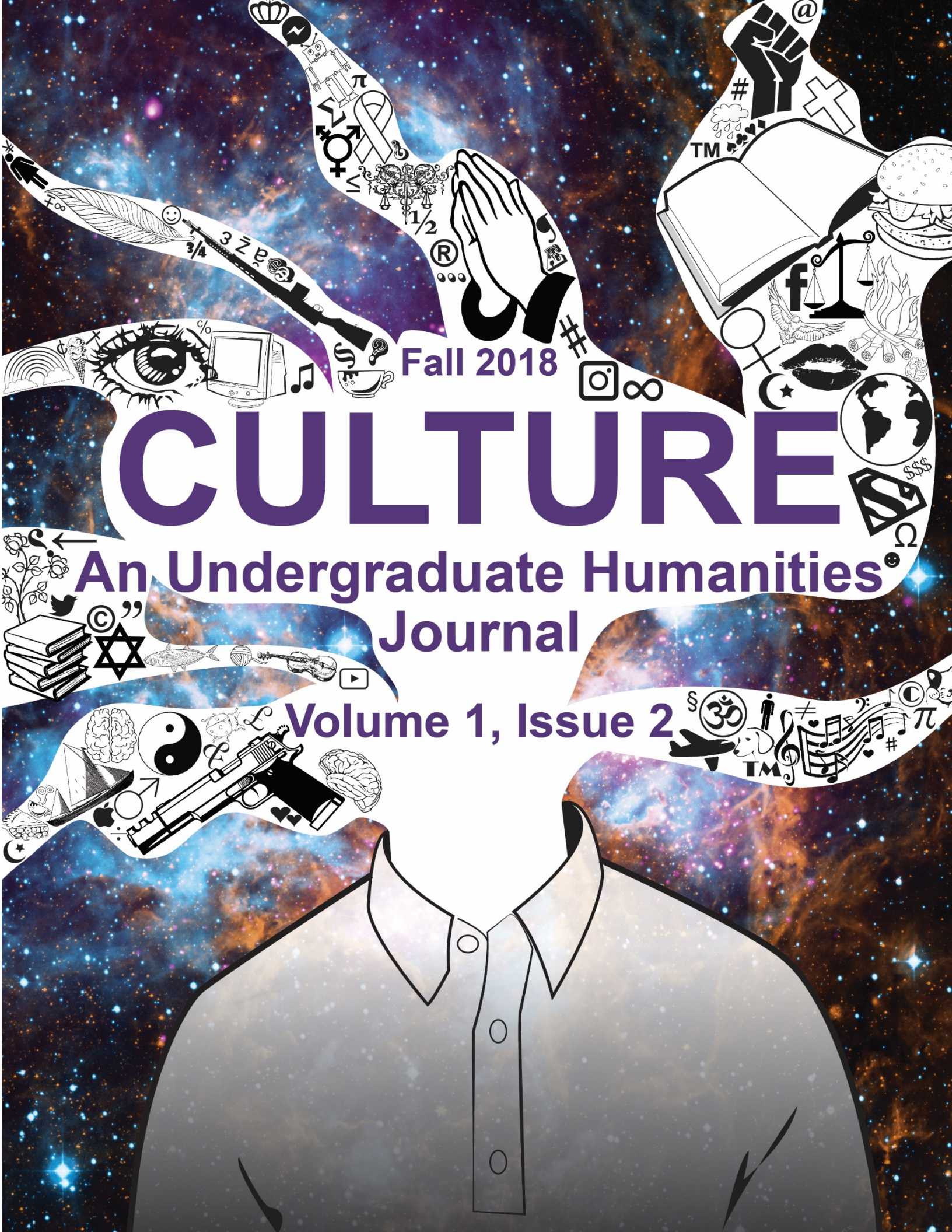

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Introduction

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Ongoing debates about the value of a humanities education increasingly center changing student demographics and growing questions about the market value utility of the Liberal Arts (Bowen 2018; Sandy 2013; Smith 2016). In short, these debates suggest a need to cultivate a sense of academic excellence that values the diversity of the futures toward which the humanities drive. The future of the humanities, according to Smith (2016), lies in contesting the nostalgia of "the good old times" that positioned humanities programs as privileged, exclusive spaces of higher education toward an encouragement of a more diverse range of ideas, perspectives and knowledges that can speak to the actual experiences of students. Without dismissing the value of a classical education in the humanities, Smith calls for a kind of humanities education that can be truly responsive to the world in which we live.

This second issue of *Culture* demonstrates that these recent arguments about the need for "new humanities" research and education that can provide the basis for public-engaged scholarship (Sandy 2013) do not so much represent the end of the humanities, as much as its rebirth. This volume of trenchant and timely essays, entirely written, compiled and edited by students at York University and the University of Toronto, offer a powerful response to new ideas and perspectives emerging from the interdisciplinary humanities in response precisely to the global conditions of the contemporary moment in which students live. These essays, indeed, confirm that the humanities remain a critical field of knowledge production, providing the basis for a wide historical understanding of the world and the development of a thoughtful citizenry that is capable of critical analysis and self-reflection.

The essays cover an impressive and remarkable range of theoretical ideas from questions related to Muslim women, queer identities, Indigenous rights, partner violence, racial stereotypes and anti-Black racism, to re/readings of Nietzsche and surrealism. They position an emerging group of university students, in many ways, as the conscience of their societies—holding those societies accountable to the production of the kinds of futures they desire. That these students were drawn from different campuses in Toronto, Canada's most diverse city, and were involved in collaboration and the critical sharing of ideas is also important. This volume, in short, represents the very best of the humanities as a lens through which to reflect on the human community and condition, to engage in transformative knowledge sharing, and to articulate and defend new ideas. These essays suggest that the future of the humanities is in very good hands, indeed.

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Violence & Bodies

Black Men '*Do* Rape' and White Men Don't: A Myth of Colonialism that Demonizes Black Masculinity and Disguises White Male Violence

Melissa Ayisi

In the novel *Disgrace*, J. M. Coetzee demonstrates how colonialism shapes the representation of gender and racializes masculinity. *Disgrace* primarily centers on David Lurie, a university professor in Cape Town, South Africa. The novel also describes the ways in which two women, Melanie and Lucy, are taken advantage of by men; Melanie, David's student, files a complaint against him for harassment and Lucy, David's daughter, is raped by three men in her home. This paper analyzes how colonialism molds the protagonist David's view of himself and the men who rape his daughter. I will argue that his views are the result of a colonial consciousness that has created a binary in which blackness is associated with savagery and whiteness with sainthood. Additionally, I argue that the victimization of Lucy, who is white, parallels David's victimization of his student Melanie. While both women are victims of rape, Melanie's rape is seemingly shrouded in ambiguity – perhaps not seen as rape at all – while Lucy's is definitively represented as rape, without any of the doubt that attends Melanie's assault. In other words, colonialism has constituted white female victimization as more legitimate than Black female victimization, which in turn places more value on white female bodies. I place this analysis in conversation with Dionne Brand's essay "Bread out of Stone," which considers how narratives of African primitiveness and white superiority penetrate contemporary society. Brand's work addresses the ways in which violence against Black bodies is perceived as subtle. Both Coetzee and Brand thus reflect on a colonial construction of Black masculinity that scapegoats the Black male body for the crimes of white men. Ultimately, white, privileged men, both during colonialism and today, have demarcated between white and Black bodies to push a racist and white supremacist agenda that upholds their power, justifies their domination over other groups, and disguises their violence as benign and justifiable.

The beginning of *Disgrace* focuses on David's relationships with two women, Soraya, a sex worker, and Melanie, a student in one of David's classes. His relationship with Soraya is short-lived and

his relationship with Melanie causes him to be fired from his job at the university after she files a complaint against him for harassment. Longing for a way to escape, he moves in with his daughter Lucy who lives on a small farm. While living with his daughter, he spends his time helping Bev, who runs the animal clinic, euthanize animals. What suddenly changes both of their lives is when three men intrude into their home, torture David, and lock him in the restroom ,while they rape Lucy. David and Lucy's relationship from then on is filled with tension as Lucy tries to continue her life with the trauma. Thereafter, David returns to Cape Town where he apologizes to Melanie's family. When he returns to Lucy's home, he learns that she is pregnant and will keep the baby. The novel concludes with David choosing to accept his daughter's choice and adapt to his new lifestyle.

The binary of white people as saints and Africans as savages influences David's view of Black and white masculinities, and, because of this colonial racialization of masculinity, David cannot apprehend himself as a violent perpetrator in the same way that he views the African men who rape Lucy. Instead, he depicts himself as an "Aunt Sally" (Coetzee, 95), a white woman at the hands of African men. This narrative of the victimized, helpless, white woman is typical colonial propaganda of black peril. Additionally, it is no coincidence that David describes himself as a "missionary" (95), an association with sainthood that contrasts with the colonial stereotypes of African people he employs to describe the men who rape Lucy. He refers to them as "savages" and evokes imagery of diabolical African witches "plunging" innocent missionaries "into their boiling cauldron" (95). His discussion of the "darkest Africa" (95) relies on racist, colonial language that refers both to African skin and to the continent's supposed immorality. Indeed, this very language was used to justify European conquest, for the Europeans believed it was their duty to (en)lighten such 'dark' people. For David, the missionary project was ultimately a failure: "Mission work: what has it left behind, that huge enterprise of upliftment? Nothing that he can see" (95). That is, missionary work failed to elevate African people from their moral 'darkness.' But it is not David himself who verbalizes these prejudices, but rather it is the third-person narration that articulates his thoughts as statements of fact. When Coetzee writes that "Italian and French will not save him here in darkest Africa" (95), there is no qualifying phrase, "David thinks", or "David believes", to distance narrator from protagonist. Both, narrator and protagonist, align in the novel's articulation of the prejudices embedded in the colonial consciousness.

Lucy's rape confirms David's beliefs about African men and he projects these colonial stereotypes onto the young man who impregnates his daughter, referring to him as "the man whose name is darkness" (168). David believes these men to be regular predators of innocent women, a "gang of three […] roaming the area, attacking women" (199), and he hyper-sexualizes them with his reference to their "testicles, sacs bulging with seed" (199). David also argues that rape is ubiquitous in Africa, that "[i]t happens every day, every hour, every minute […], in every quarter of the country" (98), again aligning blackness, and Black masculinity specifically, with sexual violence. In fact, Lucy proves to have her own prejudices, too. She tells David that "the rest" – that is, the rape – "was … expected" (156), and she says moments later, "I think they *do* rape" (158; emphasis in original). As for the

young boy who raped her, she surmises that "[h]e was there to learn" (159). Lucy, like David, sees rape as something that African men teach each other, as a practice intrinsic to African culture. More importantly, David emphasizes these distinctions between himself and African men to disguise his own sexual appetites and violence. Like the colonizers who dominated Africa, he depends on such racial distinctions to hide his history. By describing African men as rapists, savages, and witches, David concentrates attention on an act of sexual violence by Black men while dismissing the sexual violence he committed at the beginning of the novel. His employment of colonial stereotypes, then, seeks to convince readers that his sexual act is not rape, for only Black men rape, and white men do not. In so doing, he upholds the power of his colonial privilege and absolves his violation of Melanie.

In "Bread out of Stone," Dionne Brand argues that the narrative of white sainthood and black savagery transcends colonial times into the present day. She asserts that "the finest most skillful racism yet developed […] [is] the writing of history" (Brand, 52), and this account of history parallels the way the narrator of *Disgrace* describes David as a saint and the African men as savages. The novel's narration aligns with the colonial propaganda Brand observed in an exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM): "there is a display of the colonist's view of the plunder of Africa. 'Superior' Europeans and 'primitive' Africans abound, missionaries and marauders bring 'civilization' 'into the heart of Africans'" (52). By having this display, the ROM supports the colonizers who exploited African people. In the same way that Europe identified itself as superior to Africa, David depicts himself as superior to the men who rape his daughter. Ironically, Brand recounts, men and women were "beaten, strip-searched, and arrested" for protesting the exhibit (52), an act of violent suppression that functions to silence the voices of those who oppose white colonial power. Brand reveals the justification of white violence by emphasizing the continuity between a museum exhibit of violent colonial history and the brutality of Toronto police just outside its walls. In both instances, the institutional power of white men is protected, and a white supremacist agenda is advanced.

Although David tries to distance himself from the violence he commits, the victimization of Lucy parallels David's victimization of Melanie. The sexual violation of each woman begins with an intrusion into her personal space: first, her home, and then her body. When Lucy lets one of the men into her house, "the second man pushes past him and enters the house too" (Coetzee, 93). The intrusion of these men symbolizes the power that men have over space, publicly, certainly, but privately too, here in an attempt to reassert authority within the household. Also, their intrusion into Lucy's home foreshadows their subsequent invasion of her body. Likewise, David penetrates first Melanie's home and then her body, and Coetzee's prose signals a sense of invasion: "He has given her no warning; she is too surprised to resist the intruder who thrusts himself upon her" (24). In both instances, sexual violence functions as a tool with which men exert dominance over women. Lucy's rape is not a symbol of male domination simply because the men are physically on top of her, and thus superior, but because the act is intended to "show her what a woman [is] for" (115). After the rape, Lucy, unmarried and childless, is advised to marry Petrus for protection. The men who rape her thus force her into

the role of mother and wife. David likewise dominates Melanie. Even as she resists, "nothing will stop him. He carries her to the bedroom" (25). Like the men who rape Lucy, David forces Melanie into a position of inferiority. Also, both women are affected by their victimization in similar ways. When the men finish indulging their pleasures, Lucy and Melanie respond by cleansing their bodies of the violent act. When we next see Lucy, "[s]he is wearing a bathrobe, her feet are bare, her hair wet" (97). Similarly, when David leaves Melanie's house, he envisions her "trying to cleanse herself of it, of him. He sees her running a bath, stepping into the water" (25). Both women, with their personal spaces invaded, their bodies subjected to the wills of men, are deeply affected by the acts of violence visited upon their bodies. Where they differ, however, is in the fact that although all these men are guilty of a crime, David's rape of Melanie is not legitimately conceived of as rape.

Lucy's rape is not omnisciently narrated in the novel since everything is seen through David's perspective. When David is locked away during Lucy's victimization, so are the readers. However, the narrator's alignment with David nonetheless influences the way in which both rapes are perceived. Much later in the novel, the narrator reimagines Lucy's victimization: "Lucy was frightened, frightened near to death. […] *This is not happening*, she said to herself as the men forced her down; *it is just a dream, a nightmare*. While the men […] did all they could do to hurt her" (160; emphasis in original). This impassioned narration shocks and disturbs, emphasizes Lucy's helplessness in contrast to her rapists' sadism, and encourages readers to despise these men even more. There is no doubt as to who the victim is and who the perpetrator is.

Identifying victim and perpetrator in Melanie's case, however, is apparently difficult because the narrator misleads the reader. When David forces himself on Melanie, the reader is told that "[s]he does not resist. All she does is avert herself; avert her lips, avert her eyes. She lets him lay her out on the bed and undress her: she even helps him" (25). The narrator emphasizes the complicity of Melanie's body – she "lets" him, "helps" him, "does not resist" him – but never is Melanie's consent verbalized. On the contrary, Melanie gives verbal dissent when she tells David, "No, not now!" [25].) The narration suggests that Melanie gives silent physical consent simply by not resisting and, perhaps, by not looking at her aggressor as Lucy similarly articulates: "I had never set eyes on them" (156). We are told, ultimately, that what occurred between David and Melanie was "[n]ot rape, not quite that" (25), a colonially influenced assessment that disguises David's sexual violence and frames his rape of Melanie as a consensual act.

Brand comments on the many ways in which white violence is disguised and made subtle in a Canadian context, arguing that "[h]ere, the police carry out this country's legacy of racial violence in two killings of Black men and one shooting of a young Black woman in this city that calls its racism subtle, and the air stinks with the sanguine pronouncements of Canadian civility: "'Oh no, we're not like the United States,' be grateful for the not-as-bad-racism-here" (Brand 45). Brand refers to how colonialism has made the murders of Black men and women justifiable when the perpetrators are white because of the institution of "white law and white law enforcers" (45). Colonialism has created a double standard in which white violence is not seen as violence to the degree that black violence is. David takes advantage of

this double standard and projects it onto his own situation, using his whiteness to delegitimize the sexual violence he inflicted upon Melanie. In line with Brand's argument, then, white supremacy upholds white power and allows white men to renounce responsibility for their violence.

Melanie's victimization is further delegitimized because of the value attending white female bodies in contrast to Black female bodies. This indication of colonialism, which has created racial differences among Black and white bodies, enables Lucy's rape to be taken more seriously than Melanie's. David frets about Lucy's health after the attack – "There's the risk of pregnancy, […] venereal infection [,] […] HIV. Shouldn't she see a gynaecologist as well?" (106) – and he demands acknowledgment from her rapists: "*Yes, it was a violation*, he would like to hear Petrus say" (119; emphasis in original). But, he does not afford Melanie the same care or consideration. Instead, when he is investigated by the university for sexual misconduct, he argues that he is merely a "servant of Eros" (52), romanticizing his transgression and exonerating himself of wrongdoing.

Perhaps race has little to do with the novel's ambiguous treatment of Melanie's rape, for we are never explicitly told whether she is black or white, but Melanie nonetheless remains racialized in the novel. David refers to her as dark on two occasions – "Meláni: the dark one" (18, 164) – and her name resembles the word "melanin." In this way, David's sexual violation of Melanie's body is metaphorically an attack on 'dark' people; that is, on Black people. While Melanie's racial identity is ambiguous, David's violation of her body complicates his assumption that rape is the province of Black men alone. He condemns Lucy's rapists for "indulging their violent pleasures" (199), but he does the same. He convinces himself – and, via the novel's narration, perhaps convinces readers, too – that there exists some distinction between his behaviour and theirs and demonstrates the way in which the violence of white men is decriminalized. In doing this, David advances a white supremacist agenda that demonizes and subjugates Black bodies in the service of upholding his own power and white privilege.

It is noteworthy that David seems to especially desire non-white women. David's first relationship in the novel is with Soraya, a sex worker described as "[e]xotic" (7) and with a "honey-brown body" (1). He then briefly sees a secretary from his university – whose name, Dawn, aligns her with light – before he breaks it off and "avoids her" (9), in favour of tracking down Soraya's home address and phone number. Notwithstanding this apparent preference for "dark," "exotic" women (and his rejection of women symbolically associated with lightness), his physical pursuit of Soraya contradicts the notion that Black men alone are predators of women. Here, Coetzee gives us the reverse: it is the white man, David, who pursues a "dark" woman. Indeed, David believes that he is entitled to women's bodies when he tells Melanie that "a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. […] She has a duty to share it" (16). Here, then, is the colonially inherited double standard of masculinity: David demonizes Black men for their domination of white women, but he believes himself entitled to the bodies of "dark" women.

It is entirely possible that Melanie is, in fact, white, and while this would do nothing to mitigate the reality that she was raped by David, it would certainly speak to the underrepresentation of Black women in Coetzee's novel. By focusing exclusively

on the rape of white women, the text would appear to support the belief that only white women are victims of rape in Africa, an absenting of Black women from patriarchal sexual violence that erases their victimization and negates their identities. Brand, too, comments on the underrepresentation of Black women across the media: "I'm working on a film […] about women in my community. I've dreamt this film […] as a face, a woman's face, old and a little tired, deep brown and black, […] a woman's face that will fade if I do not dream it, write it, put it in a film" (Brand 47–48). She is compelled to write about "things never talked about in public: Black womanhood" (48). Brand thus points to the urgent need to write Black women's stories, which are not being told, to remedy the kind of erasure that occurs in *Disgrace* if we choose not to read Melanie as black.

Taken together, Coetzee and Brand demonstrate the way in which colonialism has constructed ideologies about white and Black masculinities. By relying on colonially informed racial distinctions between white and Black men, David is afforded a blanket of whiteness that is used as a safeguard against his own culpability while criminalizing the violence of the Black men who rape Lucy. Thus, the novel's narrator, working with David, recasts Melanie's rape not as an aggression, but a consensual sex act, spurred on by erotic passion rather than violence. Both Coetzee and Brand tap into a colonial myth that has transcended into the present day: that rape, brutality, and violence are not acts that white men commit but are what Black men commit alone. It is a myth that, while occasionally challenged, steadfastly persists in its demonization of blackness, its masking of white violence, and its preservation of white supremacy.

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Fifty Shades of Abuse: An Analysis of Intimate Partner Violence in the Media

Madeline Myshrall

Intimate partner violence (IPV) accounts for nearly one quarter of violent crimes reported in Canada (Burczycka and Conroy). In 2015, 92,000 people reported intimate partner violence to the police (Burczycka and Conroy, 47). Considering data from the World Health Organization estimates that only 26 percent of victims report IPV (Krug et al,. 96), the number of women affected is likely higher than the number reported. It has been suggested that women may choose not to report IPV because they believe their abuse is not *that* serious. Research suggests that viewing violent media can influence the attitudes of an individual. *Fifty Shades of Grey* is the first novel of an incredibly successful trilogy written by E. L. James. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how *Fifty Shades of Grey* represents the romanticism of abuse which then influences the way intimate partner violence is conceptualized in North America. This will be accomplished by: first, providing an overview of intimate partner violence and BDSM, second, detailing how *Fifty Shades of Grey* is an abuse narrative, third, examining why the trilogy has become so successful, and finally, providing suggestions for change.

There are several different frameworks and schools of thought regarding intimate partner violence. For this paper, I will be utilizing the ecological framework proposed by Heise. According to Heise, the ecological framework features four different levels to categorize factors associated with IPV. These categories include personal history factors, microsystem factors, exosystem factors, and macrosystem factors. This framework allows for IPV to be understood as a systemic problem that is closely linked to the larger community and society as a whole (Johnson and Dawson, 15). Personal factors can include witnessing violence as a child and having an absent father while one is growing up. Microsystem factors involve the relationships fostered in the family. This includes attitudes that favour male dominance, alcohol abuse, and verbal conflict present in the family unit. Exosystem factors refer to community level structures and can include economic status, unemployment, and isolation of women and their families. Finally, macrosystem factors are largely represented in society and with cultural practice. Examples of macrosystem factors include male entitlement, inflexible gender roles, and the overall acceptance of IPV (Johnson and Dawson 15). Thus, this ecological framework allows scholars to

engage with IPV on many different levels as it effectively acknowledges that this is a systemic problem that cannot be attributed to only one cause.

Intimate Partner Violence in North America

According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO), intimate partner violence is defined as any behaviour that occurs within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm (Krug et al., 89). Physical harm can include hitting, slapping, and beating. Psychological harm may involve humiliation, intimidation, and scare tactics. Sexual harm includes sexual coercion and forced intercourse. In addition, the WHO highlights the use of control tactics such as social isolation (Krug et al., 89). IPV can consist of only one type of harm or all three types. While both men and women can be the target of IPV, statistics demonstrate that women are far more likely to be victimized, and as a result IPV is not gender neutral. In Canada, female victims of IPV are three times more likely to be physically harmed, five times more likely to fear they will be killed, and five times more likely to receive medical attention than males (Krug et al., 94). According to the Ontario Ministry of the Status of Women, 89 percent of spousal homicide victims are female, while 88 percent of perpetrators are male. In cases where the female is considered the perpetrator the act of violence is most often executed out of self-defense (Ministry of the Status of Women). According to a 2013 Statistics Canada report, 45 percent of violent crimes committed against women are conducted by their intimate partners. This is significantly higher than the 12 percent of violent acts committed against males by female partners (Sinha, 14). Furthermore, in 2015, approximately 72,000 women (79 percent) reported incidences of IPV to the police in Canada (Burczycka and Conroy, 47). Of the reported incidents, 71 percent of women reported physical assault (Burczycka and Conroy, 47). While I do not wish to discredit the experience of male victims, the aforementioned statistics demonstrate that IPV is clearly a problem most often experienced by women. Thus, male violence against women will be the focus of this research.

According to Johnson and Dawson, there are four types of IPV against women. The first is coercive controlling violence, which involves elements of control and power in addition to physical violence. This type of violence is committed primarily by males. The second type is situational couple violence, which refers to violence resulting from arguments and everyday interactions. Jealousy is often a key emotion involved in situational couple violence and it has been argued that this is the most common type of IPV. Violent resistance refers to acts of violence committed out of self-defense, and separation-instigated violence is a type of IPV that begins after the relationship has ended. Together each of these four categories help shape the understanding of IPV as multi-leveled with several contributing factors (Johnson and Dawson 70-1).

Based on this understanding of IPV, numerous correlates and risk factors have been observed. Johnson and Dawson identify correlates at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. By examining the correlates of IPV, one is able to better understand what groups of women are most at risk. This directly influences the type of support that must be made available to assist women. Individual correlates include age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, childhood exposures to violence, and alcohol usage. These factors are associated

with both victimization and perpetration of IPV. For example, indigenous women are more likely to be victims of IPV than non-indigenous women. Additionally, witnessing or experiencing abuse has been associated with an increased risk for IPV (Johnson and Dawson 82). Age has also been identified as a strong correlate. Research by Stöckl, March, Pallitto, and Garcia-Moreno found that young adults are at the highest risk of intimate partner violence. As one ages, the risk for IPV decreases (Stöckl et al., 1). The highest risk group is from ages 25-34, followed closely by the 15-24 age group. Thus, people who are 34 and under are most likely to be in a violent relationship (Sinha). Additionally, research found that individuals under the age of 25 are at the highest risk for homicide at the hands of their partners. Stöckl et al., suggest that one reason younger individuals are more susceptible is that they are at a vulnerable and uncertain place in their lives. The stress of moving out of the family home, pursuing an education, finding a job, and the pressure to "settle down" influence the dynamics of intimate relationships. These stressors can increase vulnerability to IPV (Stöckl et al. 10).

At the relationship level, the type of relationship between the victim and perpetrator has been strongly correlated with the risk for violence. Individuals in common-law relationships are more likely to experience IPV than individuals who are married (Johnson and Dawson, 84). At a community level, women living in areas of low socio-economic status with limited resources (such as women's shelters) are at the highest risk. On a societal level, attitudes towards violence against women as well as legislature and public policy influence how IPV is conceptualized and punished. In fact, some scholars have argued that there is enough evidence linking beliefs about gender roles and violence against women to infer a causal relationship (Johnson and Dawson, 76). This means that individuals who idealize traditional gender roles and view violence as acceptable are more likely to perpetrate IPV. The societal level also includes cultural beliefs such as men's dominant role in the family and women's inferiority. Regardless of the motivation and factors that influence the abuse, IPV can have devastating effects on women.

Studies have found that being a victim of family violence, either as a child or an adult, is a risk factor in developing several health conditions (Krug et al., 101). Some of these conditions include fibromyalgia, sexually transmitted infections, pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic pain syndromes, irritable bowel syndrome, depression and anxiety, phobias and panic disorder, AIDS, and infertility (Krug et al., 101). According to a meta-analysis by Dillon et al., depression is one of the most reported effects of IPV (4). In addition, it has been reported that a woman's risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder increases three-fold when she experiences abuse (Dillon et al., 4). Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that violence may also influence the number of children a woman has. Oftentimes when sexual activity is coerced, the woman may be prevented from accessing birth control by her partner. This increases her risk of unwanted pregnancy, forced/unsafe abortion, and the chance of contracting a sexually transmitted infection (Krug et al., 101). According to the WHO, the impact of abuse on a woman's health appears to be cumulative, with longer and more frequent episodes of abuse indicating worse health outcomes (Krug et al., 101). The influence that abuse has on a woman's health can also persist long after the abuse

has stopped, creating a lasting negative impact on her life (Krug et al. 101). Thus, it is clear that intimate partner violence is a gendered issue with deleterious consequences primarily affecting women.

Bondage & Discipline, Dominance & Submission, Sadism & Masochism (BDSM)

To understand the relationship portrayed in *Fifty Shades of Grey,* it is imperative to understand how an appropriate and healthy BDSM relationship should operate. I do not wish to replicate the sex negative brand of feminism within this section, nor do I intend to condemn those who engage in consensual BDSM (Downing, 92). Rather, my aim is to briefly explain the typical manner in which a healthy BDSM relationship exists. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that even though a BDSM relationship places substantial focus on consent, this does not mean it is immune to abuse and psychological trauma.

BDSM encompasses a very wide range of sexual practices. These practices can range from light spanking and bondage to extreme restraints and murder fantasy. While BDSM practices are sexually arousing for participants, not every encounter ends in a form of sex. Many people argue that BDSM is inherently safe and consensual due to the extensive planning that goes into a "scene."[1] This planning includes a frank discussion of what each person is interested in doing, as well as what their hard and soft limits are (Jozifkova, 391). Partners will also decide on a safe word ahead of time (Tripodi, 93). If either partner uses the safe word during play, the agreement is that the play will be stopped immediately. Many people use the safe word "yellow" to indicate they are becoming uncomfortable with the play, and "red" to indicate that they need to stop immediately. Safe words can also be used to communicate during a scene, such as asking "Are we still green?" allows for one partner to check on the other to ensure everything is still mutually enjoyable and consensual (Tripodi, 93). By establishing clear limits and the desired outcome of the play for both people, BDSM maintains a safe atmosphere for people to explore their sexuality. In fact, the phrase "Safe, Sane and Consensual" is frequently referenced in BDSM blogs and literature to highlight how important these three components are (Barker). Consent is often regarded as the mediator between violence and eroticism in the context of BDSM (Newmahr, 129).

Critics of BDSM often ascertain that anyone who finds intense sensation[2] pleasurable must be damaged or mentally ill (Richters et al., 1661). This is closely related to the assumption that people who engage in sadomasochistic sex are not capable of love (Jozifkova, 392). Richters et al. conducted a phone survey in Australia with a very large sample (n= 19,307) and did not find a statistically significant correlation between practicing BDSM and having a prior history of sexual abuse or sexual difficulty (1662-1665). Additionally, the study found that individuals engaging in BDSM were not more likely to experience psychological distress or sexual coercion (Richters et al., 1662-1665). The study concluded that BDSM is simply a sexual preference. This conclusion is also consistent with the

[1] Individuals use the word "scene" to refer to incidences in which BDSM based play occurs.

[2] Many people reject the use of the word pain, instead preferring to use the term "intense sensation" to avoid the negative connotation of pain while also emphasizing that BDSM is not meant to be painful.

findings of Jozifkova. According to Jozifkova, there are seven key elements—that will be discussed in greater detail in the abuse section of this paper—that determine if a BDSM relationship is considered healthy. These elements include:

1) An absence of fear from the partner
2) A lack of feeling of shame or worthlessness
3) Mutual respect
4) The "scene" is distinguished from real life and no physical or psychological violence occurs during the play
5) There is no failure/anger and compensation cycle[3]
6) No isolation from family or friends occurs, the individual has access to their own finances and no aggression is present
7) There is only a mild disparity in the status of each individual in the social hierarchy (Jozifkova, 392).

Together, if all seven of these factors are satisfied, one can reasonably conclude that the relationship is healthy and mutually beneficial. Additionally, Jozifkova argues that the following five factors differentiate whether BDSM becomes violent:

1) How voluntary the act is
2) How well the partners communicate
3) If a safe word is used properly
4) If safe sex is practiced
5) If both partners have access to education about BDSM practices (392).

Together the aforementioned authors demonstrate the misconceptions surrounding sex practices that fall outside of ordinary heterosexual intercourse and provide useful guidelines for evaluating the safety of these relationships.

Overview of *Fifty Shades of Grey*

Fifty Shades of Grey is the first novel in a trilogy written by E. L. James. It was first published in Australia in 2011 and has since been purchased by Vintage Publications. The series has been so successful that it was made into a set of films. The *Fifty Shades of Grey* movie was released on February 13th, 2015 to coincide with Valentine's Day. *Fifty Shades Darker* was released February 10th, 2017, and the final film *Fifty Shades Freed* is expected to be released in February 2018. The series has garnered a substantial amount of criticism – some libraries are refusing to carry it due to the novel's explicit nature (Jones, 21). Despite this, *Fifty Shades of Grey* has spent over 100 weeks on the New York Times Bestseller's List. The eBook edition is the most purchased book on Amazon Kindle. The movie made over $81 million over opening weekend and it ranks among the highest R rated releases in history (Tripodi, 93). Following the release of the movie, sex toy sales have skyrocketed. An entire brand of sex toys was marketed at E. L. James' approval (Tripodi, 94). This marketing has made the *Fifty Shades* brand quite profitable – and clearly, sex sells.

Fifty Shades of Grey follows a typical romance narrative. Twenty-one-year-old Anastasia Steele falls in love with 28 year old, self-made CEO billionaire Christian Grey. In the novel, Anastasia is presented as a clumsy and self-conscious college grad who is trying to find a job and start her life (James, 7). In the film, Anastasia is played by a thin, white, young actress. She has wide, doe eyes and front

[3] This cycle is frequently observed in the "honeymoon" phase of abuse. A violent act occurs, the perpetrator expresses forgiveness and behaves well for a short while and then the cycle repeats.

bangs. Anastasia's character is portrayed as childlike and innocent; she speaks with a whispery soft voice and frequently wears her hair back in a simple ponytail. Anastasia often blushes at the sight of Christian. She is the epitome of a passive and vulnerable young adult and is consistently infantilized. In contrast, Christian is presented as extraordinarily handsome (James 7, 25). He is framed as a confident and powerful man. In the film, Christian does not smile and he behaves in a very cold manner. He is cast as a white, muscular and strong actor. Anastasia first meets Christian while interviewing him for the student newspaper at her university. Christian quickly expresses interest and they begin a relationship. Not long into the relationship Christian states, "I don't make love. I fuck, hard." (James, 96). This marks the beginning of their sexual relationship, which evolves into BDSM rather quickly. The couple experiment sexually throughout the book and it ends with Anastasia leaving Christian after she realizes she cannot tolerate being physically punished any longer. From the very beginning of their relationship, the power balance is unequal, and this becomes more evident as the story progresses.

The explicit nature of the *Fifty Shades* series has earned it a title of "mommyporn" (Deller and Smith 936, van Reenan 223, Dymock 892, Bonomi et al. 721). This title is problematic for a number of reasons. Most notably, mommyporn appears to indicate that the novel is so tame and vanilla *even a mother* would read it (Deller and Smith, 936). This label can also be interpreted to mean that mothers have such boring and mundane lives that they need to read sexy romance novels to be fulfilled. Furthermore, it implies that mothers cannot be sexual and do not enjoy regular pornography or erotic works. Lastly, mommyporn frames *Fifty Shades of Grey* as something that working, "respectable" women should not enjoy. Thus, by marketing *Fifty Shades of Grey* as mommyporn, we solidify the notion that mothers cannot enjoy sex (and especially not BDSM) and that women who work outside the home should not succumb to such fantasy (van Reenan, 223). However, the title mommyporn is not the most troublesome aspect of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomenon. Most problematic is the physical and emotional abuse that Anastasia Steele experiences at the hands of Christian Grey.

Abuse in *Fifty Shades of Grey*

The image of a woman swooning over an attractive man is well represented in *Fifty Shades of Grey* (Booth, 23). Anastasia is constantly tripping or fainting (James, 25). She is frequently unable to care for herself, as evidenced by Christian catching her, commanding her to eat, and reminding her to breathe. Her constant flushing and fainting represent moments when Christian is able to take control and maintain power over her. She is further infantilized and portrayed as needing a care taker, and this further contributes to the uneven power relationship between her and Christian. This creates a dangerous relationship dynamic that fosters an abusive environment.

In this section, I wish to demonstrate the rampant abuse present in *Fifty Shades of Grey*. There is a large body of literature demonstrating this abusive relationship. By using specific quotes from the novel, I will demonstrate how Christian Grey's behaviour aligns with the detailed definition of IPV outlined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Specifically, his emotional abuse, psychological aggression, use of physical violence, and overt stalking will be examined.

Christian Grey is emotionally abusive

There is an overarching theme of Anastasia believing Christian will change throughout the novel. While she acknowledges that he is not good for her, she nonetheless pursues him under the mistaken impression that she can change him. This view is commonly expressed by battered women who claim they thought they could change their partner and that they would be able to resolve the violence. Christian constantly makes Anastasia feel special by informing her she is the first woman he has ever brought in his helicopter, or the first woman to meet his parents, sleep in his bed, or cuddle with him (James, 153). This manipulation gives her false hope that he will change, which ensures she does not leave. For example, Anastasia is consistently asking Christian for more than just sex in their relationship: "[Christian says] 'But I've told you, I want more, too.' Oh my. He's coming around, and hope surges through me, leaving me breathless. 'I'm very happy you want more,' [Anastasia] whispers." (James 456).

Anastasia openly admits that she is intimidated by Christian after meeting him for the first time: "I'm glad it's over and I don't have to see him again. He was rather intimidating, you know." (James, 19). She expresses her fear of him several times, and states that she is never sure what kind of mood he is going to be in: "A thousand butterflies stretch their wings and flutter erratically in my stomach. Why am I so nervous? It's because I have no idea what kind of mood Christian's going to be in when I arrive. My subconscious is fraught with nerves" (James, 478). As a result of this fear, Anastasia quickly learns to diffuse situations by appeasing Christian to avoid his anger. This managing becomes apparent during the second time they meet. Christian appears at the hardware store Anastasia works at and is friendly until another male co-worker begins talking to her. At this point, Anastasia acknowledges that Christian's mood shifts, and he becomes "cold and distant" (James 30). Anastasia then attempts to introduce Christian to her co-worker and the atmosphere becomes "arctic" (James, 30). Towards the end of the interaction, Anastasia asks Christian if he needs help with anything else and he responds, "'Just these items.' His tone is clipped and cool. Damn . . . have I offended him? Taking a deep breath, I turn and head for the register. What is his problem?" (James, 30). Thus, from the very beginning of their relationship, it is clear that Christian desires control over Anastasia and is very unhappy whenever she interacts with any other men.

This desire for control becomes more apparent as their relationship progresses and is represented clearly in the contract that Christian presents to Anastasia. As is common in BDSM relationships, a contract is generated to establish clear limits and to ensure both parties agree to the activities. However, the contract that Christian presents extends beyond their sexual relationship into everyday life. For example, the contract states that the submissive is to eat three meals a day from a prescribed list of foods, get eight hours of sleep, procure oral contraceptives, and work out 4 times a week (James 105, 172). This relates back to Jozifkova's fourth criteria that a BDSM relationship should not have limits that extend outside the bedroom (Jozifkova, 392). Some have argued that his insistence on her using oral contraceptives and open dislike of condoms can promote unsafe sex, while also reinforcing the notion that the onus of birth control should be placed on women (Maierhofer and Israel). The book also fails to highlight the importance of using condoms or other barrier

methods to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections – this is especially important considering Christian has had more partners than he can remember (Maierhofer and Israel). In addition, she is forced to sign a non-disclosure agreement that ensures she is not able to discuss their sexual relationship with anyone. This violates two of Jozifkova's criteria. First, the non-disclosure agreement prevents Anastasia from discussing their relationship with her best friend Kate, which isolates her from her friend:

> This is going to be one difficult square to circle . . . she wants to know – in detail, and I can't tell her because I've signed a . . . NDA. I need a plan. 'The NDA, does it cover everything?' I ask [Christian] tentatively. 'Why?' He turns and gazes at me . . . 'Well, I have a few questions . . . and I'd like to ask Kate.' 'You can ask me.' [Christian replies] My voice fades. I can't ask you. I'll get your biased, kinky-as-hell, distorted worldview regarding sex. (James, 131-132).

Second, Anastasia's inability to gather unbiased information about BDSM violates Jozifkova's fifth criterion for a non-violent relationship – access to information from a source other than their partner (Jozifkova, 392). In addition, this example demonstrates the degree that Christian desires to control Anastasia's life.

This also exemplifies the manipulation that Christian uses to force Anastasia to conform to his rules. He openly admits that he is only interested in a BDSM relationship, and because Anastasia is terrified he will leave her, she often agrees to his demands simply to appease him. She states: "'I'd never do anything I didn't want to do, Christian.' And as I say the words, I don't quite feel their conviction . . . I'd probably do anything for this man seated beside me" (James, 92). She also does not want to upset Christian by saying no: "His eyes burn into mine . . . This is not a man I want to cross . . . ever" (James, 139). Thus, she is not freely consenting, and his manipulation and controlling personality forces Anastasia into acts that she is not comfortable committing. According to the CDC, psychological aggression can include coercive control, control of reproductive health, and threats of physical/sexual violence. The controlling element of their relationship is extremely apparent. In a continuous effort to maintain his control over Anastasia, Christian also uses various threats to force her into submission. For example, Anastasia says she does not like to be physically punished. After she is spanked for the first time, she sends Christian an email titled "Assault and Battery: The After-Effects" in which she writes: "You wanted to know why I felt confused after you . . . spanked, punished, beat, assaulted me. Well, I felt demeaned, debased, and abused" (James, 292). Christian responds in his usual demeaning way and minimizes Anastasia's feelings. He titles his response "Free Your Mind" and writes: "Do you really feel like this or do you think you ought to feel like this? . . . If that is how you feel, do you think you could just try to embrace these feelings, deal with them, for me? That's what a submissive would do" (James 293). His blatant disregard for her feelings and dislike of punishment allows him to threaten her, knowing that she will comply to avoid physical abuse. Christian's behaviour aligns with the definition of coercive controlling violence outlined in Johnson and Dawson (70). This involves emotional abuse focused on controlling and intimidating a partner, coupled with the use of physical violence. It is clear that

Christian is manipulative, intimidating, and emotionally toxic, but is he physically abusive?

Christian Grey is violent

In an attempt to force Anastasia to fully submit to him, Christian frequently uses physical assault as a threat. Nearly every time they have sex, it stems from Christian's anger over something that Anastasia has done. When Christian discovers Anastasia is a virgin[4] he says: "'You're a virgin?' He breathes. He closes his eyes . . . when he opens them again, he's angry, glaring at me" (James, 108). Immediately after he says, "We are going to rectify the situation right now" (James, 110). Christian's solution to Anastasia's virginity is to violently penetrate her: "'I'm going to fuck you now, Miss Steele,' . . . 'Hard' he whispers, and he slams into me. 'Aargh!' I cry as I feel a weird pinching sensation deep inside me as he rips through my virginity. He stills, gazing down at me, his eyes bright with ecstatic triumph . . . We both glance down at the bed at the same time. There's blood on the sheets – evidence of my lost virginity" (James, 117-123). Christian also admits that he uses sex as a weapon, intending to force Anastasia to do what he wants. (James 201, 224). When Anastasia expresses that she has plans to visit her mother, Christian is angry: "'When were you going to tell me you were leaving?' He asks urgently . . . he's masking his anger. 'I'm not leaving, I'm going to see my mother and I was only thinking about it.' He narrows his eyes . . . 'This conversation is not over,' He whispers threateningly." (James 339-340). Their conversation continues after dinner: "'Palm twitchingly mad,' He whispers . . . his tone is quiet and deadly. [Anastasia wonders] Will he punish me? Perhaps I'll stay in Georgia where he can't reach me" (James, 340-341). In this instance, Anastasia ends up "taking a punishment fuck" (James 350).

Christian forces Anastasia to have sex on more than one occasion while he is angry: "'No,' I protest, trying to kick him off. He stops. 'If you struggle, I'll tie your feet too. If you make a noise, Anastasia, I will gag you. Keep quiet. Katherine is probably outside listening right now'" (James, 192). Anastasia admits she is scared of him and horrified on multiple occasions (James, 100, 263). She even describes him as a monster more than once (James, 102, 110, 230). Physical violence is evident whenever Christian hits Anastasia, but most notably at the end of the novel when he beats her with a belt six times for disobeying him. This is when Anastasia reaches her breaking point and says: "'Let go . . . no . . .' And I find myself struggling out of his grasp, pushing him away. Fighting him. 'Don't touch me' I hiss. 'This is what you really like? Me? [crying] Like this?'. . . 'Well, you are one fucked up son of a bitch . . . You need to sort your shit out, Grey!" (James, 506). The aforementioned quotes demonstrate how this relationship breaks nearly all of Jozifkova's guidelines once more. Despite how many times Anastasia tells Christian she does not want to be physically punished, he continues to beat her. Thus, the "BDSM" that Christian forces Anastasia to participate in is not consensual, and therefore it is not BDSM. It is abuse.

Christian Grey is a stalker

While stalking technically falls under emotional abuse, the way it is portrayed in the book is especially troubling, so I have allotted it an entire section. There are several instances where

[4] This is directly in line with the innocent nature of Anastasia's character.

either Christian or Anastasia openly declare that Christian is a stalker, and yet it is discussed so nonchalantly (James, 295, 308, 495). For example, Christian shows up unannounced to Anastasia's workplace, which is over 100 miles away from where they first met, not even a week later. Then, he sends her a few books worth over 14,000 dollars. She protests his gifts, and in turn he also purchases her a laptop, a blackberry cell phone, an Audi A3, and upgrades her plane tickets to first class. All of this is done without her consent, and she openly declines every gift. He of course insists that she keep everything. According to the CDC definition, stalking can be characterised by sending unwanted gifts. Christian Grey fits this criterion very well. In addition to sending her gifts, he admits to tracing her cell phone and discourages her from running away from him: "Alaska is very cold and no place to run. I would find you. I can track your cell phone – remember?" (James 295). Anastasia is initially surprised when she realizes he knows where she lives. Furthermore, he follows her across the country and shows up uninvited while she is visiting her mother: "I have neglected to mention Christian's stalker tendencies to my mom . . . I see him. My heart leaps . . . he's really here – for me. My inner goddess leaps up cheering" (James, 418).

Another indication of stalking behaviour is calling repeatedly and leaving threatening voicemails. At one point, Anastasia is out with her friends while Christian is trying to contact her: "Five missed calls and one voice message . . . 'I think you need to learn to manage my expectations. I am not a patient man.' . . . I scowl at the phone. He is suffocating me. With a dread uncurling in my stomach . . . I press call. My heart is in my mouth as I wait for him to answer. He'd probably like to beat seven shades of shit out of me. The thought is depressing" (James, 304-305). These examples demonstrate Anastasia's nonchalance to being stalked. Oftentimes, women justify stalking behaviour by claiming it is a caring gesture (Logan et al., 45-53). Anastasia follows this mindset and never really opposes Christian's behaviour. The CDC also outlines stalking as a common behaviour associated with IPV (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). The way *Fifty Shades of Grey* promotes stalking behaviour as "caring" is problematic. This directly supports the notion that intimate partner stalking is not serious and nothing to be upset about. This narrative is harmful to real women who are in abusive situations as it validates the idea that stalking is not *that* bad (Logan et al., 10).

In summary, the relationship that Christian and Anastasia have is clearly abusive, and it is an example of intimate partner violence. Specifically, the relationship demonstrates coercive controlling violence as outlined by Johnson and Dawson (70). Christian's use of physical violence to control Anastasia, along with his tendency to use sex as a weapon when he is angry, demonstrate how toxic the relationship is. Furthermore, the emotional abuse that Christian inflicts on Anastasia is horrendous and should not be regarded as romantic. Lastly, the attitude that *Fifty Shades of Grey* promotes towards stalking is harmful as it minimizes the seriousness of intimate partner stalking. Every criterion that Jozifkova outlines is violated by this novel, suggesting that it is a classic example of an unhealthy and inappropriate BDSM relationship (392).

Sensationalizing Abuse

According to research by Bonomi et al. (2014) and Malamuth and Check (1981), viewing violent media influences the way people view violence against

women. Malamuth and Check found that males who had been exposed to a sexually violent (but not X rated) film showed a higher acceptance of interpersonal violence and rape myths as well as a stronger belief in adversarial sex (443-4). Malamuth and Check concluded that exposure to sexually violent media does have an effect on the attitudes men hold regarding violence against women (443). It was also suggested that the emergence of soft core erotica such as Playboy is another contributing factor (Malamuth and Check 444). Bonomi et al. had similar findings (721). In addition, they found that young women aged 18-24 who had read at least the first novel of the *Fifty Shades* trilogy were at an increased lifetime risk of being in an abusive relationship. They also found that these young women had an increased risk of being in a relationship that involved frequent, unwanted calls and stalking (Bonomi et al., 724).

Considering intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of violence in Canada, one must question why *Fifty Shades of Grey* has been so successful (Ministry of the Status of Women). It has been repeatedly argued that *Fifty Shades of Grey* is an abuse narrative, and yet women are swooning at the thought of Christian Grey (Booth, 23). It can be argued that this is only acceptable to the general public because *Fifty Shades of Grey* follows a heteronormative romance narrative (Attwood and Walters). Even more troublesome is the insistence that this is the sort of relationship women want (van Reenan, 225). This is problematic as it gives the false impression that Christian Grey is an ideal man, which may mislead male partners to imitate his abusive behaviour under the genuine impression that it is what women desire. One need not look further than the revenue that the *Fifty Shades* trilogy has generated to realize how successful the series has been in selling a glamorized version of abuse.

This glamorization is particularly harmful to younger audiences. Research on IPV suggests that women under 34 are at the highest risk of intimate partner violence (Johnson and Dawson, 80). This may be partly because young adults experience a lot of rapid changes in this age bracket and this can make them vulnerable. This is most common in couples that have an unequal balance of power and a large age gap (Tripodi, 99). Anastasia and Christian have this imbalance of power and he is eight years older, which frames *Fifty Shades of Grey* as the ultimate example of abuse. Other scholars have criticized the use of contraceptives within the book, arguing that it appears as an afterthought with little to no consideration given to the type of birth control Anastasia is prescribed (Maierhofer and Israel, 520). In my opinion, one of the most harmful scenes in the book is when Anastasia has sex for the first time. The fact that Christian decides to forcefully slam himself into her all at once, and then have rough sex with her, is extremely troubling. This is not at all representative of a healthy sexual encounter and referring back to the idea that "this is what women want," young men may get the idea that this is how a woman's first time should be. Promoting this behaviour means that women may be seriously injured and may experience difficulty engaging in sex after such an experience. Additionally, while the focus on consent in the book has the potential to be empowering—it is not. Anastasia is not well informed about BDSM, and she often agrees to sexual acts to prevent Christian from becoming upset with her. This furthers the idea that silence means yes, when in reality only yes means yes

(Tripodi 100). Christian interprets Anastasia's lack of using the safe word to mean that she is consenting to whatever act he begins. That is not how consent works and not representative of safe BDSM play.

Going Forward

Clearly, the widespread outcry from domestic violence shelters and women's organizations is not unfounded (Steiner). Campaigns such as #50dollarsnotfiftyshades[5] have emerged to spread awareness regarding the abuse in the *Fifty Shades* trilogy. Some domestic violence shelters have taken to burning copies of the novel to send a clear message – abuse will not be tolerated, not in real life and not in fictional novels (Weeks). Considering how widespread and devastating intimate partner violence is, one must think critically about the way violence is represented in the media. It is imperative that activism continue with the release of the final movie in the trilogy this February.

In conclusion, E. L. James' book *Fifty Shades of Grey* represents the promotion of intimate partner violence in the media. This misrepresentation of BDSM is harmful for young women who are at vulnerable points in their lives. Research suggests that sexually violent media contributes to the acceptance of violence against women. Thus, marketing *Fifty Shades of Grey* contributes to the glamorization of violence and frames an abusive relationship as desirable. This gives both men and women a false impression of what constitutes a healthy relationship. Future research may wish to further examine why women are drawn to Christian Grey as a character and whether battered women are more likely to read the series. However, as long as *Fifty Shades of Grey* continues to be promoted and idealized, critical analyses of the novel must continue. We must continue to send the message that no form of abuse will be tolerated – whether it is real or fictional. While I am not sure burning the book is the answer, there is certainly something to be said for keeping it off the shelf at local libraries. Perhaps the release of the final movie will spark enough activism and outrage to make a change, although this may be too optimistic. In the meantime, campaigns such as #50dollarsnotfiftyshades will help to bring awareness to how horrible *Fifty Shades of Grey* truly is. In the words of Gloria Steinem, the truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off.

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[5] #50dollarsnotfiftyshades is a movement that urges people to donate the 50 dollars they would have spent on seeing the movie in theater to a domestic violence or women's shelter instead (Steiner)

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Q is for ~~Queer~~ Me

Mackenzie Shaw

It was some time before I realized that the Q in LGBTQ+ didn't stand for Questioning. Or maybe it did and at some point the acronym shifted. I remember LGBTQ+ not even including the Q, let alone anything beyond L and G. But now the acronym doesn't even limit itself to letters, often including the 'plus' or an asterisk to include the ever-growing list of sexual identities. The Q in LGBTQ+ stands for Queer. For most of my life I thought queer meant strange, like I thought gay meant happy. Until I learned it as a slur. It was only a few years ago that I learned that people were sexually identifying as Queer. Now, the word is among the many labels in the closet that we can choose to put on. Keeping up with all the labels out there is a task in itself, and it's often thought of as unnecessary. The definitions of these terms shift, they overlap, they seem to crop up out of nowhere. Yet, we must find one that fits.

I used to identify as Pansexual; I was attracted to people based on who they were, not their gender. Before Pansexual, I identified as Heteroflexible because I thought I was mostly straight, but I wasn't totally. These two labels fit okay. Like hand-me-down jeans, they covered what they needed to, but they were never my own.

I now use the word Queer to identify myself. Mostly because its definition is ambiguous and it's a nice word. It's short, it flows off my tongue, and it has been around for a long time. Queer allows me to navigate under the realm of "not straight" without really having to commit to a specific sexual orientation. Unlike a term like Lesbian, which specifically indicates a woman who is sexually attracted to other women, Queer doesn't have such a straight-forward definition.

I have always liked the idea of the Kinsey's scale, and agree that sexuality is a fluid concept. Alfred Kinsey developed a basic scale which ranked a person's sexuality from totally Hetero- to totally Homosexual. The scale represents the idea that sexuality is a continuum. There isn't just Gay and Straight, just like it isn't just black and white. There are varying degrees, and a multitude of identifications to suite these degrees.

It was important to me to find a term that fit my values, and not settle for one that didn't represent me. I had to find just the right shade that suited me best. But why Queer? Why this word that has been used to oppress, stigmatize and slander non-heterosexuals like myself? Though some people have 'reclaimed' the word, it was once used with such negativity that even a quick dictionary search flags the term as a slur and cautions against its use. Only in its 6th definition, under "slang" does it say "noting or relating to a sexual orientation or gender identity that falls outside the heterosexual mainstream or the gender binary" (Dictionary.com). This is an ambiguous definition, and it varies depending on what

dictionary you consult, or which people you ask.

I have experienced members of the LGBTQ+ community who do not understand why myself and others wish to identify with a word that connotes hate and oppression. To them, identifying as a queer is the same as identifying as a faggot. I do not see Queer this way. I think seeing these words this way, in the way that our homophobic society has constructed them, is damaging to our community.

These terms don't have hateful origin; they have just been twisted. Queer, as I have stated, simply meant strange before it was used to target homosexuals. It's 'true' definition—if any word can have a true definition—is not the one that society constructed. So, to reclaim this word is to deny the negative connotations that have been wrongly injected into it. If we are to accept queer and fag as hateful words, then we are accepting the bigoted definition.

Queer linguists state that Queer is "a term that is supposed to escape all attempts of a stable definition or reification" (Motschenbacher, 6). This word, the same as my sexuality, is not concrete. I enjoy being marked as strange, different, and ambiguous. Those who identify as Pansexual and Heteroflexible have terms that give them a concrete definition of their sexuality. And maybe, a concrete definition of who they are. My sexuality is forever changing, forever flowing. With its changes and flows, my identification moves with me, thanks to the nature of its definition.

However, with or without the label queer, I would still be Queer. Even if the term didn't exist at all, it wouldn't change the fact that I am not straight, it wouldn't change who I am. I look to *Romeo and Juliet* (perhaps the epitome of Hetero romance) to explain what I mean by this. Shakespeare writes, "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (Shakespeare II.II.II). Juliet says this to Romeo from her balcony, claiming that it doesn't matter what house, Montague or Capulet, he belongs to, it only matters that she loves him. Whether Romeo is called a Montague or a Capulet is irrelevant to Juliet. With or without this label, Romeo would still be Romeo. Roses would still be roses, had they another name. The word is arbitrary. It would, as Shakespeare says, "smell as sweet."

For this reason, I have never given words much weight. Words themselves are simply collections of letters. Society is what gives words power and meaning. Though words may be trivial, the things they represent may not be. Identities are not trivial. Finding words that fit these identities can be difficult, and I am lucky to have found comfort in Queer.

Humans tend to have an obsession with identification. And sexual labels most definitely enhance this obsession. In an ideal world, in my mind, we would all just be people. These labels, these nouns, are said to categorize things based on a similar set of criteria or by "deep resemblance" (Malt, 44). Queer categorizes me based on my similarity to its (loose) definition. Though, the English language has not, until recently, had nouns for people who identify outside of the sexual norm. Others and I have been asked time and time again to 'define' our sexualities. We are asked to choose between identities and labels that we may not necessarily fit into. These labels are used, or demanded, to provide structure. They organize people into groups and can cause more segregation than community. Even within the LGBTQ+ community there are divisions caused by debate over certain labels, such as Bisexual. As much as they categorize and box in people, we must understand why

one might seek out these labels in order to identify themselves as part of a group, as not alone.

Even Heterosexuals are obsessed with their own identification. Though straight people don't need to 'come out,' based on today's expectations, straight people still solidify themselves as not gay. When non-hetero identifications are thrown at hetero people, they are met with hostility and anger. If a straight male is called gay, it is seen as an insult that is viciously denied. Straight people don't want to be mis-identified, and nor do we. When I get called a dyke, or a lesbian, I feel a shudder of anger, and my gut instinct is to correct the offender immediately. But it is not because those terms are negative or insulting. They're just unfitting. A similar reaction occurs when I misjudge someone's age, or their country of origin: I am met with a vehement front of correction because no one wants to be labeled as anything they are not.

Humans use these labels as explanations of who they are. When we find words than describe who we are we give our lives meaning, infusing our identities with definitions. As *WALL-E* Director, Andrew Stanton, says, "we all need affirmations that our lives have meaning" (TEDtalk). These affirmations come in the form of many types of identification: race, religion, gender, even what sports team we cheer for. Sexual orientation is no different. If we lacked these words, we would lack clear descriptions of ourselves. Queer, like any noun, has a job of identification. It categorizes me based on my similarity to its (loose) definition.

I have heard from the straight community and the older LGBTQ+ community that all these new terms are just millennial nonsense. But the point of all these words is not, as some may think, to make things more confusing. The point is identification. These words create a sense of identity for people who do not fit within society's heteronormative ideals. The only reason these terms appear strange or foreign is because minority groups have constructed them and their meanings. This makes it difficult for society at large to accept these terms into its schemata of accepted language. These minority groups are unsatisfied with the existing accepted labels out there (gay, lesbian) and seek to be recognized by words that represent them more wholly. These new possibilities for identification give everyone the opportunity to seek out their comfortable label, to seek out their own favourite pair of jeans that allow them to walk with confidence and security.

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Religion & Identity

The Image of Muslim Women in the Media

Kimberly Waite

Television shows and films have been promoted as merely a way for individuals to relax and entertain themselves. What one needs to realize is that the entertainment industry has a lot more influence and power than we first anticipate. Researchers, Rivers and Schramm, believed that media not only had the power to further the cultural and social values of a society, but to focus public interest and inform society about various issues (Dakroury, 162). Therefore, the media is more than a form of entertainment, it also has the power to inform society about another community that they would not otherwise have contact with. Television and film can influence how minority groups are viewed, and in turn, can have an impact on how those minority groups are treated. Stereotypes have often been used as an easy way to create a character within a story. Through these stereotypes we learn who we should trust and who we should not trust. The film industry either uses stereotypes to portray a minority character in a negative light or to misrepresent these minorities. This is especially true in the Western film industry, as stories are mainly told by the dominant (most represented) group, white men. The media is used as a form of cultural domination because only one culture's point of view is depicted, and as a result the views of the dominant culture are used to shape societal norms (Dakroury, 163). Unfortunately, these characterizations have a negative effect on the minorities who are being portrayed in a poor light. Fortunately, voices of the East are slowly becoming more and more visible. Islamic films, in particular, have made the effort to show a more detailed and nuanced version of the Islamic community. This has helped combat some of the negative portrayals. In this essay, we will look at the history of the film industry and learn how these stereotypes of Muslim and Arabian women developed in the West with specific television shows as examples. Once the history has been outlined, we will compare them to the nuanced images that Muslim women create of themselves. Muslim filmmakers are more likely to show a fully formed woman reflecting their individual culture, hopes and dreams. Within this examination we will also look at the show *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. Zarqa Nawaz's show is an illustration of how "orientalist" ideas are confronted as Nawaz bridges both the eastern and western cultures together. She is a good example of how Muslim female filmmakers are taking it upon themselves to change the image of Muslims in film.

Through the work of Edward Said we learn that many negative images of

Muslim women stem from an orientalist discourse. Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, was Europe's attempt at studying other cultures, while assuming their own superiority (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 48). In this rhetoric, Orientalists describe Arab men as unrefined, misogynistic and violent, while Arab women are described as sexually provocative, and co-conspirators of Arab men. At the same time, women are also depicted as victims of religious oppression (Hijri, 34). Said defined Orientalism after studying artwork, travelers' diaries and historical documents during the 18th and 19th century. In these documents, Muslims are consistently portrayed as "the other", meaning, not part of normal society. These ideas still exist in today's society: The West and East are seen as oppositions, with the assumption that the East has avoided modern values since the Middle Ages (Dakroury, 168). In this vein of thinking, Western media is shown to be superior to the East, especially in areas of equality (Dakroury, 165).

The manipulation of the image of Muslim women has only intensified since the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. To justify the war on terrorism, Muslim women in the media have been portrayed as women who are being oppressed by their government, and that it is important for the West to go in and save them (Hirji, 35). This assumption of gender inequality has not just existed in film but has also shown itself in the movements of the Canadian government. As a preemptive move, the Quebec National Assembly have passed laws that prohibit Sharia law, even though there have been no attempts to institute it in anyway (Hirji, 36).

While Western women have been subjected to the same stereotyping practices, there have been actions taken to prevent them from being portrayed in a sinister manner. In 1934 the Hays Code was instituted to prevented movies from showcasing scenes that were considered to be too lustful. Women were forbidden from showing their sexuality in a physical manner. Some films got around this by having women show their sexuality through verbal banter, rather than physical expression. Actress Mae West was known for doing this in movies through double entendres, and one-liners (Picherit-Duthler, Yunis, 228). The sainthood of white women is what needed to be protected. Unfortunately, the orientalist discourse had made its way to the film industry, as the only way a white woman could get away with being provocative on film was if she was playing a nonwhite character. A darker skin tone assured that the character was of lower moral. For instance, in the film *Land of the Pharaohs,* made in 1955, Joan Collins plays an Egyptian Princess named Nellifer. She is a woman who has an affair with a guard, and kills the competition for the Kings affection, all while barely dressed. Since white women were now excluded from playing the seductress on screen, Arab women, or white women portraying Arab women were now given the task of being the temptress in films (Picherit – Duthier, Yunis, 229). Arab women were also depicted to be living in Harems, with the narrative that they had to be saved by the Western man (Picherit – Duthier, Gaelle, and Yunis, 232). We can see how this idea has stemmed from the Orientalist perspective of Islam: Arab women portrayed as provocative and in need of saving, usually by Western white men.

Eventually the Hays Code was abolished, and the images of white women progressed. White women were now portrayed as strong, independent women with their own careers, who freely

explored their sexuality. Regrettably, the social climate did not liberate Muslim women in the same way. The Palestinian liberation movement resulted in new images. The West did not welcome these images with open arms, instead they viewed the free Palestinian women as ever-more threatening due to the fact that she was exotic, dangerous, and behaved like a Western woman (Picherit-Duthier, and Yunis, 253). Arab women were no longer seen as victims of oppression who needed saving but rather they were now dangerous individuals against whom the west must fight against.

Fortunately, it has been proven that portraying minorities in a positive way can have a favorable effect on the way minorities are treated in society. This is mentioned by Alia Dakroury, who states that it was scholar Brawley who posited that society's views and understanding of events, minorities and social issues are greatly influenced by the ideas that are communicated to us through the media (Dakroury, 163). Society learns about another culture through what is exposed to them through film and television. For instance, it is thought that the reason the United States was able to elect a black president is because the show, *24,* had already depicted one. Thus, normalizing the idea of a black male president to viewers. In addition, another event that proves the power of media is when the U.S. Supreme court used scenes from *24* to prove that torture was acceptable (Hirji, 37). The media is a tool powerful enough to justify questionable decisions made by the government in court.

After going through an overview of how women are treated in the American film industry, we will now examine specific examples from an American TV show. The first example we will be looking at is that of the show mentioned earlier, *24*. *24* was a very successful show on the Fox Television Network which centered around a counter terrorist agent who is put into the unfortunate position of having to thwart a terrorist attack in a 24-hour period. Unfortunately, this show plays into some of the same negative stereotypes of Muslim women. This is shown through the character of Marie. Marie appears to be an innocent person in the show until it is discovered that she is a newly converted Muslim who is secretly planning a terrorist attack. The show lacked an in-depth emotional exploration into her decision, thus implying that her terrorist tendencies were rooted in her newfound religion: Islam. She is depicted as illogical, deceptive and apathetic. She is not above using her sexuality to get what she wants. She is submissive as she is seen to take orders from a faceless leader, rarely questioning the instructions given to her (Hijra, 39). This characterization of Marie clearly coincides with the Orientalist stereotype of a Muslim women who perpetrators violence and is completely submissive to men and their religion.

Another aspect of the Western film industry is the fact that Muslim women are completely ignored or underrepresented in some films. In the film *Casablanca,* the characters are situated in a nightclub in an Arab country, yet there are no Arab characters in starring roles. The citizens of the country are merely props in the background, either as street vendors or monkey sellers (Picherit – Duthier, Yunis, 230). Here we see the Orientalist standard in full effect again. The Moroccan citizen is seen so much as "the Other" that they are not even a part of the story line of the country they reside in.

There is a stark contrast between the images of Muslim women in film in the West verses Muslim women in film in the East. Because the stories are created by

Muslim women themselves, the characters tend to be more nuanced, and reflect some of the social issues that these women must deal with in their particular societies. For instance, while in the United States a Muslim character may wear a veil in a film, Eastern films are more likely to explore the reasons why a woman may wear that veil in the first place—and the reason may be shocking to viewers as it may not always revolve around oppression. Furthermore, although these films may explore issues that impact the Middle East and Islam on a social and political level religion is only part of the equation. Here, we will be looking at a couple of examples of cinemas revolved around Islamic values and how they work to change the stereotype of women in Islam.

The first filmmaker we will look at is Rakhshan Banietemad. Banietemad is a filmmaker who was born in Tehran and graduated from the College of Dramatic Arts in 1979. Her films tend to focus around social issues such as veiling, oppression by the government and motherhood. Her desire for social commentary, leads her to pursue a genre of social realism for her films. In her film, *The May Lady*, she focuses on the narrative of a single mother while intertwining it with scenes from a documentary film that Banietemad had made previously, where she interviews various women in positions of power. The interviewees are a mixture of real women and actresses. In the fictional part of the film the lead character has premarital sex with men, though the love scenes are only implied and not shown. With her being the main subject of the film, she is the primary speaker, because of this we learn about her inner world, her thoughts, feelings and details of her troubled relationship with her son. *The May Lady* explores what it means to be an ideal mother and thus, has a heavy self-reflective mood (Naficy, 574). For here, the lead character is more than just a Muslim, she is a mother and a lover as well.

It is very important for Eastern female filmmakers to show a nuanced version of themselves and those who recognize this need are willing to risk breaking the rules of their own country in order to do so. In the Australian and Iranian film *My Tehran for Sale,* written and directed by Granaz Moussari, we follow the story of Marzieh. Marzieh is a young female theatre actress who is involved in the Tehran art scene. She moves to Australia with a friend, but that friend ends up deserting her after learning of her life-threatening illness. The film ends with her in jail. This film is told in a non-linear fashion with the lead character seeking sexual and artistic freedom (Shankhamala, 2). Here we have another example of women who are not just looked at as an exotic terrorist but also who want to express themselves creatively. Her hopes and dreams are to be an artist, and her religious affiliation is not even mentioned in the film.

The difference between filmmakers in the East and the West are clear: the American and Canadian film industry tends to show minorities as either severely oppressed and in need of saving, or as the dangerous intruders who should not be trusted, casting themselves as the saviors. A major part of the issue is the lack of diversity amongst filmmakers. Minorities are severely underrepresented in high-powered positions that will allow them to make a difference. Fortunately, this is slowly changing. Now we are starting to get shows that are developed by minorities. *Little Mosque on the Prairie,* written by Zarqa Nawaz, is based on her experiences of living in a small town in Canada as a Muslim. Not only does it explore the relationships between the

Muslims and the non-Muslims in their community, but it also dives into the relationships between the members of the mosque (Zine, Taylor, Davis, 379). Nawaz attempts to change the image of Muslims from religious fundamentalists to a much more lighthearted one with characters who have a great sense of humor (Dakroury, 162). Nawaz has a combination of both cultures, decimating the Orientalist view that the East and West cannot co-exist. Here, we have a show displaying a multicultural community—a more accurate depiction of the real world. Furthermore, Nawaz shows the varying levels of belief amongst members of the Muslim community. By showing the differing levels of belief, she is fighting against the Muslim fundamentalist stereotypes in the West. We have Rayyan who is a devout Muslim who fights for women's rights, her mother who is white and a convert to Islam, and Fatima who is a Muslim from Africa. Also, in this show Muslims are shown to be fully formed characters: their religion not the only focus of their life but merely an important part of their identity. This is especially evident in Rayyan. Rayyan is independent and opinionated. She has her own career as a doctor and is highly respected in the community (Hijra 42). Also, Nawaq takes the opportunity to educate viewers on the religious practices in Islam, and, just like Banietemad, Nawaq makes social commentary on Islam, touching on issues of misogyny and sexism. In this Nawaq is out to prove that it is not religion that is oppressive, but the male leaders who push for traditionally oppressive views. She also wants to prove that Islam is not any more oppressive than other religions (Zine, Taylor, Davis 380). Just like her Eastern counterparts Nawaq is questioning the role of women in society while trying to educate the West.

As we can see, the West has a big problem with showing minorities in a varied light. This is especially true for Muslim characters. The American film Industry has been affected by ideas of the past and largely has not yet moved past these ideas in regard to minorities, as they have when it comes to Caucasian women. Orientalist ideas and historical events have affected greatly the portrayal of Muslims in the media. But not all individuals who are Muslim are unfairly repressed or planning to terrorize a country. This portrayal in film is due to the lack of diversity in the film industry. Fortunately, with more and more film and television shows being created by minorities, we are starting to get more shows that reflect a different Muslim community. Especially when it comes to women. Just like women in the West, Eastern women also have the same worries and fears in regard to careers, relationships, and motherhood. With diverse television shows like *Little Mosque on the Prairie,* it is believed that the view of Muslim women will change in society.

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The Fight or Flight Response Hijabi Style: A Phenomenological Approach to the Dichotomy of the Oppressive Hijab and the Liberating Hijab

Lilian Al-Radi

This essay will try to explain the dichotomy regarding notions surrounding the Hijab; placed by a Northern American society, and the accounts provided by Muslim Women in North America. The lens applied to understand this contrast is phenomenological, due to the complexities that accompany the discourse of the Hijab in North America. It is also more appropriate to apply a phenomenological methodology to this essay since the contrasts cannot meet in the middle, each conclusion is complete with contradictions.

One of the fundamental issues with sartorial practices in general, is that they tend to distinguish a religious affiliation visibly, while somehow, in a skewed way, resisting secularism. According to Zimmerman, both the U.S and Canada share the apparent desire to superficially display a separation between church and state ([A]. 52). Nonetheless, a select few religions are understood to be more compatible with secularism, compared to others. Thus, when the people who identify with the selected 'secular religion' are seen in public with a sartorial connected to their religious affiliation are in public, it is not frowned upon. However, this is not the case for the rest of the religious outcasts who choose to display religiosity via sartorial practices. The sad truth is that a person expressing religiosity by wearing a Turban, Kippah, Hijab or Agbada are more likely to be targeted by hate crimes than people who refrain from doing so.[1] Many non-Christians who choose to publicly express their religious adherence experience confrontation, however, for the sake of this essay, the Hijab will be the only focus. The focus of the research is the shift in sentiments towards Muslim Women who wear the Hijab post 9/11; therefore, all research participants live either in Canada or the

[1] American Civil Liberties Union. (2008, May 29). *Discrimination against Muslim women* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/womensrights/discriminationagainstmuslimwomen.pdf

U.S. The research proved that there is still pertinent ideology brought on by Colonialism and Orientalism. Additionally, the attention is centered on the tangible increase in Islamophobia, and how Muslim Women respond and adapt in the face of this adversity, and the similarity of this reaction to the Fight or Flight response shown by people when confronted with danger.

The Women who veil - education, background, and age.

This essay will rely on qualitative research to allow the voices of young Muslim women to be heard through their personal experiences. The common theme in the various forms of research used for this article is the females' personal accounts on oppression, discrimination, morals, fear, strengths, and politics with regards to the Hijab.[2] All participants have at some point worn a Hijab, and the vast majority continue to wear the Hijab.[3] Moreover, all of the women were in consensus that it was an autonomous choice to wear the Hijab. [4] The ages varied from 18 to 53 depending on research and geography. Most of the Muslim women were College or University educated or attended a higher level of education at the time of research. [5] The women's ethnic background varied from southern European to several African countries and various Asian countries. The women were either first-generation or second-generation immigrants who lived in either the U.S or Canada.[6]

Post 9/11

Scholars indicate that ever since the 9/11 Terror Attack, the Muslim community has been targeted due to their religious affiliation. The predominant notion is a symbiotic relationship with terrorism, instinctive acts of violence, and Islam.[7] Due to the trauma brought on by 9/11, Islamic fundamentalism has been a leading topic whenever Islamic discourse arises.[8] Most women interviewed expressed an increasing sense of discrimination post 9/11 and a cemented stereotype that shadowed them wherever they went.[9] According to Haddad, "Since 9/11 […] The American media had consistently treated Arabs, Muslims, and Islam in derogatory terms." (259) and view the Hijab "as the standard of the enemy" (263). These sentiments result in an explosion of "hate crimes against Muslims within the United States [by an increasing] 674 percent" (Wazni & Beckmann 326). [10]

Even though Muslim Women in the U.S shared the pain with the rest of the nation during and after 9/11, "the legal system that was supposed to protect them worked to their disadvantage." (Zahedi 188). Implementing the Patriot's Act heavily targeted Muslims around the world. This relentless targeting reached a point where it created a division amongst

[2] All with the exception of Jan'nan.

[3] With the exception of two women in Wazni & Beckmann's research (328) and a few women in Zimmerman's "Religiosity as an Identity" (59)

[4] See Works Cited for Full List.

[5] (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich 36; Zimmerman "Religiosity as an Identity" 59; Zahedi 185)

[6] Canada – (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich; Hoodfar) U.S.A – (Wazni & Beckmann; Haddad; Zahedi; Zimmerman)

[7] (Jen'nan 231).

[8] (Zimmerman [A] 299).

[9] (Wazni & Beckmann 326) and (Haddad 263).

[10] Wazni & Beckmann relied on data provided by: American Civil Liberties Union. (2008, May 29). *Discrimination against Muslim women* [Fact sheet].

Muslim communities where ethnicity became the dividing factor, just to avoid constant scrutiny.

> 'After 9/11 it was better to be African Americans than immigrant Muslims'. African-Americans were regarded more as Americans and less as Muslims while the opposite was true for immigrant Muslim Americans. (Zahedi, 184-5).

Zimmerman also mentions how the horror of 9/11 allowed Western society to reinforce and renew the idea of the Orient as primitive ([A] 299). Nevertheless, this form of targeting and unfounded superiority that North American societies places upon the Muslim Community is not seen equally as problematic compared to other forms of discrimination based on religiosity.

Orientalism/Colonialism - The idea that Islam is oppressive

Ever since the white man's burden, the Muslim woman has been targeted by the West and their mission to free her from "oppression [of patriarchy] and the Muslim community" (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich 34). [11] Wazni & Beckmann explains this notion by stating: "The dichotomy between the East and the West, with the former being stagnant in archaic times and the latter being both progressive and democratic" (326). It cements the notion that the West needs to enlighten the Muslim woman by "unveil[ing] the women of Islam" (Haddad 257).[12] Moreover, it suggests that Muslim women are not fully civilized because of their religious affiliation, compared to the non-Muslim women, which is not only incredibly racist, but also completely incorrect.

Nevertheless, when the participants were asked if the Hijab operated as a mode of "male oppression […], All participants stated in response to this question that this notion was completely false and was a result of ignorance and misinformation" (Wazni & Beckmann, 331). Haddad even notes that the participants she interviewed view the Hijab as a "symbol of anti-colonial solidarity and resistance to efforts to eradicate Islam in an American environment that is increasingly seen as anti-Islamic" (253).[13] The irony is that it is these 'secular notions' that every person is expected to conform to.[14] The idea that secular ideology and Islamic fundamentalism share more similarities than differences is shared by Zimmerman, who writes that the restraints placed upon Muslim women by secularism is similar to the oppression that the same structure is attempting to alleviate ([A]301-2). Moreover, the Hijab works as an excuse for the societies in North America to separate the Muslims from the Non-Muslims, implicitly insinuating that Islam is the archaic and North American non-Muslim societies is the modern. "They are viewed, paradoxically, as either oppressed or as threatening, with the Hijab an over-determined sign of 'otherness'." (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, 34-5). This movement of 'othering' the Muslim woman due to their Hijab prevents the Muslim woman to feel equally valued and leads to them struggling to "fit in" (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, 37).[15] This separation forces Muslim women to

[11] Supported by (Hoodfar 189; Wazni & Beckmann 326; Zahedi 183&187)

[12] Supported by Wazni & Beckmann (326)

[13] Supported by (Zahedi 192)

[14] Supported by (Zahedi 183)

[15] Supported by (Haddad 262; Zimmerman "Young Muslim Women" 300; Zimmerman "Religiosity as an Identity" 65; Zahedi 184-7)

defend their autonomy and their modernity, which could have been avoided in the first-place if North American societies "Stay[ed] Woke".[16]

Discrimination/ Societal hatred/ Islamophobia

Since 9/11, Islamophobia has been on the rise, which toughens the conditions under which Muslims live in. This can be exhibited in a more silent type of discrimination or even physical altercation,[17] and unfortunately, Muslim women are the most targeted group. "According to police reports, of all Canadian hate crimes between 2010 and 2013, over 47% were against Muslim women who wore the hijab or niqab (Statistics Canada, 2013)." (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, 35).[18] However, the perpetrator is not normally a Muslim man, rather, it is the people who claim to be the epitome of secularism in North America: white men.[19] The statistics prove that there is an undisputed discrimination towards Muslim women and they are more targeted and in greater danger because of their Hijab. The women interviewed by Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, expressed how Islamophobia hinders them from participating in 'daily' activities. However, since Islamophobia has become normalized, these issues that arise are not taken seriously since Islam is generally thought of as an innately violent religion.[20] Zimmerman even goes as far as to claim that "Hijab places them 'at the bottom of the racial, gender, and religion hierarchy'" ([A], 302). Nevertheless, despite the adversity, "Muslim women want to be active in their Canadian and Muslim identities" (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, 38).

The meaning of the hijab – identity shaping

As previously established, the Hijab works as a mode for targeted Islamophobia since the sartorial practice distinguishes the women as Muslim. However, even though Muslim women are more vulnerable to hate crimes, all women who participated in the various studies express how the Hijab helped form their identity as a Muslim woman living in North America.

> For many of the young Muslim women who have decided to wear a hijab despite the fact that their mothers have never dressed Islamically, the hijab has become a symbol of American Islamic identity. (Haddad, 254)

The pattern of young Muslim women choosing to wear the Hijab even though their female family members do not, recurs in several research discoveries.[21] According to Hoodfar, many young women have to fight their parents for the right to wear a Hijab in such a 'secular' society; the parents are hesitant because the fear that the Hijab would target the daughters for even more hate-crimes (195). However, for many young Muslim women: "the [Hijab has] become as a symbol of its political triumph over secular forces." (Hoodfar, 192).[22] This

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[16] I am of course referring to the African American slang that derive from the oppression placed upon the African American Community by White supremacy.

[17] (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich 38; Haddad 262-263; Zahedi 184-9)

[18] According to Wazni & Beckmann - both Islamophobia and "hate crimes and acts of violence are more often directed at Muslim women, who wear the Hijab, than Muslim men (CAIR, 2009-2010)" (Wazni & Beckmann 326). "However, American Muslims and Arab American Muslims more specifically have been targeted by state measures in the name of homeland security and secularism since the terrorist attacks of 9/11. " (Zimmerman "Young Muslim Women" 300)

[19] Statistics Canada, 2013

[20] (Haddad 253).

[21] (Haddad 262-3; Zahedi; 190)

[22] Supported by (Wazni & Beckmann 327; Haddad 263)

'triumph' provides the women with an overwhelming sense of "empower[ment], every single participant stated that the hijab gave them a sense of respect, dignity, and control over who has access to their physical body. All participants felt that this, in turn, offered them security, self-confidence, and empowerment. " (Wazni & Beckmann, 329)[23].

Even though the women feel more empowered by wearing the Hijab, according to Zahedi, it comes with the prize of losing one's "anonymity", and the Hijab can bring "unwanted attention" (189). This unwanted attention forces some of the young Muslim women to take on the burden of "educat[ing] other students" (Zimmerman [B] 62-3) with the message that the Hijab is not a mode of Islamic oppression. [24] To the contrary, according to Hoodfar the Hijab "communicat[es] certain values" (199) and works as a "public pronouncement of piety" (207).

The Fight or Flight Response: The dichotomy between violence and safety net, and oppression and liberty.

As previously mentioned, the etic understanding of the Hijab is that the Hijab works as a mode of oppression; however, the Muslim women who wear the Hijab disagree with this sentiment.[25] For all the Muslim women in each of the studies, the Hijab was a crucial part of their identity formation.[26] Several accounts from Muslim women who wear the Hijab state that by wearing the Hijab, the women gain a sense of belonging and community which was otherwise unattainable for them in a 'secular' society.[27] According to Hoodfar, the Hijab works as an external indicator that connects women from different communities (187).[28] An example being a newly arrived Somali woman found it difficult to locate a Somali community, however, via the Hijab, she found a Muslim community through the visible sartorial practice and was therefore provided a sense of belongingness that was missing (Hoodfar 194). By choosing to wear the Hijab, young women gain autonomy since the Hijab works as a visible sign of good moralistic values. The limitations placed on women are therefore loosened, and the women gain agency over their lives, which provides them with a sense of being closer to the life that other non-Muslim women in Canada were living (Hoodfar 197).

However, some women interviewed express that they "do not, feel safe when out alone" (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, 38). One reason could be that "policies" are "failing to protect the rights of those who veil" (Jen'nan, 233). Moreover, based on the accounts of the women who personally had been assaulted due to the Hijab, the perpetrators are community members who do not belong to the Muslim community; rather they 'belong to the secular community'[29]. This indicates that the threats are not emic, rather, it is an etic misunderstanding and ignorance that poses the Muslim women with an immediate threat. Naturally there is an

[23] Supported by (Zimmerman "Religiosity as an Identity" 62)

[24] Supported by (Zahedi 196)

[25] (Wazni & Beckmann 331).

[26] See "Work Cited" for list of references- with the exception of Jan'nan

[27] Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich 38) Supported by (Hoodfar 194; Wazni & Beckman 328; Haddad 262-3)

[28] Supported by Zimmerman who says that the participants she interviewed felt "supported by the Muslim Community in college" ([B] 66)

[29] (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich 38; Haddad 262-263; Zahedi 184-9)

array of nuances to this issue and the matter is too complex to simply boil it down to outsiders' ignorance. Nonetheless, based on the women's account, the etic ignorance is a core threat. However, the Muslim women's reaction to this is to reiterate that "Not only d[oes] the Hijab act as a symbol of being Muslim, it also act[s] as a safety net for them" (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich 39). [30] This can be understood through the notion of the 'Fight or Flight Response'. Most women who decide to veil and express their religiosity are forced to contemplate if the sartorial practice is worth the fight against discrimination and hegemonic structures, or if not, then the flight is in order to avoid all confrontations. This contemplation and consideration is hard to come to a conclusion and also immensely unfair. Having to decide between something that relates to their essence of being, or conforming to society, should not be the only avenues available for women who veil. However, the issue of conformity versus expressing religiosity is even more complex than simply the fight or flight response, because the fight response allows the women who veil to feel protected against certain societal expectations. It is easy to discard the argument that Muslim women are in a constant Fight or Flight response from an outsider perspective, however, this danger has become even more prominent as of lately. In the U.K, several Muslim communities received letters informing them that the 3rd of April 2018 is: "Punish a Muslim Day".[31] Some of the Muslim communities even received score sheets with various attacks having a higher score, as if hurting Muslims is a sport. Some news outlet urged Muslim women to abandon their Hijab during April 3rd or to stay at home to avoid danger.[32] Besides this specific event, the women in the research concur by expressing constant pressure to unveil.[33] Nevertheless, the Hijab works as a shelter against Western standards of beauty. Fighting against societal pressures of conforming allows the women who veil to feel empowered to overturn other beauty ideals that do not conform to their notion and standards of beauty.

Western ideals beauty and standards versus Hijab and body satisfaction

Wearing the hijab in North America provides the women with a strong sense of courage because they are aware that they are deviating from the norm, towards something that has yet been publicly embraced. Compared to how it would be to wear the Hijab in a country with the majority of Muslims.[34] This deviation from the norm seems to apply to the Western standards of beauty as well. Several studies indicate that the women do not feel pressured to adhere to these ideals of beauty due to the Hijab. "The participants felt able to engage in society while being free from the bondage of 'Western beauty standards'" (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, 39). In Wazni & Beckmann's research "One participant noted, 'I do believe it [Hijab] protects me'" –against beauty standards (330). "Several participants stated that the source of positive body image was based in the

[30] Supported by Zahedi who writes, "The Hijab can be functional, providing safety and generating respect." (192)

[31] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/11/world/europe/uk-muslims-letters.html

[32] http://english.alarabiya.net/en/features/2018/04/03/UK-women-told-to-hide-their-hijabs-stay-indoors-on-Punish-a-Muslim-day.html

[33] (Haddad 257),

[34] (Hoodfar 208).

hijab's concealment of their bodies from public view." (Wazni & Beckmann 330).

This perception that the Hijab shields the women from beauty standards is remarkable because according to Hoodfar, there is a clear movement to remove the Hijab which signals that Western 'style' is the "model to emulate", (Hoodfar 191), signaling that all emulations of any other type of culture are seen as inferior to the West. Even more remarkable was the finding in Wazni & Beckmann's research: "When asked whether participants related the hijab to a positive or negative body image, none reported a negative body image." (330). Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich's results supports the relation between: positive body image and the Hijab as they state;

> They also reported feeling free from the judgment of peers based on external, Western ideals of beauty. This type of freedom led the participants to feel more secure and confident after adopting the hijab. (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich 39)

The dichotomy between the societal signals of being inferior and not fitting in with the beauty standards is similar to the dichotomy between the etic notion that the Hijab is a mode of oppression, and the Muslim women's view and personal experience with the Hijab. The etic perception seems to constantly believe the opposite of what the Muslim woman who wears the Hijab is trying to convey. Although North American media (post 9/11) has viewed Islam as a skewed religion with archaic morals[35] that utilizes the Hijab as a mode of 'oppression',[36] the women who wear the Hijab claim the opposite. In Wazni & Beckmann's research:

> "All participants stated that they do feel that the hijab may challenge Western images of empowered or feminist women, but that it is not necessarily in contradiction to Western values of female empowerment and feminism. […] A majority of the participants also stated that they felt that Western images of empowered women tend to exploit women's bodies by commercializing them, and they challenged Western beauty standards as well. "(330-1)

These statements make it clear that the etic perception of Islam, and in particular the perception of the Hijab, could not be more inaccurate from the lived reality.

Conclusion

Since 9/11 there has been a noticeable change in sentiments towards Muslims, and it has become increasingly normalized to express hostile opinions about Muslim with a particular focus on the sartorial practice of wearing a Hijab. The Hijab in the eyes of many North American non-Muslims has become a symbol of oppression and separates non-Muslim women from Muslim women. This separation between non-Muslim women and Muslim women in North America, has been coined as 'othering' and is not unique to North America; rather it is a worldwide phenomenon. All of the research papers used for this essay indicate that North American Muslim women are targeted, and some even assaulted due to their sartorial practice of wearing the Hijab. However, there seems to be little indication that these hostile attitudes have affected the average Muslim woman in her choice of wearing the Hijab. Even though the women interviewed in some of the research papers explicitly recount how

[35] Haddad 255&257

[36] (Wazni & Beckmann 331)

they have been assaulted or harassed, the women also claim that they feel that the Hijab has provided them with a 'safety-net',[37] and makes them feel more integrated in their society.[38] This is certainly hard to comprehend since the Hijab makes the women more visibly vulnerable to Islamophobia. Some researches reveal that the societal 'othering' inflicts on the women when they express their religiosity by wearing the Hijab. Nonetheless, most of the women express that the Hijab is necessary for their identity as an American or Canadian, since both countries pride themselves on the freedom of religion and expression.[39] Some of the research used for this essay also indicated that the Muslim Woman feels liberated from Western idealizations and expectations of beauty once they don the Hijab. Many of the researchers claim that the discourse of the Hijab relates back to Colonialism and Orientalism, and the modern expression of the Colonialism is the fact that there is increasing acceptability in legally limiting the sartorial practice of wearing the Hijab in public. This archaic desire to make women who veil (in this case) conform, enforces women who veil to make an active decision to fight against societal structures, or to take flight away from those societal structures and conform.

The focus of this essay was to reveal the dichotomy between being more exposed to Islamophobic assault due to the Hijab, and somehow feeling more integrated into a society that is expressing an increasing hostility towards that specific practice. Although the main methodology used for this essay is Phenomenological, there are some implements of a Sociological perspective due to the discourse that accompanies this topic. These two methodologies are necessary in order to understand why Muslim women choose to wear the Hijab in a society that is increasingly hostile towards these specific traditions. Hopefully, this interesting dichotomy will gain further recognition in relation to Islamic discourse since "there is new and emerging research about how the Hijab may actually work to protect women against negative body image ideals." (Wazni & Beckmann 327).

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Ceci N'est Pas Une Atheist; A Nietzschean Analysis of "Atheism" in Memes

Emily Mastragostino

Internet Atheists are some of the most persistently righteous groups in the modern age of media. The average Internet Atheist does not always make accurate claims about the religion that they are disputing. Nonetheless, they often assert it confidently and aggressively. More troubling, Internet Atheists do not practice atheism, nor do they seem to understand the position of atheism. In this essay, through a Niezschean analysis, I will argue that internet depictions of God created by Internet Atheists, in the form of memes, represent an inability to confront the death of God through their simultaneous celebration of the loss of the divinity of God and absorption and enforcement of the ideologies of theism, making Internet Atheists distinctly theist. I will analyze this through Nietzsche's conceptualization of atheism, Jean Luc Nancy and Freud's use of fetishism, and Christopher Hitchens' descriptions of Atheism.

I consider Internet Atheism to be a subsection of New Atheism. New Atheism is a twenty-first century position of rejecting God through the rational critique of God and religion (Wolf). Internet Atheism uses new media to reject the idea of a literal God through attempts to rationally delegitimize a literal God. These ideas are shared through internet forums and communities. Internet Atheism is often known for belligerent attempts to disprove God through science and logic. Internet Atheists communicate their position through a variety of platforms including blogs, vlogs, comment sections, fanfiction[1], and memes.

Memes are a staple of internet participatory culture. Memes are digital communicatory symbols that convey ideologies through the addition of text to images that already hold meaning (Marwick 1). Memes often include parody, pastiche, and satire (Marwick, 1). Limor Schifman defines memes as "cultural information that passes along from person to person, yet gradually scales into a shared social phenomenon" (Marwick, 2). Essentially, the birth of a meme involves an individual creating a meaningful image

[1] See *The Chronicles of Jesus and Shrek*, *Jesus and Hitler: A Romance*, *Jesus Gets Nailed*, and *When Jesus Comes* as found on fanfiction.net.

which eventually spreads through an internet community that adds to, alters, and shares their variations of the original image. Ultimately, memes become shared so prevalently within the internet communities that it shapes both online and offline culture.

This essay will focus on two strands of memes; God in Action and Advice God. Both memes are appropriations of a classical image of a divine God that aim to analyze the concept of God, as the Internet Atheist community understands God to be. The “God” represented in the memes does not necessarily accurately portray God (it is a false God, which will be discussed further). Nor do the memes differentiate between God, god, or gods of different religions, texts, or cultures. The memes generally describe popular atheist assumptions of the God of Abrahamic religions, though they do not generally recognize this to be their position. Rather, internet atheists tend to assume a totalizing stance of mastery on God and religion in general. Even when misrepresenting God, the Internet Atheist’s discourse about “God” reveals the position of Internet Atheism regarding theism. I will be focusing on what this discourse reveals about Internet Atheists, without consideration for whether their representation of God is accurate. However, due to Internet Atheism’s implicit focus on Abrahamic religions, when referring to theism there will be a focus on Abrahamic religions in my analysis.

Internet atheists may not understand a specific religions’ concept of God, nor, do internet atheists fully understand their own position in the dichotomy of atheism-theism. However, these concepts do have general definitions. Nietzsche describes the fundamental structure of God, atheism, and, theism. These three concepts converge at one event: the death of God. Nietzsche, through the madman, proclaims that God is dead (181). This is not a physical death as in the end of an organism’s functioning. Rather, the death of God is the destruction of the power that God held over humanity (Nietzsche 181). When “alive”, so to speak, God enforced meaning, stability, and control. Dictating that these ideologies originate in God, rather than humans, allows these concepts of order and knowledge to be accepted as universal, “natural” laws. Thus, God’s ideologies are the only truth and they are indisputable. When God is dead there can be no “natural” laws. The death of God occurs when individuals no longer believe the metaphor to be literal. If God is not understood as a literal higher power then God’s laws are not divine. Like the madman in Nietzsche’s parable *The Madman,* without God we cannot orient ourselves – we cannot understand where we are moving, if we are moving, what will happen to us? (181). For those that understand the consequences of the death of God, the world becomes disoriented.

Atheists and theists share the common dead God. The ideologies and understanding of both these group can be seen in a dichotomy. Atheism is a complete loss of God in both understanding that God does not exist as well as the consequences of losing God as a source of unequivocal order, understanding, and meaning. From the parable of the madman we can see that to fully understand that God does not exist is to relinquish all ideologies that are associated with God because they are arbitrary without the authority of God (Nietzsche, 181). Society is largely built on the ideologies of God, so removing the ideologies requires a complete restructuring of the ways in which individuals and groups view and live in the

world. An atheist comprehends that without God there is chaos; all paradigms that previously gave meaning, value, and understanding no longer apply to the world. Thus, atheism is a paradigm shift from believing that God, and thus God's values, are natural properties of the universe to understanding that there are no natural ideologies in the world. Atheism is a full rejection of every aspect of God.

God in Action meme

Alternatively, there are individuals who recognise that God does not exist but do not realize the loss of order, understanding, and meaning attached to the death of God. These individuals often identify as atheists but their behaviour and understanding of the world do not match those of atheism. By not realizing the consequences of the death of God, these individuals continue to exist through the meaning, values and understanding of God. These individuals are in the shadow of God (167). To live in the shadow of God is not to be free of God. Thus, individuals in the shadow of God cannot be atheists.

Instead, those who practice and perpetuate the ideologies of God conform to theism. Theists understand the world through the ideologies associated with God. This includes accepting ideologies that dictate that there is a singular truth or morality that has supreme value. Like the self-diagnosed "atheist", an individual may recognize that God does not exist. If he or she does not recognize the impact of the death of God, then he or she will live through the order, understanding, and meaning of theism. Thus, believing or not believing in God is not a requirement for theism, it is the behaviours and understanding of the world that define atheism and theism. The only difference between the theist that believes in God and the theist that does not is the understanding of where the order of the world comes from. Both theists behave as though the world has natural order, whether or not they dispute the existence of God is a semantic that does not affect their understanding of the world through God. This will be seen in the Advice God memes further in the essay. In the dichotomy of atheism-theism, atheism purges all ideologies of God and theism believes and upholds the paradigms of

God. Internet Atheists perpetuate the ideologies of God.

With this understanding of the position of worldviews in relation to God, distinct ways in which Internet Atheists understand the world and themselves become evident. In *God, Charlie, No One,* Jean Luc Nancy discusses the representation of God. Nancy states that giving a name, or specific image to God undermines the stature of a divine being because a name or image suggests that it is possible to understand or compare God (Nancy). If God can be understood or compared, then God is not divine (Nancy). Memes give God an image and characteristics. In this, memes define God. By defining God, Internet Atheists create a position in which they can defy God. Internet Atheists, particularly in memes, mainly, if not always, communicate their identity in contrast to their conception of God. Without identifying "God" to compare themselves to, Internet Atheists would not be able exist as a distinct group. However, when a name or image is given to God, the idea refers to a false god (Nancy). Thus, the Internet Atheists are disputing what they assume God to be. The false God is a fetish, and the fetish becomes a meme.

Freud conceptualizes fetish through the relationship of a mother and son. The son assumes that his mother has a penis (1). When he discovers her lack of penis he fears his own castration (Freud, 1). The fear of castration makes the son unwilling to consciously accept that the mother does not have a penis (Freud, 2). Thus, he represses the lack of penis and creates a substitute penis to prevent the trauma of realizing the truth (Freud, 3). The last association made before the trauma, often women's underwear, becomes the substitute (Freud, 3). The substitute is the fetish. Through this process, God imagery has become a fetish object to protect against the trauma of the death of God.

When individuals discover the lack of God they fear the consequences. The meaninglessness and chaos of a world without God is recognized in the unconscious. If this realization becomes conscious the individual will experience trauma. To protect against trauma, a fetish is created out of the last sign of safety. As God was the last instance of meaning, understanding, and purpose in the world, his image is fetishized. Particularly, images of God from periods where God held meaning (before the death of God) become the substitute.

In the creation of the fetish the mind is divided. Both sections of the mind recognize reality; both know that the mother lacks a penis and that God is dead. However, they do not both act in accordance. The unconscious mind recognizes the fears of the truth; castration and chaos. These fears are what prevents the conscious mind from understanding reality. Instead, the conscious understands the fetish. In the case of God's death, the conscious admits that God is dead but does not recognize the meaning of God's death.

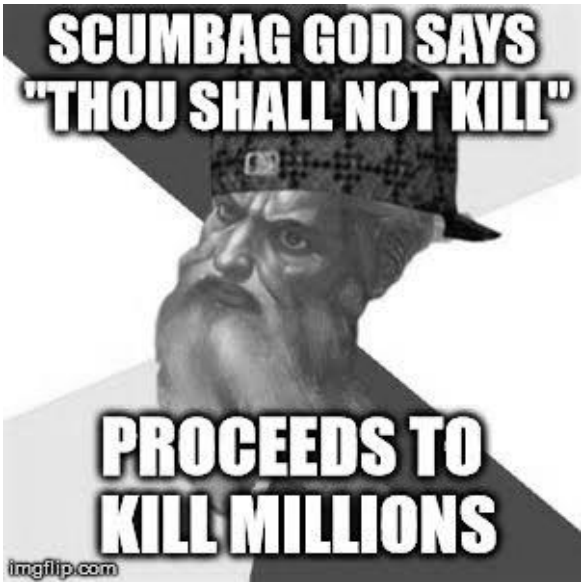
Internet representations of the image of God recreate the death of God while refusing to accept the meaning. God in Action is a meme parody series in which God from Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* is inserted into various, mortal situations. For instance, God is photoshopped into a NBA basketball game mid-slam-dunk with his arm reaching an imposed basketball into the net (ben). In another, God is added to a *Where's Waldo* search game reaching out to identify Waldo (ben). In a final example, God is imposed onto a motorcycle with his arm reaching to steal a woman's purse (ben). Through these images, Internet Atheists fetishize the

image of a divine God by placing God in human situations. On the surface, this is a celebration of the death of God. The image of Michelangelo's God represents the world before the death of God. *The Creation of Adam* is a "vision of the sublimity of God and the potential nobility of man" ("The Creation of Adam, By Michelangelo"). God represents omniscience and omnibenevolence to which man's life is structured and understood through attempts to emulate. Michelangelo's image of God represents an ordered and structured world that is comprehensive. This visual substitute protects from the trauma of the chaos of life without God. However, appropriating the image of God from the divine situation of the painting recognizes and perpetuates the death of God; God no longer is represented as celestially immortal.

Depicting God in human situations revokes God's power and divinity. In this way, Internet Atheists recognize that God no longer holds divine power and exceptionality. An atheist would feel the loss of meaning in the recognition of the death of God. However, the memes of internet atheism place God in comical situations meant to celebrate the lack of power that God holds over the individual. In fact, the humour comes from disruption of the divinity of God by juxtaposing God with mundane or immoral tasks. Like those in the marketplace of Nietzsche's aphorism, the *Parable of a Madman*, the meme creators, and consumers laugh at and celebrate the death of God without considering the repercussions of the event.

Advice God and Scumbag God also fetishize God by appropriating representations of a divine God. Like the God in Action memes, Advice God recognizes and perpetuates the death of God by representing God without divinity. Advice God is a visual argument against the plausibility and morality of a literal God existing. This meme series features the head of Michelangelo's representation of God in *The Creation of the Sun and the Moon* (imasillypiggy). A summarized argument of a religious value or "truth" appears above the head of "God". This text is meant to replicate "God's" thoughts. Text below the head of "God" contradicts the religious statement above the head. The below portion of the meme is meant to invalidate the first and, thus the religion's credibility.

For example, in one variation of this meme the above portion states, "create entire universe out of nothing" and in the below portion states "need Adam's rib to create 1 more thing" ("Advice God Memes"). The above portion represents the Internet Atheist's belief of God's attributed action. The below portion problematizes belief in God by questioning the processes of creation. Specifically, the meme suggests it is contradictory to



believe that God can create a universe out of nothing yet is incapable of creating one more object out of nothing. The combination of these assumed religious

sentiments is an attempt to discredit God through religion.

Additionally, the structure of the meme's attempts to subvert a literal God is distinctly theist. A major focus of the Advice God meme is truth, and morality. The origin of the value of these concepts is God. New Atheism guides Internet Atheism in this fight against God through theism. Christopher Hitchens, a prominent figure in New Atheism, describes the ways in which New Atheism disagrees with religion, including the source of truth and level of morality. These concepts are seen in Internet Atheism's memes

The concept that there can only be one truth is distinctly theist. Theism relies on the maintenance of a single truth so that the world is structured in a way that positions God as indisputable. Psalms states "All [God's] words are true; all [God's] righteous laws are eternal" (119:160)[2]. God creates indisputable laws of truth. Thus, anything that contradicts God cannot be true. As such, theists follow God's laws. In the bible, David, in prayer, asks "Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth" (Psalms 86:11). David relies on the guidance of God in understanding the world. God is the single truth that gives meaning and understanding.

Theists each have versions of the single truth. The origin story is an example of a truth of the Abrahamic God because it is considered the single, indisputable way in which the world was created. Internet Atheism perceives creationism and intelligent design to be religion's greatest sin. Memes target the ideology that God created the world. From the perspective of God, a variation of the Advice God meme states "Everything needs a creator" followed by "Except me" (imasillypiggy). This meme questions the origin of God using the religious ideology that everything comes from a creator. Internet Atheism, through memes, states that the belief that God does not need a creator subverts the singular truth that everything needs a creator (God). The Internet Atheists disagree with the single truths put forth by God.

Rebuking the singular truth is a product of rejecting the ideologies of God. Without the belief of a literal God no single truth can be believed. The atheist recognizes that the death of God allows a plurality of truths to be valid. This is possible because there is no longer a supreme authority on what is "true". However, Internet Atheism rebukes God's "truth" in place of their own "truth". Science and free inquiry are the substitute to the specific teachings of religion (Hitchens 4). Now, science is the dictator of truth (Hitchens 4). Science aims to empirically prove a single truth. Thus, Internet Atheism does not rebuke the ideology that there can only be one truth. Instead, science becomes the new supreme authority in dictating the single truth, just as God was before.

Memes represent this transfer of truth from God to Science. A variation of Advice God, called Scumbag God follows the same visual and argumentative structure. The Scumbag God meme series differs from Advice God in that it imposes a backwards, tight-fitted baseball cap (appropriated from another meme) onto an individual or object as an expression of contempt, to which the text supplements context. As per the internet lexicon, a "scumbag" is an individual without morals or concern for others (sillybeggar). In this

[2] All references from the bible will be from the *New Standard Revised Version*

symbol, God is the "scumbag." A variation of Scumbag God substitutes the image of God with a strand of DNA. The meme reads "Let's give you facial hair, a flat butt, big shoulders, a deep voice" followed by "and a vagina" (imasillypiggy). This suggest that biology dictates appearance. The DNA strand symbolizes science which the text places as the creator and ultimate power. Science becomes the God of Internet Atheism. Thus, the truth of science must be the only accepted one. The acceptance of a single truth upholds the theistic system of order.

Additionally, morality as valuable is a fundamental principle of God. As with truth, a singular morality is upheld. In Luke, Jesus says "No one is good but God alone" (18:19). God functions as the source of morality by representing the ultimate good. Further, God's goodness defines the relationship between God and Humans; Proverbs states that if one follows the wisdom and world structure of God then they "will walk in the ways of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous" (2:20). Thus, humans relate to God through attempts to replicate God's morality. Internet Atheists disagree with the notion that God is good and that individuals should emulate God. For example, a Scumbag God meme reads "Scumbag God Says 'Thou Shalt Not Kill'" followed by "[God] Proceeds to Kill Millions". This meme suggests that God hypocritically dictates not to kill, thus God is not the ultimate good. The meme correctly identifies that God is the original source of the moral ideology that poses murder as irreprehensible. An atheist would reject this ideology because of its origin. An atheist recognizes that the death of God indicates morality, and its specific principles, are not natural properties.

Instead, the theme of the meme demonizes God for breaking the moral code. Internet Atheists compare what they consider to be God's morality to their own. New atheists argue that religion allows, encourages, and permits individuals to behave in morally questionable ways (Hitchens, 4). For example, Hitches states that God calls for the killing of civilians so that holy objects can be created (4). Advice God meme depicts religion to be immoral based on its own structure. For example, a meme, from the perspective of God states in the top portion "makes murder a sin" followed by "forces Abraham to kill his son Isaac" in the bottom portion (imasillypiggy). This meme suggests that Internet Atheist believe that even God is inconsiderate of God's own moral structure.

In contrast, Hitchens argues that atheists behave in more morally acceptable ways. This method of learning morality is said to be effective based on the low crime rates of New Atheists (4). Specifically, Hitchens states that New Atheists have lower rates of crime, including greed and violence (4). Whether or not this is true, the moral ideology that greed and violence are fundamentally, and categorical wrong is an ideology of God (Mark 7:22, Psalms 11:5). The inability of "New Atheism" to refuse the principles associated with God suggest that New Atheism does not recognize the impact of the death of God.

Memes use this process of demonizing God in such a way that positions internet atheists as the good. By defining God, Internet Atheists create a position of the other (Said, 10). Internet Atheists then create their own identity in contrast to the other (Said, 10). If the other is bad, then Internet Atheists, who do not accept what they assume to be the other (God), are good. However, this ultimately reverts to the Godly dichotomy which conceptualizes the world through good

and evil. Although Internet Atheism holds that God does not exist it continues to conform to the principles, values, and morality of God.

Fundamentally, the judgements of truth, morality, and goodness are an analysis of the enactment of the concepts of God based on the concepts of God. This puts Internet Atheists in a position where they analyze God through God’s logic while proclaiming God’s death. Ultimately, Internet Atheists are attempting to give order to the world by imposing a single ultimate system which they assume will provide meaning and understanding. The specific rules and values they give overlap with those of theism. More importantly, by trying to impose any system they are reinforcing the theist system.

In conclusion, Internet Atheists understand that God is dead, however, they do not cognate the consequences of the death of God. Instead, internet atheists create memes to protect themselves from the fear of losing the guidance that God provides. These memes unconsciously appropriate, propagate, and enforce the structure of theism. Consequently, Internet Atheists cannot be atheists. Furthermore, without God the structures of theism cannot last; the impact of the death of God will hit us. Until then there will be no atheists. When atheists emerge, they will restructure society through the rejection of God’s conceptualization of truth, meaning, and purpose. The internet and memes will be an important platform for creating and sharing the new reality. For now, we’ll just have to live with the whining of the Internet Atheist.

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On Narratives

“Paris is like her, and so is life”: *The Fire Within* (1963) and the Impotent Surrealist Mode

Patrick Bull

The author enters *The Fire Within* (Louis Malle, 1963) from an inevitably personal position, having long found comfort in its empathetic portrait of depression. Its sparse English-language critical appraisals take a similar approach, leaning on biographical, auteurist sketches of a young and troubled Malle to emphasize the film's "world weariness," "pessimism" (Frey, 23-24), "malaise" (Dambre, 26), and existentialist ennui (Ciment 13, Brenner, 56). Attracting mostly passing mentions within academia, the film likewise finds shallow appreciation online, where fragments of its script ("I'm leaving you with your worst enemy: yourself," "Sleep is all I believe in," and so on) have a second home on the blogs of the logged-on-and-depressed. The author distances himself from these readings, mentioning them only to dismantle them by searching for the root causes of the film and its protagonist's angst—to push analyses of *The Fire Within* out of the first-person and into the third.

The film's source novel, *Le feu follet* (1931), was inspired by the suicide of author Pierre Drieu La Rochelle's friend, Jacques Rigaut. A surrealist poet and notorious womanizer, Rigaut "exerted a strong fascination on André Breton" and associates but published little before his death in 1929, aged 30 (Ciment, 6). Transporting the story to the streets of Paris and Versailles in 1963, the film retains this inspiration, characterizing its protagonist Alain Leroy (albeit less explicitly, the original movement having dissipated) as a surrealist. *The Fire Within* is not a surrealist film, but it is—without mentioning the word—about the surrealist mode, a lifestyle tied to but distinct from its artworks. Malle's film maintains Drieu's critique of that mode. Its narrative and stylistic strategies impart the surrealist's experience onto the viewer, underscoring its limitations and implying that its inept ability to cope with the modern city is the source of Alain's depression and anxiety. Central to this ineptness is an exaggerated conception of the surrealist as impotent, inhibited by passive, visual engagement with the world and driven to self-destruction by fatal associations between women and death.

Looking Backwards: The Surrealist Mode

Alain enters Paris of 1963 in medias res: the first shot within the city omits narrative justification (the act of crossing, a clear destination) to place him in the middle of a busy road, cars moving in front of and behind him in a visual, aural, and potentially physical sensory assault. Following a comparatively serene look out a car window, this shaky image's subtle violence and irresolution distill an

otherwise mundane action into the quintessential depiction of urban shocks. This is the fleeting and forceful attraction, the mobility, the abruptness, the "contra-contemplative distraction" that is sated by (and perhaps births) the cinema (Singer 102-104, Benjamin, "Some Motifs" 132), that dulls the mind once it is prepared for and accustomed to the onslaught (Simmel 37), that builds asocial barriers between figures in the crowd in order to maintain the city's machinist functions (37-38), that forces an unthinking habituation onto the urbanite (Vidler, 83), that comes—per surrealist Antonin Artaud—at a "turning point in human thought" (50). Surrealism, "offering frenzy and darkness" (Aragon 65), attempts to re-enchant minds lost to Simmel's blasé attitude (35) and Benjaminian distraction (Vidler 83); it is a mode of perception and a corrective coping mechanism.

Surrealism responds to modernity by privileging what it leaves behind. The marvelous (re)surfaces in "the 'outmoded,' in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them" (Benjamin, "Surrealism" 181), and in encounters with (usually strange) women (Sitney 28). It *awaits* these materialist and anthropological inspirations (Benjamin, "Surrealism" 179) so as not to consciously impede the experience, hoping to surprise the subconscious mind without interference from artistic, intellectual, or subjective prejudices that codify the world rationally (Turvey, 107, 109). This conception of the subconscious depends upon the psychoanalytic implication that "the dreams of magistrates, presidents of the republic, and archbishops are closer to the visions of Sade than to those of Plato"—in other words, by psychoanalysis' equalizing construct of the human mind, rather than its therapeutic applications (Sitney, 32), which the surrealists distrust (Breton, 139-141). This subconscious experience is Proust's madeleine without the "willed memory" that rationally organizes his olfactory sensation (Benjamin, "Some Motifs" 111-112); it is Baudelaire's lyrical *Erfahrung* restored under impossible circumstances (117). Like Benjamin, the surrealists look backwards into the energies of a crumbling nineteenth century. Between them and the madeleine lies the replacement of the arcades by department stores (Friedberg, 77), the rational mechanism of the futurists (Turvey, 106-107), and the Great War. The surrealist outlook, though bleak, serves a restoration project, attempting to reclaim the experiences and social connections that a shock-resistant modern mind obstructs. Its attentive looking and social bonding, though seemingly simplistic in practice, is conceived as revolutionary and irreverent in this context. Because its mode of reception and psychological (de)organization is so important to its artistic products—towards automatic, uninhibited creation (111)—the surrealist artist is not characterized by their art alone. As Man Ray wrote, "I was a surrealist before I was a photographer" (84).

Alain Leroy, writing little in the sanitarium, is a surrealist in body and mind; *The Fire Within* will disrupt its narrative and formal threads in order to emphasize and share his experiences with/of objects and women. This trend is most clearly established in his disheveled bedroom, to which the film dedicates a prolonged passage, nearly wordless and nearly ten minutes in length. "It is just when the possibilities of an encounter are

agonizingly limited—when I am alone in my room, when I am asleep, when I am running at full speed—that I most expect an apparition to possess me utterly," writes Aragon (53-54). It is in this isolated state that Alain will try in vain to record his thoughts. Erik Satie's *Gnossiennes* dominate the soundtrack.[1] Halting the narrative trajectory, Alain collects and toys with morbid newspaper clippings, photographs, a few playing cards, a novelty hat, his favourite brand of cigarettes—no longer sold in stores—and a bobble head, muttering barely perceptible words to himself in a trance-like fugue. His cluttered walls prove that this is a regular habit. Among the useless and the outmoded—he tells his doctor that he collects "prewar objects"—are a number of stand-ins for his estranged wife and mistress, both living in the United States: a porcelain doll holding an American flag, and a check written by his mistress.

Like the surrealists, he seeks inspiration in women as well as objects—transfixed at the window by a woman carrying a violin—and like the surrealists he will confuse the boundaries between the two. Breton is "closer to the things that Nadja is close to than her" (Benjamin, "Surrealism" 181), and Man Ray's depiction of the encounter in *L'Étoile de mer* (1928) ignores the woman stripping in favour of her paperweight (Sitney, 30). Drieu's novel transparently critiques this surrealist tendency:

> In the absence of people who melted away as soon as he left them and often much sooner, these objects still gave him the illusion of touching something outside himself. It was thus that Alain had fallen into miserly idolatry; more and more, he became immediately dependent upon the absurd objects which his short-lived, sardonic whims selected (23).

Malle's film is rarely so didactic—and much more sympathetic—but suggests the same psychological trajectory. Lydia, after appearing in the only sex scene retained from the novel, disappears into the walls; her photographs, and the check she writes, impose a spectral presence onto Alain's room and psyche as he searches for inspiration. Her pearl necklace, emphasized by a close-up of the nightstand during their liaison, reappears on Solange's nightstand before the last, unconsummated encounter. This objectified reference to Lydia's sex scene underlines—as Alain lies drunkenly, miserably, and alone in Solange's bed—his chaste resignation to lonesome impotency. For Benjamin, this is the essential characteristic of the surrealist in love: mystification nearly to the point of dehumanization, preferring love's potential to inspire over its sensual pleasures ("Surrealism", 181). After *The Fire Within* imparts the experience of the encounter onto the audience, it mirrors Alain's object-ifying gaze, turning the womanizer himself into the outmoded.

Vanishing into the Woodwork

She appears without warning, interrupting Alain and Dubourg's stroll through the Odéon Theater arcades. *She* emerges from a taxi, after a cut

[1] While it is true that Malle used Satie's music in a number of films, including *My Dinner with Andre* (1981) and *Vanya on 42nd Street* (1994)—thus inviting auteurist considerations of a larger musical project in his oeuvre—*The Fire Within* used it exclusively and first, suggesting a textually specific purpose. Satie was mainly associated with dada artists, but it was his music for which the term "surrealist" was coined (Flynn 30).

unannounced by a motivating gaze. *She* is in close-up and presumed narratively important—perhaps another of Alain's friends, or about to become one. *She* commandeers Alain's heretofore organizing gaze when, looking to her right, *she* motivates the following cut to Alain and Dubourg. Alain exchanges a smile as *she* walks by, out of the frame and the film. This stranger penetrates the film's most basic, instantiated organizing code—the shot/counter shot—to bypass its rational organization as if entering directly into its subconscious. As in Buñuel's first films, the "liberated thought" stands out by establishing and then subverting such codes, arriving "against a conventional background upon which it is dependent for visibility" (Turvey, 124). *She* mimics the experience of the encounter for the viewer—or she would, had Alain subsequently engaged her. Dubourg says to Alain: "She makes you want to touch her. Paris is like her, and so is life." Having interrupted the narrative with Alain's limited grasp of the marvelous in isolation, *The Fire Within* upends its formal structures with the encounter, exposing his limited capabilities on the streets of Paris. He passively awaits and then denies himself the *Erfahrung*, avoiding the inevitably impotent conclusion and retaining asocial barriers. The film makes Alain's ineptness and frustrations around "touching" clear; lines like "the sensitivity was in my heart, not my hands" dominate his last conversations. Its trajectory—from sex scene to chastity, from dodging cars to nearly getting hit by one—disintegrates his already limited tactile engagement with the world. It also, more subtly, strips away his visual agency; in the absence of the tactile, he loses his sole remaining power over the city.

The encounter wrestles Alain's gaze away from him to suggest, without constantly interrupting the film's formal structures, that each other look will do the same. This suggestion, in tandem with a pattern of vocal judgments about Alain's appearance, conditions the viewer's interpretation of innocuous glances until that interpretation is synchronized with the protagonist's: fearing their eyes and internalizing their critiques—even if they are unspoken. Each person from Alain's past will comment on his appearance in relation to the past: "Poor guy. He's really changed. His face!" "He was so full of life." "You look like death warmed over."[2] "See that face? Alcohol. He's done for. A shame. He was good looking." Each render retrospective wounds onto Alain's psyche until such wounds are no longer necessary: when a woman at the Café de Flore watches him silently, it is apparent that her gaze alone makes him uneasy. He reverts to drinking. Her eyes do more than threaten him with the encounter, which he impotently fears: they threaten him with a self-image—wrestled from his psyche and implanted directly into his subconscious—characterized by *decay*. The penultimate scene, at Place des Vosges, gathers people from Alain's past but omits their comparative criticism—criticism is now writ into the act of looking itself. When Alain comes down the stairs the guests fall silent. A point of view shot places the viewer directly inside him as they turn around to stare. Judgment is masked by social customs in the polite and faux-intellectual atmosphere of the dinner party: in hollow compliments ("Young as ever"), and offscreen laughter that

[2] Eva adds: "You have lovely eyes." This character is not in Drieu's novel; her relative kindness helps orient a more sympathetic portrait of Alain (Ciment 11).

prompts him to suspiciously search for its source. The guests' lively stories about his past contrast sharply with the present. Alain starts ranting under the pressure, frustrated by the crumbling of his already passive faculties. The former womanizer—in his eyes and others'—has become the outmoded relic. "The women here tonight, I can't desire them. They scare me. Scare me! Take Solange, for instance. Five minutes with her and I'd feel like an insect." Shouting at no one in particular into the city's oldest planned residency, he adds: "I'd vanish into the woodwork."

The Fire Within exaggerates the surrealist's receptive practices in order to critique their use-value. Alain succumbs to the alienation wrought by an increasingly transparent, ocular cityscape that substitutes glances for oral communication (Vidler, 69-70, 77). The surrealist's passive privileging of the visual over the tactile, most clearly represented by his impotency, denies him the habituated distraction that Vidler teases out of Benjamin: the ability to "feel" one's way through the city, losing sight of it in the process (84). This is a desensitized state—toward *Erlebnis* rather than *Erfahrung* (Benjamin, "Some Motifs" 117)—but it is also a less anxious "experience." His visual agency is a poor substitute, deteriorating without an accompanying active impulse; its objectifying limitations are revealed when they are mirrored. His conception of others is too dehumanizing, and his fear of women too overpowering, to break down the rationally organized barriers of the asocial, blasé attitude. Neither one with nor above the crowd (Berman, 139), he can only restore Baudelaire's metropolitan lyricism in limited ways. He fails to produce any writing because his methods are not, after all, conducive to enchantment. Neither distractedly habituated nor re-enchanted, he stands stranded between these roads. *The Fire Within* suggests that surrealism's morbidly selective but unfamiliar reception of the city is merely touristic.

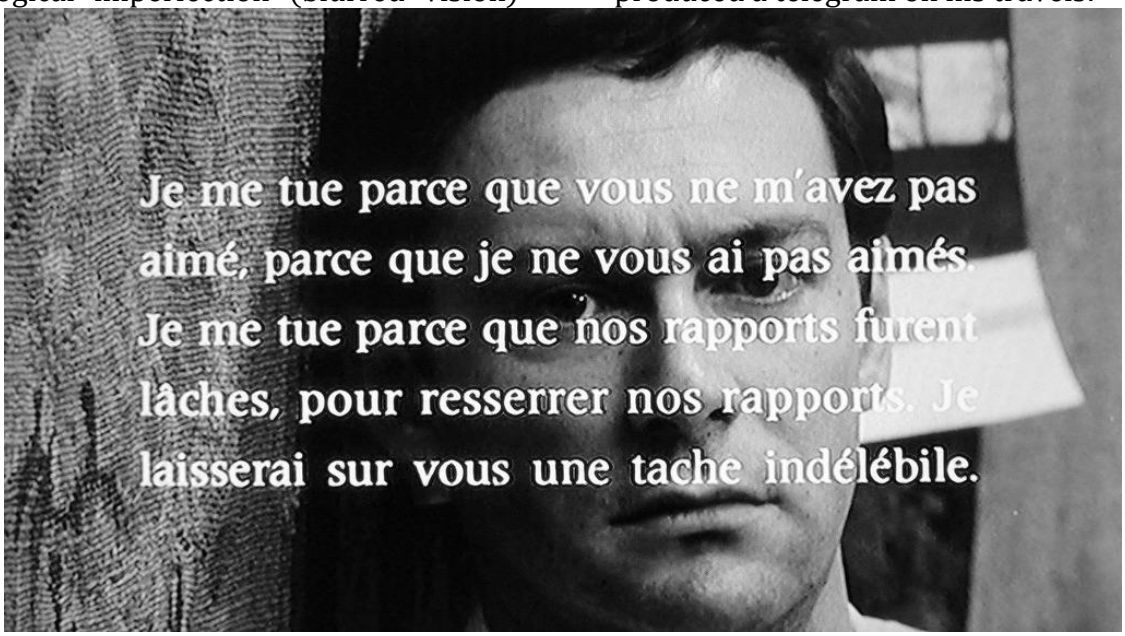
The Passenger

Alain tells Dubourg that he does not feel at home in Paris; he feels "like a visitor" in the city. A prolonged tracking shot follows him in close-up after their stroll, substantiating this claim: he does not look down, as if accustomed to the city, but up, around, and all over—a necessary condition of his visually oriented passivity that assumes the demeanor of a tourist. This analogy is central to his last twenty-four hours, which he conceives as a physical journey towards death.

Inside "the city of orgies," as he calls it, Alain is driven towards this inevitable end, resisting—like a good surrealist (Sitney 32, Breton 139-141)—therapeutic assistance whenever it is offered. Dubourg attempts to psychoanalyze him: "You're stuck in adolescence, hence your anxiety." (A group of children run by to represent his diagnosis of infantile regression). Alain resists his help: "If you're my friend, take me as I am, not otherwise." The film attempts to tease out Alain's transferences in Dubourg's stead: besides women and objects, he amalgamates a woman who cheated on him in adolescence with all the women he has dated since, perhaps identifying the roots of his impotency; he transposes Solange's desire for sex "done well" onto his estranged wife, declaring before he kills himself that "Solange answers for Dorothy"; most damningly, he associates women, love, sex, and impotency with death. Lamenting that he cannot "touch" Solange, he says he will "try with death. She should be more accommodating." There is precedence for

this association in surrealist art. In *Paris Peasant*, Aragon describes a woman overwhelmed with repressed sexual desire. Just "as she is about to come flat up against the body she has lured towards her, she shrinks back in a single motion, and with savage exaltation, through a callous suicide, she refuses herself and becomes," like Alain in the woodwork, "a stone, a stone... her whole being is giving way to utter despair" (52-53). To live with but not sate desire is likened to death itself, and Aragon calls her a "living corpse" (53). He will also describe death as a woman (33) and, though not addressing impotency specifically, move pessimistically from the slightest biological imperfection (blurred vision) towards his demise (32). Likewise, *L'Étoile de mer* refers to impotence (Sitney, 32), and relates the woman in the encounter to the vagina dentata (29). *The Fire Within*'s last major criticism of the surrealist mode is its irresolution of the subconscious' inevitable barriers to experience, affixing its pet associations to the indoctrinated and thus calling into question the unhindered accessibility of a collective, equalizing mental base. In other words, doubting the foundation of surrealism's receptive powers.

The trip through the city of orgies is conceived as an intentionally torturous experience, projecting Alain's psychoanalytically conceived and fatal associations without the accompanying resolution offered by psychoanalysis. As he tells Dubourg, he is convincing himself to die. In addition to the mirroring and depletion of his visual agency, each passing smile brings him closer to his demise, reminding him of his impotency and thus his death. The morning of his suicide, he prepares for the journey by packing his dearest objects into a suitcase. He shoots himself in the heart, having only produced a telegram on his travels:



Looking backwards, this essay undertakes a dual project. First, to prove that *The Fire Within* retains the surrealist in its makeup—despite its historical displacement—in order to offer a new analytical foundation for a misread and underappreciated film. Second, to prove that this makeup contains a critique of the surrealist response to modernity. The latter requires a brief clarification. Though

it damningly criticizes the mental processes by which Alain arrives in his bed, gun to the heart, *The Fire Within* does not necessarily condemn his choice.[3] "The resistance which modernism offers to the natural productive élan of a person is out of proportion to his strength," writes Benjamin. "It is understandable if a person grows tired and takes refuge in death" ("The Paris of the Second Empire" 75). If the film retains Drieu's criticisms, its empathetic and subjective strategies also restore something of the Baudelairian everyday heroism inherent in his passionate withdrawal (76). Its explicit depiction of his tactile ineptness and implicit depiction of his visual anxieties condition viewers to understand his mental patterns. They may in turn yearn for his enchantment after his objects and encounters impart something of the marvelous that eludes him. The critique is not exclusively of Alain, but of much broader shortcomings in the surrealist "trick by which this world of things is mastered... a revolutionary experience, if not action" ("Surrealism" 182). These shortcomings find a vessel in the figure of an impotent womanizer. Surrealism attempted to penetrate self-imposed asocial boundaries between people but, erecting barriers to social connection through a dehumanizing conception of others (particularly women), arrived at the same conclusion. Its passive, touristic segregation of urban experiences was limited in both its selectively visual and ineptly tactile engagements with the city—a taking rather than a giving that hindered its ability to restore the lyrical. Its investment in the subconscious, coupled with its rejection of therapeutic aides, rendered its outlook and associations fatally pessimistic.

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[3]This is likely true of both the film and its source material: Drieu would take his own life as well—though for very different, collaborative reasons—in 1945 (Ciment 6). This essay has avoided any consideration of Drieu's extreme rightwing politics, in part because Alain in both film and novel is apolitical, disinterested in his friends' concerns. It is notable that the film exclusively highlights his disinterest in the extreme right (calling his friends in the OAS "boy scouts"), distancing itself from Drieu's fascist legacy.

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The Blinding of a Brilliant Retina: William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and the Techno-magical Return of the Pre-Oedipal Subject

Filip Andjelkovic

"The blue sky above us is the optical layer of the atmosphere, the great lens of the terrestrial globe, its brilliant retina."[1]

These are the opening words of Paul Virilio's penetrating critique of cyber technology as he perceived it at the close of the 20th century. Although published more than a decade earlier, the technology of William Gibson's *Neuromancer* is strikingly relevant. The world in which the novel's characters live expresses an interaction with technology in which the dynamism of a differentiated subject/object relation is dissolved. On one hand, geodesic domes encapsulate the "Sprawl:" a vacuum-sealed vision of America's East Coast, now melded into one gigantic, continuous megalopolis. On the other hand, the mind becomes the central locus of experience for characters who enter the "matrix," a globally accessible cyberspace in which towering pyramids and constructs, housing information, stretch infinitely – a mirrored, digital vision of the real world. *Neuromancer's* technology deconstructs precisely that which Virilio found to be a core component of human experience, our capacity to differentiate – spatially and experientially – which was (and perhaps, in his view, still is) under threat. Virilio's celestial eye is blinded in Gibson's novel, the sky of the domed Sprawl is robbed of its capacity to fulfill its all-seeing, optical role. Freud's analysis of self-blinding is particularly potent here. As we see in his favoured Oedipus, self-blinding comes to signify a sublimated castration, re-enacting the unfulfilled castration of the incestuous son at the hands of the father.[1] What occurs is the suppression of an impulse returning in an alternate form, although this is not so alternate for the literally incestuous Oedipus. The return of the *sublimated* impulse, however, is inevitably joined by the (also sublimated) fulfillment of the original threat which lead to the impulse's initial suppression as an unacceptable act.

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[1] Paul Virilio. *Open Sky.* Trans. Julie Rose (London: Verso, 1997), 1.

[1] Sigmund Freud. "The Uncanny" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* Vol. XVII. Trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Vintage, 1919/2001): 218-256, 231.

Thus, the castrated real world of *Neuromancer* amounts to a form of masochistic violence which the society of the novel submits *itself* to, balanced by the fulfilled exaltation of psyche and spirit in the endless mind-world of the matrix. What is vital to note from this Freudian connection is that Gibson's *Neuromancer* reverses the expected role of technology as a progression. Instead, the matrix affords cyber "cowboys," like the protagonist Case, a transcendent *return* to a previously repressed subjectivity that is wholly radical in its re-situation of the subject as omnipotent and omnipresent. For in the matrix, experience is embedded in an environment which is collective and subjective; it is embedded in a cyber environment of not only data and invisible circuitry, but a collective melding of mind and mind. We will relate this notion to Freud's description of primal narcissism, a state which is imperative to repress in order to delineate any discrete boundaries of one's self. This subjectificating role fulfilled by the matrix, its nature as a return of the repressed, highlights the ambiguity of inner vs. outer experience as it relates to spiritual vs. technological, or psychical vs. physical worldviews, beyond the pages of fiction. Thus, this paper will ultimately address the way in which the "occult" notions threading Gibson's novel serve to implicitly mirror this ambiguity as it is seen in magico-spiritual movements throughout Western culture where technology and spirit, the outer and the inner perspectives, often come into confusion.

I. "Jacking In:" The Transgressive Subjectivity of Cyberspace

Ultimately derived from the same Sanskrit root that the Latin *mater* and English "mother" come from, a "matrix" can be defined literally as not only a "supporting or enclosing structure," but a "womb."[2] In Gibson's novel, the characters "jack in" to the matrix through technological extensions of their bodies, yet this is far more than an etymological return to a pre-natal state. As Freud explored in several papers which dealt with the emergence of a delineated subjectivity – a defined perspectival "I-ness" – the earliest stages of development are a particularly vigorous battleground between two structures of organizing experience. First, the infant's original sense of omnipotently extending its subjectivity into the external world, and second, the inevitable negotiation of unpleasure and lack, which restructures the infant's conception of itself and an external reality which must be mediated.[3] [4] [5] [6]

The infantile subject that must sacrifice its own omnipresence is immersed in what Freud identified as "primal narcissism," and the continuous repression of this psychic state is

[2] "matrix, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017.< http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/115057?rskey=wdeXfv&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid > Accessed 14 June 2017.

[3] Sigmund Freud. "On Narcissism: An Introduction" in *S.E.* Vol. XIV. Trans. & ed. James Strachey (London: Vintage, 1914/2001): 69-102, 75-76, 87-88.

[4] Sigmund Freud. "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes" in *S.E.* Vol. XIV. Trans. & ed. James Strachey (London: Vintage, 1915/2001): 111-140, 134-135.

[5] Sigmund Freud. "Civilization and Its Discontents" in *S.E.* Vol. XXI. Trans. & ed. James Strachey (London: Vintage, 1930/2001): 59-145, 66-68.

[6] Also see Winnicott's notion of "transitional phenomena/objects" which more tangibly demarcates an emergence from the Freudian notion of primal narcissism [D.W. Winnicott. "Transitional Objects and Phenomena" in *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1971): 1-34, 1-19].

imperative for the survival of the individual who must fight against the impending return of his or her radically subjective origins. Indeed, it is in the notions of the "otherworld," the land of the dead whose alterity is marked by its denizens' omnipresence, that Freud identifies the migration of the concept of narcissism, refigured as a dangerous marker of human mortality.[7] It is in *Neuromancer's* matrix that the primal state and the land of the dead undergoes a further migration, indeed, a trans-migration into a realm even more ethereally incommensurable with the normal boundaries of selfhood: cyberspace.

As Margaret Wertheim aptly noted, cyberspace is an escape from the empirical emphasis on the body. Most importantly, it is in this regard a *return* to the previous notion of the spirit's exaltation, a notion which was seemingly done away with through the enlightened march of mechanistic technology following the Cartesian divide of the physical realm from the realm of mind.[8] Erik Davis made a similar argument in his seminal *TechGnosis,* stating that cyberspace is "an electronic 'soul-space' that beckons the postmodern psyche to both find and remake itself."[9] In this form, the spirit double that haunts us from the ghostly otherworld of narcissistic omnipotence is now a "digitized soul" as opposed to a pre-Oedipal subject, in psychoanalytic terminology. Despite the techno-*spiritual* (or, rather, techno-*psycho*logical configuration), this ethereal double – the self in cyberspace – is rooted just as thoroughly in a *transcendent* world which blurs the lines between the pre-modern spirit than with the modern psyche. It is in this return of a spirituality, which re-emerges through the very technological mentality that sought its repression, that we find a psychoanalytic basis for the blinding of Virilio's celestial retina – the fulfilled castration threat which returns on a social scale once the taboo of spirit is transgressed.

Yet more so, what is affected by this transgression is a return to the limitless subjectivity of Freud's narcissism through a technological space which is more than animistic, but also capable of becoming an encompassing, omnipresent perspective. Gibson's protagonist, Case, views the world as a "data-map" on which the Sprawl (the dome-encased hub of information exchange which "sprawls" across America's entire East Coast) "burn[s] solid white."[10] Jacked into the matrix, Case is "beyond ego, beyond personality;" moving by the "grace of the mind-body interface granted him,"[11] he experiences "visual information… his distanceless home, his country, transparent 3D chessboard extending to infinity."[12] Virilio echoes these descriptive terms in discussing the real-world effects of cyber and instantaneous media technology; the elimination of space and time through the simultaneity of information exchange, the interface versus the interval,[13] creating a "transapparant horizon," a society that

[7] Freud. "The Uncanny," 235.

[8] Margaret Wertheim. "The Medieval Return of Cyberspace" in *The Virtual Dimension: Architecture, Representation, and Crash Culture.* Ed. John Beckmann (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997): 47-60.

[9] Erik Davis. *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic &Mysticism in the Age of Information* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1998/2015), 201.

[10] William Gibson. *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace, 1984), 43.

[11] *Ibid*., 262.

[12] *Ibid.,* 52.

[13] Virilio. *Open Sky,* 16.

lives in a state of "no future and no past… so intensely present here and there at once."[14] For Virilio, such a society can only experience a "general accident" when it comes to the unfolding of experience (in the sense of "occurrence," from the Latin, *accidere*: to occur). This is a dispersed generality, a dissolution of the boundaries which *contain* experience, that echoes the "hyperreal" society described by Baudrillard, immersed and enfolded into its own simulacra.[15] What is effected by this hyperreal in-distinction between the "here" and the "not-here" (that is, a lack of differentiation between the event and its re-occurrence through instantaneous worldwide re-presentation) is a "delocalization of action and reaction (interaction)"[16] into an "otherworld" – an "implosion of meaning" between the poles of established temporality.[17] This is certainly a perspective which is applicable to Gibson's matrix, and it is not a distant leap to transform the language of "here" and "not here" into the psychoanalytic language of "me" and "not-me."

Where the world of the matrix diverts from a direct parallel with Baudrillard's "simulacra" is in its lack of a multiplying, simulating function. The matrix, like Freud's narcissism, is entirely alien to what roots experience to the real world of differentiated subject/objects. Baudrillard's hyperreality folds back upon itself through a surplus of difference, where the multiplication of what is nevertheless clearly understood as "not-me" becomes so entirely reified in its *thinghood,* in its existence as an object capable of simulation, that it loses all qualities of unique distinction. In the matrix, Case's "vision [is] spherical, as though a single retina lined the inner surface of a globe that contained all things."[18] The matrix transcends simulation, even re-creation, existing in complete discord with the world of "meat" – the flesh – and discrete, embodied perspectives. Indeed, in its transcendent recapitulation of a primal experience, the matrix becomes a field of pure creation which is far more transgressive than one of simulation. All rules are broken within the matrix's vast pyramids of information and infinite skylines which create a dissonant clash with the castrated *caelum* of the real-world Sprawl. In Virilio's words this is "the loss of that solid ground, of that vast floor, identity's adventure playground of being in the world."[19]

It is thus that *Neuromancer's* technology is wholly transgressive, indeed, regressive, a tool which unexpectedly functions to turn back the clock of psychic evolution and clashes with the necessities of existing as a ratified subject. As mentioned, a "subject" becomes pressured into a differentiated self-definition as such, through an encounter with the unpleasure of Freud's "reality principle" – through an understanding that deferring pleasure in the moment (especially the untenable pleasure of existing in a paradoxical world which is an extension of one's own experience) leads to the ultimate maintenance of pleasure in the long run. Yet turning to the antagonistic AIs of Gibson's novel, Wintermute and Neuromancer, their in-humanity is

[14] *Ibid.,* 25.

[15] Jean Baudrillard. "The Precession of Simulacra" in *Simulacra and Simulation.* Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981/1994): 1-42, 1.

[16] Virilio. *Open Sky,* 69.

[17] Baudrillard. "The Precession of Simulacra," 31.

[18] Gibson. *Neuromancer,* 258.

[19] Virilio. *Open Sky,* 34.

understood precisely through their lack of this vital developmental realization. Their existence is impossible anywhere other than the digital infinity of the matrix's cyber-scape; they "think they're there, like it's real, but it just goes on forever."[20] This is an ironic statement on Case's part due to his own reliance on the transgressions of the matrix, yet it is perhaps the key to his discovery of what it really means to be human – to be *limited*. When Wintermute discusses the matrix, the argument is that "to live here is to live. There is no difference,"[21] and Neuromancer accepts the state of being "nowhere" and "everywhere" simultaneously.[22] That is their failure to understand the difference between Virilio's "accident" and "general accident," the failure to function as repressed, dynamic beings. It is also the failure which Case, as the representative of humanity, ultimately overcomes with the first and final blow of his shuriken in the novel's coda. After a final communication with Wintermute, living-dead for eternity in cyberspace, Case embeds his shuriken into the digital screen which "[flickers] feebly from side to side, as though it were trying to rid itself of something that caused it pain."[23] The shuriken – its simple, bare steel a symbol of a far more brutish, yet perhaps *human* technology – is what here, ultimately limits an omnipotent subjectivity, an uncanny familiar unfamiliarity which must not be allowed to return.

II. Operating Systems and Astral Planes: The Technology of Spirit in Fact and Fiction

In addition to Case's point of view, *Neuromancer* provides us with the perspective of other protagonists which clearly expresses the transgressive nature of the matrix. The Zionites, a community outside the technological sway of the Sprawl, understand the matrix through the lens of an impending apocalypticism – its info-pyramid a tower poised on the verge of cataclysm, a transcendent Fall *out of the flesh*. This is juxtaposed with Case's initial horror of not being able to enter the matrix in the beginning of the novel, of enduring a Fall *into* "meat," "into the prison of his own flesh."[24] Aerol, a Zionite who catches a brief glimpse into the narcissistic cyberspace of the matrix can utter no better description than "Babylon,"[25] the ill-fated tower of humanity's pride that attempted to transcend forbidden thresholds in the Book of Genesis.[26] There is thus a tension between the transcendent and apocalyptic at the point of transgressing into pure subjectivity.

What is most notable here is that the return of a repressed mode of experiencing is mediated and made manipulable through a technologization, a transference into a user-interface model. This transition necessitates the tenuous retention of a defined subject's agency in order to implement the tools of cyber technology in achieving self-dissolution. Gibson's utilization of cyber technology in such a way is notable in that it continues a long line of historical implementations of technology in mediating the conflict between the internal and external realms of experience. Indeed, technology is often the tool through which the uncanny return of primal narcissism is updated, rebooted, and reprogrammed in the various sublimations of pre-Oedipal subjectivity – that is, the subjectivity which precedes an

[20] Gibson. *Neuromancer,* 251.
[21] *Ibid.,* 258.
[22] *Ibid.,* 269.
[23] *Ibid.,* 270.
[24] *Ibid.,* 6.
[25] *Ibid.,* 106.
[26] *NSRV* Gen. 11:1-9.

extension into libidinal *objects*, remaining, like Narcissus, fixated on its own reflection.

Rooted as it is in the scientific method and thus, in an extension of the *repressing* worldview of embodied perspective, technology becomes an unexpected, seemingly incommensurable vehicle for the return of a *repressed* subjectification. Yet historically, movements that resort to "magical" thinking – that is, the understanding of the macrocosm of subjective experience being locked in an inextricably causative correspondence with the universal macrocosm – often adopt modern technology as a means of *mediating* the discrete selfhood which these movements must, by definition, transgress. Historian Ioan Couliano realizes this in understanding that all who "find themselves in an intersubjective intermediate place, participate in a magic process."[27] His analysis of the mnemotechnic magic of the Renaissance clearly highlights its dependence on a proto-psychology of Eros, which taps into the power of imagination as a means of its manipulative extension outwards, into external reality. For Renaissance practitioners of magic such as Marsilio Ficino, "phantasy" assisted in constructing a platonic understanding of the psyche, with imagination and the inner world of experience becoming a "means of communication between reason and intellect (the soul)."[28] Phantasy opens the "spiritual eye" by introjecting the systemic rigour of scholasticism into the world of imagination; much like how Case's "inner eye [opens] to the stepped scarlet pyramid of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority," a digital locus of knowledge and power accessible only via the technological internalization provided by the matrix.[29]

In another cultural movement, we see the mages of the Victorian "occult boom" mediating the mechanistic perspective of the Industrial Revolution with the increasingly incompatible notions of spirit by applying the former's methods onto the latter, utilizing "secularized strategies of self-construction in pursuit of spiritualized goals."[30] Much like how the name 'Neuro-*mancer'* brings together the physical and the spiritual,[31] so too did the mages of the Golden Dawn, for example, understand their astral journeys to be an ultimately scientific, though "interior," exploration. An exploration that operated within the subjective confines of the mind.[32] The astral plane of Victorian occultism is a prime example of a techno-spirituality which mediates a return of narcissistic structurations of experience, as the practitioners of this form of magic emphasized "collective experience" and communion within a macrocosmic, yet psychic, sphere of dissolution.[33] Thus, Wintermute insists that his matrix-avatars, the various "embodiments" in cyberspace that he adopts in confronting Case, are not "masks" but necessities:

[27] Ioan P. Couliano. *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance.* Trans. Margaret Cook (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 103.
[28] *Ibid.,* 37.
[29] Gibson. *Neuromancer,* 52.
[30] Alex Owen. *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 11, 238.
[31] The Oxford English Dictionary defines "-mancer" as having the oracular meaning of "someone who divines" by a certain means ["-mancer, comb. form." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. < http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/269673?redirectedFrom=mancer#eid > Accessed 17 June 2017].
[32] Owen. *The Place of Enchantment,* 128.
[33] *Ibid.,* 157.

"'cause I don't have what you'd think of as a personality, much."[34] Wintermute, in his own words, is "only part of another… *potential* entity,"[35] one which, understood through our examination of the psychoanalytic implications of the matrix, is a dissolution into primal narcissism that is paradoxically both vigorously denied and desired.

Regarding this paradox, it is interesting to note the anti-establishment, "cyberpunk" stance that permeates Gibson's characters. Their actions and attitudes against a superficial establishment mirror the much deeper psychic rebellion that this paper is examining. In so doing, their social image functions in the same way as the inevitable conception of magical practitioners as *malefici/ae*: anti-social evil-doers. Embracing a repressed sphere of an earlier, interior mode of experiencing, the "witch" or "sorcerer," as Couliano notes, encapsulates the projected embodiment of an entire era's repressed urges.[36] Case may not be an obvious manipulator of *magical* forces, but of technological ones, and in so doing is nevertheless a clear threat to social order. This is telegraphed, not least of all, by his drug use and choice of criminal companions. The AIs, on the other hand, which his psychic rebellion in the matrix cannot avoid encountering, are repeatedly depicted as demons to be invoked, as "lords of hell."[37] Thus, historically contextualized, Case is the inevitable magus, the non-conformist *maleficus* who enacts the neurotic return to a lack of subjective bounds through an invocation of the demons which were once the denizens of infantile narcissism, platonic phantasy, the astral plane, and are now reformulated in technological terms as the denizens of cyberspace.

III. Concluding Remarks

As we have explored throughout this paper, the matrix of Gibson's *Neuromancer* affords the dissolution of the familiar boundaries of one's subjectivity. This is a distinctly uncanny shift into another mode of structuring experiencing which, as a comparison with Freud's notion of narcissism reveals, is in fact a *return* to a primal state, the repression of which is necessitated and regulated by the pressures of reality. The matrix thus constructs a uniquely paradoxical picture of technology, especially as it is commonly envisioned in science fiction literature. In opposition to the perceived scientific march of progress, Gibson's technology is in fact a regressive, and thus, transgressive vehicle for the return of the repressed.

The matrix is, above all, a technology of spirit, a paradox which, once culturally and historically contextualized, is entirely unsurprising. The subjectively-rooted nature of "spirit" often returns in experiential form through a mediating union with the methods of a worldview which is its seeming opposition. The inner and the outer spheres of experience collide, recapitulating the suppressed qualities of the former – thus, as Couliano notes, the suppression of subjectivity, of phantasy and imagination, is the neurosis of an entire culture.[38] That is, a culture of quantity and technology which is wrong in assuming its successful obliteration of a "primitive" phase, expresses its "magic," symptomatically, through its own technological means.[39] In this sense, the world of Gibson's *Neuromancer* expresses

[34] Gibson. *Neuromancer,* 216.
[35] *Ibid.,* 120.
[36] Couliano. *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance,* 214.
[37] Gibson. *Neuromancer,* 163, 243, 185.
[38] Couliano. *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance,* 222.
[39] *Ibid.,* 104.

a future in which the historical struggle of psychic perspectives, of modes of experiencing and establishing our notions of selfhood, still rages on. Gibson's world sublimates, once again, our pervasive techno-neuroses into a fictional simulacrum of the real – where technology is always haunted if one knows the right name to invoke.

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Ayn Rand v. Superman - Theories of Morality in the Marvel and DC Cinematic Universe[1]

Jimmy Zhao

Comic book superheroes have never been more important to western culture than in the past two decades, during which film adaptations of these characters grew to take up five of the top eleven highest grossing movie franchises of all time (*Box Office Mojo*). At the very top is the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the series of films taking place in the same fantastical world that began with 2008's *Iron Man.* The success of the experiment would cause their main rival, DC Entertainment, to begin their own cinematic universe with 2013's *Man of Steel.* Since then, DC has been differentiating their product from their rival, not only with a darker visual style and more serious tone, but also by building their stories on an opposing theory of morality. Marvel films portray morality as an obligation that each person must adhere to for the good of the collective, whereas DC films assert that each person should be able to make their own decision as to how to act, and that moral actions are only moral when the actor acts of their own choice. This positions them towards the theories of effective altruism and ethical egoism, respectively.

Any discussion of the superhero movies of the 21st century would be incomplete without the mention of the 20th century comic books that laid the groundwork for these multi-billion dollar franchises, and the difference in the two companies' depictions of morality can be found from their heroes' very beginnings. Despite not being the first, Marvel's most recognizable character is Spider-Man, whose origin story, as told in 1962's *Amazing Fantasy #15,* establishes the moral code that the company's stories would follow for decades after, a code that encourages the placement of other people's happiness over one's own. Within the famous fable, penned by Stan Lee and drawn by Steve Ditko, high school student Peter Parker gains extraordinary powers through a spider bite and decides to use them for self-gain, seeking "FAME AND SUCCESS" (Lee, 8) as a professional wrestler. When he gets the opportunity to stop a thief from escaping, Peter turns a blind eye out of selfishness, declaring that "I JUST LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE – THAT MEANS – **ME!"** (8). His prioritization of his own interest over the interests of others is further expressed when he ruminates on his love for his family, thinking to himself "I'LL SEE TO IT THAT **THEY'RE** ALWAYS HAPPY, BUT THE REST OF THE WORLD CAN GO HANG FOR

[1] This article was written in December 2017, hence the exclusion of *Black Panther,* and *Infinity War*

ALL I CARE" (8). Of course, Peter learns that ignoring the rest of the world is wrong, when the same thief that he chose not to apprehend murders his Uncle, leading to Lee's narrator delivering the Aesopic lesson of the story: "WITH GREAT POWER THERE MUST ALSO COME – GREAT RESPONSIBILITY" (11), a line which has been retroactively attributed to Peter's late Uncle in the decades since.

While Peter's decision to do good can be interpreted as selfishly motivated, since he only learns to help others when it effects his relative, his subsequent heroism is not to protect himself or his remaining family, but rather out of a feeling of responsibility to help others, in line with the theory of effective altruism. In *Captain America: Civil War,* Peter, played in live-action by Tom Holland, gives an elaboration of Lee's original lesson as "When you can do the things that I can, but you don't, and then the bad things happen...they happen because of you" (Russo). Along with sharing a first name, Peter's line echoes the ideas of Australian philosopher Peter Singer, who writes in his 1972 essay "Famine, Affluence, and Morality": "if it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything else morally significant, we ought, morally, to do it" (231). Singer, who defines effective altruism as the idea that "we should do the most good we can" (*The Most Good...* vii), creates the analogy of the "drowning child" to illustrate the moral obligation of each person, writing "if I am walking past a shallow pond and see a child drowning in it, I ought to wade in and pull the child out" ("Famine" 231), with the addition that "It makes no moral difference whether the person I can help is a neighbor's child ten yards from me or a Bengali whose name I shall never know, ten thousand miles away" (231). Although the essay's use of the word "power" refers to wealth and influence rather than radioactive spider blood, the two texts mirror one another, as Lee's teenage hero learns to use his abilities to effectively help people beyond himself and his immediate family.

If Spider-Man is the face of Marvel Comics, Superman is DC's equivalent, and, unlike Parker and Singer, the Kryptonian's introduction in 1938's *Action Comics #1* depicts heroism as a personal choice rather than a moral obligation. Written by Jerry Siegel and drawn by Joseph Shuster, *Action Comics #1* summarizes Clark's motivation in a single narration panel that reads "CLARK DECIDED HE MUST TURN HIS TITANIC STRENGTH INTO CHANNELS THAT WILL BENEFIT MANKIND" (J. Siegel, 1) – unlike Peter Parker, Clark is allowed to make his own decisions as to how to use his great power. Through the rest of the story, Superman uses his powers to gleefully demolish property and injure suspects, all the while demonstrating an obvious enjoyment of his actions, such as shouting "YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING A WOMAN NOW!" (5), as he assaults a helpless wife-beater. Lee and Ditko's story portrays power as a burden that obligates one to use it to help society, while Siegel and Shuster frame power as granting one the freedom to help others without obstacles, implying morality to be inherently enjoyable but held back by society's rules and regulations.

Tasked with filming Superman for the big screen, director Zack Snyder, along with the producers and screenwriter, take Siegel and Shuster's conflation of power and freedom further into the realm of ethical egoism, specifically the brand proposed by Ayn Rand. Snyder is no stranger to Rand, as he has apparently done work on an adaptation of her novel *The Fountainhead* for Warner Bros., saying that he sees the book as "a thesis on

the creative process and what it is to create something" (T. Siegel). When it comes to creating DC films, Ayn Rand's philosophical influence on Snyder's work is pronounced[1].

For those unfamiliar, the novel's protagonist, architect Howard Roark, dynamites a housing project he is hired to design when it is revealed that changes had been made by his employers without his approval, and in the ensuing trial, Roark delivers a monologue that defines Rand's championing of egoism and rejection of altruism. Rand, through Roark, argues that the world is developed by a limited number of exceptional people, which she deems "creators", who are villainized by the masses. She lists the man who first discovered fire, who "was probably burned at the stake he had taught his brothers to light…[and]…considered an evildoer who had dealt with a demon mankind dreaded" (Rand, 677-8), the inventor of the wheel, who was "considered a transgressor who ventured into forbidden territory" (678), and the mythical Prometheus, who "was chained to a rock and torn by vultures because he had stolen the fire of the gods" (678). She refers to "those who do, think, work, produce" (606) as "the egoists[2]" (606), and ones who "[feed] on the minds of others" (679) as "parasite[s]" (679). Regarding altruism, Rand's protagonist states that "the man who lives to serve others – is the slave" (680) who "makes parasites of those he serves" (680). Roark explains his destruction of the housing project – which had been planned to give residence to the impoverished – by saying:

> It is believed that the poverty of the future tenants gave them a right to my work […] I do not recognize anyone's right to one minute of my life. Nor to any part of my energy. Nor to any achievement of mine. No matter who makes the claim, how large their number or how great their need. (684)

To Rand, using morality to pressure individuals to work for the good of others is in itself immoral. On the topic of power, Rand writes that "the whole secret of [the creator's] power [is] that it was self-sufficient, self-motivated, self-generated […] He had lived for himself. And only by living for himself was he able to achieve the things which are the glory of mankind" (678).

Snyder's Superman, as seen in *Man of Steel* and its sequel, *Batman v. Superman,* mirrors the ability to achieve greatness, ostracization by the masses, and rejection of altruism that Rand's hero demonstrates, with Roark's uncompromising creativity and architectural vision swapped out for superhuman strength and laser vision. Where Roark destroys a building to avoid his work be corrupted by others, Superman destroys a government drone sent to surveil him, telling the Lieutenant General "I'm here to help, but it has to be on my terms" (*Man of Steel*). Clark Kent's views on morality are shaped by the teachings of his mother and father, the former of whom tells him to "Be their hero, Clark. Be their monument, be their angel, be anything they need you to be... or be

[1] It should be noted that Spider-Man's co-creator, Steve Ditko, is also an avid follower of Rand. However, his beliefs had minimal influence on the character, and he left the company four years later (Wolk).

[2] While the original text reads "egotists", Rand corrects herself in her introduction to the 25th Anniversary Edition, writing that 'the word should have been "egoist"' (Rand viii). For sake of clarity, I use her intended word in my quotations.

none of it. You don't owe this world a thing" (*Batman v. Superman*), similar to Roark's diatribe against responsibility for the less fortunate. His father blatantly denies Singer's argument of effective altruism: in a scene that visualizes Singer's analogy, young Clark rescues children from drowning out of a feeling of obligation. When he asks "What was I supposed to do? Let them die?" (*Man of Steel*) Pa Kent absolves him of obligation by answering "Maybe," reprimanding him for his heroism. "People are afraid of what they don't understand," he tells his son, echoing Roark's descriptions of the punishments of the fire-discoverer and wheel-inventor, and later explaining that "You just have to decide what kind of man you want to grow up to be, Clark, because whoever that man is, good character or bad, he's gonna change the world". Unlike Peter's Uncle, Clark's father figure imbues him with no responsibility to use his power for the well-being of others, instead following Rand's doctrine that the use of power should only be motivated by the power-wielder's self.

It is unknown whether Siegel and Shuster would agree with Snyder's interpretation of their creation, but his films preserve the fact that Clark's actions are made by his own choice, as Snyder visualizes the immorality of taking that choice away. A montage midway through *Batman v. Superman* interweaves shots that frame Superman as a savior, such as when he appears in the sky above the camera as he hovers down to save a family on the roof of their hurricane flooded house – the sun shining behind his head as a halo – with shots that frame Superman as a slave, such as when he pulls a ship through the Arctic cold with a frown on his face. The montage is interspersed with politicians and pundits discussing on how to further regulate his power, saying that he "shouldn't act unilaterally." Only when he has an opportunity to save his love interest, Lois Lane, is he seen smiling, as that is the only good deed that he does out of his own choice. An early scene in *Batman v. Superman* sees Superman rescuing Lois from warlords in a fictional African country, leading to the government massacring villagers in response, and when he is questioned about his responsibility for those deaths, he says "I don't care what they're saying. The woman I love could have been blown up or shot." This prioritization of his personal circle motivates him to protect the planet, as Superman's sacrifice of his own life to kill the monster Doomsday is prompted not by a desire to save the world, but to save Lois, to whom his last words are "You are my world." Snyder's Superman goes through an arc that confirms Rand's thesis on morality, while reversing the thesis of Spider-Man's origin story: Peter learns to look beyond his immediate circle of loved ones in order to be moral while Clark is moral by focusing on one of the only people he truly cares about. While the masses hate him at first, protesting his appearance in D.C., they eventually come together to display their love for Superman at his funeral, similar to how "parasites" behave towards the self-martyring "creators" in Roark's rhetoric.

Despite the title being *Batman v. Superman,* the central conflict demonstrates itself to be altruism v. egoism, as Batman's motivation for antagonizing Superman stems from him placing the collective over the individual. Bruce justifies his intentions by saying "He has the power to wipe out the entire human race and if we believe there even a one percent chance that he is our enemy, we have to take it as an absolute certainty," proving Roark's claim regarding historically immoral political leaders,

which is that "Nobody questioned their right to murder since they were murdering for an altruistic purpose. It was accepted that man must be sacrificed for other men" (Rand 683). Bruce only lets go of his desire to murder Superman upon finding out that their mothers share the same first name, forcing him to connect the alien to his biological kin, and to see Superman as a person instead of an input in an ethical equation. Snyder uses Batman to show an altruist who learns the importance of the self, another reversal of Spider-Man's origin.

A fascinating case in *Batman v. Superman* is none other than the villainous Lex Luthor, who at first seems like the perfect Randian character to the point of parody. He is a scientific genius and a capitalist, owning LexCorp Industries, who stands up to those who seek to benefit from his intelligence: when a Senator asks for his specialized help, Lex force-feeds him a Jolly Rancher while listing what he wants in return, symbolically demonstrating his power over him and ensuring that his assistance is only on his terms. This version of Lex shares Rand's disdain for socialism, saying that his "Dad was born in East Germany. He grew up eating stale crackers. And every other Saturday, he had to march in a parade and wave flowers at tyrants," similar to Rand's assertion that socialism in her birth country of Russia turned them into "ragged, starved, dirty, miserable people…[who were]…afraid to say anything for fear of who is listening and would report us" (Mayhew 182). On a more superficial level, Snyder's Lex shares Roark's interest in architecture, telling Lois about the "light metals" used to build the tower that he then pushes her off of, and even forgoes the character's traditional baldness for the "preposterous orange hair" (Rand 32) of Rand's protagonist[3].

However, as the movie progresses, it becomes clear that Lex only artificially attempts to represent the ideals that *The Fountainhead* professes and is actually closer to Rand's definition of a parasite. Like Roark, Lex makes a speech referring to the myth of Prometheus, but thoroughly butchers it, inaccurately believing that the Titan "ruined Zeus' plan to destroy man kind and for that, he was given a thunderbolt," prompting an eye-roll from an undercover Wonder Woman, herself a Greek God. Where Roark defines creators as men of great intellect, including "scientists [and] inventors" (Rand 678), Lex feels insecure in the presence of the alien superhero, stammering that "The bittersweet pain among man is having knowledge with no power." He misconstrues his envy as noble when he declares "if God is all powerful, he cannot be all good. And if he's all good then he cannot be all powerful. And neither can you be. They need to see the fraud you are" to Superman while explaining his murderous scheme, and names him a "flying demon," the same label that Howard claims society gave the man who discovered fire. Zack Snyder's incarnation of Lex Luthor is a false Roark, a man who fashions himself to be a self-sufficient creator but is actually a second-hander who is entirely defined by his covetousness towards the exceptional Superman, and at the end of the film, his Roark-like hairstyle is shaved off in prison.

[3] The Lex Luthor of the source material canonically has naturally orange hair, since his inception in 1940 ("Superman: Europe at War"), before becoming bald. However, the hairstyle in the film, that reflects the "orange tangle" (Rand 283) of Howard Roark's head, is unique to Snyder's vision.

Moving back to the Marvel movies, the character of Tony Stark also acts as subversion of the Roark-figure, but to disprove the novel's thesis. In *Iron Man 2,* Stark is taken to court by the Senate Armed Services Committee who attempt to force him to give control of his technology to the United States Government, to which Stark, like Howard Roark, refuses, comparing it to "indentured servitude, or prostitution" (Favreau). Stark argues for the ethical egoistic view of morality, claiming that his selfishness towards his suits and weapons, without the influence of others, allows for a safer world, boasting that he "successfully privatized world peace." However, despite being portrayed as one of Rand's creators, Stark's perspective changes in *Civil War* when he speaks to the grieving mother of a civilian casualty he was partially responsible for. This causes him to take an anti-Randian stance towards his fellow Avengers, saying "We need to be put in check! […] If we can't accept limitations, if we're boundary-less, we're no better than the bad guys" (Russo). Tony Stark learns the importance of responsibility to the collective and abandons his egoism for altruism, literalized by him allying himself with Marvel's altruistic core, Peter Parker, during the film's central battle.

Singerian altruism and Randian egoism extend throughout the Marvel and DC Cinematic Universes, respectively, and so does their dismissal of the opposing philosophy. For Marvel, both Thor and Bruce Banner spend their first movies learning to use their great power in a responsible way that benefits others. This is represented by Thor needing to prove his "worthiness" (Branagh) in order to wield the magic hammer Mjolnir, which he only achieves when he offers up his own life to the film's villain to save the lives of strangers, saying "These people are innocent. Taking their lives will gain you nothing. So take mine and end this." In *The Incredible Hulk*, Banner learns to leave his isolationist ways and use his destructive split personality for good, saying "It *has* to be me" (Leterrier) when he is the only person who can save Harlem from an equally powerful monster. The theme of overcoming one's sense of self in order to recognize their social obligation to the rest of the world recurs through the Marvel franchise, to the point where the second *Guardians of the Galaxy* film features its heroes defeating a villain literally named "Ego" (Gunn).

In contrast, DC's films emphasize the importance of morality being a choice, often in ways that are equally unsubtle. 2016's *Suicide Squad* involves government official Amanda Waller enslaving a group of criminals by implanting bombs into their necks to force them to behave morally – or, as she puts it, "I want to build a team of some very bad people who I think can do some good" (Ayer) and that "getting people to act against their own self-interest for the national security of the United States is what I do for a living." However, the squad members only become heroes after the trigger is destroyed and they are allowed to save the day of their own free will. Waller is portrayed as a worse person than the criminals she uses, going so far as to murder innocent subordinates for the sake of America's interests, midway through the film. Likewise, the following year's *Wonder Woman* focuses on the central question of whether or not its titular heroine will decide that mankind "deserves [her] protection" (Jenkins), with her concluding that morality is "A choice each must make for themselves" and deciding not to help humanity for the century after 1918.

Finally, this dichotomy of responsibility and choice is made apparent when examining how each company portrays war: both Marvel's *Captain America: The First Avenger* and DC's *Wonder Woman* feature American soldiers named Steve, in the form of Rogers and Trevor correspondingly. Steve Rogers gives his motivation for joining World War II as "There are men laying down their lives. I got no right to do any less than them. […] This isn't about me" (Johnston), which emphasizes his feelings of obligation and selflessness. Trevor gives his motivation for joining World War I as "My father told me 'If you see something wrong happening in the world, you can either do nothing, or you can do something.' And I already tried nothing" (Jenkins), emphasizing familial-prioritization and personal choice.

The rivalry between Marvel and DC is about more than simply the quality of the films or the amount they take in from ticket sales, but rather a conflict between two opposing theories of morality. Marvel's stories define heroism as using one's power and resources to fulfil their moral duty to the world, illustrating the theory of effective altruism submitted by Peter Singer, while DC's stories define heroism as freely choosing to use one's power in a positive manner that is true to oneself, without influence or pressures from the masses, similar to Ayn Rand's brand of ethical egoism. Both film franchises are worked on by a large number of artists, and as a result, some instances can be found that contradict their respective guiding philosophies – Captain America in *Civil War,* for example, comes across as an egoistical, anti-altruistic hero, believing that "Even if the whole world is telling you to move […] look them in the eye and say 'No, you move'" (Russo). However, while their artistic visions may not be absolutely uniform, the two halves of the comic book adaptation duopoly generally offer two opposite views on what heroism is which is cohesive through their filmographies. Time will tell what extent the generation of children raised on these movies will see their moral views be influenced by their favourite superhero.

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Trying to Cope after World War I: Narrating Post-War Sentiments in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and W. B. Yeat's 'Sailing to Byzantium'

Emily Leahy

After World War I, the world's population was forced to grapple with just how much the period had changed the world: from the many deaths, both from the fighting and from Spanish influenza, to the re-writing of borders, and to advancements in technology—especially in warfare. These events were bound to bring about profound change in the way individuals reflected upon the world. Jeffrey Hart writes that there was "a sense in advanced circles that the nineteenth-century European order had become false and that we were living in a broken cultural world" (3). This sentiment is aggravated by the post-war period and is reflected in the artwork, of all kinds, produced during the period. In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and William Butler Yeat's "Sailing to Byzantium" both artists give expression to the post-World War I feelings of loss and societal disillusionment. This paper will first explore the historical sentiments that imbued the post-World War I period, and then it will then draw from the two texts to demonstrate how these sentiments are represented via their characters, events, and/or mood.

It is hard to fathom just how devastating World War I was in terms of the loss of human life. Stephen Greenblatt states, "[b]efore the collapse of Germany followed by the armistice of November 11, 1918, some 8,700,00 lives had been lost (including 780,000 British – virtually a *whole generation of young men*) and the prolonged horrors of trench warfare had seared themselves into the minds of the survivors" (emphasis mine) (2016). During the war, in order to cope with the heavy burden, they carried these young men turned to poetry "to find a way of expressing the terrible truths they had experienced" (Greenblatt, 2017) and the group known as the War Poets was born. Their works include titles imbued with a deep sense of nihilism including, Wilfred Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and "Futility" and Edward's Thomas' "The

Owl". In addition, Modernist poets also followed this tradition. Sandra Gilbert writes how in "Death of a Solider," Wallace Stevens, "insists that the unprecedentedly bleak materiality of death in the Great War necessarily revises literary as well as literal relationships to dying, death, and the dead" (181). The war forces individuals, including poets, to rethink their relationships with death and how they are imagined in literature. Thus, the post-war period will incite many works that deal closely with death and what I see to be its accompanying sentiments, like fear, fatigue, and nihilism. Harry Mount writes about the post-war period: "[g]one was the expansive optimism of those Edwardian years […], [i]n its place came the *horror* – and the *cynicism*" (emphasis mine) (1). Gilbert's above assertion about the bleak materiality of death certainly holds true when looking at the work of the young men called the "War Poets," but it can also be extended to encompass the work of other authors who wrote about the Great War – and its following period, including Woolf and Yeats. After the war, the young soldiers, either dead or shell-shocked (to use a term borrowed from the time), will be represented in other parts of literature, illustrating just how far reaching the after-effects of the war will be on the literary canon.

Hynes writes that "[t]he war was a presence in imaginations, even those that had not experienced the war directly; and it was a presence in society" (337). In fact, the post-World War I period was permeated with dark and melancholic sentiments, or what Harry Mount describes as "overwhelming sadness at so many lives cut short"; this sadness shaped how artists viewed the world and then rendered it via their medium. Instead of writing "war poetry," other artists, who will be touched by the war in different ways, will turn to Modernism as a means of narrating the post-war period. Jeffrey Hart states that "[t]hough modernism appeared long before the First World War […] it went mainstream after the war, after the nineteenth century had been blown away by the mass killings on the Somme and elsewhere" (11). As Trudi Tate states, Modernism became a tool for grappling with the feelings of unreality after the war: "[m]odernism, like other writings of the period, attempts to make the war 'readable' and to write it into history" (4). By trying to "write it (the war) into history," it is as though the authors are attempting to understand and justify war in the face of the devastating and traumatizing loss. Moreover, the events of the war "seemed unavoidable in fiction because they had changed reality" (Hynes 327). In the following pages, I will look at how World War I and the historical sentiments of its period were narrated and imagined in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" and how both works contribute to writing the war and its aftermath into history via their respective art forms (the novel and poetry).

In order to paint a picture of the devastation and loss of World War I, both texts draw on concrete examples of the harsh realities of war and loss. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* this is particularly clear in the loss Septimus experiences with the death of his dear friend and officer, Evans, while in battle. In the face of this tragic loss, Septimus is left scarred and shell-shocked: his wife Rezia notes how he was not himself any longer and how he would talk to himself and to a dead man, referring to Evans. (Woolf 60). Septimus' loss affects not only him, but also his wife who acts as is caregiver. In "Sailing to Byzantium", on

the other hand, Yeats refers to "those dying generations" (line 3) from World War I. This is a clear nod to the almost entire generation of young men, almost 800,000 men, that have been annihilated because of this war. While *Mrs. Dalloway*'s example is personal, Septimus lost a friend and is no longer himself, in "Byzantium," Yeats tackles death from a broader, societal point of view, wherein an entire generation is lost – and this loss will be coupled with many difficult sentiments.

It is not secret that war is a tiring business, both for those on the front and for those at home building munitions and helping the war effort in diverse ways. In the aftermath of the war, there is inevitably a sense of fatigue, and this feeling is represented in both texts. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, while Clarissa did not fight in the war herself, she appears exhausted when she recounts the ordeal that was the war:

> The War was over, except for someone like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; *thank Heaven – over*. (emphasis mine) (Woolf, 4).

Even for those who did not join up in arms, the war effort was tiring, and was felt by many different classes. In the above quote, Clarissa discusses the repercussions on elite estates that are caused by the loss of young men in their family. Hynes writes that loss "was evident among the aristocracy in the dead and the distinct titles" (311). While the plight of the upper-class may be less than sympathetic to some, it is nevertheless a significant change in the previously established order, and caused not by revolution, or the overthrowing of aristocracy but by the tragic deaths of young men. The words "thank Heaven – over," are also characteristic of the exhaustion that Clarissa feels post-war; the em dash, characteristics of Woolf's writing style, serves to emphasize just how important it is that the war is *finally* over and there may now be time to rest.

In Yeats' poem "Sailing to Byzantium", there is no repose. Instead, the poem tackles feelings of fatigue and evokes a feeling of being worn or used. For instance, "to keep a *drowsy* Emperor awake" (line 29) (emphasis mine), draws upon the idea of being "heavy with sleepiness" or "heavy, dull, inactive; sluggish, lethargic" ("Drowsy" OED). These emotions are particularly poignant in the post-war period when Europe, and indeed the world is worn out from the fighting. The notion of Emperor can be interpreted as a nod to the fallen Ottoman Empire, to the fallen powers of the war and, more broadly, to political entities who are fatigued after the war. The line "a *tattered* coat upon a stick" (line 10) (emphasis mine), brings to mind a body, but not one that is healthy or fit for life but rather the image the appears in the reader's mind is one in which the human body or skeleton is nothing but a tattered coat upon a stick, or shadow of its former self. In the poem, the post-war period symbolically leaves individuals feeling worn out, used or unlike themselves. Two lines below, "for every tatter in its mortal dress," (line 12), the speaker repeats the word "tatter" emphasizes the feeling of being used. It also reminds the reader that all lives will end, as all individuals are cloaked in a "mortal dress." Not only is there an underlying mood of fatigue, but

there is also the distinct feeling of man's mortality and of the inevitability of death.

The war and its losses serve a reminder of how fragile humanity is, and this fragility will be felt in in the concern with the frail nature of the human body. Tate question, "How does the war affect the ways people think about their bodies, fragile in the face of modern weaponry?" (5) is vital to this discussion. In *Mrs. Dalloway,* Clarissa becomes fixated on her ageing and weak body, and this serves as a translation of the overall sentiment that human life is fragile after the war. In the novel, Clarissa experiences a kind of doubling when she observes the older woman in the window across the street. Although Clarissa is looking at another woman through a window, it is almost as though she is looking into a mirror: "Oh, but how surprising! – in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her!" (Woolf 171). By staring into this older woman's eyes, Clarissa is reminded of the weakness of her body – and of her own mortality. While Clarissa is not a veteran and has not experienced the war firsthand, its effect means that even she must grapple with the trauma. Woolf reminds the reader that even those not directly involved are not untouched by the war.

In the post-war years, an ageing population is a reminder of the lost generation of young men who will never have the chance to grow old. As such, both texts deal with ageing as a means of translating the fear of death and the obsession mortality that imbued the post-war period. In "Sailing to Byzantium," Yeats narrates the period's obsession with ageing by taking aim at old men. Yeats quite clearly says, "[t]hat is not country for old men" (line 1). The country, Ireland, has changed in the post-war period: it has lost a generation of young men and left in its wake a generation of "old men." It is "no country for old men," because in the face of death, the older generation is reminded of their own mortality. The other tragedy of the years after World War I is that the men who were meant to represent the future of the country are dead and the country has changed in a way that is no longer desirable or even simply recognizable to those who inhabit it. With the "old men" comes a reminder of loss and the reader is confronted by the obvious: those who died will never grow old and those left behind must cope with that reality. Yeats also writes "[a]n aged man is but a paltry thing" (line 9). The word paltry, which is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "[o]f a thing: petty, trivial, insignificant; worthless, rubbishy; contemptible" is especially poignant; with so many old young men dead, the older generation seems "insignificant" or even "contemptible." The older generation is contemptible because they serve as an unwelcome reminder; the loss of the young generation is only aggravated when looking at those who are left behind.

With so many touched by the horrors and the losses of the war, it is perhaps only natural for Modernist texts like these to feel nihilistic in mood. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa is often inexplicably negative, even though her life is seemingly free of worry: "But – but – why did she suddenly feel, for no reason that she could discover, desperately unhappy?" (Woolf, 111). Clarissa's disillusionment is particularly strong in the way her thought is uttered and the em dash represents the struggle to voice her inner feelings regarding her desperately unhappy state. Septimus is also battling his own feelings of nihilism: "It might be possible, Septimus thought, looking at England from the train window, as they left Newhaven; it might be possible that the world itself is without meaning"

(Woolf, 82). In his shell-shocked state, Septimus experiences "a radical breakdown in his experience of the world which utterly cuts him off from humanity" (Bonikowski, 133). Septimus no longer feels connected to his spouse or his old life and is toying with the idea that life is devoid of meaning as he struggles to find his place in the world after the war. Septimus and Clarissa are not alone in feeling that the world is without meaning: Peter Walsh also experiences a similar episode where he questions the artifice of the world in which he lives. After his visit with Clarissa, Peter Walsh dreams about London/Britain through the ages and finally wishes that "the pageant of the universe would be over" (Woolf, 75). It is clear that the post-World War I and, by extension, the modern world that Peter inhabits feels unreal and he fantasizes about the "pageant," or the artifice of the world being "over." All three characters, all touched by the war in either direct or indirect ways, must cope with the new world and their growing lack of hope and unhappiness.

In Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium," the circle of life is corrupted by a pervasive nihilism when he writes: "[w]hatever is begotten, born and dies" (line 6). The notion that all things that are born will die is what one might call a fact of life. However, in the post-war period there is urgency and desperation to this sentiment. With almost an entire generation of young men dead, the circle of life is sped up and is no longer following its natural progression. It is no wonder then that this line has an especially nihilistic tone to it: with life slipping by too quickly, it is hard to have hope. Just as Peter Walsh questions the "artifice" of his world, a line of questioning can be seen in Yeats' poem: "gather me/into the artifice of eternity" (line 23-24). As outlined above, Yeats questions life, but he is also questioning what comes after life, he questions the nature eternity. Another sentiment expressed in these two Modernist works is the desire to escape either their present location or time, or the world altogether, as in the case of Septimus who flees by committing suicide. In "Sailing to Byzantium," Denis Corish writes, "Yeats quits Ireland, in some symbolic sense, as "no country for old men," and sails the seas to 'the holy city of Byzantium'" (103). This desire for escape is clear, but what is especially striking is where this symbolic journey leads him. Yeats' does not seek to flee to another city, but rather to another time: one before the disillusionment and alienation brought on by World War I. Yeats dreams of the ancient Greek city of Byzantium as free of the heavy burden of Britain's recent past. This desire for the past is similar to Peter's fantasy of a pre-war Britain, without its current pageantry.

In *Mrs. Dalloway,* Septimus also desires escape, although his desire is not for another location or time period, but rather to flee the world entirely because of his feelings of unreality after the war. Septimus' need to escape will result in his grotesque and tragic suicide. Hynes writes, "[d]isenchantment is a condition of loss, and that was the way the war extended its presence into English culture after the Armistice – as forms of loss" (311). In *Mrs. Dalloway,* loss of life is doubled: first Evans, and now Septimus' because of the death of his friend. In the face of the heightened sense of loss created by World War I, it is unsurprising to see that loss imagined in Woolf's novel as Woolf copes with the repruccssions of way by writing about the aftermath.

Overall, these two works, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium," are an interesting example of how two very different mediums, the

novel and poetry, from two different countries, Ireland and England (although with close ties), are able to translate just how morbid and trying the post-World War I period was. Their works demonstrate the pervasive need to narrate the feelings through their respective art forms. The post-war period and the rise of the modernity proved a difficult time, as many struggled to cope in the aftermath of such great loss. Yeats and Woolf both wrote works that deal with the sentiments, such as nihilism, fatigue, and fear of death that characterized the turbulent post-war years. Their works are not only important examples of Modernist writings and its diversity, but also equally important for how they narrate and attempt to give voice to the feelings of disillusionment and trauma of their time period.

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The West in Identity

The Political Globalization of Second Wave American Feminism as a Progenitor for the Modern Global Dissemination of Women's Human Rights
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In this essay I argue that the political globalization of second wave American feminism in the 1960's-80's acted as a progenitor for the subsequent 21st century global dissemination and application of the concept of women's human rights. To this end, I identify and delineate between three types of political globalization: the *ideological*, the *socio-structural*, and the *technological-epistemological*. I will begin by arguing via Moghadam's (2000: 114-115) world-systems theory based analysis, that the *ideological* globalization of second wave American feminism resulted in its 1980's split into the current nationalist and supranationalist branches, each of which continues to globally perpetuate the concept of women's human rights in the modern era. Then I will focus on illustrating the specific efforts of those two branches in the context of globalization. For the American, nationalist branch of feminism, I focus on its current efforts in identity framing through the innovative use of technologically modern platforms of communication; through *technological-epistemological* globalization. For the supranational branch, I focus on the efforts of two transnationalist feminist organizations (TFOs): Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and Women Living Under Muslim Law (WLUML), in their challenging of female-suppressive policies of state or power institutions; through the *socio-structural* globalization of American capitalist and democratic values.

Although the global dissemination and acceptance of the concept of women's human rights is incomplete, its current degree of proliferation can directly be attributed to the political globalization of second wave American feminism (Moghadam 2009: 63). Historical precedents of various early or proto-feminist movements from the early 18th century on (6), such as the English suffragettes movement exist, but these efforts largely failed due to their localized nature, lack of support, funding, as well as mainstream recognition (Von Sivers, 676).

According to Moghadam's (2000) world-theory based analysis (114-115), Feminism as a global social movement did not/could not take off until the 1960's-80's due to a lack of three prerequisite factors: 1) the existence of a hierarchical inter-state world system of unequal power and wealth distribution, with a single dominant hegemonic power (Moghadam 2009: 9), 2) the active influence by the hegemonic power on peripheral states, in the spread of its underlying dominant political/economic ideologies as exclusively correct and the vagaries associated with this process (14, 27), and 3) the presentation of opportunities and means to respond to the vagaries and inequalities inherent in an unbalanced inter-state system (26-27).

In the 1950's, the United States supplanted the United Kingdom as the world-system's hegemon, (Moghadam 2000: 9), and after the collapse of the soviet union in 1991 (Von Sivers, 805), which coincides with the tail-end of second wave American feminism (Rampton 2015), no country existed to challenge the influence of the United States in the spread of its unique vision of modernity and world-shaping in all aspects of globalization; cultural, economic, ideological, political, etc. (Von Sivers, 805807). The US's rise to power carried with it powerful underlying ideologies such as nationalism, which is itself both a globalized and globalizing phenomenon (Waters, 168), and the relic of two world wars. More importantly, the universalizing and inter-connected values/ideologies of liberalism, capitalism, and modernization (168). Waters makes an apt comparison (168-169) between the function of these political ideologies in the modern era and that of the dominant religions in the pre-modern era. The political and military dominance of one state over others often allowed for the dissemination of that state's religious belief as exclusively correct, and in turn this belief helped consolidate/legitimize that state's dominance, often by conferring divine rights to rule those in power. Like pre-modern Christianity or Islam, modern political ideologies such as communism, fascism, socialism and liberalism, with their associated states, competed amongst each other in order to establish themselves as the "sole principle for the organization of individual values," as well as an exclusively legitimate form of "social organization across the planet" (168-169).

The super-power cold war conflict, which succeeded the two world wars, can be regarded as "more civilizational in character (169)" and as a result, American nationalism and the nationalism of its allies was "bound up with liberalism, (169)" and to be opposed to capitalism, democracy or private property during the 1940's and 50's was deemed to be un-American" (169-170). Due to the hegemonic position of the United States and its unique set of political ideologies, values, and historical circumstances, second wave American feminism was both in a unique position to challenge the sexist inequalities within the nation, and to set a precedence for this challenge for future international and transnational feminist organizations to follow. These collective efforts can be seen as a global feminist movement (Moghadam, 115-116).

The rights gained during first wave feminism allowed American second wave feminists the unique "freedom to operate, mobilize resources, and express dissent," which, disadvantaged "peripheral or semi-peripheral countries may lack" (Moghadam, 10). The economic and technological advances of the US afforded these nationalist feminist new communications technologies to

transcend the local boundaries which had stifled the previous UK suffragette movement in the early 1800's, and seek wider support and solidarity from sympathizers (Waters 172-175). The state's adherence to democracy, liberalism, and the rights of citizenship and capitalism carried commitments guaranteeing individualism, the rights of person and property, and their welfare (168-169). Borrowing from the tactics of post-war American civil rights movement which pitted the state against local groups with racist sentiments, second wave American feminism used the contradiction between the aforementioned professed commitments of the state and the opposing sexist realities of society, to demand change (Von Sivers, 883). It did this through both violent and non-violent protest, civil disobedience (883-884); such as against restrictive policies on abortion, and complimentary feminist-revisionist research on academic subjects, such as philosophy, history, and medicine (885), etc., from which females were historically excluded and not offered a voice (Code, 9). This reexamination of what it means to be female, not as the second-sex whose identity is determined in their relation to men as sisters, mothers, daughters, etc., but as self-determined individuals (De Beauvoir, 26), is known as identity framing and took top priority western feminism (Rampton 2015), which like most social movements, begin nationally focused on nationally relevant grievances (Moghadam 2000: 114). As such, "the women's movement, at least in the west... [can be known as] identity politics movement (112)" for their focus on the concerns of privileged, white middle class feminists (Code, 266).

In the 1970's, clashes occurred among the Second wave feminists between those who tended to emphasize identity framing in the form of further legal equality and sexual autonomy, versus third world sympathizers, who tended to instead emphasize issues which are foreign and not the immediate concern of American feminists, such as third-world development and a lack of basic rights (Moghadam 2000: 114115). The disagreement between camps was not over based on whether or not the advancement of women's human rights was still the top priority. Rather, I believe the practical means achieve this goal via prioritizations of unique sub-goals sensitive to different political and economic contexts (114). This clash eventually resulted in the end of American second wave feminism and the continuation of the women's rights movement in two directions/branches: the national and supranational (114-115). The former carried on the revisionist and identity framing focused agenda (133-134), while the latter began to use the template set by second wave American feminism in its acts of dissent in more culturally appropriate, practical applications (115, 117). The supranational branching of second wave American feminism in turn caused the, "proliferation of transnational feminist networks," which can be regarded as a product of the "process of globalization," as well as a, "response to and criticism of its vagaries" (117).

Two prominent transnational organizations were born out of this ideological split: DAWN and WLUML (115). For these organizations, the advancement of women's human rights would be most fruitfully pursued by activities forcing direct and immediate change in unfair policies of the state or other governing power structures. This is reminiscent of first wave American feminism and its less theoretical but more

practical singular focus on suffrage (Moghadam 2009: 10). Comprised of a group of women researchers and activists from developing countries, DAWN's notable specific contribution is to offer an "alternative 'model' of socio-economic development, one which is people-centered, holistic, sustainable and empowers women," addressing the unique issues faced by women in the global south (Moghadam 2000: 121). In conjunction with a number of other TFOs, DAWN prepared documents analyzing and criticizing the "policies and activities of multinational corporations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and policy stances of the U.S. government," for corporate bias in policies which results in employment losses and dislocations disproportionally borne by women (Mogadham 2009: 72).

While DAWN's focus can arguably be traced back to the globalization of the American value of capitalism, WLUML's focus is oriented more so around the idea of liberalism. This TFO of over two thousand members across several continents (130) was established, "in response to the situations arising out of the application of Muslim laws in India, Algeria, and Abu Dhabi that resulted in the violation of women's human rights" (Mogadham 2000: 120, 127). Collective research projects organized by WLUML revealed that the modern return to Sharia law for various countries can be seen as an effort of the male subjugation of women, to take away their liberal rights to freedom and equality through the "contradictory interpretations of the Koran monopolised by men" (120). Further, in another project named "The Women and Law Project," involving female Sharia law scholars who examined legislation, in particular the Muslim family codes, discriminatory policies which disregards the countries' constitutional commitments to equality were revealed. This strategy is directly comparable to the American second wave feminists' strategy of pitting the state's legal/ideological commitments against the realities of inequality. Like second wave American feminists, WLUML also runs direct (acts of activism) such as protests and campaigns for "the repeal of discriminatory legislation, the end of oppressive practices," and, "cases of systematized or generalized violation of human rights," such as forced marriage (128). Both examples of TFOs can be considered direct products of globalization (117) for two reasons: 1) by their application of what can be considered originally American ideologies to countries where these are not native, and 2) by their intrinsic organization as transnational, contrary to international or national (133-134), which purposefully looks to transcend the boundaries of states and focus instead on universal women's solidarity, and the advancement of their rights against shared grievances (114).

Taking historical precedents seriously, revisionist second wave feminist theorists such as Code (1991) are sensitive to the importance of the relationship between dominant epistemological framework and power (266). Epistemological frameworks, whether in the pre-modern form of state-sanctioned religions, or modern forms of political ideologies, instruct the portioning/division of power by influencing knowledge itself, from which policies and social conventions originate (266-267). That is to say, the categorization of what something is instructs us on how we treat it or use it. Unlike the direct political activism of WLUML and DAWN, the nationalist continuation of second wave American

feminism focused not on targeting one or a few specific laws and grievances at a time, but rather on the root of those grievances. They aim to restore the liberal values of equality and personal autonomy to the reality of society by challenging notions of female and femininity. Like TFOs, they employed technology to their goal of advancing women's human rights (Moghadam 2000: 117), but beyond the basic usage of email and faxing in efforts of protest mobilization.

Relying heavily on the technological advances of the first world, modern nationalist feminists utilize a combination of smart phones, computers, and the availability of the internet in conjunction with social media applications (Wojcicki 2014). Although social scientists tend to focus on an economic perspective of globalization, in a world where "minds of individuals are resolutely focused on mass mediated images," it is arguable that "the determining principle of culture is the medium by which it is transmitted", which works to "bring together in one place all the aspects of experience" so that one can experience events and objects great distances apart (waters, 173). The global transmission of feminist ideologies as part of the milieu of American culture by technologies such as TV and radio were already in effect during the second wave (175). Technological advances sped up this process and allowed the natural evolution of new ways of activism such as "hash tag activism" through twitter, resulting in movements such as "#yesallwomen" (Wojcicki 2014). In this way, modern western feminists continues the function of the second wave, by globally exporting American values such as liberalism, as well as demonstrating by precedence innovative methods of challenging unequal frameworks.

To conclude, Mogadam (2009) indicates that there is a current social theory dispute on whether the modern phase of globalization should be understood as an unprecedented point in a linear process of human history, or cyclically, as a new wave of American imperialism (117). I submit that practically, regarding the dissemination of women's human rights, this distinction is unimportant. In either sense, there is the same globalization of American ideologies and values and their associated vagaries/responses which led to the current status of feminism as a global phenomenon. What is of importance is that without the socio-historical forces which resulted in the political hegemony of the US; its influences and opportunities to respond to inequalities culminating in the form of second wave American feminism and its unique historical circumstances, the global feminist movement would not look the same today with the same degree of proliferation and success.

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Indigenous Intellectual Property and the Law: Navajo Nation v. Urban Outfitters

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After four long years, the Navajo Nation and Urban Outfitters finally settled their bitter trademark dispute in 2016. The lawsuit stemmed from allegations that the clothing company, Urban Outfitters, had been using the trademarked "Navajo" name in their products without seeking permission. Unfortunately, many aspects of indigenous culture such as names, symbols, stories, and rituals are not protected by the law because they are neither private property nor tangible material. Indigenous cultures are undoubtedly attractive to Western society but are often commodified in ways that ignore their traditional significance. By marketing inauthentic Navajo products through items like underwear and liquor flasks, Urban Outfitters had both infringed on the Navajo Nation's registered trademark and morally dishonoured the Navajo culture. In the past, cases like this may have been thrown out since cultural property has hardly ever been protected under American law. However, the results from the Navajo Nation v. Urban Outfitters case have shown that the law is not always incompatible with intellectual communal property and that there are ways for Indigenous groups to protect their culture from wrongful appropriation.

The Navajo Nation v. Urban Outfitters Case

The Navajo Nation is one of the largest tribes in North America. They have been known by the name "Navajo" since 1849 and have registered 86 trademarks with the name "Navajo" for their arts and crafts industry (*Navajo Nation v. Urban Outfitters* 2013). Urban Outfitters is an American clothing corporation that is geared towards teens and young adults; their subsidiaries include well-known brands like Anthropologie and Free People. Items such as the "Navajo Hipster Panty" and "Navajo Print Fabric Flask" started appearing in their stores and received attention from the public. The Navajo Nation sent Urban Outfitters a cease and desist letter in 2011 to pull all of their "Navajo" branded items off the shelves. Although Urban Outfitters acknowledged the letter and removed the Navajo name from its website, the offending products were still sold through their subsidiary companies (Fonseca). According to the 2013 Navajo Nation v. Urban Outfitters court case, the Navajo Nation sued Urban Outfitters for several counts of "trademark infringement,

trademark dilution, unfair competition, false advertising, commercial practices laws violations, and violation of the Indian Arts and Craft Act" (*N.N. v. U.O.* 2013). Urban Outfitters attempted to dismiss the case, but their motion was denied, and all counts remained in the case until 2016. The case finally ended in November of 2016 with Urban Outfitters agreeing to settle with the Navajo Nation for an undisclosed amount.

Intellectual Property vs. Communal Property

It is significant to note that the Navajo Nation had the advantage of owning their trademarks while many other indigenous groups did not have this same privilege. This barrier may have prevented other cultural groups from suing their appropriators. The trademark that the Navajo Nation has on their name is a recognized piece of intellectual property, unlike most other communal cultural property. Intellectual property refers to intangible assets (generally in the form of copyrights, trademarks, and patents) that are protected by the law from plagiarism or exploitation. Laws regarding intellectual property tend to be very individualized, based largely on economic benefit, and seem incompatible with communal values. Indigenous communities have long been disadvantaged by these regulations rather than aided by them. Ziff and Rao state that intellectual property laws "are hopelessly inadequate to deal with the issues" of communal property (19). For instance, traditional folk songs are considered to be part of the public domain and can be used by anyone without necessarily compensating the source community. This is because copyright is often predicated on notions of a single creator, which is incompatible with communal indigenous works – like the Navajo designs. This makes it very difficult, or even impossible, to protect cultural ideas, stories, and works of art. Lawyer Susan Scafidi explains that this lack of protection is a by-product of how the law views creation as an individual phenomenon. "The application of protection is more complex when there is more than one author or inventor of record – and virtually nonexistent when creation flows from a community rather than discrete individuals" (Scafidi, 14). This is the

reason why cultural knowledge and designs are seldom able to be protected under American law. Indigenous artworks and designs are understood as communal creations, so no individual can "own" them the way that a singular artist can lay claim to his or her artwork.

Model of Navajo Loom, late 19th century, Brooklyn Museum

The Navajo Nation is unique in that they have trademarked their own name to prevent others from using it derogatorily or to falsely market. The American trademark law, known as the "Lanham Act," is a law that protects trademarks from infringement, dilution, and false advertising. In May of 2016, the two counts of trademark dilution against Urban Outfitters were dismissed. The claims were dismissed on the grounds that the Navajo trademark "is not nationally recognized as a household name" and "even if 'Navajo' is a widely recognized mark, it is a 'niche' mark" (*N.N. v. U.O.* 2016). Dilution occurs when a well-known trademark is used by another company to market their own products in a way that diminishes the original company's uniqueness or value. Trademark dilution can only be claimed if the original trademark is well-known or famous to the point that consumers looking for products by the original company will be confused if they come across the copy. In this case, the judge ruled that "Navajo" was not famous enough to be considered for trademark dilution. Despite this setback, the other claims made on the grounds of trademark infringement would prove to be harder to refute.

Cultural Appropriation

The Navajo Nation v. Urban Outfitters lawsuit was first and foremost a case of trademark infringement, but it was also a (non-legal) case of cultural appropriation. Cultural Appropriation involves a member who is not part of a certain culture utilizing an aspect of that culture, often for economic gain. Many minority groups have been subjected to cultural appropriation by dominant groups. James O. Young defines three types of cultural appropriation: object appropriation, content appropriation, and subject appropriation (6). Object appropriation refers to instances where tangible works of art are transferred from one culture to another. One example of this could be European museums featuring African masks in their exhibits. Content appropriation occurs when stories, music, or other intangible aspects of culture are taken and used in another context. Subject appropriation, or "voice" appropriation, occurs when someone attempts to speak in the voice of, or represent the life of, a member of another culture (7). All three types of appropriation are tricky to verify because they all involve communal (rather than individual) property. It is difficult to assert ownership of communal property because there is no traceable "author," and even if there is, it would be challenging to prove who the rightful descendants are. Content and subject appropriations are

even harder to assert because they are not tangible.

Much cultural appropriation initially takes place with good intentions; people are likely to incorporate or take things from other cultures that they find particularly beautiful or interesting. However, these occurrences can be demeaning to minority cultures, especially those that deemphasize material gain. Indigenous cultural designs and motifs are often admired by non-indigenous people for their aesthetic beauty, but the meanings and histories behind these cultural images can become lost or diminished out of context. Outsiders (i.e. people who do not belong to the source community) often wear cultural clothing or copy traditional designs without any awareness of the practices of that community. One might assume that this is purely out of ignorance and that the outsiders do not intend to harm or demean the cultures that they appropriate from. But Scafidi argues that "cultural appropriation rarely occurs without at least some consideration of the significance of the original product, if only to ensure its marketability" (94). In the 2013 court case, the plaintiffs asserted that "instead of using descriptive words like 'geometric' or 'southwestern,' [the defendants] chose 'Navajo' in order to trade off of the cachet and romanticism associated with the Navajo People" (*N.N. v. U.O.* 2013). This claim declares that Urban Outfitters appropriated the designs not with ignorance but with full knowledge that the value and significance attached to the Navajo name would bring them profit.

While the issue of profit is one of the reasons for this lawsuit, money is far from being the only concern here. Rosemary Coombe has advocated for the idea that occurrences of cultural appropriation go beyond the economic level. When cultural motifs are used freely in outside contexts, the cultural group runs the risk of being degraded to kitsch or just another fashion trend. In North America, indigenous groups are particularly susceptible to this requisition of their culture. Because of this, it has become almost commonplace to appropriate indigenous culture, and people have become desensitized to these issues. Coombe offers a provocative example: "it is, for example, inconceivable that a vehicle could be marketed as 'a wandering Jew,' but North Americans don't bat an eyelash when a Jeep Cherokee passes them on the road" (10). Part of this desensitization inevitably stems from a history of colonization in which the West appropriated indigenous lands. This colonization is still occurring in many different forms – cultural appropriation being one of them. In sum, cultural appropriation is "harmful because of the way in which it interacts with *dominating systems* so as to *silence* and *speak for* individuals who are already *socially marginalized*" (Matthes, 349).

However, some assert that cultural appropriation (or the borrowing of culture) should not always be viewed in a negative light. It is not inherently wrong to feel attracted to aspects of another culture and intercultural borrowing can have many positive outcomes. When products of minority cultures are valued, they "provide a starting point for recognition of the source community as well as a means of allowing outsiders a degree of participation in and appreciation of that community" (Scafidi, 8). This could allow lesser known cultures to broaden their audiences and share their experiences with others. Young strongly believes that cultural appropriation is not necessarily wrong. He thinks that many great works of art have been created as a result of

appropriation, and that these works have benefited society. "Many acts of cultural appropriation are . . . morally unobjectionable and some of them result in artworks of great aesthetic value" (Young 2). Young discusses the benefits of aesthetic value and believes that cultural appropriation can enhance the quality of the art market.

Young says that if someone appropriates something (including indigenous culture) into a new work that is aesthetically pleasing, it adds value to rather than degrades the original. It also follows naturally that aesthetically pleasing works attract customers while cheap, inauthentic copies do not. This approach seems to suggest that everything will work out naturally, with the rightful creators earning the fruits of their own labour. The problem is that this can recreate and/or perpetuate the unequal balance in power that already exists in the economy. People are more likely to buy from big corporate stores and if there are no regulations that prevent the big businesses from stealing small or independent artists' content, the small businesses would not be able to compete fairly.

Furthermore, the people who created these clothing pieces that turn Navajo culture into fashion statements were clearly unaware of the significance of the designs. The characteristic geometric Navajo designs are commonly found in hand-woven works of art. Although Navajo have made these rugs and blankets over time for economic purposes, they are also aesthetic works of art and carry traditional significance: "weavers' commentary reverberates with statements about relationships. References are made linking cosmology, kinship solidarity, harmony, and process" (M'Closkey, 100). Items like the Navajo Print Flask are "derogatory, scandalous, and contrary to the Navajo Nation's principles because it has long banned the sale and consumption of alcohol within its borders" (*N.N. v. U.O.* 2013). Urban Outfitters' lack of knowledge and respect proves that their clothing line was clearly not a case of inspiration. They simply used the Navajo name, knowing that the tribe's "exotic" Native culture would be appealing to young fashion enthusiasts. Urban Outfitters may have claimed that they were inspired, or paying homage to the Navajo Nation, but this is a case where cultural appropriation is clearly far from being appreciated.

To make things worse, Urban Outfitters' spokesman Ed Looram wrote the following in an email: "the Native American-inspired trend and specifically the term 'Navajo' have been cycling thru fashion, fine art and design for the last few years" and "like many other fashion brands, we interpret trends and will continue to do so for years to come" (quoted in Fonseca). This comment is obviously problematic, as it seems to imply that Native American culture is just a "trend" that "cycles through" popularity. This is also exactly the kind of language and mindset that supports the following statement Scafidi makes about the desires and motivations of Western society. We tend to be attracted to "distinctive merchandise, experiences, or souvenirs. If these cultural products are not readily available, we collectively lose interest and move on" (Scafidi, 6). Once the novelty of Navajo designs has been exhausted, it is implied that Urban Outfitters will simply move on to the next new thing.

This lawsuit has angered one blogger who said: "it's long seemed like Urban Outfitters is intentionally courting controversy with politically incorrect products as some sort of perverse no-such-thing-as-bad-publicity stunt"

(Dunne). This blogger suggests that Urban Outfitters may be trying to offend people on purpose in order to gain more attention. Urban Outfitters apparently had more than one controversial incident in the past. The clothing company has been criticized for featuring designs that promoted racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, as well as eating disorders and mental illness. Geared towards a "hipster" audience, Dunne believes that the company is attempting to "disguise conservative propaganda as ironic cool". Whether this was really done intentionally or not, this incident and several other similar cases have initiated conversations for strengthening laws on communal culture.

Criticisms against Communal Property Rights

Stronger laws on communal culture would mean that it would be illegal for people to depict any culturally specific motifs, or write/speak in the voice of someone that is not part of their own culture. Discussions about strengthening communal property rights have sparked several counter debates. In response to the criticism of cultural appropriation and the efforts to diminish it, Erich Hatala Matthes argues that allocating certain cultural arts or practices to particular individuals or groups can result in a harmful "essentialism" (345). Cultural essentialism can be problematic because it does not take into consideration the diversity of members across cultural groups and even within the same group. Matthes is also concerned that "policing the boundaries of cultural groups can construct common understandings of 'real' or 'authentic' group members that serve to disenfranchise those who do not meet all the relevant criteria" (355-6). Rather than protecting cultural property, these new laws could end up excluding certain members and treating them as outsiders instead.

Under a slightly different concern, Michael Brown is also skeptical about introducing new laws to strengthen copyright on folklore and cultural knowledge. He believes that increasing copyright on the "look and feel" of culturally specific works will not only prevent large corporations from stealing indigenous or independent designs. In fact, this increased security on intellectual property may actually be more harmful to new and emerging artists of colour. Brown illustrates this by asking: "who is more likely to be silenced by the enforcement of look-and-feel copyright: the Sony Corporation, for its infringement of Mbuti flute playing, or the emerging African recording artist whose first commercial CD infringes the style of Michael Jackson?" (203). If copyright laws were to be extended to include "styles" or the "feel" of works, it would make it very difficult for anyone, especially new artists, from creating completely original works.

These debates are still ongoing and may not be resolved anytime soon. However, there may still be hope for the protection of culture in the laws we have today. Although the current copyright and trademark laws seem rigid and inconsiderate towards non-Western cultures, it was these very same laws that helped the Navajo Nation regain what was rightfully theirs. Scafidi suggests that more Indigenous communities could take stronger control of their cultural products by commodifying and profiting off of them: "although outsiders' commodification of a cultural product without the authorization of the source community may dilute or destroy the product or its identification with the source community, limited communal commodification may instead enhance the value of the product by

forestalling inferior copies and providing an authentic version" (60). While cultural arts and knowledge cannot be copyrighted, it *is* possible to copyright the expression of that culture in the form of merchandise.

Janet McGowan also indicates the Lanham Act and the Indian Arts and Crafts Act as two ways of ensuring the protection of Native American culture. The Indian Arts and Crafts Act is an American law that prohibits people from falsely advertising arts and crafts as being made by or affiliated with Indigenous groups. "It is illegal to market an art or craft item using the name of a tribe if a member, or certified Indian artisan of that tribe did not actually create the art or craft item" ("The Indian Arts and Crafts Act"). Another law, she suggests, is the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which prevents people from selling misbranded food, drug, or cosmetic products. Many companies profit from using the names of Indigenous tribes or locations on their products in order to suggest exoticness or tradition. "For example, Hopi Blue Popcorn appears to violate the Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act, since it does not contain true blue corn and its label strongly suggests it is made by the Hopi or from the Hopi reservation" (McGowan). With regard to the Indian Arts and Crafts and Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Acts, anyone can file a complaint or petition for dishonesty. It can also be helpful to the indigenous communities if more people could become aware of these false advertising issues and refuse to buy the offending products. The more people value authentic Native American products, the less likely they will be attracted to culturally appropriated products.

Conclusion

After the settlement in 2016, Urban Outfitters publicly announced that they would be collaborating with Navajo artists on an upcoming jewelry line (Woolf). This was a big win for the Navajo Nation, and in response to the settlement, Navajo Nation President Russell Bagaye said: "we expect that any company considering the use of the Navajo name, or our designs or motifs, will ask us for our permission" (quoted in Woolf). Urban Outfitters had violated a relationship for not seeking prior permission in using the Navajo trademark. In the end, the law is just one method of sustaining relationships and moral understandings. "Presumably artists who appropriate content from a culture do so because they find something of value in that culture. This ought to be apparent from all that they say and write about the culture from which they borrow" (Young, 140). Young's statement brings to mind this familiar phrase: "imitation is the highest form of flattery." If this is true, then imitation should be presented in such a way that exemplifies nothing but respect for the original.

This lawsuit will undeniably be a wakeup call to those who plan on appropriating the Navajo name or designs. It may even give courage and support to other indigenous groups to take on their own cases against future grievances. However, while the outcome was positive for the Navajo Nation, other groups may not have the advantage of trademarks to their name, or the resources to begin a lawsuit. One solution to this problem would be to encourage Native American tribal councils to register their name as trademarks. Of course, this would only prevent corporations from using tribes' names to sell merchandise and would not protect designs from being copied or reused without permission. However, it may still be a step in the right direction to providing indigenous peoples with a sense of agency over their own identities.

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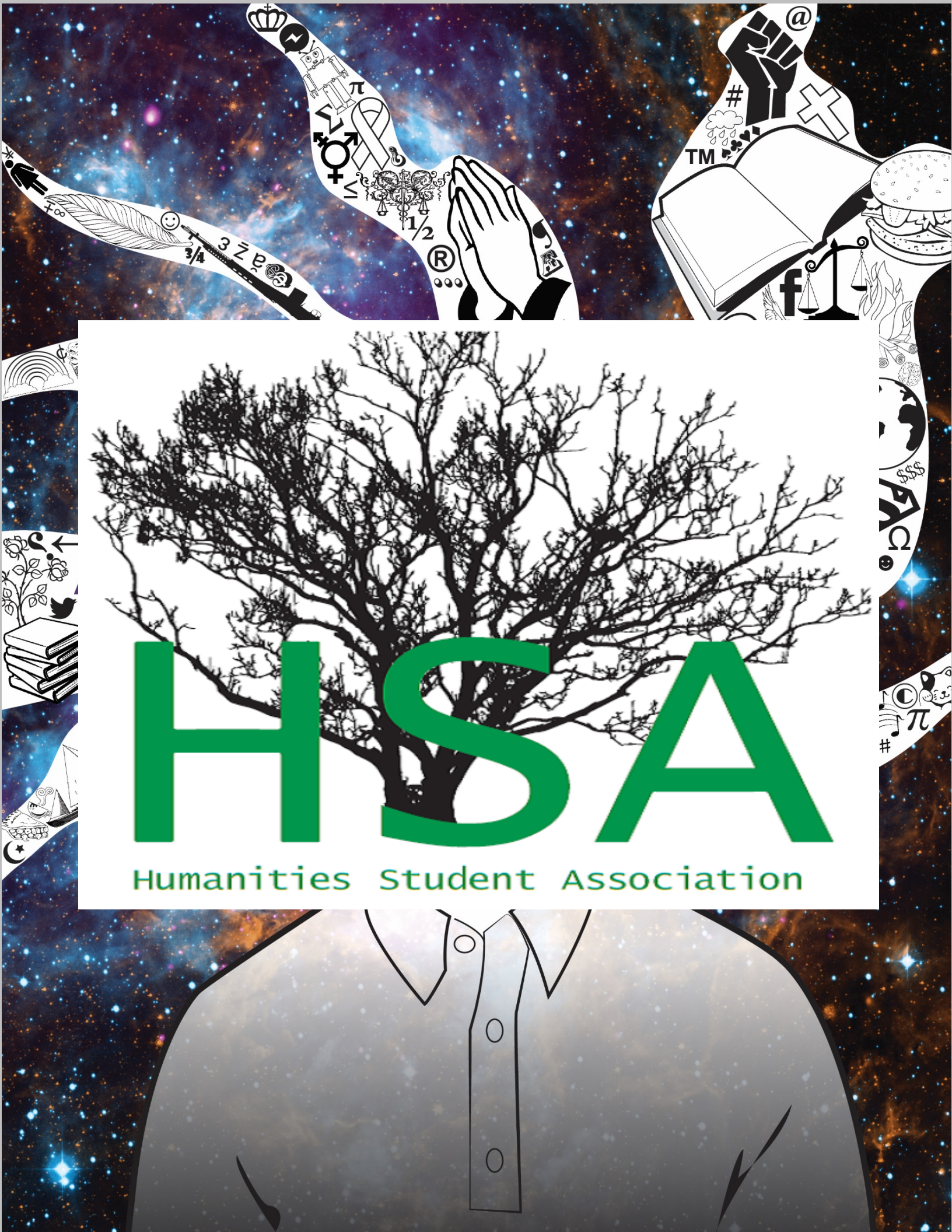
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