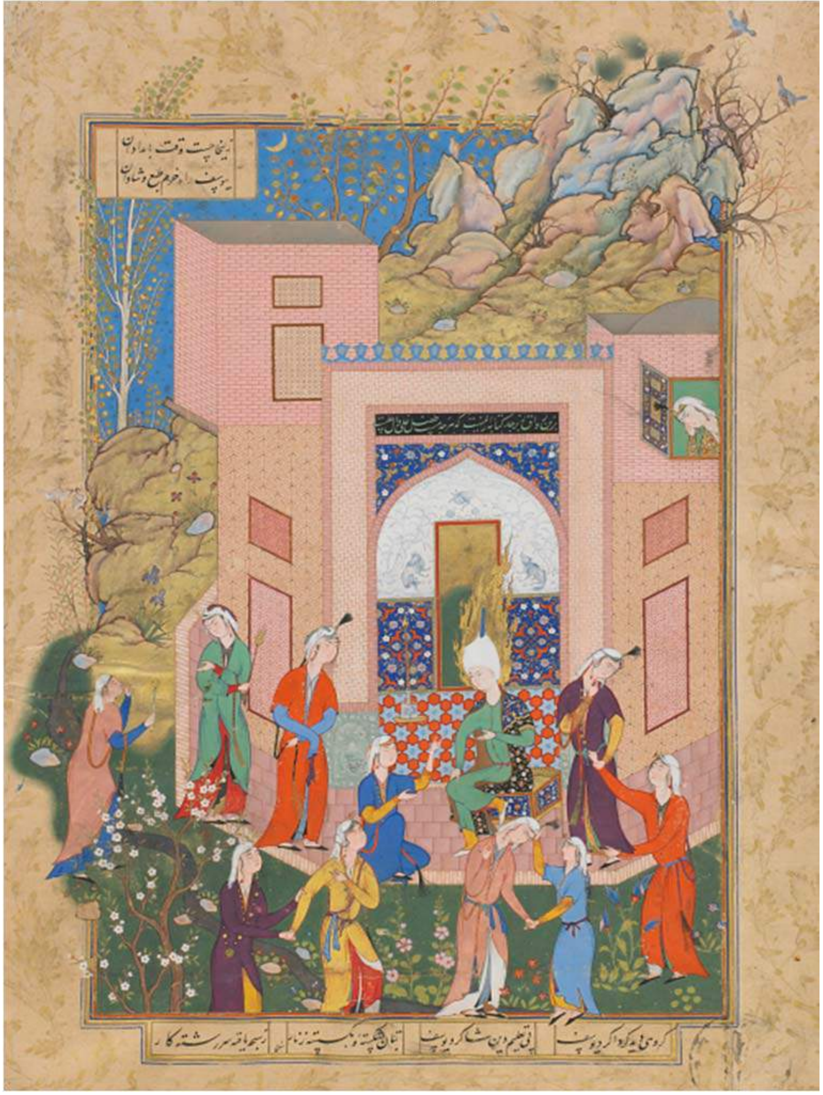

Figure 1: Jami. *Yusuf Preaches to Zulaykha's Maidens in Her Garden*. 1556-1565. Freer Gallery of Art. Freer Sackler. Google Cultural Institute.

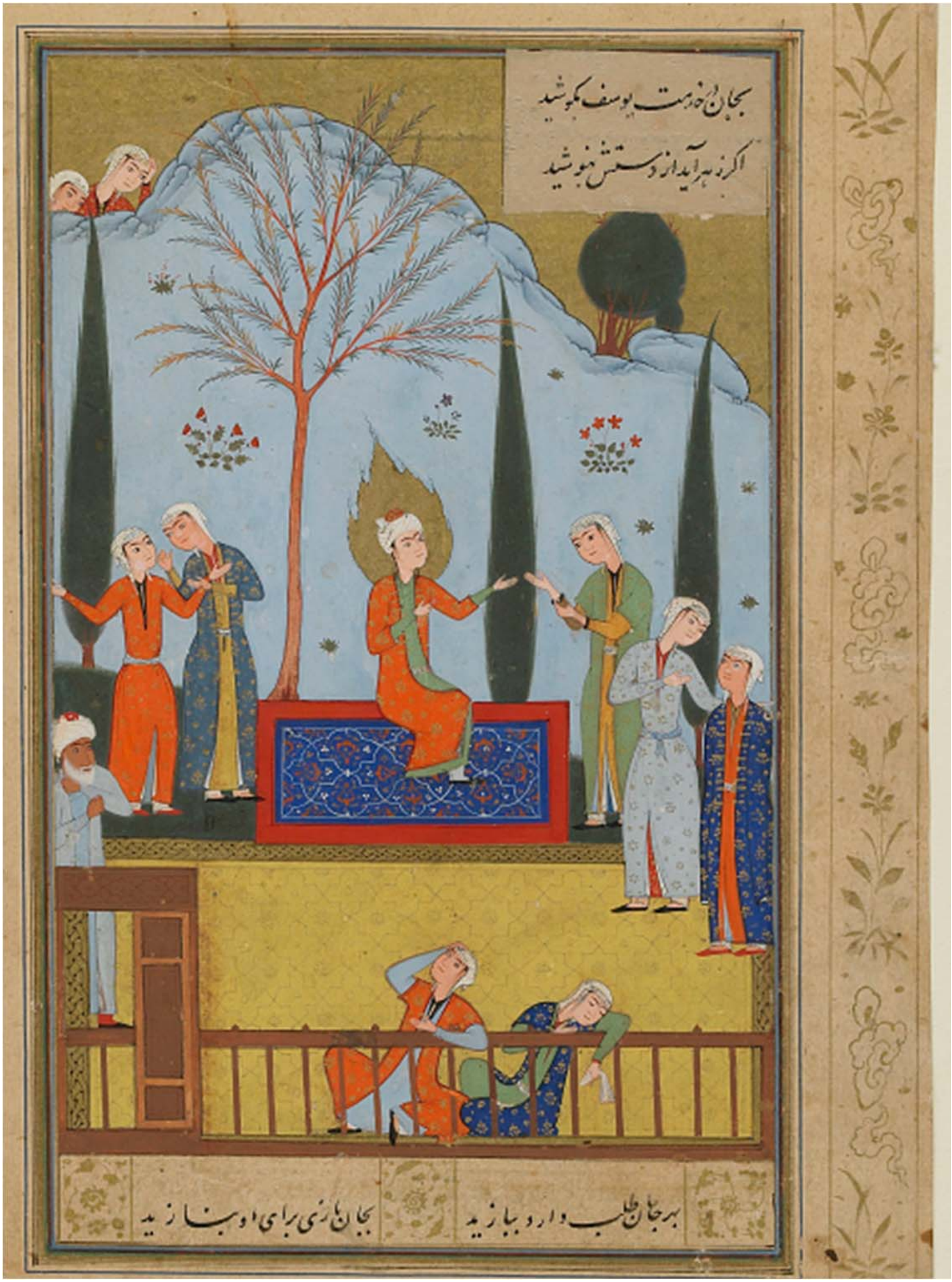

Figure 2: Jami. *Zulaykha's Maids Entertain Yusuf in the Garden.* 1575. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Freer Sackler. Google Cultural Institute.

Another thing worth noting is that, in both paintings, Yusuf is portrayed as looking in the opposite direction from Zulaikha. He is never portrayed facing her, which reflects Jami's poem, since he is described always avoiding her gaze and seduction. In both paintings, her position indicates that she has, once again, failed at her attempt in securing Yusuf's affections. She is recognizable among the other women because her headdress, which includes a golden crown, as well as a feather on Fig 1. They signal her higher status.

As mentioned before, the Quran barely talks of Zulaikha, and is sparse with details. This scene does not appear in the Quranic version, though commentaries may have referenced this scene based on circulating oral traditions. The only reference possible is that this scene illustrates the guile of women as mentioned by the Aziz in verse 28 of the chapter on Yusuf in the Quran. After her declarations and initial attempts fall on deaf ears, Zulaikha increases the intensity of her efforts, and starts to display the "guile" that the Quran mentions: "She would watch her time, if his love were shown, / If he fain would be with his darling alone, / Herself to his side in her stead would creep, / And the sweet, sweet fruit for herself would reap." (Jami 181). The intention of her actions is thinly veiled; the allusions are clearly sexual. Though Jami reiterates that she does sincerely love him, she becomes impatient and starts lusting for a bodily union with her beloved. However, true to his prophetic status, Yusuf "… looked on each temptress, and saw in her, / If not an idol, an idol- worshipper, / And only one wish in his heart he knew, / To lead them to worship where worship is due." (Jami 184).

Figure 3 depicts the scene which can be considered the climax of the efforts by Zulaikha to seduce Yusuf. The second seduction scene takes place in the love palace that Zulaikha builds, covered from floor to ceiling with images of her and Yusuf in embrace. She leads him through seven successive chambers in an attempt to entice him. It is also the first attempt mentioned in the Quran: "And she in whose house he was sought to seduce him. She locked the doors and said: Come here. He said: God forbid! My master has received me well." (*Yusuf,* 12:23). The only detail given in this simple verse is that the lady of the house - who is never named - sought to seduce him. It never mentions how or why she does so. However, there is a reference to 'doors'.

The next verse mentions: "And she advanced towards him, and had Joseph not perceived a sign from his Lord he too would have advanced towards her. Thus,

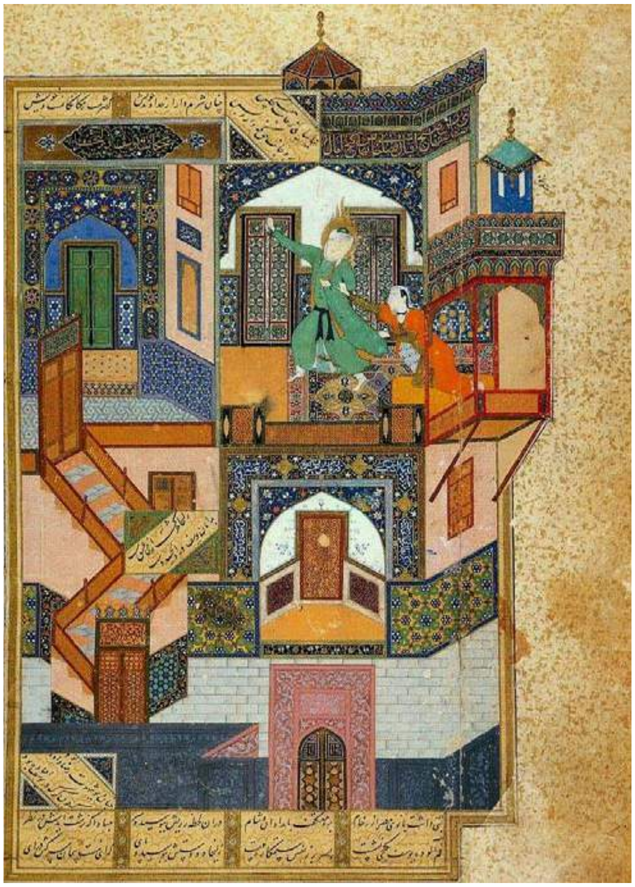

Figure 3: Behzad, Kamal Ud-din. *The Seduction of Yusuf*. 1488. National Library and Archives of Egypt, Cairo. *Art and the Bible*.

was Joseph shown a sign from his Lord that We might avert from him all evil and indecency, for indeed he was one of Our chosen servants." (*Yusuf,* 12:24). Rather than showing Yusuf as an infallible prophet, this verse admits that Yusuf was tempted. In fact, there is much debate on how far he gives in, since he needs divine intervention in order to stop himself from actually committing the deed. According to Tabari's exegesis, where he cites several traditions, "Joseph unfastened the belt of his trousers and sat before her. She lay down for him and he sat between her legs; she lay down on her back and he sat between her legs and loosened his garment, he sat with her as a man sits with his wife." (Stowasser 52). Stowasser notes that what these scenarios have in common is that the actions stop short of actual intercourse. Furthermore, that Tabari only uses these scenarios to make the distinction between natural appetite and desire as opposed to resolution and deed, of which only the latter are punishable (52). In Jami's version, however, Yusuf's strength is highlighted in that he stops out of his own accord after seeing the idols she worships.

Though at the beginning Zulaikha is portrayed as a victim of Yusuf's beauty after she has regressed to active attempts to seduce Yusuf, Jami does not hesitate to associate negative attributes to her actions and intentions: "She would woo his beauty and win success / With her tender guile and her soft caress" (Jami 196). The reference to guile invokes the same negative portrayal of her as in the Quran. The description of her preparations and construction of the love palace she builds exclusively to seduce him takes up quite some space in the epic (190-200). As soon as they reach the first chamber, the effect of her beauty and efforts to woo him start to show: "Dear lady, longer I would not be / In this curtained chamber alone with thee, / For thou art a flame, and the wool is dry / The wind art thou and the musk am I. / Is the wool secure when the flame burns fast?" (201). Repeatedly being exposed to images of him and Zulaikha lying together wherever he sets his eyes on starts to slowly unravel his restraint, because "Then the heart of Yusuf would fain relent, / And a tender look on Zulaikha he bent, / While a thrill of hope through her bosom passed" (206).

He asks her to remain patient and wait for him, but she impatiently brushes it off, to which he replies: "Two things I fear / The judgment of God, and the Grand Vizier." (207). This is similar to the sentiment he invokes in verse 23 of the Quran. The shocking twist that Jami's epic includes is that in her desperation, Zulaikha actually offers to kill the Vizier and give Yusuf all their possessions in order to win God's forgiveness:

> 'Fear not thy master,' Zulaikha cried;
> 'At some high feast when I sit by his side,
> A poisoned cup from this hand shall he take,
> And sleep till Doomsday shall bid him wake
> […]
> the keys I hold
> Of a hundred vaults full of gems and gold.
> All this will I give to atone for thy sin.' (Jami 208)

This makes Zulaikha seem completely reprehensible. Though her love was portrayed as pure and something to emulate at the beginning, her actions because of her impatience and desperation leads her to even more shocking demands: "No more evasion.

My wish deny, / And by mine own hand will I surely die. / [...] / My lifeless corpse the Vizier will see, / And the crime of the murder will rest on thee" (209-210). The effect of this double threat of killing herself and threatening him with being framed for her murder is that Yusuf's natural desire for Zulaikha is now replaced by his fear that if he does not respond to her sexual demand, she will make good on a threat to kill herself (Merguerian 494). She ignores his implorations to control herself, and throws herself at him, which he does not have the power to refuse (Jami 211).

If the episodes of her threatening to kill herself were not included, it could have been interpreted as Yusuf giving in to her on his own free will. However, now it is more likely that he does so mostly under duress. However, while they are about to lay together, Yusuf spies her idol and is disgusted and reminded of his fear of God's punishment (211). This is in reference to a part of verse 24 in the Quran, where: "[…] Thus was Joseph shown a sign from his Lord that We might avert from him all evil and indecency, for indeed he was one of Our chosen servants." (12:14). Yusuf's positive response to Zulaikha's advances were inscribed in Tabari's commentary as natural and normal, if misplaced; but by the 12th/13th-century, like in Jami's version, it had become cruel psychological warfare on Zulaikha's part, with Yusuf a victim and a hero (Merguerian 494). As with the later exegesis, Jami's version increases the degree of Yusuf's strength to reject Zulaikha, and makes her look pitiable, heightening her desperation and need to unite with Yusuf.

In terms of the illustration of this scene in Figure 3, it is markedly different from the other miniatures cited in this essay since this is painted by Kamal Ud-din Behzad in 1488, significantly earlier and closer to when Jami wrote his poem in 1483. Rather than being from Iran as with the previous miniatures, this is from Herat in Afghanistan. The painting style is similar in how structures are depicted. However, this structure in the painting is far more complicated because it depicts various levels of the palace with the seven different linked rooms that Jami too includes in his version of the scene. Yusuf is shown with a golden flame to indicate his status of prophethood. There is also a lot of text compared to the other illustrations, and they are placed all throughout the manuscript unlike the specific demarcations seen in Figures 1 and 2. The details are masterful and incredibly complex, especially how the artist uses different angles to create a more three-dimensional effect and manages to portray all seven doors as Jami's text indicates.

What Fig 1 and Fig 3 have in common is how they use calligraphy on the structures depicted in the paintings. Either due to the painting's deterioration or because it was originally that way, it seems that Yusuf's face is lightly veiled, which is similar to how illustrations of Prophet Muhammad are always veiled. The way that Zulaikha is portrayed is also in line with what Jami wrote in his epic. She is shown on the floor, tearing Yusuf's robe while he flees.

The size of the images attached to this essay do not quite do justice to the incredible scope and detail of these miniatures. The colours and outlines and the details that emerge when you gaze into the painting has the power to leave the observer speechless. It can be generally concluded that Zulaikha's character lost much of her human fullness because of an exegetic emphasis on her as symbol of the sexually aggressive, destabilizing, and dangerous nature of women (Stowaser 50). The love motif, as we see in Jami's version, was fully developed in the pious popular storytelling traditions. Though Jami does portray Zulaikha as a symbol of female guile, the beginning and the end make it clear that the protagonist symbolizes the enduring power of female selfless love and faithfulness, which is rewarded with the bliss of reunion with the beloved (50). The Quran is considered infallible by Muslims, but as the various commentators that have been cited throughout this essay show, commentary of various Islamic schools of thought tend to focus on different aspects of Zulaikha. Therefore, unfortunately, the story is still used in contemporary conservative societies as so-called proof of women’s ‘inherent’ weakness as a reason for men to continue dominating over women. The above concluding observations on the illustrations, Quran, and Jami’s portrayal of Zulaikha is further evidence that though Zulaikha may be considered as a model of love and God’s forgiveness because of her ultimate reward of the union with Yusuf, the specific choices taken by the painters, and Jami’s ambiguity, reflect the dominant notions of patriarchal superiority over women.

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Culture and Tradition in the North: Inuit Art

Semina Choi

Art has been a significant part of Inuit life for thousands of years. Today, several paintings, prints, and sculptures made by Inuit artists have gained much attention in the Canadian art market. Although art was made for very different purposes during prehistoric times, producing art to sell was found to be a great (and sometimes only) opportunity for the Inuit to make a living since the arrival of European settlers. There is often a misconception that Inuit art has retained originality and unity over the centuries, but the Inuit have experienced several changes, just as any other culture, which is illustrated in their art. Decades of colonial influence has also affected Inuit art. Inuit art has changed and developed over time, both independently and through outside influence, and although it has garnered more attention in the 21st century than ever before, people have yet to understand the historical complexities and association it has with colonialism.

The history of Inuit art is commonly divided into three main time periods: prehistoric, historic, and contemporary. The prehistoric period consists of the Dorset, Thule, and various other cultures, spanning the time between 2000 BCE to 1700 CE. The historic period dates from the 1700s until the year of 1948 when a Canadian artist named James Houston first visited the North. The contemporary period begins in 1948 and continues to present day. There is a definite shift from the innocent and natural forms that art takes in the prehistoric period to the self-aware and commercialized forms of the historic and contemporary periods. Each of these artistic periods is distinct from each other stylistically yet have similarities that link them together, such as the knowledge and love of Northern nature.

Prehistoric Art

The prehistoric period in Inuit art is characterized by utilitarian yet beautifully carved tools and magico-religious figurines. Many of the intricate tools were found in areas where people belonging to what scholars call the “Arctic Small Tool tradition” lived. These people seem to have been nomadic as there was no evidence that they had permanent or even temporary homes (Swinton). Normally, people of such minimalist lifestyles would not be found creating artistic devices. However, the prehistoric Inuit’s small weapons and flint tools were very carefully made and decorative. The craftsmen seem to have thought about the visual aspects of their tools as they chose multicolored flints, carved them with expert precision and even fashioned decorative edges (McGhee 14). These tools can be considered not just useful and portable but also as works of art. When the climate began to cool down around 1500 BCE, the Arctic Small Tool tradition people had to seek out a more sedentary lifestyle. This new way of life began to inspire better ways to hunt and the development of new tools.

Dorset Culture

These new factors formed what is known as the Dorset culture, named after Cape Dorset. This new Dorset way of life became the norm for many in the Arctic for almost 2,000 years. During this time, less functional artistic carvings were made. Settling into a more sedentary lifestyle may have given people the chance to explore creating items not necessarily needed for survival. Many of the Dorset carvings were made of ivory or wood, and depicted mostly animals, less commonly humans or spirits. Scholars believe that Dorset art was associated with shamanistic religious practices where items such as life sized wooden masks and drums would have been used in celebrations or rituals (McGhee 15). Other carved items and figurines of animals may also have been objects of magical power. There were many carvings of bears engraved with lines representing the animal's skeletal bones which led to the belief that they represented the “helping bear spirit” of shamans (McGhee 16). Other common figures found in Dorset culture included maskettes (small or partial masks), carvings of birds or land and sea mammals, and human “face clusters”. These face clusters consisted of several expressive carved out faces on a large piece of bone, antler, or wood (Swinton). Also, Dorset art is uniquely characterized by the strong expressions on the features of the figures.

Thule Culture

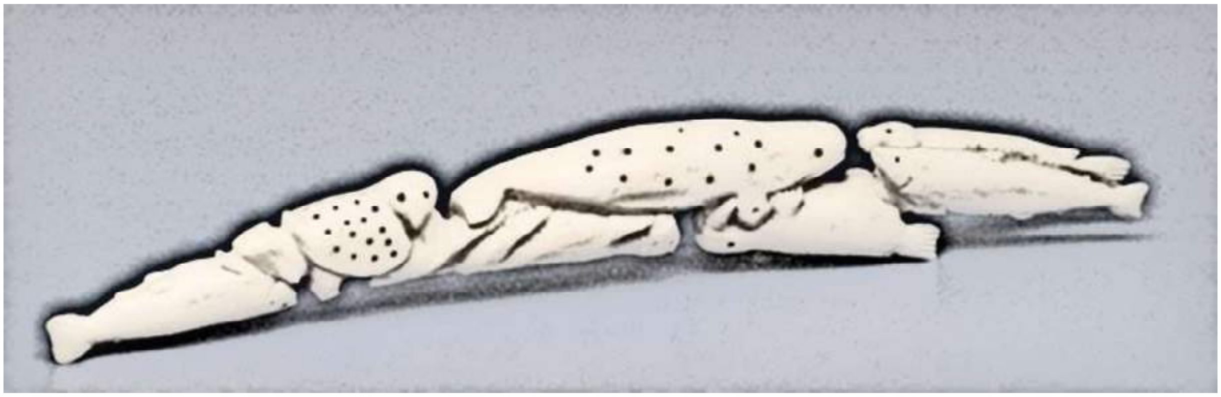
The group that came after the Dorset culture had a very different style of art from its predecessors. The Thule culture is thought to have come from northern Alaska around 1000 - 1200 CE. The Dorset culture had all but disappeared at this point, so it was believed that the Thule people had invaded and killed or driven them away. The Thule seem to have learned certain skills from the Dorset such as building igloos and finding material to make tools with (McGhee 17). Although they appear to have learned some skills from the Dorset, there are many differences in the artwork of the Dorset and the Thule. Dorset art seemed to carry a stark and masculine quality in its form, whereas Thule art tended to be more feminine and related to female forms and uses. For example, the Thule made utensils like combs and sewing equipment as well as “swimming figurines” which depicted feminine representations of humans or animals (Swinton). The elegant female figurines of the Thule culture were mostly faceless while the male Dorset figures all wore very strong expressions (Swinton). Up until this point in history, Inuit art has had no influence from the outside, since there has been no contact with foreigners yet. Later on, during what is called the historic period, the style of Inuit art changed again, but this time it was due to colonial influences.

Historic Art

The historic period is described as “an ill-defined and poorly documented time span which is often only briefly acknowledged within the history of Inuit art” (Blodgett 22).

Compared to scholars' interest in prehistoric archaeology and contemporary art, the historic period does not gain as much attention and is lacking in documentation and examples of artwork. The historic period of Inuit art began when the climate dropped again and contact with colonizers is slowly made in the Arctic. Sometime in the 16th century, the unified style of Thule art dispersed and slowly paved the way for a new style of art to enter. The Inuit did continue to make functional tools, decorated items, and carvings during the historic period. These items ranged from everyday useful objects to special dolls and games; even personal utensils such as ivory combs and pipes were often adorned with special decorations.

However, most of the visitors to the North were largely unimpressed with the Inuit art they encountered. They found the historic period art to be crude and undeveloped. Art seemed to be more appreciated when it was done by artists who had previously been exposed to settlers and utilized western tools. Before 1948, people were aware of the Inuit's artistic abilities, but they did not see their carvings and tool making as an art form. When looking at stone or ivory carvings, most individuals saw “inexpensive handicrafts, curios, souvenir items, or simple functional items” (Crandall 45). These items were just seen as plain artifacts or exotic utensils from a foreign culture rather than art.



Caved Ivory Tusk, 1914, from www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/tresors/art_inuit

Despite this, there was still a demand for historic Inuit art. Throughout the 1800s “souvenir carvings” were in high demand. The carvings that Southerners liked most were those that they believed truly illustrated traditional Inuit life (Crandall 38). So, artists had to cater to the desires of foreigners who really only saw their work as souvenirs and little trinkets. By the beginning of the 19th century, the animal carvings, as well as dolls and toys previously used to trade with occasional explorers, turned into a larger trading industry between the Inuit and settlers. The trade carvings began to become more exquisite in skill and detail than before. The previous indigenous magico-religious significance had disappeared and began to gear more towards the settlers' traditions. For example, replicas of Roman Catholic figures were being carved, as well as everyday items like cigarette boxes, match holders, and sail boats (Swinton). The Inuit carvings began to become increasingly catered towards the settlers' tastes.

Due to the increasing desire for Inuit carvings, an issue arose regarding “imitation art”. This was a problem that began in the 1930s when cheaper versions of Inuit and other Indigenous artworks were being manufactured and imported in from places like Japan. These imitation pieces were sold in west coast souvenir shops for about half the price of the originals. Although this production ceased briefly during World War II, the imitation returned with even more variety after the war. To make sure people could differentiate between the originals and imitations, the items were required by law in 1953 to have a sticker indicating the country where they were made (Crandall 131). However, the stickers could always be removed and this did not do much to improve the situation. The government then suggested the Inuit mass produce their crafts to compete with the low prices of imitation souvenirs. This became a problem for Inuit artists, as the quality of their work suffered and materials ran out. Mass production methods also risked the loss of traditional skills and true craftsmanship. This was only one of the many consequences that occurred due to the interactions with settlers.

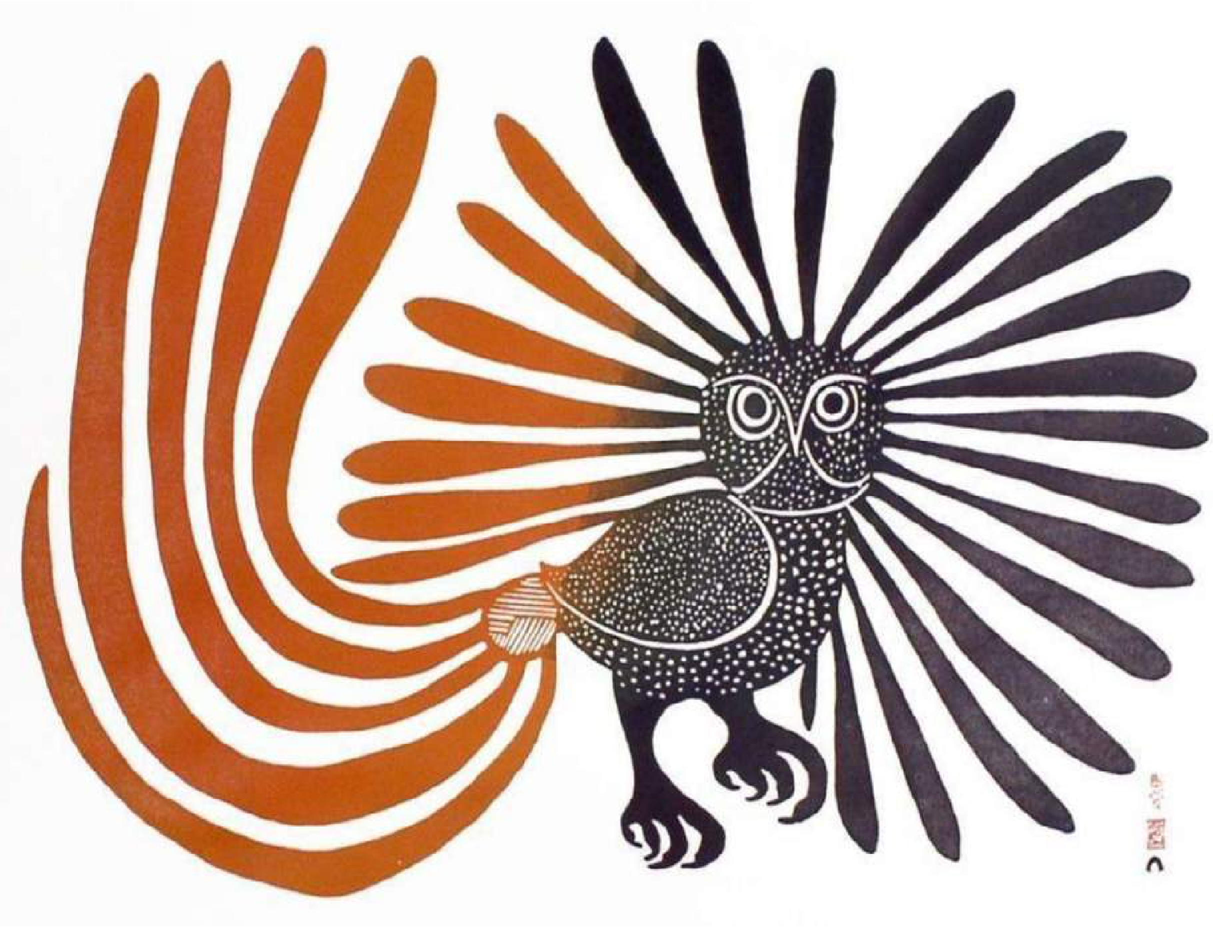
Differences between Prehistoric/Historic and Contemporary Art

Many of the modern changes in the method, media, and subject matter of Inuit art were direct consequences of outside influences. Today, people may think Inuit carvings have always been made from stone, but the materials used in the prehistoric and historic periods were usually ivory or bone. Only in the contemporary period sculptures began being made from carving stone, which had to be imported from other countries such as Brazil and Italy (Crandall 56). The reason artists had to go from using ivory to stone was due to the demand for sculptures outweighing the supply of ivory. The over-harvesting of ivory from the competitive whaling industries in the 18th and 19th centuries caused a shortage in ivory. A ban on commercial whaling was placed because of this, which was unfortunate for the Inuit who relied on harvesting whales not just for their carvings but also for their sustenance.

Besides the change in materials, there were also alterations in the function of Inuit art because of western influence. Early Inuit carvings seem to indicate that much of the art in the prehistoric and historic periods were meant to be used or handled. In the past, art had utilitarian functions as religious charms, game pieces, or tools. These works did not have a favoured point of view or a “right way” of displaying them (Crandall 57). In contrast, contemporary art does have a specific point of view and is always meant to be displayed. As a result, Inuit art today is often more detailed on one side or just 2-dimensional.

Contemporary Art

The idea of contemporary Inuit art is often accredited to a Canadian artist named James Houston. Houston had the opportunity to travel North in 1948 to an Inuit community called Inukjuak. He became friends with the residents there and exchanged artistic knowledge with them (Sutton 907). When he returned from the trip, Houston brought several carvings that the Inuit had given him. He presented these to the Canadian Handicraft Guild and they were well received by the directors. Houston was then appointed to be an art ambassador to the North and was given responsibility to the upkeep of Inuit art (908). He also introduced new forms of art (such as printmaking) to the Inuit and this seems to have created more interest in the South.



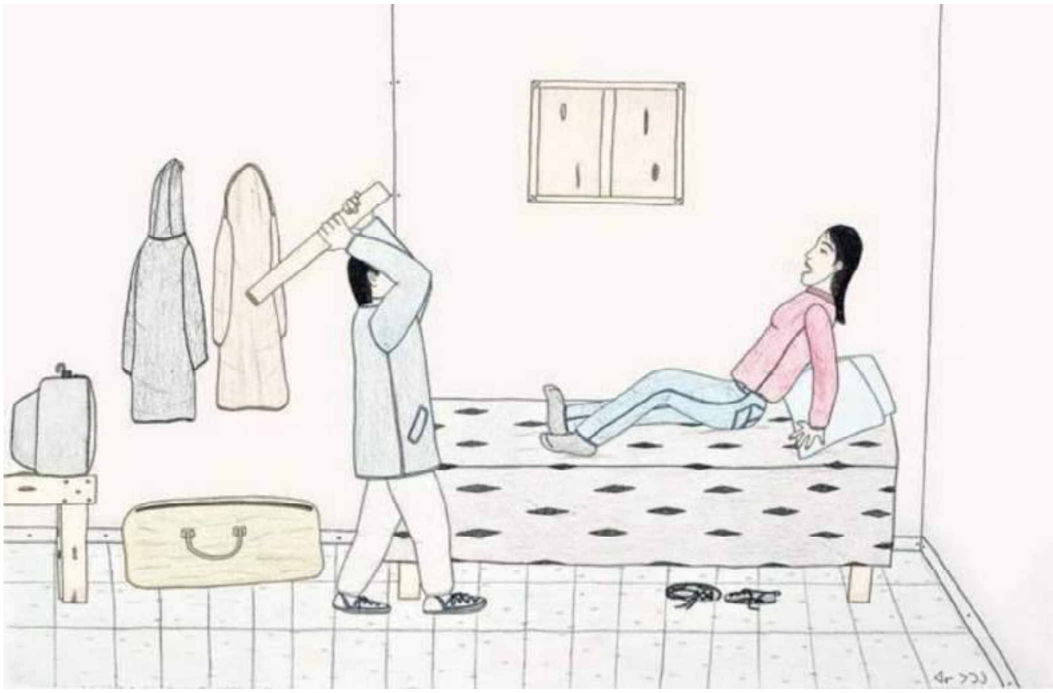
The Enchanted Owl by Kenojuak Ashevak. 1960

Despite its long history, it seems that it was only through this mediation by James Houston that Inuit art began to be recognized as an "art" rather than a craft. With this new form of print-making, a certain number of prints were made before the original stencil was destroyed. This was to ensure the value of the limited prints. After the prints were made, they were sold at galleries or the Hudson's Bay Company at a set price (Craig 58). One very famous print, titled *The Enchanted Owl* by Kenojuak Ashevak, was originally sold in 1960 for $75. This may have seemed like a fairly good price for the artist at the time, but the reality was that the price of these prints inflated exponentially over time. In the case of *The Enchanted Owl*, it was sold in 1969 for $5,000. Five years later, in 1974, the same print was sold for $35,000 in a private sale (59).

If the owners of a print want to sell a print later for profit, they can do so, for as much as they want. Unfortunately, the original artist does not get a share of the money. Although the inflated prices cannot be managed by the artists, $75 is outrageously low for a print that can be sold 15 years later for $35,000. Considering printing expenses and labour wages need to be paid as well, it is likely that the artist only received a small cut of the original profit. This cost discrepancy may be the fault of the co-operatives that produce and price Inuit art, but it is also the result of the capitalistic mindset that dominated North America since colonialism.

Co-operatives in the North began due to relocations of the Inuit that prevented them from being able to support themselves through hunting alone. The co-ops were meant to provide wage labour for the Inuit and for them to develop the local economy (Mitchell). With these cooperatives, the Inuit would be employed in retail, food service, construction, tourism, etc., but the most successful activity has been the production of art. The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources provided much of the resources needed to start up these co-operatives. The goal was to allow the Inuit to eventually take control and ownership of the co-ops, but in the meantime, managers from outside the communities were brought in. This also meant that outsiders would have a large amount of control over the production, and they often had strict ideas on what was to be made. This was, of course, done with good intentions for the artists and the rest of the community, but it also limited the diversity of work that was produced.

Most contemporary Inuit paintings, drawings, or prints portray traditional life in the past rather than the experiences of the contemporary Inuit. Many of the scenes depicted would be of hunting with spears as it occurred hundreds of years ago, instead of the rifles that most contemporary Inuit would be more familiar with. This kind of art portraying the past is sometimes called "memory art" (Crandall 57). Memory art was most popular with Southerners who liked the idea of an "exotic" culture, so Inuit artists were discouraged from depicting contemporary scenes. During the contemporary art period, some "arts and crafts officers" were sent to the North to teach Inuit artists how to produce art that would appeal to the markets' idea of Inuit art (58). This clearly restricted the artists' freedoms as they had little or no say as to what they would create.



Man Abusing His Partner, by Annie Pootoogook. 2001-2002

However, there were a few Inuit artists that depicted contemporary scenes, such as Annie Pootoogook. Pootoogook began drawing in 1997 with a co-operative in Cape Dorset.

She quickly became drawn to coloured pencils and illustrating contemporary settlement life in her hometown. Her work is unique in that it features Inuit people today, wearing contemporary clothing and using everyday items such as cigarettes, lighters, and canned foods.

Pootoogook's work also revealed common tragic experiences in the North, including domestic violence and alcoholism. She rose to fame in 2006 when she won the Sobey Art Award, and her drawings were being put up in galleries. However, due to the very experiences her art revolved around, Pootoogook's life deteriorated until she found herself homeless and addicted to drugs and alcohol (Adami). This is not an uncommon issue for many Inuit artists, due to their living conditions and intergenerational trauma. Even being a successful artist with gallery exhibitions does not always guarantee sufficient income, and factors such as abuse and addiction can worsen the situation. Artists often have a sense of responsibility to depict important issues in their personal or collective lives. Therefore, we as viewers should also find it our responsibility to acknowledge all aspects of a culture and not accept it solely for its aesthetic appeal. The art of a culture and the material/social conditions of that culture should not be separated.

Although there have been many changes and developments to the style and media of Inuit art, an underlying theme has stayed intact throughout the years. The love of nature and impeccable observation skills of the Inuit are unique and shine throughout their work. Art collectors and scholars alike may believe that contemporary Inuit art is doing well in business today, but the reality is that Inuit artists are extremely underappreciated considering the quality and skill of their work. The Canadian government has done some work to make Inuit art more available to the public, but this may have been at the artists' expense as they have not always been paid fairly. It is unfortunate that many people are still unaware of the effort, and often pain, that it took to create such beautiful works of art. Art enthusiasts today would benefit from further research on the colonial history of Inuit art and current living situations of artists.

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New Critical Perceptions Surrounding Racial and Ideological Discourse in D.W. Griffiths "*The Birth of a Nation*" *(1915)*

Jordan Krohn

The Birth of a Nation (1915) is often acclaimed as the most historically valuable and technically groundbreaking film of silent American cinema, notwithstanding its presentation of racist subject matter. At one point, D.W. Griffith's three-hour epic was the longest film ever made, the first movie to have an original soundtrack, and became Hollywood's highest grossing film until the release of *Gone with the Wind* in 1939. Consequently, early filmmakers credited *The Birth of a Nation* (hereafter *Birth*) with revolutionizing the standard by which subsequent Hollywood productions were developed.

The film juxtaposes the conflicting ideologies of the 'Northern Union' and the 'Southern Confederate States of America'. As well, it chronicles the ongoing conflict between whites and blacks amidst the socio-political unrest after the American Civil War. *Birth* is most often critiqued for its white supremacist presuppositions and barbaric depictions of African-American people; the presence of racism in the film is undisputable. However, the existence of prejudice leads many spectators to dismiss important aspects of *Birth's* complex narrative structure in favour of focusing entirely upon the film's racial propaganda.

The following paper will begin with a brief plot summary to provide a foundational understanding of important scenes, characters, and themes, followed by two sections that will undertake a detailed examination of the technical elements and historical significance of *Birth.* These aspects of the film are underrepresented in comparison to its racist themes. The last section will deconstruct the way in which *Birth's* racist elements were promoted by Griffith's effective use of stylistic conventions (i.e. viewer identification, the 'happy ending', and the hero figure) to promote white supremacy. *Birth* integrates progressive entertainment with the marginalization and devaluation of black livelihood, which creates an ideological connection between the film's 'acclaimed greatness' and its white supremacist values.

Plot Summary

Griffith's film tells the story of the American Civil War from a predominantly Southern perspective. The first half of the film focuses on the period before and up to the Civil War. *Birth's* plot is structured around several contesting themes of oppositional conflict which serve to perpetuate the struggles surrounding idiosyncratic class interests and contrasting ideological approaches to social problems (e.g. racism and gender equality) in the early 20th century. The four main areas of conflict in *Birth* are: 'the North' vs. 'the South', Union vs. Confederacy, peace vs. war, and black vs. white people.

The movie's narrative follows the interconnected story of two American families who are at the center of the conflict. First, there is the Stoneman family from the North, which supports slave abolition and lives somewhere in the Pennsylvania countryside; next is the slave owning Cameron family from the South, which lives in Piedmont, South Carolina. The friendship between these two families is initially strong because Phil Stoneman falls in love with Margaret Cameron and Ben Cameron falls deeply in love with Elsie Stoneman. The American Civil War strains the civility between the two families since they must fight in opposing armies. The Stoneman family fights on behalf of the Northern abolitionist Union, while the slave owning Cameron family fights for the Southern Confederacy. The Confederate army fights valiantly, yet they are unable to defeat the Union forces. Ben Cameron is captured in the battle and sentenced to death, but escapes punishment when U.S. President Abraham Lincoln is suddenly assassinated.

After Lincoln's assassination, the second half of the film progresses with more Union abolitionists moving into Piedmont, thereby allowing the freed African-American slaves to gain political power. Once the black slaves came to power, they are portrayed as being too "simple-minded" and "savage" to successfully run a democracy. As a result, Ben Cameron, along with other Caucasian supporters of the Confederacy, founds the Ku Klux Klan (hereafter, KKK or 'the Klan') in order to save the South from African-American control. Ben has ill-intentions when he directs the KKK's wrath upon Gus 'The Negro'. Ben is falsely led to believe that Gus has killed his sister Flora Cameron, following her rape/sexual assault. The movie ends with a peaceful reconciliation between the surviving members of the Stoneman and Cameron family.

Assessing the Reality of D.W. Griffith's Impact on Hollywood Cinema

Griffith began filming *Birth* in 1914 and upon its release in 1915, he received widespread public and critical acclaim for using and developing several revolutionary film production techniques. The panoramic long shot, the iris effect, still shots, night photography, and panning camera shots were just some of the new artistic film techniques utilized in the movie. Additionally, Griffith hired hundreds of "extras" to stage and film the large-scale battle scenes. While there were only hundreds of actors in the battle scenes, the panoramic long shots made it look as if thousands of people were fighting on screen. One of the most celebrated aspects of *Birth* was Griffith's use of "artistic colour tinting". Colour tinting is the process of adding colour to a black and white film, usually for dramatic purposes (Jacobowitz & Lippe). For instance, the chase scene between Gus 'The Negro' and Flora Cameron is a perfect example of artistic colour tinting because the entire sequence is tinted green. Before *Birth* was released, colour had never been previously used on film. This added cinematic feature enabled audiences to construct personal meaning from the emotive nature of visualizing colour on screen.

Birth was historically regarded as the "greatest and most important American film ever made". However, it is necessary to be suspicious of the proclaimed degree of innovative influence that Griffith's film contributions had on other directors. Griffith's supposed widespread influence on future film techniques and his popularity with early audiences should not be compared to his skill as a film artist. It is impossible to seriously assess Griffith's film directing capabilities without first acknowledging the problems of referring to *Birth* as the most important Hollywood film ever made. On the contrary, Griffith did not pioneer every important film convention and production technique:

> "Other filmmakers were establishing important narrative conventions – especially in the areas of continuity editing, three point lighting, organically integrated set design, subjective camera movements and manipulation of narrative chronology and point of view – that owed little to Griffith." (Merritt 34)

The filmmaking process is comprised of a variety of competing systems of expression and ingenuity that are independent of each other. Therefore, it is illogical to argue that *Birth* had a substantially pervasive influence on all films that succeeded it. Other acclaimed filmmakers, such as F.W. Murnau, established their own expressive techniques without strictly adhering to Griffith's narrative conventions.

Technical & Historical Composition of *The Birth of A Nation*

Birth is a complex structural composition with a surprising degree of attention given towards the technicalities of set design. One of the most technically proficient and emotionally complex scenes within *Birth* is the infamous chase scene between Gus and Flora Cameron. The set had been meticulously designed to provide a visual experience of a high magnitude during the chase scene. The chase scene's striking application of various film compositional techniques, such as panning and exhaustive transitions coupled with the intricate set design, provided audiences with extraordinary visual stimulation. Furthermore, the chase sequence is marked by four actively distinct phases: 1) Gus sees Flora walking into the woods alone and he follows her; 2) Gus approaches Flora, she runs away and he runs after her; 3) Ben Cameron goes into the forest to look for his little sister Flora; and 4) Flora is under the-belief that Gus will hurt her, so she leaps off a cliff to her death. Ben later finds the mangled corpse of his beloved sister on the ground below (Merritt 38).

Griffith preferred to film scenes in a way that only captured three sides of the room in each shot. Yet, the chase seen is filmed outdoors, in the middle of a forest. Consequently, the forest is filmed in a naturalistic way, which helps illustrate its natural harmony: "So here we see only one face of each part of the forest, the vantage point of the shot never changing" (Merritt 39). Griffith uses a consistent vantage point, which highlights the sheer size of the forest, while still capturing the subtleties of nature. The amount of suspense generated in this scene can be credited to Griffith's effective use of contrasting film shots. On one end, one sees the expression of horror on Flora's face, which is blended with camera angles that make Gus appear misguided and menacing. In addition, one of the most stunning elements of the chase scene is the way that it propels the viewer to emotionally respond. Flora Cameron's demise is one of the most shocking plot elements within *Birth*. Clearly, Griffith utilizes the suicide of a wholly innocent character to maximize the emotional reaction elicited from the audience. The grandiosity of the chase scene is amplified by appealing to viewer emotions with the visceral imagery. There is a simple reason for illustrating the scene in this manner: viewers are meant to identify with Flora due to her tragic and unnecessary death. Yet, Gus is portrayed as a villain whose pursuit leads to the death of the angelic, young Flora. In actuality, viewers are not given any prior context of Gus' intent or motives for chasing after Flora in the first place.

Another critical technical element of the film is the deliberate inclusion and manipulation of props in a progressive way (i.e. characters interact with props they find, which progresses the plot). Given that *Birth* is a silent film, Griffith often relied on a 'prop-oriented' approach to bring characters into conflict with one another. For example, as part two of the chase scene is about to begin, Gus drops his jacket, leaving it there for Ben Cameron to discover. In turn, the jacket is later used as evidence to incriminate Gus for Flora's murder, leading to his public execution near the end of the film.

Birth is a 'fictional biopic', meaning all the primary characters are fictional creations. Some of the characters and events in the movie serve as a historically accurate means of driving the plot in new directions. For example, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln is what allows the fictional protagonist, Ben Cameron, to escape from his captors. Nevertheless, *Birth* also wields the influential power of Hollywood cinema to portray factual historical events, while simultaneously promoting biased racial perceptions. Griffith’s historical misinterpretations in *Birth* are problematic because they present a series of historical events without providing probable explanations for the validity of their cause. For example, the South is portrayed as the strongest militant force, due to the way that white Southerners took matters into their own hands and established the KKK to secure white liberty and ensure black subordination. Notwithstanding, Griffith’s strong depiction of the South solidifies his racial biases and neglects historical accuracy, as the Confederate States surrendered and lost the American Civil War. Griffith’s southern bias is the primary reason the film is often treated as racist propaganda. Accordingly, this generates dismissal of the movie's positive attributes (e.g. the film's technical proficiency) due to feelings of disgust amongst viewers.

Both academics and the public disproportionately focus upon the racist elements of *Birth.* Disproportionate focus on the brutal occurrences of racism encourages the audience to neglect valuable historical inquiries about the film, which can be studied to broaden understanding of particular socio-historical, political, and cultural contexts. Simultaneous examination of the historical and racial elements of *Birth* brings forth the troubling conclusion that Griffith’s own racial bias is responsible for the disconnect between factual history and his passionate ‘historical’ portrayal of an overly empowered Southern Confederacy. The very beginning of the movie takes place at the Cameron house; the Cameron family is depicted as being very tight-knit, privileged and standing united amidst the bright North Carolina sunshine. Conversely, the Stoneman family is first introduced to the viewer in a dimly lit study occupied only by Austin Stoneman. The South was depicted as being a much warmer and more familial place to live, despite the Confederate States actively promoting and defending inhumane behavior such as slavery.

Stylistic Conventions & Griffith's Endorsement of Racist Ideals

In the following section, three different film conventions that were used throughout *Birth* will be discussed: 1) viewer identification; 2) the "happy ending"; and 3) the hero figure. Some questions will be asked considering each convention and its significance towards promoting *Birth*'s values and ideals. One must recognize the contextual realities of analyzing an old film from a modern perspective. In other words, watching a 102-year-old film from a solely 'progressive' modern perspective may impede one from gaining a more nuanced understanding of the film's content, racist overtones notwithstanding. In order to have a more focused critical discussion, each of the three conventions will be separated into sections.

The ideologically biased complexity of *Birth* fails to provide viewers with interpretive modes of identification. In other words, Griffith portrays his characters in a way that coerces viewers into identifying with Flora Cameron as the innocent victim of sexual abuse, and Gus as the violent perpetrator of sexually explicit behavior. As previously mentioned, Flora is portrayed as an angelic, na*ï*ve, and innocent young woman. When Gus is ferociously chasing Flora, the viewer is led to feel sorry and empathize with Flora's feelings of hysteria and despair. Gus' character is portrayed as an "immoral savage" and this is evident through the actor's (Walter Long) application of erratic body language. However, watching this movie from a modern standpoint effectively manipulates potential identification possibilities, since current views on racism are generally much more progressive compared to the dominant racist values from 1915. Additionally, viewing *Birth* in a modern context made me identify with Gus due to the fact that I felt sympathy for him. On this subject, Russell Merritt claims, "Yet in *The Birth of a Nation*, Flora's pursuer is curiously restrained; Gus keeps insisting he merely wants to talk with her" (Merritt 45). To reiterate, at *no* point in the movie is the viewer given an accurate account or explanation of Gus' motivations for chasing after Flora, yet it seems that Flora's death brings him much remorse. Gus' feelings of remorse and him requesting 'just to speak' with Flora shows his intentions were likely not malicious, and the suicide that ensued was an unfortunate tragedy. Moreover, the unjust nature of Gus' court trial, and him being sentenced to death, also influences viewer identification. Gus is convicted of murder and sentenced to death based on pure circumstantial evidence, with no witness testimony confirming his guilt or innocence. From a post-modern perspective, the ideological morality in the chase scene is highly ambiguous. The portrayal of South Carolina in a powerful light leads to scenes of black slaves terrorizing the Cameron family by destroying their home and ransacking the local community. The assault on the Cameron home directly influences who the viewer identifies with, since the black raiders were depicted in an extremely primitive and animalistic way, while the Cameron men were seen as heroic defenders of their property, women, and children. Relating to technical film composition, the Cameron house attack scene utilized a red screen. The red screen is an example of how groundbreaking film technology also contributes to creating a savage atmosphere, thus forcing the viewer to identify with the defending Cameron family.

The inclusion of a "happy ending" is a pivotal stylistic convention used in *Birth* because it demonstrates the resilience of humankind, principally through the ways in which people overcome adversity. Before delving into a more in-depth analysis, it is essential to recognize that many modern viewers perceive the film's ending as "charmless" and "unhappy." Modernity has ushered in a universal toleration of racial differences, which are certainly more accommodated and respected, seeing as how racism has become much less overt in the 21st century. A key element of modern racism is that it is often restricted to the private sphere (i.e. covert forms of racial bias including institutionalized racism), thus explaining why racial slurs have largely become shunned from casual conversation. For this reason, the ending of *Birth* is problematic because it can be perceived as being "happy" for the few with privilege, yet it clearly poses serious implications for marginalized racial minorities. In the movie, privileged white Southerners are depicted as the underdogs who successfully fought overwhelming odds after losing the American Civil War. The most frightening aspect of *Birth* is the celebrated presence of the KKK, which controversially signifies the ‘happy ending’**.** The KKK represents the catalyst facilitating white supremacy, since they promote exacting undeserved revenge upon the "savage" black people, whom they deem unable to exist in democratic society. The KKK crusade towards the end of *Birth* can be interpreted from a variety of different ideological perspectives. Modern spectators would presumably be disgusted with the racial hierarchy at the end of the film. On the opposing side, early viewers would likely feel satisfied when the KKK cavalry rampaged through the Southern Carolina village, thus signifying the KKK's return to former glory. To elaborate, *Birth* was initially called *The Clansman* in 1915, which illustrates the widespread societal acceptance of white supremacy in the early 20th century. By modern standards, *Birth* is problematic because of its celebratory interpretation of the racism plaguing early American history.

When films were first made available for popular viewing and global distribution, they were expensive and required financing. Consequently, the majority of the initial movie watching demographic consisted of white, privileged families. After the racial genocide occurring in World War Two, Griffith faced harsh criticisms from African-American viewers for the film's racist ending: “In communities where blacks could not get *Birth* banned outright, they made the censorship of Flora’s death scene a top priority” (Merritt 37)**.** The African-American community's resistance to *Birth's* release in theatres suggests the film's inherent bias in favour of whites. White people were pleased with *Birth’s* positive reaffirmation of dominant Caucasian values, which explains why white people comprised the majority of *Birth’s* viewer demographic. Upon the film's initial release, *Birth's* comfortably racist ending served as a critically important ideological reaffirmation of previous historically accepted notions of white superiority.

The last remaining film convention is not used to endorse any specific ideological viewpoint in *Birth.* Most movies have a narrative structure, revolving around a perceivable hero figure, but there is ambiguity surrounding the hero in *Birth.* The resulting ambiguity is due to the fact that character development is limited because *Birth* is a silent film. When attempting to clearly locate the hero figure in the film, it is essential to examine the presence of evil in order to decide who takes a heroic stance against injustice. Given the repeatedly mentioned fact that *Birth* espouses evil in the form of racism, it is acceptable to define any character that actively fights against racism as a heroic figure.

As Merritt argues, Griffith was sympathetic to the racist rhetoric of the Confederate States. This could be part of the reason why he portrayed the Northern Union in a negative light, since they supported the abolition of slavery. Considering the way that Griffith’s own racial biases influenced the film's narrative, *Birth's* hero figure would be Ben Cameron. Obviously, Ben's character is clearly racist, and is not perceived to be even remotely heroic by 21st century standards. Notwithstanding his racist perspective, Griffith intends for Ben Cameron to be viewed as the film's hero figure. Since racism towards African-Americans was accepted in 1915, it seems that in Griffith's distinctly ironic fictional world, those who fight against the societally acceptable racial hierarchy are villains. Modern standards dictate that the "true" hero figure in *Birth* must be a brave character and a progressive thinker. Racism is a counter-progressive mode of thought; it irrationally divides humanity as opposed to encouraging uniform human growth and development. Given this fact, a more accurate representation of the hero figure would then be Austin Stoneman. One could argue that Austin Stoneman is truly heroic since he displays humanitarian traits such as caring, compassion, and acceptance. Stephen Weinberger argues in support of Stoneman's heroism, stating that "He is also highly principled: he has a visceral hatred for the institution of slavery and also for those who have created and benefited from slavery" (Weinberger 3). Stoneman may appear like an evil character because of his stoic persona and stern facial expressions, but, the contrary is true: Austin's honorable nature - as demonstrated through his progressive advocacy against slavery - makes him worthier of the hero figure label than Ben Cameron, the KKK, or any of the racist Southern Confederates.

Griffith's epic silent film, *The Birth of a Nation,* should not be dismissed as a simplistic narrative. Arguably, *Birth* should *always* be recognized for the complex, structural narrative that it is. Griffith made use of innovative film techniques and conventions to convey a landmark narrative, highlighting the cultural significance of racist colonial relations. *Birth* is filled with paradoxically racist and historically discursive thematic elements. Even so, the film should be analyzed in-depth to better articulate the reasons *why* white supremacist rhetoric within Griffith's film resonated with audiences at the time and how the themes in *Birth* - while repugnant - are still relevant to contemporary world issues.

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Visionaries: Supernatural Revelation in Two Brechtian Plays

Shaun Feldman

In Europe during the 1920s, a new form of theatre, called 'Epic Theatre', was changing the way audiences viewed and interacted with the stage. The term, coined by German playwright Bertolt Brecht, referred to a modern theatre which rejected contemporary drama's ae sthetic of "invit(ing) its spectators to empathise with the emotional destiny of its central individual characters", instead presenting them as "socially constructed and malleable" as a reflection of the drastically changing sociopolitical nature of the times (Brooker 212). According to Brecht, "the continuity of the ego is a myth", which explained why he felt it was necessary to remove the naturalistic elements of theatre and replace them with a universe that was ever-changing, in keeping with a Germany that had seen the decentralization and subordination of the individual (212). Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* (Post-Brechtian) and Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (Pre-Brechtian) are two plays that, although succeeding and preceding Brecht's era respectively, contain elements of Epic Theatre that either inspired Brecht's work (in Marlowe's case) or were influenced by it (in Kushner's case). In *Angels in America*, we have supernaturally-inspired entities visiting various characters in different forms in their time of need and bestowing upon them visions which reveal hidden truths about who they are and their place in the world. In *Dr. Faustus*, the title character summons a demon from Hell that grants him supreme power over the elements, in exchange for his soul. What these plays have in common is that they both feature socially isolated characters who are struggling with religious quandaries about their own existence and who may not be ready to embrace the answers.

The nature of religion as a social construct is a prevalent theme in *Angels in America*, one that links many of the narrative's disparate threads together. Joe Pitt, the young lawyer, is representative of the devout Mormon, experiencing a crisis of faith as he fights with his demons over his homosexuality, which he perceives as a sin according to his religion. Although Joe's wife, Harper, is a Mormon like her husband, she appears to believe in a more metaphysically naturalistic form of God. This is revealed in her opening monologue to herself where she muses on "guardian angels, hands linked, making a spherical net, a blue-green nesting orb, a shell of safety for life itself" (Kushner 16). This is emblematic of her isolation, being pushed away by Joe who is constantly working but is secretly also gay. Her loneliness also explains why she is frequently left talking to herself (and the audience) and has a rather grim, almost apocalyptic outlook on the world where she imagines "beautiful systems dying, old fixed orders spiraling apart" (16).

Harper has visions of a man named 'Mr. Lies' who appears when she is at her most emotionally vulnerable, her guardian angel as it were. In one of his visits, she tells Mr. Lies that she secretly hopes that the new millennium will either bring new, good things to the world and change everything for the better (which includes the coming of Christ), or that everything will be destroyed in a series of biblically-scaled catastrophes (18). Later, Mr. Lies transports her to Antarctica, where she is surrounded by ice and snow, a haven for her which complements her loneliness and isolation. Although Mr. Lies tells her that "even hallucinations have laws," Harper is somehow able to conjure up images that were never meant to be a part of her imaginary landscape. This proves that she has control over her own destiny because she has the power to will what she desires into existence. As she states, "I want to make a new world here. So that I never have to go home again" (106). The audience is meant to question whether Harper has actually been transported to an alternate reality by some form of divine intervention or whether she is crazy (as she soon becomes aware that she is still in Brooklyn, when the Antarctica setting fades away at Mr. Lies' behest and the city re-emerges.)

Roy Cohn, the powerful Republican lawyer, represents the assimilated American Jew who values the American constitution and the freedoms held within, but harbours his homosexuality as a secret shame. When his doctor reveals to him that he has AIDS, Roy is defensive and stresses that someone in his position cannot have that disease and remain a powerful attorney, as it is a sign of weakness. Roy tells the doctor to diagnose him with liver cancer instead. Roy emphasizes his political influence by hinting that all he has to do is pick up the phone and he can get any member of the White House, all the way up to the president, to do him a favour. As Vanessa Campagna puts it, "Roy Cohn is a character who relentlessly manipulates the facts and works desperately to preserve his image to ensure that his history is written as he desires" (9).

In Act 3, Scene 5, Roy is visited by the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg, the woman convicted of treason against the United States and executed for selling secrets to Russia. Roy tells Joe of his lobbying for Ethel's execution as his personal pride and that he is completely unashamed and unremorseful of his actions, despite being vilified by the liberal media:

> I pleaded till I wept to put her in the chair. Me. I did that. I would have fucking pulled the switch if they had let me. Why? Because I fucking hate traitors. Because I fucking hate communists. Was it legal? Fuck legal. Am I a nice man? Fuck nice. They say terrible things about me in the *Nation*. Fuck the *Nation.* (Kushner 113)

Despite this tirade, Roy exposes his true motivation behind his push for Ethel's execution when he states that "she reminded us all of our little Jewish mamas" (113), which may explain why she comes to Roy when he is near death, as opposed to her husband, Julius. In a sense, Kushner is suggesting that Ethel represents Roy's repressed Jewish guilt, a mirror image of his own mother whom he has hostile feelings towards. As well, her presence as his own personal Angel of Death is appropriate given the subtext of Roy feeling emasculated by the limitations of his power and the advanced onset of AIDS ravaging his body. Despite his venomous rantings against Ethel, Roy shows his true emotions when, during his last scene on his death bed and seemingly disoriented, he imagines she is his mother and asks her to sing for him the way his mother used to, which prompts Ethel to sing a Yiddish folk song to him. Though Roy claims a few moments later that he knew who she was all along and was just goading her into singing for him, the poignancy of the scene remains intact, as Roy has finally given in to his humanity and symbolically submitted to his own weaknesses and limitations.

Prior Walter, another victim of AIDS, is visited in what appears initially to be a dream by the Angel representing America - actually four separate entities in one form (Lumin, Phosphour, Fluor, and Candle) - and is given a divine prophecy, instructing him to unearth a holy book from underneath the tiles of his kitchen floor and to “SUBMIT TO THE WILL OF HEAVEN!” (162). The Angel appears in the form of a “hermaphroditically equipped” female with “eight vaginas” and a “bouquet of phalli”(165) and tells Prior that God is in fact male, represented by the “Aleph Glyph” (166). The transgendered motif is an allusion to the nature of homosexuality, with gays having both male and female anima, and Prior having sex with the hermaphrodite angel (producing “plasma orgasmata”, the material of all creation [166]) as part of his revelatory experience is a way of confirming and validating his true nature - that homosexuality is not just a lifestyle choice but rather an undeniable biological and spiritual part of someone’s being. San Francisco, considered to be the gay capital of the world, is revealed as being the earthly equivalent of Heaven, suggesting that Prior’s prophetic vision is in fact a dream where his desires come true. In this case, that dream would be that in Heaven he will be allowed to be himself without fearing judgment from others. The allusion to the Great San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 echoing the “Heavenquakes” (170) certainly supports Prior’s conception of San Francisco as a heavenly paradise. It may also be Kushner’s way of hinting that God has abandoned not only humanity in general but gays specifically, as they are left to wander the earth as outcasts among their own kind, with AIDS as their punishment. The Angel also cryptically alludes to the fact that Prior has driven someone away, and Prior understands that he is talking about his boyfriend Louis, the main source of him feeling abandoned. This especially rings true when the Angel proclaims that “There is No Zion Save Where You Are!” (172), meaning that salvation lies within everyone’s reach and that, deep down, Prior feels guilty for his virus putting a wedge between himself and Louis.

If the characters of *Angels In America* are seeking freedom through salvation, then *Dr. Faustus’* title character seeks his freedom through damnation. The play was written at the height of the English Reformation, a major religious movement spearheaded first by Martin Luther and then by John Calvin, which challenged the authority of the Catholic Church and its theological notion of purgatory and free will (Poole 2). Although Luther introduced the concept of a faith-based Christianity (known today as Protestantism) which emphasized a person’s personal connection with God, as opposed to the Pope and the Catholic Church acting as the middle man, it was Calvin’s extreme ideology of ‘predestination’ that shook the foundations of Elizabethan theological practice by suggesting that mankind had no control over where he ended up in the afterlife (3). *Dr. Faustus*’ narrative hinges on this religious zeitgeist by offering the audience a morally conflicted character seemingly caught between two possible realities of his own existence: one that sees him serving God, the other that sees him serving the Devil.

As the play opens, we are introduced to the character of John Faustus via Greek chorus, which proceeds to espouse how he was once a respected doctor who used his knowledge of science and the arts to do good works, before becoming lured by his own egocentric exhortations towards the black arts, sullying his once good name and damning himself in the process.

> That shortly he was grac'd with doctor's name,
> Excelling all those sweet delight disputes
> In heavenly matters of theology;
> Till swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
> And, melting, Heavens conspir'd his overthrow. (Marlowe 6)

This passage compares Faustus to the character of Icarus from Greek mythology, who ambitiously tried to fly too close to the sun and had his waxen makeshift wings melted off, plummeting to his death. This moral fable is usually referenced in conjunction with any overly-ambitious figure who attempts to grab hold of more than is destined for him, and appropriately in this case: Faustus tries to procure for himself Godlike powers by bargaining with Lucifer's cohort, Mephistopheles, and trading his soul to become divine.

Faustus invokes the name of Lucifer through incantations which he reads from a book of black arts, summoning the devil Mephistopheles in the process. Mephistopheles tells Faustus that he can attain the power he desires in exchange for his soul, which will belong to Lucifer. Throughout the play, Faustus is challenged by the presence of two angels, good and evil, representing his conflicted conscience; on one hand, the good angel encourages Faustus to keep his soul with God, urging him to "lay that damned book aside and gaze not upon it lest it tempt thy soul" and to "read the scriptures" (12), reminding him of the importance of "contrition, prayer (and) repentance" (39), while the evil angel slyly coaxes him towards the darkness, telling him to "be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky / lord and commander of these elements"(12) and that only "honour and wealth" are of any significance (39). Shortly after regretting signing his name in blood to the unholy contract, both angels continue to argue over the reality of salvation, as the good angel tries to convince Faustus that it is not too late to repent and be saved, while, naturally, the evil angel attempts to dash his hopes by telling him that he is already damned and should accept his place as Lucifer's servant. According to Kristen Poole, these angels "are a holdover from the allegorical medieval genre known as the morality play," and represent "the play's complicated relationship between old and new" in respect to Christian doctrine (4). Although Faustus is primarily a modern Renaissance man, versed in philosophy, medicine, law, and astronomy, his conscience is still fundamentally primitive, relying on simplified archetypes of 'good and evil' to make his decisions.

Faustus is obsessed with the need to control the universe, arising from his insecurity in regards to his limitations as a man. By allying himself with Lucifer, he hopes to gain supernatural powers to break free of those limitations, even if that means enslaving himself in the next life as a servant in Hell. In one of his earlier monologues, he mentions all the nations he desires to hold sway over, not just as a ruler but as an absolute tyrant, forcing the world to bend to his will. The source of Faustus' deviation from his Christian doctrine to indulge in the black arts is clarified when, contemplating turning back to the righteous path, he concludes that there would be no purpose because he has already been damned since "God loves (him) not" and that the only god he serves "is (his) own appetite" (Marlowe 39) . This suggests that Faustus feels abandoned by not only God but by what

God symbolizes - in this case, the Catholic Church. Faustus' rejection of Christian doctrine to indulge his own selfishness is in fact a rejection of the control that the Church (and society) has over his life. However, Marlowe reveals that it is not only Man who feels abandoned by God on Earth: Mephistopheles informs Faustus that the reason Lucifer tempts humans with forbidden power is to "enlarge his kingdom" with their souls, because "*Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris*", which is Latin for "misery loves company" (41). In essence, Faustus and Lucifer were meant for each other, as they are both burdened with the sin of rejecting God.

Marlowe exposes Faustus' disdain for Catholicism in Scene 7, in which Mephistopheles transports him to the Pope's chamber in Rome as an invisible spectre. While there, Faustus seizes the opportunity, cursing, humiliating, and terrorizing the Pope and his friars, by stealing his food and wine and mocking St. Peter ("Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray, / Because it is Saint Peter's holiday"), before physically assaulting them and disappearing. This scene shows that Faustus' primary source of discontentment is the oppressiveness of the Church as opposed to God himself, as Marlowe depicts the Pope and his followers as quite foolish while God is still held with a degree of reverence throughout the play. Faustus' rather malevolent attitude towards his oppressors comes into play in a later scene as well, during his encounter with the Emperor, who requests that he resurrect the body of his heroic ancestor, Alexander the Great, whom he admires, along with Alexander's paramour. Although he admits that this feat would be impossible, as their bodies would have been dust by that time, Faustus offers to summon spirits that would take the exact form of their original bodies, down to the very last detail. The Emperor's knight, however, remains unimpressed, referring to Faustus as a common conjurer and is sceptical of his abilities, belittling him in front of the Emperor. As a spiteful gesture, after granting the Emperor's request, Faustus has Mephistopheles attach horns to the knight's head, in reference to his comment of the likeliness of the goddess Diana turning him into a stag (89).

Towards the play's end, Faustus is visited by an old man, who warns him of the dire consequences of his dalliances in the dark arts and urges him to repent and save his soul from damnation. He tells Faustus to "Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears, / Tears falling from repentant heaviness…" and that only the blood of "thy Saviour sweet" can wash away his guilt (110). The blood imagery serves to reinforce how deep his contract with Lucifer is, as it was also forged in his own blood and, therefore, only through further bloodshed can he be purified and absolved. The old man may represent, if not an angelic vision, then a vision of Faustus' prospective future if he embraces God and retains his innocence; yet, after being visited by Mephistopheles and accused of being a traitor, Faustus quickly recants and once again draws his blood to freshly 'reseal' the contract. Parallel to the characters in Kushner's play, Faustus is aware that his time on Earth is limited, as Lucifer has granted him just twenty-four years till his soul is claimed. However, unlike Prior and Harper, who simply wish for lives free of undue complication and conflict, Faustus creates his own conundrum by asking for more than he rightfully deserves or even needs. Faustus refuses to take responsibility for his own dilemma, though, choosing to blame the world around him instead, including Aristotle, the devils, the stars, and his own parents at various intervals (Poole 5).

In true Brechtian form, the characters in these two plays experience forms of supernatural revelation that, although not grounded in realistic or 'traditional' elements of theatre, open up new possibilities that shape their view of the world and offer them a new set of moral and ethical choices. It is these kinds of revelations that make traditional theatre transcend its naturalistic limitations and become truly ‘Epic’. While the characters in *Angels In America* are, for the most part, victims of external forces beyond their control, Faustus is a victim of his own avarice and seals his fate by not keeping his ambitions in check. Though not inherently an evil man, it is difficult for the reader to feel much empathy towards someone who, despite his vast knowledge, flagrantly ignores the obvious warning signs and chooses a path that yields little merit for himself and society in general. It is fitting, then, that most of the characters in Kushner’s play are rewarded for their efforts to overcome their situation with a reasonable compromise for the ideal life they had imagined, while Faustus is dragged off to Hell, never to find peace again.

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