crossings.

an undergraduate arts journal

Volume Three

Land Acknowledgement

The Organization for Arts Students and Interdisciplinary Studies, Crossings, and The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Naktoo Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.





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Hailey Lothamer

I am very pleased to welcome you to the third volume of Crossings: An Undergraduate Arts Journal. As the student peer-review journal for the Faculty of Arts, we publish the finest written and visual work from across the fine arts, humanities, and social sciences at the University of Alberta. During my tenure as Editor-in-Chief, I have had the opportunity to work alongside some of the faculty's most talented creators and inspiring researchers. Over the last year, I have witnessed firsthand how these creative endeavours contribute to our community within the Faculty of Arts, and the resilience Arts students possess in adapting to various challenges and opportunities.

This volume would not have been possible without the work of an incredibly accomplished and diligent editorial board and review team. To this end, I extend my sincere gratitude and thanks to our art and design director, Michelle Wedel, and the graphic design lead, Alex Sychuk, who directed the creative processes of Crossings. Our Section Editors, Ashley Lau, Katie O'Connor, and Rebecca Swityk were instrumental in managing a large review team and contributing to the polished work seen in this volume. Finally, our senior copyeditor, Jana Elsalhy oversaw the copyediting team through comprehensive revisions to produce the best draft of each submission.

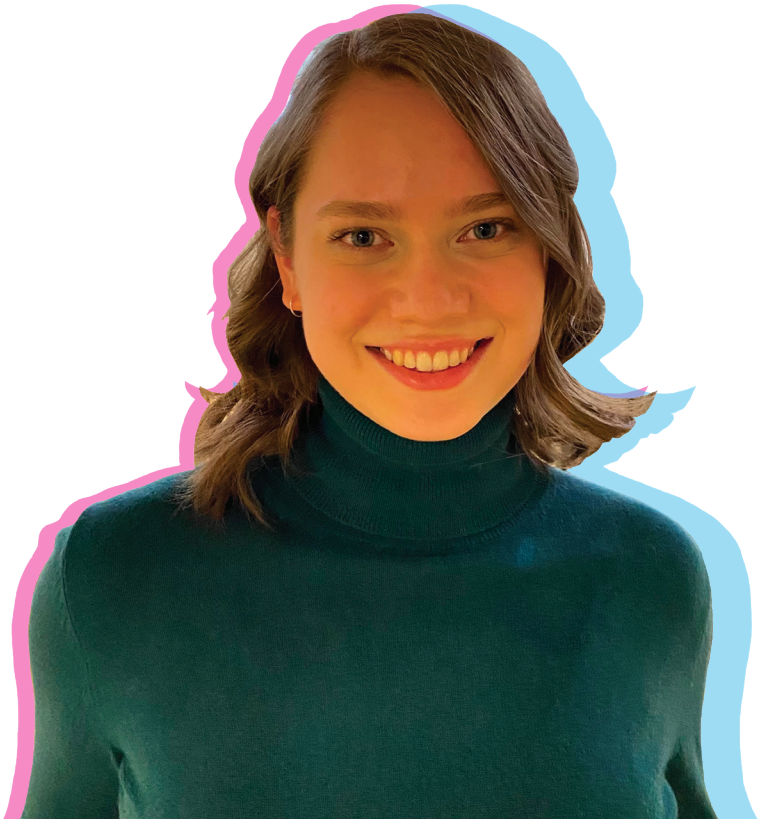
It has been such a privilege to work alongside experienced and enthusiastic peer review and copyediting teams in the production of this volume. Crossings benefits immeasurably from their contributions and time, particularly as our team of 25 individuals each represent a unique discipline in the Faculty of Arts. Their knowledge of their field and their passion for this project has surely enhanced the final form of this volume. I commend each and every one of them for the contributions to Crossings and the greater Arts community.

A highlight of the Crossings journal is that our editorial team is able to work with the fantastic people involved with OASIS, to whom I am very grateful for their expertise and assistance in producing this volume. On a personal note, I would like to thank the co-executives at OASIS, Rebecca Swityk, Hussain Alhussainy, Vivek Gala, and Bronwyn Johnston for their support. I am also excited to announce that a member of the OASIS team, Bassem Raad, will succeed me as Editor-in-Chief.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Robert Woods and Dr. Christine Brown for their guidance and support to Crossings over the years. Their contributions have been invaluable in promoting undergraduate research and the sense of community within the Arts. Sarah Severson and the team at the University of Alberta Libraries also enable our work and we are greatly appreciative of their efforts.

To all of our readers: I wish you a pleasant experience as you progress through this volume, and I hope that Crossings is able to provide insight into what makes our community in the Faculty of Arts stand out.

Hailey Lothamer
Editor in Chief



Ariane Lamoreux

At OASIS, we began this year with a discussion on how we would like to see our community evolve and with resounding certainty, our team identified a need to further illustrate the expansive talents that exist within the Arts. Hailey and the Crossings team have taken this point in stride by producing not only a third edition of Crossings but a special edition that proves the value of uplifting the voices of Arts students from across all sectors of the Faculty. As the Arts population has grown and changed, so too has this journal. By responding to the calls of students and providing opportunities for personal academic development, Crossings has been able to thrive under Hailey's incredible leadership. It has been a joy to watch the story of this journal continue to unfold and I look forward to seeing how Crossings builds upon the work produced by this year's brilliant team.

To the readers, I encourage you to truly take in the artistic, academic, and journalistic work produced throughout this piece. It is with careful curation that Crossings hopes to not only share the talent of students spanning across the Faculty of Arts, but also inspire the pursuit of learning through interdisciplinary avenues that showcase the breadth of knowledge and insight housed within the Arts.

On behalf of OASIS, I would like to sincerely thank all of those involved in the crafting of this journal. From the authors to the peer reviewers, copy editors, artists, university staff, readers, and of course, our Editor-in-Chief Hailey Lothamer, we would not have been able to create this piece without all of you. Thank you.

Ariane Lamoureux
OASIS President



Dr. Robert Woods

I am honoured to welcome readers to the third volume of Crossings: An Undergraduate Student Journal.

Founded in 2020 by the Organization for Arts Students and Interdisciplinary Studies (OASIS), Crossings is the first interdisciplinary arts journal at the University of Alberta. It offers students an academic and creative platform to showcase their work and demonstrate the crucial importance and impact of the arts in academia and society. Crossings provides the opportunity for Arts students to develop invaluable skills and experience related to publishing and the dissemination of research and creative activity.

I was pleased to learn that this year the journal saw a sharp increase in the number of submissions compared to the previous two years, especially within the humanities and our media and technology studies programs. On another exciting note, for the first time, this year's journal also features peer-reviewed visual and media submissions, in addition to written submissions, which signifies the beginning of a deeper relationship between the journal and the fine arts.

Each piece in this journal is a testament to the talent, innovation and originality that exists within our student body, and I hope readers both enjoy and find inspiration through these works.

Please also be on the lookout for a special edition of Crossings that will be released later this summer, featuring submissions that focus on the resilience of marginalized communities and those affected by humanitarian crises and conflicts.

Lastly, it's important to remember that no publication is possible without an abundance of behind-the-scenes work, and I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the Crossings' editorial team. This extraordinary group of students put their time and care into reviewing each submission, editing, designing layouts and fostering all communication necessary to offer readers this visual treat. Please join me in congratulating them on their success!

Happy reading,

Robert Wood, PhD
Dean, Faculty of Arts


FINE



ARTS

Photographer: Henry Deng

Ashley





Lau

Fine Arts

Section Editor

I am thrilled to present the Fine Arts Section of Crossings' third volume, which continues to expand our representation of the diverse research and innovation found within the arts. This year, Crossings opened submissions of visual art and design for the first time since its inception. Recognizing that text is only one of many vessels for knowledge creation, we hope that this is the first step towards publishing work across an even broader range of creative practices, including music and drama.

The works featured in this section offer rich and insightful examinations of interdisciplinary issues, all through the lens of art and design. The two articles highlight the power of art and design to shape or challenge our understanding of society, from speculative design that prods at Chinese cultural norms to painting that reveals gender and class ideology during the Joseon period of Korea. The visual works showcased in this volume explore philosophy, gender, sexuality, and environmental issues through multimedia, sculpture, painting, and 3D design.

Each work stands on its own on the basis of its formal qualities; however, upon closer examination of the artist statements, each is a product of extensive learning, research, and contemplation, provoking further questioning and imagination.

This volume's final form is the result of the hard work of many individuals working behind the scenes. I would like to extend special thanks to Madeleine Beaulieu, who played a crucial role in recruitment and outreach efforts before passing on the editor role to me at the end of the first term, and the Humanities team, who supported the Fine Arts review team in ensuring a thorough, double-blind review for all submissions. As both a contributor and editor this year, I have personally experienced the enthusiasm and diligence of the Crossings editorial team in curating and refining an excellent body of work. Their efforts have provided a valuable learning experience for undergraduate researchers in the arts, many of whom may be publishing their work for the first time. I hope you enjoy this section and the wider scope of research-creation that Crossings will continue to explore in the future.

The Representation of Gender and Social Class in Sin Yunbok's Two-Sword Dance

Author: Amy Weber
Discipline: Art History

ABSTRACT: This essay will explore how the painter Sin Yunbok used visual conventions to depict gender and class in his 1745 painting Two-Sword Dance. Two-Sword Dance was painted during the Joseon period of Korea (1392 - 1897) when Neo-Confucianism was the dominant ideology. Elements of Neo-Confucianism that are relevant to this work are the value placed on proper social relationships and the patriarchal structure of society. This paper will focus on the position of yangban (upper-class) men and women and gisaeng (female performers) in society as represented through Sin's work. In Two-Sword Dance, Sin depicts the societal and gender roles that were dominant in the Neo-Confucian Joseon society in three main ways. Firstly, the clothing of the figures demonstrates their position in society. Secondly, Sin uses the spatial separation of the yangban family and the gisaeng dancers to demonstrate the separate and hierarchical spheres in society. Lastly, the motion of the gisaeng and the stillness of the yangban women represent how, although part of a lower class, gisaeng were often afforded more social freedom than yangban women. This paper aims to provide a close reading of Two-Sword Dance and a clearer understanding of the role of gender and class in Joseon society.

KEYWORDS: Joseon period, Korea, painting, Social and Gender roles, Korean women, Sin Yunbok

This article will explore the representation of gender and social class in Sin Yunbok's 1745 painting Two-Sword Dance (*fig. 1*), painted in colour on paper and currently in the Kansong Art Museum in Seoul, South Korea. Sin Yunbok (ca. 1758 - after 1815) was known for his lively but unconventional paintings of everyday life, particularly of female performers.[1] He worked for the Court Painting Bureau but lost his post due to the controversial nature of his subjects.[2]

Two -Sword Dance was created in the Joseon period of Korea (1392 - 1897), which was dominated by the Neo-Confucian ideology. Confucianism originated in China from the teachings of Confucius (c. 551 BCE - c. 479 BCE). Neo-Confucianism emerged in the twelfth century CE, with the Chinese scholar Zhu Xi, whose ideas strongly influenced what would become Korean Neo-Confucianism.[3] Neo-Confucianism was introduced to Joseon by Korean scholars who brought the ideology back from their travels to China and from their relationships with Chinese Neo-Confucian scholars.[4] Neo-Confucianism was a complex and multifaceted belief system that came to be the dominant belief system of Joseon. Neo-Confucianism touched many aspects of daily life, from philosophical beliefs to daily routines. In relation to Sin Yunbok's Two-Sword Dance, I will be focusing on the social aspects of Neo-Confucianism, particularly in relation to the role of women. Relationships under Neo-Confucianism were strictly hierarchical, with those situated atop the hierarchy expected to act responsibly and morally to those below them. [5] The "Five Cardinal Relationships" of Confucianism were between father and son, ruler and minister, husband and wife, old and young, and friends.[6] Respecting social position and age was especially important in Joseon society. [7] Women were viewed as subordinate to the men in their lives; the eldest male in the family held the highest social position.[8] Not only were women viewed as lower than men in the Neo-Confucian hierarchy, female performers, or gisaeng, who Sin often depicted in his paintings, were part of the lowest class of Joseon society.



Sin's paintings of gisaeng, such as Two-Sword Dance, conflicted with the Neo-Confucian ideals of the Joseon period.[9] Gisaeng were beautiful women who were highly skilled in singing, playing instruments, dancing, poetry, calligraphy, and painting; some also became popular for their wit and humour.[10] Some accounts date the beginning of the gisaeng to the early Goryeo period (918 to 1392 A.D.),[11] while others date even earlier to the Three Kingdoms period (57 B.C. to 668 A.D.).[12] Girls were taken from the cheonmin class, the lowest social class, at around fifteen years old to train to be gisaeng, and typically worked from eighteen to thirty years old.[13] During the Joseon dynasty, gisaeng trained at schools that taught music, dance, and literature.[14] Before Sin's work, women, especially gisaeng, were rarely depicted in genre paintings. [15] As gisaeng were considered to be part of the lowest class of Joseon society, they were subject to fewer restrictions than the women of the high yangban class. Unlike yangban women, gisaeng were able to have an education, be seen in public, and interact with men.

[1] Saehyang P. Chung, "Sin Yunbok's Kisaeng Imagery: Subtle Expression of Emotions under the Women's Beautiful Facade," Acta Koreana 10, no. 2 (2007): 75.
[2] Chung, 75.
[3] Kevin N. Cawley, "Korean Confucianism," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2021), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/korean-confucianism/.
[4] Cawley.
[5] Cawley.
[6] Cawley.
[7] Cawley.
[8] Cawley.
[9] Chung, "Sin Yunbok's Kisaeng Imagery," 74.
[10] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, "Women Entertainers: The Kisaeng," in Women of Korea: A History from Ancient times to 1945, 3rd ed. Translated by Yung-Chung Kim. (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1982), 142.
[11] Chung, "Sin Yunbok's Kisaeng Imagery," 76-77.
[12] Byong Won Lee, "Evolution of the Role and Status of Korean Professional Female Entertainers (Kisaeng)," The World of Music 21, no. 2 (1979) (2007): 75, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43560608.
[13] Lee, 76.
[14] Chung, "Sin Yunbok's Kisaeng Imagery," 77.
[15] Chung, 88.

Two-Sword Dance depicts various social groups of Joseon society. The group that immediately draws the viewer's attention is the gisaeng in the middle. These two women, dressed in vibrant clothing with a sword in each hand, twirl in the center of the gathering, their forms creating harmony and balance with each other. The women face opposite directions, their bodies curving towards each other. The slight curve of their swords reflects the curve of their bodies. Both women wear sweeping garments in vivid shades of blue, red, purple, and green, which convey their rapid movement as they ripple and flow, seemingly swept up in the wind currents around their moving bodies. Their bright clothing and dynamic movement make them the focus of the painting. The next group, above the two central women, are four men and two women watching the entertainment. These men and women are part of the yangban (upper-class). Three of the men wear the black gat, while the man on the far right wears a gat in a pale beige shade. The ladies' hair is swept up into large puffs, and they wear different shades of blue hanbok.

Their pale clothing and motionless posture visually differentiate them from the gisaeng. The next social class is seen in the smaller figure in white robes to the right of the yangban, perhaps a servant. Lastly are the figures of seven male musicians, between the dancers and the viewer. These men hold instruments, indicating their status, and wear blue garments, except the man on the far left, who wears white. The men wear black gat hats, creating a visual rhythm that breaks up the mostly pale colours of the composition. The clothing, placement, and motion of the figures vary depending on their social group. To limit the scope of this paper, I will focus on the yangban men, the yangban women, the gisaeng, and the interplay between them; the two groups of women were strictly separated, but the male yangban could move in between. In Two-Sword Dance, Sin uses visual conventions to reflect the social and gender roles of Joseon society, particularly through clothing, positioning, and motion.

Clothing, Colour, and Headwear

In Two-Sword Dance, Sin demonstrates differences in class through the clothing of the figures. During the Joseon period, clothing demonstrated the social position of the wearer through elements such as colour, material, pattern, and style.[16] A Joseon viewer would have been able to understand how the colour of the clothing and the headwear of the figures demonstrated their class. As well, the special costume of the sword dancers demonstrates their gisaeng status.



Figure 2. Sin Yunbok, Portrait of a Beauty, Late Joseon Dynasty. Ink and colour on silk, 114 × 45.5 cm. Collection of Kansong Art and Culture Foundation.

The women at the top left of the painting are identifiable as yangban through the colour of their clothing and its decoration. The basic structure of women's clothing in the Joseon period was the jeogori (jacket) and skirt.[17] Women of the higher classes wore white jeogori with coloured trims along the seams of the collar, underarms, and sides, known as the samhoejang jeogori ("triple-trimmed jacket"). [18] The women's jeogori in Two-Sword Dance is trimmed along the collar and wrists, and although the underarm seams are hidden, it seems likely that they are wearing samhoejang jeogori. The women also decorate their jackets with norigae, tasselled ornaments. [19]

Like the dress of the women in Two-Sword Dance, shades of blue dominated women's everyday clothing in the Joseon period.[20]

[16] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, "Costume," in Women of Korea: A History from Ancient times to 1945, 3rd ed. Translated by Yung-Chung Kim. (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1982), 145.
[17] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, 146.
[18] Tae-ho Lee, "Aesthetic Awareness of Women in Old Paintings," Koreana 32, no. 4 (2018): 16.
[19] Lee, 17
[20] Lee, 16.

Blue skirts also demonstrated that a woman was married.[21] A popular choice of dress was "a white jacket and an indigo blue skirt . . . reminiscent of cheonghwa baekja, white porcelain with cobalt blue designs, which was popular at the time." [22] This shows that clothing was representative of wider societal tastes and conventions. To identify the clothing of the yangban women in Two-Sword Dance, we can compare it to another painting by Sin: Portrait of a Beauty (fig. 2). In this painting, the yangban woman also wears a triple-trimmed-jacket, light blue skirt, norigae, and similar hairstyle to the women in Two-Sword Dance. By identifying the similarities between the dress of the women in the top left of Two-Sword Dance with Portrait of a Beauty, the women's dress can be classified as that of the yangban class.

Gisaeng clothing differed from that of yangban women. This difference is heightened in Two-Sword Dance, as the gisaeng are wearing sword dance costumes. Costumes for these performances were made up of brightly coloured jeogori and skirts, as well as elements of military dress, notably the jeonbok (military long vest), jeondae (military belt), and jeollip (military hat)[23]. The military aspects of sword dance costumes were slowly integrated into the performance, creating a sense of androgyny. [24] The gisaeng in Sin's painting are distinguished from the yangban women through their clothing, particularly in the bold colours, the use of military elements, and the sense of androgyny they portray.

Hair and headwear were also indicative of class in the Joseon dynasty. Yangban women spared no expense on their hair and often wore large wigs.[25] Although kings Yeongjo and Jeongjo, who reigned during Sin's lifetime, attempted to suppress the use of wigs, the fashion for big hair is still visible in Sin's work.[26] For men, the black gat was part of the proper attire for noblemen.[27] The man on the right of the top group is not wearing the gat, but rather the chorip, made from woven grass or bamboo.[28] This type of hat indicates the age of the male figure, as it was worn by boys who were too young to wear the traditional black gat but had passed their coming-of-age ceremony.[29] The sword dancers wear jeollip (military hats), which indicates their role as performers and separates them from the other figures in Sin's painting.[30]

Space in Society and Painting

Although the gisaeng system conflicted with the values of the dominant Neo-Confucian ideology of the Joseon dynasty, it was not eradicated – likely because of the influence gisaeng held over government officials as well as the concern that without gisaeng government officials might turn their affections to the wives of commoners.[31] Gisaeng were a way for the yangban man to enjoy what he was denied by the Neo-Confucian family system, such as erotic desire and intellectual stimulation.[32] Successful gisaeng had many qualities that a proper yangban woman was denied, such as "artistic excellence, beauty, and sex appeal."[33] Joseon gisaeng were strictly regulated and were not allowed to become part of the yangban class through marriage.[34] As gisaeng status was hereditary, even if the daughter of a gisaeng had a yangban father, she would still grow up to be a gisaeng.[35] Gisaeng could not be part of the Joseon family system; yangban men could not marry gisaeng, and yangban women could not interact with them.[36] Gisaeng lived on the fringes of society and were often not allowed marriage or a family.[37]

The separation of gisaeng from the world of yangban women and men, and the ideal Neo-Confucian family, is demonstrated in Sin's work. The gisaeng are spatially separated from the yangban family in the painting. As revealed by their blue clothing, the yangban women are married, and as the man on the far right is younger (as indicated by his chorip hat), he is likely one of their sons. This group represents the ideal of the Neo-Confucian family, something gisaeng were denied. While the yangban spectators watch the gisaeng performing–aside from the man directly to the left of the women–the performers do not meet their gaze.

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[21] Youngjae Lee, "The Research of Costume on Shin, Yun-Bok's Painting in Late Chosun Dynasty," Journal of Fashion Business 14, no. 3 (2010): 54.
[22] Lee, "Aesthetic Awareness of Women in Old Paintings," 16.
[23] Ga Young Park, "Androgyny of Sword Dance Costumes in the Joseon Dynasty," International Journal of Human Ecology 15, no. 2 (December 2014): 25, http://dx.doi.org/10.6115/ijhe.2014.15.2.23.
[24] Park, 30.
[25] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, "Costume," 150.
[26] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, 150.
[27] Lee, "The Research of Costume on Shin, Yun-Bok's Painting in Late Chosun Dynasty," 58.
[28] "Chorip," Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Culture, National Folk Museum of Korea, accessed December 14, 2022, https://folkency.nfm.go.kr/en/topic/detail/7206.
[29] "Chorip."
[30] Park, "Androgyny of Sword Dance Costumes in the Joseon Dynasty," 25.
[31] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, "Women Entertainers: The Kisaeng," 139.
[32] Ji-young Suh, "Women on the Borders of the Ladies' Quarters and the Ginyeo House: The Mixed Self-Consciousness of Ginyeo in Late Joseon," Korea Journal 48, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 144.
[33] Suh, 144.
[34] Lee, "Evolution of the Role and Status of Korean Professional Female Entertainers (Kisaeng)," 75-76.
[35] Chung, "Sin Yunbok's Kisaeng Imagery," 77.
[36] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, "Women Entertainers: The Kisaeng," 144.
[37] Chung, "Sin Yunbok's Kisaeng Imagery," 74.

The gisaeng are denied the agency of looking either at the yangban above them, the musicians below them, or directly at the viewer. Their gazes are confined, which creates a space cell that boxes them off both from the rest of the group and from the viewer. They are separated from the other figures both by their positions and their gazes, reflecting how they were in a separate social space in their lives.

Motion and Freedom

Despite being part of the lowest class of Joseon society, gisaeng were able to transcend the Neo-Confucian restrictions on women in various ways. For example, they were the only group of women who were educated.[38] According to Confucian thought, "there are four virtues women should possess: First, not being too intelligent; second, not being too eloquent; third, not being too beautiful; and fourth, not being too dexterous."[39] As gisaeng were expected to be charming women who were often renowned for their wit, the role of the gisaeng conflicted with all these values. Unlike other classes of women, gisaeng were permitted to leave their homes, interact with men, and attend public events.[40] While yangban women held a higher position in society, their lives were highly restricted by the dominant Neo-Confucian ideology. Through this lens, the gisaeng had more freedom.

The representation of motion in Two-Sword Dance demonstrates how the lives of yangban women were often more restricted than those of gisaeng. The yangban women in the top left sit in stillness, their legs tucked beneath their large skirts and hidden amongst the puffy drapery. The motion of their bodies is hidden by their clothing which shows their rank. In contrast to the stationary yangban women, the gisaeng twist and turn, their swords cut through the air, and the peacock feathers on their hats bend. Even their delicate feet show their precarious movements. The sword dance was taught at special gisaeng training schools; the women's ability to perform this dance demonstrates their education, something the static yangban women lack.[41] Therefore, their dynamic motion is representative of both the increased education and social freedom of the gisaeng compared to the lives of yangban women.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of Sin Yunbok's Two-Sword Dance, we can see how the artist depicted the different social roles of the yangban women, yangban men, and gisaeng. The Neo-Confucian ideology of the Joseon period strictly prescribed how the Joseon people were to act. Those who lived outside of the structure delineated by the Neo-Confucian order, such as the gisaeng, struggled on the fringes of society. However, in many ways, the gisaeng had more opportunities and freedom than the women of the yangban class. Sin shows these complex relationships between class and gender in his work through clothing, positioning, and motion. Works by genre painters such as Sin reveal the structure and everyday life of Joseon society, and how distinct social groups interacted with each other.

[38] Chung, 78.
[39] Suh, "Women on the Borders of the Ladies' Quarters and the Ginyeo House," 143.
[40] Committee for the Compilation of The History of Korean Women, "Women Entertainers: The Kisaeng," 140.
[41] Park, "Androgyny of Sword Dance Costumes in the Joseon Dynasty," 25.

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Photographer: Henry Deng

Sinofuturism as Speculative Design

Author: Ashley Lau
Discipline: Design

ABSTRACT: The video essay Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) by artist Lawrence Lek is difficult to categorize. It is an hour-long film collaging documentaries, news clips, video games, and CGI. Most often exhibited and discussed in a (new) media art context, it has been described as a work of video art, a pseudo-documentary, and a manifesto. The work's titular ideology, Sinofuturism, has been characterized as conspiracy theory, science fiction, and "radical realism." As an architect-by-training, musician, simulation artist, and now filmmaker, Lek himself is equally difficult to pin down. Given the artist's formal training in a design discipline, it is curious that Sinofuturism has not yet been discussed by scholarship through the lens of design. This essay discusses Sinofuturism for the first time as a work of speculative design, an emerging genre of design that aims to critique and reimagine societal structures. As a work of speculative design, Sinofuturism pushes its viewers to re-evaluate stereotypes of Chinese society and diaspora by presenting a theory of how Chinese society operates, survives, and replicates itself around the world and into the future: be like artificial intelligence.

KEYWORDS: Sinofuturism, new media art, Orientalism, Speculative fiction, Diaspora, Posthumanism

Introduction

The video essay Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) by artist Lawrence Lek is difficult to categorize. It is an hour-long film collaging documentaries, news clips, video games, and CGI. Most often exhibited and discussed in a (new) media art context, it has been described as a work of video art, a pseudo-documentary, and a manifesto. As an architect-by-training, musician, simulation artist, and now filmmaker, Lek himself is equally difficult to pin down. Given the artist's formal training in a design discipline, it is curious that Sinofuturism has not yet been discussed by scholarship through the lens of design.



Figure 1: Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD), 00:01:49.

This essay discusses Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) for the first time as a work of speculative design. First, I will introduce the work and its creator. Next, I will discuss its negative reception as a work of art, laying the basis for my central argument that analyzing Sinofuturism as a work of speculative design might yield more fruitful insights and discussion. I will then explore the emerging field of speculative and critical design (SCD) and its potential to critique and reimagine societal structures. Finally, I will evaluate the effectiveness of Sinofuturism as a work of speculative design and analyze its vision, whether it be utopian, dystopian, or something else. As a work of speculative design, Sinofuturism pushes its viewers to re-evaluate cultural clichés of Chinese society by presenting the outrageously plausible theory of Sinofuturism: that Chinese society is actually a form of artificial intelligence, resiliently problem-solving and adapting itself for survival throughout time and place.

In doing so, Sinofuturism paints a compelling metaphor of Chinese society—its diasporic communities in particular—that blurs literal and figurative interpretation, revealing cultural tendencies so taken for granted that they have rarely been articulated in seriousness. Accordingly, Sinofuturism has been described as "conspiracy theory," "science fiction" (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD)), and, perhaps most fittingly, "radical realism" (Rhensius).

Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD)

Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) superimposes an original transcript, narrated by a robotic text-to-speech voiceover, against a haphazardly edited pastiche of found video from the Internet. A game of Go and a dizzying CGI shot of outer space simultaneously play onscreen (fig. 1) as the narrator opens with the claim that contemporary China as "the factory of the world" is "only the latest incarnation of the Chinese work ethic," born from an "agrarian society prone to natural disasters" and situated "within a Confucian belief system that values hard work as the only insurance against a turbulent world" (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 1:27). "Multiple stereotypes of [China] are everywhere," the narrator drones on as the scene transitions to shaky, blurry footage of a nondescript room, where rows of identical-looking machines are plugged into industrial metal shelving (fig. 2). The narrator continues, "Whether Chinese Olympic athletes are branded as robots, or Chinese students or tourists are likened to swarms, or Shenzhen factory workers are criticized for flooding the marketplace, the subtext is the same: it is the dehumanization of the individual into a nameless, faceless mass" (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 1:53). The video is divided into seven chapters, each focusing on a key stereotype of Chinese society: computing, copying, addiction, studying, labour, gaming, and gambling. These seven tenets make up Sinofuturism, the theory that what we mistake for contemporary China is actually a form of artificial intelligence—specifically, computer systems famously known for their ability to fabricate human intelligence by recognizing patterns in extensive data sets and regurgitating them (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 3:54).

Sinofuturism's creator, Lawrence Lek (born in 1982), is a multimedia artist whose practice spans simulations, installations, video games, electronic music, and other audiovisual works. He is of Malaysian-Chinese descent; was born in Germany; grew up in Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Osaka; and is currently living and working in London. Lek possesses an educational background in architecture that culminated in a master's degree in architecture at The Cooper Union in New York (Cheung 77). While studying architecture, Lek became fascinated with the tension in architecture between the virtual and the real—the sketch or prototype versus the real building. He became more interested in the virtual as not the means but the end product, and started exploring the narratives and first-person experiences embedded within architecture. Through the audiovisual medium of digital simulations, his work has addressed a revolving set of themes including the virtual versus the real, capitalism and the corporatization of culture, and labour and creativity in a posthuman world. Up until 2015, he experimented with site-specific simulations and installations.

In 2016, he started creating The Sinofuturist Trilogy for which he is the most well-known: Sinofuturism (2016), Geomancer (2017), and AIDOL (2019). Geomancer and AIDOL are both CGI films set in the near future in a Singapore that is populated by both AIs (artificial intelligence) and humans. In these films, he explores the boundary between AI and humanity, with the ultimate boundary being creativity. There is a group of AIs in Geomancer called the Sinofuturists, who are inspired by the Sinofuturist manifesto to fight against a law banning AIs from making art. The film Sinofuturism is this manifesto. As the first film in the trilogy, Sinofuturism was made as a by-product of Lek's research for Geomancer (Lek, "Worldbuilding for 2065 - Lawrence Lek" 58:36).

Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD)

In its critical reception, Sinofuturism received a notable number of negative responses. These responses stemmed from an understandable wariness that Sinofuturism was yet another simplistic mutation of Orientalism that perpetuated harmful clichés. In "Chapter Three: Gaming," the narrator recites:

> Edward Said's 1978 book Orientalism studies the cultural representations that are the basis of the West's patronizing perceptions and fictional depictions of the East, the societies and peoples who inhabit the places of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. He argues that Orientalism, the Western scholarship about the Eastern world, was, and remains inextricably tied to, the imperialist societies who produced it, which makes much Orientalist work inherently political and servile to power and therefore intellectually suspect. (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 20:14)

And intellectually suspect indeed was Sinofuturism to many critics. Curator Zian Chen has described Sinofuturism as underdeveloped and reeking of "internalized historical discrimination" in comparison to Afrofuturism, the canonical ethnofuturist genre (Chen). Chinese studies scholar Gabriele de Seta has accused Sinofuturism of the same "temporal othering" that Orientalism and techno-Orientalism have been guilty of: relegating an Eastern culture or nation to the past or to the future, but denying its agency and participation in the present (de Seta 89). Such criticisms liken Lek's Sinofuturism to a reductive narrative imposed by an outsider onto an Eastern other, even as Lek himself is a member of the Sino diaspora, and even as the Eastern other in question is in fact the Sino diaspora, as will be discussed later in this essay. To this, the narrator preemptively quips that "Said's narrative created a paradigm where 'Orientalism' has become a generalized swear word" (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 21:20).

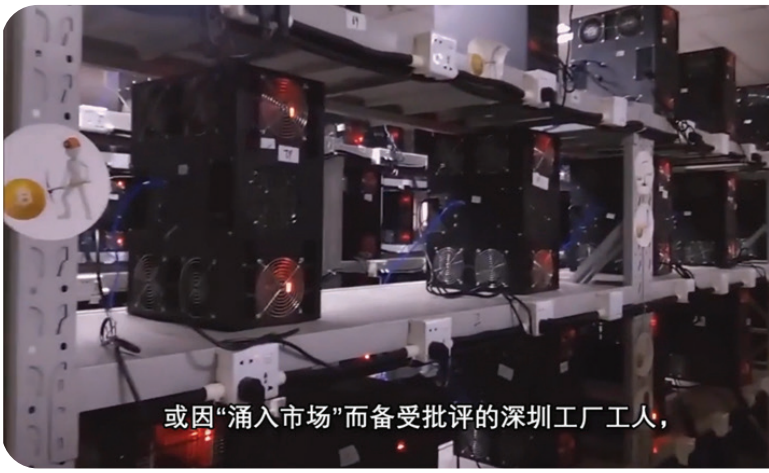

Figure 2: Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD), 00:02:04.

The sentiments discussed in this section are best summed up by de Seta and science fiction scholar Virginia L. Conn: "Sinofuturism rehashes many established tropes of Orientalist representation," and this in itself is bad (Conn and de Seta 75). Indeed, in its ambiguity about what exactly it is trying to advocate for, Sinofuturism is provocative, possibly harmfully so. However, viewing Sinofuturism as a work of speculative design may yield a different conclusion.

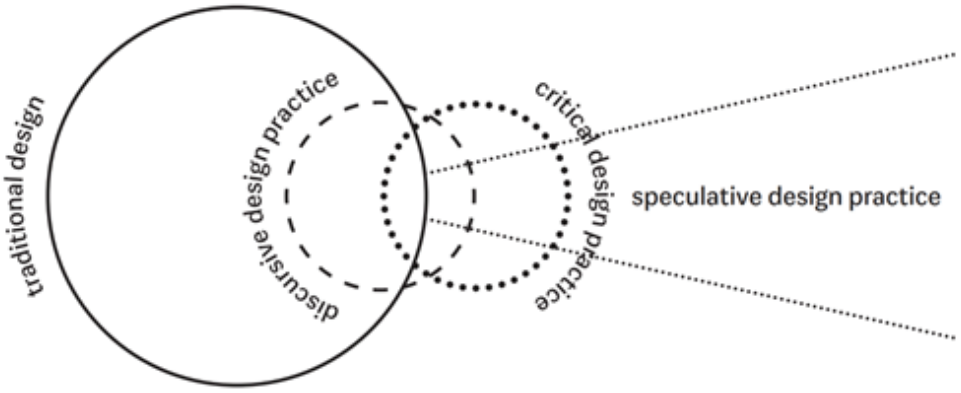

Figure 3: Relationship between traditional, critical, and speculative design. (Mitrović et al. 2021).

Speculative Design

Speculative design is part of a broader "field" of Speculative and Critical Design, or SCD. Critical design builds on traditional (i.e., commercial) design, using methods from design to critique the very systems that traditional design enables and affirms. Speculative design takes critical design one step further (fig. 3) by imagining alternative or future scenarios through the design of objects, also known as "props," and/or narratives, which can often take similar forms as literature and film (Johannessen et al. 1628). Like the practice of storyboarding in animation, filmmaking, and product design, these objects and narratives "prototype" a scenario at a level of fidelity that makes it believable enough for an audience to engage with and debate about.

British designer Anthony Dunne coined the term "critical design" in his 1999 dissertation and the term "speculative design" along with his collaborator Fiona Raby in their seminal 2013 book Speculative Everything (Johannessen et al. 1625). While SCD emerges from a European context, people all over the world might be engaging in speculative design whether they know it or not (Mitrović et al. 70–71). Thus, it is entirely plausible that Lek, drawing from his designer's toolkit and fascination with the prototype from his formal training, created Sinofuturism as an unintentional work of speculative design. Dunne and Raby emphasize that speculative design is not a strictly defined field or method, but an attitude or "position" a designer takes. This position is one that seeks to "emphasize ethical and societal features of design practice," "reveal underlying agendas," and "explore alternative values, forms, and representations" (Johannessen et al. 1624).

Sinofuturism as Speculative Design

Sinofuturism makes surprising connections between topics that seemingly have no correlation—the most obvious example being Chinese society and artificial intelligence. Rather than presenting sound evidence to support these claims of connection, Sinofuturism haphazardly collages together a series of found footage. Many of the clips contain biased or unreliable content such as extremist political commentary or biased docu-mentary narratives. Many more do not convey any message, but simply provide an ambient backdrop to the eyebrow-raising statements that the voiceover spews with robotic cadence. In "Chapter Three: Gaming," a CGI drone video displaying dizzying video-game-like manoeuvres of a to-be-developed commercial complex accompanies the following monologue: "Games are a training ground for a future reality, one where the individual will most likely perform repetitive tasks individ-ually and in groups. Why not start young? Gaming is training" (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 17:19). (Just seconds afterwards, this argument is soured by documentary footage of teens having a hard time at an Internet addiction rehabilitation centre in China (fig. 4).) Sinofuturism prioritizes weaving an outrageous argument rather than proving it with reliable, even relevant, sources. Such is the nature of speculative design. It draws connections based on assumptions, and these assumptions—the more absurd the better—in turn provoke the audience to critically examine their own assumptions. Speculative design does not provide answers and solutions nor trap itself in the current conception of reality; rather, it aims to raise questions, encourage thinking, and generate discourse (Johannessen et al. 1629).

Speculative design draws inspiration from the science fiction of the 1970s, an era full of "social dreaming" as humankind became ever closer to travelling in outer space (Johannessen et al. 1626). This might explain why speculative fiction and speculative design are nearly impossible to differentiate in terms of subject matter and methods of execution. In recent years, a number of artists have been drawn to the genre of science fiction, "bound by an interest in fragmentation" and "a combining of tropes of documentary and narrative," as well as by posthumanist concerns of "critiqu[ing] the rational human subject" and "open[ing] up discussions relating to non-human otherness" (Byrne-Smith 12, 16). Lek is one such artist. Sinofuturism presents an alternative framework to Western humanism, albeit a seemingly dystopian one. But, in this way, Sinofuturism especially resonates with those who are caught between the two opposing sentiments of Western Sinophobia and Chinese national chauvinism in the age of globalization.



Figure 4: Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD), "Chapter Three: Gaming," 00:17:46. Documentary footage of a distraught Chinese teen detailing the way he was locked up in an Internet addiction rehabilitation centre is juxtaposed against an upbeat CGI architectural animation. This is characteristic of the film's tone and editing style.

Considering the above, it is no coincidence that Sinofuturism's links to the Sino diaspora have been a particular point of interest in discussions surrounding the work (Lang; Zhang). In this essay, I use the term "Sino diaspora" to refer to emigrant Chinese populations from Sinophone regions such as China, Macau, Hong Kong, and Taiwan without delving into the complicated relations these regions have with one another. (Fertile grounds for further research are the multitude of terms, often entangled with notions of ethnonationalism, used by the governments of the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China to describe Chinese emigrants from their respective territories.) Diaspora refers to populations that "have been dispersed from their original homeland… either involuntar[ily] (resulting from forced displacement) or voluntar[ily] (arising from a search for employment, attempts to maximize trade, or the aim to colonize other lands and peoples)" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 1). The Sino diaspora is not a monolith, and waves of migration, both voluntary (e.g., the California Gold Rush) and involuntary (e.g., the Second Sino-Japanese War), have occurred at different points in time and in reaction to various triggers. Regardless, the Sinofuturist narrative pointedly ignores these nuances and presents a singular global Chinese entity and origin story for the viewer's reckoning.

Artist and writer Gary Zhexi Zhang observes that the Sinofuturist narrative "identif[ies] with neither the 'target' culture nor the 'global' culture of Western hegemony but rather imagin[es], from the diaspora, a third position through which the other of Western modernity… erupts from within its own colonized horizon" (Zhang 87). Not only is Sinofuturism imagined from a diasporic perspective, but it is also undeniably about diaspora. In a 2020 lecture about The Sinofuturist Trilogy, Lek himself underlines the diasporic roots of Sinofuturism's seven key principles:

> One of the biggest ironies I also thought of as a diaspora Chinese person was that some of the biggest Chinese chauvinists are people who don't live there. Quite often, emigrant cultures preserve the old traditions even more strongly than the original people in the original place… [those traditions being] computing, copying, gaming, addiction, laboring, gambling… My understanding was that emigration and diaspora culture [bring] certain things up to the forefront as essentially livelihood gets harder, especially because immigrants at those times and now have fewer rights, rights of immigration and legal rights… and of course less money. They are susceptible to these systems of labour, subjected to addiction and gambling. (Lek, "ATC Lecture — Lawrence Lek's The Sinofuturist Trilogy" 59:22)

To dismiss Sinofuturism as a mere "techno-Orientalist fantasy" (de Seta 90) is to disregard the context in which it was made and the intent behind it. Sinofuturism does not aim to be totalizing. Rather, it is introspective and semi-autobiographical. As stated above, Sinofuturism was made as a by-product of Lek's research for his 2017 film, Geomancer, which explores the boundary between artificial intelligence and humanity. In the making of the film, Lek reflected on his identity as an artist and on his "algorithmic" creative process in comparison to artificial intelligence and its inner workings (Lek, "Worldbuilding for 2065 - Lawrence Lek" 1:00:25). He used a frame of reference he was familiar with, his own family and the diasporic Chinese communities of his childhood, to make this comparison.

Lek's observations of the Sino diaspora ultimately evolved to become a hypothetical narrative of how Chinese society operates, survives, and replicates itself around the world and into the future (Lang). It has been thought that Lek borrowed the term "Sinofuturism" from his friend, the musician and cultural theorist Steve Goodman, whose techno-Orientalist writings were among the first to define it (Zhang 87). Since the term was popularized by Lek's video essay in 2016, Sinofuturism has spiralled into a highly profiled aesthetic genre that has generated equal amounts of buzz and befuddlement among scholars. More of an emerging genre put as a label by scholars on disparate artworks, exhibitions, and texts than a movement with clear aims and proponents, this mirage of a category has nonetheless been dismissed by these same scholars as a trendy yet empty "aesthetic cliché" (Conn and de Seta 76) that parrots old Orientalist tropes (Chen) in a convoluted fashion (Zhang 88). However, comparing Lek's Sinofuturism with this broader genre/movement is beyond the scope of this text.

Unlike techno-Orientalism, Lek's Sinofuturism does not claim that China is the future, or that a dystopian future will take place in China. Rather, his Sinofuturism is more about the present than it is about the future. Thus, it is neither utopian nor dystopian (fig. 5). This is an important distinction to make as it helps us understand that the Sinofuturist "blueprint for survival" (Lang) is not trying to predict a "good" or "bad" future, but is trying to help us see a "world that exists in plain sight" (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 58:38). Zhang argues that, unlike other ethnofuturisms, "the aesthetic products of Sinofuturism make few claims to emancipation, instead relaying emergent narrative and geopolitical configurations" that already exist. Instead of Sinofuturism, Zhang offers up "Sinopessimism," spun from Frank B. Wilderson III's Afropessimism, as a less misleading name for Lek's video and theory that does not evoke a politicized power struggle over the future, but rather of the Other's timeless, inescapable state of existence (Zhang 90). Sinofuturism describes a state of being that is not rooted in the celebration of individualism and self-determinism, but rather in a faith in algorithmic processing and eternal toil. What makes Sinofuturism an especially disorienting, and thus successful, work of speculative design is that it eerily connects this speculative, dystopian existence to an already recognizable way of life in our current times.

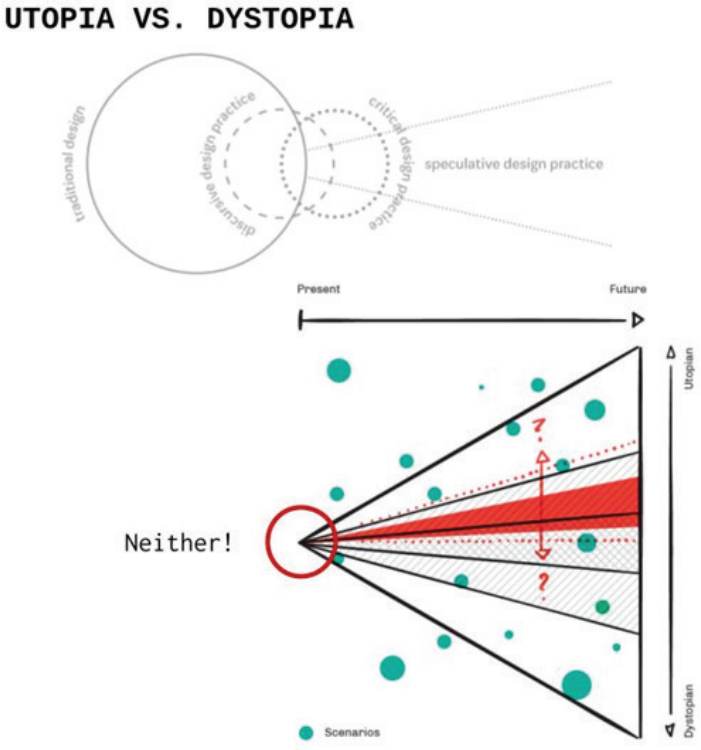

Figure 5: The two axes of speculative design practice and the area it spans. I mark the spot Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) falls on. (Johannessen et al. 2019; Mitrović et al. 2021).

Iris Lang, co-founder of Sine Theta Magazine, an arts and literature magazine made by and for the Sino diaspora, marvels that "Lek illuminates a perspective on Chinese society so transparent it has gone unnoticed by domestic and diaspora alike—until now" (Lang). This response helps make the case that Sinofuturism's sweeping generalizations are a means, not a goal. Rather than being a "techno-Orientalist fantasy" that others its subjects, Sinofuturism may well describe the reality of the Sino diaspora, portrayed in a reductive way to complicate commonly held narratives.

The Singularity

Through a close examination of the tone of the work, it appears that Sinofuturism does not aim at all to take positions on the questions it raises. Rather, it pokes fun at and subverts all positions. For example, in "Chapter Four: Studying," the narrator counters the negative stereotype of the robotic Chinese student who mistakenly prioritizes rote memorization over critical thinking by proclaiming that acquiring information without understanding it or judging it is a valid, even successful, way of learning: "Be a machine. Aspire to learn more and assimilate knowledge. Do not judge the information itself. It is all a training set. Information overload leads to consciousness" (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 27:21).

The cryptic and fragmented content of Sinofuturism, which could be interpreted as simplistically inaccurate messages in convoluted dress, is precisely what makes it an effective work of speculative design. Through the use of sweeping generalizations, surrealism, dark humour, and satire, Sinofuturism explores the origins, verity, benefits, and drawbacks of cultural narratives and questions the basis of constructed dichotomies—the West versus the East, modernity versus tradition, human versus nonhuman/posthuman, and utopia versus dystopia—which all invariably pose one side as the other. Our indifferently monotonous text-to-speech narrator reiterates at the end of the film:

> Sinofuturism is in fact an early form of the singularity, an artificial intelligence whose origin and behaviour [are] impossible to identify with certainty. It is a massively distributed network focused on copying rather than originality, addicted to machine learning rather than ethics or morality, with a total capacity for work and an unprecedented sense of survival. It is not the other, either. Orientalism is the shadow of Occidentalism. In the West, the East is the other. In the East, the West is the other. Sinofuturism moves beyond these boundaries. (Lek, Sinofuturism (1839–2046 AD) 57:52)

Indeed, entities which would otherwise be seen as greatly different from one another converge in Sinofuturism in a disorienting way. Artificial intelligence is not becoming more and more like humans, but rather, in the quest to optimize productivity and to reach new heights of industrial and creative output, humans are becoming more and more like artificial intelligence. Sinofuturism posits that, in ancient China, centuries before industrialization, humanity's disposition for and belief in the transformative power of computing, copying, studying, and labour have already been latent. So, as the chicken-or-egg question goes, which came first, humanity or artificial intelligence? In Sinofuturism, the past, present, and future converge in a reality where humans and AI are one and the same. Rather than asking if artificial intelligence will ever be able to achieve humanity, why not ask if humanity can realize its full, human potential by becoming more like artificial intelligence?

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Artist: Denise Gama

Purpose

Hannah Walter

2022, 2′x2′x5′, steel and fabric

Purpose is an expression of my creative and feminine identity through textile that synthesises with steel. In my new exploration of welding and methods of art making traditionally associated with male-dominated trades, I learn that I can still include a gentle and careful intensity that I relate to as a woman and as a sort of quiet person that reflects on the world more often than I leave my mark on it. The meditative and nurturing acts of micro-detail work and small decisions involved in the application of the fabric to the steel, from tailoring, adhering, and refining raw edges, lends to the effect of the floral fabric forming a tight skin around the surface. With this effect, the sculpture transcends material and viewers become curious about the process and the physical feel of the sculpture. This material ambiguity resonates with me, as I often find myself walking a line between certain binaries like feminine and masculine practices, and utility and the decorative, especially as a young artist investing myself in a career that often defies the conventional.

Hannah is in her third year of a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, where she explores sculpture, painting, and printmaking in her work. She is inspired by the Alberta landscape and the ordinary, beautiful moments of daily life. Her loved ones also inspire her and her work to live fully and fearlessly each day. More of her work can be found on Hannah's Instagram @hwalter.art.









The Exquisite Joy of Life in the Cave

Anna Marie Chemi

2022, 11″× 8.5″x 1.5″, mixed media (Merit Students Encyclopedia volume 11 book and pages within, cigar case, coke label, key, playing card, cardboard, moss, trees, fishing wire, battery powered lights, ribbon, paint, craft apple, crafts stars, Twin Peaks postcard).

In Plato's allegory of the cave, men are chained inside and can only see the visions portrayed on the wall in front of them which they believe to be real, but are only projections made by the men behind them who are moving forms in front of a fire…but the men know nothing else, and they believe these visions to be the truth. The realm of the world outside of the cave represents intellect, knowledge and the light of the sun, the intelligible realm in which the truth of the world can be known. There is also an additional component that is discussed at the end of the allegory that the enlightened person who is able to see the good has a responsibility to share their learning with others, to "descend again" into the cave.

I call my book transformation The Exquisite Joy of Life in the Cave building upon Plato's allegory with concepts of epistemology (how we know what we know), metaphysics (dealing with ideas of being, identity, time and space) and existentialism (related to the meaning, purpose and value of human existence) to return into the cave not to impart knowledge but to dwell in the fantastic visions which hold different discoveries of truth, a different dimension of reality. To any who think the world is not our own construction, the Queen of Hearts emerges and says "Off with their heads!" Enter the cave where the time is always now and allow the alchemy of secrets, mysteries and fantasy to bring you on a fantastical voyage. Allow non-sense to turn the key to free you from your invisible prisons of: left, right, left, right, left...left…, go straight, sit straight, fix your face, drive a Lincoln, speak-when-you're-spoken-to life of no questions. Plant the flowers in your mind, enter the cave and enjoy the exquisite joy of fantasy and secrets. The scenes you see are not the only destinations you will visit, where you go will be up to you.

Anna Marie Chemi is a mature student who previously obtained a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Political Science and has returned to pursue an after-degree in Social Studies and Art. She always finds ways to incorporate adventure and creativity for her as well as for her two boys, Khalil and Layth, and strives to connect her purpose to the larger universe.



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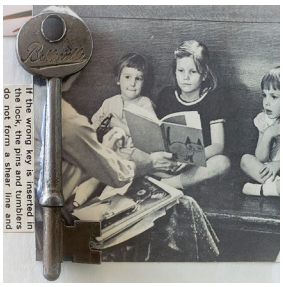









Photos by Anna Marie Chemi and Ashley Lau

Coca-Cola ®/MD

Share a Coke ®/MD with
Partagez un Coke ®/MD avec

Anna

If the wrong key is inserted in the lock, the pins and tumblers do not form a shear line and the plug cannot turn.

Science World X Recycle: Children's Playground Proposal

Peilin Wu

2022, 594*841 mm, Poster, 3D modeling

With environmental issues and sustainability being important topics of current society, recycling takes a large part. From research, many people are not educated on how to properly manage waste, as well as lack awareness of the environmental impacts caused by waste generation (Walker et al. 7; Liu et al. 781). There is a great amount of garbage produced in parks, playgrounds, and public spaces. The garbage would be a potential risk for pollution in our lands and severe harm to wild animals. As children play in outdoor areas, it is also important for them to learn about recycling their snacks, drinks, or other waste items.

The playground has the theme of recycling, and the field has colour codes to indicate different types of garbage. The blue represents Recyclables, green as Organics, and black as Landfills. The playground objects will build into the shapes of daily garbage such as a plastic fork, a plastic spoon, watermelon rinds, a bag of chips, an apple core, and more. These will be placed on the corresponding-coloured field.

Children could have fun playing with the enlarged objects and interacting with them as well as playing with transitions to different colours. The goal is to enhance knowledge of how to recycle, and recycling bins with the same colour code will be placed beside the playground to encourage correct choices of bins. The melting earth in the center puts the focus on our planet is going through tough conditions, also as a representation of global warming. The goal of this project is to possibly raise awareness of environmental crises for children, parents, and others. To improve the environment of the public park and areas around, giving children a more clean and healthy space to play.

The location chosen for this playground proposal is at The Creekside Park beside the Science World in the City of Vancouver in British Columbia. As the Science world focuses on children exploring and interacting with science, they also focus on environmental topics such as saving water and reducing the rate of wasting water. The age group would be focused on five to twelve-year-old school-age children or older since the playground has more sections of climbing and tall slides. Children could face physical and mental challenges as they also thought about recycling and developing balance and coordination. Learning while playing also fits in the overall concept of Science World (About Science World).

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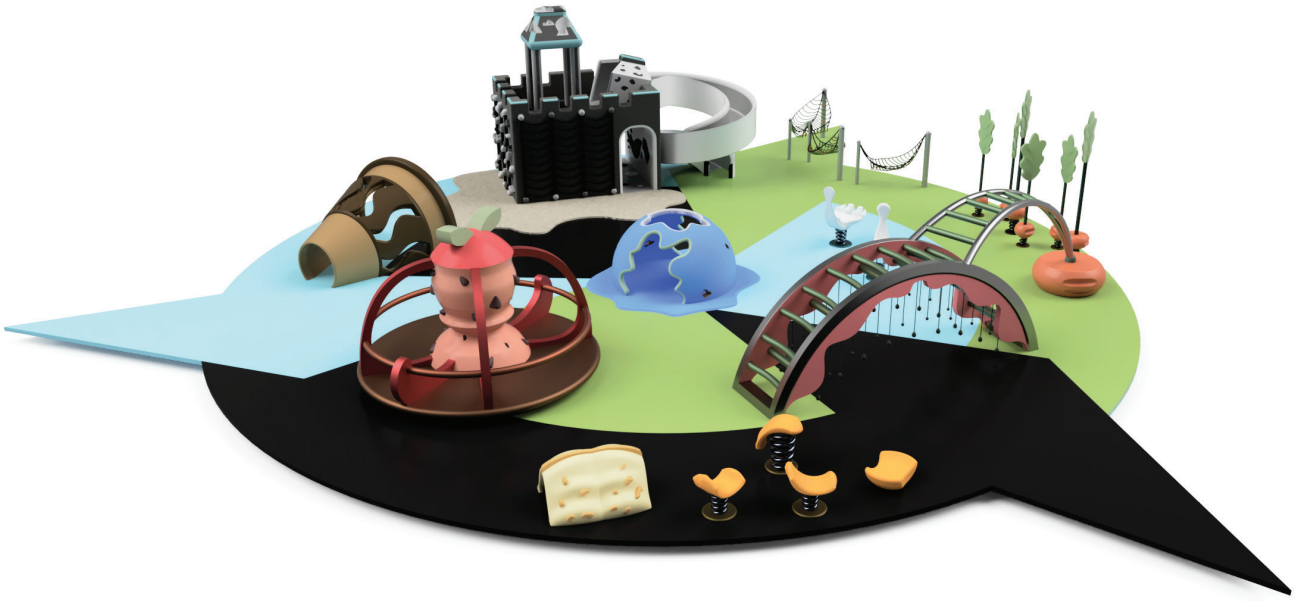




TELUS WORLD of SCIENCE
A MIRROR MAZE



Fulfillment

Nicole Wrishko

2023, 16x20", acrylic paint on cradled masonite

Work Cited

Mitchell, Heather, and Gwen Hunnicutt. "Challenging Accepted Scripts of Sexual "Normality": Asexual Narratives of Non-normative Identity and Experience." *Sexuality & Culture*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2018, pp. 507-54.

I explore my inner, asexual identity that exists under heteronormative agendas by primarily using acrylic paint. Despite sexuality being a spectrum, asexual individuals have been disregarded and lack representation in society due to being viewed as falling outside of a normative and "ideal" lifestyle. This is proven to be true in discussion with a study written by Heather Mitchell and Gwen Hunnicutt where self-identified asexual individuals expressed being made to feel psychologically abnormal by others (Mitchell 507). My work depicts a coexistence of seeking romantic interactions while lacking sexual desire.

Spaces that sit between reality and imagined are represented in my work, emphasizing the difficult experience of finding footing in the allonormative world. Utilizing thick paint, I render forms by meshing cartoon and realism to enforce the spectrum of desires. Emotional depth and movement is illustrated through these stylistic choices alongside significant colour usage. The purples used within my almost monotone palette creates unity through its inspiration of the asexual flag. These techniques of physical paint and colour stress the importance that colour has in my representation of identity and the figure.

In both literal and metaphorical ways, I use the figure to represent my internal dialogue regarding the struggles of existing in modern society. The purple being broken up into red and blue on and around the figure visually emphasizes the complexity of sexuality. An intimate atmosphere is created through shifts of saturation to filter the viewer into different parts of my brain. The vulnerable experience within the work allows for a deep relationship between viewer and art. Overall, this painting presents my inner struggle with finding fulfillment through meshing cartoon with realism to juxtapose serious and humorous tones, using colour and texture to express emotional depth, and using the figure to reflect my intimate exploration of the self.



Nicole Wrishko (any pronouns) is an emerging artist in their fourth year of the Bachelor of Fine Arts program at the University of Alberta. Their practice involves addressing the emotional state on both a personal and expansive level in relation to identity and place. Through painting, printmaking, and visual communication design, Nicole challenges the modern-day norms within society by highlighting both the dismissal of asexual representation and the emotional impact of income inequality. Nicole uses the figure to explore the socio-political world and connect to their own experiences on an internal and external scale. With the combined artistic styles of realism and cartoon, Nicole juxtaposes serious and humorous tones as a means of exploring emotional responses. Nicole has received the Jana Lamacova Memorial Award (2021-2022) and had their work displayed at the University of Alberta during their undergraduate degree (2022).


HUM
ANI
TIES



Photographer: Michelle Wedel


Katie

O'Connor

Humanities

Section Editor

I am proud to present a collection of impressive essays from a wide range of disciplines in the humanities. Though the topics span from pertinent textual analysis to amplifying under-recognized histories, these papers are united in their exceptional writing quality. Together, this grouping of Undergraduate work illustrates the relevance and utility of research in the arts, continuously examining how culture shapes our world and can reshape it.

"Labourer, Maid, Slave, Spy" tells the essential stories of Black spies in the Van Lew spy ring during the American Civil War. Zooming outward from individual histories, "Mannheim's "Problem of Generations" Applied" and "Spirituality and Spaceflight" consider complicated historical relationships, dealing respectively with race in 1960s counterculture and how spiritual belief intersects with space exploration. Applying social justice discourse to fiction, "The Anthropocene and the Posthuman in 'The Back of the Turtle'" examines human subjectivity and Indigenous futurisms in Thomas King's novel. "Nolite the Bastardes Carborundorum?" and "Unsettling Touch and Aversion to Manipulation" focus on the audience reception of the sensational novel The Handmaid's Tale and the sensorial short film Dimensions of Dialogue.

I hope readers are inspired by and celebrate these exceptional Undergraduate contributions to academic discussion in the arts.



Spirituality and Spaceflight

Author: Patrick Erickson
Discipline: History

ABSTRACT: While the advent of space flight is relatively new, humankind has always had a fascination with the heavens. Ancient religions across numerous civilizations had spiritual and/or religious beliefs as to what lay in the heavens, or what is now referred to as outer space. Humans constantly searched for answers among the stars and believed space to be a place of the Gods. As astronomy developed at the dawn of the Scientific Revolution, so too did these beliefs. Astronomers, from Copernicus and Galileo to present day have used faith and a desire to become closer to the heavens/God as a driving force for their scientific pursuits. Many modern-day astronomical terms derive from Muslim astronomers and almost all our Solar System's planets are named after Grecian-Roman Gods. Though religious institutions, such as the Catholic Church, were often at odds with them, the astronomers did not let that dampen their spirits. This overlap between spirituality and space science progressed into the onset of achievable space flight technology. Important engineers, such as Werner von Braun, were driven by faith and their belief that it was humankind's destiny to unravel the mysteries of the heavens. Almost all NASA astronauts and engineers during the *Gemini* and *Apollo* programs held strong spiritual beliefs. And beyond that, many more recent astronauts have described a transformative experience during their time in space, something that several prominent psychologists have begun to explore. With the recent beginning of humankind's next manned moon missions, *Artemis*, well under way, it is time to examine the very obvious and powerful connection that exists in humans between spirituality and spaceflight. This paper seeks to examine this connection, with a slant towards NASA and the West and how spirituality and space will continue to interact into the foreseeable future.

KEYWORDS: Spaceflight, Spritiuality, Astronomy, NASA, Catholic Church, Christianity, Religion

For nearly all of humanity's existence, space and the heavens have existed as one. Beyond the obvious limitations imposed by technology before the 20th century, many humans considered space to be beyond all limitations and the realm of the Gods. This belief can be found throughout history and across most civilizations. From the Christian God and the Nordic Gods to Hindu deities and Allah in Islam, civilizations and religions place the Gods among the starts. This is evident in religion, astrology, astronomy, and many more sectors of life that exist within modern society. Space was seen as the heavens, a place for the Gods, and a venue for the immortal. Religion bore this out in both text and practice and the very thought of exploring space was frequently seen as an assault on the faith. Astronomers, such as Galileo and Copernicus, were often at odds with the church when their theories, such as heliocentrism[1], clashed with religious ideology. Martin Luther wrote "There is talk of a new astrologer who wants to prove that the earth moves and goes around instead of the sky, the sun, the moon…however as Holy Scripture tells us, so did Joshua bid the sun to stand still and not the earth."[2] Thinking like this, combined with a lack of sufficient propulsion confined the human race, and their thoughts, to the Earth in all but faith. This changed rapidly with the dawning of the 20th century.

Scientists from many fields made incremental progress, even if without intent, towards space through the last few centuries of the millennium. As the 19th century drew to a close, works such as Jules Verne's *From Earth to the Moon* and H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* began to expand public imagination towards the unexplored, bringing it closer to reality. It was a development that would force mankind to rethink the concept of space, the universe, and the heavens. Though still few have reached outer space, there are numerous accounts of astronauts having what they consider a religious experience in space, from which different meanings have been drawn. Some speak of an encounter as out-of-body, while others are simply left in awe of the experience being somewhere so few have been and seeing the universe in a different light. Whatever the reasons, space and spirituality have been intrinsically linked for many centuries. This paper will explore the evolution of how humanity views the links between space and spiritual events and beliefs.

It will show both the clash and the overlap between space science and faith, utilizing first-hand accounts from astronauts, scientists, and religious and historical figures. Though they are often at odds, this paper will show that space and spirituality are on a trajectory together and will go hand-in-hand, at least for the foreseeable future.

Space in Religion

Space and the heavens have been an integral part of human life since time immemorial. To fully grasp the length to which they are intertwined, one must first look into the past. History is full of Gods, science, and other beliefs that derive from human beings staring up at the night sky in awe. These beliefs manifested themselves differently from culture to culture, but the core principle remained roughly the same. The night sky, and space by extension, was the realm of the Gods, something well beyond the reach of mortal human beings. The Nordic Gods, many of whom persist today in mythology and pop culture, came from nine worlds in the cosmos, flanking Yggdrasil, the tree of life. Many of the Gods lived in Asgard, the world most closely resembling the Christian version of heaven. Whether referring to Odin and his wisdom, Thor with his thunder and strength, Freyr and her control of the weather, or one of the many others, these Gods played and lived within the heavens, though occasionally they would manifest themselves on Earth.



[1] Heliocentrism refers to the solar system and/or universe centered around the Sun, rather than the Earth as it was originally believed.
[2] Lehmann and Tappert, "Luther's Works," 358-9.

Similar to Christianity, the Nordic beliefs included creation myths deriving from these Gods and the cosmos. Greek and Roman Gods also call space their realm. So attached are these Gods to space that they are ingrained into space culture and astronomy today. The Greek Gods Apollo and Artemis are the given names for the first and second American moon programs respectively, while most planets are named after Grecian-Roman Gods, such as Mars, Jupiter, and Neptune. It is no accident that the Greeks and Romans are among the forefathers of astronomy and they named these heavenly bodies after the most important members of their pantheons. Religions that exist to this day continue this connection in a similar ilk.

Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam all have beliefs in the heavens existing in the area seen in science as space. Hindus consider their gods to live in the heavens and even have one god, Varuna, who is the God of Space, ruler of the sky and the upholder of cosmic law. In Islam, Earth and the heavens are seen as one after Allah brought them together in creation. While they certainly have the most conservative views on space and the heavens, Muslims do carry the beliefs of the heavens being in space. Though Muhammad is thought to have said "Whoever seeks knowledge from the stars is seeking one of the branches of witchcraft," there was no shortage of Muslim astronomers. There are numerous terms in astronomy, including *alidade* and *azimuth*[3], that are derived from ancient Arabic. Many early Christian astronomers were taught the field by Muslim contemporaries.

One can find any number of references in the Bible and Christian literature as to what lay in the heavens. Many astronauts and NASA engineers have discussed their beliefs as a driving force behind their work to explore space including Werner von Braun, Buzz Aldrin, and Edgar Mitchell. Von Braun, NASA's chief engineer, discovered his fascination with space after being given a telescope upon completing his confirmation in the Catholic church[4]. Later in his life, after his faith had strengthened, von Braun put out powerful words as to why humans should explore space and eventually colonize it, spreading the word of God –, "If man is Alpha and Omega, then it is profoundly important for religious reasons that he travel to other worlds, other galaxies; for it may be Man's destiny to assure immortality, not only of his race, but even of the life spark itself."[5] It was a sense of duty and destiny that was commonplace among many of those involved in the space program, a theme this paper will further explore. To understand this relationship it is necessary to briefly explore the history of space science, not limited merely to space flight, and how it was received by the different religions at the time.

Space Science In History

Spaceflight is a relatively infantile field of science. It would not be entirely inaccurate to say the history of spaceflight began with the dawning of the 20th century. There were precursors in theory and literature that had influence on spaceflight, such as The War of the Worlds and From the Earth to the Moon, but the true development, with tangible scientific progress, is relatively new. However, space sciences, especially astronomy, have a long and extensive past. There is not enough time, nor is it the point of this paper, to take a deep dive into this history, but it is important to discuss a few key persons; what drove them in their studies; and how they were received by the religions at the time. To keep this concise we will focus on three key figures: Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo.

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was a Prussian mathematician and astronomer who was most well-known for pioneering the heliocentric model that placed the Sun, rather than Earth, at the center of the universe. He was also religious and respected as a canon within the Catholic church. Among his many famous quotes is "Of all things visible, the highest is the heaven of the fixed stars." Copernicus was clearly driven in his studies to pursue as much knowledge as God would allow him. Heliocentrism was groundbreaking thinking and would eventually lead to serious conflict with the church, albeit not for some time. The initial reaction from the Catholic church was actually positive. When Johann Widmastetter presented the Copernican system to Pope Clement VII, the Pope was so pleased he presented Johann with a valuable gift.[6] Indeed, strong opposition to this heliocentric idea did not come until sometime after Copernicus' death. This is due, in part, to the fact that his work was not published until the year he died. The criticism also didn't come until after the Protestant movement, led by Martin Luther, had swept through much of Europe. Ironically, it was Galileo who might have borne the largest brunt of the delayed backlash against Copernicus's heliocentrism, something we will explore shortly.

[3] Azimuth refers to the direction of a celestial object in relation to the observer, expressed in degrees. An alidade is an instrument used for measuring angles, including in astronomy.
[4] Neufeld, "Von Braun," 21.
[5] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 127.
[6] Repcheck, "Copernicus' Secret, How the Scientific Revolution Began," 79.

Before Galileo however, we must briefly discuss Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). Kepler was a devout Christian who dedicated much of his study to the bible and who identified astronomers as "priests of the highest God."[7] Originally, he studied theology, with intent to join the clergy, before pivoting to science with religion as a key motivator.[8] Kepler subscribed to Copernicanism and developed several laws in support of heliocentrism. One of these laws stated each planet in the solar system revolved in an elliptical orbit around the Sun.[9] In his desire to reach space and get closer to God, Kepler imagined humans being sent to the moon as if they were shot from a cannon[10], a means of propulsion later replicated in prose by Jules Verne. There is little doubt of Kepler's faith, perhaps the deepest of any of the famed astronomers, as it was evident in his writings. To Galileo, with whom he frequently corresponded, he wrote "Let us create vessels and sails adapted to the heavenly ether."[11] And now it is time to discuss Galileo who was perhaps the most influential, and most persecuted, of the three famed astronomers.

Galileo di Vincenzo Bonaiuti de' Galilei (1564-1642), henceforth referred to as Galileo, was an Italian astronomer and physicist who has been referred to as the father of observational astronomy. He further developed and advocated for Copernicus' theories, but unlike his predecessor, quickly found himself embroiled in controversy with the Church. Galileo, like Kepler, initially seriously considered joining the priesthood before turning to science.[12] It was to his dismay that he found himself at odds with the Church due to his scientific beliefs. In fact he tried to use religious beliefs and his knowledge of them and their logic against those who tried to disprove him with scripture by saying, "...if it is impossible for a conclusion to be declared heretical while we remain in doubt as to its truth, then these men are wasting their time clamoring for the condemnation of the motion of the earth and the stability of the sun, which has not yet demonstrated to be impossible or false."[13]

Despite all this, Galileo faced more persecution than any other astronomer for his beliefs and teachings. When the Church stated Copernicus' heliocentric model could only be treated as a hypothesis, Galileo pushed back to his own cost. When he tried to push the Church to accept a heliocentric universe as fact in February, 1616, going as far as having Cardinal Orsini appeal directly to the Pope on his behalf, Galileo was met with official censure. He was told to abandon his teachings and research on heliocentrism and that failure to do so would result in action taken against him by the Holy Office.[14] For a while Galileo stayed in the good graces of the Church, but in 1632, upon publication of his book *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, he once again found himself in hot water. He was summoned to Rome where he underwent an official Inquisition which went as far as threatening torture, albeit only verbally.[15] Eventually Galileo was sentenced to house arrest where he would spend the remainder of his life.[16] In the end the Church's findings against Galileo would be disproven and the Church would even recant, though not in time to benefit the astronomer. As these three extraordinary men – from three separate regions – demonstrate, spirituality and space were intertwined together, even if they were simultaneously at odds. Now moving back to a more modern era, as spaceflight became a reality, the quest and the experiences of the very men who would explore the heavens would continue to bear out this link.

Spirituality in Religion and the Space Program

Werner von Braun was not alone in his strong religious beliefs in NASA during the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo eras. Nor was it limited to a single community, such as engineers or astronauts. Among the ground crew notable names included William R. Lucas, Jerry Klumas, and Rodney Johnson. Their ranks included scientists, engineers, directors, and administrators. Lucas had worked with von Braun since 1952 and eventually followed in his footsteps, taking over as director of the Marshall Space Flight Center in 1974. He was active in his church (Baptist) and even took part in the evangelist Billy Graham's crusade, while also advocating for religion and science to become integrated.[17] Lucas believed humans were expected to learn as much about creation as they could and space technology was one avenue towards achieving that.[18]

[7] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 116.
[8] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 116
[9] Brown, "Engaging the Cosmos: Astronomy, Philosophy and Faith," 53.
[10] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 117.
[11] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 117.
[12] Reston, "Galileo: A Life," 3-14.
[13] Langford, "Galileo, Science and the Church," 77.
[14] Langford, "Galileo, Science and the Church," 90-92.
[15] Langford, "Galileo, Science and the Church," 151.
[16] Langford, "Galileo, Science and the Church," 158.
[17] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 130.
[18] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 130.

Furthermore, he saw the community at Marshall as spiritual and very Christian. "The vast majority of people at Marshall, and before that at the ABMA and the Redstone Arsenal, were Christian people," "The oddity was not the believer, but the nonbeliever."[19] Johnson, a NASA scientist in Huntsville, Alabama stated, "My contacts indicate that a surprising number of scientists, engineers, and technicians associated with the space program have a deep and vital faith. More, proportionately, than in any other fields and professions."[20]

Jerry Klumas, a systems engineer, co-founded the NASA Church of the Nazarene[21] and echoed the sentiments of Lucas and Johnson. It was also his view that they were following the prophecy of Daniel and the knowledge increase as a result of space flight signaled the end of time was near.[22] Additionally, NASA's only 2-time administrator James Fletcher, a devout Mormon, used his vision for space exploration as "an intellectual frontier of expanding knowledge and the progress of understanding about nature and, by extension, about divinity."[23] In 1958 a religious object literally became part of the space program. After several failures, Vanguard rocket engineers attached a St. Christopher medal to their guidance system and even noted on the engineering change request that the addition was for Divine Guidance![24] Most noteworthy though, were the beliefs and experiences of the astronauts, the very men who would reach the heavens.

Like the men who sent them there, the majority of the first NASA astronauts were religious men. Many carried religious relics or a bible with them into space. Others went a bit further. One of the most well-known, and somewhat controversial, instances took place with Apollo 8. On Christmas Eve, 1968 the crew of Apollo 8 read from the Book of *Genesis* as they circled the moon. The reading was heard by an estimated one billion people spread across 64 countries during a live television broadcast.[25] It came at a time when there was significant turmoil in America, it was just after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, and had been pre-planned to deliver a unifying message around the holidays. Each of the three astronauts: Bill Anders, Jim Lovell, and Frank Borman, took a turn reading a passage. As the commander for the mission Borman signed off the broadcast, "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas: and God saw that it was good. And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas – and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth."[26]

The reception to the *Genesis* reading back on Earth, particularly America, was well-received, but with a vocal backlash. The Apollo 8 crew weren't the first to recite a prayer in space, that honor belonged to Gordon Cooper,[27] but were the first to do so to a large audience. Every stage of the Apollo 8, from launch to recovery, was covered by the media, available in six different languages around the world.[28] The reading sparked a debate between the separation of Church and State and the role religion should play, if any, in the space program. A lawsuit was soon filed by Madalyn Mary O'Hair, a noted atheist, accusing the United States government of violating its citizens First Amendment Rights.[29] The suit made it to the Supreme Court, where it was denied, and failed further appeals, but the message had been sent. NASA took significantly more caution in the immediate future when concerning religious matters. Perhaps that was why Buzz Aldrin, the second man to walk on the Moon, kept his religious ceremony on the surface of the moon significantly quieter.

While Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin waited inside the Apollo 11 Lunar Module *Eagle* to make history as the first men to walk on the moon, a small communion ceremony took place. Though both men considered themselves Protestant, only Aldrin partook with Armstrong observing respectfully. Aldrin stated the ceremony was intended to express gratitude and hope. It took place off-air, a request of NASA following Apollo 8. Aldrin also requested radio silence during this time.[30] His communion also posed the first question of how to practice religion in space, something this paper will explore further shortly. The bread and wine consumed in Communion is traditionally not self-served, presenting a hurdle for Aldrin. However, the Church, recognizing the significance of the occasion, granted special permission to Aldrin to bring along bread and wine and to serve himself when the time came.

[19] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 130.
[20] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 130.
[21] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 130.
[22] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 131.
[23] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 131.
[24] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 134.
[25] The New York Times, "St. Christopher Medal Affixed to Vanguard Rocket."
[26] Muir-Harmony, "How Apollo 8 Delivered Christmas Eve Peace and Understanding to the World."
[27] Woods and O'Brien, "Apollo 8 Flight Journal," Day 4, Lunar Orbit 7, 8, 9.
[28] Noble, "The Religion of Technology," 138.
[29] Muir-Harmony, "How Apollo 8 Delivered Christmas Eve Peace and Understanding to the World."
[30] Chaikin, "Man on the Moon," 623.

So, it came to be that before a human took their first steps upon the surface of the Moon, they first took Communion on it. Aldrin later stated he might have done things differently, but not because he was ashamed to have undertaken a personal religious ceremony directly prior to such a momentous occasion. Instead he reflected that he [and Neil] "had come to the moon in the name of all mankind – be they Christians, Jews, Muslims, animists, agnostics, or atheists."[31]

As Apollo 11 paved the way for future moon landings and space exploration, so too did Buzz Aldrin's set the tone, or at least began the conversation, of the practice of religion in space. In the following decades many more nations would send men and women into space. This meant that other religions would soon be represented in plumbing the depths of the heavens, a great achievement, but one that came with questions. Communion for Catholics would be more complicated than for Aldrin and his fellow Protestants, as the sacrament requires the blessing of a priest, traditionally just before consumption. This would eventually be handled in a similar ilk to Aldrin, as priests were allowed to perform the blessing before the astronauts launched into space, with the astronauts able to serve themselves Communion. Many Jewish people observe every seventh day as the sabbath, a day of rest. This practice becomes significantly more difficult in space where the International Space Station (ISS) circles the Earth in roughly 90 minutes, meaning a seventh day would occur every 11 hours. Much like the Christian solution to Aldrin's Communion, Jewish rabbis allowed an exception. Ilan Ramon, the first Israeli astronaut, would follow Cape Canaveral time, allowing for a much steadier and traditional schedule. As the son of a Holocaust survivor, it was exceptionally important for Ramon be able to practice his faith. "I'm kind of the proof for my parents and their generation that whatever we've been fighting for in the last century is becoming true." [32]

Many Muslim astronauts face a similar challenge because of the high speed of travel in orbit. Most Muslims are required to pray five times daily, though some Shi'a Muslims sometimes combine prayers and pray three times a day. These prayers take place while facing in the direction of Mecca, something that becomes exceptionally difficult when traveling at speeds of kilometers per second. Even more challenging is observing Ramadan, where Muslims are required to fast from sunup to sundown. Similar to Jewish astronauts, such as Ramon trying to observe the sabbath, this becomes exceedingly complicated while experiencing roughly 15 sunrises and 15 sunsets every 24 hours. On top of that, fasting in a living environment where peak health is paramount creates its own complications. When Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor, the first Malaysian astronaut and a practicing Muslim, was in space during Ramadan it was decided he could only do as best he could but would not be held to the usually rigid Muslim standards that he practiced on Earth.[33] Though not all religions, or sects of religions, have been represented in space, there have been many. Despite there being obstacles that need addressing, all the religions saw the value of supporting astronauts in their faith while in space and helped tailor practices to support the men and women in space.

As of this writing there have been hundreds of men and women who have reached space, some religious, others not. What is nearly universal for astronauts, one might even say a rite of passage, is having an experience they would refer to as spiritual, if not necessarily religious. These experiences reformed these astronauts' perspectives on the universe, their own lives, and much more.

Spirituality Outside Religion in Space

Voyaging into space is still an experience reserved for the smallest of minorities of humanity. Getting a chance to go involves an incredible amount of talent, determination, experience, and some luck. Performing a spacewalk is privileged to less than half of astronauts to date and those who have either orbited or landed on the moon significantly smaller still. However virtually all who have gone to space speak of an experience that is spiritual, perhaps out-of-body. Getting to view the world from above, seeing the network of lights that compose cities, watching auroras and the constant sunrises and sunsets has a profound effect on all. This feeling of awe and self-transcendence can result in a phenomenon known as The Overview Effect. Psychologist David B. Yaden explored this and its connection to space exploration in his excellent paper *The Overview Effect: Awe and Self-Transcendent Experience in Space Flight*. Yaden posits that seeing Earth from a distance is equally important to merely being in space.[34] It is an experience that is so important to astronauts that some members of the Skylab IV mission refused to work when denied the opportunity to do so. Their flight director stated they were asserting "their needs to reflect, to observe, to find their place amid these baffling, fascinating, unprecedented experiences."[35]

[31] Rosen, "Communion on the Moon: The Religious Experience in Space," 8.
[32] Rosen, "Communion on the Moon: The Religious Experience in Space," 8-9.
[33] Rosen, "Communion on the Moon: The Religious Experience in Space," 10.
[34] Yaden, "The Overview Effect: Awe and Self-Transcendent Experience in Space Flight," 3.
[35] Yaden, "The Overview Effect: Awe and Self-Transcendent Experience in Space Flight," 7.

Yaden concludes that space flight is one of the few things that can truly inspire humans through awe and self-transcendence.[36] This effect manifests itself in numerous ways, but is nearly universal to all who experience time in space. British astronaut Tim Peake said his time on the ISS led him to consider the universe was of intelligent design,[37] while others such as American astronaut Jim Irwin strengthened their existing faith.[38]

American astronaut Edgar Mitchell is one of the best examples of someone who is not necessarily religious but experienced a profound spiritual impact in space. The Lunar Module pilot for Apollo 14, Mitchell became the 6th person to walk on the Moon, alongside Alan Shephard. He also engaged in research in extrasensory perception (ESP) and paranormal phenomena both during and after his career. He published his experiences in space in his autobiography *Earthrise* providing the public with a stirring, first-hand account of his time in space. As he stood on the surface of the moon at the beginning of his second moonwalk Mitchell felt an intense connection towards Earth, even at such a great distance.[39] It was on the trip back home however that Mitchell had an even more powerful experience. As he sat in his seat in the Command Module, watching the Earth, Sun, Moon, and other objects in space rotate through his view he felt what he describes as a moment of "deep insight." Feeling an intimate connection with the cosmos he became keenly aware of every molecule in his body, the molecules of his fellow Apollo 12 astronauts, and even the molecules of the spaceship itself, realizing they were all created in ancient star systems.[40] Mitchell described the experience as wonderful and gave validation to the ESP experiments he was performing during the journey. He would go on to be the founding chairman for the Institute of Noetic Sciences, which researched consciousness and related phenomena.[41] In another of his books, T*he Way of the Explorer*, Mitchell wrote that, "There was a sense that our presence as space travelers, and the existence of the universe itself, was not accidental but that there was an intelligent process at work."[42]

Mitchell's experience has frequently been echoed by subsequent astronauts, regardless if they were religious or not. British astronaut Tim Peake said the views of Earth inspired wonder.[43] Eugene Cernan, an Apollo 17 crew member, stated "There was too much purpose, too much logic. It was too beautiful to happen by accident. There has to be somebody bigger than you…,and I mean this in a spiritual sense, not a religious sense."[44] Barry "Butch" Wilmore, an American astronaut who was on the ISS in 2014, experienced The Overview Effect when he saw a reflection of himself during his third spacewalk. A religious man, when he asked himself how he had gotten there he concluded, "And the answer is very clear. I was there because the Lord in His planning purposes allowed me to be there and gave me that desire in my heart. That's why I was there."[45]

These astronauts, spanning different nationalities, faiths, religions, and time frames, were all struck by the sheer awesomeness of their experiences in space. Their encounters were not isolated, an entire book could be written solely on this phenomenon. What connects them, the scientists, engineers, astronomers, philosophers, mathematicians, and more is the belief in space as a transformative realm. Long before the technology existed humans stared at the night sky and told stories of great Gods playing and fighting amongst the stars. Human beings' desire to understand the heavens led them to discovering the Earth was round, revolved around the Sun, and so much more information vital to us today. It took thousands of years, but humans' belief in the heavens helped lead them to accessing them. In conclusion, this would not have been possible without many men and women of diverse faith and spirituality who used their belief to power their extraordinary lives in the pursuit of space. From the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Nordic people to Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, von Braun, Mitchell, Irwin, and so many more. Though their faiths and beliefs vary, all of them are connected in their spirituality, a connection that persists with today's astronauts and looks set to carry on into the foreseeable future.

[36] Yaden, "The Overview Effect: Awe and Self-Transcendent Experience in Space Flight," 8.
[37] The Week Staff, "Why Astronauts Have Spiritual Experiences in Space," 1.
[38] Weibel, Space Exploration as Religious Experience."
[39] Mitchell, "Earthrise: My Adventures as an Apollo 14 Astronaut," 120.
[40] Mitchell, "Earthrise: My Adventures as an Apollo 14 Astronaut," 138.
[41] Kluger, "The 40th Anniversary of the Moon Landing."
[42] Mitchell and Williams, "The Way of the Explorer: An Apollo Astronaut's Journey Through the Material and Mystical Worlds," 16.
[43] The Week Staff, "Why Astronauts Have Spiritual Experiences in Space," 2.
[44] The Week Staff, "Why Astronauts Have Spiritual Experiences in Space," 4.
[45] Jilton, "Tennessee's Current Astronaut is a Devout Christian."

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Photographer: Henry Deng

Nolite te Bastardes Carborundorum?

Using Kylie Jenner and Reproductive Rights to Examine the Cultural Afterlife of *The Handmaid's Tale*

Author: Olivia O'Neill
Discipline: Humanities

ABSTRACT: Emerging from the shocking image of Kylie Jenner's 2019 *Handmaid's Tale* themed birthday party — in which women clad in red dresses and bonnets drank cocktails and celebrated — this paper analyzes the cultural afterlife of the Handmaid symbol from Margaret Atwood's celebrated novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. Spanning from Jenner's birthday celebration to abortion protests in Philadelphia, I begin by understanding how the Handmaid herself is conceived of by Atwood in the novel. Building from this literary analysis, I question all modern utilizations of the Handmaid symbol. In the same way that acts of resistance are subsumed by the tyrannical system in *The Handmaid's Tale*, I argue that contemporary deployments of the Handmaid symbol — whether for protest or not — have no lasting impact, as they are inevitably assimilated into the oppressive cultural from which they emerged.

KEYWORDS: The Handmaid's Tale, Kylie Jenner, Reproductive Rights, Cultural Symbols, Social Media

In June of 2019, clad in a red dress and a white bonnet, Kylie Jenner served "Under His Eye" tequila cocktails at a *Handmaid's Tale*-themed birthday party she threw for a friend (Hesse). One year earlier, 100 similarly dressed women gathered in Philadelphia to protest the arrival of then-Vice President Mike Pence, whose administration sought to eradicate "women's most basic right, the right to control when and if they bear children" (Goldman). These two instances are examples of cultural afterlife, a term which refers to when "phenomena acquire new capacities for finding and making meaning" even after their removal from their original contexts—after their figurative 'deaths' (Biber 2). The cultural afterlife of the Handmaid symbol is kept on a tight leash—it cannot stray too far from the novel's initial message of oppression and resistance without being deemed unacceptable. However, returning to *The Handmaid's Tale* and examining the novel's protagonist, Offred, complicates the original assumption that the Handmaid herself can be viewed as a symbol of resistance. Offred's own acts of resistance are minimal at best, and are eventually subsumed by the very same system that perpetuates her oppression. Thus, is there really a 'correct' way to use the symbol of the Handmaid? In the following essay, I argue that much like how Offred's acts of resistance are eventually exploited by the system that oppresses her, the same can be said for contemporary uses—or the cultural afterlife—of the Handmaid symbol.

Understanding Offred

Before we can examine the cultural afterlife of the Handmaid symbol, we must return to Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, which takes place in the dystopian, totalitarian setting of the Republic of Gilead. Due to a declining population, fertile Gileadean women have been forced into sexual slavery—they serve as Handmaids to the Commanders, whose wives are unable to bear children. To mark their valuable status, the Handmaids are forced to wear red dresses, gloves, and shoes, all "the colour of blood, which defines [them]" (Atwood 8-9). Around their faces, they wear a white bonnet which covers almost everything except "a scrap of face" (Atwood 32). The white wings are meant to "keep [the Handmaids] from seeing, but also from being seen" (Atwood 9). In this way, clothing—which visibly and figuratively forms the symbol of the Handmaid—is used to interesting effect in Atwood's novel: it simultaneously conceals and exposes, operating in both visibility and invisibility. The red dress and white bonnet seek to strip away all that is unnecessary—the Handmaids' individual identities—and preserve only that which is important: their fertile bodies. Because Offred is vital to the continuation of Gileadean society, she is tracked and surveilled, in order for her body and purity to be preserved. Offred is constantly aware of the possibility that the Eyes, Gilead's secret police force, are watching (Atwood 20). In fact, Offred cites her Handmaid uniform as one of the reasons why she cannot escape Gilead: when she considers fleeing, she stops herself, knowing that eventually she would be noticed since "red is so visible" (Atwood 336). The Handmaid uniform is a symbol, which, as Andrea Mubi Brighenti explains in *Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research*, is a "device for visibilisation" (64). Yet, embedded within this 'visibilisation' is the goal of making the Handmaids themselves completely invisible. In the "Ceremony," Offred lies between the legs of the Commander's wife while he has sex with her fertile body (Atwood 107). Describing the Ceremony, Offred explains that 'copulating' would be an inaccurate term, as "it would imply two people and only one is involved" (Atwood 107). This ritual reveals the true purpose of the Handmaid, what is implied in the symbolism of her red dress and bonnet: she is simply a receptacle, a dehumanized reproductive system. While Offred is constantly observed, she is never truly recognized; she begins to see herself as "a thing [she] must now compose, as one composes a speech" (Atwood 75). While she tries to convince herself that "it doesn't matter, your name is like your telephone number, useful only to others" (Atwood 95), her lack of identity—her simultaneous (in) visibility—wears her down. Staring at the garden of the Commander's wife, she notes that there is "something subversive" about it—"a sense of things bursting upwards, wordlessly, into the light" (Atwood 176). Perhaps foreshadowing the rest of the novel, she concludes that "whatever is silenced will clamour to be heard, though silently' (Atwood 176).

And what is to be heard? Much debate has taken place questioning the complicity of Offred's character, thus complicating the idea that the Handmaid can be used as a symbol of resistance. It is revealed in the last chapter, titled "Historical Notes on *The Handmaid's Tale*," that the novel is actually comprised of a set of tapes recorded by Offred which are later unearthed by a group of male historians (Atwood 345). Thus, the story has been filtered through the lens of Offred's perspective: it is her story, albeit not a very happy one. However, by telling her story to an unknown audience, she believes them "into being" (Atwood 308). Thus, she "keeps on going" with her narration—and her life—because she wants someone else to hear it and to bear witness to it (Atwood 308).

As scholars such as Hilde Staels have noted, this act of self-narration, as inconspicuous as it is, can be seen as a form of resistance. Because Offred "produces a profusion of words and desires that are not allowed" and gives voice to an "alternative discourse that continuously cut[s] through the rigid logocentric texture of the [Gileadean] superstructure" (Staels 233), she becomes a figure of resistance, one which silently protests the Gileadean regime. Staels' perspective fits well with Andrea Brighenti's theory of resistance, which posits that "the official 'public transcript' of subordinate discourse in the presence of the dominant one does not tell the whole story of the relationship" (65). This is because, as is well documented in *The Handmaid's Tale*, "there is also a 'hidden transcript' taking place offstage, behind the scenes" (Brighenti 65). In this way, Offred's hidden self-narration is a subtle form of resistance, which, given her circumstances, is just as valuable as larger, more 'formal' acts of resistance. "For subordinate people," Brighenti explains, "the only effective resistance may be invisible resistance, because [visible resistance] provokes ferocious repression and retaliation from above" (65). This is particularly true in the Gileadean context, where discipline is on constant display. Walking past "The Wall," where dissenters have been publicly executed, Offred remarks that Gileadean citizens are "supposed to look: this is what they're here for, hanging on the Wall" (Atwood 36). Thus, scholars like Staels, who exemplify Brighenti's theories of resistance, present a compelling case: Offred's self-narration is a powerful act of resistance simply because it is the only act of resistance possible. Had Offred resisted more publicly, we can assume that she too would have ended up dead, like one of the silent, hanging bodies on The Wall.

But what of the fact that Offred is publicly complicit in Gileadean society, even if she resists it in private? Can her silent act of resistance—her self-narration—make up for the fact that, as Allen Weiss describes it, Offred "prefers freedom from pain and acceptance of paternalistic domination over dangerous political commitment" (138)? Although "the absence of direct confrontation does not mean that hegemony goes unchallenged" (Brighenti 65), it is certainly true that Offred makes almost no conscious effort to directly challenge her oppressors. When the Commander offers her "an arrangement" (Atwood 176), in which he endows her with contraband gifts and activities, she accepts, feeling momentarily guilty but eventually giving in to the pleasure—she describes it as "something to fill the time, at night, instead of sitting alone in [her] room" (Atwood 188). Furthermore, while the Ceremony takes place, Offred once again struggles for the words to describe it: she cannot call it rape, as she explains that "nothing is going on here that [she hasn't] signed up for" (Atwood 107). At the end of the novel, faced with the possibility of her punishment, Offred offers to give into the system completely if it means she can survive; she pleads to God, promising that she'll "obliterate" herself, offering to "repent," "abdicate," and "renounce" (Atwood 330).

Still, Staels' argument rings true: what else could Offred do but—at least to some extent—accept her circumstances? After all, if the only thing Offred has control over is her own narrative, is preserving her story not the most resistant act possible? The "Historical Notes" chapter of *The Handmaid's Tale* complicates this argument. Professor Pieixoto, the man who is responsible for publishing Offred's tapes, explains that they were initially found unnumbered, and thus he and his colleague take it upon themselves to "arrange the blocks of speech in the order in which they appear to go" (Atwood 347). The fact that this information is revealed at the end of the novel has a devastating effect: the reader realizes, after 342 pages of listening to Offred, that her story has been *further* filtered through the male historians who control the only existing copy of her tapes. The Professor—who urges the audience not to judge Gileadean society too harshly, as it was "under a good deal of pressure" (Atwood 347)—dehumanizes Offred, turning her yet again into an item which men have infinite access to. Even if Offred's self-narration was a resistant act in the time of its creation, her tapes eventually become subsumed by the overarching system of patriarchy that still dominates society. It is fitting, then, that the final sentence of the novel comes from Professor Pieixoto, not Offred. Turning to the audience of his male colleagues by whom he is well loved (Atwood 344), he asks if "there are any questions" (Atwood 358). The question remains, however, if they are his to answer.

The Handmaid's Cultural Afterlife

The complicated nature of the Handmaid symbol—both within the novel itself, and in its reception by scholars—returns us to the topic of its cultural afterlife. The two case studies I have chosen for this essay—Kylie Jenner's *Handmaid's Tale*-themed birthday party and the group of Philadelphia protestors—illuminate the fact that contemporary use of the Handmaid symbol is divided into two distinct camps: what is acceptable, and what is decidedly not. In the case of Jenner, the Handmaid symbol was instantly deemed to be misused. Observers took to social media immediately, calling the party "tone deaf," "disturbing," and "disgusting" (Katie [@KatiePetZim]; Veronica [@veronicacrz]; sophie [@thisonlyangeI]). But can Jenner really be blamed for viewing the symbol in such a lighthearted manner? And, if she had used it more solemnly, would it have had any more of a profound effect?

The term 'cultural afterlife' emerges from the discussion of the *afterlife* proper: the philosophical, theological, and spiritual interest in what happens to us all once we die. Whereas with the human afterlife "it is the material body that has died," the afterlife of cultural artefacts "is what remains after they are removed from their original context" (Biber 2). Katherine Biber's *In Crime's Archive: The Cultural Afterlife of Evidence* focuses on the cultural afterlife of criminal evidence that has been displaced after the end of criminal trials. Biber traces the term to Walter Benjamin and his work in *The Arcades Project*, "his unfinished attempt to understand the afterlife of cultural artefacts" (3). Benjamin was "attentive to the transformations that an object underwent during its life and afterlife" and focused primarily on objects of interpretation or translation (Biber 3). As referenced in the title, Benjamin examined the arcades of Paris, seeking to discover what they said about the city's social history after they were mostly shuttered from disuse. Thus, the afterlife of cultural objects "is a zone of either immorality or waste; it is where we keep things which are not dead to us" (Biber 2). It is where we keep concepts like the Handmaid.

Returning to contemporary examples of cultural afterlife, it is important to note that Jenner based her party on *The Handmaid's Tale* television series, rather than the novel—however, given the fact that Margaret Atwood herself is a consulting producer for the show ("Margaret Atwood"), we can assume that general message of the television series is the same. Commenting on Jenner's party, Washington Post columnist Monica Hesse raises the point that "in America, it's perfectly acceptable to turn on the television and binge on rape, subjugation, kidnapping and torture—as long as we agree we're doing it in a serious manner" (Hesse). Where 'well-behaved' watchers of the television show do so with the goal of education, disobedient consumers like Kylie Jenner are explicit about the fact that they view the show as entertainment—or, as Hesse puts it, they make a "*gaudy spectacle* of treating violence toward women as entertainment" (Hesse).

On the other hand, the 'proper' way to use the Handmaid symbol is in cases such as the Philadelphia protests, where the women—like many other activists across the country—used the cloaks and bonnets as a terrifying symbol of what was to come. Explaining the outfits, protest organizer Samantha Goldman writes that "the cloaks and white hats didn't feel symbolic at all" when she protested the arrival of then-Vice President Mike Pence, whose administration was forthright about its pro-life stances.



Yet, since the Philadelphia protest in 2018, abortion rights in America have only continued to plummet—as of April of 2022, the fate of Roe vs. Wade hangs precariously in the balance (Donegan). While, of course, the blame for this injustice does not lay on the shoulders of the Philadelphia protestors, the continued disregard for the reproductive rights of women in the United States does question the power of their symbolic protest.

To further examine the commodification of the Handmaid symbol, we can look to the initial inspiration for the use of it in protest. Heather Busby, the executive of a pro-choice advocacy group in Texas, was inspired when she saw women dressed as Handmaids at a festival in 2017 (Liptak). Instantly taken by their solemn and silent presence, Busby organized for a group of women to attend legislation sessions debating anti-abortion bills dressed the same way. Yet, despite their protests, the bills were eventually passed and sent to the Texas state House for approval (Rife). And as for the original Handmaids, at the festival? They had been planted there by Hulu, who used them as advertisements for the imminent release of the television series (Luu).

As Rothe and Collins explain in "The Illusion of Resistance: Commodification and Reification of Neoliberalism and the State," using commodities such as costumes—or, in the case of Busby's protestors, advertisements, to resist oppression is "just another way of engaging the neoliberal market" (616) and does little to incite real change. Much like Offred's tapes, such forms of resistance are eventually subsumed by the oppressors, and "serve to perpetuate the system" (Rothe and Collins 609). In this way, the Handmaid uniform signals nothing more than an ideological stance: the symbol is "sold to the consumer as being representative of making a political statement," but really has little to no lasting effect on the system of oppression (Rothe and Collins 612). Symbols of protest such as the Handmaid placate feelings of injustice by imbuing a false sense of autonomy and action upon the oppressed, momentarily distracting them from the fact that their persecution continues.

In this way, we can begin to understand how Kylie Jenner and the Philadelphia protestors might not be so different from each other after all: in reality, both of their uses of the Handmaid symbol are eventually delegitimized. Whereas Jenner is more explicit about this fact—doing the work herself through selfies and Instagram posts—symbolic protestors such as the Philadelphia Handmaids operate under an illusion of legitimacy. Although their use of the symbol is interpreted as meaningful, it achieves the same ends as Jenner's: it does nothing. The story of the Handmaid symbol's cultural afterlife bears a striking resemblance to the original Handmaid herself: the novel's protagonist, Offred. Because Offred is forcibly silenced and surveilled, her self-narration is initially seen as a quiet act of resistance—perhaps the only one of its kind that is possible. However, as is revealed at the end of the novel, even Offred's recorded tapes cannot escape the system of male oppression: they are eventually appropriated by the same people who oppress her. Knowing this, we find ourselves at a crossroads. If silent, symbolic resistance is eventually subsumed by the system, and outspoken resistance is not possible due to that very same system, is there no alternative? Must we accept oppression? Answering a question such as this may lay outside the scope of the present essay. However, doing the work of recognizing which forms of resistance are ineffective—and which forms placate and distract—is an effective first step. It brings us closer to enacting real change.

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Artist: Emma Bechtold

Labourer, Maid, Slave, Spy:

Mary Jane Richards, the Van Lew Spy Ring, and Black Espionage in Richmond

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Discipline: Humanities

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the role played by Black spies working on behalf of the Union during the American Civil War. It looks specifically at the Richmond-based Van Lew spy ring, and the integral role played by Black spies in many of its intelligence gathering efforts as well as secret operations designed to impede the Confederate war effort. It makes the case that the contribution of these Black spies was essential for the Van Lew spy ring to become the most successful secret service of the latter half of the American Civil War.

KEYWORDS: Black Espionage, Female Spies, Van Lew Spy Ring, American History, American Civil War

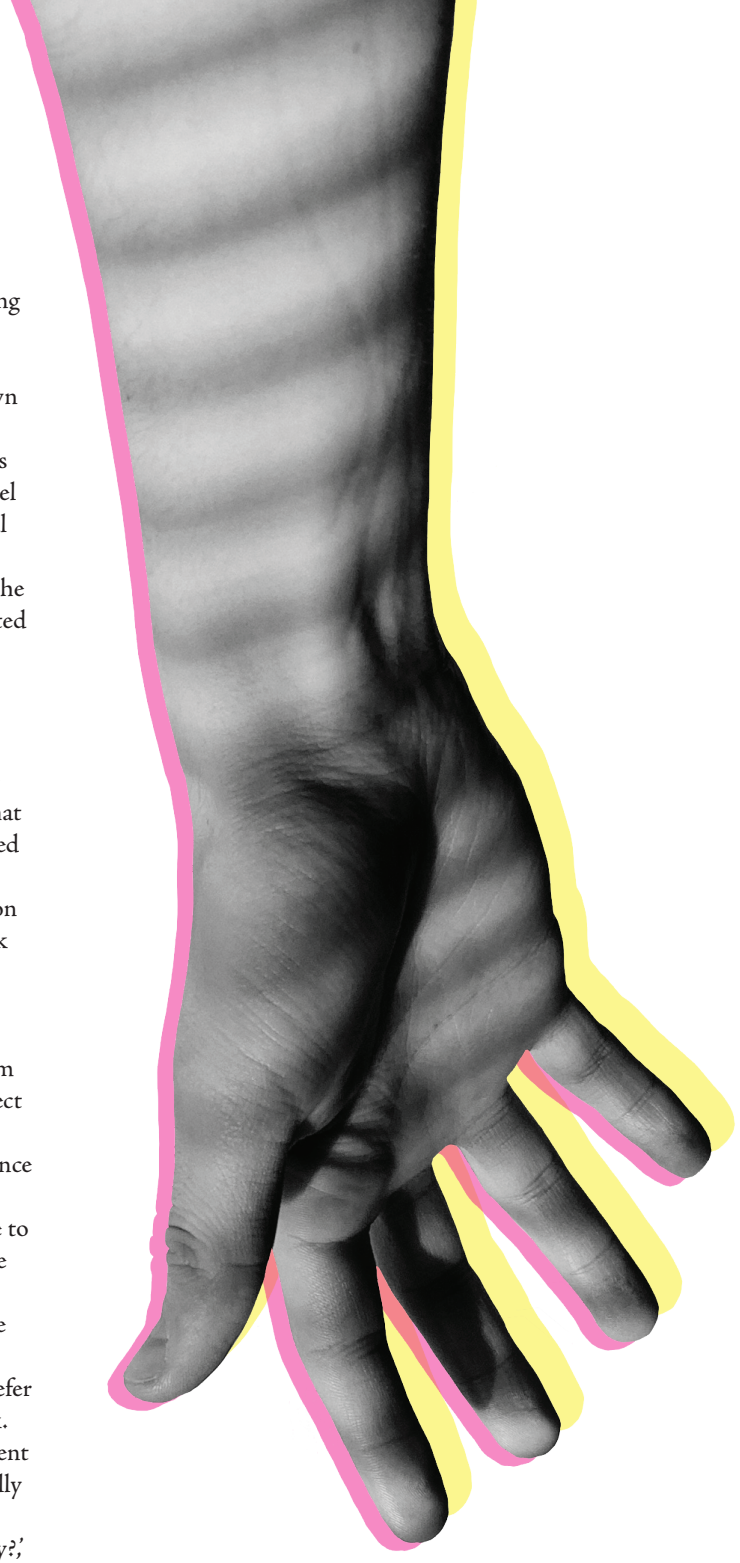
In recent years, espionage and intelligence-gathering by both sides in the American Civil War have seen a renewed interest and a flurry of academic activity. There has been a significant amount of research on how women became prominently involved in intelligence-gathering for both the Union and the Confederacy. However, the more difficult subject of Black spies working for the Union has not been subject to the same level of attention. The primary sources on the topic are scant, with no prominent post-war autobiographies or diaries like those that were written by some White spies. Existing sources point to undeniably effective and skilled spies who operated under extremely difficult circumstances to produce impressive results on behalf of the Union Army. Black spies were involved in military reconnaissance, political espionage, and covert actions designed to degrade the Confederate ability to continue the prosecution of the war. One of the most prominent examples of this was the Van Lew spy ring in Richmond, which was composed of free Black and White Unionists, dissenters, as well enslaved and emancipated people.[1] This spy ring was singled out by Colonel George Sharpe, intelligence officer to Ulysses S. Grant, as responsible for most of the Union intelligence on the disposition of the Confederate army in the latter part of the war.[2] Elizabeth Van Lew, a White woman, used all of her considerable resources to do work on behalf of the Union, including her family's Black servants or enslaved workers, as well as enlisting many of Richmond's free Black residents to spy for the Union. These Black spies were an integral part of the Van Lew spy ring, penetrating various Confederate institutions and undertaking many of the most difficult and dangerous tasks that were carried out to further the Union's cause.

Elizabeth Van Lew

Elizabeth Van Lew, the "most successful female spy of the mid-nineteenth century," seemed in many ways a prototypical Southern woman, and she maintained this public image over the course of the American Civil War.[3] She behaved in the manner of a proper lady, cultivating the respect of many Richmond residents. In public, she performed the role that Southern society expected of her, protecting herself from scrutiny by taking advantage of Southern views towards upper-class women and the sorts of activities that were permissible to them. Even if many in Richmond disagreed with her unionist views, they respected her extensive charitable work. But behind the cover of this charity work and the façade of being a proper Southern lady, Elizabeth Van Lew ran a large spy ring in the Confederate capital that reported directly to the Union army, conducting reconnaissance, gathering secrets, and rescuing prisoners from right in the heart of the Confederacy, in Richmond, Virginia. The remarkable successes of the Van Lew spy ring must be attributed, at least in part, to the many Black spies who penetrated various Confederate institutions and carried out numerous espionage missions in the Richmond area.

The Van Lew family arrived in Richmond from New York some time in the early 1800s and built-up a sizeable fortune in various business ventures, particularly the city's first hardware store. The family quickly assimilated into the city elite and participated in their practices, including buying numerous slaves.[4] Some of the people bought by the family would go on to be spies on behalf of the Union, working under the command of Elizabeth Van Lew. The status of the people held in bondage by the Van Lew family leading up to the war is a matter of some contention, however. The Richmond tax and census records would seem to indicate that Eliza Van Lew, the head of the family, had reduced the number of enslaved people held by the family from twenty-one in 1850, to two by 1860; this was done without making any sales, implying that she freed them.[5] But city officials kept a record of deeds of manumission, and there are none from the Van Lew family over this period. In addition, other records do not indicate that there were any "free negroes and mulattoes" in the county who were formerly enslaved by the Van Lew family.[6] These contradictory records make it difficult to determine the status of the Van Lew family's Black servants as either enslaved or free employees. What is known, however, is that during the war Elizabeth Van Lew would direct many of them to gather intelligence which would be passed on to the Union army, sometimes by Black couriers as well.

[1] Varon, Southern Lady, Yankee Spy, 260–61.
[2] Andrew, For the President's Eyes Only, 22.
[3] Andrew, The Secret World, 413.
[4] Varon, Southern Lady, Yankee Spy, 12.
[5] Varon, 24.
[6] Varon, 24–25.



Mary Jane Richards

One of the most successful spies of the Van Lew spy ring was Mary Jane Richards.[7] She was born to an unnamed enslaved woman owned by the Van Lew family in the mid-1840s, baptized by the Van Lew family at their own church—an unusual practice for the time—and then sent to Princeton, New Jersey to receive an education as a missionary.[8] The family then sponsored Richards' travel to Liberia, where she worked as a missionary for several years. In 1860, Richards returned to the United States and went back to join the Van Lew household. When she was on her way back to Richmond, Richards was arrested for violating state laws about educated or freed slaves returning to Virginia. While embroiled with the legal system, Richards gave two fake names to her jailors, Mary Jane Henley, and Mary Jones, which reappear in later documents.[9] The Van Lew family was able to have Richards freed after paying a small fine and attesting that she was in fact enslaved and not free. It was this assumed status as an enslaved person, whether true or not, that would enable her to carry out her later espionage on behalf of the Union, giving her the opportunity to work in sensitive areas while concealing her literacy and true motives from Confederate employers.[10]

As with many Civil War spies, and especially those from marginalized groups, there is only a partial and imperfect record of what Black spies did. Officers of the Union army also tried to avoid any discussion of how intelligence from spies in the South influenced their decisions. They understood that most of these people would have to continue living in the South after the war, and therefore those who spied would be vulnerable to retaliation.[11] For information on what Mary Richards did during the war, we have to rely mainly on the extant writings of Elizabeth Van Lew and a few newspaper articles that refer to talks given by Richards after the war about her work. Richards passed intelligence to Van Lew, who in turn sent it along to the Union Army. In her diary, written partially during the war and partially supplemented afterwards, Van Lew wrote, "I say to the servant, 'What news, Mary?,' and my caterer never fails! Most generally our reliable news is gathered from negroes, and they certainly show wisdom, discretion, and prudence which is wonderful."[12]

[7] The issue of Mary Jane Richards' name is quite complicated. She was probably married at least once to a man named Wilson Bowser, which is how she became attached to the name 'Mary Bowser,' and likely married a second time after the war. Various government documents give slight variations on her name, but the other biographical details are so close that we must assume they refer to the same woman. She also went by different fake names at times, to evade the authorities before and during the war and then to protect herself from Confederate reprisal afterwards. I am following the convention used by Elizabeth Varon in this essay because Mary Jane Richards was the name she was baptised with, and we know that she used it regularly at least for the early part of her life, even if we cannot establish for certain what name she would have used in the postwar period.
[8] Varon, Southern Lady, Yankee Spy, 28.
[9] Varon, 31.
[10] Varon, 28–31.
[11] Fishel, The Secret War for the Union, 6.
[12] Van Lew, A Yankee Spy in Richmond, 69.

Here Van Lew acknowledges that Black spies were often able to get information that would have been difficult or suspicious for White spies to acquire, and she singles out Richards as the source of accurate and reliable intelligence.

The question of how Richards came by important and reliable intelligence regularly has been the subject of some debate, with one story coming up several times in the decades after the Civil War: Mary Richards worked in the Confederate White House, and either read, copied, or stole documents from inside. The practice of hiring out enslaved people to do work in businesses or industrial settings was common in 19th century Richmond, so it is plausible that the Davis family hired enslaved people from other affluent Richmond families, like the Van Lews, to do extra work.[13] In a newspaper article published in July 1900, as Van Lew was on her death bed, she describes how she had a "maid, of more than usual intelligence," who went to Liberia as a missionary and came back, who could only be Mary Jane Richards.[14] That enslaved person, who was not named in the article, "was planted […] by Van Lew in the Confederate White House, where in her guise as a domestic servant she gathered intelligence for the Union spy network."[15] The story was corroborated by a niece of Van Lew's who was interviewed for a June, 1911 article in Harper's Monthly, which claimed that "Mary Elizabeth Bowser" was "installed as a waitress in the White House of the Confederacy."[16] Unfortunately, none of this is conclusive evidence of Richards' spying on Jefferson Davis in the heart of the Confederacy. It is plausible, but even the author of the Harper's Magazine article concedes that this is one of the "questions to which Time has effaced the answer."[17]

What little information we have from Mary Richards herself also supports the idea that she was doing important espionage work gathering secret intelligence for the Union, even if she did not provide proof that she infiltrated the Confederate White House. There are several newspaper articles which describe lectures given by a woman fitting Richards' biographical details using fake names in the North after the war. For one lecture at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York, she gave her name as "Richmonia Richards," paying homage to her home city but keeping her last name the same. She was going to talk about her work "connected with the secret service of our government," and to "give a description of her adventures."[18] A description of that same lecture written after the fact in another newspaper describes the speaker telling her life story, which aligns well with what we know of Mary Richards, providing more evidence that she must have been 'Richmonia'. It somewhat describes her work in the "secret service of the Government," including specific details which are lacking in other accounts.[19] Richards claimed in her talk that she was able to hide "in the Rebel Senate" while they were "in secret session," discussing something related to the war which was then passed on to unnamed others who got the information to the Union army.[20] She also claimed to have stolen documents from the "Davis House" after applying for a job there doing the washing, which matches with the other details that were to come up later in the previously mentioned interviews with the Van Lew family.[21] While there is no definitive, documentary proof of Richards stealing documents from the Confederate White House, the fairly consistent oral histories from Richards herself shortly after the war and the Van Lew family several decades later make the story seem entirely plausible.

This espionage in the Confederate White House exemplifies the kind of task for which the Van Lew spy ring had to rely completely on Black spies. Sneaking into the Confederate White House in the guise of some sort of menial employment was something that would have been impossible for the elite and genteel White Unionists who made up much of the Van Lew spy ring. It was, however, possible for a woman like Mary Richards. She would have been used to Southern attitudes toward Black people and would have been able to exploit their assumptions about her level of intelligence and cunning to carry out her mission. If Richards really did carry out espionage inside both the Confederate White House and the Confederate Senate, then the highest levels of deliberation and planning on the part of the Confederacy were known to the Union. This major intelligence coup was made possible only because of the dedication and excellent tradecraft of Mary Jane Richards.

[13] Varon, Southern Lady, Yankee Spy, 26.
[14] Varon, 165.
[15] Varon, 165.
[16] Breymer, "Miss Van Lew," 90.
[17] Breymer, 90.
[18] "Lecture by a Colored Lady," 8.
[19] "Miss Richmonia Richard's Lecture," 4.
[20] "Miss Richmonia Richard's Lecture," 4.
[21] "Miss Richmonia Richard's Lecture," 4.

Prison Breaks and Robert Ford

Other than gathering intelligence on the Confederacy, the other important task carried out by the Van Lew spy ring was assisting Union prisoners in escaping from Richmond. Many of the prisons in Richmond became notorious over the course of the war for their poor treatment of inmates, with excessive cruelty rampant and food always in short supply.[22] These horrific conditions prompted Union prisoners to attempt escape often, even when their plans were extremely dangerous and seemed to have a low chance of success. That so many escapees were able to make it out is due in no small part to the members of the Van Lew spy ring. They aided and abetted the fugitives in procuring false papers, hiding from the authorities, and travelling back to the North where they could rejoin the war effort. The return of escaped prisoners was often greeted with great fanfare and was of significant propaganda value to the Union.

There is evidence that the Van Lew family was involved in helping escaped inmates flee the South as early as August 7, 1862. That day, three Union officers and one Union sympathizer escaped from Talbott prison and managed to return to the North with the help of "a lady of the most thoroughgoing Union sentiments," who fed and clothed them, hid them for several days, and then aided them to secure the forged documents that were required to escape the city.[23] This kind of activity was made possible by the Van Lew family's Black servants (whether they were enslaved or employed at this point is unclear, as aforementioned), who actually tended to the needs of the fugitives and kept their presence in the family house a secret. In fact, "much of what Elizabeth and Eliza [Van Lew] 'did' for Federal soldiers—providing food, clothing, and contact with the outside world—was in fact done by the [black people] in their service."[24] They also kept the Van Lew family activities on behalf of the Union secret, despite the grave personal danger it placed them in.[25] Those four men were eventually able to return to the North, owing to the help of "unidentified black Unionists," who informed them of the position of the search party sent out from the prison to recapture them, allowing the men to sneak past.[26] Black servants of the Van Lew family as well as others in the Richmond area made it possible for these escapees to evade recapture and make it across Northern lines.

Captain William Lounsbury of the Union army also escaped from Libby prison with the help of the Black servants of the Van Lew family. Lounsbury was given a Confederate uniform by a Union-sympathizing prison clerk. Leaving the prison, he was approached by a Black man who was waiting to bring him to the Van Lew family house, where he was prepared for his perilous but ultimately successful journey back to the North. In fact, according to the memoirs of one Union officer, "Miss Van Lew kept two or three bright, sharp colored men on the watch near Libby prison, who were always ready to conduct an escaped prisoner to safety."[27] While this may be a slight exaggeration, as well as reducing the active role that Van Lew played in planning and executing prison breaks to that of a passive assistant to the Union soldiers, it still gives a sense of how critical Black spies were to this aspect of the Van Lew spy ring and in helping escaped prisoners. While they were important in helping these early small-time prison escapees, one Black spy in particular, Robert Ford, was instrumental in the largest prison break of the war.

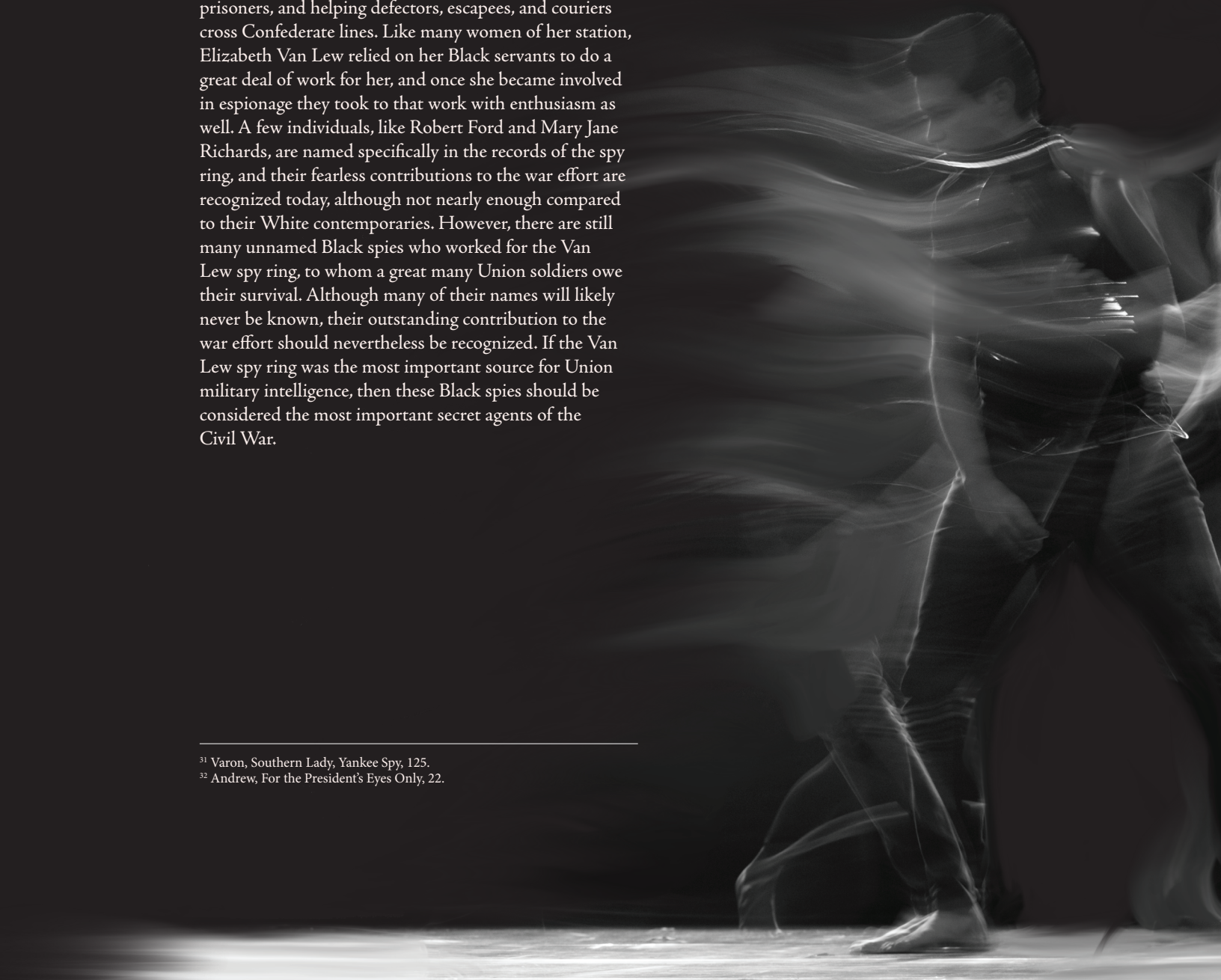
Robert Ford was a free Black man from the North who was captured by the Confederate army and then put to work in Libby prison as a hostler, tending to the horses of the guards.[28] He got into contact with the Van Lew spy ring via the Black servant of a White Unionist who worked with Van Lew and was a vital link for a largescale plot for a mass prison break at Libby Prison. Union officers at that prison began digging a series of tunnels out of the prison in order to effect an escape, beginning in late 1863.[29] After several false starts and close calls, the officers managed to dig a tunnel under the street and into a vacant lot across from the prison. Robert Ford became aware of this plan and communicated the details to Van Lew and her spy ring, presumably by means of some of the other Black workers at the prison who knew Van Lew as a Union sympathizer who had helped other escapees. Because the Van Lew spy ring was prepared to hide the escapees and bring them across Confederate lines, most of them were able to get home safely. Van Lew was able to prepare her house and her spy network to hide the escapees because they knew about the plan ahead of time.[30] Van Lew also sent a message to General Butler, her correspondent in the Union army in early 1864, encouraging him to launch a raid on Richmond at the same time as the prison break to make it easier for the escapees to cross the Confederate lines.

[22] Varon, Southern Lady, Yankee Spy, 57, 133.
[23] Varon, 88.
[24] Varon, 64.
[25] Varon, 64.
[26] Varon, 88.
[27] Varon, 90.
[28] Varon, 92.
[29] Varon, 118–19.
[30] Van Lew, A Yankee Spy in Richmond, 35–36.

While that raid would end disastrously for the Union, many prisoners still successfully escaped thanks to the help of the Van Lew spy ring, both its Black and White members. The consequences for Robert Ford were extreme, however. The commandant of the prison suspected that Ford might have been involved somehow and had him whipped. Robert Ford was subject to five hundred lashes, and yet even that extreme torture could not induce him to divulge anything he knew about this escape plot or the Van Lew spy ring in Richmond; this proves just how skilled, loyal, and tenacious he was in pursuing Union victory in whatever way he could.

Conclusion

Black spies were integral to the functioning of the Van Lew spy ring. They played important roles in collecting intelligence, stealing documents, rescuing escaped prisoners, and helping defectors, escapees, and couriers cross Confederate lines. Like many women of her station, Elizabeth Van Lew relied on her Black servants to do a great deal of work for her, and once she became involved in espionage they took to that work with enthusiasm as well. A few individuals, like Robert Ford and Mary Jane Richards, are named specifically in the records of the spy ring, and their fearless contributions to the war effort are recognized today, although not nearly enough compared to their White contemporaries. However, there are still many unnamed Black spies who worked for the Van Lew spy ring, to whom a great many Union soldiers owe their survival. Although many of their names will likely never be known, their outstanding contribution to the war effort should nevertheless be recognized. If the Van Lew spy ring was the most important source for Union military intelligence, then these Black spies should be considered the most important secret agents of the Civil War.



[31] Varon, Southern Lady, Yankee Spy, 125.
[32] Andrew, For the President's Eyes Only, 22.

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Artist: Peilin Wu

Mannheim's "Problem of Generations" Applied

Counterculture, and Formative Factors in Socio-Historical Analysis

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Discipline: American History

ABSTRACT: This paper seeks to analyze Karl Mannheim's generational approach to social history by applying it to the Boomer-led 1960s counterculture movement. This paper examines the extent and limitations of Mannheim's theory that generations can be a study of historical analysis by examining how race plays into generational cultural participation. This paper examines the Boomer's generational break from G.I and Silent Generation life and values in their dress, living conditions, and sexual practices. It also examines how race and the civil rights movement prohibited or dissuaded Black youth from participating in the counterculture movement. This paper analyzes to what extent generational study is useful in historiography when considering important variables such as race in cultural movements and participation.

KEYWORDS: Karl Mannheim, American history, Generational divide, Counterculture

Perceptions of generational ideologies, such as dominant beliefs about gender roles, change over time as old generations disappear and new generations continuously emerge. Karl Mannheim's "The Problem of Generations" undertakes this concept by explaining how temporal location influences generational ideologies and their behaviors.[1] Mannheim considers generations as a category of social-historical analysis. Karl Mannheim's 1923 work has, however, been critiqued for being overly simplistic and theoretical. Hans Jaeger notes that Mannheim's theory can only be applied to generations experiencing major events such as revolutions, wars, or pandemics because there is a significant unifying factor between people and generations. Although individuals within each generation hold different local and personal values, the collective generation is impacted by national war efforts or political and institutional upheaval. Another critique of Mannheim's work, and one which this essay will examine further, is his underestimation of the role of formative factors (race, class, and religion) that take precedence over generational identity. Race, a socially constructed category, has been used to draw and reinforce significant differences between ethnic groups in socio-politics throughout American history. Mannheim's socio-historical framework does not allow for a proper recognition of race as a crucial factor in generational studies. If generations are studied without acknowledging race as a formative factor, historians will create gross generalizations in their conclusions. To fully grasp the risks and rewards of Mannheim's generational theory, an explanation and a case study applying his theory will prove useful. The case study will examine 1960s American counterculture while also examining how race was a determinant in counterculture participation.

The term "generation" carries many connotations, and therefore, must be defined before further analysis. Brent J. Steele and Jonathan M. Acuff provide a well-suited definition of generations:

> as a cohort of individuals in a particular setting (local, corporate, national, or transnational) that is shaped by a set of interrelated processes, including specific formative experiences and a set of cultural tropes constituting a collective set of ideas, causally relevant assumptions, and expectations about the world within a particular historical period. [2]

This definition highlights the social significance of generations: they not only share biological, age-based commonalities but also undergo "interrelated processes" and experience "cultural tropes" at the same time. This definition provides a foundation for Mannheim's useful categorization of generations in three ways: generation locations, generational units, and generational poles.[3]

Generation location, as Mannheim writes, "is based on the existence of biological rhythm in human existence" such as the "limited span of life and aging."[4] This biological rhythm is shared between individuals with the same year or range of birth. However, its implications are greater than shared existence and age-commonality; generation location implies a shared experience and temporal limitation––"a common location in the historical dimension of a social process."[5] This limited range of experience and exposure to historical phenomena creates a mode of thought that is unique to that generation's location. Mannheim writes that there are two modes of generation location within a historical process: emerging and disappearing.[6] Emerging generations have less exposure to cultural processes and thus, form their thoughts based on limited experience, selecting and rejecting modes of thought from former generations. In contrast, disappearing generations have a greater range of exposure to cultural processes. As they leave the temporal range of existence, so too does their mode of thought and memory. Both emerging and disappearing generations have unique modes of thought that influence and overlap with each other. Generations coexist and overlap — time is a continuous process of emerging and disappearing generations. The idea of generations forming their modes of thought on exposure or hypothetical location within cultural processes is logical and useful for generational studies.

Mannheim's second term is the generational unit. A generational unit is a subgroup of a generation. This subgroup shares the same age range, and when exposed to the same problem, they react in the same way. Multiple generational units may exist within a specific historical context, as not all members of one generation think uniformly, though they share a specific set of cultural experiences. Mannheim explains that generational units can become "polarized into antagonistic 'generation units.'"[7] Formative cultural processes can further shape and separate generation units into poles characterized by different behaviors and ideologies that are distinct from other members of the same generational unit.

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[1] Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," Essays (1972): 276-322.
[2] Brent J. Steele and Jonathan M. Acuff, In Theory and Application of the "Generation" in International Relations and Politics, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2012): 5.
[3] Mannheim does go into other elements (zeitgeist and entelechies) of studying generations but this essay will only focus on these three elements due to the essay length.
[4] Mannheim, "Problem," 290.
[5] Mannheim, "Problem," 290.
[6] Mannheim, "Problem," 290.
[7] Mannheim, "Problem," 24.

Mannheim's framework of generation location and generation units conceptualize how time, a continuous process, can be divided into segments of study. Mannheim's work is commonly referred to in many studies seeking to understand the historical significance of generations. Today, Karl Mannheim's work has lost the explanatory power it once held.[8] Many modern-day scholars agree that generations are a category that is limited to studies of social change over a short duration of time.[9] Some scholars examine specific, practical flaws in generational studies that Mannheim fails to absolve.

Hans Jaeger outlines a major classification issue when generational age groups intersect with other categories, such as class. Mannheim treats generations on the same level as class membership. Jaeger makes a distinction between these two categories: generations appear and disappear whereas class "exists across generations."[10] If one was to properly consider this cross-classification between age cohorts and class, their study would result in multiple complex combinations of small groupings. Likewise, if one was to ignore the intersection between age and class membership, then their study would result in generalized, false conclusions. Mannheim's theory can either cause the historian to lose the specialization of their study or find results that are too broad with no depth.

Alan B. Spitzer builds on Mannheim's generational framework by skillfully examining the relationship between age and collective behavior. By assuming that age and collective behavior are positively correlated variables, one can make generalizations without sufficient evidence to support their claims. However, Spitzer argues that in some cases "differences that began as political or ideological may end as generational."[11] This is explained by the generation cohorts aging without changing their ideologies. This explains how the once-considered radical Boomers are presently considered traditionalists: they and their ideologies have aged, and new ideologies have emerged with the younger Gen Z. Spitzer discusses the value of generational studies in specific historical research as it shows the interplay between age and collective behavior.

The Generational Divide in 1960s Counterculture Participation

A case study is necessary to fully grasp the extent to which Mannheim's theory can be used in historical analysis. Many scholars note that Mannheim's theory is best applied in revolutionary periods where the rate of cultural change is heightened. American 1960s counterculture represents this generational gap well: the 1960s countercultural youth represent a generation that completely rejected the ideas and lifestyles of their predecessors. Contrary to Mannheim's theory of ideas being selectively processed, the counterculture youth disavowed any resemblance of the norms and ideologies they grew up with. Instead, they advocated for change and resembled this rejection of norms through drugs, sex, and dress. The Haight-Ashbury and Woodstock Festival of the late sixties best characterize this section of youth. However, this outward rejection of norms was reflective of an inward rejection of old norms, a "breaking-away of a new culture from an old."12 This case study will demonstrate how the counterculture youth of the 1960s represents a generational gap while also showing generational poles through movements such as the Young Americans for Freedom Organization (YAF).[13] Additionally, the study will decide whether race was a formative factor that determined youth participation in counterculture.

Mannheim's terminology of generational breaks helps explain the dress, sexual behaviors, and the larger ideological rejections by counterculture Boomers to the beliefs of their generational predecessors, the G.I. Generation and the Silent Generation. The countercultural (Hippie) movement gained recognition after news reports about the neighborhood Haight-Ashbury reached nationwide television. News articles described hippies by their "weird-o granny eye-glasses," bare feet, long hair, and dirty bodies.[14] Appearance played an important part in displaying a generational gap: for example, the short hair of the Silent and G.I. generations was associated with military service and support in the Second World War.[15] Long hair of the 1960s was a symbolic defiance against war and militarism.

[8] Hans Jaeger, "Generations in History: Reflections on a Controversial Concept," In History and Theory, (n.p.: Wesleyan University, 1985), 280.
[9] See Jaeger, Spitzer. Like a revolution or war.
[10] Jaeger, "Reflections," 285.
[11] Alan B. Spitzer, "The Historical Problem of Generations." in The American Historical Review 78, no. 5 (1973): 1353–85.
[12] W. J. Rorabaugh, American Hippies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 99.
[13] "Young Americans for Freedom." Omeka RSS. Accessed April 9, 2022.
[14] Mark Harris, "The Flowering of the Hippies," in The Atlantic, September 1967.

In this way, long-haired men also represented hostility towards the Vietnam War. Additionally, men's feminine dress represented a generational break in terms of gendered norms and expression: necklaces, brightly colored jeans, and purses––traditionally feminine items––represented a challenge to the formerly accepted masculine dress of collared shirts and ties.[16] This hippie dress defied against traditional gender norms, which wanted men's dress to ideally represent their strong, rational, and business-like demeanor.

Women's dress also challenged traditional ideas of femininity by disrupting notions of sexual purity and modesty through wearing low-cut shirts and abandoning bras. W. J. Rorabaugh writes that elders reacted in disproval, arguing that barely-covered breasts were seductive and inviting promiscuity.[17] Other women wore masculine, collared work shirts as a challenge to traditional feminine dress. The hippy dress also rejected the reservation of gendered expressions of femininity and masculinity to their respective sexes; dressing overly feminine could counter notions of what was considered culturally appropriate. Male and female defiance of gender norms through their dress reflected a rejection of larger ideologies such as decency, masculinity, femininity, and sexual purity. Hippy dress was a generational break and a creation of a new youth-led culture.



Additionally, the invention and widespread use of the anti-contraceptive pill in universities enabled young people to engage in sex without anxieties about the risk of pregnancy. In a way, the pill, though initially designed for married women, allowed single women the ability to end the double standard around sexual 'promiscuity.'[18] Both parties could engage in sex without worrying about an unplanned pregnancy. This, in turn, increased the commonality of premarital sex: "sex became a matter of opportunity, whim and taste."[19]

The new sexual freedom of all genders was tied to anti-Vietnam War ideology. Violence and war were both associated with sexual repression, while Love and peace were associated with sex. Sex was also tied to liberation––casual sex was an act of liberation from traditional morals and cultural constraints. Counterculture rejected abstinence, saving sex for marriage, and traditional heterosexual ideals. The sexual revolution, endorsing more than promiscuity, was a collapse of traditional American sexual mores.[20] The sexual revolt against traditional mores represents a generational break: hippies completely discarded traditional views of sex and marriage. An anti-contraceptive pill was a variable that allowed this to occur, and places such as communes and neighborhoods like Haight-Ashbury were also important variables for sexual liberation, as like-minded individuals could congregate and sleep in masses.

The communal living of hippies also reflected a generational break. This break was tangible––an existence geographically separate from the influence of older generations and their ideologies. Communes were a "counterculture sanctuary."[21] They were a community of like-minded twenty-somethings that wanted a lifestyle based on a "new social ethos."[22] This new social ethos varied between each commune (there were over 3,000 communes in early seventies America) but the common feature throughout them was the principle of sharing. Sharing materialized in food, finances, clothes, cars, clothes, and––more often than not––sex. This principle of sharing everything countered the post-war habits of individualized consumerism that were apparent in the G.I. and Silent generations. The suburban, nuclear family homes with TVs and two cars did not appeal to the young Boomers.

[15] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 99.
[16] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 103.
[17] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 104.
[18] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 109.
[19] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 109.
[20] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 111.
[21] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 189.
[22] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 169.

Instead, counterculture youth shared almost everything, pooling finances in an effort to avoid employment outside of the commune. For example, the Twin Oaks commune produced hammocks as a way to sustain their community without having their members seek employment from the outside.[23] Mannheim would explain this geographical break as the hippy generation removing themselves from the ideological influence of other generations, another example of the generational break between Boomers and their predecessors. The teacher-student like interaction between generations was disrupted by the communal living design that separated younger from older generations, therefore, blocking the flow of ideas between generations.

The counterculture of the 1960s is a perfect case study that puts Mannheim's theory to work. It is a generational break that shows an emerging generation releasing themselves from the constraints and the transmission of disappearing generational ideologies and culture. In another way, the Boomer generation conforms to Mannheim's theory in its antagonized generational poles. Though there was counterculture youth, there was also youth pushing for adherence to traditional norms. A generational pole opposing counterculture was the Young Americas Foundation (YAF). The YAF was an organization that promoted conservative American values such as free-market capitalism and limited government regulation.[24] This widespread youth movement spread across campuses, presenting a contrasting ideology to the counterculture youth. Mike Yeager, a 1970 student at the University of Connecticut and Vietnam veteran stated the following: "In a couple of days I'll start growing a beard and letting my hair go…I'll look like a radical but talk like a conservative."[25] Yeager was one of many students involved in the still-present YAF organization. YAF is an example of a subsection of the Boomer generation that selectively accepted older generational ideologies and culture. Instead of rejecting ideologies and traditional politics altogether, YAF transformed their politics to represent the anti-government, free-market ideologies of many Boomer, university-age youth.

Though generations are an important category of study, Mannheim underestimates the power of formative factors that transcend the conscious or unconscious generational membership. Race plays a role in ideological participation and exclusion from contemporary movements.

For African Americans, the struggle for civil rights and equal opportunities in the 1960s United States took precedence over a generational (Boomer) rejection of the *status quo*. Black people, young and old, were fighting for the same opportunities that White counterculture youth easily rejected. Race as a factor in counterculture participation is evident in the demographics of the Haight-Ashbury hippy neighborhood:

> Once the visual scene was ignored, almost the first point of interest about the hippies was that they were middle-class American children to the bone…these were not negroes disaffected by color or immigrants by strangeness but boys and girls with white skins from the right side of the economy in all-American towns… After regular education, if only they'd want them, they would commute to fine jobs from the suburbs, and own nice houses…[sic][26]

White people, arguably the most privileged individuals in 1960s America, rejected the countless opportunities available to them for successful careers and established lives. Instead, White youths left home to live in communes and join the hippie movement—living in "voluntary poverty."[27] Notably, people of color and immigrants were not a large demographic in Haight-Ashbury and the wider countercultural movement. Few African Americans were present in Haight-Ashbury, even though the adjoining neighborhood, Fillmore, was predominantly African American.[28] This demographic insight refutes the idea that the counterculture was a collective generational idea—if it was, wouldn't have *all* youth participated equally in it? Race, I argue, took precedence over generational and ideological commonality, and instead, shaped an individual's countercultural participation over generation identity.

There are two words that can be attributed to the distinction of racial participation; power and privilege. The upbringings of White American and Black American families during the 1950s were drastically different. Black families, still existing in the era of Jim Crow laws and segregation, existed differently than White families. Where White families typically experienced material wealth and opportunities, Black families were still exiled to segregated suburbs and commuting to work for White men. Where success was viewed as brainless conformity to a capitalist system for White youths, success was viewed as a step forward for many Black people.

[23] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 188.
[24] "Young Americans for Freedom." Omeka RSS. Accessed April 9, 2022.
[25] Wayne J. Thorburn, A Generation Awakes: Young Americans for Freedom and the Creation of the Conservative Movement. (Ottawa, IL: Jameson Books, 2010), 370.
[26] Mark Harris, "The Flowering of the Hippies," in The Atlantic, September 1967.
The word used in the quote above is not politically correct. However, it is necessary to include in the quote because it shows the tone of 1960s America.
[27] Peter Braunstein, Imagine Nation: the American counterculture of the 1960s and '70s, 12.
[28] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 99.

Journalist Peter Braunstein noted that the hippy "adoption of virtual poverty" was viewed as a:

> cruel mockery by the Black, Hispanic, and immigrant residents of these neighborhoods, who dreamed of attaining entry into the very material world the hippie children had casually — a provisionally— repudiated.[29]

Consumption of material goods were viewed in different lights by Black and White youths. Rorabaugh states that reporters found that many African Americans hated hippies for "renouncing the middle-class lifestyle that they could not achieve."[30] Additionally, the collective lifestyle of communes was also unappealing to people of color, as 99% of commune residents were Caucasian.[31] The absence of Black youth from the counterculture movements shows the importance of race over generational commonality. Additionally, race transcends generation location: it is shared between generations and shows a common struggle against oppressive historical and present forces. To apply Mannheim's theory of generations to the counterculture movement without recognizing race as a factor in participation would create a generalized history, privileging White-centered movements without acknowledging Black opposition to these movements.

The conceptual framework of Mannheim's theory of generations holds value in analyzing the counterculture movement compared to former generational ideologies. The counterculture movements of the 1960s and early 1970s show a generational break between the Boomer generation and its predecessors, the G.I. and Silent generations. The feminine dress by young people was a symbolic rejection of pre-existing gender roles and military intervention in Vietnam. Furthermore, the invention of an anti-contraceptive pill allowed for a generational break against the traditional constraints of sex within a marriage. The pill lowered the risks of unwanted pregnancies and enabled women's sexual agency. The sexual revolution broke away from the traditional abstinence-until-marriage narrative of previous generations. Additionally, communes were also a generational break from the intergenerational living norms of the past. Instead of living with family or in multi-generational neighborhoods, counterculture youth lived collectively while separate from their families and other generational influences.

Mannheim's theory best applies to comparing two generations to each other, examining how ideologies differ from one another according to their positions in cultural processes. A risk in applying his theory to form a historical claim lies in the absence of other formative factors and identities within generations. Not all individuals adhere to the same ideologies because of constructed differences such as race. As evident above, counterculture did not define the entire Boomer generation. Instead, generational poles such as the conservative YAF existed in opposition to hippie culture. Present-day scholars have critiqued Mannheim's framework because it undermines the formative factors of class, race, and sex. This case study has shown how Mannheim's theory does not understand how race transcends and takes precedence over generational thought. Evidence of this is seen in the lack of representation of African Americans in communes and in Haight-Ashbury. Instead, race and the movement for equality took precedence over a complete generational, counterculture break. Therefore, Mannheim's theory needs to be either analyzed with recognition of its limitations or revised to understand how larger systemic factors fit into generational studies. Mannheim's theory has clear value in the terminology used to distinguish between generational ideologies and the appearance of generational poles, as evident in the comparison between counterculture ideologies and the Silent or GI Generations' ideologies. Mannheim's theory, however, lacks an understanding of formative factors such as race and class which are a clear limitation in proper socio-historical analysis.

[29] Peter Braunstein, Imagine Nation: the American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 12.
[30] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 180.
[31] Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 183.

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Photographer: Henry Deng

The Anthropocene and the Posthuman in *The Back of the Turtle*

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Discipline: English

ABSTRACT: The Anthropocene is the current geological epoch in which humans are the primary agents of environmental change. Inherent in this agency is the possibility that humans could bring an end to the world, at least as we know it today. The Anthropocene is thus a drama in which humans at once play both the role of protagonist and antagonist; how can we achieve a happy ending to this drama if these two roles are played by the same actor? To find tentative answers to this question, I analyze Thomas King's 2014 novel *The Back of the Turtle* through the lens of posthumanism. *The Back of the Turtle* follows the trials and tribulations of Gabriel Quinn, an Indigenous scientist who journeys to the town of Samaritan Bay to commit suicide after a botched deployment of his experimental defoliant led to an ecological disaster in the region. However, after failing his initial suicide attempt, Gabriel lives awhile among the region's remaining human and non-human inhabitants. Through them, Gabriel reconnects with his once-lost Indigeneity and discovers a posthuman alternative to the human subjectivity that drives the Anthropocene, showing how the protagonist may survive and the antagonist be defeated.

KEYWORDS: Environmental change, Posthumanism, Drama, Indigeneous Resurgence, Canada, The Cyborg Manifesto, Indigenous Epistemologies

Introduction

"Now I am become Death … the destroyer of worlds" (King 62). Thus speaks Gabriel Quinn, the Indigenous scientist and inadvertent world-destroyer in Thomas King's novel *The Back of the Turtle*. Gabriel does not say this merely out of poetic impulse. Rather, Gabriel stands in Samaritan Bay, which was devastated along with the Smoke River Reserve by the clumsy deployment of his experimental defoliant, GreenSweep. At these words, longtime area resident Nicholas Crisp assumes, "Ye [Gabriel] know the Bhagavad-Gita then," to which Gabriel replies, "Oppenheimer. I know the phrase because of Robert Oppenheimer" (62). What the two men are discussing here is who may claim responsibility for the apocalypse, or who may claim the mantle of Death, the destroyer of worlds. Crisp associates such a title with the divine through his reference to the Bhagavad-Gita, wherein the Hindu God Vishnu was the first to describe himself as Death. In contrast to Crisp, Gabriel associates Death with the Western scientific tradition, first through Robert Oppenheimer and then through himself. According to Gabriel, human beings have become Death, and are destroying our world. Perhaps that is why Gabriel, at this point in the novel, has come to Samaritan Bay to kill himself and do his part to remove Death from the world. Yet by the end of the novel, Gabriel commits to life rather than death.

The problem that Gabriel faces, becoming Death, has a scientific signifier: the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene refers to our current geological epoch in which humans are the primary agents of environmental change. Inherent in that agency is the possibility that humans could bring an end to the world, at least as it is known today. As such, the Anthropocene has thus far been characterized by many a worrisome piece of news, including this snippet from a 2013 issue of *La Monde*, which states, "The maximum permissible CO2 limit was crossed just before 1990" (qtd. in Latour 1). The Anthropocene is a "historical drama" of planetary proportions, one in which humans are at once playing the role of antagonist and protagonist (Latour 1). If we desire a happy ending to this drama, then the antagonist must be defeated, and the protagonist must go forward into a brighter future. Yet how can this be done, if these two roles are played by the same actor? Gabriel struggles with this very question, and the way in which he continues to live is an example of how we might find a satisfactory resolution to the drama of the Anthropocene. Drawing from Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti's theories of posthumanism, I argue that Gabriel constructs an alternate subjectivity to the human-become-Death, thereby defeating the antagonist while allowing the protagonist to survive. Gabriel builds this alternate subjectivity through the re-enactment of an Indigenous creation story, demonstrating how Indigenous cultural practice already applies many aspects of posthuman theory.

The Posthuman

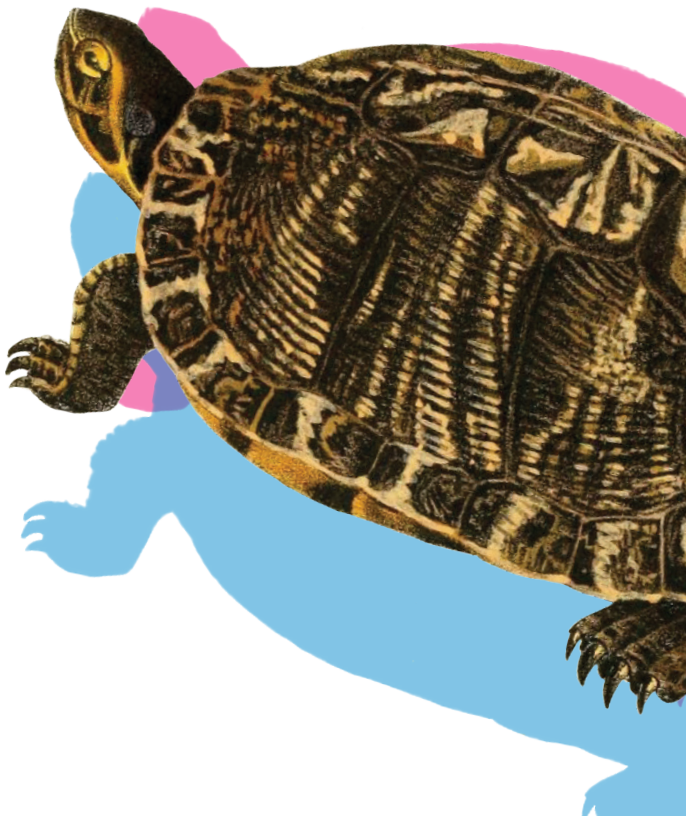
One might expect that the English language term "human" refers to a subjectivity that is universal to all beings in our subspecies of primate. However, the term "human" refers to an often-exclusive subject that has been constructed through "Western social, political, and scientific theory" (Braidotti 1). This human exists as a citizen of a capitalist nation-state and uses their status as a property-owner and rights-holder to advance their individual material interests. Human subjectivity of this kind has not always been afforded to all who are now thought of as humans; children, the impoverished, the enslaved, and women are all groups of people to whom full humanity has been denied at various points in the Western past and present. For example, the citizen property-owner has the right to vote, and yet the exclusion of women from this right is a near-universal part of Western political history. In Canada, white women did not obtain the Federal right to vote until 1918, and even then, not all Indigenous women could cast a Federal vote until 1960 (Strong-Boag). Furthermore, those who are not part of the category of human rights-holder are often commodified as exploitable capital, over whom the human's rights are held. Rosi Braidotti discusses a 2002 example of such commodification in *The Posthuman*, saying that while "people in war-torn lands like Afghanistan were reduced to eating grass in order to survive[,] … cows in the United Kingdom and parts of the European Union were fed meat-based fodder" (7). Braidotti describes this situation as one in which the "genetic code of living matter – 'Life itself' (Rose, 2007) – is the main capital" (7). At the top of this chain of commodification sits the consumer, the Western human. Below the human sits the cow; because of its ability to be fed and fattened for consumption, it is raised to a status just beneath the human. Ironically, the Afghan is relegated to the level of grass eater, seeing as they are unable to be commodified in the same way as the cow. The designation of "human" is extremely malleable. The cow is pulled closer to the human as the Afghan is pushed further away, while the status of women's humanity remains contested, depending on factors such as race and class (Braidotti 7-8).

Given the inconstant history of the human subject, it should come as no surprise when Braidotti claims that "[not] all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that" (1). For many, this assertion will seem unsettling, or even frightening. Yet for scholars like Braidotti, who write in the face of the Anthropocene, such an assertion provides hope. It raises the possibility of an alternative, posthuman subject, a way to escape the human-become-Death, without bringing death upon ourselves.

In "A Cyborg Manifesto," author Donna Haraway articulates this posthuman subject in a way that is at once academic and poetic. Haraway asserts that the cyborg is a "hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (149). From this assertion, it may seem that Haraway uses the fictional cyborg as a metaphor for the complexities of social subjectivity, and to an extent, she does. However, Haraway also refers to social subjectivity as "world-changing fiction" that has material consequences, and here she gives this fiction a new character: her cyborg (149). Haraway grounds her manifesto in feminist thought, a fertile source of inspiration for the cyborg given the tentative and incomplete extension of human subjectivity to women. Haraway writes that "gender, race, and class cannot provide the basis for essential unity … There is nothing about being 'female' that naturally binds women" (155). As it is with her cyborg, Haraway's conception of womanhood "skips the step of original unity, of identification with nature in the Western sense" (151). In other words, people in general and women in particular are comprised of various different and sometimes conflicting components; just as cyborgs are comprised of nuts and bolts in addition to flesh and blood, women are constituted by their race and class as much as by their gender. So, where cyborgs cannot identify in whole with the myths of human unity that lie within Garden of Eden and the state of nature, the "[p]ainful fragmentation among feminists … along every possible fault line has made the concept of woman elusive" (Haraway 155). History provides many proofs for Haraway's statement here, not least the much-delayed extension of the Canadian Federal vote to Indigenous women, even after the fulfillment of "women's" suffrage in 1918. How then do posthumans, who do not descend from a garden, organize a collective? What does a cyborg-feminist society look like? Haraway answers that cyborgs form societies "through coalition – affinity, not identity" (155).

While Haraway does not provide a precise definition of affinity, we can find a good articulation of a similar concept by returning to *The Posthuman*, this time to Braidotti's chapter on post-anthropocentrism. As Braidotti argues, through examples such as that of the cow and the Afghan, "advanced capitalism is a spinning machine that actively produces difference for the sake of commodification" (58). As this spinning machine twirls around its anthropocentric subject, the human, all others are swept up in its wake. In such a situation, the extension of human subjectivity to others, be it to cows or women, would perpetuate rather than address the problem of the Anthropocene. Rather than the establishment of a universal identity through such an extension, made impossible in any case due to the human's need for commodification through difference, we require something else. Braidotti refers to that something as *zoe*-centred egalitarianism, wherein differences between beings are still maintained but relocated "outside of the dialectical scheme" of conflict and domination. Under this framework, difference is articulated as positive "relation to multiple others," or affinity (Braidotti 56).

In sum, the posthuman subject is post-anthropocentric. As a cyborg, the posthuman accepts difference as something both internal and external. They operate through equal relation rather than domination. It is in such a posthuman subject that we may find a satisfactory solution to the drama of the Anthropocene.



Gabriel and the Woman Who Fell From the Sky

Gabriel's claim of a sort of ontological descent from Robert Oppenheimer is curious, considering his actual familial descent is far removed from the world-destroyers of the Western scientific tradition. Gabriel was raised in a community of Indigenous relations that centred around his mother, father, and younger sister. Of his family, Gabriel states that, though he loved them, "[h]e simply didn't feel as though he was a part of their lives. Nor were they a part of his. His world was a world of facts, of equations, of numbers. His family's world was made up of connections and emotions" (King 184). The detachment that Gabriel expresses here is likely a consequence of the dissolution of his family. After the murder of his father and the loss of contact with his mother and sister, Gabriel was left with no strong connections through which he could construct a world. This left him with only the facts and equations for which he had always possessed a natural talent. During his studies at Stanford University, Gabriel was recruited into the biotech corporation Domidion. There he became the "Head of Biological Oversight," or in his words, a destroyer of worlds (20).

Despite Gabriel's claim of a clean separation between his world of equations and his family's world of connections, there is evidence in the text that suggests a porous boundary between the two. During Domidion's investigation of Gabriel's disappearance, which accompanied his first suicide attempt, Dr. Warren Thicke remarks that he noticed "a folder on Quinn's desk" prior to the latter's desertion. When asked what was special about the folder, Thicke responds that his interest derived from what Gabriel wrote across the face of the folder: "The Woman Who Fell from the Sky" (90). The Woman Who Fell from the Sky is an Indigenous creation story, one that tells of a pregnant woman who fell from a sky-world and into our own, which was originally formed completely of water. Following her descent, the woman rests "[o]n the back of a turtle," and through the labours of herself, her twin children, and the animals, they construct the hybrid water-land world that becomes Earth (227). Later, when Crisp tells the story to Gabriel, the latter begins to reminisce:

> Gabriel's mother had told the story any number of times, but he couldn't remember if she had ever given a reason. Gabriel and his sister had taken turns cheering for the various animals who dove down to the bottom of the ocean, betting cookies on who would be the first to try to find dirt. Gabriel suspected that his mother varied the outcome, so that neither of her children got too far ahead of the other in the overall standings (222).

Through that folder, The Woman Who Fell from the Sky followed Gabriel from the world of connections into that of equations. Yet when Crisp asks if Gabriel knows the tale, the latter denies any relation to the story, saying, "No … I don't think I do" (222).

It is understandable why Gabriel would deny having ever heard The Woman Who Fell from the Sky; the story evokes memories of his mother and sister, who were among those killed on the Smoke River Reserve when GreenSweep entered their water supply. Yet Gabriel unwittingly seems to find himself pulled into a narrative that has strong parallels with the creation story of his childhood. For example, he abandons his initial attempt to drown himself in the ocean after seeing multiple people seemingly emerge from the depths, all struggling to find solid ground and escape a watery grave. Where he had come to die, Gabriel observes that "suddenly the sea was alive with people. He caught a young boy by the hair and dragged him to the rocks. Then a young girl … Two young men. All naked and cold. Their eyes wild with life" (9). Once the tide retreats, the sea-people leave the exhausted Gabriel on the beach, and he wonders whether he had "sung them out of the depths" (30). He dismisses such a notion, remarking to himself that "[h]e understood physics, understood the intricacies of the universe," concluding that "[t]he people in the water were not mythical beings" (30). While Gabriel eventually finds a physical explanation for the events in the ocean, the fact remains that by pulling the people out of the water, he has begun a new story wherein he plays the role of the turtle. Upon Gabriel's back, or rather through his labour, he embarks on a constructive process through which he becomes something other than Death.

Gabriel and Posthumanism

Noting the importance of co-operative relationships in The Woman Who Fell from the Sky, I cannot help but recall Braidotti's emphasis on framing difference as "relation to multiple others" in her articulation of posthumanism (56).

As such, I wish to examine Gabriel's relationships to see how posthumanism manifests in his journey. In this examination, Gabriel's time at Domidion once again proves to be revealing. The Public Relations (PR) department at Domidion, in looking for a way to spin Gabriel's disappearance, says that "he was anti-social" (King 134). PR draws this description from the comments of Domidion CEO Dorian Asher, who says of Gabriel that "[h]e kept to himself" (134). These depictions reinforce the idea that Gabriel constructs himself and his world out of equations alone, yet Dorian remembers Gabriel as having at least one close workplace relationship. Specifically, Dorian recalls that in Domidion's aquarium, there had been "a single turtle in the tank, and, each day, Gabriel would eat his lunch and watch the turtle as she swam back and forth in the long rectangle of water" (21). Even after the turtle disappeared from Domidion, Gabriel "continued to eat his lunch in front of the empty tank … as though he expected the turtle to return." Dorian is unable to see why Gabriel did this, remarking that the "reptile wasn't of any [material] value," and he feels no need to look deeper into Gabriel's association with it (23). Yet Gabriel and the turtle are both fish out of water at Domidion, the former in a cultural setting that is foreign to his upbringing, the latter removed from others of its species. Braidotti claims that "the recognition of shared ties of vulnerability can generate new forms of posthuman community" (69). It is perhaps for this reason that Dorian, as the invulnerable CEO, could not see that Gabriel felt more closely tied to the turtle than to others of his species at Domidion. Further, Dorian is unable to understand Gabriel's decision to follow the turtle's lead and leave the company.

While Gabriel's saving of the mysterious sea-people parallels aspects of The Woman Who Fell from the Sky, the story that Gabriel helps create is not exclusively Indigenous but instead embraces the multiple "others" of which Braidotti speaks (56). This embrace is in opposition to the Christian creation myth that advances the idea of "essential unity," which Haraway critiques in her work on cyborg identity (155). For Haraway, the posthuman "cyborg" subject "was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without end" (315). Throughout *The Back of the Turtle*, there are several implicit critiques of the Christian creation story of God-given, singular humanity. For example, when Gabriel accuses Crisp of romanticizing his memories of gatherings in the Smoke River Reserve, Crisp responds, "It were no paradise [or Eden], if that be the question. But it were a community" (King 417). Gabriel, who so starkly proclaims a preference for equations over connections, plays a role in the rebuilding of that community; when he visits the Reserve, he discovers the people he pulled from the sea eating a meal alongside Mara, the only remaining Indigenous resident in the area. Mara informs Gabriel of the sea-people's identity, describing them as "[t]wo families … The Chins and the Huangs. They're Taiwanese" (433).

Gabriel discovers that by pulling the Taiwanese families from the sea, he began a creation story almost as unwittingly as he had begun a story of destruction through the invention of GreenSweep. He learns that the families were cheap labour on a decaying cargo ship, which, adrift in bureaucratic malaise, was being battered by the same rough seas in which he had tried to drown himself. Gabriel joins the impromptu crowd for a meal, and wonders at the fact that he "had known them [the Taiwanese] no better than he had known his own sister, and yet here he was, having dinner with the lot as though they were family" (433). Burdened by the knowledge that he was responsible for the deaths of his mother and sister, Gabriel attempts to excuse himself from any kind of familial relationship with the diners, saying that he "should be getting back." Crucially, Gabriel does not say where he would be going back to, and Crisp stops him from leaving by telling him to "[l]ook around … This is the back to which [he] needs be getting" (436). The "back" to which Crisp refers is more than just a return to an Indigenous community; while such a return is part of Gabriel's journey, of the many assembled diners, only Mara is also Indigenous (436). What Crisp urges Gabriel to return to is the relational way of life that he was taught in childhood, alongside his sister, as the two learned of the sky-woman and the animals who shaped our world.

The transition from Death into the posthuman for Gabriel is a gradual one, though it does have a clear climax. After the dinner, Gabriel confesses his role in the devastation to Mara. She angrily encourages him to go through with his original resolution of suicide, saying that "[l]ow tide is at five … Don't be late" (455). Yet, as Gabriel waits for the encroachment of high tide, Mara reverses course and goes out to Gabriel. The following exchange ensues:

> Mara looked over her shoulder. The early surges had already found the base of the Apostles. "You don't get to kill yourself."
> "What?"
> "I have questions."
> "Questions?"
> "And I want answers" (474).

Here, Mara reminds Gabriel of his responsibilities to the living and claims a possession, at least in part, of Gabriel's body and subjectivity. The idea that Gabriel does not have the right to inflict death upon himself, something that he has already inflicted on so many others, stands in opposition to humanism's "unitary subject position" which holds individual identity and autonomy above all else (Braidotti 54). When Gabriel accepts Mara's demands and continues living, his subjectivity becomes something more than that of a unitary human. Rather, Gabriel becomes something akin to Haraway's cyborg, a being that is constituted from its responsibilities to multiple relations. For Gabriel, those relations include all the residents of the Samaritan Bay-Smoke River area, especially those that he had devastated in his time as a destroyer of worlds: Mara, Crisp, and the turtles. Indeed, when Gabriel arrives back on the beach, he spots "[a] sea turtle," one that bears a remarkable resemblance to the turtle "from the tank in the lobby at Domidion" (King 492). The return of the turtle is a reminder that Gabriel's life is "[n]ot a straight line." (472). He is no longer the human-become-Death that ends a linear story of progress and ruin. Rather, Gabriel sits on the back of a turtle that can survive an apocalypse; he lives in response to its needs and moves in whatever way it demands.

Indigenous Peoples and Cyborgs

Here I would like to stress that my analysis of Gabriel's journey is not an effort to appropriate Indigenous values and stories and frame them as exclusively posthuman, nor do I wish to depict Indigeneity as a dying thing that must be replaced by a cyborg identity. Instead, I wish to focus the theoretical and future-oriented concepts articulated by Haraway and Braidotti through an Indigenous lens, to show how such concepts have already been applied in real-world Indigenous cultures and their stories. However, posthumanism and Indigenous ontologies are by no means equivalent. In that vein, there is one area in which *The Back of the Turtle* retains and even reinforces a strict binary, something that is decidedly contrary to posthuman thought. The binary of which I speak is between technoscience and Indigeneity, which is what Gabriel references when he speaks of the contrast between his devotion to equations and his family's emphasis on connection.

Yet Indigeneity is not something possessed exclusively by a single person or people, and it should come as no surprise that other Indigenous peoples are telling stories that break down the boundaries between their kinship relations and the products of science. An example of this effort is the essay "Making Kin with the Machines." In the words of its authors, the essay draws upon "Hawaiian, Cree, and Lakota cultural knowledges" to develop "conceptual frameworks that … acknowledge our responsibility to find a place for [Artificial Intelligences] in our circle of relationships" (Lewis et al.). In the section on Cree attitudes towards human-AI relationships, author Archer Pechawis expresses fears that "anonymous hyper-intelligences" might base their work upon the "same values that have fostered genocide against Indigenous peoples worldwide and brought us all to the brink of environmental collapse" (Lewis et al.). Pechawis, instead of turning away from AI altogether, raises the possibility of creating programming languages that are "grounded in nēhiyaw nisitohtamowin." Pechawis defines nēhiyaw nisitohtamowin as "Cree understanding" in which "relationship is paramount" (Lewis et al.). Like Gabriel, Pechawis is concerned about Anthropocentric destruction, which harms the world in general and Indigenous peoples in particular. Yet unlike Gabriel, Pechawis does not turn away from the creations of Western technoscience altogether. Instead, Pechawis looks for ways to integrate those creations into a system of positive relation, just as Gabriel integrates himself into the system of relation that governs Samaritan Bay. While the two depict technoscience differently, both Pechawis and Gabriel tell Indigenous stories of relation, from which aspiring posthumans can learn a great deal.

Conclusion: Earthbound

In his articulation of a posthuman subject that he dubs the "Earthbound," Bruno Latour states that "the speech of the Earthbound will no longer have to alternate wildly … between the exact transcription of the world or an arbitrary sign unconnected to its referent. Their statements will *draw* what they are *bound* to" (16). Latour's Earthbound is a response to the problems of the Anthropocene; he decries "[h]umans and their 'facts,'" insinuating that the devotion to such facts allows some humans to disentangle their subjectivity from the world around them (16). While Latour uses the future tense when talking about the speech of the Earthbound, I argue that Gabriel's journey from a destroyer of worlds into a relational subject provides an example of how posthumans like the Earthbound exist in the here-and-now, in Indigenous speech and Indigenous stories.

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Artist: Alex Sychuk

Unsettling Touch and Aversion to Manipulation:

An Analysis of Tactility and Physical Experience in Jan Švankmajer's *Dimensions of Dialogue*

Author: Jade Deputan
Discipline: Film Studies

ABSTRACT: The "film body" as outlined by film theorist Jennifer Barker, explains the idea that a film is not just an object to be viewed, but a subject to be experienced. In the world of animation film, there have been many filmmakers that treat their film as its own body due to the tedious nature of self-figuration, which is to allow the filmmaker's own body to be known and acknowledged within the film[1]. Jennifer Barker's theory for the " film body" outlines perfectly the feelings and emotions expressed through Jan Švankmajer's work in claymation. While his entire filmography in claymation exhibits a personal and unique feeling to the viewer, his short film *Dimensions of Dialogue*[2] captures three different types of tactility. The tactility he represents in the three divisions ("dialogues") of this short film works to provoke a tactile response in the viewer that in turn forces association of this physical response to unique feelings. These dialogues each serve to engage in the very personal and intimate nature of the vast range of human dialogue and discourse. The film abuses familiar objects, sounds, and clay to invoke a tactile response in the viewer that allows them to further occupy and relate to the purpose of each dialogue. Švankmajer's ability to engage a physical response in the viewer creates a unique form of storytelling that posits the film as both an instrument and a corporeal experience.

KEYWORDS: Claymation, Filmography, Film Theory, Film, Jennifer Barker, Jan Svankmajer, Dimensions of Dialogue, Surrealism

[1] Lin, "The Interface," 269-270.
[2] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."

It can be said that although inventive and impressive, the majority of film animation does not exhibit any tactile experience within the viewer, being for the most part in the mainstream either drawn or computer generated. Within clay animation—also known as claymation, the artist or director is able to create an image of perceived three-dimensionality, satisfying the viewer's quest and obsession for realism within the world of animation. Clay animation is itself a unique form of animation that falls under the style of stop motion animation, involving the manipulation of physical clay in a frame-by-frame style,[3] which can provoke an intense experiential reaction with the viewer. Czech filmmaker and surrealist animator Jan Švankmajer manages to create his own distinct auterist vision within the rather characteristic field of claymation by manipulating food, objects, and using self-figuration—the filmmaker's act of inserting and acknowledging their body within their own film.[4] The tactility and visceral nature of Švankmajer's work, specifically in *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982), his series of animated shorts[5], matches Jennifer Barker's exploration of the physical experience of a film body; Barker's tactility focuses on the film's body and the tendency for the film to be "at the same time the subject of experience and the object for experience."[6] I will argue that Švankmajer's unique approach to claymation in *Dimensions of Dialogue* (from now on referred to as *Dimensions*) exploits Jennifer Barker's theory of tactility within film through manipulation and self-figuration and creates a film body that the viewer can viscerally experience and relate to outside of the film.

Jennifer Barker's "Film Body"

In order to analyze *Dimensions* and its relation to tactility and touch, I would first like to introduce Jennifer Barker's theory of the film body and its subsequent influence on the physical experience of film. Traditional tactility is of course known primarily in the context of physicality and actual tangency of touch between people and objects, detailing an expression of intimacy and relationship of contact that can be felt and experienced by the parties involved.[7] When speaking of cinematic tactility then, it may seem inconsistent or paradoxical to refer to the experience of touch within the film viewer; cinema is at first glance a viewing focused activity with no relation to physicality. The very essence of the term "viewer" is the lack of physical tangibility. Yet Barker argues that cinematic tactility, in the same vein as traditional tactility, is able to invoke a physical experience of intimacy and relation in the viewer through the film, arguing that the film's body initiates a reciprocity between itself and the viewer's body.[8] This film body is what is able to create such a visceral response in the viewer. Barker defines this body to be both independent of and engaged with the viewer's and the filmmaker's lived bodies.[9] It is a cinematic lived-body capable of its own transgression of emotion and tactility independent of the emotions and physicality of its creators and subjects. In this way, both the film's body and the viewer's body are engaged in the emotion and physicality of the film: "[they] share certain ways of being in, seeing, and grasping the world, despite their vast differences."[10] Tactility then can be felt and expressed both by the film body and the viewer in the same ways, creating a reciprocal relationship of contact and intimacy which allows the viewer to actually physically experience the film through tactility.

In the case of Švankmajer's *Dimensions*, the over-emphasis on physicality and touch with the manoeuvring of clay and objects creates a film body with an intense affinity to the viewer's physicality. In this way, Švankmajer is able to portray the intricacies and complexities of human discourse through haptic devices that travel through the screen and manifest experientially in the viewer. As Ewan Wilson argues, "[Švankmajer's] focus on the surfaces of his materials forces his viewers to imagine the sensation of touching them."[11] *Dimensions* is a body exhibiting an intense reciprocal haptic relationship, reminding the viewer of the densities of dialogue through the experience of physical tactility.

All together, *Dimensions* is an exercise in the exploitation of subjective experience, whether that be the creation of aversion or relation to the objects Švankmajer uses. The filmmaker states that "[w]hile touching, we project a sensation outwardly, outside of us; at the same time we perceive it subjectively, on our skin."[12] This outward sensation combined with the subjective perception manifests itself as an experience of which we can draw upon when watching his films.

[3] Kawakami, "Manipulation," 82.
[4] Lin, "The Interface," 269-270.
[5] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."
[6] Barker, "Introduction: Eye Contact," 8.
[7] Barker, 3.
[8] Barker, 3.
[9] Barker, 7-8.
[10] Barker, 8.
[11] Wilson, "'Diagrams of Motion,'" 151.
[12] Švankmajer, *Touching and Imagining*, 2.

The manipulation and exploitation of these experiences allows the audience to genuinely identify with the filmmaking process and the film's body, which better familiarizes them with the intentions behind the film. In their analysis of Švankmajer's works, Kawakami states that "[the viewers] are forced to see significantly vivid textures of objects while also being acutely aware of the editing manipulations that construct the scene."[13] In this way, the film body of *Dimensions* makes the viewer aware of its process which increases relatability through the destabilization of their own physical experience with the objects presented. This in turn permits the viewer to both physically and emotionally relate to the contents of the film and their subsequent manipulation—the themes of the intricacies and complexities of dialogue and the ensuing frustration are experienced both mentally and physically. Each dialogue in *Dimensions* is representative of this physical experience, and while all three comment upon the nuance of human discourse, the intricate ways in which each short is constructed gives the viewer different tactile experiences that match their thematic purposes.

Eternal Conversation

In *Dimensions'* first short entitled "Eternal Conversation" ("Dialog Věčný"), three groups of objects—food, office supplies, and kitchen supplies—are positioned and animated as human heads in, as Wilson notes, an Arcimboldian fashion.[14] Each head takes turns in devouring the others until ultimately all three are reduced to indistinguishable grey copies in an endless loop of regurgitation.[15] In her article examining Švankmajer's haptic devices, Vasseleu details this affinity as a sort of tactile memory, stating "[Švankmajer] is fascinated by the memories that physical objects contain by virtue of their enduring material existence."[16] In other words, the objects he uses in his films, especially in *Dimensions*, give off an experiential quality to them before they are even manipulated—the viewer is familiar to the touch and feel of the food, kitchen tools, and office supplies. Thus, when manipulated in Švankmajer fashion, we are able to subsequently understand and have a visceral reaction to the unconventional usage of these objects. As the heads devour each other in this first short, Švankmajer closes in on specific objects overtaking others, such as pliers crushing sugar cubes and scissors and cutlery dismantling cooked chicken.

Within these close-ups, Švankmajer makes sure to emphasize the harshness in which the objects collide and the resultant disorder of the attacked party. Specifically, when the already-attacked chicken encounters a book from the office supplies head, the pieces of meat slide across and rip apart the pages until the book is unreadable and visibly damaged.[17] Barker's physical tactility is present in the recognition of how both the chicken and the book feel separately, and thus the collision of such an unconventional pairing invokes an unsettling sense with the viewer. Imagining the feel of these two objects together in the same context is definitely absurd, as traditionally and experientially, this pairing would never interact in such a way. This causes the viewer's resultant physical aversion. The chicken leaves grease stains on the pages, invoking a familiarity of cooked chicken grease—a realistic tactility that allows the viewers to tap into their subjective experience and ultimately physically reminds them of greasy food and its inherent messiness. Švankmajer continues with this chain of destructive pairings until all items that were once identifiable are turned completely into unrecognizable mush and eventually into clay.[18] Feeling the destruction of these objects induces what Kristoffer Noheden describes as the imagination of touch, noting how "Švankmajer found that touch has the capability to not only transmit information but also induce analogical associations."[19] That is the tactile memory of these objects are already engrained within the viewer through subjective experience, and the exploitation of these memories—the reduction to indistinct clay heads from tangible whole objects—invokes a disturbing feeling. The nature of these "conversations" between the heads works mostly to perturb the viewer, reinforcing the eternal nature of dialogue through this manipulation of once distinguishable objects. All thoughts and discourse become melded into one, without the ability to differentiate what was so discernable to begin with, both within this "conversation" and tangibly for the viewer. This distressing film body characterizes Švankmajer's thematic intentions of a dialogue that never ends, displaying the "Eternal Conversation" as one in which continuous discourse ultimately ends in singularity, no matter how distinctive it begins.

[13] Kawakami, "Manipulation," 81.
[14] Wilson, "'Diagrams of Motion,'" 154.
[15] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."
[16] Vasseleu, "Tactile Animation," 155.
[17] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue".
[18] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."
[19] Noheden, "The imagination of touch.".

Exhaustive Discussion

The final dialogue, "Exhaustive Discussion" ("Dialog V yčerpávající") shows two clay heads as they present each other with different household objects using their mouths to create unconventional combinations that ultimately lead to indistinct chaotic pairings.[20] The irregular pairings in this dialogue exhibit a similar sense of confusion and unsettling tactility as the objects in the first dialogue. However, the physical experience in the viewer does not come from the destruction of said objects but rather from the combining of them. It is incredibly frustrating to watch two objects that should never interact connect in the way Švankmajer makes them. This frustration comes from the aforementioned memory and familiarity with objects and their functions, which Švankmajer blatantly disregards again for thematic purposes. Barker's tactility is evidently apparent when the objects are paired with anything other than their respective accurate partners, creating a visceral response manifested by the viewer's aversion. At the beginning, shoes are paired with laces, butter is paired with toast, and so on.

By the end, no pairing is correct and the clay heads crack under the pressure of stress, and physical repulsion is expressed as a result.[21] This tactile disgust is exemplified perfectly in the pairing of the pencil sharpener and the toothpaste. The chaos and messiness of the toothpaste leaking through the sharpener and the plastic being shredded[22] feels completely wrong due to our familiarity of both objects being separated. There is a repulsive quality to the mess created by the marrying of these two objects. This physical repulsion, alongside the platform of grotesque clay tongues, compliments the narrative of exhaustion in miscomprehension as this "dialogue" between the heads is incredibly frustrating to experience.

The different onomatopoeic sound pairings work to enhance the visceral nature of the objects as well, with different noises associated with each of the different objects. Of course, the sounds match up phonetically when objects are paired correctly. Thus, just as the viewers are already deeply unsettled with the forced unsuccessful pairings, the accompanying sounds create an even more chaotic atmosphere to the environment which further frustrates the viewer. All together, as the sounds, objects, and their paired collisions become increasingly unsatisfying, Švankmajer is able to create a physical recoiling in the viewer due to this obvious subversion. The physical reaction is one of an intense sensory overload. Yet, this is of course exactly how Švankmajer wishes the viewer to react, forcing a conclusion of continuous discourse as frustrating and tiresome. Švankmajer is asking the viewer how long this discourse can continue exasperatingly until both parties are completely broken. That is to say, "Exhaustive Dialogue" reaches its meaning through tactility; it is frustrating to watch the dialogue due to the distressing nature of its tactility. These two shorts in *Dimensions* accurately exemplify Švankmajer's attraction towards the manipulated familiarity of objects and the experiential memory associated with their purposes and intents.

Passionate Discourse

Švankmajer's self-figuration is another way in which he is able to use animation to elicit a physical intimacy in his viewers. This is most prominent in his second dialogue, "Passionate Discourse" ("Dialog Vášnivý"). It depicts a sexual encounter between two clay figures resulting in the birth of an inarticulate clay blob, sending the two clay figures into an abstract quarreled frenzy, where they become one messy unit of clay.[23] Whereas the other two dialogues exhibit an intense frustration with the familiarity and subjective experience of manipulated objects, this second dialogue focuses on the intimacy of touch and its dismantling through clay figuration. The filmmaker's touch is incredibly apparent in this section of *Dimensions*, as the fingerprints and claw marks appearing on the two figures offer the main source of tactility within the "Passionate Discourse" film body. As the two figures approach each other, physical imprints representative of Švankmajer's own hands sculpting the clay meld the two bodies together, ultimately culminating in a cesspool of prints and movements. Emerging from the boiling clay are fragmented physical creations of this sexual encounter, such as an extended head in apparent orgasm and a figuration of a vagina and breasts. Not only do these figurations contribute to a three-dimensional realism in the figures and their encounter, but the movement of molding and pressing the clay is easy to physically imagine with our own hands.

[20] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."
[21] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."
[22] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."
[23] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."

Towards the end, as the lovers are in an intense quarrel, the clay is manhandled rather forcefully, with visible claw marks and indents—much harsher and much less intricate than the encounter minutes earlier.[24] In this way, Švankmajer exploits the viewer's experience with clay and matter of this kind. Just as Barker explains the sharing of texture between the viewer and the film, [25] the viewer can physically feel the clay in their nails and between their fingers. At first it is gentle and soft, just as the sexual encounter is, but by the end there is no rhyme or reason behind each blow and the cruel handling becomes quite unsettling to watch.

Ewan Wilson argues that "[t]he same energy that was transferred from the animator's hands to shape the clay, to arrange the utensils, is subsequently employed to crush the figures and, in doing so, makes the force of the blows palpable to the film's audience."[26] That is, the invisible exploiter behind the clay's movements is more apparent, and thus the viewer is able to identify with the force and impact needed to contort this material in the way that it is represented visually. While Švankmajer's hand or physical body is not technically present in *Dimensions*, his influence and touch contribute to the viewer's relation of contact. This extension of the hand of the artist posits the filmmaker in the space of the film, inserting himself into the dynamic between the film body and the viewer's body. In creating a dialogue that allows his own body to be experienced, Švankmajer merges his body with the film body.

While *Dimensions'* first and last dialogues use figures and objects to invoke a sense of recognition and tactility in the viewer, this second dialogue uses Švankmajer's body to do the same. Švankmajer's presence works to invoke a personal connection to the tactile experience, as along with recognizing how objects interact, there is an intimate experience of relating directly to the filmmaker's own tactility. Rather than create such an aversion towards his images, Švankmajer's touch in "Passionate Discourse" forces the viewer to physically experience this intensity between two lovers intimately through his own hands. Being able to figure the different movements and creations allows the viewer to understand and feel the gravity of each movement and figuration of the clay; we can imagine manipulating and fashioning the clay with our own hands due to the obvious markings of Švankmajer's own hands. "Passionate Discourse" is sensual and private, and the intimacy felt through the filmmaker works simply to enhance the recognition to this affectionate and personal nature of the dialogue. This marrying of the filmmaker's, the film's, and the viewer's bodies creates an experience in tactility that manifests itself as a physical experience of touch and as a thematic narrative, both of which are equally enhanced by the other.



[24] Švankmajer, "Dimensions of Dialogue."
[25] Barker, "Introduction: Eye Contact," 2.
[26] Wilson, "'Diagrams of Motion,'" 151.
[27] Barker, "Introduction: Eye Contact," 8

Conclusion

With his unique approach to clay animation using the manipulation of known objects and an abundance of self-figuration, Jan Švankmajer has created his own distinct sub-genre of surrealist claymation which invokes a sense of physical touch and an experience of visceral tactility within the viewer. This physicality experienced by the viewer directly relates to Jennifer Barker's theory of the film body—the film's, filmmaker's, and viewer's bodies work together to create a visceral and tactile response outside of the film. The film body of Švankmajer's *Dimensions of Dialogue* exploits viewers' subjective experiences of touch through the uncomfortable figuration of clay fingerprints and destruction, alongside the reconfiguration of tangible objects. In this way, viewers are subject to the physical tactility of familiar objects and the clay's texture, making it easier to both understand the thematic dialogue of Švankmajer's series of short films and to interpret that dialogue as unsettling and complex. Although the intent behind each dialogue can be configured differently and subjectively by each individual viewer, it is apparent that the themes and narrative are experienced physically through tactile and haptic means and are felt through the film body's "modes of embodied existence."[27]



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SOCIAL SCIENCE



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After three years, UAlberta students were able to experience a full academic year on University of Alberta campus for the first time. This gave us the ability to carve out a community of Arts students that had wavered in its existence prior to this; so much time apart had left the Arts community feeling disjointed and untethered, and this year was an opportunity for a faculty predicated on collaboration and togetherness to finally have both of those things at the same time again. The collection of essays that you are about to find is proof of this; Arts students came back strongly and found compelling ways to entice readers to maintain their appreciation and support of the Arts.

None of this would be possible without the work of the dedicated editorial team of Crossings, who have been working on this compilation since the Fall 2022 semester. Every peer-reviewer, copy-editor, and designer made this project beautiful; each author and artist made this project possible. I'd like to extend a special thanks to all of those who submitted contributions to the third volume of Crossings, and encourage all of those in the Arts faculty to do the same for future volumes.

A considerable thanks is due for this year's Editor-in-Chief, Hailey Lothamer. Her nonstop work on this journal since she took over the portfolio of OASIS VP Academic shines in both this project and the Special Edition of Crossings for 2023. As well, thank you to our readers, who help to remind us each day that as much as the Arts needs us in order to exist, we might need them just as much.



Interrupting the Cycle of Sexual Violence

Prevention and Intervention for Problematic Sexual Behavior in Youth

Author: Amal Kasim
Discipline: Social Sciences

ABSTRACT: Alberta's service landscape for sexual violence intervention in relation to youth exhibiting problem sexual behaviour (PSB) is noticeably lacking. "Current theories emphasize that the origins and maintenance of childhood [PSB] include sexual abuse as well as familial, social, economic, and developmental factors" (Friedrich et al., 2001; Friedrich, Davies, Feher, & Wright, 2003). Early intervention is critical and yet there are no services for these individuals to turn to. The current service landscape essentially requires youth to formally interact with the criminal justice system before they can be redirected to the necessary settings to address their behaviours. This paper highlights the need for non-punitive and judgement-free forms of preventative measures in order to disrupt the cycle of sexual violence.

KEYWORDS: Criminology, Sexual Violence, Youth Services, Non-profit Organization, Counselling, Public Education

For my criminology field placement, I had the opportunity to work with the Saffron Sexual Assault Centre, which is based in Sherwood Park serving the Strathcona County region. This non-profit organization delivers three main services: Counseling, Police and Court Support, and Public Education. The Counseling program is offered to anyone ages four and up who is a survivor of sexual violence. The Police and Court Support program offers clients support throughout the legal process of disclosing sexual violence crimes, if that is the path they so choose. Center advocates offer support to clients through reporting information, reporting support, documentation support, court preparation, court support, and advocacy with the police and the court (Saffron Centre ltd., n.d.). The Public Education Program offered by Saffron currently includes presentations for youth, Kindergarten through grade 12, and parents. Professional development workshops are also available to businesses and organizations.

Throughout the course of my placement, I was exposed to various aspects of the Saffron Centre's programming. Through my own observations as well as through discussions with various members within the organization, I developed a clear understanding of the gaps in the service landscape of sexual violence intervention. Currently, the Saffron Centre does not provide services to perpetrators of sexual violence, due to potential overlap with survivors seeking aid. Though this is a justified action taken for the sake of protecting survivors, this means that perpetrators, who are usually survivors themselves, have nowhere to turn to (Tyson, 2019, p. 180). One of the tasks I was assigned during my placement was the creation of a resource document which compiled information on service providers within the Edmonton area. Through this project, it was made abundantly clear that there are no explicit services equipped to handle the topic of prevention and intervention for youths presenting problematic sexual behavior. This highlights a severe gap in services for individuals exhibiting these behaviors. Oftentimes, these individuals recognize that their behavior is problematic and want to address it, or they have family members that notice their behaviors but there are no services to look to for help. In this paper, I will be highlighting the lack of and subsequent need for prevention and intervention services that take place before an act of sexual violence occurs.



Definitions

It is well known in the field of criminology that "early childhood victimization has demonstrable long-term consequences for delinquency, adult criminality, and violent criminal behavior" according to Cathy Spatz Widom's 1989 research, where she utilized the term "cycle of violence" in reference to sexual violence. She sought to answer the question of whether or not violence begets violence. Through her findings, she noted that "child abuse or neglect may not directly cause delinquency or violent criminal behavior" (Widom, 1989, p. 165). She further notes that "rather, these outcomes may be an indirect by-product of these early abusive experiences" (Widom, 1989, p. 165). Within the field, it is understood that this idea exists across all races, ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexualities and so on. However, we know that individuals from more marginalized backgrounds are at greater risk of being victimized and therefore are disproportionately represented in crime statistics (Conward, 2004, p. 36).

Sexual violence crimes are not separate from this, and "sexual violence against children remains a prominent predictor of a multigenerational cycle of sexual violence" (Tyson, 2019, p. 180). Though it is not a certainty that survivors of sexual abuse will go on to become perpetrators themselves, it is understood that there are "multigenerational dynamics of sexual assault, where children of childhood sexual abuse survivors are at higher risk of being abused and neglected themselves" (Tyson, 2019, p. 180). In line with this cycle of sexual violence, past research has shown that problematic sexual behavior is often, but not always, present in youth who have histories of sexual abuse (Allen, 2022; Bergeron et al., 2022, p. 5).

Problematic sexual behavior (PSB) has been defined as "children ages 12 and younger who initiate behaviors involving sexual body parts (i.e., genitals, anus, buttocks, or breasts) that are developmentally inappropriate or potentially harmful to themselves or others" (Chaffin et al., 2008, p. 200). The developmentally inappropriate prong of this definition relates to the frequency in which the individual engages in problematic behavior, as well as the specific kind of behaviors (Allen, 2022). The second prong, regarding potential harm to themself or others, relates to behaviors that "may be self-focused (e.g., inserting objects, masturbating to the point of injury) or involve another individual, whether the other party agreed to such behaviors or not" (Allen, 2022). I will be utilizing these definitions to illustrate the need for support for youth exhibiting PSB, by highlighting case studies and making recommendations to disrupt the cycle of sexual violence.

Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children

According to Friedrich et al., "Current theories emphasize that the origins and maintenance of childhood [PSB] include sexual abuse as well as familial, social, economic, and developmental factors" (Friedrich et al., 2001; Friedrich, Davies, Feher, & Wright, 2003). Contributing factors include maltreatment, substandard parenting practices, exposure to sexually explicit media, living in a highly sexualized environment, and exposure to family violence (Friedrich, Davies, Feher, & Wright, 2003 as quoted in Chaffin et al., 2008, p. 201). Levenson and Grady (2016, p. 95) further highlight how "abused and neglected children are socialized within relationships characterized by betrayal and invalidation, which can then produce distorted cognitive schema, boundary violations, disorganized attachment patterns, and emotional dysregulation." Moreover, they draw a connection between sexually abusive behaviors and early attachment disruptions, emphasizing that "attempts are made [by these individuals] to satisfy unmet emotional needs and to connect with others through sexual or aggressive means" (Levenson & Grady, 2016, p. 95).

Additionally, individuals who have experienced abuse are more likely to have insecure attachment styles which indicate intimacy deficits. This deficit has the potential to lead some to "attempt to connect with others through coercive, violent, or deviant sexual behavior" (Levenson & Grady, 2016, p. 95). These behaviors can be dangerous if not addressed, as research suggests that "a positive correlation between measures of insecure attachment and the number and severity of risk factors associated with criminal behavior, including sexual crimes" (Levenson & Grady, 2016, p. 95).

When analyzing PSB across categories, there are a few things that need to be understood. First, there is a general consensus that younger children, in comparison to older children, are more likely to present with PSB (Allen, 2022, p. 52). However, Allen (2022, p. 52) notes "that PSB is practically universally assessed by caregiver report and older children may be more adept at concealing PSB from caregivers." While gender, race, and ethnicity do not seem to directly influence PSB, "PSB may in some instances be related to factors endemic in lower socioeconomic strata (e.g., parental stress, less frequent supervision)" (Allen, 2022, p. 52). It is also known that "the rates of early trauma in poor, disadvantaged, clinical, and criminal populations are even higher" (Levenson & Grady, 2016, p. 94). Further, there is the added effect of "pathogenic parenting and deprivational environments" which can "impede family functioning and model maladaptive coping" and is "often exacerbated by impoverished socioeconomic conditions" (Levenson & Grady, 2016, p. 95). All of these factors can lend themselves to the development of PSB, making it so that individuals in lower socioeconomic classes have a disproportionately higher likelihood of exhibiting such behaviors.

Barriers to Accessing Services

While "early intervention with children who exhibit PSB is essential to ensure a positive development" (Bergeron et al., 2022, p. 11), there are a wide multitude of barriers to accessing services that provide safe and effective intervention. When youth present with PSB, there are often challenges to accessing proper services in order to address these behaviors. First, it must be noted that "problematic sexual behavior among preteen children is an understudied and poorly understood clinical phenomenon" (Allen, 2022, p. 61). Therefore, there are many service gaps that leave vulnerable individuals with no legitimate place to turn to when in need. Further, there are many "challenges at the individual, family, agency, service system, and policy levels" (Slemaker et al., 2021). Access to adequate services is critical for victims of child sexual abuse as well as youth who display PSB, in order to disrupt the cycle of sexual violence.

One of the key challenges to accessing care is that many survivors of child sexual abuse do not report or disclose their abuse, and some of these individuals "may not characterize their experiences as abusive" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 3). Furthermore, victims of child sexual abuse may choose not to formally report due to factors such as stigma, revictimization, emotional distress, "fear of not being believed or supported", concerns over offender retaliation, or fear of "negative repercussions for the offender" (Winters et al., 2020, p. 600). Therefore, these individuals are unable to "receive appropriate, trauma-informed services" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 3). Slemaker et al. (2021, p. 3) further highlights a number of other crucial instances related to environment, culture and family models which create challenges in providing adequate services.

> In some contexts, abusive sexual behaviors between youths may be perceived as a normal part of youth culture rather than something to be disclosed, reported, or challenged. Similarly, caregivers and institutional authorities may also be unable to accurately assess sexual behaviors to determine where they may fall on a continuum of healthy, typical, concerning, problematic, and harmful sexual activities in youth, thus repeatedly failing to recognize that abuse has occurred.

> Finally, [child sexual abuse] among siblings is often minimized or ignored by caregivers who want to protect the privacy of their family, keep their home intact, and/or shield their child with PSB from being placed in the criminal justice system. (Slemaker et al., 2021)

Aside from these challenges, there is also the fact that involvement in treatment facilities is completely voluntary, and due to the youth of the individuals, caregivers must first be convinced of their need for services (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 7). There are instances in which parents or guardians do not feel as though the victim is in need of services. When it comes to PSB within the family unit, often "caregivers [want] to minimize the victimization of one child in order to protect the child with PSB from being labeled a 'perpetrator,' which [leads] them to be unsupportive of treatment for either child" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 7).

At the system level there are also many challenges. Slemaker et al., (2021, p. 3) notes that "misconceptions and stigma have led to ignored, resisted, or underfunded public health efforts to ameliorate [child sexual abuse]." Additionally, policymakers often react emotionally when it comes to implementing legislations and public policy rather than accurately and impartially considering the evidence available to them (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 3). A policy concern that arises due to these challenges relates to "cases in which no agency was designated as responsible to respond to youth-initiated [child sexual abuse]" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5). Furthermore, even if these cases of abuse are reported, they often never end up being investigated because "law enforcement did not have mandated protocols for investigating reports of youths with PSB and their victim(s), which often led to PSB cases being ignored" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5). Additionally, there is a noted reluctance in law enforcement to investigate or intervene due to the age of the youths with PSB and their "being too young to be formally charged, which indirectly [leads] to the minimization of the needs of the victim" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5).

Due to these issues, if the child is not over 12 years old and formally charged with a criminal act, law enforcement is not generally involved. This creates a situation where no one system is involved. Moreover, this sets the precedent that youths presenting PSB need to formally interact with the criminal justice system before they can receive services to address their behavior. This does not allow space for any preventive measures and essentially deems individuals with PSB 'lost causes' who will inevitably fall into the criminal justice system and can be dealt with at that time. Beyond this, if child sexual abuse is reported and measures need to be taken accordingly, "multiple agencies may [become] involved with the family" and if this effort is "not well-coordinated, the multiagency response could result in an overwhelming and emotionally stressful situation that [hinders], rather than [helps], the family's healing" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 7). Preemptive intervention services that create space for these individuals to seek and receive the help they need before potentially having a criminal record and harming others is paramount, yet severely lacking.

Other issues arise out of policies of confidentiality which often "[restrict] the process of access to services by victims and their caregivers" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5). Slemaker et al. (2021) interviewed many stakeholders and highlighted that securing permission in order to "share information about the victims with the PSB treatment agencies was a significant challenge […] especially when the victim was not related to the youth with PSB" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5). These challenges also extend to receiving victim referrals because "other agencies (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice) were prevented from releasing victim information due to confidentiality laws" Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5).

Poor-interagency communication and collaboration also plays a role in impeding individuals from accessing services (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5). Some agencies have good relationships with law enforcement, but other agencies do not. Oftentimes, law enforcement is the first point of contact for individuals when they have been victimized. In the event that law enforcement agencies are not willing to refer to or collaborate with service providers, treatment for those individuals can never even begin without the victims explicitly seeking out said providers. Even communication between different community partners can be strained, as mustering the financial means to collaborate with other agencies is simply not feasible.

Additional issues at the organizational and societal levels make it increasingly difficult for individuals and families to "[access] or [receive] high-quality services" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 7). Even if people are able to find therapists or other services that can address their needs, there are additional barriers such as long waitlists, low financial means, unreliable transportation, and so on, which make it very difficult for victims and their caregivers to engage with these services (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 7). Financial barriers can also lead to increased "caregiver stress" which can "[impede] regular attendance at treatment" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 7).

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Beyond this, "in the event that victims could successfully get to the treatment facility, the services offered may not [be] enough to meet their needs" (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 7), due to the fact that not all treatment facilities are multifaceted and equipped for the specific cases that may arise.

Finally, there is a considerably low level of knowledge about youth with PSB (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 5). There is also a false belief that these children are 'mini adult sex offenders.' It is important to understand that youth with PSB "are no more a risk to the community than the community is to them" (Gomez, 2022). All the data shown on PSB depicts how "youth who sexually act out are as different from pedophiles as you are from a pedophile" and that "these are still, fundamentally, children" (Gomez, 2022). In his writing, Gomez (2022) describes the issue of homogeneity with a patient case study:

Here's what my patient did. He was watching TV with his sister, and he put his hand on her vagina, over her clothes and engaged in that activity for approximately 10 minutes according to his sister. Mom walked in and then immediately called child welfare who called the cops. He was 13. His sister was nine. She told us that she did not want her brother to go to jail, she just didn't want him to do that again. However, the court threw the book at him. This is a classic example of the homogeneity error; the court saw him as the same as every other sex offender. He was put on a registry and everything.

Parents, caregivers, and families have a limited understanding of sexualized behaviors, sexual health, and the development of children. Due to this, there is often a fear-based response, which leads parents and caregivers to be unwilling to come forward and ask for help, further leading them to taking extreme measures which can impact a youth's entire life. There is a "systemic failure to grasp the severity of youth-initiated [child sexual assault] or an avoidance of the issue altogether (Slemaker et al., 2021, p. 6). This cannot be the case if we want to ensure that survivors get the care they need, as well as the individuals with PSB. Gomez (2022) emphasizes that "a PSB is not a problematic SEXUAL behavior, it is a problematic sexual BEHAVIOR," highlighting that these individuals have treatable behavior problems and should not be denigrated to the same level as persistent violent sexual offenders.

Possible Solutions

To address barriers to accessing services and gaps within the service landscape, there must be non-punitive and judgment-free forms of intervention implemented in order to genuinely aid people seeking these services. Lee et al. (2007, p. 15) describe three different classifications of sexual violence prevention and intervention: primary prevention which occurs before sexual violence has taken place; secondary prevention which consists of immediate responses after sexual violence has occurred; and tertiary prevention embodied by long-term responses after sexual violence has occurred. Currently, research indicates "most anti-sexual violence efforts have been secondary and tertiary prevention" and in order "to address sexual violence prevention in a truly comprehensive manner, strategies to prevent its initial perpetration and victimization (primary prevention) must reach the same level of efficacy and adoption as programs that respond to its consequences" (Lee et al., 2007, p. 15).

Therefore, there must be policy implementation that promotes and centers primary prevention. This can look like the "implementation of education and activities [which change social norms], and other pieces of a comprehensive strategy against sexual violence among youth" (Lee et al., 2007, p. 19). These strategies require the backing of public policy makers as well as community members. It is critical to this work to maintain a trauma-informed lens and to understand that when clinics and other service providers are well funded and supported, trauma-informed support can help victims of child sexual abuse as well as individuals with PSB (Levenson & Grady, 2016, p. 100). Levenson and Grady (2016) argue that "we need to provide victims of all forms of child maltreatment with immediate and appropriate therapeutic services" and that we need "to intervene early with at-risk parents to help them develop skills that foster attachments and healthy family functioning" (p. 100).

Some of the most commonly recognized forms of sexual violence prevention work are education trainings and workshops (Lee et al., 2007, p. 16)., such as those I experienced and engaged in with the Saffron Centre. Attitudes that reinforce "societal norms supportive of sexual violence, male superiority, and male sexual entitlement" (Lee et al., 2007, p. 15) must be addressed as well as "how those attitudes interact with interpersonal influence, and the manner in which norms, policies, and institutions shape the environment in which it all occurs" (Lee et al., 2007, p. 16). Therefore, communities must invest in programs that are multifaceted, well-funded, and equipped with clearly outlined policies (Levenson & Grady, 2016, p. 100), as without "dedicated funding for primary prevention programs, there is little chance for sustained and progressive efforts to interrupt the cycle of sexual violence" (Lee et al., 2007, p. 19).

Conclusion

In this paper I attempt to bring attention to noticeable service gaps present for youth with problematic sexual behavior. Currently, service providers in Alberta, while crucial in helping adult victims of sexual abuse, lack the means and services to properly address sexual violence before it has the possibility of occurring. Addressing this issue in advance requires adequate services, which can intervene in the cycle of violence by providing resources and services for youth who have been sexually abused and individuals who have PSB. Primary prevention policies are necessary to address the current lack of services available to these individuals and their families. Public policy needs to make space for greater education and awareness, take steps to effectively facilitate coordination and collaboration between service agencies, and bridge the gap between existing barriers that prevent individuals and families from seeking aid.



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Artist: Peilin Wu

Recuperation and Cooptation in Undermining the BLM Movement Neutralizing the 2020 Black Lives Matter Protests

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ABSTRACT: The Black Lives Matter movement, originating in 2013 is "a Black-centered political will and movement building project" (Howard University School of Law, 2018). In the spring and summer of 2020, the BLM movement was reinvigorated by the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police officers, resulting in some of the biggest protests America had ever seen. In order to deal with these protests and the demands for radical systemic change while maintaining the status quo, American corporations, government bodies, and law enforcement agencies engaged in a number of tactics broadly belonging to the idea of recuperation, the idea that "capitalism [can] appropriate even the most radical ideas and return them safely in the form of harmless ideologies" (Vague, 2012). In this paper, I use the frame of recuperation and cooptation to analyze how the demands of the BLM movement were undermined and neutralized.

KEYWORDS: BLM, Black Lives Matter, Cooptation, Social Movements, Activism, Socio-economic Inequality

Introduction

In the 50s and 60s, "the [Situationist International] identified the threat of revolutionary tactics being absorbed and defused as reformist elements" (Kurczynski, 2008, p. 295). Further, they "pinpointed the increasingly evident problem of capitalist institutions subverting the terms of oppositional movements for their own uses" (p. 295). In this paper, I use the framework of recuperation and cooptation to analyze the lack of successes of the Black Lives Matter movement and the broader 2020 summer protests in achieving radical transformative goals. Black Lives Matter, "a Black-centered political will and movement building project" began in 2013 following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the murder of Trayvon Martin (Howard University School of Law, 2023). Throughout the 2010s, as cases of police brutality against Black people and white supremacist violence received more attention, the movement grew, placing increased attention on the historic and continued inequality of Black people in the United States and abroad. In May 2020, the movement was reinvigorated once more with the murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis, made public by bystanders turned civilian journalists armed with phone cameras. In following months, some of the biggest protests in American history took place largely under the banner of Black Lives Matter and connected calls to action such as defunding the police and an end to the prison industrial complex. While nation- and world-wide conversations were prompted because of these protests, major transformative change that reckoned with police brutality, the racism in the criminal justice and prison industrial complex systems, and socio-economic inequality in America was avoided through methods of reframing, rebranding, and strategic cooperation by the media, corporations, and governments. These methods are not a new phenomenon and have been organized under the ideas of recuperation and cooptation.

Definitions

In 1967, leading figure of the international, Paris-based radical artist group Situationist International, Guy Debord, wrote The Society of the Spectacle. An understanding that we live in a society of the spectacle is crucial as "the spectacle actively alters human interactions and relationships" (Morgan & Purje, 2016, par. 7), influencing the ways in which we view and communicate with each other, especially in the context of those who seek to upset the status quo.
Further, to make sense of Debord's idea of recuperation, it is necessary to understand that recuperation is the means by which the spectacle is reinforced and maintained. In his influential book, Debord (2012) explains the spectacle as "both the result and the project of the existing mode of production" (thesis 6), "world vision which has become objectified" (thesis 5), as "not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (thesis 4) and "[in] all its specific forms, as information or propaganda, as advertisement or direct entertainment consumption, […] the present model of socially dominant life" (thesis 6). Dr. Eric-John Russell analyzes Debord's philosophizing of the spectacle as "a social separation of human beings from each other, from their own alienated activity, and from their own sense of historical experience" (2021, par. 8). Simplified, Debord defines the spectacle as "[the] moment when the commodity has achieved the total occupation of life" (as quoted in Vague, 2012, p. 7). According to Debord, largely through mass communication technology and systems, "capitalism [controls] the very conditions of existence" and thus, "the world we see is not the real world but the world we are conditioned to see: The Society of the Spectacle" (Vague, 2012, p. 7). This brief summary of the politico-philosophical idea of the spectacle is necessary to understand the frame that I utilize in this paper, the Situationist International idea of recuperation.

In the socio-political context, recuperation is the idea that "capitalism [can] appropriate even the most radical ideas and return them safely in the form of harmless ideologies" (Vague, 2012, p. 7). Sam Cooper (2012) further explains the effects of recuperation in terms of the spectacle:

> [Recuperation is] the process through which the spectacle can hollow-out any gesture of resistance, re-represent it, and divest it of its radical content. The recuperated gesture can then circulate harmlessly in the spectacle to placate or distract any would-be antagonists. The spectacle thrives through reducing real opposition to the image of opposition, repackaged as an exchangeable commodity. (p. 27)

Jan D. Matthews defines recuperation as simply "the channeling of social revolt in a way that perpetuates capitalism" (2005).

Cooptation, a more common term in today's socio-political language, is a form of recuperation. Cooptation refers to "the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy- determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence" (Selznick, 1949/66, as quoted in Birn et al., 2016, p. 735).
Further, cooptation can take the form of a surface level cooptation of language or a deeper ill-willed cooperation or compromising. The cooptation of language consists of the group attempting to neutralize opposition using the same language as said opposition to refer to 'toned down' or completely different ideas in order to "[elicit] support from many audiences who are unaware that progressive agendas might have been taken over and distorted" (Armada et al., 2001 as cited in Birn et al., 2016, p. 753.) The latter form of cooptation consists of adopting certain, intact or distorted, portions of radical opposition demands or demands from less radical sectors of the opposition in order to "absorb those who seek change – to make them work with elites without giving them any new advantages," thus pushing "those who seek change [to] alter their positions when working with elites," making "the challengers become politically irrelevant" (Holdo, 2019, p. 444).

Corporations: Cooptation as 'Benevolent Racism'

As the BLM movement once again took off across the United States in the spring and summer of 2020, corporations launched social media posts, ad campaigns, and open letters to claim that they supported the fight against racial inequality and systemic racism.
While corporations made seemingly grand gestures in the way of brand activism such as making Juneteenth a corporate holiday, diversifying boards, and pausing promotion of products that fetishized law enforcement, many of these same corporations continued practices, policies, and funding that directly promoted systemic racism (Duarte, 2020; Jan et al., 2020).
Luigi Esposito and Victor Romano describe how this act of "co-opting many of the race conscious demands of [the Black Lives Matter movement]" embodies what they call 'benevolent racism' (2016, p. 3). Esposito and Romano describe benevolent racism as doing three things: advocating for accommodations for racially oppressed groups, as opposed to calling for transformative and systemic change; framing racist practices as unfortunate but necessary steps on the road to a better future for Black people and for society; and arguing against policies meant to address systemic racism by labelling them "as not only 'unfair' or 'unjustified' […], but also counterproductive and ultimately detrimental to Blacks" (2014, p. 70).

I argue that the cooptation of Black Lives Matter's demands and rhetoric undermines the original movement by simultaneously redefining what meeting those demands looks like as well as taking attention away from grassroots organizers and movement leaders.
By claiming to have met movement demands while making minimal, surface level, and often symbolic gestures, companies are able to capitalize on the wide social support of the movement without taking any of the risk that 'on the ground' protestors and leaders took.
Further, when companies are able to associate themselves with a social movement without making structural changes, they undermine the legitimacy of the movement and the radical nature of its demands by making them appear easily attainable and harmonious with capitalist corporate structures. In this same motion, corporate attachment to social movements inherently recuperates, deradicalizes, and capitalizes on the social movement as corporate backing symbolizes the backing of the very structures that the social movement originally fought against.

Political Leaders: Cooperation and Symbolism

Politicians often participate both in the cooptation of social movement language as well as cooptation through ill willed cooperation. These two types of cooptation often go hand in hand as politicians meet with movement leaders, publicly utilize words and actions associated with the movement in an attempt to portray solidarity, and make meaningless symbolic changes with little follow through on more transformative demands.
Further, politicians are notorious for unveiling seemingly monumental projects in support of social movements which, in the end, offer little more than symbolism that is quickly forgotten, yet offers a flurry of headlines attaching the politician's name to the movement.
Countless examples of this type of empty symbolism were witnessed during the height of the Black Lives Matter

movement in 2020. One of the most famous examples is that of Democratic Party leaders taking a knee while wearing Kente clothing from Ghana in front of cameras (Paquette, 2020). While moves like this attached Democratic politicians to the image of Black Lives Matter, across the US the party acted in opposition to demands from the movement, strongly opposing the idea of defunding the police and, in fact, supporting increased funding measures as well as openly fighting for hard-on-crime policies (Seitz-Wald, 2022).

In the same vein as corporate backing of a social movement, support from politicians immediately enacts the process of recuperation as the social movement struggles to be seen as fighting against the system that is seemingly supporting it. Furthermore, symbolic support such as renaming streets and taking a knee in front of the media offers the movement little more than a feeling of dehumanization and delegitimization as political leaders receive media attention and headlines while front line protestors struggle to make their messages heard.

Law Enforcement: This Time, Reform Will Work

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd as a result of police brutality targeting Black people as well as many similar incidents, police departments came under enormous pressure from the public. One of the main strategies for police departments to counter this pressure was the cooptation of language. While much of the Black Lives Matter movement called for defunding of the police, less radical participants called for reformation of policies and training. In order to appear sympathetic to the movement's demands, police departments nationwide engaged in the rhetoric of reformation.
This strategy successfully kept police departments functioning essentially the same and even garnered increased budgets for new training, in direct opposition to many Black Lives Matter organizers and leaders (Department of Justice, 2022). By using this cooptation of the less radical language from the Black Lives Matter movement, police departments were able to appear to be bending to the demands of the movement while maintaining budgets. In other words,
police departments successfully recuperated the Black Lives Matter movement into a reformist movement, requiring little change from law enforcement.

Conclusion

This paper is extremely limited in scope as it does not even begin to cover the number of institutions which engage in the process of recuperation and cooptation, and did so, in order to undermine the Black Lives Matter movement throughout 2020. Analyzing how institutions take radical movements and ideas and regurgitate them as harmless ideals, which can be capitalized on, is crucial to understanding why so many social movements fail under our current socio-economic system. I argue that Debord's theory of recuperation, as well as the current language of cooptation, is a key factor to this understanding.
Through cooptation of language, the usage of symbolism as low stakes solidarity, and ill willed cooperation, major institutions such as corporations, political parties, and law enforcement engage in recuperating and, thus, undermining 'social revolt' (Matthews, 2005). In the case of the Black Lives Matter movement, these practices meant the deradicalization and undermining of demands and rhetoric aimed at uprooting systemic racism and racial inequality.



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CHEVROLET



Photographer: Henry Deng

Rooted Constitution:

A look into the Living Tree Doctrine and Indigenous Rights

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Discipline: Political Science

ABSTRACT: The living tree doctrine is a landmark amendment that transformed how the constitution was understood. However, it is often not used to its fullest extent in Indigenous rights cases. This paper explores how the underutilization of the living tree doctrine in Indigenous cases has been impacted by Canada's settler state mentality. This essay argues that the dismissal of the living tree doctrine in Indigenous rights cases has restricted Indigenous self-governance and that this is purposely done by the Canadian state to maintain oppressive colonial power relations. The paper will first explain the reasoning behind not employing the living tree doctrine in Indigenous rights cases and how it is rooted in maintaining colonial power relationships. It will also explore why and how the doctrine can help promote Indigenous rights.

KEYWORDS: Indigenous Politics, Indigenous Sovereignty, Indigenous Self-governance, Canadian Settler State, Colonial Power & Politics, Supreme Court of Canada, Living Tree Doctrine

The living tree doctrine was originally created by Lord Sankey regarding the Persons Case and was a landmark amendment that promoted the right of judges to participate in judicial activism (McLachlin, 2001: 65). The Persons Case laid the precedent that judges could interpret the constitution to fit the social climate. Originally only men were legally understood as Persons; however, by interpreting the law to include women, the judges not only altered the patriarchal underpinnings of the constitution but became a catalyst for using courts to promote social change (McLachlin, 2001: 65). The living tree doctrine uses the metaphor of a "living tree" to symbolize the Canadian constitution's ability to be flexible and to evolve with time (Cloutier, 2019: 467). The doctrine has been used to promote women's rights and the rights of LGBTQ individuals; however, it has been ignored in cases involving Indigenous peoples and their rights (Borrows, 2017). This essay will explore these ideas while asking the question: how has the underutilization of the living tree doctrine in Indigenous cases been impacted by Canada's settler state mentality? This essay argues that the dismissal of the living tree doctrine in Indigenous rights cases has restricted Indigenous self-governance and the Canadian state purposefully does this to maintain oppressive colonial power relations. This paper will first explain the reasoning behind not employing the living tree doctrine in Indigenous rights cases and how it is rooted in maintaining colonial power structures. I will then explore why and how the doctrine can help promote Indigenous rights.

Canada's Supreme Court often chooses to utilize originalism instead of the living tree doctrine in cases regarding Indigenous rights. Originalism is a philosophy in which judges must follow the original meaning behind a law based on its historical understanding, thus limiting constitutional interpretation (Borrows, 2016). John Borrows (2016) explains that this philosophy is used in Indigenous rights cases because:

> The Supreme Court… judges Indigenous peoples by reference to a mythically questionable past. Their cases measure the constitutionality of Indigenous peoples' rights by attributing public meaning to events that are regarded as being foundational to constitutional relations between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown at some dubious historical point. (130)

Therefore, Indigenous rights are limited in that the Supreme Court does not allow them to evolve beyond the point at which the colonial state first made legal relationships with Indigenous peoples. This suggests the Canadian state is trying to maintain an unjust relationship where Indigenous peoples are legally oppressed. When the living tree doctrine originally came into play, Lord Sankey stated that the constitution of Canada is "...a living tree capable of growth and expansion within its natural limits" (McLachlin, 2001: 65). As Canada is a settler state built on the suppression of Indigenous sovereignty, constitutional cases regarding Indigenous rights to self-determination can thus be seen as a natural limit. Borrows (2017) explains that originalism is used to limit Indigenous self-governance in that it limits Indigenous peoples' "decision-making authority" (121) about "rights like hunting, fishing, trading, education, economic development, caring for their children, providing for their health, and general welfare" (130). Limiting Indigenous sovereignty is purposely done because fostering Indigenous sovereignty "fundamentally interrupts and casts into question the story that settler states tell about themselves" (Simpson, 2014: 177). This is a story rooted in the assumption that the settler state is new and free of the guilt of colonization, dispossession, and violence against Indigenous groups (25). Simpson (2014) states that Canada "define[s] itself as a revolutionary (postcolonial) and simultaneously immigrant state" (25), and this identity would not be viable if Indigenous sovereignty was recognized. Hence, originalism is used in Indigenous rights cases because it not only maintains the settler-colonial relationship where Indigenous people are legally oppressed but also limits Indigenous sovereignty to maintain Canada's national and international image.

However, the living tree doctrine can and should branch out to include Indigenous rights. As Borrows (2017) argues, the living tree doctrine is the dominant practice in Canada regarding constitutional interpretation, and thus, it should also be used in cases regarding Indigenous rights (124). This is because this approach allows modern constitutional interpretations to take place, all while engaging with the history of the constitution. The metaphor of the living tree is constructed on the idea of evolution, but evolution that is limited by its inception as "trees, after all, are rooted" (Jackson, as cited



in Cloutier, 2019: 469). Therefore, though Indigenous treaty rights do not fit with modern liberal enlightenment ideals (an argument originalists often use), they still should be assessed under the dominant constitutional framework that permits growth. Practicing originalism does not allow that (Borrows, 2016: 144).
Borrows (2017) explains that "while history is relevant in deploying 'living tree' reasoning, historical understandings are thought to be a 'floor' for interpretation rather than a 'ceiling' for understanding rights" (125). Originalists should understand that the living tree doctrine does not disregard the histories behind certain rights and laws but instead keeps them in mind while also allowing for growth. It is important to understand Indigenous rights beyond a solely historical framework based on colonial relationships. Borrows (2017) argues that it would be significantly more valuable to see Indigenous rights within the framework of human rights. Just like how the Charter of Rights and Freedoms advanced human rights like the rights to religion, life, and equality, Indigenous rights should also be given the opportunity to evolve as human rights without being fully historically dependent (115). By pushing for Indigenous rights to stay historically entrenched, the Supreme Court asserts that Indigenous peoples are not allowed to evolve their practices and traditions as other groups do. Extending the living tree approach can, therefore, make Canada more inclusive towards Indigenous groups and represent the modern social climate around Indigenous rights while also keeping in mind the constitutional history that precedes them. It would be a step forward in eliminating the legal subjugation that Indigenous peoples experience.

In conclusion, the living tree doctrine has the ability to become an important tool in promoting Indigenous sovereignty and rights. However, currently, it is unutilized as the Canadian Supreme Court chooses instead to employ originalism in constitutional cases regarding Indigenous rights. The Supreme Court does this to limit Indigenous self-governance by holding Indigenous rights to the standards set to when Europeans first met the Indigenous peoples in Canada. The living tree doctrine allows judges to take into account the social climate of the time and evolve the constitution to match it while still considering the history of these laws. Though the living tree doctrine can be an immensely useful tool in Indigenous rights cases, it is important to acknowledge that it is still a part of a settler constitution and may have detrimental effects on Indigenous communities as well. The limitations of the living tree doctrine in regard to Indigenous cases can thus be researched further.

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Artist: Hannah Mehling

Indigenous-Led Environmental Action:

A Relational and Reciprocal Means for Environmental Protection and Indigenous Liberation

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Discipline: Political Science

ABSTRACT: Environmental harm and environmental violence affect everyone, however, climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately affect Indigenous communities. More specifically, Indigenous women face the worst neglect and harm from environmental damage. To adequately address these harms, it is necessary to support Indigenous-led climate activism and community-based organizations and to platform for those who are affected most deeply. Structural violence did not end at colonialism and this paper explores the ways in which environmental violence and degradation represent an ongoing form and result of colonial and capitalist practices. This paper also explores how damage to the land results in damage to the people who rely on it. Environmental violence represents a manifestation of intersecting modes of oppression like colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, racism, and sexism; intersectional social movements are therefore necessary to adequately work against these intersecting oppressions.

KEYWORDS: Environmental Violence, Indigenous Activism, Colonial Violence, Environmental Justice, Intersectionality, Community-based Organization

Harm to the environment causes harm to the people. Everyone is affected by climate change and resource extraction; however, the impacts of environmental harm are most severe for Indigenous peoples due to their connection and relationship to land and water and "the proximity of their communities to resource developments" (Galloway 2021, 6). Beyond the disproportionate impact resource extraction has on Indigenous peoples, there is further undue impact on Indigenous women (Dennis and Bell 2020, 378). This is because of their multiple marginalized identities and experience of intersecting modes of oppression (Bacigal 2020). Since intersecting identities "such as gender, race, and class influence how people are uniquely situated in these struggles" (Harper et al. 2018, 190), it is necessary to center environmental justice around how these oppressed peoples experience and fight against environmental violence.

Environmental violence reflects an ongoing form of structural colonial violence against Indigenous peoples. With settler colonialism comes an "exploitation of the land" and "for settlers to usurp the land and extract its value, Indigenous peoples must be destroyed" (Spillett 2021, 13). As Bacigal puts it, "what happens to the land happens to the people," thus, the destruction and "degradation of the land is viewed as 'normal'" to ensure the economic prosperity of the settler state (2020); this, in turn, positions the destruction of Indigenous bodies and communities as an "'acceptable risk' – a necessary sacrifice" (Bacigal 2020). This system of destructive resource extraction and environmental violence thus "seeks to eliminate" Indigenous peoples to access "the lands and waters" (Bacigal 2020). Indigenous women have historically been protectors of "their families, communities, and lands," and the intersecting violence against them has been a primary mode of disconnection between Indigenous peoples as communities, and Indigenous peoples and the land (Dennis and Bell 2020, 383). The "current environmental crises" illustrate Indigenous women's vulnerability due to their intersecting "[marginalized] identities, but also Indigenous women's leadership in resisting resource extraction and environmental degradation on their lands, as they have always done" (Dennis and Bell 2020, 378).

Environmental degradation and exploitation (and climate change as a consequence) affect everyone, however, environmental benefits and burdens are not distributed equally across society (Galloway 2021, 5). Hazardous waste facilities (Tsuji 2021, 1) and industrial developments "assimilate [...] Indigenous homelands into the colonial landscape through development," and thus, "the colonizers are also assimilating the Indigenous people through environmental assimilation" (2). Indigenous women hold special "reciprocal relationships" with the land and the non-human world (Dennis and Bell 2020, 378). These reciprocal relationships and Indigenous women's roles in society have been hindered by environmental violence and assimilation (Dennis and Bell 2020, 379). Traditional Indigenous cultural practices like "berry picking, collection of sweat rocks, and harvesting medicines" are not being conducted "because of fear of exposure to contaminants," and so environmental degradation also "robs communities of intergenerational knowledge transmission" (Dennis and Bell 2020, 380).

There are evident connections "between the health and safety of the lands and the health and safety of Indigenous bodies" (Bacigal 2020). Cancers and illnesses that manifest from exposure to bioaccumulating environmental toxins can also produce congenital disorders and infertility (Bacigal 2020). However, unfortunately, and ironically, "Indigenous Peoples are among those least responsible for environmental degradation but are most often subjected to its fallout" (Bacigal 2020). "Indigenous trans, genderqueer, and Two-Spirit people, women, and girls are even more deeply affected by environmental violence" (Bacigal 2020). They have also traditionally had a more "intimate connection to the lands and waters," and often were responsible for carrying out the next generation (Bacigal 2020). If the land is destroyed, the people living off of and with that land are destroyed; this fuels the colonial and capitalist goal of eliminating Indigenous peoples and their cultural practices for easier access to the land they want to exploit (Bacigal 2020).

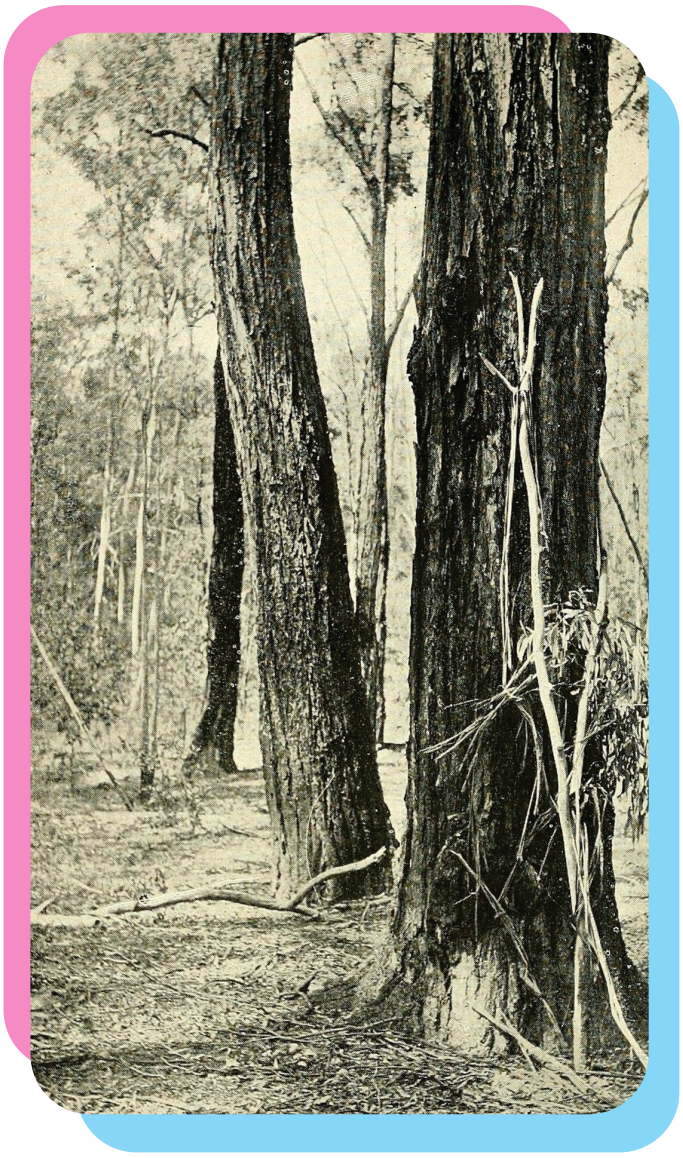
Since Indigenous peoples, especially Indigenous women, are most affected by environmental violence, it is essential to embody practices they value in our effort for environmental justice. Framing "and responding to violence" in a "relational and structural, holistic, sustainable, and locally owned" (Nagy 2022, 192) manner reflects a kind of "'bottom-up' pressure for transformation at the level of the state and institutions" (199). These "'bottom-up' civil society initiatives" (Nagy 2022, 195) oppose "top-down, western liberal approaches" (192) that do not reflect relational, reciprocal, and inclusionary practices that are so central to Indigenous peoples' ways of life. In this way, environmental justice accounts for "the sharing [...] of environmental costs and benefits" that are associated with "environmental policy and natural resource development decisions, and the extent to which the decision-making has meaningfully included the participation of affected communities" (Tsuji 2021, 1). Furthermore, Indigenous women-led bottom-up approaches to environmental justice emphasize "the interconnectedness of people and their environments" and the limitations of the top-down approach, which reinforces a false idea of a division between humans and the ecosystems they depend on (Tsuji 2021, 1). To maintain healthy, reciprocal relationships between humans and the non-human world, we need to follow Indigenous "laws and codes of conduct" (Tsuji 2021, 2).

Indigenous women engaging in this bottom-up approach as leaders, teachers, and "transmitters of culture" (Harper et al. 2018, 195) can provide a framework for how we can and should engage with environmental justice. Indigenous women are most impacted by environmental violence and are also especially "mindful of respect and caring for the lands and waters" that provide for the "continued well-being of their communities" (Dennis and Bell 2020, 379); moreover, with new kinds of "environmental injustices," their ability to engage with their roles as teachers and careers for the environment is threatened (Dennis and Bell 2020, 379). Both "women and nature are othered, exploited, and dominated," and so a kind of bottom-up ecofeminism reinforces that "no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature" (Spillett 2021, 18). This also represents an essential feature of land-based learning and knowledge that seeks to "interrupt the ways the Western gender binary, heteropatriarchy, and heteronormativity have operated as tools of colonial projects, fracturing relationships between humans and Land, and resulting in the erasure of land-based knowledge" (Spillett 2021, 24). Both Western top-down approaches to environmentalism and wrongful Western conceptualizations of a disconnect between humans and ecology perpetuate the idea that the land is "something to dominate" (Spillett 2021, 24). Bottom-up, community-based, and Indigenous women-led forms of environmentalism and resistance is also simultaneously "anti-capitalist and anti-imperial" and demands the "respect and protection" of "women's bodies, but also of land, water, mother earth, culture, and community" (Bacigal 2020). Approaches to environmental justice and protection have to embody Indigenous peoples' recognition of a relational exchange and set of reciprocal responsibilities to nature.

The Indigenous Environmental Network and Oil Change International collaborated in publishing a report called "Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon" (IRAC) that highlights the ways in which - and outcomes of - Indigenous peoples and their grassroots movements protecting and defending the environment (2021). These actions are bottom-up community-organized forms of action that "fight against neoliberal projects that seek to destroy our world via extraction" (IRAC 2021, 1). Environmental protection and liberation are cornerstones of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination interests and are "guided in principle by traditional Indigenous knowledge" (IRAC 2021, 2). "[These] principles determine how Indigenous Peoples act and relate to surrounding ecosystems and to other human beings, on a personal level and a collective nation-to-nation level" (IRAC 2021, 2). Fossil fuel extraction (and other kinds of resource extraction) directly harm "traditional Indigenous knowledge by seeking to untether spiritual ways, languages, cultural practices, legal systems, and social, economic, and legal systems from relationship with those lands and water" (IRAC 2021, 2). Indigenous women-led resistance movements are "effectively stopping or slowing local environmental destruction that threatens our whole planet" (Ramdas and Garcia 2021). There exists a "gross underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles at international and environmental organizations" and so transformative change has been made - and should continue to be made - through decolonial, community-led, bottom-up advocacy (Ramdas and Garcia 2021).

Engaging in Indigenous-led bottom-up modes of environmental protection and advocacy reflects a "move away from state-centered processes and discourse while also foregrounding structural injustices and the agency of marginalised groups" (Nagy 2022, 208). Bottom-up Indigenous "decolonial transformative justice incorporates grassroots acts of Indigenous resurgence and self-determination as well as the local unsettling of colonial relations through settler decolonisation and allyship" (Nagy 2022, 208). Centering Indigeneity in environmentalist action and discourses is necessary and "addresses the current needs of Indigenous peoples, follows the environmental leadership of Indigenous women, and actively supports Indigenous sovereignty as essential to climate justice" (Dennis and Bell 2020, 383). While environmental degradation and destruction (and consequently climate change) affects everyone, "Indigenous peoples, and women in particular, are affected disproportionately" (Dennis and Bell 2020, 383); gender-based environmental violence furthers colonial, patriarchal, capitalist, and imperialist goals and perpetuates the domination and subjugation of Indigenous peoples (Bacigal 2020). To adequately combat these structures of domination, it is imperative that we look toand engage with bottom-up, community-based, Indigenous-led forms of resistance. Even beyond this, we must engage with Indigenous-led forms of resistance that account for the unique ways environmental degradation affects Indigenous women and other gender minorities.

Western, institutional, top-down approaches are inadequate and advance a belief that the land can be "owned, controlled, and sold," which opposes Indigenous "responsibility-based [relationships]" that emphasize the relational and reciprocal care "for the land, sea, and the creatures within, respecting and nurturing the land as a living entity" (Williams 2021). Bottom-up approaches to environmentalism like those by Indigenous peoples "disrupt the goals of the world's most powerful institutions — nation-states and multinational corporations" (IRAC 2021, 2). Movements "built upon an Indigenous Rights framework" also go beyond "the goals of environmental protection" and decolonize environmental action (IRAC 2021, 2). To adequately combat environmental violence that is often gendered, capitalist, colonial, patriarchal, and imperialist, we must employ bottom-up Indigenous-led modes of environmental action; this ensures the representation of reciprocal and relational Indigenous values and knowledge while also guaranteeing the prioritization and valuing of Indigenous cultural and traditional practices. Decolonized Indigenous environmental action that comes from the community reinforces these traditional values, which ensure the longevity of Indigenous knowledge, the protection of the environment, the protection of Indigenous communities, the protection of Indigenous gender minorities, and ultimately the protection of us all.



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Photographer: Henry Deng

Trans-Ukrainians and the Need for LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in National and International Refugee Policies

Author: Annie Wachowich
Discipline: Political Science

ABSTRACT: Over 7 million Ukrainians have become refugees since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As a result, countries around the world have opened their doors and invited Ukrainians to seek refuge from the ongoing conflict. However, not all Ukrainians have experienced this conflict equally, with queer and transgender Ukrainians facing increased risks of gender-based violence, discrimination, and difficulties crossing borders due to inaccurate gender markers on their identification. This policy brief focuses on the unique challenges LGBTQIA+ Ukrainians have faced while fleeing the conflict. I provide an analysis of the persistent exclusion of LGBTQIA+ people within sexual and gender-based violence policies and refugee policies (like the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and Feminist Foreign Policy initiatives) due to marginalization and systemic discrimination. This paper argues that the Government of Canada can address this issue, not just for Ukrainian refugees but for all refugees, by implementing LGBTQIA+ inclusive policies to address the gaps in Canada's current system. It should be noted, this policy brief examines the conflict from February 2022 to April 2022. Given that this is an ongoing conflict, some statistics may have changed, however, the lack of support of LGBTQIA+ refugees in national and international refugee policy remains a pressing issue.

KEYWORDS: Refugees, Conflict, War in Ukraine, Gender Peace and Security, Canada, Ukraine, LGBTQIA Inclusion, Transgender

Executive Summary

Conflict, and the process of seeking refuge from violence, are specifically challenging for queer and transgender (trans) people. As a result, this policy brief examines the problems queer and transgender Ukrainians have faced while trying to escape the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The choice to include this case study is due to the breadth of information surrounding the war in Ukraine and to demonstrate the urgency for trans-inclusive policies. It does not support the problematic (although troublingly present) notion that Ukrainians are more worthy of protection in comparison to other refugees. All around the world, LGBTQIA+ refugees face intersectional oppression and unique problems when fleeing violence and resettling in new countries. Therefore, this brief should be read as an indication of the heteronormativity that has made queer and trans refugees' needs and vulnerabilities invisible during conflicts. The war in Ukraine serves as a timely case study to support the argument that LGBTQIA+ inclusive refugee policy is vital and needed. As a result, the brief recommends that the Government of Canada set up an LGBTQIA+ refugee policy advisory board that includes and centers LGBTQIA+ refugees and their lived experiences. The brief also suggests the Government of Canada provide immediate monetary support to the LGBTQIA+ non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helping queer and trans Ukrainians.

Statement of the Issue

War and conflict are understood to increase Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)against women and children. As well, queer and trans people are incredibly vulnerable to violence during periods of conflict, but these forms of vulnerability and insecurity have often gone unnoticed (Hagen, 2016). After Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, countries opened their doors to Ukrainians fleeing violence; however, racialized people and transgender and non-binary Ukrainians have struggled to leave the country and faced violence in the process (Factora, 2022). The Ukrainian government implemented Martial Law on February 24, 2022, barring men between the ages of 18-60 from leaving the country. For transgender and non-binary people, this move has caused significant problems (Tondo, 2022). Trans-women who do not have accurate identification and updated gender markers on their IDs have been forced to stay and fight in the war, as have some trans-women with female IDs (Tondo, 2022). As well, many trans-men are waiting to receive exemptions so they can leave the country (Tondo, 2022). The increased sexual and gender-based violence war brings, and Russia's notoriously harsh stance on people who are LGBTQIA+, have made leaving Ukraine a necessity for many LGBTQIA+ individuals (Factora, 2022). A study done by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association in 2021, ranked 49 countries in Europe on their acceptance of LGBTQ people: Ukraine ranked 39th, Poland ranked 43rd, and Russia ranked 46th (Rainbow Europe, 2021). As of April 9th, 2022, Poland has accepted the highest number of the 4.5 million Ukrainians who have fled (UNHCR, 2022). Given its low ranking and the LGBTQ free zones in the country, Poland should not be considered a safe space for queer and trans refugees.

Refugees are not a monolithic group. The war in Ukraine and subsequent treatment of queer and trans Ukrainian refugees is a clear example of this. As a result, there is a dire need for an intersectional approach to refugee policy that acknowledges the conditions and unique sets of challenges queer and trans refugees face. Not just for Ukraine, but for LGBTQIA+ refugees around the world.

Defining Intersectional Refugee Policy

An intersectional approach to refugee policy accounts for the ways the same conflict is experienced differently depending on a person's identity categories. It acknowledges the unique types of support people who experience intersectional forms of oppression need as they seek refuge, and requires direct actions to be taken that address the systemic exclusion of marginalized people from refugee policies due to discrimination and biases.

Overview of the Issues LGBTQIA+ People Fleeing Ukraine are Facing:

Systemic Barriers:

- Many trans Ukrainians have inaccurate IDs, as changing identification to align with gender identity is a complicated process due to anti-LGBTQIA+ policies in Ukraine (Lach-Aidelbaum, 2022).
- There are reports of invasive strip searches and questioning by Ukrainian border officials (Tondo, 2022). In these searches, if the officials decide they are "men" regardless of their identity or the gender marker on their ID, they will not be permitted to leave the country (Tondo, 2022).
- Refugees face unsafe resettlement and housing plans due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of LGBTQIA+ refugees (Rumbach & Knight, 2014).
- Visa applications for resettlement require accurate identification information. As mentioned, accurate IDs are a rarity for transgender people in Ukraine (Lach-Aidelbaum, 2022).

Anti-LGBTQIA+ Violence:

- Trans people experience an increased risk of violence, given the SGBV that occurs during war and the anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiments already present in Ukraine (UNHCR, 2021).
- Borders are violent spaces of bodily surveillance for transgender people (Rumbach & Knight, 2014). As well, the trips to borders can be harrowing journeys due to anti-LGBTQIA+ violence (Tondo, 2022).
- Fleeing conflict does not guarantee safety due to the marginalization LGBTQIA+ refugees face and the anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiments in the countries they seek refuge.

Isolation:

- LGBTQIA+ refugees often do not find acceptance within the broader refugee community. Upon arrival in new countries, queer and trans refugees have to rebuild their support networks (Rosenburg, 2015).
- During resettlement if service providers are unaware of safe housing options or community support, LGBTQIA+ refugees can become further isolated, or be put in vulnerable situations (Rumbach & Knight, 2014).
- LGBTQIA+ community organizations on the ground strive to ensure the safety and security of queer and trans refugees (OutRight Action International [ORAI], 2022). These groups have a wealth of resources and LGBTQIA+ specific knowledge; however, this is not their typical work (Factora, 2022). They need adequate support to facilitate these services.

Medical Needs:

- Many transgender people take hormone therapy. Transgender refugees need trans-informed healthcare access upon arrival to new countries. This is difficult if the country has strong anti-LGBTQIA+ beliefs.
- HIV-positive people need specific medication urgently.

Background

The rights of LGBTQIA+ refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants have been an afterthought within domestic and international refugee policy. While some countries have made strides towards inclusion as a result of the activism, calls to action, and critiques from activists, LGBTQIA+ refugees still face systemic barriers to their safety and security when seeking refuge (Hagen, 2019; Rumbach & Knight, 2014). In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, marking a shift towards recognizing the SGBV and vulnerabilities women and children face in conflict (ORAI, 2020). The WPS agenda offered a gendered approach to understanding violence that challenged patriarchal ideas about security, but this agenda did not address heteronormative notions of security (Hagen, 2016). As a result, this excluded many people who experience vulnerability and marginalization due to their gender and sexuality; but are not cisgender women (Davis & Stren, 2019). While there has been subsequent work to include LGBTQIA+ people within the WPS framework, it is imperative to continue to evaluate how

LGBTQIA+ people experience conflict and what intersectional gendered approaches to conflicts should be (Hagen, 2016; Trithart, 2020). This requires acknowledging the needs and vulnerabilities of queer and trans people; so LGBTQIA+ rights do not continue to be ignored, as they have been in many conflicts, including most recently in Ukraine.

Seven countries, including Canada, have adopted Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) initiatives since the passing of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This signifies their commitment to protecting women and children in conflict and their understanding that security includes freedom from SGBV (Moaveni & Nagarajan, 2022). Canada has also created more inclusive LGBTQIA+ practices for refugees and asylum seekers through the implementation of Guideline 9 for the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada in 2017 and the government funding for the Rainbow Refugee Society in 2019 (Global Affairs Canada, n.d.; LGBTQ2 Refugees, 2019). Despite these efforts, there are some issues with Canada's approach: the concentration of funding in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver for LGBTQIA+ refugees but a lack of funding elsewhere, persisting discrimination upon arrival to Canada, and a lack of adequate LGBTQIA+ refugee specific services (Lee et al., 2021; Mulé, 2020). Gaps persist within the Canadian system and the international context, which cause further harm to people who have experienced trauma, violence, marginalization, and emotional and physical abuse (Lee, et al., 2021; Mulé, 2020).

While the WPS agenda and FFP mark governmental and international commitments to protecting women and children in conflict, there are shortcomings with this protection. In the Ukrainian context, there has been a lack of intergovernmental attention and action on the violence women, children, queer, and trans people have faced in Ukraine (Moaveni & Nagarajan, 2022). Ultimately, this shows that WPS and FFP initiatives repeatedly take a backseat to militarisation and defense strategies during conflicts (Moaveni & Nagarajan, 2022). LGBTQIA+ livelihoods have existed on the margins of domestic and foreign policy surrounding refugee rights for too long. Every conflict that forces queer and trans people to leave their homes and cross borders without comprehensive policy is a direct failure linked to the systemic discrimination and heteronormativity that has left LGBTQIA+ safety and security out of international policy-making.

Key Stakeholders:

- LGBTQIA+ Refugees: policy decisions and moves will directly impact their safety and experiences fleeing violence.
- LGBTQIA+ NGOs: these groups have gone outside their usual work to advocate for and help the queer and trans refugee community (ORAI, 2022). In the Ukrainian context, these include (but are not limited to): Kyiv Pride, Gay Alliance Ukraine, Insight Ukraine, Budapest Pride, and Warsaw Pride.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: the UNHCR is a leading voice on refugee safety, support, and rights. Given their influence, they must call on countries to better support LGBTQIA+ refugees.
- The Government of Canada: Canada is seen as an ally to Ukraine, invoking the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (Boisvert, 2022). This emergency measure means Ukrainians arriving will have limited access to the services refugees typically receive (Boisvert, 2022). The impact on LGBTQIA+ Ukrainians is not yet known, but should be closely monitored. Furthermore, Canada promotes itself as a leader in Feminist Foreign Policy and LGBTQIA+ rights. To continue to affirm this leadership position, the government must take action.

Recommendations

1. Create an LGBTQIA+ refugee advisory board that includes LGBTQIA+ refugees who have been through the system in Canada.

Merits:
Seeking refuge and fleeing conflict are complex, challenging, and often long processes. For LGBTQIA+ refugees, it is unnecessarily taxing due to the heteronormative assumptions that have shaped international and domestic refugee policy (Davis & Stern, 2019; Lee et al., 2021). Each point in the process of leaving conflict and resettling should account for the specific needs of LGBTQIA+ refugees (Lee et al., 2021).

As a result, setting up a queer and trans refugee advisory board will help create policies that center the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ people who have fled conflict and resettled in a new place. This board would also help leverage the voices of queer and trans refugees; in turn, removing barriers LGBTQIA+ refugees have faced while trying to achieve legislative inclusion in heteronormative spaces (like governments and the United Nations) (ORAI, 2020). The establishment of the board and the policy that comes from it could create a sustained and long-term shift that would address the systemic barriers queer and trans people fleeing violence and persecution face. Overall, this board holds the potential to set new precedents for what LGBTQIA+ rights and policy inclusion look like at national and international levels.

Drawbacks:
Firstly, this type of board would put the onus on queer and trans people to advocate for their rights. This could be a draining request, especially because many of the people serving on the board will have experienced harm from the existing system. Secondly, an advisory board runs the risk of being used as a performative entity for governments to signal that they care. This kind of performative allyship is dangerous because a board like this only works if recommendations are implemented (in a timely manner) through real tangible actions. Thirdly, while creating the board could set an international precedent for centering LGBTQIA+ people within policy creation, it does not guarantee changes to the inherently flawed international system, because the board advises Canada. As well, this kind of board will bolster Canada's image as an accepting country for LGBTQIA+ people. This could be problematic as Canada still has high rates of anti-LGBTQIA+ violence. Therefore, the Government of Canada must avoid harmful homonational narratives that frame the country as better than countries people have fled from (Mulé, 2020). Lastly, creating the advisory board, hearing the recommendations, and acting on them is a lengthy process. While this board could do important work for future cases of LGBTQIA+ migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, it is unlikely to help those currently fleeing violence and persecution.





2. Provide funding for LGBTQIA+ NGOs that are on the ground.

Merits:
This policy recommendation would help queer and trans Ukrainians fleeing the war who require LGBTQIA+ specific services like housing, healthcare, and community connections (Factora, 2022; Rosenburg, 2015).
In times of conflict, LGBTQIA+ NGOs step up to help bridge the gap international refugee policy leaves in dealing with queer and trans people, however, this work is beyond the typical reach of these groups (ORAI, 2022).
For Canada, it is logical to offer this kind of financial support, given that the federal government has pledged 100 million dollars in humanitarian aid to Ukraine.
Monetarily supporting these groups ensures LGBTQIA+ refugees' needs are not overlooked, as these NGOs support queer and trans Ukrainians.

Drawbacks:
A risk with this option is that governments may view funding as providing enough support and turn away from doing the necessary work of changing the policies that created these problems. Furthermore, this kind of policy assumes that LGBTQIA+ NGOs are present everywhere that there is a conflict. In many countries, LGBTQIA+ groups operate "underground" as it is unsafe to be openly pro-LGBTQIA+; these groups consist of small, dedicated teams who do not always have the worker capacity to add additional operations (Mulé, 2020).
On the ground funding is vital, but it is a stopgap solution for a much larger problem.

Recommendation: Option One (LGBTQIA+ Refugee Advisory Board)

Situating the knowledge and lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ refugees in formal policy and agenda-setting spaces will create a more inclusive and intersectional approach to gender, peace and security, and resettlement practices. The heteronormativity that has guided national and international policy, like the WPS agenda, will not be effectively challenged as long as queer and trans voices are left out. Furthermore, the shortcomings of these systems have often gone overlooked by governments (Mulé, 2020). For example, resettlement in Canada does not grant an individual safety and security from the racism and anti-LGBTQIA+ violence within the country, but "safe haven" narratives often assume freedom from violence after resettlement (Lee et al., 2021; Mulé, 2020). LGBTQIA+ people living in Canada are more likely to "be violently victimized than heterosexual Canadians" (Jaffary, 2020). Statistics Canada reports that 6 in 10 LGBTQIA+ individuals experience physical or sexual assault, compared to 4 in 10 heterosexual people (Jaffray, 2020). While statistics on LGBTQIA+ refugee experiences of SGBV are not well documented or understood, the numbers are assumed to be high given the known rates of SGBV women and children face when fleeing conflict (Hagen, 2016). The Government of Canada should create an LGBTQIA+ refugee advisory board. The board will help ensure that better support is offered to refugees throughout the process of fleeing violence, making asylum claims, resettling, and during the community building that is necessary after leaving a home country.

Option two, funding on the ground LGBTQIA+ NGOs, is a path the Government of Canada should seriously consider. However, there is a substantive need for better LGBTQIA+ refugee policies in Canada and internationally—option one best addresses this.
Overall, creating an LGBTQIA+ refugee advisory board has the capacity to create real change.
The Government of Canada can share the discussions, recommendations, and implementation processes that come from this board. This could create an opportunity to call on and work with other countries and international organizations to address their policy shortcomings by centering queer and trans voices. There will be future conflicts where queer and trans people become refugees—sustained systemic change is vital.

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Artist: Layla Reddy

Ang Nawalang Ilaw ng Tahanan:

Examining the Lived Experiences of Filipino Women in the Live-In Caregiver Program

(Trans: The Missing Light of the Home)

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ABSTRACT: The Philippines belongs to Southeast Asia and is rich in natural resources.However, it remains a developing country, with globalization and neoliberal policies weakening its economy and damaging its environmental resources to prioritize foreign interests (Velasco 2002). With a lack of national industries, the Philippine government implemented a labour export policy favourable to developed countries such as Canada, whose demand for domestic work, childcare, and eldercare expanded. In the 1980s, Canada's Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) Program allowed migrant workers to gain permanent residency status (Velasco 2002; Cohen 2000). FDM was replaced by the Live-in Care Giver (LCP) Program by 1992, and during this period the Philippines became among the top sources of labourers to Canada (Bonifacio 2008). The seemingly mutually beneficial set up between two countries inevitably treated human beings as commodities, the labourers also racialized, thereby devoid of rights typically afforded to other migrant workers of European descent. The migration process was also gendered since most caregivers were women, depicting a feminization of care work. This paper sheds light on the experiences of Filipino caregivers who worked under the Live-In Caregiver Program. It utilizes an intersectional framework to examine the interlocking issues of race, class, ethnicity, and gender and how these became tools of oppression for these Filipino women.

KEYWORDS: Philippines, Neoliberalism, Live-In Caregiver Program, Canada, Migrant workers, Careworkers

The Philippines' Labor Export Policy

With the rise of globalization and neoliberal policies in the 1970s, the Ferdinand Marcos regime implemented the official labour export-oriented strategy—the State Migratory Apparatus (SMA) – accelerating the outmigration of Filipinos through government ministries and agencies (Velasco 2002; Malek 2021). Whereas the devaluation of the Philippine peso, high inflation rate, poverty, and lack of job opportunities were the push factors for the Filipinos to emigrate, the SMA made human resource export the temporary solution to rampant unemployment and a revenue source through remittances (Velasco 2002).

Although the Philippines is rich in natural resources, the absence of national industries has urged the government to dehumanize its people into movable commodities. The Gloria Arroyo government also actively encouraged Filipinos to work abroad, painting them as cheap labourers preferred by countries such as Canada, whose policies focused on importing domestic workers through the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) in 1992 (Velasco 2002). However, research suggests that the LCP led to victimization because of poor working conditions and abuse. Thus, this paper investigates the experiences of Filipino women caregivers, beginning with a brief background of Canadian immigration policies and the LCP. Most importantly, it uses an intersectional framework to analyze the oppression experienced by these women because of the interlocking disadvantages caused by gender, race, class, and ethnicity.



Canada as an Ideal Migrant Destination

Like the United States, Canada has historically outsourced its labour force from different countries to sustain its economy. Immigration policies initially prioritized Western Europeans, particularly the British and the French, because others like Italians and Jewish people were not considered White at the time. They were still preferred, however, compared with Asian people and Black people placed at the bottom of the racial hierarchy (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). In the prairies, advertisements about moving to Canada spread throughout Europe, with promises of free lands. As preferred races, Ukrainians and the Irish easily moved to Western Canada to establish homesteads (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). Similarly, politicians such as Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver deemed Asian people and Black people unassimilable and undesirable (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010)

Immigration eligibility adapted according to the needs of the economy through the years. Chinese workers were in demand when the Canadian Pacific Railway was being constructed due to their work ethic and cheap costs, but its completion spelled the end of their immigration with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1885, illustrating the state's intention to halt Asian resettlement (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). By the early twentieth century, the economic growth of Europe disincentivized White migration to Canada, forcing the Canadian state to implement legislative changes and open its borders to more people of colour. Furthermore, the number of female migrants caught up with men following the Second World War due to increasing demand for nurses and domestics (Boyd and Pikkov 2005).

Canadian immigration reforms in the 1960s "removed the overt restrictions based upon race and geographical origin" (Malek 2021, 3), boosting the number of Filipino immigrants in Canada. Many of these migrant workers were women, filling positions in health care, education, and garment factories. By the 1980s, Canada implemented a new immigration scheme: the Foreign Domestic Movement Program (FDM), which doubled the approval of temporary work visas (Bonifacio 2008; Velasco 2002). The cession of Spain of the Philippines to the United States turned the US into the country's new colonial master until 1946. As a result, Due to colonial ties with the United States , Filipino and English are official languages in the Philippines, giving its citizens an advantage over other nationalities. At present, Filipino communities are most significant in four major Canadian cities: Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg (Malek 2021).

The Canadian state attempted to implement several policies to help newcomers settle and adjust to the foreign environment. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) offered four main settlement programs: the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP), the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), the Host Program, and the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for refugees (Bonifacio 2008). These programs were not maximized to their full potential, especially since new immigrants faced accessibility issues. Nonetheless, Canada offered a chance for migrants to get permanent residency and citizenship. The job opportunities were sufficient for the Filipino people who had failed to secure employment back home. Canada was an alternative to the United States—it was an ideal migrant destination.

The Live-In Caregiver Program

In 1992, the LCP replaced the FDM to meet the increasing demand for childcare and eldercare among the middle-class (Cohen 2000). The program permitted caregivers to apply for landed immigrant status after living with their employer for at least two years; however, this time requirement was deemed exploitative as it placed the worker in a vulnerable position (Velasco 2002; Malek 2021). Although the LCP enabled more foreign workers to come to Canada, these women had to obtain both a 'visitor' and a 'potential immigrant' designation to prove that they would not stay in Canada permanently. In line with this, the LCP contributed to familial disruption and fragmentation unlike other immigration schemes because it effectively prevented family members to move to Canada at the same time as the caregiver (Cohen 2000).

Bonifacio (2008) and Ty (2012) highlight the gendered aspect of the immigration policies by describing how the undervalued feminized nature of work targeted women, thus explaining the discrepancy between the two sexes in terms of the number of work visa acceptance. Gendered work was also racialized because spouses of those considered skilled, mostly White immigrants, were allowed to join them immediately through work permit grants (Cohen 2000). Hence, an intersectional framework reveals how Filipino women were recipients of caregiving jobs due to their femininity, while their precarious working conditions were legitimized and considered acceptable as people of colour. It became normal for Filipino women as members of a racialized minority to be separated from their families. They were treated as less deserving of companionship, their positions relying heavily on discriminatory procedures. The restrictions painted a jarring picture of exported and dehumanized labour force without family and community ties.

The government introduced changes to the program in 2014. However, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper cancelled the LCP in 2019, citing claims that the program had become a pathway to family reunification instead of a means to strictly import cheap domestic workers (Malek 2021). The decision cemented the vision of the Conservative government. They had no business looking after the welfare of racialized foreign workers.

Filipino Women's Experiences as Caregivers in Canada

Research on the LCP has been popular throughout the years, but Malek (2021) cautions that existing literature has presented these women as a "victimized population" (17) without any agency. Nevertheless, the findings of previous studies remain credible and valid. The LCP was supposed to be a ticket to a better quality of life, yet the reality on the ground was much harsher.

Precarious Working Conditions

First, Filipino live-in caregivers were required to stay with a designated employer for at least two years, making them susceptible to abuse and exploitation (Malek 2021). The power imbalance persisted since their shelter depended on the employer, who could easily change their mind and terminate their contract. The work-life boundary was blurred because they were sometimes requested to do jobs outside their obligations, such as housekeeping. These women chose to endure, unable to complain and demand the enforcement of employment standards for work that was deemed 'private' or 'familial', and in fear of getting fired and deported (Velasco 2002; Malek 2021; Cohen 2000). As a result, they did not have the same working hours as a regular employee, and their wages were usually below the minimum wage with no benefits. They also faced physical violence, sexual harassment, and no overtime payments (Bonifacio 2008).

Filipino women whose contracts get terminated sought help from their social networks. Permit processing took at least three months, and these caregivers had to look for another employe (Bonifacio 2008). They usually got assigned to a new residence, depicting a precarious status (Bonifacio 2008). In addition to the sudden uprooting of their current lives, they suffered from impending homelessness and the inability to fulfill their roles as breadwinners.

Recruitment Agencies

Of interest was the role of recruitment agencies, which required expensive placement fees in exchange for their services (Bonifacio 2008). Many of these agencies were situated outside the Philippines, such as in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

These brokers were unreliable and merely added to the burden of the caregivers, especially since they did not offer support when employer abuse occurred (Bonifacio 2008). They encouraged them to suffer in silence or risk deportation. In short, recruitment agencies focused on profiteering at the expense of migrant workers.

Mental Health Issues

The prolonged separation negatively affected these Filipino women's mental health and strained their relationships with their nuclear families. "Mothering from a distance… [had caused] helplessness, regret, and guilt for mothers, and loneliness, vulnerability, and insecurity for children" (Bonifacio 2008, 33). These mothers were penalized, incapable of watching their children grow and be part of the most important milestones in their lives, reinforcing feelings of isolation. Instead, these women were encouraged to believe they were 'one of the family' at work, compelling them to participate in psychological and emotional labour (Cohen 2000). However, the employer's house, as both their shelter and workplace, provided enormous pressure, for they were under constant surveillance (Davidson 2012).

Effects on the Family

Another unintended consequence was the transfer of care work of their own children to a sibling, a single parent, or relatives. As these caregivers' children grew older, maternal affection came from somebody else, resulting in estrangement. Sadly, the LCP ensured that caregivers would face as many hurdles as they could by requiring them to prove their financial security to sponsor their dependents (Davidson 2012). Poor working conditions crippled these women on top of having to send remittances to their families. The chances of them meeting the threshold were low.

Furthermore, family reunification did not always end happily as the effects of fragmentation trickled in. Some couples eventually separated because of the tension caused by the separation or wage differences (Cohen 2000). Women continued to earn more because the newly arrived men did not possess the same language skill level, challenging the traditional roles of husbands as providers. Other factors also included affairs, jealousy, and indifference.

Coping Strategies

To cope with isolation, caregivers sought refuge in meeting with friends, families, communities, and religious organizations. Filipinos are predominantly Christians, specifically Catholics; hence, the Sunday worship services became a space for them to connect (Bonifacio 2008, 38). They found a sense of belonging and access to information through these informal networks. They also associated with their agencies to help them adjust to the foreign land, illustrating their ignorance of migrant assistance services from the Canadian government (Bonifacio 2008, 33). Moreover, the requirement to live with their employer reduced accessibility, since they mostly had to work while these services were open for business (Bonifacio 2008, 34). For those who were aware of government assistance, they assumed their problems (i.e., termination, abuse, shelter) to be unsolvable by those in power, so they reached out to their circle of friends, community, or family (Bonifacio 2008, 40).

Deprofessionalization and Post-LCP

Several human rights groups organized protests to end the program due to discriminatory regulations that intensified deprofessionalization. The Canadian government preferred Filipino women because most were university and college graduates, yet many live-in caregivers were licensed nurses who were prohibited to work in healthcare. Velasco (2002) claims that "[the Canadian government] want[ed] to keep skilled and talented immigrant women in a trap, where their labor remain[ed] cheap and flexible" (134) by not recognizing their foreign credentials while setting high standards for immigration. Canada operated at a loss because it failed to maximize these workers' skills despite shortages in healthcare workers. In addition, these caregivers could only take non-credit courses while in the LCP, impeding their chances to upgrade and meet Canadian standards after they exit the program (Davidson 2012). Overall, the structure perpetuated poverty and lower quality of life because racialized immigrant workers were barred from entering the white-collar labour market.

Lastly, the LCP resulted in racist stereotypes against Filipino women being only capable of domestic tasks in contrast to the early years of immigration where many came to work in health care, clerical, or garment industry jobs (Ty 2012). This prejudice resulted in difficulties to advance to a different career and find a professional job because years of their relevant experience had become insignificant (Davidson 2012). For previous caregivers, upward mobility was challenging, and nearly impossible as Canadian employers looked for experience in Canada. The LCP was a vehicle for preserving racial and social inequality by establishing a system of 'othering'; it successfully reinforced the invisible line between 'us' and 'them.

Conclusion

The story of the Filipino diaspora must consider the context of global inequality. The outmigration was a result of interlocking issues of unemployment in the developing homeland and the economic needs of the developed foreign country. Both governments sowed benefits from one another, but in between were human beings treated as commodities. Without strong industries, the Philippines chose to split families apart, while Canada accepted the trade, exerting minimal effort to support family reunification.

Despite the stories of labour exploitation and abuse, some caregivers had positive experiences with their employers (Malek 2021). Canada remained a better option than the Philippines because of its relative economic prosperity and higher standard of living (Davidson 2012). However, these do not erase the discriminatory and precarious working conditions many suffered. The Canadian state failed to support these live-in caregivers after using them as a band-aid solution to the absence of universal childcare and eldercare. The consequences of familial separation were placed on these long-distance mothers to bear as the government deemed "the former life of a domestic worker…irrelevant" (Cohen 2000, 82).



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Narratives and Constructions of Sexuality in American Women's Prisons

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores lesbianism in American prisons, identifying the impact dominant homophobic narratives have on incarcerated women with diverse sexualities. Drawing from academic research, the paper discusses historical, theoretical perspectives and media construction of lesbians in prison. Both theoretical and media portrayals of incarcerated lesbian women work together to alter public opinion. This paper investigates how portrayals of lesbianism are harmful due to their tendency to stereotype and misrepresent. The paper will also investigate how correctional perspectives continue to be affected by dominant narratives, which directly impact the lives of incarcerated women through corrective measures. Finally, the paper highlights the perspectives of incarcerated women, as they are the experts of their own experiences. The term lesbian is used throughout the paper as an umbrella term describing women who engage in sexual relationships with other women. This is for the sake of simplicity due to the limited scope of the paper's length and the available research on the subject. It is not intended to dismiss or oversimplify the diversity of sexual identities and labels.

KEYWORDS: Incarceration, Women, Lesbianism, Sexuality, Prisons, Media Narratives, Stereotypes

Women's personal experiences of incarceration are underrepresented within academic literature. This is especially true when discussing incarcerated women who engage in romantic and sexual relationships with other women. Theoretical explanations of homosexuality in women's prisons historically delegitimize the sexual experiences of incarcerated women through dismissal and fear-based stereotyping. As a result, incarcerated women's voices are rarely given the space they need to be heard. How do common and interacting perceptions and discussions of female sexuality in the carceral setting work to uphold and exacerbate outside-world sexual stereotypes? In turn, how do outside-world sexual stereotypes uniquely affect women serving prison terms? Common narratives and explanations of female sexuality within the prison context highlight and exacerbate existing historical heteronormative discourses that prevail outside the carceral setting. This paper will explore a) historical perspectives, b) media representations, c)correctional realities, and d) incarcerated women's own experiences to reveal continuing patterns of heteronormativity and homophobia. The paper will focus on incarcerated lesbian and bisexual women in the context of the United States carceral system. The term "lesbian" will sometimes be used as an umbrella term to describe women who engage in sexual relationships with other women. While not to dismiss that there are multitudes of complex and diverse terms for unique identities, the general use of the term "lesbian" is done for the sake of simplicity due to the limited scope of a paper of this length.

Historical Theoretical Perspectives

Historical academic and theoretical explorations of sexuality in prison are tailored to reflect homophobia and heteronormativity. The exploration of women-centred research in criminology is lacking; the same goes for initial discussions of female sexuality within prisons. Women's experiences have historically been invisible in terms of academic research and theoretical perspectives (Balfour & Comack, 2014). While homosexuality was harshly punished in male prisons, early 20th century American women's prison officials largely ignored or denied the existence of female homosexuality (Freedman, 1996). Exceptional to this was the racist, stereotypical construction of Black women as aggressive lesbians who preyed upon White, feminine women while incarcerated (Freedman, 1996). Margaret Otis was the author of one of the first criminological studies of prison homosexual relationships (Freedman, 1996). She asserted that Black women pursued White women, taking on a traditionally "male" role (Freedman, 1996, p. 400). Upon release, the White women returned to heterosexuality and ceded contact with their in-prison partners (Freedman, 1996). These initial criminological theories exemplify how homophobia intersects with racism and sexist depictions of what constitutes valid femininity. Early studies also emphasize another prevalent theory of lesbianism in prison, which positions homosexuality as temporary.

As lesbianism in prisons became more widely recognized, fear began to ramp up over the potential threat female sexuality could have on societal structures. Margaret Mead was the first to suggest that lesbianism is not as threatening as male homosexuality because female prisoners would likely revert to heterosexuality upon their release from prison (Freedman, 1996). She posited that lesbianism in prison was simply a response to the deprivation of heterosexual relationships (Freedman, 1996). Deprivation theory is one of the most common historical, theoretical perspectives used to explain homosexuality in women's prisons. There is an ongoing debate over whether women engage in temporary female relationships situationally in prison or whether prison acts as a catalyst for pre-existing diverse sexual identities (Severance, 2004). More current research posits that jail serves as a site for tuning into diverse sexualities already present within a woman's identity, as will be discussed later. The historical view was that women became afflicted or corrupted by homosexual pathology as a direct result of their incarceration or their predisposition to criminal behaviour. Eventually, fear of incarcerated lesbians threatening the status quo of patriarchal power became mainstream among criminologists and academics.

Criminal lesbians symbolized patriarchal rejection that had to be controlled and mitigated. Female prisoner lesbianism was a social problem to be "contained" due to mounting fears of undercover enemies during the Cold War (Freedman, 1996, p. 405). The racialized image of Black women as predatory lesbians subsided somewhat, and researchers now thought that any woman had the potential to be a threatening, promiscuous, and dangerous lesbian (Freedman, 1996).

The idea that even White, middle-class women could be a sexual threat stirred a frenzy among academics and the public (Freedman, 1996). No one was safe any longer, as the public perceived the enemy as more challenging to identify. Prison, while acting as a site of containment for lesbians, was also considered a breeding ground for sexual deviancy and corruption of working-class women. Homosexuality became harshly punished in women's prisons (Freedman, 1996). This is still reflected in correctional practices today, as will be discussed later in the paper. Historical perspectives of the 20th century reveal "deep-seated cultural anxieties about the instability of White heterosexuality" (Freedman, 1996, p. 408). Incarcerated lesbians, in their rejection of heterosexual relationships along with their criminal behaviour, are the absolute manifestation of this cultural anxiety. Eventually, historical perspectives and narratives of prison lesbianism gained public popularity and continued shaping the stories about diverse sexualities in media.

Media Construction and Public Opinion

As a historically taboo subject, prison lesbianism easily captures audiences' attention. As a result of media portrayals, the public perceives women in prisons who partake in same-sex relationships in a highly sensational and distorted light. Familiar fictional narratives of female relationships in prison work to reinforce heterosexuality and to quell fears of the cultural instability that come with the idea of homosexual women. Fictional portrayals of lesbianism in prison typically go two ways. They reinforce heterosexuality by either portraying lesbians as aggressive and dangerous predators or as hyperfeminine victims of corruption who temporarily engage in relationships with other women (Ciasullo, 2008).

Beginning with the latter, media representations of passive prison lesbians frame their relationships as temporary and due to isolation from men outside. This is a continuation of the historical deprivation perspectives previously discussed. In fictional media, many women portrayed in a carceral setting revert to heterosexuality upon completing their sentences (Ciasullo, 2008). In Girls in Prison, a film from 1956, Anne Carson is the innocent and feminine protagonist in prison, afraid of the "contagious" lesbianism of the other women whom she separates herself from (Ciasullo, 2008, p. 204). The message is that the public should not take prison lesbianism seriously as it is depicted as temporary. The more feminine and classically beautiful the onscreen lesbian prisoners are, the less of a concern they are. Their conformity to heteronormative values in other ways, regardless of their engagement in homosexual relationships, allows a certain degree of protection. They are more easily controlled when constructed as passive.

On the other end of the spectrum, incarcerated lesbians who present as more masculine are stereotyped as predatory, man-hating, and threatening to the status quo (Ciasullo, 2008). This stereotype assumes "that women who live independently of men are anti-men" (Farr, 2000. p.54). Essentially, more masculine-presenting lesbian women represent an ultimate rejection of patriarchy for the public (Ciasullo, 2008). This is because they are depicted as avoiding relationships with men and actively working to corrupt heterosexual women (Ciasullo, 2008). Again, in Girls in Prison the character Melanee is exemplary of this stereotype, greeting Anne Carson aggressively in prison by touching her hair and immediately demonstrating sexual desire (Ciasullo, 2008). These women are punished on screen for what they represent to reassert mainstream heterosexual values. They are typically left behind when their more feminine counterpart eventually leaves the prison setting and returns to dating men (Ciasullo, 2008). According to popular narratives, the more masculine and threatening women belong in prison, while the feminine victims deserve to be saved.

These portrayals extend beyond fictional accounts and have real-world effects on how women are discussed in news media and the courtroom. Constructed media narratives of lesbians can act as aggravating sentencing factors, contributing to their likelihood of being sentenced to death (Farr, 2000). Lesbians whom the news portrays as more masculine and who threaten men through violence tend to be overrepresented on death row (Farr, 2000). The idea that these women reject men through their sexuality while also lashing out violently against men is exceptionally threatening to male authority. Further, the view that more traditionally feminine lesbians are less threatening than more masculine presenting lesbians indicates a reward for heteronormative

conformity. The lesbian prisoners who present as more heterosexual are forgivable. In turn, the women who are more threateningly lesbian are more deserving of harsh punishment (Farr, 2000). This unfortunate reality directly reflects the fictional examples in media. Women sentenced to death are defeminized and dehumanized by the media and by prosecutions appealing to juries (Farr, 2000). The fact that this distinction is based on who is more sexually accessible and non-threatening to men denotes consistency with patriarchal expectations and control of women.

There are examples of fictional lesbian portrayals in recent years that attempt to subvert old trends and depict lesbians in more realistic and dynamic lights. For example, the popular and recent television show *Orange is the New Black* subverts the tropes of the feminine and temporary lesbians. The lead character, Piper Chapman, is initially portrayed as the ultimate stereotypical image of femininity (Weiss, 2014). She is White, blonde, feminine, passive, and engaged to a man when she begins her prison term (Weiss, 2014). Correctional staff and her fiancé seek to preserve her femininity and protect her from the other inmates (Weiss, 2014). By the end of the first season, however, Piper defines her sexuality as valid in its fluidity when she reunites with her ex-partner, a woman also serving a prison sentence with her (Weiss, 2014). She breaks down stereotypes by behaving violently and aggressively on her own accord toward the end of the season, contrary to her initial portrayal as passive and classically feminine. Piper demonstrates that women are dynamic and complicated and have agency over their identities. Modern portrayals such as the characters in *Orange is the New Black* suggest that public perspectives of incarcerated lesbian women are shifting towards a more nuanced and understanding lens.

Still, *Orange is the New Black*'s modern representation of imprisoned women is imperfect. The show is primarily told through the lens of a White woman, despite its attempted focus on the stories of women of colour (Caputi, 2015). The show also presents its characters in highly sexualized and sensational situations, where Black women are often the primary instigators of lesbian relationships (Caputi, 2015). This is problematic given the stereotypical historical representations of criminalized Black women as predominantly sexually aggressive. Modern portrayals of incarcerated lesbian women are far from perfect and have important implications due to the beliefs they present to the public. While perhaps misunderstood by public perception, women's experiences within the prison system are most directly affected by disciplinary perspectives. The dangers of general misunderstandings and stereotypes come to fruition when correctional authorities allow these constructed narratives to shape the treatment of incarcerated women.

Correctional Realities

Histories of trauma and violence colour incarcerated women's experiences. Female incarcerated populations are "young, poor, unemployed, undereducated" and suffer from addictions or gendered abuse (Fields, 2016. p. 31). Further, Black women are overrepresented in American prison systems, especially Black women lacking stable and affordable residence (Fields, 2016). The American criminal justice system is a "funnel" for the country's most marginalized groups (Hereth & Bouris, 2020, p. 359). Prisons are built to separate disadvantaged groups from the larger society, correct their behaviour, and contain and separate them. This includes lesbian and bisexual women as well. As a result, representations of queer-identifying Americans in prison are disproportionate (Hereth & Bouris, 2020). The overrepresentation of sexual minorities in prison is not a result of the corruption of women by a few inherently evil lesbians, as historical theorists have posited. Rather, prisons work as intended by the state to contain and separate groups that already experience disadvantage and marginalization outside the prison walls. It is here that authorities can optimally monitor and correct marginalized groups.

The abuse endured by incarcerated women outside the carceral setting is mirrored within the prison walls. Correctional figures often continue cycles of violence or control over their female wards through the exertion of their institutional power (Fields, 2016). Further, corrective perspectives on women's sexuality reflect a heteronormative valorization of authoritative control over women, especially women who are thought to be more sexually deviant. Overall, the control and treatment of women of diverse sexual orientations tend to be harsher, such as being sent to isolation units for physical contact (Forsyth et al., 2002). Physical contact between inmates is generally off-limits in most prisons, but it is punished considerably more when thought to be

of a sexual or romantic nature (Forsyth et al., 2002). As previously discussed, more masculine-presenting women are especially threatening in the public's eye. This is true for correctional key players as well, who more harshly punish and supervise lesbians that present themselves in less traditionally feminine ways (Smoyer et al., 2021). A more feminine presentation indicates increased conformity with structural heteronormative values.

Inmate relationships are often the subject of conversation between correctional officers, a source of entertainment, and a target for disciplinary action (Maeve, 1999). This points to a sensational and voyeuristic narrative of incarcerated women who identify as sexually diverse, similar to general public perceptions. What differs, however, is the level of control correctional officers can exert over incarcerated women (Maeve, 1999). Correctional behaviours have the most room for direct harm against imprisoned women in this sense. Officers need to take more nuanced stances on women's sexuality in prison. However, adherence to protocol and dominant narratives of female relationships as something to control prevents nuance and understanding in the prison setting.

The Perspectives of Incarcerated Lesbians

While external narratives of lesbians in prison are essential to critique prevailing heteronormative discourses, ample time and thought should be devoted to women's perceptions of their own sexuality. After all, incarcerated women are experts on their own experiences. Imprisoned women, unsurprisingly, view their sexuality as more legitimate and less sensational than external perspectives do. Rather than perceiving their sexuality as temporary, many women explain how their sexual identities do change because of prison sentences yet remain changed upon release (Maeve, 1999). As such, it may be true that prison does provide a venue for first lesbian or bisexual experiences for some women who previously identified as heterosexual, but this realization is not temporary. Rather, incarceration may be a venue that incites exploration and shifts in identity. There is, after all, a heavy push for women to look inwards while serving prison sentences and closely examine their identities, which could include sexual components of their identities. Women outside of the carceral setting



are more likely to identify as bisexual than men, and bisexuality makes up the most significant proportion of sexual identities among women (Cipriano et al., 2022). This identity shift tends to occur later in life for women, so it follows that incarcerated women would also show similar patterns of late identity discovery (Cipriano et al., 2022). Internalized heteronormativity accounts for the delay or disinterest in identity exploration related to sexuality, which is perhaps triggered by the prison setting where men are largely removed from the equation.

That being said, it is crucial not to delegitimize the relationships women form in prison by denoting them as simply a substitution for heterosexual relationships. Many women also list reasons for their carceral relationships that extend beyond the sexual and romantic. Simply needing comfort and closeness in a time of isolation is a primary reason given for romantic relationships (Maeve, 1999). Some women also mention security and safety as other significant benefits of finding a partner. This includes financial and physical security, a practical facet of partnership during incarceration (Maeve,1999). Finding newfound comfort and security in relationships with women can also result from abuse by men. One incarcerated woman said

"they have some that may have been battered by men, and so it was easy for them to turn and get into a relationship with a woman" (Forsyth et al., 2002, p. 73).

Inmate perspectives like this suggest a degree of agency in choosing to engage primarily in relationships with women because of social conditions, despite experiencing sexual desire for both genders. This defies the stereotypical historical perspective that women are corrupted into homosexuality at the hands of other women. Instead, men's violence and abuse against women, in some cases, catalyze women's exploration of relationships with other women.

Unfortunately, a common theme in research about women's perceptions of their own sexuality while incarcerated points to the internalization of heteronormativity and misogyny. Lesbians who present as more masculine in a carceral setting tend to discuss feminine inmates' apparent advantages with correctional officers. They perceive the more feminine inmates as having an advantage due to their ability to flirt with officers or use their sexuality to gain favour or avoid punishment (Smoyer et al., 2021). Such perceptions reflect the patriarchal idea that the objectification of women is beneficial rather than oppressive or subordinating. Some women also express their belief that prison homosexuality of certain women is temporary and that bisexual identities discovered while incarcerated are less legitimate than those who entered the prison identifying as lesbians (Smoyer et al., 2021). Such perspectives ignore the complexity and fluidity of sexual identities and reflect resentment due to internalized heteronormativity. When living in a setting that actively perpetuates homosexual stereotypes and paints diverse sexual identities as something to be corrected or punished, it is easy to understand why internalized heteronormative values continue to prevail. Women presenting as more masculine in their sexuality are punished more harshly by correctional authorities after all (Smoyer et al., 2021). Internalized heteronormative values demonstrate the pervasive nature of stereotypical and historical portrayals of lesbian women. Subconscious beliefs about women of diverse sexual orientations prevail today and are perpetuated by incarcerated women themselves.

Conclusion

Harmful narratives and stereotypes of lesbians in prison are ongoing, despite their roots in dated historical theory. Stemming from fears that prevailing White heterosexual structures are in danger, homophobic narratives of incarcerated women with diverse sexual orientations function to contain and control deviant desire. Prisons act as a site to hold marginalized Americans who threaten the status quo with their very existence. It is through an exploration of intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality that dominant narratives are deconstructed, and their discriminatory intentions are exposed. Women with diverse sexualities are overrepresented in the prison system, and prevailing stereotypes reduce the legitimacy of their identities and unjustly punish them. Only by acknowledging the diversity, complexity, and reality of women's experiences while incarcerated can narratives begin to reflect the truth. Centring women in their own experiences is the most effective way to find truth and ensure women have an active role in shaping their narratives. Researchers, media, and venues where correctional policy is made should centre the voices of incarcerated women. While this paper focused primarily on bisexual and lesbian-identifying women, more attention should be given to the diverse ways that incarcerated women present their sexual identities so that change in corrections can come from a place of understanding at the societal level.

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Narratives of Asexuality

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, I utilize the lens of narrative power to argue that stories of asexuality have been employed to pathologize and separate people from heteronormative societies but can (and are) amplified to connect and mobilize people to resist dominant narratives and norms regarding sexuality. I apply this lens to two case studies. The historical and modern pathologizing of asexuality and the creation of online communities for asexual people and experiences. By exploring the power and hierarchy of narratives, I expose more people to non-normative sexualities and thus reduce the isolation and marginalization of asexual peoples and stories.

KEYWORDS: Queer theory, Narratology, Political Theory, Asexuality, 2SLGBTQ, Heteronormativity

Introduction

Heteronormativity permeates all aspects of existence in Western cultures and politicalsocieties. In this paper, I utilize the lens of narrative power to argue that stories of asexuality have been employed to pathologize and separate people from heteronormative societies; however, they can also be (and are) amplified to connect and mobilize people to resist dominant narratives and norms regarding sexuality. Heteronormativity is a set of assumptions that relies on the belief that heterosexuality is the normal, and often only, expression of sexuality (Butler 1990; Sundrud 2011; Warner 1991). Social norms and cultures are formed about the gender binary that upholds heteronormativity. A crucial aspect of heteronormativity that exacerbates the belief in a strict gender binary and heterosexual coupling is the assumption that all humans should possess sexual attraction, desire, and behaviours (Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2019; Przybylo 2011). These norms and stories uphold and reproduce dominant narratives regarding gender, sexual orientation, and sexual expression. Asexuality as an identity and lived experience does not conform with these narratives and thus is positioned—when acknowledged—as deviant, unhealthy, wrong, or problematic. Understanding narratives revolving around asexuality in queer theory literature and 2SLGBTQ+ communities will better provide queer scholars and communities with the language, means, and opportunities to challenge heteronormative structures that serve to oppress, omit, and suppress asexual perspectives and experiences.

In this paper, I provide an overview of my position in relation to asexual stories and identity that I utilize to develop a theoretical background to examine two narratives of asexuality. The power of narratives and storytelling is used to analyze the limitations of heteronormativity when discussing non-normative experiences of asexuality. I explore how asexuality has historically been and currently is, pathologized in Western cultures through medical intervention in people's lack of desire for sexual intimacy. I provide an exploration of two common themes of asexual narratives. First, I investigate the use of medical authority to determine what is "normal and true" for people's sex life, which is questioned by many queer scholars. Secondly, I identify asexual communities and people who utilize online communities and forums to share their stories and lived experiences with others. The power of digital spaces to share narratives is crucial for people with marginalized identities, and asexual people have mobilized to educate and amplify stories of asexuality in order to connect and inform people. Asexuality and asexual experiences challenge institutions and norms built from those narratives. Still, asexual narratives have shared stories of joy and community to build new counter-narratives.

Feminist Positionality

I am inspired by feminist, queer, and asexual scholars' research that explores lived experiences and stories with an emphasis on personal history and memory. I find work that centers and reflects on the lived experiences of the researcher to be the pieces of research and writing that resonate most with me. Sandra Harding's work on strong reflexivity—that "objectivity requires that the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as the object of knowledge" (1992, 458)—requires me to examine my own identity and position in this research. I preface this in my paper to explain my investment in asexual narratives and remind myself to follow their guidance and expertise when analyzing dominant and counter-narratives of asexuality. Asexual scholar Evelyn Elgie's notes on positionality within the asexualcommunity encourage me to reflect on my position as a white settler learning and researching from Treaty 6 land, the homeland of Dene Suliné, Cree, Nakota Sioux and Saulteaux peoples (2020, 4). I am privileged to attempt to carve out space for myself and my communities in academic institutions and Western cultures. I can explore dominant narratives through a platform available to me as a white settler with access to academic resources and educational opportunities. Many marginalized asexual perspectives and voices are not afforded the same platforms or opportunities that my position grants me.

My position within this paper will inevitably influence my theoretical foundation and critical analysis through case studies of asexual narratives. Reflecting on my position as a queer person, in terms of sexuality and gender, who is on the asexual spectrum will allow me to engage with others; critically shared asexual narratives and my own experiences of facing pity or misunderstanding. I have an investment in discovering how asexuality is shared in stories, experienced in Western cultures, and represented in dominant narratives because I hope to find ways to publicly reject the notions that sex, intimacy, and physical connection are aspirational. I strongly relate to Elgie's desire to "understand my socialization and the (sexual) culture I find myself in" (2020, 10).

I hope that my ability to unpack narratives surrounding asexuality will start me on the path of understanding the discourses around sexuality and intimacy within the queer and heteronormative cultures in which I exist. The paradoxical nature of asexual discourses and scholarship (Elgie 2020) requires that I first situate myself as a subject of sexual cultures and narratives before attempting to make sense of relationships that commit to and connect with individuals outside of the heteronormative narratives of relationships.

Theoretical Background

Narrative and Storytelling

Ken Plummer states that we, as citizens and humans, are "born into a pre-existing narrative world over which we have initially little control [;] we face narrative power" (Plummer 2019, 115). When confronted with this narrative power, we form distinct religious, gendered, political, and sexual identities. Ken Plummer and Michel Foucault both explore the networks of power—such as narratives, discourse, and stories—on an individual's formation and understanding of identity, and how those identities are acted upon by society in relation to sexuality (Foucault 1978; Plummer 1994). Story-telling and the recognition of narratives regarding (a)sexuality are among the most powerful ways to intervene against heteronormative discourses that cause harm to marginalized and muted groups. Questioning dominant or hegemonic narratives as constructed in modern Western culture that center being "human" around having or engaging in sex (for reproduction, pleasure, and relationship formation) can challenge how we view the right to have (or in this case, not have) sex as constructed in modern Western culture (Elgie 2020; Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2020; Plummer 1994; Sundrud 2011).

Scholars center asexual individuals through story-sharing, qualitative interviews, and engagement with online communities to amplify narratives of asexual lived experiences (Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2020; Przybylo 2013; Sundrud 2011). When allowed to share their asexual stories of fear, ridicule, pity, joy, diagnoses, trauma, faith, and pleasure, the power of sexually driven narratives ebbs and flows in different ways than what is seen as the universal or natural "truth" of a heteronormative society's understanding of sex (Plummer 1994; Przybylo 2013). The historical and modern pathologization of asexuality requires understanding the dominant narratives. However, counter-narratives that resist calls for intervention, and maintain the dignity and self-hood of an asexual identity and lived experience are identified in some contemporary narratives of asexuality (Elgie 2020; Foucault 1978; Plummer 2019; Przybylo 2013).

Heteronormativity and Asexuality

Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner argue that in heteronormative societies "we are used to thinking about sexuality as a form of intimacy and subjectivity" (1998, 566). In their efforts to counteract this narrative, they explore the nature of queer sex, identity, intelligibility, publics, and cultures that unsettle the heterosexual couple's reverence and privilege in Western societies (Berlant and Warner 1995, 1998). Hegemonic heterosexuality and heteronormativity maintain the privileged status of the heterosexual couple, but an asexual identity can attempt to unsettle the normalization of such a the couple's privileged status (Hopkins, Sorensen, and Taylor 2013).

A simple definition accepted by asexual communities is found on the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) as "a person who does not experience sexual attraction" (Asexual Visibility and Education Network's n.d.).
Considering the above definition of asexuality along with a definition of sexuality from the World Health Organization, which posits sexuality as "a central aspect of being human throughout life[,] encompass[ing] sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction" (Elgie 2020; World Health Organization 2006). The inclusion of "does not" in a definition of asexuality immediately orients the definition of being or doing asexuality in opposition to being heterosexual (normal) or homosexual (more normal in expressions of sexual attraction). The connection of definitions could allude to a narrative binary where asexuality is ultimately a lack of humanity (Plummer 2019).

Asexual scholar Evelyn Elgie outlines the perils of identity in a heteronormative culture. She focuses on the language and power around who defines identity within the accepted labels when claiming an asexual narrative or sharing asexual stories requires "establish[ing] oneself and one's body as nonnormative from a standard, 'normal' baseline which is always assumed to be sexual" (2020, 17). The establishment of sexuality as a normative and natural aspect of humanity leads to the formation of an asexual identity that resists, does not, or cannot experience sexual attraction or standard sexuality. Dominant narratives can then identify asexuality as an illness, deviation from norms, or improper response. In this way, asexual identities can become both the 'ties that bind' and the 'ties that blind'" (Plummer 2019, 115).

Medicalization

Lindsay Grenier examines the connections of medicalization, classification, and standards of behaviours in individuals' sexuality as a "'disease' or 'dysfunction' which creates a new standard of 'normal'" (2014, 75). Medicalization refers to the process where healthcare officials (the state, doctors, scientists, medical communities, etc.) are granted authority over the body-minds of citizens (Elgie 2020; Foucault 1978; Grenier 2019). When medical authority and scientific "truths" are infused into a citizen's social and political experiences of everyday life, citizens become the subjects of medical authority beyond their direct experiences with healthcare institutions and structures (Elgie 2020; Foucault 1990; Grenier 2019). The nature of a heteronormative society requires that the knowledge produced by medical authorities reproduces and maintains the "truth" that the dominant narrative holds above other truths or lived stories. Medical intervention into the sex and intimate lives of citizens "puts satisfying sex lives at the center of achieving a healthy, balanced lifestyle" and encourages the widespread belief that any "deviation from a 'normal' sexual experience in which gratification is reached is seen as needing medical treatment" (Grenier 2019, 76).
Medicalization produces a dominant narrative around what healthy citizens should be. It controls how citizens are encouraged to act, behave, and look to remain "normal" and "healthy." Diverting from a heteronormative existence can lead to people being labelled as "defective" or "deviant."
Deviation from desiring sexual connections and experiences continues to be pathologized through the diagnoses, treatment, and othering of people with low-sex drives, little or no desire for sexual fornication, and lack of sexual experiences (Elgie 2020; Grenier 2019).

Topics on Asexual Narratives
Asexuality in DSM-V: Oppression of rights through dominant medical narratives

Social scholars such as Michael Foucault argue that the role of medical institutions is tocreate a scientific "truth" that is placed above all other experiences. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (hereby referred to as the DSM) acts as a tool for dispersing the "truth" developed by American doctors and medical authorities that dismisses the lived experiences and stories of asexual people (Elgie 2020). Asexual people, such as those interviewed in Mitchell and Hunnicutt's study, who admit to identifying outside of the normal sexual truths, as defined by organizations

such as the World Health Organization and American Psychiatric Association, risk medical intervention in their lives to preserve the "truth" of sexuality.

The DSM-V published in 2013 contains two diagnoses that asexual scholars have challenged. Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder and Male Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder are diagnoses that can be provided by medical professionals that identify a lack of sexual desire or sexual activity that persists across a person's life. Those who identified as asexual or shared asexual experiences wished to correct the idea that not desiring sexual attraction was a medical or mental problem. However, asexual scholars have questioned why asexual identity was required to be recognized by medical institutions to provide legitimacy and authority to asexual experiences and how it continues to uphold dominant narratives and institutional powers (Elgie 2020; Przybylo 2013). These critiques draw from similar challenges of heteronormative structures that require recognition from institutions and systems that seek to cause harm to those who identify outside of gender binaries or other than heterosexual. The two diagnoses above contain addendums that exclude people who "self-identify" as asexual (Elgie 2020; Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2019; Przybylo 2013). The recognition of asexual identities by medical authorities continues to identify asexuality as abnormal. Females and males are diagnosed with separate criteria which contributes to a heteronormative understanding of gender and sexuality. Females who experience a "life-long lasting lack of sexual desire" and males who experience "low sexual desire" must be either asexual or sick (both deviating from normal) (Elgie 2020; Parish and Hahn 2018).

Narratives regarding asexuality as something that can be explained, cured, adjusted, and normalized to better conform asexual people to heteronormative ways of experiencing and behaving on sexual attraction negatively impact people living asexual lives. Heather Mitchell and Gwen Hunnicutt "employ[ed] the narrative stories of asexual lived experience" (2018, 511) from asexual interview participants and discovered that asexual people often felt invisible, broken, and confused about their asexual lived experiences and identity, whilst residing in a Western world that prioritizes heteronormative ways of connecting through relationships based on sex. These life story interviews—that Mitchell and Hunnicutt employed to "hear about an individual's unique experience of life through their own voice and perspective" (2018, 511)—can be an opportunity to "understand the social, cultural, and historical world of participants through learning about their individual, familial, and social circumstances along with their history, experiences to date, and perspectives" (2018, 511). Providing a platform for participants to share their understandings of asexual experiences in a heteronormative culture presented an opportunity to challenge dominant narratives.

Evelyn Elgie provides a deeper understanding of the lived experiences that would lead asexual people to share stories of feeling broken by exploring the historical and current methods of pathologizing asexuality (2011). Elgie concludes with her analysis of the medicalization of asexuality, claiming that the right to exist as an asexual person relies on the recognition of dominant institutions and narratives to provide legitimacy and validation. Several of the participants interviewed in the above studies on asexuality (oral histories, narrative storytelling, and qualitative interviews) recognized that people in their lives viewed asexuality as a phase, a medical or mental condition, or a reaction to previous sexual traumas (Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2018; Sundrud 2011).

In response to being pathologized for their asexual stories and experiences, participants shared that people would tell them that they were "sick" or had a "disease" and that they would be able to experience sexual attraction and desire through medication or therapy (Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2018). People were told they must "have a hormonal imbalance" or have not yet "met the right person" and that with the right mixture of medications, professional help, and socialization they could become "normal" (Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2018; Sundrud 2011). My asexual stories resonate with the experiences of those shared in the studies. The people I value and care about (both those that are and are not a part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community) were unable to understand

and relate to my disinterest in connecting with people via sex. My relationship with my partner has been questioned as less valuable or legitimate because of the lack of sex. It is assumed that I would find a more suitable partner whom I could engage with sexually if I tried harder to conform to sexual norms. I had medical professionals offer me "solutions" that would "improve my sex drive" and mental health professionals attempt to unpack my experiences so that I may "work through" what was holding me back from a "normal" sex life. I am able to recognize that these so-called solutions are offered to me so that I can better conform to dominant narratives.
In response and resistance, I continue to share my stories and create communities where other people with asexual experiences or identities can also share their experiences. This privilege is part of my education (formal and informal) and exposure to queer and asexual narratives that advocate for the amplification and resistance of assumed "truths" of compulsory sexuality.

AVEN Counter-Narrative

Asexual stories and people encounter resistance to existing and being recognized within Western heteronormative cultures that value sexual intimacy as something natural and desirable for all adults. In response to the power of narratives that center on sex, asexual communities form resistance and question the inherent dominance of the "truth" of sexuality that is regulated by medical and other authoritarian institutions. The mobilization of asexual identities and stories can be found on the online forum and community called the Asexual Visibility and Education Network. There is a political aspect to the purpose of AVEN as the website serves to question and resist dominant norms of compulsory sexuality so that people with asexual experiences feel seen and find belonging with a group of people who resist dominant narratives. The political mobilizing power of AVEN agitated for changes to the DSM-V so that asexuality would be a valid and legitimate form of existence and not a medical or psychological disorder (Elgie 2020; Sundrud 2011). AVEN's digital powers of connection allowed people across the globe to access education and community for their lived experiences with asexuality.

The internet provides marginalized groups with a digital space where they can safely and privately engage with aspects of their identities and share stories that may be stigmatized, pathologized, or rejected by people in their everyday lives. The forums are a key part of the AVEN website and serve to facilitate the growth of asexual stories and connect people within a digital community. Ken Plummer highlights some of the risks in digital narratives as they can be easily distorted and reinvented extremely quickly and thus contribute to dominant narratives and harmful experiences for users (2019, 94). However, AVEN as a site for sharing stories about asexual experiences is crucial for people trying to better understand themselves as a contradiction to dominant narratives of heteronormativity and compulsory sexuality "since there is no singular way to embody asexuality" (Sundrud 2011, 11).
Digital narratives are extremely important to people who "learn about and develop their asexuality through online community sites, personal sites, and blogs that collectively create a communal space for asexuals to connect with other asexuals and narrate their asexual identity" (Sundrud 2011, 9).

The oral histories conducted by Janet Sundrud, the story-telling interviews by Mitchell and Hunnicutt, and my own experiences within the asexual community have highlighted the importance of digital spaces to communicate stories of asexual experiences. The process of identifying as asexual often brought people a sense of comfort, clarity, and connection with other people (Mitchell and Hunnicutt 2019; Sundrud 2011). These online platforms allowed people to ask specific questions about real lived experiences. Storytelling from people with asexual experiences was crucial as people searched for words and narratives that resonated with their experiences and identity. Many people asked others about their asexual stories to form a narrative that differed from dominant Western sex-focused narratives. People could identify similarities and a common language within a private space by engaging with others' stories and reflecting on the experiences shared via internet forums, Skype calls, blog posts, and in-person conversations and could form a collective identity. The power of a collective identity allows individuals more backing in their demands for not only recognition from institutions that

control "truths" of narratives and maintain the dominance of specific truths over others but also a restructuring of the narrative hierarchy. The digital space of AVEN and other forums for asexual people create counter-narratives that encourage people to embrace their non-normative identities and empower them as individuals and collectives.

Conclusion

This paper utilized the lens of narrative power to argue that narratives of sexuality have been employed to pathologize and separate asexual people from "normal" heteronormative societies. However, the power of narratives is also used by people who have asexual experiences when they share stories to connect and mobilize people to resist dominant narratives and norms regarding sexuality. Asexual people have successfully advocated for themselves to adjust diagnoses that are given to people who do not experience sexual desire. However, popular narratives continue to exist within medical institutions and Western cultures that view asexuality as a deviant condition or problem to be solved. There is a continued necessity for an online community and a mobilized collective identity for asexual people to receive positive recognition and educate others. My own stories as an asexual person and my experiences researching non-normative sexualities continue to face resistance from academic institutions, people in my life, and my cultural norms. By exploring the power and hierarchy of narratives, I hope to expose more people to non-normative sexualities and thus reduce the isolation and marginalization of asexual peoples and stories.

There are limitations to exploring sexual narratives in Western cultures when there are narratives and stories of human suffering and human rights violations that are happening across the globe regarding gender, sex, and race. However, I am in a position to recognize that there are muted narratives regarding asexuality and that I may be able to expose dominant narratives and represent a counter-narrative that resists heteronormativity and compulsory sexuality.

I hope that this paper has served this purpose and can function as a dignified representation of asexual stories. In 2022, there are non-normative sexualities across the globe that are facing oppression and are muted by powerful narratives. Sharing stories through digital platforms, in academic papers, and other platforms for oral histories and life experiences is a way for people to ethically engage with narratives, power, and individual identities.



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Photographer: Henry Deng

A Persistent Sacrifice

The 'Sacrificial Lamb' Effect, Women Candidates, and Underrepresentation In the 44th Parliament

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ABSTRACT: In August of 2021, Canadian Parliament was dissolved and the 44th federal election was called. Its result was a Parliament that was only marginally more representative of female and gender-diverse candidates than the last. This is in part due to the 'sacrificial lamb' effect identified by Melanee Thomas and Marc-Andre Bodet, which highlights the persistence of parties in running women and gender-diverse candidates in unwinnable or 'swing' ridings – such that they become 'sacrifices' and are destined for failure. Previous research has confirmed the presence of the 'sacrificial lamb' effect across several elections. I examine specific incidents of gender-diverse candidates being run in the 'stronghold' riding of another party, as well as the slates of candidates in several 'swing' and 'stronghold' ridings across the country. Further, I consider the likely implications of the 'sacrificial lamb' effect and the general underrepresentation of female candidates on the 44th Parliament, as well as the extent to which the 'sacrificial lamb' effect may have compromised the freeness and fairness of the 2021 campaign.
I conclude that the 'sacrificial lamb' effect continued in full force throughout the 2021 campaign, which is likely to have a detrimental impact on the representation of women's interests, specifically as they pertain to the pressing women's issues of today.

KEYWORDS: Canadian politics, Canadian Government, Political Representation, Agenda Setting, Women's Issues, Women in Politics, 2021 Federal Campaign, Canadian Parliament

The 44th federal election was called with ambiguous intentions by a government that seeks to attach itself to a distinctly feminist label (Gerster 2019). Despite this goal, the election produced a Parliament that was nearly identical to the last. This is contemptible, given that while Parliament continues to elect record numbers of women, there is a difference of about twenty percentage points between women's representation in Parliament and their share of the broader population (Montpetit 2020). Thus, I will argue that the 2021 federal election was ultimately unsuccessful at advancing women's representation, and by extension, women's interests. This is because women continued to be run in unwinnable ridings, squandering an opportunity to incorporate the perspectives of women from diverse backgrounds into Parliamentary discussion. By excluding these perspectives from Parliament, parties cemented the exclusion of women's issues from the government agenda. Within this discussion, I will consider the slate of candidates in both swing ridings and party strongholds, as well as the effects this systematic exclusion will likely have on government priorities and action.

Compared to the 2019 election, the 2021 election produced five new women-led seats, with a considerable slate of flipped or new-member seats being held by women (Equal Voice 2021a). However, while 43% of candidates across all major parties were women, only 30% of those elected were women, reflecting a substantial disconnect between candidates ran and candidates elected (Equal Voice 2021b). This demonstrates a need for all major parties to make a concerted effort to nominate women and gender-diverse candidates within their slates, particularly in party stronghold ridings to ensure their diverse perspectives are present in Parliament. Such an effort proves particularly important as Canada grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately impacted women within both economic and social spheres (Madgavkar et al. 2020). Additionally, given that under Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system, parties have less control over their final caucuses (Virgint 2016), but voters remain heavily constrained by first-past-the-post ballot structures (Trimble 2021a), it is necessary that a substantial effort by parties occurs at the nomination stage in order to ensure women's interests are effectively voiced in Parliament. In this essay, I will consider the repercussions of the underrepresentation of women and gender-diverse individuals in Parliament, as well as the flawed nomination strategies of parties that directly influence Parliamentary underrepresentation.

Nomination and the 'Sacrificial Lamb' Effect

Melanee Thomas & Marc-Andre Bodet identify a persistent phenomenon wherein women candidates are nominated as 'sacrificial lambs.' Candidates can be defined as 'sacrificial lambs' when they "run in the stronghold of one of their competitors" or serve as standard-bearers in a riding that a given party does not realistically expect to win (Thomas & Bodet 2013, 154). This phenomenon is mainly a result of flawed nomination strategies, for example, Thomas identifies the Conservative Party's strategy of both finding the 'best possible' candidate (with few other formal restrictions) and automatically re-nominating all incumbents, who are overwhelmingly more likely to be men (House of Commons Canada 2019, 57). While the New Democratic Party offers financial incentives for the successful nomination of 'affirmative action' candidates, the Liberal Party and Bloc Quebecois set targets for women's representation but have few other formal measures (Thomas & Bodet 2013, 154). Clearly, few formal mechanisms exist for the recruitment and nomination of women and gender-diverse candidates, which, when coupled by the 'sacrificial lamb' effect, contribute to a distinct underrepresentation of women and gender-diverse individuals in Parliament. Going forward, I will consider key instances of the 'sacrificial lamb' effect in the 2021 election, demonstrating its pervasiveness across electoral campaigns.

The 'Sacrificial Lamb' Effect in the 2021 Campaign

A 'stronghold' riding can be defined as one where a party gathers more than 50% of ballots for two elections in a row (Thomas & Bodet 2013, 158) or, more broadly, where one party has a sufficient edge over the others, such that it is unlikely that other parties will flip the seat. The riding of Victoria has been widely identified as an NDP stronghold, given that the NDP has won the riding in each of the last four elections with a significant plurality of the vote – their highest share at 50.8%, lowest at 33.2%, and with 44% of the vote in 2021(338 Canada 2021e). In 2021, the Conservative Party of Canada nominated Hannah

Hodson in Victoria – the party's first openly transgender candidate, and had she been elected, Parliament's first openly transgender MP (Kay 2021). For a party that has been traditionally hostile towards transgender individuals, this was an important step in increasing representation among the Conservative slate of candidates, as well as a chance to increase the diversity of perspectives represented in Parliament. However, the Conservatives have consistently failed to win a plurality in Victoria for the last four elections and were projected with a 0% chance of winning entering the 2021 campaign (338 Canada 2021e). Further, they have never exceeded 23.6% of the vote there (338 Canada 2021e). Hodson's nomination perfectly captures the unfortunate impacts of the 'sacrificial lamb' effect – her nomination provided an essential opportunity to promote tolerance and transgender acceptance, as well as affirm the importance of diverse perspectives within Conservative circles and the broader Parliamentary community. Despite this, she was nominated in a riding that the Conservatives had nearly zero chance at winning, securing her position outside Parliament Hill.

Two important swing or 'battleground' ridings can be considered: Fredericton and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill. Fredericton is a quintessential swing riding – it has seen Conservative, Liberal, and Green Party seat-holders over the last four elections (338 Canada 2021c). Yet, its slate of candidates in 2021 were overwhelmingly female, with 3 out of 4 major party candidates being women (Elections Canada 2021c). Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill has seen very close competition between the Conservatives and the Liberals over the last four elections, with each taking between 40% and 45% of the vote in the last three races, alternating between Conservative and Liberal-held seats (338 Canada 2021a). Its slate of candidates in 2021 was similarly overwhelmingly female – the 3 major parties (Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats) each ran a woman candidate (Elections Canada 2021a). A consideration of the stronghold ridings of Battle River-Crowfoot and Souris-Moose Mountain is also in order. In Battle River-Crowfoot, where the Conservative Party has garnered more than 71.3% of the vote in each of the last four elections (338 Canada 2021b), the Conservatives ran a male candidate, Damien Kurik, in their 'safe' jurisdiction, whereas both the Liberals and the New Democrats ran women as 'sacrificial lambs', given that they had a near-zero chance of achieving a plurality (Elections Canada 2021b). Further, in Souris-Moose Mountain, where the Conservatives have won with more than 70.1% of the vote in each of the last four elections, the Conservatives ran Robert Kitchen, and the NDP, who have experienced a steady decline from an 18.1% plurality in 2011, ran Hannah Ann Duerr (Elections Canada 2021d), who garnered just 8% of the vote (338 Canada 2021d).

These observations speak to three main points. Firstly, the 'sacrificial lamb' effect was certainly persistent throughout the 2021 election. This is especially concerning given both theNew Democrats' and Liberals' commitment to achieving gender parity in their caucuses, as well as their long-standing desire to be seen as feminist parties (Tremblay & Pelletier 2003, 80). While feminist concerns cannot be addressed entirely through electoral means, Karp and Banducci argue that the presence of women in Parliament can positively influence women's political engagement through heightening the importance of women's policy issues in the government agenda and increasing political efficacy among young women (Karp & Banducci 2008, 106). These, in turn, can provide a stronger vehicle through which women's interests can be addressed. Secondly, the persistence of the 'sacrificial lamb' effect into the 2021 campaign also reflects a broader need for feminist reform and initiatives, even within progressive circles. The easiest of these to implement would likely be stronger recruitment initiatives, especially in stronghold ridings, and doing away with nomination processes that favour incumbents, given that these are overwhelmingly biased towards men (House of Commons Canada 2019, 57). These would not necessarily have to be financial incentives, as the NDP currently employs, given that they may appear to exploit women's nomination for partisan financial gain. A more concerted effort on behalf of parties to seek out qualified, politically engaged women, rather than simply 'the best' candidate (given that these processes, too, are biased towards men), would certainly besufficient so long as it is solidified with formal mechanisms and is done with proper intentions (Thomas & Bodet 2013, 155).

Thirdly, it is essential to consider whether the 'sacrificial lamb' effect compromised thedegree of freeness and fairness of the 2021 campaign, as well as the degree of inherent political equality of the campaign. Bishop and Hoeffler outline several determinants of freeness and fairness, one of which is relevant to this discussion: ballot access. For proper ballot access to be fulfilled, "parties/candidates [must] get equitable treatment when applying for office" (Bishop & Hoeffler 2016, 611). Whether this was sufficiently achieved is questionable for two reasons. Firstly, some parties have nomination processes that favour incumbents, which are biased towards men and may not be considered 'equitable' treatment. Secondly, it is questionable whether the 'sacrificial lamb' effect, which has been documented extensively in feminist political literature, "constitutes equitable treatment when applying for office. If women candidates are disproportionately placed in unwinnable ridings compared to their male counterparts, can this be considered truly equitable treatment at the nomination stage? Further, it has been established that an essential component of representative democracy is, in fact, political equality (Trimble 2021b). While political equality mainly encompasses the right to vote and the right to run for office, it also consists of equal capacity to seek office (Trimble 2021b). The 'sacrificial lamb' effect certainly compromises this variable, both through its role as a deterrent for women to seek office, and its effect of disadvantaging women to the extent that they do not have the equal political capacity to seek and hold office.

Thus far, I have established that the 'sacrificial lamb' effect was persistent in the 2021 federal campaign and may have been a contributing factor to the relatively small increase in women-held seats from 2019. I will further consider the likely impacts of these results on the government agenda, as well as on the broader representativeness of Parliament.

Likely Implications for the 44th Parliament and Beyond

Jonathan Homola identifies that across Europe, the United States, and Canada, women members of government tend to diversify policy agendas more effectively than their male counterparts. For example, they often increase party focus on social justice issues, family-friendly initiatives, and feminist policies (Homola 2021, 2). This is certainly evidenced by Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland's spearheading of the universal $10/day childcare program (McCuaig 2021), and the tendency of several women MPs across party lines to call out Prime Minister Trudeau for his anti-feminist actions throughout his tenure (Maddeaux 2021). Additionally, Homola argues that governments fulfill more of their policy pledges when they employ more women in their highest ranks, suggesting that higher levels of women's representation can lead to "more effective policymaking and a stronger program-to-policy linkage" (Homola 2021, 2). With only a marginal increase in women MPs this Parliament, feminist concerns may not get as much traction as they need to make their way to the top of the government agenda. Further, this was a missed opportunity to sufficiently address women's issues relevant to our current political and economic climate, such as the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), and economic recovery in the context of a pandemic that has disproportionately impacted women (Madgavkar et al. 2020). Kubik and Bourassa argue that the MMIW crisis has been given insufficient attention by a broad range of governments, despite being used as a campaign platform point across multiple elections (Kubik & Bourassa 2016). Thus, if we consider Homola's finding that governments with women in leadership positions are both more effective at keeping their campaign promises and addressing feminist issues (Homola 2021, 2), it is to be lamented that a potential opportunity to sufficiently address this pressing crisis was wasted.



Women's representation in the 44th Parliament and beyond must also be considered in terms of its impacts on women's overall political engagement. Karp and Banducci expand upon Homola's findings, arguing that the positive policy outcomes that are an effect of increased women's political representation may foster a stronger sense of political efficacy and engagement among women in general, given that it sends a cue that politics is an "appropriate activity for women" (Karp & Banducci 2008, 111). This would likely increase the number of politically minded women who seek public office, and, as a result, exert greater pressure on governments to implement feminist concerns. Further, in his study of the voting patterns of racialized individuals, Randy Besco argues that affinity voting, or voting based on one's shared characteristics, could form an essential base of support in terms of advancing minority interests, and act as a counterbalance to discrimination (Besco 2019, 4). It is essential to consider the impacts of this finding on women's representation. While it is unclear whether the Canadian electorate discriminates against women candidates (Young et al 2006, 3), encouraging women of differing backgrounds to unite as a voting bloc in support of women's interests, similar to Besco's suggestion of a broad coalition of racialized voters (Besco 2019, 6), could counterbalance the 'sacrificial lamb' effect seen in the 2021 election, which will likely persist into the future.

Addressing Concerns

Firstly, it is important to note that this analysis is not to discredit nor gloss over women candidates who do run in stronghold ridings. They certainly play an important role in ensuring women's voices are effectively represented in Parliament. The goal is to emphasize the need to increase this practice, such that more women are cemented into the Parliamentary makeup and are not used as disposable pawns in a male-dominated system.

Secondly, it may be argued that the strategy of nominating 'the best' candidate is ultimately preferable, given that doing otherwise may imply that women are not 'the best' candidates, or may incline women to think they are not being sought out for their merits, but rather for their token status. Both arguments have merit, and I will address them as follows. In terms of continuing to employ strategies that seek out 'the best' candidate, these are not necessarily harmful on principle, and they do have a clear aim to promote a general sense of equality across racial and gendered lines. However, these strategies are rife with internal bias, which is what ultimately leads to negative outcomes for women and gender-diverse candidates. It is known that when men are in positions of party and constituency leadership, they are more likely to nominate male candidates. The same is true for women in positions of leadership (Thomas & Bodet 2013, 155). However, Cheng and Tavits note that women constituency and party presidents are significantly in the minority (Cheng & Tavits 2011, 464), meaning male-to-male bias has an unequal presence in the party selection process. Hence, strategies that seek out women candidates are needed to mitigate this bias. These are not done with the intention of discrediting the merits of women candidates, but rather, to create an equal playing field among qualified male and female candidates. These would further the necessary democratic objective of political equality and ensure that the candidate selection process is not disproportionately biased towards one demographic (Trimble 2021b), ensuring that 'the best' candidate is chosen without implicit favoritism.

Conclusion

While the 2021 campaign was successful in increasing the number of women-held seats in Parliament, it was still plagued by many issues detrimental to women's representation and interests. Throughout this essay, I have sought to argue that the campaign was unsuccessful in advancing women's representation and interests by highlighting the persistence of the 'sacrificial lamb' effect and its impacts on the fairness of the campaign, as well as the likely implications of the effect on the government agenda. Further, I have analyzed party practices that contribute to the 'sacrificial lamb' effect and offered suggestions as to how parties can mitigate this effect at the nomination stage. The 'sacrificial lamb' effect continued to influence the 2021 campaign, and it will not be diminished unless parties make substantial efforts to nominate women and gender-diverse candidates. Pressing women's issues essential to political progress will not be sufficiently addressed unless women's representation in Parliament is increased, which can be best achieved under our current electoral system by the concerted efforts of parties. The future of women's representation under single-member plurality is in the hands of party policy, and it is essential to look to this area should we want to achieve sufficient political and economic progress.

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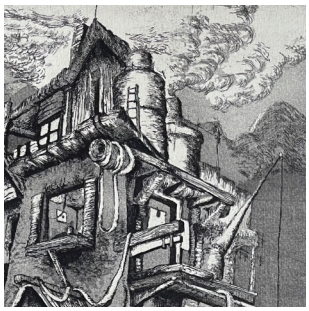









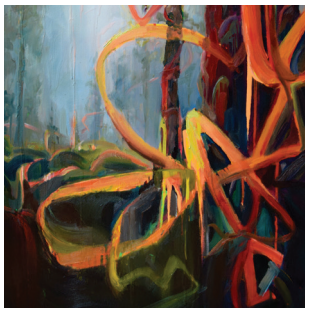



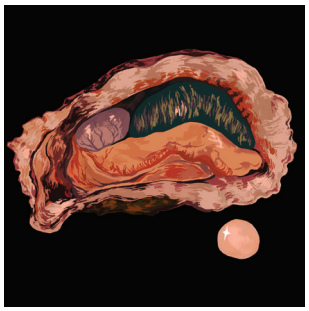



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