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Gregory R Bedell

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Qurat-ul-Ain
Ammad Iqbal
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Zoe Ward

Design and Layout

Gregory R Bedell

Photography Credit

Ramy Elhoufy

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asfa.ca

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Notes on editors

Preface

Between Arts and Science is an interdisciplinary academic journal produced by Concordia University's Arts and Science Federation of Associations (ASFA). Each year ASFA's Vice-President of Academic and Loyola Affairs, ASFA's Academic Committee, and a board of editors work together to produce a body of work that seeks to empower the undergraduate academic community of Concordia's Faculty of Arts and Science. This year we are pleased to present eight articles from a range of subjects that we feel embody the great academic potential of our fellow undergraduates.

The ASFA is rooted in a belief that every student benefits from a strong community, and it is from this belief that our journal derives its purpose. By displaying the hard work of undergraduates from a wide array of fields in one publication we offer up the chance for students to be presented with ideas and concepts that they would otherwise not be exposed to. In doing so, we hope to not only instill a sense that our fields are closer than they seem, but also that it is only when we understand one another that we can begin to truly tackle the many issues that we are present in our current world.

As Editor-in-Chief I am proud to present *Between Arts and Sciences, Volume 3*, and hope that you the reader not only enjoy the incredible work of our students, but are also inspired by our community to further pursue your own interests from new angles.

Gregory R Bedell

Editor-in-Chief, *Between Arts and Science*

Vice-President of Academic and Loyola Affairs

“Historical Ethnocentrism: The Hyksos in Ancient Egypt”

Emilie Charron

The Ancient Egyptian civilization can credit its long existence to its social norms, which highly value stability through tradition. At the center of this worldview was the concept of Ma’at, which was personified by a goddess, that emphasized order through ritual, repetition and conformity. The Ancient Egyptians’ devotion to order, and subsequent fear of chaos, was exemplified by their belief that all unknown or unfamiliar events and people were deemed chaotic. This can expand to how Egyptians contextualized themselves in relation to others in the Old World. This is best represented by the chronology of Ancient Egypt, where the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms are viewed as the most stable and conveniently deemed quintessentially “Egyptian.” Juxtaposed with the Intermediate periods, which are characterized as chaotic due to foreign rulers, it becomes clear that this ancient civilization had a skewed outlook on its history. The Egyptian perspective was particularly biased against the Hyksos rulers of the 15th Dynasty during the Second Intermediate Period. Their disdain for being under “foreign” rule under the Hyksos had more to do with their own cultural biases and ethnocentrism than a validated fear of being overpowered by invaders. The Hyksos were often demonized and, to some extent, eliminated from historical records as they tarnished the Egyptian legacy. The compromised history of the Hyksos will be examined through an analysis of the migrational pretext which led to their rise to power, the Egyptian concept of race, and through an investigation of artifacts and texts which demonstrate the Hyksos assimilation into the mainstream society.

The origins of the Hyksos are still rather vague, and no one

is certain of their ethnic origins, as their material culture seems to be an amalgamation and possibly a variation of Mediterranean customs. Their linguistic history is Semitic but can be linked to a combination of different origins: Hurrian, Indo-Iranian, Hittite, and Hebrew. Contemporary scholars acknowledge that, although they cannot identify their specific ethnic background, ceramic remains from Palestine have a resemblance to those found in the Delta, particularly the Hyksos capital of Avaris, circa 1700 BCE.

One perhaps can go back to the precedent Middle Kingdom to notice a shift in population, where an influx of people from the Levantine Coast settled in the Nile Delta to work in developmental projects for the state. These individuals of seemingly Canaanite origins settled particularly in the Fayum oasis, not far from the Delta itself. The discovery of copper weapons, Palestinian-style ceramics, and horse burials at the site of Tel el-Dab’a (Avaris) demonstrate the presence of foreigners in the predominantly Egyptian area at the time.¹ While many would have been doing physical labour for the Egyptian state, some formed economic ties by engaging in trade. Papyrus texts pertaining to the Kahun pyramid town under Senusret II’s reign write of aamu (Asiatics), who served in homes, in religious centers, and in the army. Bard and other scholars would argue that the Asiatics’ presence from the 12th Dynasty onwards would lead to a patient and opportunistic seize of power two centuries later, as opposed to the previously held theory of a swift military takeover. The Levantine peoples first did not appear to be “an internal threat”, but as time progressed into the 13th Dynasty, the situation changed. Egypt’s weakened hold of mining in the Sinai Peninsula, along with increased numbers of Asiatics in Tel el-Dab’a, would suggest an

1 Bard. 2015. 213.

impending shift in the power dynamics.² As early as the mid-20th century, scholars such as T. Säve-Söderbergh point towards a disproportionately small number of individuals that eventually become the ruling class of the 15th Dynasty. He writes:

....The Hyksos were only a little group of foreign dynasts rather than a numerous people with a special civilization [...] it also seems as if the Hyksos rule only meant a change of political leaders in Egypt, and not a mass-invasion of a numerically important foreign ethnic element.³

This excerpt would help dispel the previously held assumptions that the Hyksos violently overthrew the precedent rulers, which was partly perpetuated by Egyptian historical propaganda.

It is now increasingly thought that the Asiatics that settled in the Nile Delta began to gain power in local government and religious centers. As their role in the community became more important, they began to replace native Egyptians in positions of authority. While there is still debate among scholars regarding the true chronology of the Hyksos ruling class as heads of state, it is possible that pharaohs from the 13th Dynasty shared the same heritage as the Asiatics who would come to rule in the 15th.⁴ Again, this can still be speculative since dating in the Second Intermediate Period was not exact. The era's 13th to 17th dynasties overlapped and routinely fought each other for power, with many records of that time period being compromised when pertaining to the Hyksos.

It is by no coincidence that the Asiatics who eventually become the Hyksos chose to settle by the Nile. Egypt had previously

forged contact with the Levantine coast by means of trade of natural resources such as lumber. The Lebanese city of Byblos had extensive contact with Egyptians as a trading center during the Middle Kingdom, where its heads of state eventually incorporated hieroglyphs and Egyptian names for diplomatic advantages. Sphinxes likened to Amenemhet III have been found in Byblos. While reciprocity of gift exchanges between Levantine city-states and the Egyptian state occurred, the pharaohs displayed hostility towards the Asiatics outside the context of the trade. Expansion into foreign territory went beyond the Eastern Mediterranean as fortifications were built in Nubia under Senusret III's reign.⁵ Lower Nubia, in particular, had populations of C-group people dating back to the Old Kingdom, when the area was necessary for the Egyptians' use of gold.

During the time of Herodotus, Ancient Egypt was under one of its final stages of instability, the Late Period. His informants further perpetuated the biased accounts of history: "The past, moreover, served a propagandistic function in an age of foreign domination by recalling the glories of Egypt's native kings."⁶ One can link the commonly-held attitudes towards their own foreign rulers to a more broad sense of how they viewed the "Others" they encountered in the world. They were hardly alone in having this mentality as the Ancient Greeks and Romans were also known for having a similar sense of superiority.

While coming into contact different peoples, the Egyptians tended to place themselves at the top of the hierarchy of races, which can often be demonstrated through depictions of various ethnicities in Egyptian art. The difference between the Egyptians and the latter Mediterranean civilizations was that the Egyptian icono-

2 Bard. 2015. 188.

3 Säve-Söderbergh. 1951. 56.

4 Van Seters. 1966. 116.

5 Freeman. 2014. 56.

6 Moyer. 2002. 80.

graphic works placed a tremendous amount of emphasis and detail into the differences amongst ethnic groups. What some would consider methodological classification of peoples into categories, others would deem stereotypical depictions of races. Whichever is the case, it seems as though the Egyptians made an effort to differentiate various peoples of the Old World in a way unparalleled by others at the time.

A late 19th century work (and its accompanying illustrations) by Reginald Stuart Poole does an extensive analysis of prominent examples of ethnic classification in Egyptian art. While Egyptians frequently made use of the more traditional, stoic, refined, and idealized profiles when portraying their own peoples in their two-dimensional or low relief works, the depictions of other groups have arguably exaggerated features. The best specimens of these depictions can be found in the tomb of Seti, dating to the 13th century BCE during the New Kingdom. The first figure is a quintessential depiction of an Egyptian with delicate features, dreadlocks, and a goatee. Semitic peoples (either Hittite, Assyrian, or Persian) are depicted with stylized beards, headwear, and prominent brows, as shown in figure 2. Figures 5 and 6 allegedly depict Northerners (presumably Aegean) with heavily adorned hairstyles and facial hair, along with protruding and curved noses, sloping foreheads, and pronounced chins (Appendix 1). Africans are depicted in figures 11 and 12 as possibly Libyan and Nubian, respectively. Figure 11 depicts a person who is shown wearing a feathered headdress, with facial characteristics of a protruding nose and mouth. Figure 12 would be deemed a rather common depiction of a sub-Saharan African, with a rounded nose and large, well-defined lips (Appendix 2). It depicts sub-Saharan Africans also wearing a leather-cap helmet that

is attributed to Nubian culture.⁷ A Theban limestone relief dating to the New Kingdom is a well-preserved depiction of the Canaanites that were conquered by the Egyptians and subsequently became part of the Egyptian Empire (Appendix 3). It would be fair to liken this depiction to how the Hyksos would be viewed as well, given that Canaan is the closest ethnicity scholars are able to link to the Asiatic pharaohs.⁸

The biggest misconception of the period under Hyksos rule is the notion that it is a chaotic time given the Egyptian perspective that considers foreign rule to be attributed to this negative characteristic. For the early part of the 15th Dynasty, Egypt would be in relative peace considering that its leadership was fractured -- with two heads of government, one in Avaris and another in Thebes. Diplomatic exchanges of material culture have been found in both the sites of the Hyksos kings and the Theban pharaohs. One noted example would be of the clay sealings commonly attributed to Hyksos king Khayan, found in the Upper Egyptian site of Tell Edfu, which was under Theban control (Appendix 4). Moeller's article contextualizes the early part of the Second Intermediate Period by highlighting the interactions between the kings of overlapping dynasties. She writes:

The discovery at Tell Edfu of forty-one clay sealings [...] sheds new light on the early part of this period, prior to the war between the Hyksos and the Thebans... [It] implies economic or diplomatic contacts between the north and the capital of the second Upper Egyptian province, Tell Edfu, in the south.⁹

7 Poole. 1887. 373 - 374.

8 Atwood. 2017. 29.

9 Moeller. 2015. 12.

It is unfortunate that most of the sealings are in poor condition and often fragmented, as demonstrated by photographs and corresponding illustrations of a specimen in Moeller's article. The discovery is among the few examples that demonstrate Khayan's willingness to keep peace within a fragmented Egypt. Khayan's palace was decorated with a hybrid of Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian stylization. He wanted to be king of all of Egypt and tried to prove so by incorporating the "traditional style of his adopted country", along with extending the border of his territory to Memphis.¹⁰ Another Hyksos king, Apepi, had his daughter marry into the Theban royal family -- perhaps to quell any doubts of diplomatic ties. The Hyksos even likened one of their deities, Baal, to an Egyptian counterpart, Seth, who was also a storm god. Interestingly enough, the 'native' Canaanites also incorporated the Egyptian deity Horus into their own narratives involving Baal (Seth).¹¹

Despite their efforts to coexist with the southern pharaohs of Thebes, the situation became increasingly hostile in the later part of the Second Intermediate Period. The Hyksos eventually created a strategic alliance with the Nubians, and essentially leads to the Theban state to be surrounded. Kamose managed to fend off attacks from the Kushites, and decided to move northwards. Seqenenre Tao, Kamose, and Ahmose proceeded to try to claim back Lower Egypt. Kamose's son, Ahmose I, finally succeeded in defeating the Hyksos, driving them to the other side of the Sinai and back into their homeland in the Levant.¹² The Hyksos capital, Avaris, was then claimed by the Thebans under the rule of Ahmose I, and new palaces were built in the grand city. Despite being architecturally distinct from any previous Egyptian capital, the New Kingdom pharaohs contin-

10 Freeman. 2014. 61.

11 O'Callaghan. 1952. 43-45.

12 Freeman. 214. 62.

ued the city's tradition of hybridization of eastern Mediterranean culture. Minoan style frescoes were made, possibly hinting at Ahmose's marriage to a Cretan princess. The most noted example is the bull leaping fresco, which is strikingly reminiscent of the one in Knossos depicting the same subject matter (Appendix 5). It is rather surprising that the Egyptians would continue this eclectic style of wall art, considering their keen interest in a sense of traditionalism. This perhaps speaks more to the importance of Avaris and its strategic location by the Delta, a location Egyptians desired to depict as a cosmopolitan trade center. The Oxford Handbook of Archaeology emphasizes the importance of the city with this passage: "Well before (as well as during) its acme as the Hyksos capital, it hosted a heterogeneous mix of indigenous and incoming people and customs."¹³ It was advantageous for the Theban to further promote this cultural intermingling, as they continued to benefit from the trade liaisons created under Hyksos rule.

The Hyksos dynasty of the Second Intermediate Period exemplifies the problems of objectivity in the recording of history. It highlights one of many instances where primary and secondary sources from Egypt were far from unbiased. The perspective of the Egyptians was one of great power over a long period of time, where they were able to shift the narrative and make history malleable to benefit themselves and demonize the Hyksos. Even though the end of the Second Intermediate Period ended violently but in victory for the Thebans, one cannot only consider their account of the events that transpired. This presents issues for archaeologists who want to find nuance, as they have to do more work and read between the lines of how certain people are depicted. One must note that the Egyptians are hardly alone in the manipulation of history to fit their

13 Cunliffe, Gosden, Joyce. 2009. 703.

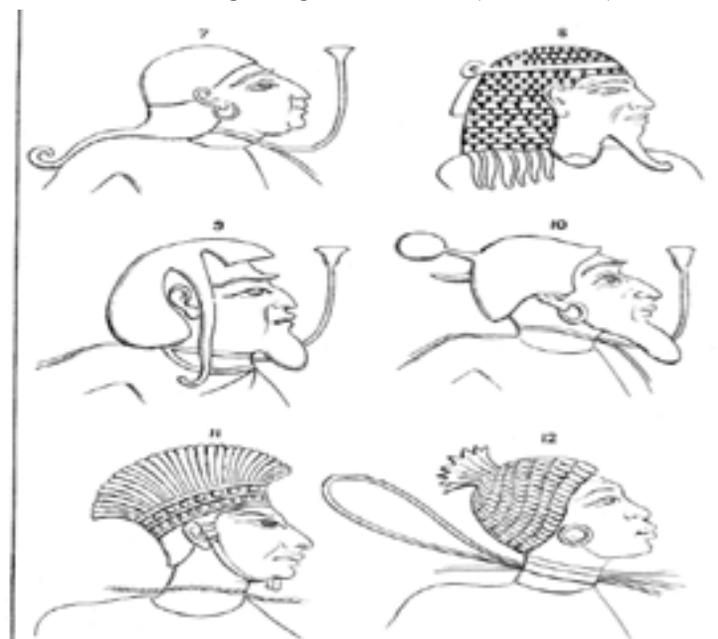
ethnocentric view of historical events. No matter how rightfully dismissed or unjustifiably vilified the Hyksos have been, one can argue that the Egyptians greatly benefited from their presence both before and after their reign. It would be fair to credit the Asiatic migration and settlement in the Delta with Egypt's adaptation to horse-drawn chariots, composite bows, along with an outward gaze and increased interaction within the Old World. This ultimately leads to a paradoxical attitude of the Egyptian pharaohs in the New Kingdom, as they looked to extend themselves into the world by creating an empire, while still maintaining suspicions of others.

Appendix of Illustrations

Appendix 1, from left to right: Figures 1, 2, 5, and 6 (Poole. 1887)



Appendix 2, from left to right: Figures 11 and 12 (Poole. 1887)



Appendix 3: Theban limestone-relief depiction of defeated Canaanites (Atwood. 2017.)



Appendix 4: Hyksos Sealings from Tell Edfu (Moeller. 2015.)



Appendix 5: Bull-leaping fresco in Avaris (McInerney. 2011)



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The Criminal: A Gendered Depiction of an Erotic Saint

Kayla Fanning

Michael Field's "Saint Sebastian", Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, and Jean Genet's *A Thief's Journal* engage themes of saintliness in order to convey the intricate nature of transgression as a means of self-betterment. In sum, these texts view laws and punishment as necessary evils; ones that are an essential part of the path to saintliness. The editors' footnote in Field's reader explains that Saint Sebastian was a Roman martyr associated with nineteenth century masculinity, masochism, and homosexuality (Field 94). Homosexuality and punishment epitomize the ability of sins to spiritualize the sinner through love and sorrow. In short, this paper examines the literary devices used in order to convey the relationship between homosexuality, erotica, and saintliness in all three of these literary pieces. Furthermore, this examination reveals that the criminal is at once saint and sinner, that the ideal masculine is situated in proximity to the feminine on the gender spectrum, and that the criminal body, through a discourse of punishment, is eroticized.

Firstly, the criminal is described, through the use of paradox, as both saint and sinner simultaneously. Saintliness is not a state; it is instead the moral procedure leading to the goal (Genet 215). Wilde and Genet frequently proclaim that they do not regret the life of pleasure they have led; they can only regret appealing to society for help. The 'crime' all three subjects are guilty of is the performance of homosexual acts. The argument is that these texts view homosexuality as akin to saintliness. A day on which a criminal does not weep in prison is a day his heart has turned to stone, not a day of happiness (Wilde 132). Ergo, the sinner is happiest in sorrow since it is the gateway feeling to humility and saintliness. Wilde writes:

"Christ's aim was certainly not to transform an interesting thief into a tedious honest man" (Wilde 132), and that is so because Christ is said to despise the practical. And so, the tediously honest or heterosexual man is further from the saint than the criminal or homosexual. Wilde describes suffering as a very long moment where time revolves around one circle of pain rather than progress. This occurs in a space where the criminal is forced to live by "inflexible laws of an iron formula" (Wilde 11). The martyr also lives a life of constant sorrow; the undoubtedly religious often live by a series of strict rules. Where there is sorrow there is holy ground (Wilde 16). Therefore, in *De Profundis* Wilde alludes to the saintly qualities of the convict. Suffering evolves in a circular motion of time that closely resembles the seasonal motion of nature where the only season is that of sorrow (Wilde 12). Presently, the criminal/natural is juxtaposed with the law abiding/progressive or materialistic. Genet argues that saintliness is defined by turning pain to good account or forcing the devil to be God (Genet 205). Likewise, a circular motion is developed where sorrow or pain is vacuumed within the self in order to approach divinity. The sinner must willingly transform himself into saint, hence embodying both simultaneously.

Moreover, humility can only be acquired by surrendering everything that one has through sacrifice (Wilde 26), and humility in the criminal is their frank acceptance of all experiences (Wilde 67). Sacrifice being the ultimate virtue of saintliness, the criminal sacrifices his freedom in order to be true to his nature (Genet 215). Wilde states that the two main turning points in his life were when his father sent him to Oxford and when society sent him to prison (Wilde 34). Oxford gave him the independence, knowledge, and confidence allowing him to create art and live for pleasure. Prison opened his heart and mind to the sorrows of the soul, which led

him to acceptance, and brought him closer to the divine. Genet writes: “the more I love Lucien the more I lose my taste for theft and thieves” (Genet 235), and thus he leaves Lucien. This can be interpreted as a need to continuously sacrifice comfort in order to gradually approach saintliness. Additionally, Genet worships his lovers for their sin and imperfections similarly to the worship of classical gods. Christ views sin and suffering as beautiful and holy modes of perfection, as long as the sinner repents (Wilde 114). The moment of repentance is, in reality, the turning point of the sinners’ life (Wilde 115). Repentance and humility are consequently in association with one another; and neither can be fully attained or understood without experiencing prison (Wilde 116). Accordingly, to accept a particularly painful experience without shame is rendering it other from the present, and categorizing it as past; therefore, acceptance is a form of repentance. On another note, in *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler discusses Douglas’ idea that all social systems are vulnerable at their margins, and all margins are thus considered dangerous and transgressive (Butler 132). The saint and the sinner are liminal characters; the saint is the border between divinity and humanity, and the sinner is at the margin of evil and good hence both transgress the norm. The world views the saint as being the nearest possible approach to the perfection of God and Christ views sinners as the nearest approach to the perfection of man (Wilde 113). Hence, the criminal is conclusively saint and sinner simultaneously considering the evidence that meditates upon the prison experience as necessary to spiritual achievement.

Comparatively, Field uses paradox in “Saint Sebastian” to the same effect. This poem is steadily in conversation with Wilde and Genet. Field writes:

Yet throughout this bold rebellion of the saint

Noonday’s brilliant air has carried no complaint.

Lo, across the solitude

Of the storm two white,

Little clouds obtrude

Storm-accentuating light! (Field lines 86-91).

This quote infers that the nature of the saint requires rebellion; the rebel is predisposed to sacrifice. The rebels also transgress the authority of the State and are often labeled criminals. Wilde says that those in a state of rebellion are incapable of receiving grace since the mood of rebellion closes up the channels of the soul and shuts out heaven (Wilde 62). Hence, reaching saintliness is necessary for the rebel who hopes to ever approach the divine. Within these ideas a paradox emerges wherein the criminal or rebel must embody the qualities of a saint and a sinner to remain true to his nature. They thrive in nocturnal repressed spaces and network among themselves similar to criminals as described in *A Thief’s Journal*. The clouds in the sky disrupt the solitude of the storm. An oxymoron is used in order to emphasize the paradoxical nature of storm/sinner and light/saint; sinner being equivalent to transgressor.

Secondly, Genet, Field and Wilde’s ideal masculine is established and maintained through its proximity to saintliness; this ideal masculine is located on a spectrum of gender in proximity to the feminine. Wilde writes: “I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character” (Wilde 23), and Genet says: “I accumulate rash acts” (Genet 206). These quotes are comparable with Butler’s rendition of gender identity. She mentions that early feminist movements and ideals originate from a firm belief in pre-existing binary genders (Butler 1). She describes gender identity as a *repeated stylization of the flesh*, which is a set of repeated acts that create a seemingly natural appearance. It is an ongoing practice

where, even when identity seems to stabilize, its insistence on practice sustains it and is forcibly regulated by social means (Butler 33). Correspondingly, *De Profundis* narrates existence within an implicit acknowledgment of the actuality of gender fluidity. Christ felt that life was changeable, fluid, active, and that allowing it to be stereotyped in any way was death (Wilde 105). Gender is never explicitly discussed in *De Profundis*, however gendered pronouns are sometimes used which assume a certain understanding of the two culturally dependent extremities of the gender spectrum. For example, sorrow and poverty are personified and feminized through the use of gendered pronouns, and allegories; thereby, feminine characteristics epitomize self-betterment. The extremities, being the masculine and feminine, encompass a multitude of widely known cultural characteristics and qualities. Subversion of these categorized and controlling qualities can be done only by those aware of the culturally constructed confinements. In addition, Genet states that he could see the violence that animated him, the accumulation of all his criminal acts, in his facial features and identity (Genet 86). This accumulation of crime, as much as lovers, defines his masculinity.

Withal, love, submission, and interiority are key features of a saintly existence; all of which are canonical feminine characteristics. Love is described as the only way to approach the feet of God which is why Christ is viewed as the leader of poets and lovers (Wilde 80). Submission is implicitly essential to achieve saintliness; the saint submits to God in a similar fashion to the woman's submission to man. Genet writes: "I don't like him, but his calmness masters me" (Genet 15). He often describes moments where he surrenders to a lover, sexually or not; this surrender is intrinsically associated with femininity. Similarly to sorrow and poverty, the sound of love is personified through its embodiment in Christ. Arguably, sorrow

and poverty are pre-requisites to an experience of pure love. This mode of situating masculinity is a historical possibility materialized through a semi-repetition of various corporeal styles. This repetition is a reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of already socially established meanings; it is a ritualized form of their legitimization (Butler 140). Wilde and Genet use the Christian narrative in order to project the impossibility of organically living as conflicting binary genders. Christ's depiction of values, and individualist notions of emotional exertion demonstrate the rationale of a more feminized masculine. Also, Genet ritualizes his love encounters in a way that strengthens his soul; he must continuously meet new lovers as a means to approach saintliness. This absorption of experience and its internal transformation into emotional fuel is rooted in individualism; renouncing reason and focusing on the internal are classic feminine ways of internalizing knowledge. According to Battersby, in female experience an inner space is at the center of their despair and fulfillment because women experience their bodies as empty containers (Battersby 346). Based upon the deeply rooted conception that women are vessels used to perpetuate the human species, the feminine body and psyche go through a multitude of inner transformations. Mirroring this concept, Genet says that the body is free of all distinguishing signs; it is a shell emptied of its manhood (Genet 206). Hence, a masculinity rooted in individualist characteristics is intrinsically feminized.

Moreover, Wilde amused himself by being a man of fashion before being imprisoned (Wilde 22). He described his convict clothing as the dreadful prison dress that makes sorrow grotesque to look at (Wilde 34). In *Gender Trouble*, Butler discusses Foucault's idea that, in the context of prisons, the strategy is not to enforce a repression of desire but instead to compel their bodies to represent the prohib-

itive laws as part of their identity (Butler 134). The dreadful prison uniforms compel the body to internalize its transgressiveness; in doing so, the body rejects the dress and renders it loathsome. This forces the mind to confront this rejection which may translate to an overt obsession with dress. This obsession with clothing is a stereotypically feminized fascination. Captivatingly, Genet opens the text by saying: “convicts’ garb is stripped pink and white” (Genet 9). This opening not only renders the body important, but also emphasizes the significance of the ways we dress the body. Equivalently, the relation between flowers and convicts is defined by the fragility of the former as being similar to the brutal intensity of the latter; the materiality, the dressing, of the flower is evoked by its color and roughness (Genet 9). The petals themselves can be interpreted as dress and body at once. According to Wilde, Christ is the first person to say people should live flower-like lives (Wilde 104). To live life parallel to a flower could mean to live in the present, to respond and listen to the physicality of the body. Field writes: “Of a heaven that takes hyacinthine hue from a storm that wellnigh breaks” (Field 4-6); the rich purplish blue of hyacinthine is used to describe a heavenly sky that is on the edge of breaking into a storm. Blue often symbolizes virginity while purple is associated with royalty and power. The storm can be interpreted as a transgression; thus, the state is transgressed by the shadow of a storm all the while, the sky merges the saintly and the powerful. In Western culture, flowers are generally associated with the fragility and superficiality of the feminine; therefore, the ideal life, regardless of gender, seems to revolve around a stereotypically feminized disposition.

Comparatively, Field writes:

At his feet a mighty pillar lies reversed;

So the virtue of his sex is shattered, cursed:

Here is martyrdom and not

In the arrows’ string;

This the bitter lot

His soul is questioning (Field 74-79).

This quote suggests a reversal of something thought to be rigid and unbending. Immediately after this rigid construction is associated with sex; thus it is viable to infer that the rigid construct now reversed, and in ruins, relates to social gender constructions. The saints’ sex is deemed cursed and he is labeled a martyr; this suggests a form of self-inflicted pain. This can be understood as an acceptance of punishment as seen in *De Profundis* and *A Thief’s Journal*. The homosexual transgresses gendered sexual categories. According to this interpretation, the soul is questioning the rigidity, and absolute nature of gender categories conforming to social law.

Thirdly, through a discourse of punishment, the sinner is eroticized. In *De Profundis* and *A Thief’s Journal* interiority is sexualized through the use of allegory. Wilde writes: “there is nothing that stirs in the whole world of thought to which sorrow does not vibrate in terrible and exquisite pulsations” (Wilde 16). Sorrow and despair lead to the revelation of humility (Wilde 25). Therefore, sorrow feels terrible to the senses, but eventually leads to an awe-inspiring ecstasy of nearly orgasmic nature; the revelation of humility is the moment where sinner tentatively transforms into saint. Excitement is due to the interior assumption of being criminal and victim at once (Genet 15). Hence, excitement can be viewed as a revelation of the flesh. Genet states that erotic play discloses a nameless world revealed by the nocturnal language of lovers (Genet 9); similarly, Wilde believes the soul should always be waiting for the voice of a lover (Wilde 112). Through comparison, Genet’s statement can be interpreted as an allegory where the nameless world is both interiority and the noctur-

nal sphere at once. Words whispered at night and forgotten by day (Genet 9) could be referring to the continuous thinking done by the criminal in prison; therefore, the language use renders the interior erotic through dualism of soul and lover.

Additionally, in *A Thief's Journal* and "Saint Sebastian" the physicality of the criminal is eroticized through punishment. Genet believes that dousing hardens men, since when they are beaten something in them must harden to endure the physical hardship (Genet 12). As previously mentioned, their bodies are compelled to represent the prohibitive laws as part of their identity (Butler 134). Therefore, the hardening is not only in reference to the mind or heart, but also to the corporeality of the body. The beauty, read goodness, of the criminal depends upon the beauty and strength of the body, moral vigor, and punishment. The body is important because it textualizes the labor of the flesh, moral vigor refers to being capable of accepting a destiny of transgression, and punishment is the intrinsic quality, which allows the criminal to glory in sin (Genet 11). Accordingly, Field writes:

Captive, stricken through by darts, yet armed with
power
That resents the coming on of its last hour,
Sound in muscle is the boy,
Whom his manhood fills
With an acrid joy,
Whom its violent pressure thrills (Field 61-67).

In this quote, Saint Sebastian is publically punished for his crimes that remain unknown but can be inferred to be homosexual acts. Paradox is used in order to invoke an erotic tone in the last four lines. He is armed with power induced by punishment; power translates to the muscular quality of his body. The reference to his manhood

holds sexual resonances. The oxymoron in the last line is used in order to demonstrate the contradictory nature of punishment and pleasure all the while confirming the existence of a connection between the two. Furthermore, Field writes:

Massive is his mouth; the upper lip is set
In a pained, protesting curve: his eyes have met
God within the darkening sky
And dispute His will,
Dark, remorselessly
Fervent to dispute it still (Field 49-54).

This quote substantiates the relationship between the saint and the rebel. The saint is in contact with God and challenges even the certainty of his existence or at least the soundness of his will. "His will" could also translate to the will of the head of State. The transgressive character of the saint incites punishment which is the core erotic quality. His ability to still transgress even after punishment highlights what Genet calls an aesthetic of violence. In other words, violence being a boldness lying idle an enamored with danger (Genet 14). Also, it strengthens Genet's statement that the criminal loves crime for the penalty involved (Genet 12). The mouth draws attention to the highly sexualized aspects of the body.

To conclude, *De Profundis*, *A Thief's Journal*, and "Saint Sebastian" use diction, paradox and allegory to demonstrate the convoluted parallel between homosexual, criminal and saint positioned as rebel. All argue that the criminal is saintly since sacrifice links them together. According to these texts, the ideal masculine is repeatedly feminized through the use of Butler's notion of a *repeated stylization of the flesh* and other literary devices. An aspect of interior and physical submission in the homosexual and saint reveals the correspondence between masculine and feminine entities. The ways in which dress-

ing the body and flower-like lives are deemed imperative to a construction of the criminals' identity demonstrates a fusion between, and deconstruction of gender extremities. Interiority and physicality are eroticized; the buildup of sorrow and humility is used as a means of ecstatic release and the body of the criminal is meant to mirror the punishment exerted upon it. A hardening occurs that is reminiscent of sexual intercourse. All three texts use Christian narratives to explore transgressive sexualities; however, especially in *De Profundis*, the feminine is often described as a mere means to an ideal male dominated end.

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An Analysis of The Québec Charter of Values

April Tardif-Lévesque

In its short-lived mandate, the Parti Québécois (PQ) introduced its controversial Québec Charter of Values, commonly known as *La Charte*, which dominated public discussion for the most part of that year. There was talk of this being some form of rebellion against Canadian federalism on the part of Québec Nationalists seeking to reject the multiculturalist principles and policies of the Canadian government, but this paper will go into greater detail on how the Charter of Values was more than an age-old separatism-fueled debate. This harsh sentiment toward immigrants of religious-minority is not one that sprung up at the time of the Charter's introduction, but one that has been simmering on the back-burner of Québec's political history for a prolonged period of time. While some argue that this was a legitimate expression of a need to protect Québec heritage and the secular values of the state, the context of Québec's *laïcité*, its efforts to preserve prior cultural norms, and how much protection is needed to sustain Québec heritage would suggest otherwise. This paper will simultaneously seek to examine the roots of the discourse on Québec values and culture, as well as the goals of its secular society, from both the perspectives of those supporting the Charter and those who oppose it. The aim ultimately is to shed light on what led up to the Charter's abandonment, despite overwhelming public support and what kind of reverberations are still simmering.

The Charter of Values and Religion

The *Charte des Valeurs du Québec* was introduced in September of 2013 by the Parti Québécois minority government, whose mandate lasted from 2012-2014; the Charter was abandoned in 2014, when the PLQ (Parti libéral du Québec) took office (Iacovino 2015, 41). The Charter declared that no state employee, or employee of any institution receiving any kind of state assistance or money, is permitted to openly wear conspicuous religious symbols (Bakali 2015, 413). What was defined as 'conspicuous' was illustrated in informational brochures that had been circulated, de-

pecting the *hijab*, the *kippah*, the *niqab* (*burqa* implied by default along with it), large neck crosses, and the Sikh turban as forbidden items to be worn in the context of these professions. In the section containing examples of what was deemed to be 'non-conspicuous,' acceptable forms of religious symbols were depicted as including a small cross necklace, a pair of stud earrings portraying the Islamic symbols of the moon and star, and a small ring with featuring the Star of David (Authier 2013). This immediately exposes the disconnect between, and unrealistic grasp of, religion and culture that the creators of the Charter possessed. They could not have blindly assumed that a hijab-wearing individual would simply remove her headscarf and buy herself a pair of Islamic earrings as a replacement; it is inconceivable. The underlying message, here, seems to be the suggestion that *turbans*, *hijabs*, *kippahs*, and *niqabs* are not welcome in public life, especially considering the fact that the example of unacceptable public displays of the Christian faith is an oversized cross necklace, an article of jewelry seldom seen. Additionally, the inclusion of a Christian example within the campaign, under the guise of inclusivity, seems to serve to prevent portraying the campaign's disproportionate effect on minorities. Simultaneously, the PQ government claimed they would not be removing the crucifix affixed to the wall in the National Assembly, as it was a part of Québec's heritage (Bakali 2015, 413), albeit flamboyantly Catholic. This gives the impression that, since the crucifix is considered heritage and not religious, any Christian symbol can be "selectively" religious. Much of the discussion became centered around Muslim women wearing the hijab, being the most visible members of the religious minority in Québec. The discussions of political parties in Québec became increasingly exclusionary, arguing against an "other" that is irrational, deviant, and unaligned with Québec values. This "other," they argued, were imposing their views and culture upon the Quebecker majority (413). To understand this fear of an evaporating Québec culture, one must consider the history of an evolving Québec identity, much of which is rather recent.

A Summary of Relevant Québec history

Essential to understanding the current discussions about Québec

bec's current value of secularism is looking at its origins in the context of Québec's Catholic heritage. During the term of Québec premier Maurice Duplessis, an era of harsh conservatism and Catholic church hegemony, Francophone Quebeckers were thrown into economic marginalization as mainly working-class laborers under a hierarchy, where unions were squashed, and the Anglophones were a reigning economic elite (Bakali 2015, 414). Simultaneously, immigration following the Second World War began to boil up tensions regarding religion, class, and ethnicity (414). This period of conservatism and church control is referred to as *la Grande Noirceur*, leading up to the period called the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. During the Quiet Revolution, new premier Jean Lesage began to award responsibilities to the state that were formerly handled by the church, notably the education system, sparking a sentiment of liberation from an oppressive era of church control. The identity of the population began to shift, signaled by the reassignment of religion to the peripheries of public life with the embrace of secular progression (414). Aside from restricting the power of the church, the Quiet Revolution aimed at providing more political and economic powers to Francophone Quebeckers, in order that they may hold an equally influential position as the Anglophone minority. The Parti Québécois's platform reflects this sentiment in seeking to appeal to Québécois ethnicity, which would be white, Francophone, and largely Catholic (referred to as *de souche* or *pure-laine*, in English: old-stock) (Winter 2014, 683). The history of this group is very preoccupied with *la survivance*, the struggle of this distinct cultural minority to survive without being assimilated in an Anglo-Protestant North America (683). This is important because the Québec values being expressed in the Charter, as well as in other discussions concerning notions of belonging, are values which appear to be embraced by the Québécois.

Given the importance of *Québécois* identity and values, it comes as no surprise that neo-nationalist ideologies encourage assimilation, especially regarding the language. Intellectual elites called for radical *laïcité*, that the marker of belonging and group identity be in language and culture; this led to secularism, French-language identity becoming the standard of be-

longing, the seeking out of more political autonomy, and eventually the desire for a sovereign nation (Bakali 2015, 415).

Despite this, with a concept of "us" comes a concept of "other". This was seen in the two referenda of 1980 and 1995 where the PQ used politics of identity and a desire for a distinct country for its distinct culture to support a case for independence. When the referendum failed, Parizeau, the premier at the time, framed the "other" by blatantly and publicly blaming the ethnic voters for the loss, as though they were hindering the progress of the society (415). Minorities are seen to be hindering the attempts at independence and perverting the Quebeckers from within, and anxieties about immigrant minorities are a constant throughout the province (Winter 2014, 683). This essential context will be used as a lens with which to view the Charter discussions, as anxieties over cultural, ethnic, and religious minorities are not new in Québec's political environment.

Multiculturalism versus Interculturalism

Canada saw an introduction of a multiculturalism platform by Pierre Trudeau in 1971, permitting newcomers to keep their identity, pride in their heritage, and feel like they belong, while simultaneously live in harmony with those around them and develop understanding across different cultures all while holding an identity as a Canadian as well (Bakali 2015, 417). The federal government effectively controls the naturalization of newcomers by providing formal status to incoming citizens through the granting of access to a Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the citizenship test, which familiarizes them with various aspects of the country and its predominant signifiers of belonging. (Iacovino 2015, 44). Bakali (2015) offers a slightly critical perspective on the multicultural platform, mentioning that it came at a time when immigration was increasing and that, within talks of multiculturalism, there is an idea of benevolence or tolerance, which marginalizes minority groups into being merely tolerated and, in the case of benevolence, fails to acknowledge the multitude of contributions immigrants have made to society (417-418). Citing Mookerjee (2009, 188), Bakali (2015) goes on to paraphrase that perhaps the multiculturalism policy is not simply a gesture of goodness but rather a veil upon Canada's

dependence on immigrants for its economy and success (418).

Québec, on the other hand, had a more challenging compromise to make between its need to maintain identity and to address immigrants of different ethnicities and backgrounds. Interculturalism may resemble multiculturalism in a few ways, but what makes it notably different is the same as what makes Québec different from the rest of Canada: language. Interculturalism was adopted in the 1970's following the Canadian initiative, with three important pillars: (1) French is the language of all things public, (2) Québec, and Canada, support a democratic society where everyone should participate, and (3) it advocates an open pluralist society that adheres to democratic values (Bakali 2015, 418). Multiculturalism gave Quebecers the impression of a hiccup in integration, more individualist than collective, that could chip away at the buildup of common values (Winter 2014, 684). The Québec model permits for a plurality of cultures, but under the umbrella of Québec identity, culture, and language. The PLQ in the 1990s made a statement of shared responsibility between immigrants and the state to integrate and participate; as part of this contract, the newcomers would put in the effort to integrate, especially in learning the French language, and the government would provide the resources to facilitate this (Iacovino 2015, 46).

Groups in Québec, however, did mobilize on the matters of collective identity and pluralism: Catholics longed for the pre-Quiet Revolution period, during which belonging was centered around faith; Republican groups wanted absolute secularism; cultural nationalists wanted a majority-centered narrative in the makeup of the public sphere; civic nationalists argued that culture is a private matter; and sovereigntists saw pluralism as a threat of Canadian assimilation on their culture and identity (48). This brief overview of the Québec and Canadian models of cultural diversity and acceptance policies offer insight into Québec's attitudes toward Canadian multinationalism, while also providing the context for understanding that this attitude is not the sole force in driving Québec's desire for sovereignty; instead, the above contextualizing history calls into question Québec's policies, particularly as they relate to minority communities. The

following will consider the multiple facets leading up to the eventual boiling point of the 2013 Charter.

Reasonable Accommodation and Media Sensationalism

Many Quebecers recall the 'reasonable accommodation' discourses that seemed to dominate public discussions in recent times preceding the Charter. A post-9/11 sentiment may have contributed to these discourses of integration, particularly in the emphasis of integration being the sole responsibility of minorities (Iacovino 2014, 48). These minorities are then tasked with gaining the trust of the majorities with whom they seek to coexist (48). The Stasi report in France also provides a reference for these sentiments (48), and it will be later explained and compared with Québec's Bouchard-Taylor commission along with its findings. The reasonable accommodations debates took flight with the over-reporting of minority-group accommodation requests, mostly for religious reasons, and disproportionately representing the nature of these requests, consequently putting those minority groups into a public spotlight (48).

Between 2006 and 2007 there was an increase in media coverage: from Sikh people requesting to wear the *kirpan* to school or other public spaces to Hassidic Jews requesting that a YMCA frost their windows as the women inside were visible from the synagogue Other cases included requests from Muslims for prayer rooms at schools, women requesting female doctors in hospitals, and a plethora of stories centered around the hijab (Bakali 2015, 419). This undoubtedly contributed to feelings of frustration toward religious minorities: a sense of them demanding too much, a sense of them feeling too 'at ease' with their foreign practices. Iacovino (2015) describes the Quebecers sentiments toward the situation as an increasing sense of loss of control over their own society, dominated by preconceived notions of what, for example, Muslim practices constitute. Instead of integrating the religious minorities into Québec's society, Quebecers continually perceived religious minorities to be inherently incompatible with their own society. Quebecers believed that religious minorities chose to self-exclude themselves while simultaneously taking advantage of Québec's accommodations to impose their own agendas into the society. (48). Interestingly,

most of the accommodation requests were, in fact, made by Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses (Bakali 2015, 419), but this was not being reported as much as the religious minorities, who were perceived as more "foreign". The apparent sensationalism of these requests capitalized on people's anxieties for the benefit of the media receiving views, and this would be later exploited further for the interests of other groups. To highlight the extent of this sensationalism, a case study of the town of Hérouxville, in the Mauricie region of Québec, would prove beneficial. With the rise of immigration, Hérouxville adopted a specific set of guidelines for immigrants that included bans of stereotypical Muslim practices, some of which were not accurate or reflective of actual Islamic practices, such as a ban on acid attacks on women and a ban on stoning people. The bans included the statement that children can sing Christmas songs on Christmas and that women are "even" permitted to make autonomous choices (Bakali 2015, 420). What makes Hérouxville such a particularly effective example of the paranoia resulting from the media sensationalism of Muslim-minority religious accommodation is Hérouxville itself, with its population of 1,340 residents in a total of 650 dwellings, 98.8% Francophone (1.2% Anglophone) (Statistics Canada, 2012). The town would appear an unlikely target for cultural threats to immigration.

The discourse on the matter was also exploited for political gain. Mario Dumont and the ADQ (Action Démocratique du Québec) made notable political gains from its past status of being a less popular third party, simply by taking a hardline stance on minority accommodations. Calling them unreasonable and even going so far as to say that Québec's national racial origin was incompatible with the groups seeking accommodations intensified the ADQ's reputation as one of Canada's most anti-immigration and pro-assimilation platforms in recent history (Bakali 2015, 421). This prepared the grounds for the eventual introduction of the Charter of Values.

The Stasi Report and the Bouchard-Taylor Commission

The French debate over accommodation of religious minorities versus secularism is one to be also considered as a partial influence on Québec's desire to preserve its heritage vis-à-vis immigration. The de-

bates in France ended with a full niqab ban and a ban on hijabs in public schools, resulting in ethnic populations rioting in the streets of certain neighborhoods (Winter, 2014, 683). In the post-war era, France saw a rise in immigration from their former North African colonies, settling and becoming unskilled laborers; their predominantly Muslim religion created resentment from the French, who perceived their society as being in peril and their secularism at risk (Bakali 2015, 416). As a result, the Stasi Commission report was implicated to examine the country's secularity and how well these secular principles were being followed. The findings of this report essentially concluded that Islam was oppressive to women its the core and too patriarchal and political to be compatible with French values of secularity The French government thus assigned responsibility to Islam for issues such as genital mutilation, forced marriage, and polygamy (416).

The Stasi Commission could not have reached these conclusions on a purely factual basis, given that most people with a sufficient grasp of religion and culture know that these stereotypical barbaric practices are not purely Islamic issues, nor are these condoned and supported by most Muslim adherents. Bakali (2015) offers an interesting connection between French attitudes toward the Muslim faith and practice resulting in the ban on headscarves in schools and the colonial era during which the French colonizers ardently set out to remove the hijab from Algeria. Though the hijab was a cultural identifier for the Algerian people, the French colonists, from their self-appointed stance as 'civilized' and 'superior', considered and declared the Algerian practice 'barbaric', hence the resulting enforced removal of the hijab, which signaled an essential step toward the assimilationist project of the colonial era (416). This reveals the dichotomization of the French perspective that perpetuates notions of themselves as fundamentally different from the 'other,' and the lasting impact of colonialism in the continued, present-day acts of attempting to erase or remove cultural practices of the 'other'.

In the case of Québec, the Bouchard-Taylor Commission held focus groups province-wide, meetings with experts, scholars, and cultural organizations. It held forums, asked for brief reports from the public, listened

to testimonies, and made a web resource. The commission finally acknowledged that this so-called ‘crisis of reasonable accommodations’ was exaggerated (Sharify-Funk 2010, 539). The commission also concluded that immigrants were integrating rather well, and that there was no justifiable cause for alarm from Quebecers about the accommodations. In the interests of optimal integration and harmony, the Commission prescribed a resolution addressing issues of underemployment, economic hardship, inequality, prejudice, and the tendency of Francophone Quebecers to project fears of cultural obliteration onto minority groups, which strengthened biases and increased the excessive, and often unfair, responsibility placed on minority groups to prove themselves as willing members of Québec’s society, capable of integrating in ways the majority deemed satisfactory (540).

Of course, even though the commission addressed this issue and reached seemingly adequate conclusions, not everyone was pleased; soon, the Charter of Values was born from a mixture of variables, including fragments and unfinished business on the matter of reasonable accommodation.

The Charter of Values and Accompanying Controversy

The supporters of the Charter of Values were overwhelmingly Francophone, and the differences between Francophone support on the Island of Montréal, the region of Montréal, and elsewhere in the province still yielded that there was majority Francophone support across the board (Jedwab 2013, 27). This dispelled the common idea that perhaps Montréal was an oasis for cultural acceptance if one solely considers the Francophone population. Non-francophone respondents were much more likely to see the Charter as a violation of rights, were generally less disposed to supporting the Charter, and only about one in six non-Francophones thought that government interference to ban religious symbols in public was acceptable (28). Additionally, a significant number of Quebecers had the impression that Muslim women were forced to wear the hijab (Jedwab 2015, 25). There were accompanying discourses on feminism and gender equality, specifically regarding the ways secularization complements gen-

der equality and sexual self-determination, as opposed to religion, which is fundamentally oppressive toward women and non-heterosexuals, and thus automatically shifts a negative light onto Islam, especially, as seemingly ‘bad’ for women (Bakali 2015, 423). However, the voices of the women themselves were notably missing from these discussions; despite the guise of advocacy for women’s freedom and agency, the absence of the women’s voices suggests the refusal to give them the agency and permission to speak out on issues that directly concern and affect them. There was a bitter taste of hypocrisy present in the discussions about the welfare of women regarding religion, seemingly framing misogyny as something fundamentally tied to religion as though it were not present in many groups regardless of race, origin, or culture.

Québec used its desire to protect its culture as an opportunity to repress minority groups through the demonization of unfamiliar, non-Christian practices, which resulted in their framing as security threats, such as the incompatibility of culturally-specific dress and diet with Québec culture. (Winter 2014, 685). If the policies the charter endorsed promoted non-discrimination in public life, without the promotion of any kind of cultural purity or religious favoritism, this charter may have been more justifiable in its pursuit of culturally-related policy. (685).

Indeed, the Charter did the exact opposite by promoting discrimination, with blatant expressions of exclusion, nationalism, and Québec cultural purity. This Charter appeals to the cultural majority, the *pure laine* Quebecers, to appease and assure them that the government will keep minorities in check by demonstrating and reinforcing state power. This would be most emphatic in instances of minority compliance with integration policies; should minorities refuse to integrate in ways that the majority deems acceptable, employment and other services would be heavily discriminatory and otherwise unattainable to fortify the conservative need for integration. Repressive state action toward ethnocultural practices, violating fundamental individual rights (685) to cater to the whims of an idea of collective identity formed by the ethnic majority, cannot and should not happen in a society that awards constitutional and unalienable rights to its

citizens.

Discussion

Over the course of the past century, Québec has used the age-old debate of self-preservation innumerable to justify various policies including: language laws; diversity and pluralism initiatives different from those of Canada; the very existence of the Parti Québécois; talks of independence and national sovereignty; the two referenda; the ‘reasonable accommodation’ debates; and the Charter of Values. Despite these attempts, the Bouchard-Taylor Commission found and concluded that there is much unfounded worry over Québec’s cultural disappearance, that Quebeckers need to redirect their energies on more pressing matters than identity politics in order to secure a progressive future for the entire society. The recurring need to preserve and protect a Québécois cultural identity lies in a nationalistic desire to live in a society that appears unlikely to last and detached from reality; one in which no one is forced to confront or accept what they refuse to understand, an inability to adapt to social change for fear of destroying society. By not focusing on more salient issues, Québec impinges upon the fundamental rights of minorities; by regarding minorities’ rights as subject to change at the whims of the cultural majority, Québec majorities devalue the contributions immigrants make to their society. There are roots to this debate in the Dark Period, the Quiet Revolution, and in much of Québec’s recent history. Secularism liberated the Francophone “old stock” Quebeckers from the economic marginalization imposed upon them by Duplessis, the Anglophones, and the Church, which dictated many aspects of their lives. However, none of these roots, nor the advancements achieved for the cultural majority through secularism, constitute a basis with which to argue that the Charter of Values was a legitimate means to protect Québec culture. Québec culture was simply perceived as being under attack by cultural or religious minorities. This was not found to be true, as it could not be concretely proven by the commission or by researchers. As such, the introduction of the Charter appears to be a combination of public anxiety being exploited by ambitious politicians for power, using anxiety-inducing discourse to feed the nervous population

what will get votes. The media is also guilty of exploiting these matters, overblowing them, and exaggerating their salience, yielding a magnified issue where there was none of such magnitude. Collective identity, thus, is not a bad principle upon which to build or maintain a society; however, the infringement of the constitution and removal of rights from individuals for simply choosing to exercise their protected rights to express their faiths is not in line with the inclusivity and diversity that collective identity entails.

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Japan's Denialism and Nationalism and the Context, Experience, and Legacy of Comfort Women

Renay Minichiello

Along with their oppression during wartime period, Japan's ignorance of Asian comfort women victim-survivors after the Second World War testifies to the country's stubbornness, as it is unable to accept its past faults, apologize for its mistakes and compensate for the trauma caused by its government and military. The comfort women system was implemented during the Pacific War, dating back to the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 to 1945, but its recruitment of predominately Korean women was affected by the tension existing between the two nations and caused further division. Due to the persistence of "fascistic paternalism" and ultra-nationalism in Japan, comfort women were continually viewed as a threat to the country's success as a nation and as a result, their legacy as victim-survivors suffered from the government's denial of the damage inflicted by the military during the Pacific War.¹ Japan's history of prostitution and patriarchal power structure, the role of comfort women as "imperial subjects" for Japanese soldiers' pleasure, and the legacy of comfort women in Asia and the western world in terms of their opposition, recognition and memorialization further explain the country's existing resistance towards the reality of comfort women.²

Licensed prostitution was rife throughout Japan's history, as it dates back to 1193, during the Kamakura period, when an official prostitution post was created as a space for male travelers to find company or sexual relief.³ "Pleasure quarters" were established in

1 C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 37.

2 Ibid., 38.

3 Ibid., 109.

Yokohama, in the 1860s, for American, British, Russian, and Dutch residents in order to prevent the rape of local Japanese women.⁴ During the 1870s, the Meiji state implemented a licensed prostitution system, based on European models, "to modernize and strengthen the nation," and this process eventually led to the establishment of the first comfort stations in Shanghai and Manchuria in 1932, with Taiwan, mainland China, Korea, Japan, the Pacific Islands, and Southeast Asian countries following the trend later on.⁵ The comfort zones that were erected throughout east Asia came to represent "the militarized behavioral practice rooted in Japanese masculinist sexual culture" and emphasized prostitution as traditional and necessary.⁶

The comfort system's creation and Japan's denial of women's recruitment and enforcement are based on ideologies, such as "sexism, classism, racism, colonialism, militarism, and capitalist imperialism," adopted by the Japanese government and military.⁷ The country's history of licensed prostitution and gender discrimination became responsible for the implementation of comfort systems in Asian society and sanctioned their use through patriarchal roots and the acceptance of power imbalances among genders. Soh highlights the presence of a "masculinist sexual culture" that persisted throughout imperial Japan and later manifested itself in the comfort system.⁸ Patriarchy defined the Japanese society and created space for discrimination directed towards girls and women as their rights were deemed secondary, or even nonexistent, compared to those of

4 Ibid., 110.

5 Ibid., 111, 132, 133; Yangmo Ku, "National Interest or Transnational Alliances? Japanese Policy on the Comfort Women Issue," *Journal of East Asian Studies*, January 1 2015, 243.

6 Soh, 132, 133.

7 Ibid., xii, xiii.

8 Soh, 3, 37.

men.⁹ The comfort system thus became a way to institutionalize the patriarchal power structure and gender inequality in Japan. It created challenges for women in all aspects of life and normalized the oppressive attitude adopted towards those whose duty, whether willingly or not, was to satisfy men's needs.

Furthermore, the annexation of Korea by Japan, which took place in 1910, and the former's resulting status as the imperial nation's colonial subject until 1945 fueled the profound tensions existing between the two countries. The patriarchal structure was also present in Korea where virginity was considered a woman's only redeeming quality, and men had sexual liberty as they could keep concubines or through infidelity.¹⁰ Still, the "age-old enmity" between countries turned into a growing disrespect for Koreans, and Japanese soldiers viewed the rival nation's citizens in a negative light, causing them to later inflict a crueler mistreatment upon Korean comfort women compared to those of Japanese descent.¹¹

The comfort women's experience varied throughout stations across Asia and was heavily dependent on the person's heritage and the understanding of superiority and domination exercised by Japanese soldiers at comfort stations. Gender imbalance and a hierarchy of nationhood were key factors in the differing role and treatment granted to comfort women by the Japanese military. The comfort zones sought to "raise military morale," but instead led to the emergence of licensed prostitution relying on forced recruitment.¹² In terms of demographics, the number of comfort women has not yet

been definitively determined, but ranges up to 410,000 with women being recruited from countries such as Philippines, Indonesia, Indochina, and Burma. Of course, most of comfort women were Koreans, and this fact further highlights Japan's colonial relations with the nation.¹³ Their recruitment occurred either through kidnapping, the sale of daughters by "indigent parents," the exploitation of the desire to avoid domestic violence and poverty, the promise of work opportunities or even through "forcible [measures taken] by agents of the colonial state."¹⁴ Work opportunities were especially attractive for people belonging to the lower classes as the prospect could be transformative, and the Japanese government used this "mobilization scheme" to their advantage, apparent in the recruitment of Korean women belonging to "landless tenant or semi-tenant classes."¹⁵

Moreover, comfort stations were set up by private parties, maintained by the Japanese military, and the hired women were considered as "essential supplies" for the soldiers.¹⁶ The service providers, as subjects of imperial Japan, were bound by their captivity to serve the Japanese soldiers and perform their "gendered duties" to help win the war.¹⁷ While comfort stations' purpose was supposedly to "reduce rapes and venereal diseases," Lee and Crowe note that comfort women were raped about ten to thirty times per day, and a large number of them died from the very diseases that were to be

9 Ibid., 88.

10 Constance Youngwon Lee and Jonathan Crowe, "The Deafening Silence of the Korean Comfort Women: A Response Based on Lyotard and Irigaray," *Asian Journal of Law and Society*, July 1 2015, 347.

11 Ibid., 349.

12 Ibid., 31.

13 Ahmad Rashid Malik, "Japan Can't Wash 'Comfort Women' Out of Hair," *Diplomatic Insight*, January 2017, 11; Soh, xi, xii.

14 Soh, 3, 4, 107.

15 Youngwon Lee and Crowe, 348.

16 Nicola Henry, "Memory of an Injustice: The 'Comfort Women' and the Legacy of the Tokyo Trial," *Asian Studies Review*, September 2013, 366; Soh, 38.

17 Soh, 38.

prevented, backfiring the nation's plans.¹⁸ The comfort women were also frequently impregnated and as a result, many either died from performing their own abortions or left their newborn children with the local village women.¹⁹ The treatment received by the victims was also discriminatory, because it depended on their nationality. For example, Korean comfort women, in addition to being forced to change their personal names to Japanese ones, had to provide service to low-ranking Japanese soldiers in poor conditions while Japanese women were paid to fulfill high-ranking officials' needs and were referred to as the "imperial gifts."²⁰ In fact, Korean comfort women were either left behind or killed by the Japanese forces after the war's end rather than being taken to safety like the Japanese women.²¹ The former were even labeled as the "expendable" products of war, and their treatment was rooted in the continuing ethos of Japanese paternalism and ethnocentrism.²²

As a response to Japan's maintenance of fascistic paternalism and nationalism after the Pacific War, the victim-survivors, charities, and organizations rose up to counter the nation's narrative of comfort women's experience and demanded justice for their conditions. Until this point, the victims' experience had been tarnished, unfavorable and even considered implausible by many Japanese leaders and citizens. Comfort women's legacy fluctuated in Japan, Korea and the United States depending on the country's public stance

18 Shin Ethan Hee-Seok, "The 'Comfort Women' Reparation Movement: Between Universal Women's Human Right and Particular Anti-Colonial Nationalism," *Florida Journal of International Law*, April 2016, 93; Youngwon Lee and Crowe, 339.

19 Malik, 11; Mina Watanabe, "Passing on the History of 'Comfort Women': The Experience of a Women's Museum in Japan," *Journal of Peace Education*, September 2015, 241.

20 Youngwon Lee and Crowe, 349, 350; Soh, 30, 39.

21 Soh, 141.

22 Ibid.

48

on either commemoration or denialism. Japan's resistance in taking responsibility for the comfort women system reflects the state's ultra-nationalism, since the belief that it can carry out no wrongdoings was engraved in its leaders' minds. However, the presence of organizations, museums, memorials, and tribunals in response to the victim-survivors' situation emphasizes the continued search for justice.

The Pacific War's aftermath led to a series of tribunals, treaties, and associations being set up to deal with the victims and survivors of war. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, was held on April 26, 1946, and its goal was to try military leaders, except for Emperor Hirohito who proved to be useful to the United States for controlling Japan, guilty of crimes against peace, conventional war crimes and crimes against humanity.²³ While its intentions were commendable, the tribunal failed to take into account two important issues. It did not declare rape, committed during war, to be a crime against humanity or a war crime in the Tokyo Charter, and this point disabled comfort women from testifying and labeling the Japanese military leaders as perpetrators of an organized crime.²⁴ The tribunal also failed to elaborate on the United States' involvement and usage of the comfort women system as it sought to "celebrate the victory of the Allies and vilify the vanquished" after the war in Asia.²⁵ Perhaps the United States' unwillingness to associate itself with the history of comfort stations and sexual slavery further encouraged an absence of discussions and blame on any country, including Japan.²⁶ This

23 Henry, 367; Eika Tai, "Museum Activism Against Military Sexual Slavery," *Museum Anthropology*, March 2016, 38.

24 Henry, 367.

25 Ibid., 367, 368.

26 Ibid., 368.

lack of acknowledgment and justice led to a sense of denialism and “legal amnesia” in the Japanese society, because the state refuted any accusation of crime committed against comfort women, believed that it could remain unaccountable and allowed for “neo-nationalist revisionism” to grow in response to comfort women’s issue.²⁷

In the same way, the Treaty of Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea, signed on June 22nd, 1965, would have been a perfect opportunity to publicize the injustice faced by comfort women, but the two nations failed to bring up the topic even if the meeting was meant to be about war reparations.²⁸ In fact, despite the large presence of Korean women in comfort stations, it was decided that the Korean government would not receive any financial reparations from the Japanese government.²⁹ The treaty emphasizes Japan’s continuous sense of denial, as the country can avoid responsibility by not acknowledging the situation at all. It also highlights the ultra-nationalism that plagues the Japanese society throughout the 1950s with the citizens believing that a peaceful, economically-strong nation can never commit any harm.

However, the South Korean Association for the Pacific War Victims and Bereaved Families was founded on December 6, 1991, when the group, made up of thirty-five South Korean comfort women victim-survivors, filed a class-action lawsuit against the Japanese government and asked for 20 million yen for each victim-survivor and her family.³⁰ Kim Hak-Sun was the comfort system’s first victim-survivor to come forward and testify publicly, and her appearance sparked a change in the vague discussions taking place for fifty

years prior to then.³¹ The victim’s testimony marked an important moment in the Japanese history since, for the first time, the government was being pressurized to claim responsibility and offer compensation to the surviving comfort women.

Two years later, on August 4, the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yōhei Kōno, released the Kono Statement which acknowledged the military’s involvement in comfort stations and apologized to the victim-survivors.³² It was considered to be Japan’s official statement on the topic and detailed the forced recruitment of comfort women which had been denied by many at the time.³³ The statement resulted in the establishment of the Asian Women’s Fund in August 1995, offering 5 million yen to each victim-survivor and standing in for the government’s acceptance of “moral responsibility.”³⁴ While the Fund had good intentions in offering reparations, the mission was carried out poorly and ultimately, highlighted Japan’s wish to remain legally innocent. The Asian Women’s Fund was set up in a way that the Japanese government’s compensation for medical, welfare, and advertisement costs constituted moral responsibility, whereas private donations made up the rest of the “atonement money,” representing legal responsibility.³⁵ Consequently, many comfort women rejected the funds as it became “hush money,” and it was obvious that Japan did not want to take responsibility for its actions during the Pacific War.³⁶

27 Youngwon Lee and Crowe, 346, 347; Henry, 371.

28 Youngwon Lee and Crowe, 346, 347.

29 Ibid.

30 Soh, 43.

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31 Youngwon Lee and Crowe, 340.

32 Muta Kazue, “The ‘Comfort Women’ Issue and the Embedded Culture of Sexual Violence in Contemporary Japan,” *Current Sociology*, July 2016, 623.

33 Tai, 37; Soh, 44.

34 Soh, 44.

35 Tai, 37; Hee-Suok, 119.

36 Hee-Suok, 113; Mikyoung Kim, “Memorializing Comfort Women: Memory and Human Rights in Korea-Japan Relations,” *Asian Politics & Policy*, January 2014, 89; Kazue, 624.

In December of 2000, the Violence Against Women in War Network held the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery with the purpose of finally prosecuting military leaders for their involvement in comfort women's recruitment and the system's establishment.³⁷ The Tribunal was supported by civic groups, as well as Korea, the Philippines, China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Indonesia, East Timor and the Netherlands, and embraced respect for victim-survivors, Japanese responsibility, and universal acknowledgment of sexual violence during war as being a human rights violation.³⁸ In the end, the trial found Emperor Hirohito and seven other Japanese high-ranking military officers "guilty of holding individual and special responsibility for the crimes of sexual slavery and rape, as crimes against humanity."³⁹ Although the trial had no legislative power, it urged the Japanese government, which refused to acknowledge its conclusion, to take legal responsibility and offer compensation to victim-survivors.⁴⁰

Yet, the movement of resistance in Japan, represented by conservatives and ultra-nationalists, argued that comfort women were not forcibly recruited and that the comfort system was simply a continuation of licensed prostitution that originated in the late nineteenth century.⁴¹ It was believed that comfort women were willing participants in the system and consequently, the nation had no obligation to apologize to them.⁴² Following Kim Hak-Sun's public testimony and the movement for recognition, conservatives viewed former comfort women as greedy and not worthy of reparations, be-

37 Kazue, 622; Soh, 42.

38 Watanabe, 237; Tai, 38.

39 Kazue, 622.

40 Ibid., 623.

41 Kim, 89.

42 Kazue, 627.

52

cause according to them, "everybody had suffered during the war."⁴³ Many citizens claimed that Japan's resistance to accepting responsibility for its actions was due to a fear of tarnishing the nation's honor or appearing weak by acknowledging past mistakes.⁴⁴ Still, despite the conservatives and ultra-nationalists' harsh resistance, there are progressivists in Japan who push for the government's acknowledgment of comfort women's suffering by arguing that its acceptance can lead to "the creation of a new, peaceful world order," benefiting Japan in the long run through a positive international image.⁴⁵

With this rising support from Japanese, Korean, and even American groups for comfort women's justice in the twentieth century, a series of memorials and museums were set up in Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, and the United States to commemorate their suffering. The first memorial was the Kanita Women's Village in Tateyama City, Japan, set up as a public monument to honor Japanese comfort women. The village also established a women's rehabilitation center for former prostitutes who struggled in their new lives, as comfort women victim-survivors did in the postwar years, in terms of "disability, social stigma, and a lack of family support."⁴⁶ Moreover, two important memorials were set up in the United States, in heavily Korean-populated areas within California and Virginia. The first one came to be in 2010, in Glendale, and is a comfort woman's statue, replicating the infamous statue in Seoul, denouncing the forced recruitment and human rights violations which occurred from the 1930s to 1945.⁴⁷ The second one, located in Fairfax Coun-

43 Soh, 44, 45.

44 Ibid., 229; Kim, 87.

45 Soh, 68.

46 Ibid., 197.

47 Tai, 44; Kim, 90.

ty, is a memorial garden at the county's Government Centre, which commemorates the suffering of Korean comfort women and the importance of the county's Korean population.⁴⁸

Along with the Chinese Comfort Women Research Centre exhibition, which started in Shanghai, in 2007, and Taiwan's Virtual Museum on Sexual Slavery by Japanese Military in Taipei, 53 memorial statues honoring Korean comfort women were set up by local organizations in Seoul, Busan, and other cities around South Korea.⁴⁹ Notably, the bronze statues erected in Seoul and Busan, in 2011 and 2016 respectively, directly across from Japanese embassies, made a statement about Korean comfort women's suffering, and the rival government's lack of action to compensate for its wrongdoings, and as a result, received much public attention.⁵⁰ In 2005, the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace in Tokyo was also erected as a "temple and forum" which not only highlights comfort women's condition during the war, the victim-survivors' testimonies and the evidence against Japanese military's actions, but also acts as a peaceful, privately-run, united space.⁵¹ Hence, memorials and museums acted as a physical manifestation of support for comfort women's experiences and directly countered the denialistic and nationalistic narrative presented by conservative Japan.

In conclusion, through the context of comfort women in Asian society and its deep-rooted history of prostitution, gender inequality and power imbalances, the role of comfort women in World

War II in terms of recruitment, conditions and discrimination based on nationality, and the legacy of comfort women visible in tribunals, treaties, associations, memorials and museum, it is clear that this idealism of "fascistic paternalism" and ultra-nationalism in Japan laid the groundwork for the creation and consumption of comfort stations along with allowing comfort women to be considered obstructions to the country's peaceful and honorable self-image. Due to Japan's lack of accountability, comfort women's legacy around the world has been a struggle against continued resistance from Japanese conservatives and right-wingers. However, a rising support movement in Asia and in the western world has proved that the tides are changing, and comfort women are finally receiving the recognition and commemoration that they deserve. As the Pacific War's 100th anniversary quickly approaches and the victim-survivors' aging population continues to decline, one hopes that, while many years too late, Japan will finally accept responsibility for its role in the war and only then can former comfort women be at peace.

48 Robert Shepherd, "Cosmopolitanism Nationalism and the Heritage of Shame: Comfort Women Memorials and the Legacy of Slavery in the United States," *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, November 2016, 2.

49 Tai, 44; Malik, 12.

50 Malik, 11.

51 Tai, 40; Watanabe, 237.

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Street Art in the Gallery: The Work of Jean-Michel Basquiat as Visual Representation of the Early 1980s New-Wave Artistic Movement in New York City

Taylor Neal

Born in December 1960, Jean-Michel Basquiat embodies an era of artistic liberation in New York City, in the late 70s and early 80s, through a unique visual style that would turn the art world on its head with the rise of neo-expressionism derived from the streets. At the time, graffiti and street art were growing immensely across New York, where the walls, subway trains and the streets themselves became canvases for artists wanting to channel their creative energies against the sociopolitical issues present at the time. Growing jaded from a New York succumbing to steep crime rates, a plummeting economy and crumbling infrastructure, the city's inhabitants began to revolt in the late 70s, and the large community of artists, part of this landscape of cheap rent and unemployment, found new means of self-expression in order to ensure that their voices would be heard from the bottom up. This transitional era then became a birthplace for street art and graffiti culture along with developing new waves in music, film and literature; a cumulative shift within the liberal arts to be historically recognized as the rise of hip-hop culture in New York City's underground throughout the 80s. Basquiat developed as an artist within this very movement and came to represent the era as an icon of the city's streets with his fresh, neo-expressionist aesthetic.

In the late 70s, Basquiat initially established himself as a street artist within the art community by scribbling poetic phrases attacking the existent art establishment on the city's walls and streets. He financially sustained himself through the sale of hand-drawn post-cards and reworked items found in the street. The artist literally

utilized anything available around him as a mean of self-expression and survival, unable to finance any other form of work at the time. However, Basquiat maintained his identity as a street artist even after his rise to fame, and the impressive scale and prestige attributed to his works. Due to the raw authenticity of his neo-expressionist representations of New York's streets, reflecting the cantankerous time during the city's development, the artist does not change his methods or style even after transitioning from the street to canvas. His work holds its roots in both the literal utilization of the street as a medium and the adoption of a new-wave culture growing from the early 80s' artistic street community. Through the integration of music, literature, film and his own experience as a young black man, Basquiat produced culturally-grounded work which held deep socio-political commentary and embodied the era's collective art movements, granting him a prominent position in the history of street art through the all-inclusive vibe of his work representational of New York's hip-hop stricken streets.

Beginning his career as a penniless wanderer in the late 70s, Jean-Michel Basquiat entered the art world with the rise of New York City's collective hip-pop, graffiti and street art culture under the name and tag, SAMO©. The street art movement, which came as a direct response to the "city's looming bankruptcy" and social upheaval at the time, was perhaps the most revolutionary method of self-expression used by New York's artistic community as it strove to ensure that the artists' voices be heard by the officials who had failed to resolve the issues plaguing society (Barker, 2017). However, political upheaval also granted freedom to the new wave of creative youths across the city, as Alexis Adler, Basquiat's former girlfriend, explains that "[t]he city was crumbling, but it was a very free time. We were able to do whatever we wanted because nobody cared"

(Sawyer, 2017). This freedom then led to creative liberation, and neo-expressionist movements across all artistic disciplines, setting “the stage for the dynamic New York art world of the early 80s” (Deitch, 2007). In “The Art of Noise,” Matt Barker further claims that “[a]mong the crumbling infrastructure, crime, unemployment and poverty, it was suddenly party time. Left to its own devices, a generation of musicians, artists, film-makers and writers was finding new ways of expression” (Barker, 2017). The oppressed poverty-stricken city then became a space for artists to develop their craft whether in visual art, music, literature or film.

Basquiat’s street art work as SAMO©, an abbreviation for “same old shit,” alongside his partner Al Diaz, attacked the existent art institution, seen as corrupt by the pair in the 70s. Consisting of simple lettering forming poetic phrases, found in SoHo and the city’s predominantly artist-inhabited areas, SAMO©’s work was quickly acknowledged by the art world, as its messages differed in nature from the graffiti tags being thrown all over New York. In *1981: The Studio of the Street*, Deitch states that Basquiat’s “disconcerting but riveting haiku-like street poetry marked the walls of every building where artists and musicians congregated” (Deitch, 2007). This unavoidable presence then demonstrates the artist’s deliberate insertion of himself into New York’s art scene, where new-wave movements were occurring simultaneously across all art forms. In contrast to the exploding wild-style graffiti found in subways, SAMO© maintained a distinct poetic style which not only intrigued the common passer-by, but also the art community’s distinguished members. Deitch claims that “SAMO© became an essential part of the downtown experience. His work was widely discussed and documented” (Deitch, 2007). Basquiat and Diaz ended their partnership in 1978 after selling their story to the *Village Voice* for \$100, marking the conclusion of

SAMO© by plastering the phrase ‘SAMO© IS DEAD’ throughout the city. By then however, Basquiat had already gained a substantial following as an artist (Kane, 2017).

After revealing his identity through Philip Faflick’s 1978 article, *SAMO© Graffiti: BOOSH-WAH or CIA?* for the *Village Voice*, and ending his journey with Diaz, Basquiat produced works on anything found in the streets, facing financial challenges despite his eagerness to insert himself in New York’s thriving downtown community of new-wave artists. In a 2017 interview, Diaz explains, “He immersed himself very quickly. I mean, he *immersed* himself. He went from 0 to 90 in two seconds. That’s what he was doing – he was like, ‘I’m an artist’” (Kane, 2017). This immersion highlights Basquiat’s rapid transition from street art to the studio while maintaining heavy influence from the former. Diaz says that “[i]n early 1981 he was mainly painting on discarded windows, doors and pieces of wood and metal that he found on the street, and making drawings on reams of typing paper” (Deitch, 2007). From *Jean-Michel Basquiat 1981: The Studio of the Street*, two works have been pulled out as examples, with one created on scrap sheet metal (Figure 1) and another on a piece of burlap (Figure 2). The subject matter and physical medium used for these works, produced in 1980 and 1981 respectively, reflect Basquiat’s heavy inspiration from, and involvement with, city street culture, as the artist depended on the street itself to create and sell works prior to gaining access to legitimate materials.

In Figure 1, *UNTITLED AARON 1981*, a building is seen drawn in marker on a found piece of sheet metal, under which the word AARON is written, and the metal surface is left otherwise blank. The name Aaron, and the repetition of the capital letter “A” are reoccurring components in the artist’s other works belonging to this period. Basquiat’s father explains that “the multiple As that pop-



Figure 1. Jean-Michel Basquiat, *UNTITLED AARON*, 1981

ulate [his son's] early work refer to Hank Aaron, the baseball player-for the spelling, and because there are so many baseball references in his work" (Basquiat, 2006; Deitch, 2007). However, this piece also speaks against the media's institutionalization and coldness as it dehumanizes media personalities, including Hank Aaron who was a major player about to break the Babe Ruth record (Basquiat, 2006; Deitch, 2007). The nature of the piece's existence on sheet metal automatically gives it a cold, hostile tone - heightened by the way "Aaron" appears to be trapped under the weight of the heavy, institutional establishment existing over its head. In this case, the integration of culture and the street in Basquiat's art resides in the physical medium of found sheet metal, along with the cultural reference to a highly recognized athlete, creating commentary on mediated society from the street's point of view.

Similarly, in the second figure referred to as *UNTITLED (CAR CRASH)* 1980, the artist depicts a head-on collision on a found stretch of burlap and once again, the work can be understood as both a physical manifestation of the street as well as commentary on society from a grounded perspective, contributing to its nature as street art. This piece evokes the end of a white-dominated, capitalist

society which victimized Basquiat's New York during the "anti-golden-age years in the period between 1974 and 1981" (Deitch, 2007). In the painting, a green car collides head-on with a stark white vehicle operated by a driver, seemingly white in color as well, while the former vehicle is filled only with gold. In American culture, the colour green, especially when paired with gold, presumably refers to money and capitalism. This notion is further confirmed by the word "ORO" written above the green vehicle, which translates from Spanish, a language spoken by Basquiat, to mean gold. Furthermore, the damage caused by the collision is being illuminated by a window in the background, from which a beam of light connects directly with a red circle drawn around the collision's center, suggesting the destruction that occurs when the white man is faced with financial capital. The letters "MLK" are written behind the white vehicle, seemingly in reference to Martin Luther King, and the word "catalyst" can be read above the green car. Considering a poor, young black man's position in New York's crumbling streets, this piece comments on the challenges faced by minority groups, especially the black population, in New York due to the white man's pursuit of capital. Basquiat calls for a change of power through this piece, and his further use of burlap as a physical medium on which to place this message brings suggestion of organics and nature to the work, evoking white, patriarchal capitalism's lethal confrontation with the natural earth.

While these early works reflect Basquiat's nature as a street artist through physical street content and through his political commentary on society's shortcomings, his studio work on canvas upholds these roots in street art and a fickle New York's urban landscape. From his start as SAMO©, Basquiat rejected the existent art world as it stood in the 1970s minimalist era, therefore upon his transition to canvas, Basquiat's work was disregarded due to its de-



Figure 2. Jean-Michel Basquiat, *UNTITLED (CAR CRASH)* 1980

parting from the period's conventional high art. Despite this, the artist maintained the themes found in his previous works, as “[h]e had a special talent to take all the street's energies and translate them into high art” (Davis, 2010). His messages then soon reclaimed the attention of the art world Executives, as they were unable to prevent the eruption of Basquiat's works in New York's downtown art scene.

The writings, the figures and the signs which until that moment had decorated the cement expanses of the metropolitan suburbs started to adorn large canvases, rapidly finding favor with collectors and gallery owners. In themes that have always been preferred – the city with its multicultural society and its violence – there emerged echoes of the Afro-American culture which ran in the “street” artist's Haitian and Puerto Rican blood. (Ricard, 1981; Damiani, 1999)

On canvas then, the artist enjoyed a greater access to mediums and utensils which allowed his expressionistic style to flourish in density and strength through the application of vibrant color and layered narratives, reflecting similar movements occurring across all artistic disciplines at the time. Marenzi suggests that “Basquiat is art's answer to Jimmy Hendrix and Charlie Parker” and thus, his early can-

vas work can be seen as a visual representation of the collective new-wave art movement also taking over music and literature during the artist's rise to fame (Marenzi, 1999). In this manner then, Basquiat continued to represent the streets of New York, as the shift across art forms came as a direct response to the city's political injustices in the early 80s, and the artist maintained these same shared philosophies since his time as SAMO©.

As a heavily integrated member of the downtown New York scene in the early 1980s through his highly recognized work as SAMO©, his involvement in the music scene with his band Gray, and his eminently active social life in the downtown nightclub scene, Jean-Michel Basquiat embodied the entirety of the collaboration between the different artists and artistic movements happening within the streets during his time (Cortez, 2006; Deitch, 2007). Of his methods, the artist explains: “I don't think about art when I'm working. I try to think about life” (Sandoval, 2017). However, his life was a collaborative production of all the extraordinary people he continuously surrounded himself with, accentuated by his own interpersonal experiences as a young black man. Therefore, his art took the form of the vibrant, controversial street culture in which he immersed himself daily.

The Basquiat pieces which demonstrate most prominently, the interaction between the artist's own life, his jazz-based background and New York's vibrant artist community are the 1981 piece known as *IRONY OF A NEGRO POLICEMAN* (Figure 3), *ALL COLOURED CAST (PART 3)* made in 1982 (Figure 4) and *BEAT-BOP*, from 1983 (Figure 5). In the first piece, the figure of a black, male police officer standing against a white canvas speaks



Figure 3. Jean-Michel Basquiat, *IRONY OF A NEGRO POLICEMAN*, 1981

to the dichotomies present amongst police officers of color during a period when police brutality against blacks was a major concern. Basquiat took great care in addressing these issues in a deliberate and vibrant manner, as “police harassment of and brutality against blacks was something which touched him to the core because it could always have been him” (Morenzi, 1999). The officer in the painting wears a blue uniform representative of the police force, though his figure is surrounded by a red aura-like line, intensified around his head and hat, which then moves down to form a target-like circle around his heart where his badge is painted in gold. While his yellow features are seemingly disoriented, under severe stress and are outlined in bright red, the man’s face is entirely black. The red lines trace the formation of targets on the officer’s body, especially focusing on his heart, highlighting his distraught facial expression as he stands weaponless against a void of whiteness which makes up the



Figure 4. Jean-Michel Basquiat, *ALL COLORED CAST*, 1982

piece’s background. Basquiat is distinctively known for using color to fill his canvas and therefore, by leaving the canvas white, the artist makes a clear statement about the issue at hand. The “irony of the negro policeman” then lies in the seeming disregard for the uniform when a man of color is put in a position of authority against a white body, where regardless of his status, his skin color causes him to become a target. The man looks helpless with his arms by his sides, weaponless and defeated; one cannot help but feel pity for him, while looking past him for a more reliable means of protection.

By contrast then, rather than commenting on New York’s political situation, *ALL COLOURED CAST* (Figure 4) and *BEAT-BOP* (Figure 5) represent Basquiat’s cultural experience of the streets. They both highlight the artist’s strong connection with jazz music, a fact pointed out by his close friends throughout a series of interviews found in *Jean-Michel Basquiat 1981: The Studio of the Street*. He not only took a particular interest in this music genre, but also

in its contemporary, new-wave form as it evolved, in the 80s, into beat-bop, during the rise of hip-hop culture (Deitch, 2007). Arto Lindsay explains, “He felt that to understand the structure of the art it was really important to understand the musical context he came out of” (Lindsay, 2006; Deitch, 2007). Therefore, while Figure 5 literally contains visual references to jazz and beat-bop music, it is his adoption of language along with his unpredictable, instinctual use of color and space in *ALL COLOURED CAST*, which is most structurally reflective of his musical influence.

Basquiat’s later paintings have more references to the jazz music that he grew up listening to with his father, but the earlier works reflect the disjointed rhythms of bands like DNA and James White and the Blacks, who were part of the artist’s circle. The linguistic abstraction in Basquiat’s works, such as the extra *As* in *AAARON*, and the splicing and juxtapositions of what would normally be unrelated phrases, could have served as the lyrics to a no wave song. His approach to language also parallels the innovative writing of Kathy Acker, who was also part of the downtown scene, and the influence of William Burroughs (Deitch, 2007).

Here then is where the artistic influence of Basquiat’s surroundings in New York City’s streets shines through his work, as it becomes a visual representation of both the music and literature being produced at the time through his unique approach to joining street art and music on canvas. Morenzi states that “[l]ike the rhythmness of free jazz and the use of samples which repeat chance phrases until a musical quality can be discerned in them, Basquiat takes basic figures, words and fragments and fuses them together in compositions that work visually” (Morenzi, 1999). As a result, Basquiat’s art came to collectively represent the sociopolitical transgressions alongside



Figure 5. Jean-Michel Basquiat, *BEAT-BOP*, 1983

the creative liberation taking place around him, only to be recognized from a street level perspective during his revolutionary rise into New York City’s un-predicting art world.

Through his dissection of contemporary social issues via the application of structural characteristics of jazz music and the cross-disciplinary artistic revolution occurring during his growth as an artist, the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat exists as a visual representation of the New York city streets amidst the creative landscape of the late 1970s and early 1980s. His use of the street as a medium, and his life on the street during his years as a starving artist hold a strong visibility in Basquiat’s work as he transitions from the street to the canvas. His fidelity to his raw, authentic aesthetic, which combined language, cultural movement and a young black man’s experience in a time of police brutality and racial dispute in America, stood out substantially when placed within the world of the gallery. Although he achieved fame after leaving the street then, Basquiat can still be categorized as a street artist, since his work holds true to

the narratives of life led in the streets at the time. One can visualize the artistic community as well as the vibe of streets through his work, due to its embodiment of the cross-disciplinary, neo-expressionist movement, and this fact, if nothing else, classifies Jean-Michel Basquiat among 20th century's most influential street artists.

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Purposeless and Functional: the Story of Fictional Narratives in Cognitive Models

Nicola Phillips

One of the fundamental tasks that children face is learning how the world works. Parents guide their children in this process, to facilitate their ability to act on their environments, and to keep them from harm. It is a costly exercise for children and adults alike. And yet, bizarrely, we also devote huge amounts of time and energy to actively encouraging children to engage with ideas that contradict the lessons we teach them. We tell children tales about impossible creatures in fantastic, faraway lands, as well as stories about more recognizable - but plainly fictional - characters doing everyday things in imagined settings. Does it not seem counterintuitive to do this while simultaneously placing great demands on children to learn to think and behave in a set of prescribed ways?

Most of us, at least in Western societies, have learned to reliably distinguish between reality and fantasy before adolescence. By young adulthood, we have normally incorporated the accepted norms of our cultures into our thoughts and behaviors. Nevertheless, as adults, we are still compulsively drawn to fictitious narratives, spending billions globally each year on novels, movies, television series, music, theatre, comic books and computer games. What explains this universal drive to spend considerable physical and cognitive resources on abstractions that we know do not exist?

Steen and Owens (2001) memorably described play as both *purposeless and functional*, and in the same way, storytelling is also such a paradox. The following essay will weigh both sides of this apparent contradiction by examining existing evolutionary and cognitive models that relate to narrative, incorporating ideas from research

about entertainment and play. It will also discuss why stories come to mean so much to us, both as individuals, and within society.

It is important to acknowledge that children (and adults) do not generally confuse fiction with reality to the extent that they acquire beliefs that are not true in the real world (Tan, 2008). Tan (2008) espoused a dual-layer model of mental space during entertainment, in which *executive space* creates an *entertainment space* akin to a laboratory, where schemas can be tested in a safe and controlled way. We attend to both the executive and entertainment spaces at the same time, shifting between them as needed (Tan, 2008). So, when we tell each other fictitious narratives, we know at some level that everyone is pretending, even from a very young age. A study by Bosco, Friedman and Leslie (2006), found that children as young as 16 months were able to recognize the pretend and real forms of an action. Li, Boguszewski and Lilliard (2015) showed that children as young as four years of age reliably identified fantasy elements in television shows.

It appears that substituting fact with fiction, even for small children, is not detrimental to their development. The real question is why we bother at all. When faced with a behavior that is as costly in terms of physical and mental resources as storytelling, it can often be helpful to ask what potential adaptive value might exist. McBride (2014) posits that the linear structure of stories is both the result of, and serves as a model for, the type of goal-directed planning required by early hominid societies for successful hunting. Steen and Owens (2001) argued that the amount of pleasure we derive from engaging with stories, even those that make us scared or sad, is itself evidence of an underlying adaptive function, in the same way pleasure is inherently tied to food and sex. They proposed that the way we process stories (or *entertainment*, as they are present-

ed in their schematic) maps onto the cognitive system activated by pretend play. For example, children playing chase are honing skills needed to evade predators, a behavior that can also be observed in the animal kingdom, as anyone who has tried (and failed) to take a ball away from a playful dog will know. Species in five phyla engage in this type of play as well, simulating dangerous scenarios in a safe environment (Lilliard, 2017). There is, therefore, evidence that make-believe play can be considered adaptive, and it is not too much of a stretch to imagine that the fictional quality of stories extends from this. What is interesting however, is that animals continue to play as adults, while human children do not, stopping around age 11 (Lilliard, 2017). What we do continue to do, however, is engage in story-telling long into adulthood.

Steen and Owens (2001) suggest that an *organizational cognitive mode* co-opts and generalizes the ability to pretend play for the purposes of learning. The executive cannot afford either the risk of injury involved in practicing every skill an adult human may need to know, nor the resources required to do so. According to their *structural learning* model, the organizational mode, therefore, extends pretend-play into role-play. From there, it broadens role-play to narrative. The ultimate goal is to test novel behaviors that the executive cognitive mode may later employ (Steen and Owens, 2001).

The Steen and Owens model simultaneously acknowledges the adaptive function of play while also dismissing entertainment as fortuitously benefitting from a vestigial survival system (Steen and Owens, 2001). As such, it fails to address two crucial aspects of entertainment, and by extension, storytelling: firstly, the sheer magnitude of time we are willing to invest in these behaviors, and, secondly, the degree to which entertainment and stories profoundly influence our lives. Applying what we now know about mirror neurons to

the Steen and Owens mode, we can take their idea of structural learning further. These specialized motor cells fire not only when we perform an action, but also when we observe someone else performing an action, allowing us to encode a behavior without needing to physically express it ourselves (Corballis, 2010; Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2016). The significance of this is that mirror neurons in humans massively expand our repertoire of schemas, allowing us a greater scope to tailor our responses and meet the demands of novel situations. Storytelling, as in theatre and film for example, can certainly involve us watching others perform physical actions. A mirror neuron model of storytelling fits the established models of visual code and imagination: imagination makes use of visual circuitry to allow the organism to safely visually simulate a problem and rehearse strategies before the event. We can quite easily extend this notion by describing storytelling as the after-the-event equivalent: our visual systems are stimulated by watching a simulation of a series of events, and then our motor systems go to work, testing what we have observed for ourselves. This strategy is extremely powerful and economical in terms of survival: we reduce the resources we as a species collectively expend, yet make huge gains in shared learning.

But we also know that storytelling makes extensive use of verbal codes, which prompts the question: are there mirror neurons for verbal information? McBride (2014) suggested that mimed stories existed before speech communication in hominids, a theory which confers an extraordinarily privileged role to storytelling within human development. It is a compelling idea if he is correct: the logic of evolution suggests that we would preferentially adapt our existing, efficient visual mirror neuron system. In his theoretical double-function model, mirror neurons should work for both movement and phonemes (McBride, 2014). Knapp and Corina (2010) in

an earlier study, however, had found no convincing evidence that the neural mechanisms involved in comprehension and production of human sign-language rely on mirror neurons. Corballis (2010) resolved this problem by suggesting that there are mirror neurons dedicated specifically to verbal functions. He argued that language must necessarily be to some degree dependent on the mirror system, citing close overlapping of Broca's and Wernicke's areas, with key neural structures activated during imitation (Corballis, 2010). A study by Aziz-Zadeh and colleagues (2006) observed the same direct activation of motor representations in the premotor cortex when actions were described as when they were performed.

Human verbal and written communication has the power to travel long-distances quickly. Stories are shared and repeated, extending a single experience - one single moment of learning - to many other members of our species. The digital era in which we currently live demonstrates this capacity working optimally: one story can be shared with millions in minutes. But communicating information can be, and regularly is, achieved with expository speech and text alone.

Stories are therefore so much more than mere information: when we share a story, we transmit from one human to another a whole learning package including a model for simulating the event, cues to enter a mental space in which to safely rehearse the event, the motor skills required to resolve a problem, and emotional details that embed and embody learning. If we agree with McBride (2014), humans have been successfully crowdsourcing survival strategies and sharing them with each other since before we could talk. And that is only the model for sharing stories about real events. At some point in our evolution, we linked neural systems reserved for imagination with our capacity for storytelling. The result was an explosion in the

number of schemas we made available to our species.

So, while storytelling is costly, it is also incredibly cheap. Yes, we spend enormous amounts of time on it and many of us also spend a considerable portion of our money on different forms of stories. But it is the return on investment that explains why storytelling, including sharing stories about imagined worlds and make-believe people, holds such sway over us.

This is also what resolves the paradox of sharing fictional stories with children from infancy despite the amount of work required by both children and adults to ensure they also understand natural laws and accepted social norms. By providing them with fictional scenarios during critical periods, children are exposed to hundreds more learning opportunities than simply by modeling adult behavior alone.

That does not necessarily explain why we compulsively continue to consume stories even as we age. The answer may lie in the fact that attending to a story does not just involve observation of, or hearing about, motor actions; stories evoke our sense of smell, taste, and touch, and manipulate our emotions. They require us to orient ourselves within a timeline, identify with characters, and make judgments about cause and effect. Stories also activate working memory, and can trigger episodic memory. The result is a constant reactivation of the neural networks associated with these functions.

Why is this important? Because where neurons are concerned, either use them or lose them. Processing stories is a way of keeping cognitive skills sharp, and preventing neuronal loss through pruning. Neuroimaging shows that stories activate certain right hemisphere structures, as well as areas of the posterior temporal lobes, associated with macro-level language; the medial and prefrontal cortices select and sequence information; the anterior cingulate and orbitof-

rontal cortex maintain attentional focus; the posterior cingulate is likely activated when both understanding and producing narratives to create links with personal history and memory; and the medial prefrontal cortex, temporoparietal junction, and temporal poles aid in theory-of-mind and empathizing with characters (Mar, 2004).

Finally, and by extension, a reason that may explain why we engage with narratives throughout our lifetimes is that, even if we have already amassed substantial learning, we can limit functional fixedness as we age. As adults, even if we do not actively seek out entertainment in the form of books or TV series, we are passively exposed to stories told by friends, associates, neighbors and family members. As such, while we may be strengthening existing neural networks, it is also possible that exposing ourselves to how others approach problems may be a crucial factor in preventing attrition of individual problem solving skills.

To conclude, storytelling is far from purposeless, and unlikely, merely an incidentally pleasurable method of transmitting information. On the contrary, it has a functional quality, representing the essence of human social cognition, transmitting a package of data that leads to a cascade of cognitive activity. There is evidence to suggest that storytelling is as vital to the human experience as language itself, if not more so, and has conferred upon our species an almost incomprehensible evolutionary advantage, which we continue to fully exploit in this era of instant mass media. Storytelling is a neglected and yet key indicator of the fundamental difference between human and animal cognition. If Mittens or Fido ever start telling each other stories, we're in trouble.

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Please, Tell Me Who I Am: The Plurality of the Self in Virginia Woolf's
Orlando
Krystale Tremblay-Moll

History shows how certain fundamental aspects of human nature are timeless: greed (the need to conquer), pride (the need to impress others), love (the need for others) and the perpetuation of distinctions in gender. In Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando*, the main character travels through time; the novel begins in the sixteenth century and ends in 1928. Yet, the narrative shows how a movement through the ages does little to affect what is fundamental to human nature. This is especially true of the way we construct gender. There are things that are perceived as female and others that are perceived as male; these are the two binaries. Where does that leave Orlando? This character is both genders and neither, all at once. Woolf demonstrates how gender is simply a representation of certain facets of the selves, as there is not one single self, but several. Who a person is does not need to be bound by gender, but, instead, by who they construct themselves to be. If gender is solely a performance (Butler 25), then how does it play into history and inform it or vice versa? In Virginia Woolf's text *Orlando*, the protagonist's gender ambiguity allows her to transcend history, which is depicted as a movement from one sameness to another, through an exploration of the plurality of the self.

Woolf mocks society's need to prescribe and identify gender through the idea of the lawsuit, which has the final say on what gender Orlando is. This lawsuit also serves to critique the biases of the English judiciary system. The nuances and ambiguity of selfhood are represented as inherently incompatible with the law: "Thus it was in a highly ambiguous condition, uncertain whether she was alive or dead, man or woman, Duke or nonentity, that she posted down to her country seat, where, pending the legal judgment, she had the Law's permission to reside in a state of incognito or incognita as the case might turn out to be" (168). Gender fluidity threatens what is established and what the law attempts to enforce. The grey areas are a risk that can overthrow this rigid system. Since the

beginning of civilization, the idea of law, in some form or another, exists. Yet, where does an entity that is "something between a bat and a wombat" (238) fit in? How can it be monitored and controlled? This type of policing, which is symbolized by the pronouncement of Orlando's gender, demonstrates the perpetuation of binaries throughout history: "My sex ... is pronounced indisputably, and beyond the shadow of a doubt, ... female" (255). Though this document is "of some very impressive sort, judging by the blobs of sealing wax, the ribbons, the oaths, and the signatures" (254), its substance is cursory. Indeed, at this point in the novel, the doubts concerning Orlando's gender are greater than they ever were. Thus, Orlando transcends what history imposes: she may be female on paper, but that does not diminish her ambiguity.

Yet, being female on paper will henceforth dictate how she will be treated, understood, reduced or elevated. Being a woman puts her at a disadvantage in the eyes of the law: "The estates which are now desequestered in perpetuity descend and are tailed and entailed upon the heirs male of my body, or in default of marriage" (255). Woolf's play on words in this passage continues to perpetuate the polarities of gender: "tailed and entailed" in parallel to man and woman or "bat and wombat" (238); it is a language of appendages. Yet, Orlando continually blurs these distinctions and even uses her ability to perform as a woman to her advantage. She wears a pearl necklace when walking around town to accentuate her femininity and also show her rank: "[S]everal park keepers looked at her with suspicion and were only brought to a favourable opinion of her sanity by noticing the pearl necklace which she wore" (284). There is a certain power in knowing what the gender conventions are and using them as the need arises.

Woolf presents readers with the analogy of a stack of plates to emphasize a person's manifold identities. This also relates to how gender and one's understanding of it is really just a representation of these identities. Orlando demonstrates how gender is not all-defining, but just one of the various options available that can be used as a manifestation of interiority. Hence, in the same way that history is made up of a past, how it relates to

the present and to its future, so is the self an amalgamation of what came before it, what it currently is and what it will be. Woolf presents the self as something in flux and, rather than being rigid and singular, it is fluid and plural. As such, the same goes for gender: “These selves of which we are built up, one on top of another, as plates are piled on a waiter’s hand, have attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own” (308). These “rights of their own” are those impulses that make a person emphasize more of one side of the pole than the other or neither. Woolf presents the self as not only plural, but made up of various versions and oppositions. The selves do not exist independently from one another, but simultaneously.

The plate analogy also draws in the idea that the plurality of the self is enriching and incredibly important for development. If the self is exponential, then there are at least two genders within it all interacting and emerging or retreating at any given moment. It is something that transcends history; the self is not bound by gender because it is interior. Whatever the social conventions of the time may be, a person’s interiority is a space that knows no bounds: “how many different people are there not - Heaven help us - all having lodgment at one time or another in the human spirit” (308). The human spirit is represented as the essence of a person - one that people cannot access and, while they may try to tarnish it, ultimately, they cannot reach its core. Orlando’s escalated confusion towards the end of the novel lies in the irresolution of her character within history. She knows no boundaries within herself yet is bound within the world. Her confusion is based on the sense that although she may be multiple versions of herself at once, the outside world will place her neatly in a box: “women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled” (156). It is a conflict that cannot be reconciled. “And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being she seemed to vacillate” (158). This vacillation occurs beneath the surface and allows her to perceive herself as fluid, yet the conventions of the outside world always tie her down.

Woolf uses Orlando’s house as a symbol for how history is in conflict with Orlando’s various selves. When she returns to England after her voyage in Constantinople, the narrator states: “The house was no longer hers entirely, she sighed. It belonged to time now; to history; was past the touch and control of the living” (318). In the same way that the law takes it upon itself to determine what gender Orlando is, the house, which was the character’s place of refuge throughout centuries, is a place that she no longer has agency over. Nevertheless, she may have lost symbolic ownership over her house, but history cannot claim her identity. Indeed, the most important part of her home is the oak tree under which she explored her poetic self. She had spent endless hours underneath it and, even when she leaves her house, the manuscript of her poem “The Oak Tree” follows her everywhere she goes “in the bosom of her dress” (280). Interestingly, when Nick Greene reads Orlando’s work centuries later, his reaction to the poem, his “verdict” (280), is completely different from the first time when he ridiculed her poetry. The poem, a manifestation of herself, that had once caused her to be ridiculed, now allows her to be praised. This proves that, although tastes may change over the course of history, predilections are superficial and unpredictable.

Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* is a novel that blurs the lines between history, gender and identity to show how constructed each of these are. Society lets history and gender dictate what it deems fit or unfit, normal or abnormal and moral or immoral. Yet, it is a reductive way of looking at the complexity of humans. Orlando exemplifies how being ambiguous in the eyes of society, the law and history, allows for a certain fluidity that is at once liberating and oppressive. Her interiority may contain many selves, but the world will only see what she shows them and it can only be one self at a time. Woolf uses the image of a pile of plates to relate to the plurality of the selves. She also uses the idea of the house and the poem “The Oak Tree” to demonstrate how, when one presents one of these versions of ourselves to the world, there is something that is lost along the way. Nowadays, we are experiencing a paradigm shift. Slowly but surely, people are beginning to recognize that the binaries which have dictated their lives are much

more plural than before. Despite the insistence on a person being only one thing, Woolf provides a progressive perspective of the self that, were it to be adapted to the modern day, would offer a world of possibilities.

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“Legacy of Lunacy”: Replacing Race in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Casey Williams

Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in exploring the origins of madness itself in a post-colonial and West Indian context, reveals the inherently progressive nature of prejudice and the emerging modern conception in which mental illness is the most damning designation of all. In delving into the complexities and fundamentally corruptive forces of displacement and discrimination as a whole, Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* exposes the emergence of an ethos in which the legal eradication of slavery necessitates the creation of an ulterior form of oppression and segregation. As a means of reckoning with the merely illusory and politically fueled imposition of emancipation in the West Indies, people of all racial backgrounds and international creeds are inadvertently propelled by politics and nation to direct their hatred and intrinsically human desire for superiority and power onto another vulnerable and unwarranted target. In merging the contemporarily undesirable traits of mental illness and national un-belonging, the previously racially segregated population of Coulibri, and the extended Jamaica, institute yet another form of damning differentiation; and in doing so allow for the permissible stratification and possession of the individual under the pretense of *madness*. This notion of *madness* supersedes all prior understandings of racial prejudice and partisanship; unshakably proven by the fact that the final nail in the coffin of Antoinette Mason's, (nee Cosway's), identity, worth, and self-governance is the departure of her sanity and lucidity rather than the undeniably precarious situation of her cultural ambiguity and un-belonging. Through the exposition of the fundamentally hierarchical mode that racism and slavery takes on,

Rhys expands upon the apparent atrocities and obscenities produced by this toxic colonization in laying bare the often-overlooked experience of the Creole and the consequent ramifications of racism and slavery that transcend ethnicity.

In a futile attempt to placate the despondency and wretched realities of racism and slavery, the people of Coulibri, Spanish Town, and Jamaica direct their now indoctrinated and mercurial tendencies of intolerance onto an equally defenseless kind; the *mad*. The evident dismissal of the worth of the mentally ill, among other neglects of human morality in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, survey the wider ramifications of the slave trade and colonialism as a whole in reference to the transcendental nature of bigotry and prejudice. The larger implications of institutionalized racism and brutality are immortalized throughout the course of the novel through the pursuit of vilifying a “legacy of lunacy” (Baker, “Fighting Mad: Between Sides and Stories in *Wide Sargasso Sea*” 70) and in doing so silencing those who are deemed unworthy of being heard. The systematic oppression of the mentally ill, first evidenced in the harsh and one sided reception of Antoinette's mother, Annette Cosway Mason, is presented by Antoinette and the people of the Coulibri Estate to be a logical response to there being “no more slavery” and the now commonly held consensus in Coulibri that there is “no distinction between black and white, black and white the same” (Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* 5, 4). Annette's classification as *mad* is derived early on from her physical representation of having been “twisting like a cat and showing her teeth” (Rhys 24) and as such the leap from prejudice based upon physical racial differentiation to that of physically evident mental instability is a relatively fluid and uncontested transition in the minds of those at the Coulibri Estate. This relative ease from which racial prejudice is developed into a cognitive bias is largely

fostered and propelled by the notion of requiring some sort of tangible, or ocular, evidence of instability and dissimilarity. Before being silenced and nullified as human, Annette's last physical interaction with her daughter occurs directly after the realization that "one [of her] plait[s] is] much shorter than the other" (Rhys 30); a moment in which Annette's evident unkemptness is used as a precursor and definitive factor in her classification as *mad* and thus being "outside the ranks of the...population" (Baker 74). The later implied rape of Annette by her caretakers and the description of her physical state, being "all soft and limp" (Rhys 104), further develops the idea that after having been visibly outcast and deemed *mad*, a person's body, much like their mind, is not their own and is thus subject to defilement in the confines of the systematic prejudice in place. Thus, in conflating racial and mental inferiority, the people of Coulibri, and effectively Antoinette herself, permit the classification of mental illness to take on a likeness to that of the observable dissimilarity that rules the institution of racism.

Wide Sargasso Sea unmask the harrowing transition from which differentiation and ambivalence are furnished as insanity, and in doing so explores the consequent degradation of identity. In constantly grappling with the "wish to be part of the black Caribbean community" (Baker 76) Antoinette's soul and personhood is destabilized to such an extent that she is rendered doll-like; simply a "Marionette, Antoinette, Marionetta, Antoinetta" (Rhys 121) due to the fact that she is fundamentally incapable of belonging to either the sphere of the Caribbean or that of the English. Rather than being characterized as *madness* incarnate, Antoinette is driven to a chaotic state upon the realization that she "exhibits an expertise" on these two worlds that "she cannot claim even about herself" (Baker 76); this inability to grasp her own interiority, furthered by past trauma

and the repeated act of being "forsake[n]" (Rhys 124) by people and country, is actually the inverse of what is understood to be *madness*. Rather, Antoinette's response to the atrocities of her childhood and being characterized as the "mad girl" (Rhys 131) are an entirely rational and remarkably lucid reaction to her circumstance. In finally understanding that her situation is incomprehensible and utterly unbridgeable Antoinette seems to take the only sensible course of action, removing herself from this damning and oppressive narrative. Antoinette's striking descent into *madness*, the moment of this "dream jump" (Baker 76), is the very instance in which she achieves true clarity and eclipses the constraints of the insurmountable difference that has defined her person. This interiority and clarity is only achieved upon Antoinette's dismissal of the racial and cultural binaries that have bound her; therefore it is verified that rather than the notion of insanity being comparable to the person that is Antoinette, she is more accurately characterized and aligned with the "social upheaval incited by abolition" (Baker 78) and furthermore the vilification of the *other*; in this case the *mad*, that arose out of a need to perpetuate the already present ideologies of slavery and racial dissimilarity rooted in the Caribbean.

The placement of Antoinette as Creole, both in the Caribbean and English contexts, calls attention to the increasingly prevalent, and disturbing, notion that regards those of mixed descent to be inherently damaged and thus warrant to violation and mistreatment. In recognizing Antoinette's Creole identity the people of the Caribbean and England are acutely attuned to her variability and consequently Antoinette is forced into a vague and vulnerable space in which her civil liberties and personhood are taken away and the only certainty in her being is to be outcast. Antoinette is thus relegated to the conventional trajectory of the Creole in that she is emblemized

to illustrate “the ways the self can be split under...colonialism” (Baker 79) and in being as such must possess and reckon with the implications of the title of “white cockroach” (Rhys 75). This recognition of “Antoinette’s place between the two” (Baker 85) worlds, as a bottom dwelling but populous creature, this “white cockroach” (Rhys 75), is without question a catalyst in her descent into *madness* and acts as a constant reminder of the “wicked world” (Rhys 75) in which she finds herself. However, this inverted racial epithet has a far more profound effect on Antoinette’s interiority and sanity than it does on the physical and racial perception of her person. This state of ambivalence in which Antoinette finds herself, physically in the realm of possibility to be “any pretty English girl”, is overshadowed by the “madness in that family” and solidified by the disturbing truth that Antoinette, both physically and mentally, “is something else” entirely (Rhys 50, 71, 100). In failing to conform, or easily bind herself, to a concrete and comprehensive identity Antoinette is forced into the frightening cognizance that she doesn’t “know what I am like now” (Rhys 143) and thus is fundamentally incapable of complying with the “either/or imperative” (Baker 85) that defines personal worth and integrity. Rather than being outcast and damned for her racial difference, her Creoleness and “patchwork” (Rhys 151) qualities, Antoinette is rejected by Caribbean and English society for lacking a mental sanctity that is derived from her being the *mad* and “infamous daughter of an infamous mother” (Rhys 149). Although classified “as [no] more than an unidimensional lunatic figure” (Baker 89), Antoinette is truly a product of her time in that her Creolity and racial unbelonging are the cause of her classification as *mad*. This newly emancipated Caribbean, and England, in which Antoinette finds herself no longer allows for segregation and servitude under the guise of racial inequity and therefore must implement “a logical

continuation” (Baker 90) of the previously instituted hierarchical oppression; the persecution and condemnation of the *other* through the demolition of their personhood, interiority, and sanity.

Wide Sargasso Sea explores the prevalent victimization of the emancipated, post-colonial world and in doing so reveals the transformative and adaptive qualities of damnation and indifference to dissimilarity. In chronicling the formation of a new creed of despotism and maltreatment, in the form of the persecution of the mentally ill or merely cognitively unconventional, *Wide Sargasso Sea* effectively outlines the further ramifications and implications of institutionalized racism and colonialism as a whole. While racial differentiation and prejudice still pervades the fractured world of Jean Rhys’ narrative, mental illness and its vulnerability in invisibility emerge as the modern and contemporary means of oppression supported by kingdom, country, and people.

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Editor-in-Chief

Gregory R Bedell

Gregory is in his last year of undergraduate studies in Anthropology. In addition to being the Editor-in-Chief of the third volume of *Between Arts and Science*, he is also the Vice President of Academic and Loyola Affairs for the ASFA. His interests include environmental issues, plant science, and tabasco.



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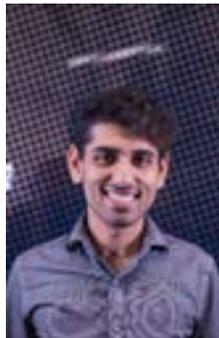
Qurat-ul-Ain

Qurat-ul-Ain is a second-year student at Concordia University, specializing in English Literature and doing a Minor in Philosophy. She is most interested in literature from the Romantic period and Philosophy of Religion, dealing especially with issues of morality. Due to her attachment with books, Qurat-ul-Ain is planning on pursuing a master's degree in Library Science, but she is also interested in producing quality works during her studies at Concordia. These goals have pushed her to take advantage of the editing position in order to not only improve her social skills, but also to learn from other students' works. The attention to details required for the task, and the authors' thorough research process will certainly allow her to refine her own papers.



Malik Ammad Iqbal

Malik Ammad Iqbal is a second year undergraduate student specializing in Biology at Concordia University. Ammad has a passion for the English language, from prose to poetry; Editing was an inevitability with his inclination towards peer-reviews. He is grateful for the opportunity to be an editor for *Between Arts & Science: Vol 3*. It has allowed him to meet some wonderful people with brains to match the size of their hearts. He will forever cherish what he's learned as an editor and take the knowledge to his future endeavours.



Zoe Ward

Zoë Ward is in her third year at Concordia University completing a BSc degree in Honors Behavioral Neuroscience with a minor in Multidisciplinary Studies in Science. Her interest in sciences spans several fields. She has enjoyed working on projects in laboratories studying infectious diseases and neuroendocrinology and is looking forward to completing her Honors project at Concordia in Dr. Nadia Chaudhri's lab, studying how alcohol affects behavioral responses in rats. Zoë enjoys scientific writing and is intrigued by the intersection of arts and sciences, and finding ways in which the two can be combined to promote accessibility and interest in science by the general population. Being an editor for the ASFA journal is one of the ways she hopes to bridge her many interests.



Marie Sakr

Marie Sakr is in her third and final year as an undergraduate, pursuing a BA in Honors English Literature with a minor in Education. Her academic interests include Romantic lyricism, travel writing, colonialism, and the ways otherness is represented across literary genres. Her paper, "Travel Writing in Jonathan Swift's 'The Lady's Dressing Room,'" was published in the LUCC 2017 Proceedings. This year, she served as a member of the English department's Curriculum Committee, LUCC Vetting Committee, and LUCC Editing Committee, and was Panel Coordinator for the 2018 LUCC. This fall, she plans to begin a degree in Secondary English Education in the hopes of becoming a teacher, fusing her passions for literature and education.



