

HINGE

CSS

F23



We recognize that the work and scholarship at the University of King's College, including Hinge, takes place on K'jipuktuk, in the third district of the Mi'kma'ki, which is Eskikekwa'kik. This is the unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. The primary language of this journal is English, a language of historic and continuing colonialism and oppression. These lands are governed under the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, which never dealt with surrender of the land to settlers. The treaties promised to uphold Indigenous sovereignty and stewardship on this land, and never addressed the issue of land possession in any significant way. The promises of the treaties were continually broken by the settlers, as they violently carried out a genocidal agenda against the Mi'kmaq and all the nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy.

For more information on these treaties visit
<https://www.migmawei.ca/negotiations/migmaqtreatyrights/>

These injustices are not limited to historical events. Indigenous lands and knowledge continue to be appropriated for political and economic gain. As people dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, it is our responsibility to recognize the impacts of colonialism and strive for a future of shared understanding between all peoples. Our intellectual pursuits at King's and beyond must be guided by the principle of Two-Eyed Seeing, which Mi'kmaq elder Albert Marshall refers to as “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and learning to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing... and, most importantly, using both of these eyes together for the benefit of all.” May our curiosity and learning guide us toward a better and more just world.



Foreword

This long-awaited edition of *Hinge* is here following the contributions of many authors, editors, and supporters. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Contemporary Studies Society has put itself back together with the help of past and present members of the Executive Board, the King's Student Union, faculty members, and friends. This edition collects the works of 15 authors across two cycles of submissions, each reviewed and collaboratively edited with their peers on the CSS' Executive Board. The diversity of this journal reflects the open horizon of the Contemporary Studies program at King's. The following essays have been drawn from students' work in the Foundation Year Program, the Contemporary Studies course doublets, and King's well-known offering of elective classes. Across time and space from Engels and Victorian lesbians to Virginia Woolf and Levinas, as well as our authors' own insightful commentaries, the Fall 2023 edition of *Hinge* demonstrates the connection between theory, practice, and academic pursuit in our contemporary world.

Thank you,

The CSS Executive Board
Noah Katie Grace Jessica



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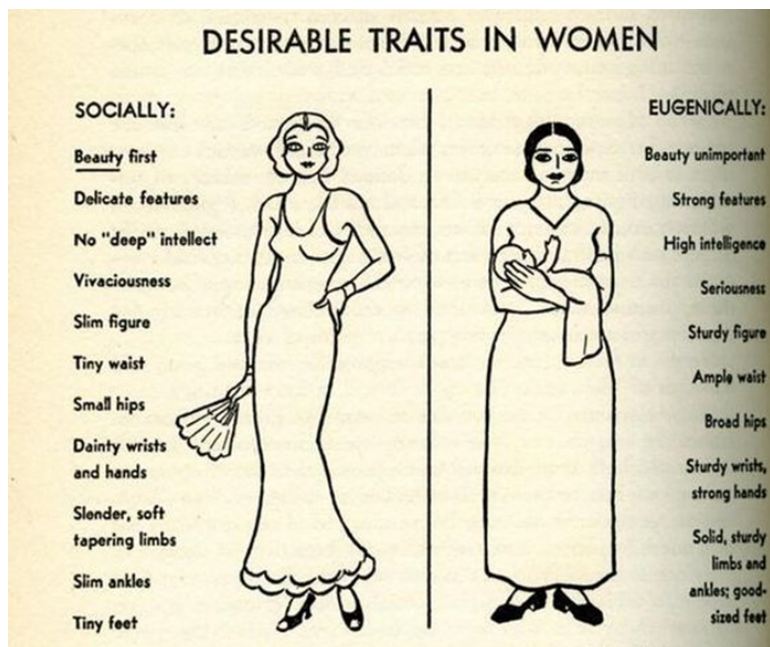
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The Fraught Discourse Between Eugenics and Modernity

Meredith Bullock

This paper is framed like an exhibition; a piece of media is presented and is followed by an analysis. In this exhibition, I shall argue that the discourse between eugenics and modernity is fraught, using the example of the distress caused by the eugenics movement implemented after the Halifax Explosion. I have based this multi-media “gallery” on the exhibits I saw on childhood trips to the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. Like those exhibits, this project will include diagrams from books, texts, photographs, posters, and magazine covers. In captions, the “visitor” to this “gallery” will be given a theoretical view of the media it is paired with; each piece of media has been partnered with a different theorist. In doing this, I shall show that post-explosion interest in eugenics was affected by politics, gender, fear, and hopes for the future. A conclusion will bring all of these pieces together and address the movement’s distressing legacy in Halifax’s current “modernity,” thus showing that the anxiety it caused has continued.

Exhibit A – Theoretical Background



In “Eugenics and the Left,” historian Diane Paul shows her reader that many Leftists and “Progressives” attempted to use eugenics as a means of creating better workers. A figure in the book “You and Heredity,” this 1936 diagram displays traits that were considered desirable in women; it juxtaposes “socially” desirable traits with more practical, “eugenically” desirable ones, which would help women bear children and thus make them better labourers.” This being said, leftists continued to debate what constituted a “desirable trait” (Paul 582). Prominent socialists supported the idea of “socially responsible eugenics,” as promoted by communist biologist Haldine (567). As opposed to the beauty standards depicted in the above diagram, these advocates advanced both positive and negative eugenics, as they desired, “improvement of the genetic stock of the human race through selective breeding” (568) – in short, breeding of people similar to the woman in the diagram on the right. J.B.S Haldine claimed that,

In many countries the poor breed much quicker than the rich, even when allowance is made for their higher death rate. Thus the valuable genes making for ability, which bring economic success to their possessors, are getting rarer, and the average intelligence of the nation is declining (585). (quoted accurately)

Here, Haldine shows the possibility that, despite not being economically prosperous, the poor are more eugenically “fit” than the rich. This exhibition will show that the Halifax movement had a similar ethos in that it promoted eugenics as a means of bringing the city into modernity, and was one of the ways in which the town was “improved” after the explosion. The exhibition will also address the fact that even reformers who promoted radical equality supported eugenics, as they deemed it better for the whole of society. Frederick Engels himself voiced the general leftist view that

the real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the abolition of classes. Any demand for equality which goes beyond that, of necessity passes into absurdity. (572)

From this quotation, one can infer that the left could theoretically align eugenics with their values due to the fact that they believed all other forms of equality would follow class equality; eugenics could be used in the knowledge that the needs of disabled people would be addressed after the above was ensured. After the Explosion, Halifax was pulled into a new era of modern technology, similar to that of Europe. While the Soviets themselves rejected eugenics through its doctrine of diversity, it is possible that the west used eugenics to mimic this efficiency. In 1917, Halifax had just been pulled into a new “modernity” by the explosion, and rebuilt the city from the ground up afterward; as suggested in this article, they were given an opportunity to create their own “modernity” via biology (590) that resulted in the questionable treatment of disabled people. This may have resulted in the anxiety to return the city to a state of normalcy and make the health of society better instead of worse after such a disaster; ethical treatment of minorities became a secondary project at most. Because they were seemingly unimportant to a society in need of workers, disabled people did not benefit from post-explosion reforms.

Exhibit B – Pre-Explosion Eugenics: Baker’s Doctoral Report on the Role of Women



While the Halifax Explosion gave rise to new anxiety about population health, eugenic reform had been previously advocated for by women. While they were originally unsuccessful, the disaster seemed to give this arm of the feminist movement new steam (Baker 167). In the 1850s, the upper-class British population was afraid because lower-class birth rates were going up even though national birthrate was going down (151). This was solved with maternal eugenic feminism, which advocated that “women were needed to balance society and save the white race” and that domesticity be used to a woman’s advantage (152) – something also seen in the Halifax movement. While not a particularly left-wing view, the general idea that mothers have a “job” to raise healthy children who society would see as good potential workers can be seen in both Paul and Baker’s articles. Those who subscribed to this ideology also believed that families and children would benefit from women’s participation in the political sphere, where women could “[mother] the nation” (153). While the movement was “modern,” then, it still promoted the traditional role of women. Although their ideology was in place, advocates from the Halifax Council of Women were not seen as important until after the explosion; the organization had not even been taken seriously until 1906 when they worked with the school for the deaf to identify feeble-minded children in Nova Scotia and had little success (167). Here, one sees the relationship between two “modern” movements that were contemporaries – eugenics and women’s rights. The Council’s push for eugenic reform was only taken seriously after the explosion, raising the question of whether what they advocated for was being taken up by modernity or whether the fact that women wanted eugenic reform was secondary to the post-explosion changes being advocated for by men like sociologist Samuel Prince. This raises the question of whether the implementation of the post-explosion eugenic movement would have given women false hope that the feminist movement was being advanced. If these women reflected on this, it would surely have caused anxiety within the movement and themselves. The above picture represents maternal eugenic feminism in that a woman (the “grower,” “nurturer,” or “gardener” of the traditional western family) is “pruning” away societal unfitness. The cartoon demonstrates a new power in the feminist movement to supposedly influence and benefit from eugenics, as aided by the explosion.

This 1934 magazine cover was featured in a Guardian article about eugenics and immigration (Malik). A “personal problem magazine,” the journal outwardly idealizes the able-bodied and reduces the disabled to a pest issue. One reason for Halifaxian anxiety after the explosion was that the city had been an economic hub during the First World War, which had led to an increase in drinking, sexually transmitted infections, prostitution, and illegitimate children. The opportunity for reconstruction after the explosion became an “‘experiment’ in public health, education, and reform” (Baker 102). Due to their shock and disorientation, the citizens of Halifax seemed to blindly partake in the “progressivism that was both paternalistic and authoritarian” (Baker 102), as represented in this supposedly-didactic magazine cover; both authoritarianism and the magazine give direction for self-improvement. However, this government paternalism was threatened by a post-explosion rupture in the city’s class system that resulted from disorientation and the arrival of relief workers, causing what citizens believed was a “threat to public safety” (102-103). New modernity often brings a new outlook, but instead of Halifaxians going from innocence to experience, Baker suggests they fell into a state of dependency, as the anxiety and change were too large to be embraced. While eugenics was popular at this time, Halifax did not promote surgical eugenics (including sterilization). Instead, “undesirable families and ‘feeble-minded’ women of childbearing age” were sent to institutions like the Nova Scotia Hospital for the Insane – a project aided by explosion reconstruction. This may have created anxiety among more extreme eugenicists or community members who wanted these people to be sterilized.

Exhibit C – Baker (“A Visitation of Providence”) and Disaster Repair



Exhibit D – Prince and the Revolution: Explosion and Outcomes



Photo from Nova Scotia Archives. Copy of original photograph courtesy of the Maritime Command Museum, Halifax. Photograph copied from the album of Colonel Robert S. Low. Date: 1917 or 1918. Photographer: James & Son. Reference no.: Robert S. Low NSARM accession no. 1992-524

Instead of discussing the children in the foreground of this photograph from the Nova Scotia Archives, I would like to focus on the poster in the window, which reads “We Shall Never Rebuild Halifax Unless Everybody Works.” Strangely enough, this promotional poster for the post-explosion eugenics movement is being re-printed and sold in shops during the current COVID-19 health disaster, including Inkwell and The Loop. After the explosion, Haligonians became frustrated with the knowledge that disabled people could not help to rebuild the devastated city. With the installation of the eugenics regime, these people became part of the “disaster repair,” as they were not seen as societal contributors. In his 1920 doctoral thesis, *Catastrophe and Social Change*, Samuel Prince writes that the explosion gave Halifax the “advantage of an opportunity which comes to a city seldom but save through the avenue of disaster” (130), and a chance to aim for the Aristotelian notion of “the welfare and happiness of everyone” (131). It seems that Prince did not consider the welfare of disabled people. However, it is also possible that he assumed this population would be happy in institutions. From this standpoint, Prince would have considered himself a champion of the disability community. While he was interested in physical infrastructure, Prince was also proud of how the city was implementing eugenics as it applied to children; his writing boasts that the new health center now had classes on mothering and a “baby-saving exhibit,” which is not described (134). In this book, he also advocates for a new psychiatric clinic, as “defectives” must be diagnosed and subsequently segregated in schools (135). While public schools no longer take up the ethos of eugenics in such a direct way, the notion of separating those who will and will not be able to work at a young age is still largely intact. Prince claims that

In making her plans for the future [Halifax] has not forgotten that the rebuilt city should contain every facility for children to grow up with strong bodies and sane minds. (137).

Here, Prince promotes play with eugenic ends, and later claims that this leads to fewer juvenile offenders (138). The reader notices Prince’s anxiety about there being disabled people in an already-shaky post-explosion society, as they would not be good workers and overall unhelpful in this period of re-building. *Catastrophe and Social Change* suggests ways to alleviate this anxiety and not only re-build after a tragedy, but create a superior new modernity. It is possible that Prince’s optimistic outlook would have relieved some distress with the suggestion of a new and stable order. However, he suggests that this stability should include the “destruction” of disability. Both change and disability cause anxiety; Prince seems to suggest that, although societal change is uncontrollable, disability is, and that humans should use circumstances beyond their control to shape what is within it.

This 1922 cartoon from the *American School Board Journal* depicts a child being inspected under the magnifying glass of intelligence tests and other children being siloed into classes A through C. While not itself about the eugenics project in Halifax, this media piece speaks to this part of the city’s history when placed in said context. After the discovery of germ theory and the dawn of pathology and microbiology, doctors knew that even a healthy-looking person could “harbour deadly microbes” (McLaren 2). While doctors were not in an elevated position in western society before the late nineteenth century (1), after these breakthroughs those in authority began to consult doctors as a means of “social management” (3) in institutions like the military, so the profession gained status (4). As their profession could be furthered by the eugenics that came with this post-explosion anxiety, doctors were some of its biggest supporters (2). However, there is some suggestion that this was not out of noble professionalism, but rather curiosity and hunger for power (3). This would have caused internal conflict for doctors, as societal anxiety for help and safety bred in them a desire for power. While a contrary position did not have any particular social benefit, some doctors were still anti-eugenics, as they feared that it would lead to people explaining everything away with heredity or medicine losing its “moralizing message” (3).

Exhibit E – McLaren on the Power of Doctors

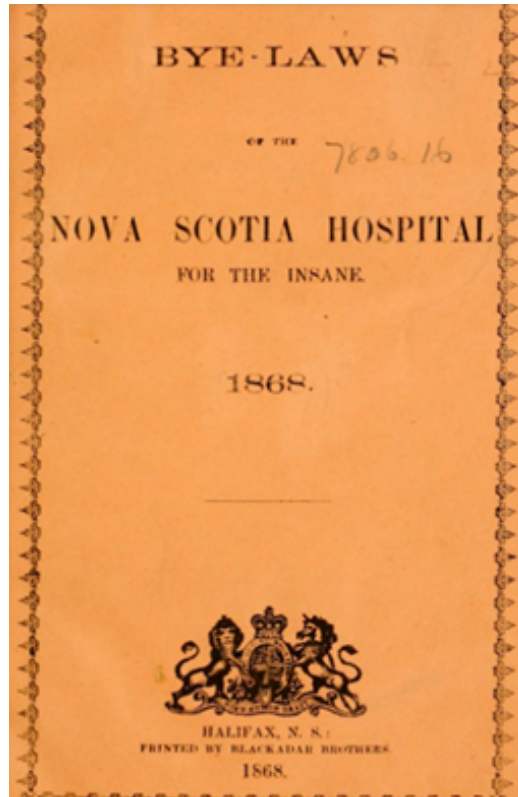


In opposition to the post-explosion reformers, this group was anxious to move away from the modern; however, longing for the past is also a contemporary feeling. Lastly, the explosion brought with it the idea of “faith’ in the doctor” (12). This cult-like status held by the new eugenic reformers would have also been a new cause for fear among physicians who did not promote a eugenics agenda – not only would they have missed out on an opportunity to gain societal influence, but they likely would have been disgraced by their profession. Helen MacMurchy – a member of the first generation of female physicians – advocated for school inspections, as these would produce what McLaren calls a “healthier and more orderly working class under the surveillance of scientific observers” (13). Reformers were also interested in the work of people such as Dr. A.P. Knight, who attempted to advance the field of preventative medicine at the time in hopes of a new, disease-free modernity [13]. Eugenics would have caused distress within the Halifax medical community itself.

If any artifact in this exhibition shows that anxiety results from the discourse between eugenics and modernity, it would be the by-laws for the Nova Scotia Hospital for the Insane. These by-laws were discovered in Boston, the city that came to the aid of Halifax post-explosion. Originally named Mount Hope Asylum, the hospital’s construction took place from 1856 to 1857. Three of its superintendents were eugenics advocates and two of them later served as government public health authorities. While the first, Alexander Reid, promoted sterilization, the latter two, George Sinclair and William Harrop Hattie, merely advocated for the institutionalization of the “feeble-minded.”

Two years after the hospital's initiation, the Act for the Management of the Hospital for the Insane (1858) ruled in favour of humane treatment of patients; the institution was put under the control of a superintendent and board of commissioners to ensure that the mentally ill were not mistreated, but never specified what treatment could be considered "inhumane." In 1901 it was re-named Nova Scotia Hospital, but colloquially called Mount Hope Lunatic Asylum; the hospital was finally named the Mental Health Program under the 2001 "Health Authorities Act." The construction of each of these programs probably seemed "modern" at the time; however, this hospital was not one of the major centres of reform after the explosion, possibly because they just thought it was too old for improvement and that it did not merit attention at the time.

Exhibit E – McLaren on the Power of Doctors



With the explosion came a rupture in Halifax's class system, which was caused by physical displacement and relief workers coming in (who were seen as a "threat to public safety") (Baker 102-103). While this new class instability resulted in anxiety, people at least knew that they could control the disabled population by exiling them from society and putting them in this hospital; this gave able-bodied citizens one seemingly simple way to "clean up" Halifax. Prince (cited above) had an idea of how to pull the city into a healthy new age after the explosion, but it was designed to only help the healthy and (to an extent) rid Halifax of the "issue" of the disabled community. However, this reform did not aid the disabled population, but rather helped able-bodied people by removing them. For them "modernity" was having their rights repealed. As suggested above, the creation of hospitals and institutionalization of the disabled may have stemmed from an anxiety about ensuring that society was strengthened after such a disaster. By having all disabled people in one area, they could be more easily controlled and would not "infect" or otherwise get in the way of the able-bodied population, for whom the focus of the post-explosion eugenics movement was fitness and overall betterment. Keeping the two populations separate would help to release at least some post-explosion anxiety regarding welfare; it would promote the idea of a shiny new modernity and wipe out remnants of the disaster.

While the institution being discussed does not relate directly to the explosion, there is evidence that the “modern” project of eugenics continued to cause anxiety in Nova Scotia up until the early twenty-first century. After the disaster, Brookside became home to the Nova Scotia Training School, which was built as a result of new laws meant to control the fertility “of the ‘sub-normal’ population;” the institution operated from 1929 to the late 1990s. As the school was not built directly after the explosion, its existence raises the question of whether it was a post-explosion reform or a completely separate eugenics project. The fact that it began to operate in 1929 shows that the explosion’s eugenics ethos had a long-term effect on Halifax. In 2004, Fred MacKinnon, a reformer in the Nova Scotia provincial government, claimed that the school’s strictness made it so that students would not “contaminate or weaken the human race by producing ‘feeble-minded’ offspring” (Wickham); he also boasted that his intervention had made it so that the school was functioning well by the late 1970s. However, former students came forward to the Halifax Examiner with allegations that they were sexually abused in the place that was built to control their fertility. This may have caused anxiety among modern adherents to eugenics that the institution did not do its job when it was open (even though the students were the ones being abused). Although not directly related to post-explosion reform, anxiety for control goes both ways in this final part of the “exhibition” – the school and government were anxious for control over these children. Years later, the former students became anxious to hold the school and government accountable for the abuse it perpetuated up until the 1990’s, and in going to the press took control themselves. Finally, it is important to note that there was likely more abuse suffered by the incredibly vulnerable people in these institutions that will remain unknown. Much of the anxiety caused by this part of post-explosion “modernity” will never be brought into Halifax’s current “modernity” and sorted out through something like this allegation.

These pieces of contemporary media and texts show that distress can lead to eugenics, which ultimately – as seen in the final exhibit – leads to more distress; even by the late twentieth century, disabled people continued to suffer under Halifax’s post-explosion eugenics movement. While disaster can provide an opportunity for optimism and reform, this can negatively affect vulnerable populations both immediately and in the future.

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“Untouched” Wilderness and Other
Male Fantasies: An Ecofeminist
Examination of Loving and Destroying
Nature Under Patriarchy
Jessica Casey

The glorification of “untouched” land is an innocuous and even celebrated part of Western culture, so much so that it usually escapes judgement for its colonial and patriarchal origins. Examining these roots presents an opportunity for all people, especially members of the environmental movement itself, to bring the innocuous into a more critical light. Why is the very fact that a place is “untouched” enough to draw crowds? Why did USA Today advertise the “untouched” places where “you really get away from it all” (Lebetkin) and why did Byron write, “[t]here is a rapture on the lonely shore” (Byron, ln. 1-2)? To tease out the trouble with this view, I will first ascertain the origins of the fantasy of being the lone inhabitant of a “virginal” landscape, what relationship this implies with nature more broadly, and what this view accepts as the norm through a post-colonial and eco-feminist lens. William Cronon’s “The Trouble with Wilderness” brings light to this counter-productive way of thinking about the environment. He outlines a dualism where land is either “nature,” uninhabited, wild and worthy of protection, or an impure “non-nature,” defiled by civilization’s touch. This dualistic thinking is not merely a fallacy or error; it absolves post-colonial capitalist society of environmental responsibility, and in an interrelated way, mirrors the oppression of women. Sigmund Freud writes about another kind of dualistic thinking, the ‘Madonna/Whore Complex,’ where men see women as either pure saints worthy of respect or degraded objects of desire. This is one example of the exploitation of land and the exploitation of women mirroring one another. As in Freud’s construction, where men view women as either an object of respect or desire, men view land as either an object to adore or degrade, depending on the perceived value of the land’s “purity.” This kind of thinking poses a threat to both women and the environment. The social construct of “wilderness” and the exclusivity of what constitutes nature is structurally similar to Freud’s Madonna/Whore complex in that they both cater to a patriarchal need to simultaneously admire and exploit, therefore demonstrating the interconnectivity of social and environmental oppression. Though Cronon points out that treating humans and nature as definitionally incompatible suggests that nature’s salvation would require humanity’s suicide, this thinking is not and never was truly suicidal. Both categories of land in this dualism, the pristine escape and the exploitable non-nature, cater perfectly to patriarchal interests. Conceding defeat and implying that civilization is incompatible with nature while still glorifying what land remains “untouched” absolves the patriarchal settler society of environmental accountability.

The gendered power dynamics involved in man’s encounter with wilderness reveal the inherent misogyny in valuing land for being “untouched.” Cronon’s social critique of wilderness recognizes this through the “mythic frontier individualist” (Cronon, 102) who “was almost always masculine in gender: here, in the wilderness, a man could be a real man, the rugged individual he was meant to be before civilization sapped his energy and threatened his individuality” (102). This description portrays a relationship between man as a virile individual and a reactive, feminized nature. However, not just any nature can affirm his spirit, but a very narrow definition of it: one that is pure, untouched by the traces of other men.

Describing his untouched refuge in nature, Romantic poet and ardent lover of nature Lord Byron wrote in his euphoric “Ode to the Sea” that “[t]here is a pleasure in the pathless woods,/ There is a rapture on the lonely shore” (Byron, ln. 1-2). In this Ode, as in Cronon’s character, nature is enjoyed by one man, at least in part because other men have not enjoyed it. Two things happen for Cronon’s “mythic frontier individualist” (Cronon, 102) when he discovers a pre-existing path in the woods. First, he can more easily exercise his power over nature because he can rely on another man’s work rather than use his strength and courage to conquer the land for the first time. Secondly, there is no longer the excitement of discovering something no one else has seen, and therefore the land becomes less valuable. These things denote a lessening of intrigue for “touched” land, which mirrors misogynistic valuations of women. The valorization and desire for the innocence of the virginal “Madonna” is a male fantasy in which men are both the people who assign value to women and the people capable of taking it away. Establishing this relationship over a feminized nature is the extension of a male fantasy that can simulate power over women and other power dynamics rooted in Western cultures such as colonial expansion or personal connection with God. Since the nature he desires is untouched and therefore outside of what he deems “society,” he indulges in this simulation without recourse; it is a fantasy that is intimate, sheltered from history or audience. This relationship with nature is not only an attitude of the past. In 2014, USA Today asks in its travel section, “where can you really get away [...] from the sounds of distant highways, from air pollution, light pollution, pollution pollution?” (Lebetkin) and offers a list of protected wilderness park areas across the country. These wilderness areas guarantee that for the privileged class who can afford to escape to the Everglades, there will always be a slice of true nature accessible amidst ecological breakdown, even if it is in, as USA Today calls it, “bite-sized bits” (Lebetkin). The fantasy of nature as an admirable, sacred and untouched place where the masculine individual discovers glory, individuality and God only functions when there is a distinct separation between a narrowly defined “nature” and the rest of the world.

Though the “ambivalence, if not downright hostility, towards modernity” (Cronon, 101) inherent to the male wilderness fantasy appears to oppose patriarchal structures, the use of wilderness as an escape from capitalist society can also be patriarchal in nature. Since wilderness is definitionally empty and untouched, one may only live there in fantasy, not in any permanent or harmonious state. Therefore, man must live and find fulfillment in a post-Industrial Revolution capitalist society while using the wilderness as an escape to affirm his individuality. But how can man participate in a society that destroys nature while adoring wilderness? The answer is implicit in a line from Lord Byron, who writes, “I love not Man the less, but Nature more” (Byron, ln. 5). This short declaration epitomizes the defense of a patriarchal relationship towards nature. This is not to imply that Byron was malevolent towards nature, but rather that separating nature from culture can become problematic. Valuing the environment over humankind does not always prove to be as benevolent and environmentalist a mindset as it appears. By claiming to prioritize ‘Nature’ over ‘Man,’ Byron defines the ‘natural’ as what is outside civilization, as though human life can negate or deny nature. The separation of humankind from nature is a common feature of Romantic poetry, so much that, as Kevin Hutchings writes, ecocriticism of poetry is often “concerned not with the politics of nature’s social construction in literature, nor with the rhetoric of ecological activism, but with the writer’s effort to communicate a sense of nature’s otherness to the human or cultural realm” (Hutchings, 17). The Romantic construction of nature and its separation from “man” enforces the narrative that an observing male subject has the authority to decide and declare the value of a female-coded nature. The separation of nature from civilization means that land can only be true “Nature” if it remains untouched by men. In this system, untouched land is valuable as a temporary escape, a fleeting fantasy that can never be fully acquired.

If the value of true nature can only be accessed in escapist fantasy, where then, is the patriarch to find satisfaction? Here arises the male anxiety: the earth must fulfill his desire to exploit and expand without compromising his gender-affirming aestheticized fantasy of wilderness. The solution to this paradox is to indulge in the aforementioned dichotomy; men can satisfy both needs by loving untouched wilderness and devaluing all other parts of the natural world. This tendency mirrors a complex Freud writes about in “On the Universal Tendency of Debasement in the Sphere of Love.” In it, he states,

[t]he whole sphere of love in such people remains divided in the two directions personified in art as sacred and profane (or animal) love. Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love. They seek objects which they do not need to love, in order to keep their sensuality away from the objects they love (Freud, 183).

This is the Madonna/Whore complex, a tendency for men to consider women as either deserving of their love or their desire, but never both. Either women are saintly, pure creatures worthy of admiration, or degraded objects only worthy of further degradation. The Madonna/Whore complex is a harmful consequence of patriarchy, particularly the patriarchal notion that sex for a woman must be degrading or lessen her value. More immediately for men, the Madonna/Whore complex is a solution for two competing needs: the need to love and find emotional fulfillment in that loving relationship and the need to find sexual fulfillment in a relationship that devalues their partner. This dichotomy, what Freud calls a “[s]plit in their love” (183), parallels the dualism of ‘true’ nature and the rest of civilization. Rather than a tension between romantic love and sexual desire, the ecological relationship revolves around a tension between Romantic love of untouched wilderness and acquisitive desire for expansion. To satisfy his desire to exploit land without destroying the purity of nature which his individuality and spirituality rely upon, man creates a realm of non-nature in cities, suburbs, backyards and parking lots. He can nearly define nature out of existence, keep it confined to the places men have not sullied, so he can be fulfilled by wilderness fantasies while further degrading the non-nature that is now fair to take. Whether it is toward women’s bodies or the planet earth, assessing value based on “purity” is a method of determining worth in relation to men, either through love or commodification.

Understanding the dynamics of women’s subjugation is instrumental to dismantling patriarchal institutions in its many forms, including the exploitation of nature. Linda Vance writes in “Ecofeminism and Wilderness” that “[wilderness] recreates the history of the conquest of nature, the subjugation of Indigenous peoples, the glorification of individualism, the triumph of human will over material reality, and the Protestant ideal of one-on-one contact with God” (Vance, 71). This experience of wilderness is an ahistorical re-enactment of centuries of domination. It functions as an affirmation of superiority for those who identify with whiteness, Christianity and patriarchy. By maintaining power over pristine wilderness while also picking apart the rest of the world for extraction, dominant social groups can encounter the planet as a perfectly divided-up playground to exercise their power. Therefore, the dismantling of environmentalism can be done in parallel to the dismantling of misogyny. Environmental activism that does not actively resist patriarchal attitudes will never be entirely successful. According to Linda Vance’s view of eco-feminism,

[t]he issue for us is not the amount of land which is set aside but rather the conceptual foundations on which wilderness protection currently rests. These foundations are the same ones that support the rationalist project of controlling nature and, by extension, the project of controlling women, and they are therefore wholly antithetical to eco-feminist philosophy (61).

Though Cronon correctly diagnoses the logic of this nature-civilization dualism when he says it requires humankind to die it is not truly suicidal but rather self-sustaining, because it matches patriarchal interests and tactics in its desire to control and commodify. The denial of human dependence on nature that is implicit in the construct that “where we are is the place where nature is not” (Cronon, 103) is a defence of environmental exploitation: we do not have to worry about striving towards a positive relationship with the earth because any relationship with nature is definitionally impossible. Intersectional environmentalism can create more socially aware environmentalism, one that not only condemns the exploitation of the planet or social constructs like wilderness for being illogical but goes further to condemn the broader systems of oppression that allow for the justification of exploitation.

As seen in its parallels to the Madonna/Whore complex, the valorization of wilderness and the degradation of land outside it reconciles the desire to exploit what is also worthy of love. In Freud’s analysis, a separation between affection and sexual appetite makes men unable to respect their desired partner or desire their respected partner. Similarly, a tension between the needs to both love and exploit nature bisects the natural and human realms, making it difficult for men to see humanity in the land they revere or revere the land they see humanity inhabit. Of course, desires to exploit or conquer are not integral to the essence of men but rather tenets of a patriarchal system of thought that determines value in relation to men. The same patriarchy which subjugates women also facilitates the subjugation of a feminized natural realm. This realm is a cultural creation which men attempt to segregate from humankind. Once this nature is separated from culture and society, it can be divided further into categories based on misogynistic notions of “purity,” which become the basis of its value. By understanding the origins, intentions and dynamics of this logic, environmentalism becomes less of an anxious question of how many square acres of earth humanity has left to defend and more of a multi-faceted critique of power.

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Racializing Truth in Academic Knowledge Production

Audrey Chan

Just as Kuhn frames “normative science” as a science that is governed by a set of norms, paradigms, or standards, this paper draws on Weber’s “Science as a Vocation” and Arendt’s “Truth and Politics,” arguing against the hegemony of scientific methods that enable, determine, and uphold the continued authority of whitewashed knowledge production within western academia (Bennett). In keeping with the conventional expectations and practices of knowledge production, racialized individuals working within these academic spheres are, too, subject to such methods in order to prove and validate their findings, regardless of how suitable they are for the subject matter in question. The consequences of this forced conformity are manifold, two of which will be examined in detail. First, this paper will tackle the racial trauma of students of colour engaging with an Academy that favours processes of scientific verification over lived experience. It will then follow with an overview of the paradigmatic stasis that constrains westernized academic knowledge. This paper will interpret the two aforementioned texts by locating in each of them key philosophical mechanisms that preserve the whiteness of academic knowledge creation, linking them with studies that demonstrate their effects on students and academically-accepted knowledge alike. Ultimately, this paper will demonstrate that the prevailing methods of knowledge production in the western academic world are ill-equipped to deal with the many types of knowledge that exist beyond the European purview, thus beckoning a shift away from whiteness as the guiding authority of academic ways of knowing.

To begin, the Academy shows preference towards the methods of scientific verification over knowledge amassed through lived experience, thus contributing to the racial trauma of students of colour who seek to produce scholarship through relatively unscientific means. For one, Weber’s “Science as a Vocation” observes that much of the academic production of knowledge is inherently bound to its own self-importance, in that academics must presume that their subject matter is worthy of being researched in the first place. Arguably, the methods they employ to do so are, by extension, self-affirming and yet unproven as well. To this end, Weber writes that

science [...] assumes that the knowledge produced by any particular piece of scientific research should be *important*, in the sense that it should be ‘worth knowing.’ And it is obvious that this is the source of all our difficulties. For this presupposition cannot be proven by scientific methods. It can only be *interpreted* with reference to its ultimate meaning, which we must accept or reject in accordance with our ultimate attitude toward life. (Weber 17-8)

Weber further expands on this point by asserting that “the genuine teacher will take good care not to use his position at the lectern to promote any particular point of view, whether explicitly or by suggestion” (20). Rather than adding to the self-assumed and, still, arbitrary merit of particular scientific methods, along with their consequent bodies of knowledge, teachers ought to provide students with a holistic picture of their chosen subject matter by addressing it from all angles possible. What students do with this wealth of information is up to them, for teachers are merely meant to act as teachers, not leaders. The classroom should not be political. In other words, education should not impose ideas, it should help students develop their own — ideas that are logically consistent with their individual philosophies instead (Weber 24). With that being said, this demand from teachers is more often than not an unrealistic one. Weber acknowledges this concern when he states that political objectivity in teaching is difficult to achieve:

It is irresponsible for [...] a teacher to fail to provide his listeners, as is his duty, with his knowledge and academic experience, while imposing on them his personal political opinions. No doubt, an individual lecturer will not always be able to suppress his subjective sympathies. (Weber 21)

Here, several implications arise when situating Weber’s ideas within an academic framework that invariably reiterates behaviours of white supremacy. On the one hand, western academia produces knowledge that it assumes is worthy of being produced by using methods that, itself, takes the liberties to legitimize. Naturally, the methods and knowledge sought out by whitewashed academic systems will tend towards and prioritize research that promotes whiteness rather than that which undermines it. It follows that academic institutions highly encourage individuals who bring this knowledge to fruition to do so. Put in Weber’s words, the processes of knowledge production, alongside its findings, are “*interpreted* with reference [...] with [one’s] ultimate attitude toward life,” which, under the given circumstances, can be said to be the preservation of white supremacy within the Academy (18).

In keeping with this reading of Weber’s text, Naomi Bird’s 2021 thesis *The Emotional Labour of Indigenous Post-Secondary Students: A Trauma-Informed Autoethnography* highlights the colonial violence that whiteness in academia inflicts on Indigenous students. Subjective experience fails to appeal to western science as a valid method of producing knowledge seeing as the western scientific tradition privileges objectivity above all else. Lived experience and embodied knowledge are, therefore, divulged to the colonial Academy at Indigenous students’ own expense in an effort to be recognized as credible information: “I remembered crying while writing a short reflection paper on residential schools, pushing my intergenerational trauma down so I could get a good mark,” Bird recalls (15). Citing Einstein, Fox Keller further identifies this hegemonic pattern of idealized scientific objectivity in western academia. In *Reflections on Gender and Science*, she notes that

[t]he impulse toward impersonality suggests [...] an] attraction of certain individuals to the image that science projects [...] scientists who are ‘driven to escape from personal existence [...] and] actively embrace — even choose — a picture of reality as being ‘as impersonal and free of human values as the rules of arithmetic. (Fox Keller 10)

“[T]he ideology of modern science [...] carries within it its own form of projection: the projection of disinterest,” she continues (70). Notably, the valorization of impersonality in the Academy has directly led to a lack of Indigenous academic sources to reference that would aid one in building on past bodies of Indigenous knowledge that are regarded as citable by academia. Whiteness in academia purposely operates so that it renders Indigenous knowledge difficult to access and build upon. Bird’s thesis makes it clear that their research sourced from social media was no mistake, seeing as the lack of existing academic literature on their chosen topic was considerable:

I also looked to Twitter, Instagram and other social media sites for ‘informal’ knowledge, employing ‘social media as method,’ a practice of renowned Indigenous scholar Kim Tallbear. Due to our historic and present-day exclusion from academic space, there is a lack of Indigenous scholars with PhDs. The fact that I can find multiple memes yet few academic papers about our emotional labour and (re)traumatization in academia, demonstrates the need to write this into being. (Bird 7-8)

Not only does this passage reveal the vacuum of Indigenous information that is both academically recognized *and* easily accessible to students, but it also shows that the methods employed to grasp ahold of such knowledge are deemed by academic practice as “informal” — that is, not done in accordance with academic convention, and thus more prone to being seen as illegitimate within white academic spaces. For the same reason, Bird stresses the limiting methodological conditions under which Indigenous knowledge is produced and recognized as valid within academia:

This thesis may not be particularly ‘ground-breaking’ information for upper-year Indigenous students[,]” they write, “I am simply ‘translating’ (Blackstock, 2009) knowledge many Indigenous students hold, into a language [format] deemed appropriate by the Academy. (Bird 8).

To circle back, Weber holds that teachers of knowledge should paint an unbiased portrait of the topic that they seek to educate upon. However, said teachers can be expected to let slip their “subjective sympathies,” for it is an impossible expectation to think that individuals can hold back their partialities at all times, whether consciously or not (Weber 21). In this way, Weber admits that his ideal pedagogic setup is unattainable at best. In the context of whitewashed academic institutions, albeit teachers may attempt to identify and mitigate their racial biases to the best of their ability, these efforts are all but foolproof. Subconscious biases regarding curriculum planning, the ways that information is exchanged, and the validity of different research methods may, nevertheless, deter students from seeking and producing specific types of knowledge for fears of not doing well academically. In short, the mere recognition of racial prejudices in teaching does not suffice to remedy the larger institutional practices that uphold whiteness in academia, especially with respect to how it legitimizes certain knowledges and truths. In contrast to academia’s encouraging treatment of those who produce knowledge validating its whiteness, those who seek out knowledge criticizing it are penalized, in one way or another.

In keeping with this reading of Weber’s text, Bird highlights the colonial violence that whiteness in academia inflicts on Indigenous students; Weber’s text suggests that Indigenous attendance and critique of the white, colonial academic institution is often penalized. Bird testifies that

[c]ertain circumstances [...] require Indigenous students to correct and challenge colonial frameworks and histories presented in class lectures and discussions, or in course assignments and readings. Indigenous students who cho[o]se (or feel forced) to undertake these education interventions are required to [do] so in **ways that are non-threatening** to peers and professors. Indigenous students must regulate emotional responses when responding to racism and microaggressions in the Academy, **or risk further marginalization**. (Bird 3) [bold emphasis mine]

With these conditions and risks in mind, the Academy and its normative methods of knowledge production discourage critical subjective responses towards them that come from an individual's social location. In addition, they also actively marginalize and punish those who try to do so, for subjective experiences of colonial oppression are intimately tied with retraumatization and pain. Bird writes:

I want to write this thesis without having to explain residential school. I want this painful knowledge to stop circling in my brain. I want this knowledge to be out in the world— known, **so I do not have to constantly speak it into existence** in the minds of peers and professors. I want to dwell in the joy of Indigenous existence but **instead I am stuck explaining and providing evidence of the pain**. (Bird 51) [bold emphasis mine]

That *evidence* of pain is necessary to verify one's truth is a fundamentally modern idea, rooted in methods such as Popper's scientific method of Logical Falsification, where scientists test for the consistency of a verified piece of knowledge. Popper writes, "I refuse to accept the view that there are statements in science which we have, resignedly, to accept as true merely because it does not seem possible, for logical reasons, to test them" (Popper 867). To what extent ought subjective pain and trauma be verified and tested "for logical reasons," and how much more harm does this inflict on individuals subject to this testing and questioning? All in all, whitewashed academia clearly favours methods of science over knowledge amassed through lived experience, adding to the barriers and racial trauma of Indigenous students and students of colour who seek to produce scholarship through relatively unscientific means.

Next, Arendt's "Truth and Politics" adds another dimension to this discussion of academic knowledge production. For Arendt, Truth is stubborn and stable. She writes that

fragments of facts constantly disturb and throw out of gear the propaganda war between conflicting images [...] Reality takes its revenge on those who dare defy it [...] their trouble is that they must constantly change the falsehoods they offer as a substitute for the real story[.] (Arendt 568)

In this passage, Arendt boldly asserts that historical truths, in essence, cannot be erased, seeing as it takes massive amounts of effort and continuous upkeep to shapeshift a lie to fit constantly changing circumstances: "one can post a lie by noticing incongruities, holes, or the juncture of patched-up-places" (565). Truth — facts fixed in the historical past — is therefore hard to threaten.

A racialized reading of western academia's canon of historical truths, however, will reveal that the dominant contemporary historical voice is a colonial one — one that is not entirely representative of all individuals. Bird cites Piccano and Spring in order to explain this contemporary phenomenon of the exclusion-based "education-industrial complex," explaining it as the

ideological, technophile, and for-profit entities that seek to promote their beliefs, ideas, products, and services in furtherance of their own goals and objectives. This complex is fueled by significant resources and advocacy provided by companies, foundations, and the media that want to shape [...] education policy to conform to their own ideals and that also stand to profit significantly from its development. (Bird ix)

Education policy, in Bird's view, conforms to its own values, goals, and ideals, and seeks to preserve its own worldviews by instilling it in learners, steering away from knowledge production that might undermine its existing Eurocentric and colonial paradigms. Here, Arendt notes that the equivocation, lies, and performances necessary to cover up truths about historical and racial violence must be convincing in order to achieve the ends of said "education-industrial complex," since Truth is, in her view, so deeply unwavering. Specifically, these untruths must be so convincing that those carrying out the task of obscuring truth should find themselves believing their own falsehoods, too. Arendt declares that

[those] who among themselves still knew and could preserve the truth [...] They were not likely to fall victims to their own falsehoods; they could deceive others without deceiving themselves. [...] These mitigating circumstances of the old art of lying are noticeably absent from the manipulation of facts that confronts us today. [...] Self deception has become an indispensable tool in the trade of image-making. (Arendt 565)

Arendt's text, therefore, suggests that self-deception is the ultimate tool that ensures the preservation of white supremacy. With that said, one can set such self-deception against her very optimistic idea that truth *is*, in fact, truly that stable and enduring. Within the scope of this paper, this self-deception arguably removes accountability from individuals who either deceive, self-deceive, or do not question the dominant Eurocentric ways of knowledge production that prevail within the Academy. For such self-deception to be all-encompassing, the production of facts, truth, and knowledge that undermine or offer alternatives to the paradigm under which academia operates precludes the exchange of information that is not heavily hampered by denialist attitudes towards race. In 2014, British journalist Eddo-Lodge took issue with these denialist attitudes in racialized discourses, specifically regarding how racially-prejudiced white people are so self-deceived that there is no way of even interacting with them due to their commitment to racist or post-race worldviews. "In Together and Alone? The Challenge of Talking about Racism on Campus," Tatum cites Eddo-Lodge, who expresses her frustrations:

I'm no longer engaging with white people on the topic of race. Not all white people, just **the vast majority who refuse to accept the existence of structural racism and its symptoms**. I can no longer engage with the gulf of an emotional disconnect that white people display when a person of colour articulates their experience. You can see their eyes shut down and harden. It's like treacle is poured into their ears, blocking up their ear canals. **It's like they can no longer hear us.** (Tatum 86) [bold emphasis mine]

Structures of white academia render many of its authoritative figures, methods, and canons of knowledge impossible to debate, for one party seeks to deny, while the other seeks to prove their humanity to them in order to be merely seen as legitimate or existent.

In the final analysis, racialized readings of Weber’s “Science as a Vocation” and Arendt’s “Truth and Politics” reveal key philosophical mechanisms that preserve the whiteness of academic knowledge creation. Coupled with testimonies that demonstrate their effects on students, bearers of embodied knowledge, one notes the standstill of the paradigm governing academic knowledge production itself. The preference shown towards western, scientific methods of knowledge verification and creation in the Eurocentric academic world inflicts continued harm and trauma in racialized persons. One must concede that there either needs to be a paradigm shift in terms of normative methodologies that determine the legitimacy of academic truths, or an entire shift away from whiteness as the guiding authority of academic ways of knowing.

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Queerness in the Unsaid;
The Secret Power of
Female Emotion
Sophie Harriman

In both “The Story of an Hour” and “A New England Nun”, the female protagonists experience the imposition of a masculine presence, and the euphoric release from it. Mrs. Mallard and Louisa’s relationships to the men in their lives are ones of duty and requirement, lacking a traditional depiction of love. Marriage and love as concepts are complicated by the power of emotion they feel upon release from these institutions. Furthermore, they are both presented as solitary figures with private and inaccessible inner lives. As Martha Vicinus argues in *Lesbian Perversity and Victorian Marriage: The 1864 Codrington Divorce Trial*, lesbianism in the mid to late 1800s existed as an unspoken truth, one emerging through secrecy and silence. Vicinus explains the intricate ways female relationships serve to challenge and disrupt patriarchal domination, and the power that women can exercise exclusively using their emotions. Similarly, in *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Sedgwick explores the way queer silence and heterosexual ignorance work together to construct the closet. Sedgwick complicates the idea of silence as she presents it as an extremely active position for queer people. For all these reasons, I will argue that both Mrs. Mallard and Louisa can be read as queer, due to the nature of their emotions upon removal from patriarchal society, their solitary presentation, and the insight into their inner lives that would otherwise be presented as silence.

In “The Story of an Hour,” the contrast between Mrs. Mallard’s apathy regarding her marriage and the overwhelming emotion she feels upon its supposed end suggests the transition from a stifling male presence giving way to an authentic freedom. After her initial “storm of grief” upon hearing the news of her husband’s passing, Mrs. Mallard feels “something coming to her [...] too subtle and elusive to name [...] creeping out of the sky, reaching towards her” (Chopin 543). The surge of emotion regarding the new life that she is about to experience is involuntary and essentially unavoidable, coming to her from a primal place. This kind of all-encompassing experience is contrasted with her rational ability to analyze her feelings about her dead husband. When thinking about him, “she knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death [...] but she saw beyond that bitter moment” (543). Although she feels some measure of sadness in regard to her husband, she maintains composure and perspective, suggesting a clinical nature to their relationship, which is contrasted with the pure and raw emotion she is about to feel in regards to her freedom. Mrs. Mallard experiences her newfound freedom as a full body reaction, feeling “her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warm[ing] and relax[ing] every inch of her body” as she whispers “free, free, free!” (543). The joy she experiences upon being released from her husband is orgasmic, while her feelings about Mr. Mallard are distilled, suggesting that perhaps it is not that love is not powerful, but rather she did not experience any sort of romantic or sexual love for Mr. Mallard. She comes to the realization that love is nothing “in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognize[s] as the strongest impulse of her being” (543). It is clear that there is something within her that was being stifled in her marriage, and I would argue that it is the potential to love.

By reading Mrs. Mallard as queer, it becomes clear that she was alienated from love itself in her marriage, and as soon as she is released from the marriage, she is able to access this intense emotion again. Since “there w[ill] be no powerful will bending hers” any longer, she can exist as her true self; “she w[ill] live for herself” (543). Masculinity itself was oppressing Mrs. Mallard, and the patriarchy was imposing its will on her life, and as she is freed from this will, she is able to access emotions she was unable to give to her husband. Mrs. Mallard’s true self is the ultimate form of queer resistance to the patriarchy, as she was completely unable to force herself to show that kind of love to her husband.

Similarly, in “A New England Nun,” Louisa experiences oppression at the hands of a masculine presence. Rather than an emotional and physical experience like Mrs. Mallard, Louisa experiences continual discomfort and irritation at the masculine presence in her life, and he actively disrupts the lifestyle she desires. Louisa and Joe’s relationship is one of duty and necessity, with neither party expressing much interest in the other. Yet, while Joe is in love with another woman, Louisa is in love with her space and life alone. Louisa cherishes femininity, and often uses this word to describe objects or practices, and she is startled and dismayed at the possibility of “a coarse masculine presence in the midst of all this delicate harmony” (Freeman 645). The mere proximity to maleness is an affront to Louisa’s lifestyle. Masculinity and femininity in this sense can be applied not only to her physical space, but also to her inner space, as the imposition of maleness into her emotional life would disrupt her harmony. Louisa feels a physical sense of relief when momentarily liberated from the presence of masculinity just as Mrs. Mallard does, when she “fe[els] as much as the kind-hearted, long-suffering owner of the china shop might have done after the exit of the bear” when Joe leaves her home (643). Reading Louisa as queer explains the physical release she experiences when back in her self-defined, feminine space. Louisa is not alienated from love as Mrs. Mallard was, as she knows exactly what she desires and is in danger of having the patriarchal will superimposed upon her own. Additionally, her characterization as an “uncloistered nun” suggests both the desire to be free from the institution of marriage, as well as the desire for an all-female space in which to sit “prayerfully, numbering her days” (649). Louisa wishes to rid her life of masculinity, and perhaps the only way she can imagine her life as such is in the form of an uncloistered nun. Louisa, as a queer figure, is able to exert a similar type of power as Mrs. Mallard, as although she was willing to uphold her duty to her husband, she could not show him any romantic love, and could not curb the relief she felt upon his departure.

In addition, both Mrs. Mallard and Louisa exist in ways that Vicinus explains in her article, *Lesbian Perversity and Victorian Marriage: The 1864 Codrington Divorce Trial*. Here, Vicinus uses a divorce trial to unpack and understand the subversive ways lesbianism and queerness operated and existed before heteropatriarchal society wanted to acknowledge it. She uses the example of a husband and wife divorcing due to a supposed affair the wife had with Emily Faithfull. Vicinus argues that “we do not find an absence of lesbians in the Victorian period but, rather, an eloquent silence,” and that even before being named as such, lesbians were “already a recognizable, if shadowy, subject” (Vicinus 72). Mrs. Mallard and Louisa are recognizable as unnamed, unlabeled queer figures due to their presentation as solitary women and their desire for femininity in and of itself, as well as Vicinus’ assertion that no suggestion to affirm their queerness through terminology is suggestive in itself. This argument is further corroborated by Eve Sedgwick, who states that silence can be active specifically in the way it is used by queer people, and she makes this argument using the construction of the closet within heteronormative society. Vicinus argues similarly throughout the article that a lack of distinctive proof is not indicative that lesbianism is not present. She says: “we do not insist on heterosexuals naming their bedtime activities in order to be defined as sexually active, but we seem to demand this of lesbians” (72). Within this framework of understanding queerness, Mrs. Mallard and Louisa can be read as queer through the things they do not do, rather than by looking for confirming proof.

Firstly, the way that each woman speaks about and interacts with the male figure in their lives is indicative of a restricted and limited relationship. Both women speak about these men in dull terms, with Mrs. Mallard saying that “she had loved [Mr. Mallard] - sometimes. Often she had not,” and Louisa saying that “it was not for her [...] to break [Joe’s] heart” (Chopin 543, Freeman 64). Neither woman demonstrates any kind of passion, or even interest, in these men as people or partners, choosing rather to refer to them as someone they must spend their time around and who they owe a certain amount of respect due to cultural norms. Thus, the lack of interest or passion can be seen as indicative of this eloquent queer silence, as their true desires are expressed through what they withhold from men. Just as, in the divorce trial, “the admiral and his wife did not need manifest sexual identities until Emily Faithfull walked into their lives,” Mrs. Mallard and Louisa need not present a queer sexual identity, as they negate to present a heterosexual identity (Vicinus 87).

This can also be understood in Sedgwick’s terms, as she would argue that both Mrs. Mallard and Louisa are in the closet, in some capacity. Sedgwick states that “even at an individual level, there are remarkably few of even the most openly gay people who are not deliberately in the closet with someone personally or economically or institutionally important to them” (Sedgwick 67-68). This clearly illustrates the complicated nature of queer silence, and the idea of coming out. Queer people are consistently engaging with others who do not know their sexual orientation, and as Sedgwick articulates, they must come out over and over again, or decide not to disclose this information. Yet even if queer people choose not to disclose their queerness, they are absolutely still queer. Thus silence or ignorance as confirmation of heterosexuality is an act that is inherently homophobic and dismissive of the existence of queerness itself. Despite the fact that neither Mrs. Mallard or Louisa explicitly come out to the men in their lives or to the reader, their silence is dynamic, as we must engage with what they do not say, and how they go about not saying it. Sedgwick quotes Foucault in discussing silence in this way, saying “as Foucault says: ‘there is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things [...] There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses’” (3). These various ways of “not saying such things” are telling for both Mrs. Mallard and Louisa (3). Mrs. Mallard questions the value of love itself, which reflects both how she feels about Mr. Mallard, and also perhaps the idea that she may never truly experience love, as love is complicated and ever-changing as a queer person. As well, it is within what Louisa does not want, namely masculinity, that her queerness is identifiable, which can be as telling as her disclosing what she does want.

Additionally, silence and the closet go hand in hand for Sedgwick, and she states: “‘closetedness’ itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence—not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularity by fits and starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it” (3). She further states that “the fact that silence is rendered as pointed and performative as speech, in relations around the closet, depends on and highlights more broadly the fact that ignorance is as potent and as multiple a thing there as is knowledge” (4). The act of ignorance in the face of queerness is as active as queer silence is, and this ignorance is imposed onto Mrs. Mallard and Louisa by men, the readers, and the narrative itself.

Furthermore, both women are presented as isolated, solitary figures who are actively being suppressed by masculinity. Both women express a desire to live their lives on their own terms. After realizing her newfound freedom, Louisa “fe[els] like a queen who, after fearing lest her domain be wrestled away from her, sees it firmly insured in her possession” (Freeman 648). Similarly, Mrs. Mallard “open[s] and spread[s] her arms out to the years that w[ill] belong to her absolutely” (Chopin 543). Both women possess a newfound independence, but also a transformation of the isolation they felt within their marriage.

Being alone in this new sense is not isolation; rather it is liberation. Vicinus addresses this depiction of women who are alone, and highlights the inherent threat of a distinct lack of a male presence. She states that the “unease about women's friendships [is] about the possibility of lesbian sex” (Vicinus 75). The possibility of spaces lacking masculinity is inherently threatening to the patriarchy, and even as Mrs. Mallard and Louisa are alone, they are a threat due to their rejection of heterosexuality and their ability to access their true desires.

As well, the idea of being alone and isolated is complicated by Sedgwick's discussion of the closet. The closet in Sedgwick's writing is a recurring oppressive force in queer people's lives, as they are continually placed back inside by heterosexual ignorance. The presence of the closet shapes the queer experience insofar as it exists within the heteropatriarchy, and it “is the defining structure for gay oppression in this century” (71). The perception of those who are not ‘out’ as straight speaks to Mrs. Mallard and Louisa's situation. They are perceived as alone once they are no longer in relationships with men, rather than this being perceived as liberatory. I would argue that, according to Sedgwick's explanation of the functioning of the closet, Mrs. Mallard and Louisa are in the closet and therefore isolated when they are with Mr. Mallard and Joe, respectively, and once they are physically alone, they are able to be ‘out,’ as they can engage with the world and their emotions in an authentic way. In addition, Sedgwick states that “the gay closet is not a feature only of the lives of gay people. But for many gay people it is still the fundamental feature of social life; and there can be few gay people, however courageous and forthright by habit, however fortunate in the support of their immediate communities, in whose lives the closet is not still a shaping presence” (68). Thus, the closet would shape Mrs. Mallard and Louisa's actions while in relationships with men, changing their ability to express emotions and understand their desires. Therefore, their instant reactions upon being liberated from these reactions mirror a verbal coming out; they are released from the closet in one facet of their lives, and can fully step into how they feel.

Both the lack of romantic and sexual interest and the independence the two women find are examples of the queer silence Vicinus continually discusses. She says that the divorce trial “seems to corroborate Eve Sedgwick's argument that nothing is more open than the gay closet - everyone knows, but nobody tells” (Vicinus 92). It is this open secret that is present in both stories. Both women decide to live for themselves and feel the joy accompanied by that, and implicit in this joy is the open closet. Vicinus argues that in the trial, “the refusal to hint [at lesbianism] is, of course, more than a hint” (93). It is evident that while neither woman hints at any kind of queer relationship, the implications of the actions they do not take and the emotions that overcome them is more than a hint.

Queerness is laden with silence and secrecy, as it is forced to take these forms within heteropatriarchy. The way that heterosexuality dominates and undermines queerness through erasure is necessary in understanding the way queerness functions in these stories. The act of coming out is often contrasted with the idea of being in the closet, the former being an active and permanent stance, and the latter being couched in silence and inaction. Yet, this is clearly a simplistic and heteronormative understanding of a complicated dynamic. Sedgwick argues that coming out “can bring about the revelation of a powerful unknowing as unknowing, not as a vacuum or as the blank it can pretend to be but as a weighty and occupied and consequential epistemological space” (Sedgwick 78). This reframes the idea of the closet, and places responsibility on those who are unknowing, as it is not the silence of the queer person that is keeping their queerness unknown, rather it is the unknower as they continue to perpetuate heteronormativity. Thus, this idea places the onus on Mr. Mallard, Joe, and the reader, as their inability to understand Mrs. Mallard and Louisa's exhibition of queerness is “weighty and occupied and consequential” (78).

In conclusion, Mrs. Mallard and Louisa can both be read as queer people escaping the shackles of the heteropatriarchy and experiencing the freedom of genuine existence. Mrs. Mallard is alienated from the concept of love itself, and experiences its resurgence in her body after her husband's death. Similarly, Louisa experiences dread at the thought of her life post-marriage, and relief and joy when it all falls apart. Furthermore, both women keep their inner life to themselves, and they are accessible only to the reader, and this emphasizes Vicinus' point that queerness existed in the Victorian era as unspoken and unnamed, but ever present. Furthermore, both women show their true desires through what they do not do, rather than by acting in any confirming way, which is indicative of Sedgwick's conception of active queer silence and the functioning of the closet. Queerness operates as an unspoken possibility and desire in the lives of Mrs. Mallard and Louisa, who each in their own way value femininity, possess a distaste for the masculine presence, and feel euphoric at the idea of living life on their own terms. At the heart of queerness in Vicinus' article is the idea that men are "stirring a bedroom fire with a poker" (98). Both Mrs. Mallard and Louisa have had their lives and desires stirred up by the men in their lives, and assert autonomy and desire in both subversive and explicit ways. Mr. Mallard and Joe ultimately represent what Vicinus classifies as "male interference in female warmth," leaving both women free and warm upon their departure (98).

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Outsourcing Morality: 1960s Science
Fiction and Machine Warfare as a
Cold War Concern
Emma Martel

Cold War tensions between the US and USSR were characterized by expansionist-based technology races that all played a part in the Cold War's unique hold over public consciousness. Technological advancements of the period were often made with the intent of surpassing the progress of the rival nation, a fact that is most evident when studying the space race and the arms race. A.I. developments were also of note and were far less distinct an issue than might be assumed. Advancement in the field of A.I. was deeply connected to the arms race and to the idea of nuclear warfare. This connection created fears of a global war – perhaps a World War Three – that could be run automatically, by machines rather than people. In the field of A.I. development, learning machines were the relevant topic of the time, and the idea of using such a machine in warfare was one that interested and alarmed many theorists of the day. A particularly relevant example of this is Herman Kahn's idea of a 'doomsday machine' or a "doomsday device". The device would be run by a computer without the influence of human operators (Kahn 101). Though the machine was only ever hypothetical in nature, it represented fears about the potential of machine run warfare. These fears are reflected in media, specifically American Cold War era science fiction and pop culture of the 1960s. The idea is covered in both Stanley Kubrick's body of work, and in several episodes of the original series of Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*. American Cold War media is often characterized by its heavy ideological lean, and because of this it can also be reflective of what fears and issues were present in public consciousness of the time. For this reason, it is significant to examine the way media characterizes the idea of a doomsday machine, or more generally how the idea of machine run warfare is portrayed. Doing so can reveal the public attitude towards the topic and provide a useful historical perspective.

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb, a 1964 Stanley Kubrick film, is a dark satire film that focuses on the idea of a doomsday device, created by the Soviets as a deterrent against the American nuclear threat. In the film, the device is the same as the original hypothetical device presented in Herman Kahn's *On Thermonuclear War*, but specifically in the hands of the USSR. It is designed to be triggered automatically by a nuclear attack from the US, and it is impossible to disable. It is primarily a deterrent against enemy attacks. Simply put by the film's fictional Soviet ambassador to Washington, DeSadeski, the doomsday machine is "[a] device which will destroy all human and animal life on earth" (*Dr. Strangelove* 43:15). The absurd scenario of the film is that the USSR never told the US that they had such a device, thereby removing the possibility of using it as a deterrent. When a rogue US general – aptly named Jack D. Ripper – orders an attack on the USSR, both sides come together to try to prevent the end of the world. The dark satire of *Dr. Strangelove* presents a fictional possibility of the results of Cold War expansionism and technological races. The film identifies the kinds of science and technology that were being theorized at the time, and the plot is emblematic of Cold War anxieties surrounding the possibilities that this new technology created.

In his article on film as an American ideological weapon during the Cold War, Pierre Sorlin writes that Kubrick's film may also have overestimated and contributed to these fears. Certainly, the film ends with a bleak outcome. In the end, humanity is destroyed through its misuse of technology. Sorlin is also concerned that the film presents the idea "that the most menacing of the two adversaries was the Soviet Union" (380). However, this assumes that the film is approaching the issue with the idea of emphasizing the gap between American and Soviet technology. In fact, these technological gaps, which Sorlin describes as "fancy" rather than as anything substantial, are critiqued through the satirical lens of Kubrick's film (379). *Dr. Strangelove* is critical of the technological races that were common in the Cold War period. The film's characters are constantly paranoid about the possibility of technology and resource gaps. It is the fear of a "doomsday gap" that led to the construction of the device in the first place (*Dr. Strangelove* 48:30). Also mentioned is the idea of a "mine shaft gap", which is a fear presented at the film's end (1:28:40). Even with the world literally ending around them the characters are unable to come together to preserve the human species. *Dr. Strangelove* is a self-aware piece of media, ridiculing fears of the technological gap in order to reveal deeper fears about how technology could move beyond human control into the dangerous possible future of machine warfare.

In his 1964 article on anti-militarism in Kubrick's films, Jackson Burgess writes about some of these technology focused anxieties, including a discussion on the "abdication of moral responsibilities" that is allowed by outsourcing war to machines (11). *Dr. Strangelove* reveals a flawed military system that is incapable of stopping the machine, both on the side of America – which fails to call off the air strike that triggers the machine – and on the side of the Soviets, who cannot control their own device. The machine is unstoppable and uncontrollable, relieving both parties of any sort of accountability. The US is responsible for triggering the machine, though the machine is owned by the USSR which designed its automatic process. Regardless of who set it off and who owned the machine, the machine is what carries out the automated attack. According to DeSadeski, it has to be an automated process because triggering the machine intentionally is "not a thing a sane man would do" (*Dr. Strangelove* 47:45). Another example from *Dr. Strangelove* of this moral automation is the end of the film, when President Muffley is presented with the idea of selecting people to preserve in the potential mine shaft society. He is appalled at the idea of having to choose, and *Strangelove* reassures him that he wouldn't have to be involved in the direct selection of who lived and who dies. He would be absolved of any sort of moral responsibility because the process could be automated and "easily be accomplished with a computer" (1:25:27). It's a very convenient sort of mechanized eugenics, where the "computer could be set and programmed to accept factors from youth, health, sexual fertility, intelligence, and a cross section of necessary skills" (1:25:34). The idea of this moral outsourcing is one of the fears attached to the idea of a doomsday machine. Also in the film, Dr. Strangelove himself says that "[b]ecause of [its] automated and irrevocable decision-making process, which rules out human meddling, the Doomsday Machine is terrifying" (50:00). It is precisely the autonomous nature of the machine that makes it so frightening because it sits beyond human control. There is no room here for human error, but that also means there is no room for a change of heart. Burgess also writes that "human fallibility is less likely to be fatal than... machines or machine-logic" (11). Once deployed, the doomsday machines cannot be called back by any human operator. This theme of permanence is further explored in the *Star Trek* episode "The Doomsday Machine".

In "The Doomsday Machine", fears about machine warfare are played out though an allegorical future. Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* was a popular science fiction serial that often used allegory to make points about difficult or controversial topics, and this particular episode is no different.

In the episode, the *Enterprise* and her crew encounter a planet eating machine that is traversing the universe in search of energy sources to consume. They believe it has arrived from some distant galaxy, vestige to some ancient war. The machine was designed as a weapon of ultimate destruction, created by a people that “don’t exist anymore... [though their] machine is still destroying” (“The Doomsday Machine” 13:53). The machine has surpassed its creators, has even surpassed the point of mutual destruction. It is intent on an alien or mechanical notion of victory, carrying out its task of destruction in a never-ending cycle of consumption. It is Captain Kirk who draws the comparison between the alien machine and a doomsday machine from Earth’s distant past. In the episode, Kirk explains the concept to ship’s surgeon, Dr. McCoy. He describes a doomsday machine as “a weapon built primarily as a bluff” emphasizing that “[i]t’s never meant to be used” (13:30). The machine in the episode is one that was used and that has become a permanent and self-sustaining monster, wandering the galaxy and continuing the automatic pattern of destruction it was designed for. The episode’s doomsday machine has become an autonomous world eater, revealing the episode’s clear cautionary message about the potential of such a device. In his article on *Star Trek* and Cold War pop-culture, Sarantakes summarizes the episode’s message, stating that “the moral of the episode is that unless the two global superpowers of the 1960s change direction, they will take their own societies and the rest of humanity down the same path of ruin chosen by the inventors of the planet-destroying device in ‘The Doomsday Machine’” (89-90). Sarantakes is interested in the clear anti-nuclear message of the episode, but somewhat overlooks the A.I. angle, and how that particular technology is characterized. As revealed in *Dr. Strangelove* the fear of machine warfare is significant and reaches beyond the more general fear of nuclear war. Here we see a dark future, the allegorical exaggeration of those fears. This is a piece of futurism that shows what the potential outcome of machine warfare could be, and it isn’t a particularly attractive future. The doomsday machine wipes out not only its creators, but it continues on a destructive path without any foreseeable end in sight.

Similar themes can be found in the *Star Trek* episode “A Taste of Armageddon”. Here we see another device. An ancient war is still ongoing between two planets, carried out via computer simulation. The computer, which autonomously runs the simulation, reports the results of simulated attacks and the planetary citizens who are killed within the simulation are rounded up and terminated in accordance. The *Enterprise* encounters the computer when they are caught in one of the simulated attacks, and Kirk refuses to submit his crew to machine dictated termination. The goal of the computer simulation is to reduce the destruction caused by war, and to make war a distant and transactional thing so that it can be continued without taking a toll on infrastructure. This gets exactly at the idea Burgess’ paper presents. There is a clear “evasion of moral choice”, the planets exemplify the “abdication of moral responsibilities” that Burgess identifies in *Dr. Strangelove* (11). Expanding on this particular issue, the episode can also be understood as making a point about proxy wars. This was a huge part of the Cold War, as both the involved superpowers sought to establish influence in other parts of the world. The Vietnam War is the largest example of a Cold War proxy war, and *Star Trek*’s message about it is clear. Though there are other episodes that also deal with the Vietnam War, “A Taste of Armageddon” is a significant example in that it combines a critique of proxy wars with a critique of machine warfare (Sarantakes 96-97). The justification offered by the involved planets is that a full-scale war will destroy their culture, that real attacks will wipe out more of the populous than their algorithmic war. Their form of distanced war allows the conflict to continue, only affecting portions of the population without so much as inconveniencing the rest of the planet. Kirk accuses the planets’ leaders of this, saying that they’ve made war “[s]o neat and painless, you’ve had no reason to stop it” (“A Taste of Armageddon” 43:37). The message of the episode is clear: outsourcing violence does not remove the casualties and tragedies of war; it merely puts it at a distance, absolving the public of direct involvement. It’s an issue of “public morality” as well (Burgess 11).

In the episode's conclusion Kirk destroys the machine, proclaiming "I have given you back the horrors of war... you have a real war on your hands. You can either wage it with real weapons or you might consider an alternative—put an end to it! Make peace!" ("A Taste of Armageddon" 45:29). By removing the ability to outsource violence and warfare, Kirk creates the opportunity to end the machine-based proxy wars the alien planet has been engaged in.

American science fiction of the 1960s is deeply reflective of fears surrounding machine warfare that existed in Cold War public consciousness. These films and episodes reveal the nuances of these fears. Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* explores the idea of a Soviet doomsday machine, and the potentially disastrous consequences a machine like that could have. *Dr. Strangelove* sets up that idea of moral evasion, and how machines can allow humanity to outsource horrible acts. Technology has no moral compunctions, and is capable of horrible things, especially when it exists beyond human control as the doomsday machine does. The permanence of such a machine is explored in *Star Trek's* "The Doomsday Machine", which shows an alien doomsday machine, left to wander the universe forever in a vicious mission of destruction. Beyond that, there is "A Taste of Armageddon", which explores the idea of moral evasion in more detail through the lens of proxy wars as well as through the angle of machine-based warfare. Taken together, these examples of American Cold War science fiction are all emblematic of the fears surrounding A.I. as a growing Cold War technology, situated in the context of the arms race and other technological advancements that were set against a backdrop of superpower tensions.

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"My body, my choice": The Deconstruction
of Levinasian Responsibility in the
COVID-19 Pandemic
Hope Moon

The work of French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas on heteronomous ethics and one's role to the Other offers a guide for how we must act in pandemics and the responsibilities we must upkeep to ourselves and our communities. At the beginning of 2020, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) erupted into a global pandemic prompting governments to impose mass lockdown efforts in attempts to stop the spread of the virus. Residents were asked to stay at home, if possible, only leaving for 'essential' purposes such as grocery shopping or working 'essential' service jobs that could not be done at home. Such drastic measures were put into place largely due to how little we knew about the virus—how it spread, its effects on the body, its incubation period in the body. As the months went by, restrictions began to loosen as more information was learned and we found other effective ways to lessen the spread such as masks and social distancing. As the initial shock and fear started to subside, conspiracy theorists began to rise, skeptical of the virus's risk and critical of governments' responses. Such reactive responses call into question why indeed we underwent and continue to follow COVID-19 safety protocols and decide to get vaccinated. This paper will examine the importance and eventual erosion of Levinasian ethics throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, discussing issues of biopolitical power and perversions of responsibility.

In *Otherwise Than Being*, Levinas explores ethics in relation to the Other—another being one encounters. Prior to encountering the Other, the self is merely a body—a solitary ego—that lives serving only themselves. Development of "consciousness and freedom" are not yet accessible to the solitary self as they are crucially dependent upon encounters to the Other (Levinas, *OTB*, 145). Once the selfish ego is met with the Other, they are then transformed into an ethical being—adopting a heteronomous approach to life with the Other. Such transformation allows the self to then develop such a consciousness where all one's inwardness is "invested in the form of a despite-me, for another...finding oneself while losing oneself" (Levinas, *OTB*, 11). Freedom for the Other "could never begin in [the self's] freedom" (Levinas, *OTB*, 10). The self's identity is further developed upon accepting "the impossibility of escaping responsibility...of the other," adopting a subjectivity to the Other (Levinas, *OTB*, 14). This subjectivity to the Other, for Levinas, is infinite, recalling the Cartesian infinite god. For Levinas, subjectivity is the glorious act of the Infinite and absolutely defines the "human adventure" (Levinas, *OTB*, 148).

Pandemics, especially those involving airborne transmitted viruses, rely upon the cooperation of beings to reduce the spread in the hopes of sparing the most vulnerable. They are large-scale social problems that demand to be faced collectively should the greater public be saved. Such behaviour recalls Levinasian ethics, where individuals are asked to follow their primary responsibility to others as is their supposed duty. In an interview regarding his work, Levinas notes that these relationships need not be reciprocal for one to participate in their moral responsibility to the Other, emphasizing that "I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity, even if I were to die for it" (Levinas, "Ethics and Infinity", 195). Poignantly, the cost of life is something that is a very real possibility in the context of pandemics. Those working in care taking roles such as in healthcare or in long-term care facilities suddenly are put into situations where they risk their own safety while caring for others.

In a paper entitled “Levinas’ Ethics of Caring: Implications and Limits in Nursing,” author Byung-Hye Kong traces Levinasian behaviour in nurses’ acts of care to their patients. Kong outlines the immediate response of nurses to the suffering Other that occurs without “one’s inner autonomous moral conscious” (Kong 212). Following such instincts are crucial in the work of saving lives as rational questioning of responsibility in severe circumstances could cost someone their life. Kong, however, questions the asymmetry of the dynamic, as well as the infinite concept of responsibility with the concern for the nurses’ wellbeing as they “[bear] everyone’s suffering” (Kong 212). Such concerns raise the importance of not only healthcare workers, but everyone following Levinasian ethics to lessen the burden off those directly working in positions of aid. Through widespread adoption of Levinasian responsibility to the Other, a society of egotistical beings can be transformed into an ethical society that works collectively for the protection of the Other.

The strategies for slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus developed in succession following scientific research on the nature of the virus. Physical distancing was the first widely adopted safety measure, quickly followed by mask-wearing, and then after almost a year, vaccines began to be approved for use. Each of these strategies involve different levels of personal sacrifice such as being apart from loved ones, the cost of buying face masks, and accepting the risks of taking a vaccine. For an individual to undertake these strategies, they must have a certain grasp of understanding as to why they help to stop the spread of the virus. A 2021 study examining the negative attitudes regarding the use of face masks discovered that the people who object to wearing them believe that the masks are ineffective, or simply have a general psychological resistance to the concept of mask-wearing (Taylor & Asmundson 2021). This psychological resistance to wearing masks is also applied to social distancing protocols and vaccine uptake held by the same population (Taylor & Asmundson 2021). The avoidance of safety protocols demonstrates a breakdown of Levinasian ethics in these people in their rejection of responsibility for the Other.

Face masks and vaccines are primarily used to protect the Other, not one’s own self. The use of both do not guarantee personal protection, but greatly diminishes the possibility of spreading the virus should one contract it (*Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination; Science Brief: Community Use of Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2*). Furthermore, vaccinations greatly lower risk of hospitalization, lessening the burden on health care systems should the virus still be spread—allowing capacity for other people needing healthcare unrelated to COVID-19 to be seen (*Science Brief: Community Use of Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2*). This logic, where the ultimate reasoning for using masks and getting vaccinated is for the protection of others, not oneself, is perhaps where the skepticism of effectiveness and general resistance lies. For the act of putting on a mask or getting the vaccine demands a level of substitution—“putting oneself in the place of another” (Levinas, *OTB*, 146). In that substitution, one would see oneself as a potential risk to the Other, as a potential carrier of the virus, and be faced with the weight of their full responsibility to the Other to protect them from themselves. Responsibility becomes tangible, and the ethical self is challenged to accept it.

In the early stages of the pandemic, movement was discouraged for everyone—essential workers were the only exception. However, as restrictions began to lift and movement began to increase, states then began to implement conditional freedom of movement based on mask wearing or vaccine status. Until conditional movement was implemented, the vast majority of people seemed to be able to accept Levinas’ understanding of responsibility where “responsibility for the other... [is antecedent] to my freedom” (Levinas, *OTB*, 15). People willingly sacrificed their own movement in the understanding that they were helping protect the Other.

Perhaps this was more easily done because many of the first victims of COVID-19 were older people, giving individuals personal faces of the Other, like older family members, to imagine protecting through their actions (Wortham et al. 2020). Levinas highlights the importance of encountering the Other face-to-face to be able to bring about one's ethical sensibilities: "speaking face-to-face to the Other causes pain to the ethical self and forces the self to make sacrifices" (Kong 211). As the coronavirus progressed and those at risk became more abstracted into masses, Levinasian instincts of responsibility began to fade away. People began to question their sacrifice of freedom for the Other.

A 2017 study found that vaccine hesitancy is correlated with concepts of personal liberty and oppression (Amin et al. 2017). In 2021, protestors of the COVID-19 vaccine in Canada were interviewed claiming that they were not necessarily anti-vaccine but were more concerned with "the erosion of personal freedom...[and] excessive government control" (Lee-Shanok 2021). A kind of 'freedom of choice' is particularly prevalent in people's arguments against the vaccine. People desire a leniency to be able to choose whether they wish to adopt safety protocols without being "socially ostracized for their beliefs," such as being barred from restaurants or risk of losing one's job if they do not wear masks or get vaccinated (Dickey 2021). Those who refuse to wear masks or get the vaccine revert into Levinas' ego state, without the "sincerity" or sensibilities gained when they encounter the Other (Levinas, *OTB*, 144). For Levinas, these beings forego a degree of humanity as they refuse to take responsibility for the Other as he states that "expressing the very identity of the human ... I cannot refuse [responsibility]" (Levinas, "Ethics and Infinite," 196).

In her paper "When the Face Becomes a Carrier," Sarah Horton offers an explanation as to why the responsibility to the Other can be overlooked amidst political responses to the global pandemic. Horton describes government mandates regarding the pandemic to be an exercise of biopower. She argues that as such restrictive measures are guided by science, they too reduce individuals into an abstracted 'study population' that works to dissolve the face of the Other: "From the perspective of biopower, the Other...and the self disappear into the population" (Horton 718). The application of biopower comes in the form of control techniques and surveillance such as restricting movement or COVID-19 exposure tracking apps like COVID Alert. Due to its overhauling nature, biopower "does not depend on individual motivations" (Horton 728). By removing the individual and replacing them with a population, biopower efforts obscure Levinasian responsibility. Where there were once face-to-face transformations of beings into ethical beings responsible for the Other, there becomes only a body that is faced with an abstracted population that does not immediately solicit an ethical response.

Horton writes that responsibility "is to bear the risk of uncertainty and error... [and that becomes the task] of the biopolitical state" (Horton 731). Those who refuse to get vaccinated do not wish to bear this uncertainty and error over the state of the virus. Instead, they wish to have the choice, the freedom, to "disregard acknowledged authorities... [and] come to [their] own conclusions" (Dickey 2021). By not getting vaccinated, people feel as though they are opting out of a large-scale experiment of the nascent COVID-19 vaccines, citing worries over "long-term ramifications" (Bogart, Dunham, & Neustaeter 2021). This argument puts the self in priority over the Other, directly contradicting Levinas' concept of being. For Levinas, being necessarily "forms an exception"—an Other—that one is indebted to (Levinas, *OTB*, 6). For those refusing to get vaccinated, they are perversely almost taking the role of the Other, wishing to be the exception that the vaccinated population will be responsible for: "They want the freedom to not wear a mask with the assurance that they'll be well taken care of at a hospital if they do get sick" (Dickey 2021).

However, within an insular community of unvaccinated people, the face of the Other can almost seem to return. While it is not necessarily an infinite Levinasian ethics on display, there is a certain degree of responsibility for the Other that is demonstrated within the crowds of anti-vaxxers. Throughout their organizing, they create recognizable communities in which they can retrieve the Other amongst their fellow group members. Organizing in these circles allows for individual identities to be reclaimed from the obscured abstract population that governments previously had them dissolve into. Members of these unvaccinated groups then are able to latch onto one another, building a sub-Levinasian ethics between each other. No longer confined to restriction of movement, these people are met face-to-face once again with others, and re-develop ethical sensibilities amongst one another. In an interview, the director of the Social Identity and Morality Lab at NYU explained that “[anti-vaxxers] create an insular community, relying on [each other] for information and relying on them for belonging” (Scott 2021). The trading of information regarding the use of Ivermectin as a COVID-19 treatment, for example, demonstrates how these communities rely on and trust one another to provide solutions “more than the establishment” due to its exercise of biopower that has alienated the population from one another (“Horse dewormer the latest trend in COVID-19 misinformation”). Supporting Horton’s argument, everyone has the capability of becoming ethical beings—it is only until they are met with enforced biopower do they begin to waver in their senses of responsibility.

Interestingly, those who refuse to get the vaccine have appropriated the abortion rights slogan of “My Body, My Choice”. While both issues tackle political control over individuals’ bodies, they vastly differ in the risks associated to the individual. The issue of whether one decides to wear a mask or get vaccinated affects the greater public’s health, with the contrary risking lives of the many. Restricting abortion rights, however, is not only a much more invasive and personal exercise of biopower, but also only affects one individual directly. As already discussed, the dissonance is carried by the unvaccinated populations because they do not recognize the greater population to be an Other for whom they are responsible. Therefore, the cooptation of the abortion rights slogan not only posits an equalization of the issues, but also works to hypocritically erase the abortion rights movement entirely. If we follow the logic of the unvaccinated that “it’s tyranny to be told to put something they don’t want on or in their bodies in order to save lives”, then they should be opposed to abortion bans that directly threat people’s right to choose if they wish to be pregnant or not (Goldberg 2021). However, as unvaccinated people tend to be politically on the right, and therefore also express anti-abortion sentiment, it is clear that they have made themselves to be the exception. As Michelle Goldberg puts it in an NYT article, “Choices, it seems, aren’t for everybody” (Goldberg 2021).

Confusingly, unvaccinated people are seemingly able to exhibit a perverse kind of ethical sensibility towards abstracted unborn fetuses despite being unable to connect with living abstracted members of the greater population. Perhaps this is due to not recognizing the faces of abstracted pregnant people wishing to get abortions, and therefore not being able to substitute themselves into their lives. However, if “responsibility for the Other...is met to me as face” in face-to-face encounters, then arguably one cannot do that with unborn fetuses (Levinas, “Ethics and Infinity”, 194). Even if we take into consideration that those against abortions truly believe that fetuses are beings, enough to feel morally sensible to, then the question remains as to why they are better able to respond with ethical responsibility towards fetuses over other existing people. The continued use of the slogan seems to expose the hypocrisy of the unvaccinated and the selective limits in where place their moral sensibilities. Just like their communities, their ethical vision is insular to what is in front of them and cannot see into the abstracted greater population enough to make out an Other to feel morally responsible to.

The pressure that global pandemics place upon the individual in making ethical choices to protect one another demand a degree of Levinasian ethics. The mere acceptance of an individual to put on a mask or get vaccinated exhibits a moral sense of responsibility for the Other. Sacrifices are made, even if they are difficult, for the sake of the Other as coronavirus transforms the self into a threat to others. The problem of those who refuse to get vaccinated is brought about in reaction to the exercise of biopower by the state through its imposition of vaccine and mask-wearing mandates. These unvaccinated people have lost sight of the Other, and with that their moral responsibility, to the greater public as they have been dissolved into an abstract population void of beings or Others. The intersubjective relation is no longer felt between the unvaccinated and the wider community. Instead, they create their own insular communities of solitary egos where they find the Other amongst themselves, transforming into ethical beings only for one another in their quests for solitary freedoms. As they appropriate slogans of choice and fight only for themselves, Levinasian ethics are turned on their head in the name of personal freedom, but at the cost of the freedom of many.

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"I was/ where I have been forever, / where I forever
go:/ the realm of night/ which girds the world./ We
have there one knowledge only:/ godlike, endless/
prime oblivion!"

Simon Rostis

In his book *Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music*, author Alex Ross writes that "all of Tristan is a hymn to oblivion. The political realities surrounding the Irish princess and the Breton-Cornish knight dissipate like a mirage" (Ross, 67). Ross' nebulous take on the opera captures one, if not the, key element of Wagner's masterpiece: the dissolution of reality and its harsh truths. The titular characters yearn for nullification. They desire a way out of life's facts – duty, identity, societal roles, existence – for an eternal, romantic unification with one another. The spirituality of their love, however, is restricted by these secondary elements of life. This dichotomy is what occupies the piece from its opening measures. What begins the opera are two yearning voices, the cello and oboe; they converge in the tormented harmonic waters of the *Tristan chord* (Wagner "score," 1): it is an unsettled, reaching, torturous sonority which represents the unquenched love of either partner. The chord begs for resolution, likewise, the lovers yearn endlessly for one another; but it is corporeality, titles, formalities – all of life's encumbering baggage – that prevents the satisfaction of romantic and harmonic resolution. If the couple is to achieve total unity and thus eternally rapturous love, the truths of life must be erased, and in some sense, forgotten. In *Tristan's* unmistakable occult-romantic style, Wagner introduces the concept of *Ur-Vergessen*. This idea – which roughly translates to divinely eternal and primordial forgetting – acts as a remedy to the love-throes of the duo, the very emotions represented by the Tristan chord. At points throughout the opera's rough sea of discord we hear how *Ur-Vergessen* satisfies the passions of either character. It is mainly in the opera's musical syntax – motifs, chords, keys, etc. – where *Ur-Vergessen* proves to be the remedy of the lovers' romantic anguish.

Darkness falls on Tristan and Isolde in the second act of the opera. While King Mark is out hunting, the lovers meet to consummate their passion in the hidden realm of the night. What ensues is the famous *Liebesnacht* or Night of Love, described by Alex Ross as a "forty-minute duet that oscillates between extreme sexual agitation and blissful lassitude" (Ross, 67). The *Liebesnacht* nudges them both towards the satisfaction of *Ur-Vergessen*: the rapture and bliss of being unified in love, ignorant of identity. They meet and ask, "Now do I touch you?/ Whom do I see here?" (Wagner, 14) and cry out euphorically, "Glorious rapture!/ O sweetest, highest, ... blessedest joy!" (Wagner, 14). The lovers lose themselves in each other, forgetting duty and danger under the cover of darkness.

Wagner's unique ability to transform meaning lies in Tristan und Isolde's leitmotifs. Leitmotifs are "underlying sonic tags" (Ross, 35) that can express feelings, objects or characters. The most familiar leitmotif in *Tristan und Isolde* – longing and desire – is presented in the first four bars of the prelude (Wagner "score," 1). Longing and desire captures the dualism and separation of the titular characters: the despair of having no means to fulfil an endlessly yearning love. But, halfway through the *Liebesnacht*, Wagner hints at a potential solution during a section called the *invocation of night* (Wagner "score," 348). Tristan sings an ascending phrase – tender and peaceful – to begin the *invocation*, markedly different from the restless, violent music that preceded it. Isolde enters as he finishes the fourth bar, and the duet continues in this overlapping manner for 12 more measures. The naked, strictly musical implications are arresting: miraculously, both Tristan and Isolde's opening phrases of the *invocation* consist only of tones from the Tristan chord.

Out of some simple musical transformations – arpeggiation, augmentation and reharmonization – a new, tranquil, meaning of the Tristan chord has been born. As Wagner develops his musical material, he is simultaneously developing themes central to the drama. The night brings obscurity to daylight, to life: the invocation has turned bitter longing into peaceful melodies. As Tristan sings, “grant forgetting,/ that I’m living ... set me free / now from the world” (Wagner, 17) and Isolde echoes, the emphasis on forgetting is crucial. Tristan and Isolde forget their earthly selves as they sing in unison, enraptured and divine. Some of the most calm, intoxicating and free music of the opera – born out of the fundamental, painful sonorities of the Tristan chord – is during the invocation. This pleasant transfiguration occurs because the lovers forget themselves in the night and unite almost as one.

This bliss, however, is fleeting. Ur-Vergessen is a product of the night, and the reality of the world brings forth daylight and memory. The ever-increasing euphoria of the *Liebesnacht* meets its end in the third scene of act two, when King Mark’s hunting party returns and catches the lovers. The music trembles in anxious passion before the couple are interrupted: “No more naming/ no more parting... ever endless/ both one mind” (Wagner, 20); they rant about a state of unity in non-being and Ur-Vergessen where love is eternally fulfilled. But they cannot overcome their selves. The reality of Tristan’s character, an honourable knight, is inevitable in his mortal form. “*Rette dich, Tristan!* (Save yourself, Tristan!)” (Wagner, 20) and the resounding Tristan chord is a memory of his past, dutiful self that is revived as “morning dawns” (Wagner, 20) on the lovers. While they live, Tristan and Isolde oscillate between their dual natures and passions remained unsatisfied. Duty, memory, discontent – all are inescapable consequences of being that keep their desires from fulfillment.

Transfiguration (*verklärung*) is the soul’s ascent into the heavenly realm of World Spirit (*Welt-Atems*) and highest bliss in Ur-Vergessen. While at the end of her life, Isolde is described “[sinking], as if transfigured, in Brangaene’s arms upon Tristan’s body” (Wagner, 31), Tristan himself seems to die un-transfigured. In act three, the wounded Tristan receives Isolde at his ancestral castle after waiting eagerly for her arrival. In a fanatic lust, he tears off his bandages as she arrives and dies in her arms. The music is jubilant before his death. In a manic state, he cries “Joyful delirium ... Aha, now my blood!/ flow now, exulting!” (Wagner, 28), welcoming death as Isolde approaches from her ship. However, Tristan’s desire is not satisfied in death: Isolde still lives after he passes into the realm of night (*Weltennacht*). Pure transfiguration seems to require the oblivion of either lover. Satisfaction – as prophesized in act two – is not dying separately but together: “But should we die,/ we would not part/ joined forever/ without end” (Wagner, 19). The music makes this even more clear. The final lyric Tristan sings, “Isolde” (Wagner, 28), is accompanied by the tense, plangent Tristan chord. Memory and consciousness triumph during this moment: Ur-Vergessen cannot overcome the truth that Isolde lives, and Tristan does not. Forgetting requires quasi-unity and proximity like that in the *Liebesnacht*. Here, the two are differentiated by a barrier of death as the chord lingers unresolved.

Isolde’s love-death and subsequent transfiguration (*verklärung*) is where the pain of the Tristan chord is finally resolved: the dichotomy of existence and romantic union unravels when she joins Tristan in death. Isolde begins her finale with the *Liebestod* leitmotif as she hallucinates Tristan’s reanimated corpse, “See him smiling,/ softly, gently” (Wagner, 30). This two-measure melody (Wagner “score,” 633) is connected to the longing and desire leitmotif by a series of descending chromatic tones. But the *Liebestod* leitmotif loses itself in the murmuring orchestra, all sense of the Tristan chord and longing and desire is lost. The music rises to an orgasmic climax, worshipping the World Spirit: “in the World Spirit’s/ infinite all” (Wagner, 31) and finally resolves.

Isolde's spiritual satisfaction, transfiguring to a state of bliss and non-being, is realized as she dies. She enters Ur-Vergessen: "void of thought—/ highest bliss" (Wagner, 31). *The Tristan chord inquires a final time, wondering if the problems it poses—separation, yearning, suffering—have been fixed.* After hours of suspension the chord rests at last: transfigured, it fades away into Ur-Vergessen. It achieves a "radiant simplicity" (Ross, 69) that affirms the lover's unification in the realm of night. The painful memory of the Tristan chord is forgotten in oblivion.

One of the most astounding musical-semantic facts about Wagner's opera is to be found at either end of the work. While tonal ambiguity lingers over much of *Tristan und Isolde*, the approximate key of the prelude's opening bars is perhaps in F major. The very first Tristan chord has its root on F, and the downbeat of the first bar is also F. That the music begins in F major and ends definitively in B major is significant: on the keyboard, the distance between F and B is a tritone, an interval known colloquially by musicians as the 'devil's interval.' The significance of the tritone to the entire opera cannot be understated: it is this interval that lends the Tristan chord its torturous, yearning sonority. This interval lies between the first and third notes of the four-note chord; if it were changed, the harmony would sound pleasant and completely lose its meaning to the opera. The story ends in B major, a devil's interval up from F major, the approximate tonality of the beginning. This tritone, which creates the inherent pain of the Tristan chord, is both the resolution of the opera and the cause of the lovers' prolonged suffering. While this musical easter-egg is no more than a neat fact, it demonstrates how ingeniously crafted the work is. It is a reminder that forgetting plays such a crucial role: over the course of the opera, the tritone forgets its tortured nature and is itself transfigured, granting romantic satisfaction to Tristan and Isolde.

The musical achievement of *Tristan und Isolde* is astounding. As Alex Ross claims in *Wagnerism*, it is perhaps the most written about piece of classical music, second only to Beethoven's fifth. This is because Wagner had single-handedly reoriented Western music: *Tristan und Isolde's* dissonant and ambiguously resolved harmonies expanded the tonal system to previously unknown reaches. For all its loose tonal wandering, however, the opera is tightly contained by the leitmotifs discussed above. The creation of new material from existing material, when the Tristan chord is transformed during the invocation of night, for example, gives the work stability and aural unity. Ur-Vergessen has its place within this framework by being a descriptor: when Wagner subjects an unpleasant motif to a pleasant transformation, the developmental effect is as if the new material *forgot* its previous nature. Just as Tristan and Isolde strive for romantic union by forgetting reality, the music has an equally passionate aim in developing towards a pleasing, consonant ending. The utter euphoria of Isolde's *Liebste Tod* confirms this, and as the opera fades into oblivion, we are left with inexplicable feelings of both satisfaction and utter mystery.

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Object Biography Project:
Swedish Bodice
Elsy Rytter

Sweden, like many of its neighbours in the Baltic and in Europe is known for its tradition of folk costumes. The history of this tradition is complex and tied to many cultural movements and historical events. To understand the origins and evolutions of the Swedish folk costume phenomenon, I selected a late eighteenth to early nineteenth century bodice from Västra Götaland, identified by the museum it is housed in as a folk costume piece. As I discovered through my research, Sweden's folk costume heritage is a fairly recent one, which was greatly influenced and strengthened by the ideas and sentiments of the Romantic period, and Sweden's rapid industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century. To discuss the bodice and the folk costume movement in Sweden in detail, I will contextualize the general fashion of the nineteenth century, the geopolitics of the time, and explore the other artistic and folk movements happening contemporaneously.



“Livstykke” [bodice]. Identification number BM78872. Borås Museum and Textile Museum.

The bodice I am examining is made of red and blue wool damask (which has faded to red and green), plain weave striped linen, plain blue wool damask, red wool bias tape, paper, blue linen thread and an undyed linen cord. The entire bodice is lined in the striped linen (which is pieced). The front and back tabs are interlined with paper, and the front tabs are lined with blue damask, while the back tabs are lined with the fashion fabric. All of the edges are bound in the bias tape, and the garment is sewn with the blue linen thread, which originally matched the fabric. These fabrics were likely purchased and made into the bodice at the home of the owner. Around this time in Sweden, restrictions on fabric purchases were loosened, and it became more affordable to buy pre-made fabric.

Before I draw any conclusions about the bodice, I will examine the fashion systems in Sweden at this time. There were two popular modes of fashion. The majority of the regions in Sweden followed the aristocratic and bourgeois fashions as well as they were able. A few regions, including Dalarna, Skåne, Hälsingland, Blekinge and a few small communities scattered in the other mainstream regions practiced a folk costume tradition that had existed since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The interest in folk costumes has also existed since that time. Sumptuary law was passed to restrict access to fashionable materials and styles, and a “national dress” was encouraged in 1793 in an effort to assimilate the lower classes and create stronger boundaries between the upper and lower classes. It was also admired by the royal court, and in 1778 Gustav III had a special folk costume based on the Dalarna region made for exclusive use by the royal family and court.

Some communities used folk costumes in a living tradition up until the Second World War. This tradition was essentially everyday wear that codified the regions and even parishes into distinct patterns of dress. This tradition was a crystallization of earlier fashion systems into a quintessential peasant style. Women commonly wore linen shifts, wool skirts, laced bodices in contemporary style shapes, aprons and different head coverings. The style and shape of the headwear depended on marital status and could be quite elaborate. Men wore shirts, waistcoats, breeches (often fall front) and specific hats depending on the region. Someone’s status and exactly where they were from was visible through their clothing and the styles of decoration used. Most regions had special versions of the costumes for special occasions, which was another way to show status, as it was difficult for the poorer people in a community to have many outfits. This kind of conspicuous consumption was not through lavish fabrics but through the number of different pieces of clothing in one’s wardrobe.



“Folkdräkt från Leksand” [Folk costume from Leksand]. Identification number 1M16-B145046:2635. Västra Götlands museum.



Hilleström, Pehr. *Bondhustru och dotter i Wärend's dräkt* [Housewife and daughter in Wärend's dress]. Oil on canvas. 35 x 26 cm. Museum of Småland.

Folk costumes in the regions that traditionally had them slowly evolved over time to mirror the fashionable silhouette. This slow evolution took place because rural communities updated their clothing when they could afford to and kept their older garments when they had to. This is one reason folk costumes in Sweden today generally have a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century inspired silhouette. Another reason is that that particular style remains the modern ideal for folk costumes. The past is interpreted by modern people, and so the modern costumes are historically inspired, but are not representative of the actual clothing of those periods.

After industrialization in Sweden really began in the 1850s, many of the communities who belonged to these established traditions began to adopt mainstream fashion because of the breakdown of traditional rural life caused by the overwhelming wave of the industrial revolution. Because of this decline in folk costumes' normal use, and because of the Romantic movement sweeping through the country, the middle classes began to take folk costumes up as special occasion garments. The middle classes believed they were reviving the past, but a revitalized tradition does not serve the purpose it did in its original context and changes completely by being adopted by a different group, time, and context. After the costumes became popular, folk costumes were designed for every region across Sweden. They were not for every parish, (the regions that originated the tradition were much more specific). The region's invented folk costumes generally only included women's versions, due to the Romantic and Victorian ideals of a more sombre masculinity. Still today, the folk costume tradition is tied to ideas of femininity, domesticity and other Romantic ideals that informed the original movement. Men have always worn some form of folk costume for folk dancing, however, as it is the traditional expectation.



The invented costumes were designed to reflect a united whole, and in fact, folk costumes were and still are sometimes referred to as “nationaldräkt” or national dress, even though it is region specific. At the beginning of folk costume's adoption by the middle classes, a universal “national dress” was the goal, but resistance to the idea and a desire to protect local identity was more popular.

“Sverigedräkt” [Sweden's national costume]. Identification numbers 311361, 311362, 311363, 311364. Nordiska Museum.

The bodice I selected is not from a region that traditionally had folk costumes. This region, Västra Götaland, is coastal and was close enough to the outside world through trade that the region was more inspired by mainstream fashion than the folk costume regions. The regions which have older and original folk costume practice are mostly clustered in the mainland of Sweden, and prior to industrialization, those regions were particularly isolated by great forests and poor roads. Instead, the folk costumes of Västra Götaland were designed in the early 20th century. However, the bodice I chose is not a regular, everyday wear piece, despite the fact that it predates regional folk costumes in this region. It has the characteristic timeless look of a folk costume bodice, and it is labelled by the museum it resides in as a folk costume piece. Therefore, the bodice can be understood as originally a kind of everyday wear, as the tabs on the bodice and the higher waistline do match with the dating of 1780-1800. I theorize then, that this bodice was originally normal clothing, and not intended to be part of the special folk costume tradition. It was probably incorporated later in its life into the invented folk costume tradition in Västra Götaland. The bodice was then donated to the museum when it could no longer be worn or was replaced. Unfortunately, the museum does not list the date of acquisition, which would help confirm or complicate my theory.

To continue exploring the context and origin of my chosen bodice, the political circumstances of its environment must be examined. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Europe was facing many wars and political issues, especially those caused by Napoleon, and the disastrous political climate he left in his wake. In Scandinavia specifically, Sweden took possession of Skåne and Norway from Denmark, and Sweden lost Finland to Russia. On top of these geographical shifts, Scandinavia was facing political pressure from the west, east and south by the British and Russian empires and a turbulent collection of German states. These situations, along with more liberal minded Scandinavian kings, and the Romantic and nationalist movements in Europe created the perfect environment for Scandinavianism to rise. Scandinavianism was a popular movement, especially in academic and younger circles, determined to unite Sweden, Norway, and Denmark under one crown, uniting the culturally similar countries and creating a stronger defense against Britain, Russia, and the German states. This movement failed in its goal of uniting the countries politically, but had a lasting impact on the arts and culture of Scandinavia. On top of the political landscape, Sweden was transforming into a modern country, and industrializing very rapidly. The too-quick transition to industrial life led to a fractured and poverty-stricken rural population, and large-scale immigration to North America. Also due to the industrialization, modernization and Romanticism, rural culture and especially folk costumes began to be seen as special and nationalistic by the middle classes, and they were also seen as reflections of an idealized past.

To gain a complete image of the context that created the folk costume movement in Sweden, the surrounding and related cultural movements must be considered. For brevity's sake, I will only be considering three major movements, but I would like to acknowledge that other movements which occurred simultaneously and were also impactful on folk costume's rise include religious reform, government reform, and the literary movements of the period. The three movements I shall consider in detail are educational reform, the fine arts movement, and the revival of folk dance.

Education was reformed to conform with new nationalist and Romantic inclinations. Schools were set up by the bourgeois and intellectual class to educate the lower classes, as well as teach good manners, good taste, and an idealized history. Girl's schools had similar motivations, and specifically focused on feminine and traditional skills like weaving, sewing, needlework and other handicrafts. The Romantic ideals and practical skills were often taught all at once by requiring the students to make folk costumes. In schools, art was also blended into education.

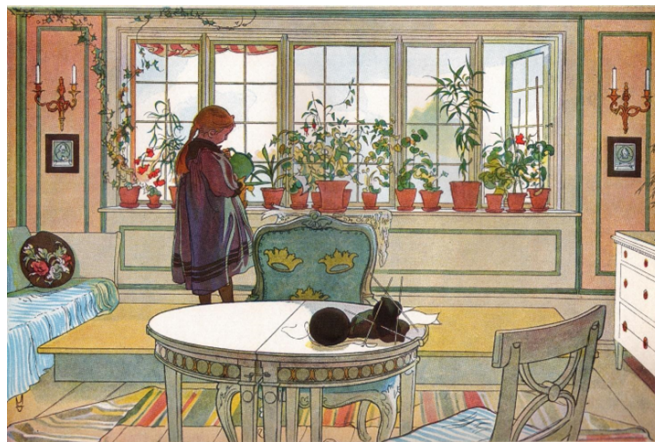
One example of this is a series of murals Carl Larsson completed in a bourgeois girls' school in Göteborg. The murals form a timeline through history of idealized women, beginning at the bottom of a set of stairs in the Stone Age and going up to the contemporary 1890s at the top of the stairs. This collection of paintings is an excellent example of Gothicism, the interest in ancient Scandinavian history, focusing largely on historical continuity through the ages as well as the collective over the individual. The name comes from the medieval Germanic tribes, the Goths who settled in Scandinavia after the collapse of Western Rome.



Hirsch-Pauli, Hanna. 1896. The Princess. Oil on canvas. 150.7 cm x 105.7 cm. National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.



Zorn, Anders. 1897. Midsommardans ("Midsummer Dance"). Oil on canvas. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.



Larsson, Carl. 1894. Blomsterfönstret [Flowers on the Windowsill]. Watercolour. 32 cm x 43 cm. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

Gothicism was a prevalent movement that was especially influential in art. Historical scenes were a common theme, as well as fantasy scenes, both of which played into the notion of Romantic nationalism. Another common theme was domesticity. Carl Larsson's *Blomsterfönstret* (Flowers in the Windowsill) shows a cozy, quintessentially Swedish interior, with paused knitting on the table, and the national symbol of Sweden, the three crowns, on the centre chair. Other frequent themes in Swedish art of this time included idealized landscapes, and idealized depictions of the peasantry, often wearing their folk costumes. The idealization of these subjects was informed by a middle class outlook on life, and did not include the lived realities of the subjects depicted. Anders Zorn's *Midsommardans* (Midsummer Dance) is a perfect example of this attitude, as well as depictions of folk costume.

The last movement I would like to discuss, folk dance, uses similar nationalistic and Romantic tropes, and it requires folk costume. Folk costume can exist without folk dance, but folk dances are not danced without a folk costume being worn. This movement was also very idealized and drawn away from its original context, so it developed into a new tradition entirely. The movement was in part popularized by the Uppsala university folk dance club Polichoros, as they did tours and dances in Sweden and Scandinavia more widely. Interestingly, this club's members were exclusively men, but they danced in men and women's costumes. Folk dance evolved through time to remain culturally important in Sweden, and folk dancing is always danced on holidays, especially Midsummer.

Folk costumes are inherently political and symbolic. They acted as a tool for unifying cultural expression as well as for encouraging the spread of nationalism in Sweden. When folk costumes were adopted and invented by the middle classes after the industrial revolution in Sweden, they became symbols and were distanced from their original cultural meaning and context. Sweden was utterly shaped by this romantic and nationalist movement, and it is still a major part of Swedish culture today. In the bodice I selected, this interconnected history is accessible as well as visible. It holds within itself transitions in fashion and in culture.

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Meditation Nation: A Categorical Critique
of Western Buddhism and Cognitive
Psychology
Lucas Tennan

Then I hope I laughed
Then I hope I said, "it's fine"
And quietly undressed in a world completely possessed by the human mind.

“In A World Possessed By The Human Mind”
The Tragically Hip, *Man Machine Poem* (2016)

The mind is necessarily implicated in its understanding of itself. Humanity can only probe consciousness through consciousness' own tools of comprehension, which are inexorably constituted by language and culture. Insofar as we can learn of the mind's own innate properties, a much-overlooked mode of inquiry is the capacity of the mind to teach us about ourselves as a mirror does, by showing what is projected upon it. Harvard Humanist Charles Hampden-Turner champions this approach with an underlying understanding that “man is his own metaphor, whose self-image fulfills itself in unforeseen ways. Like Proteus, we can take many alternate forms, but not escape the consequences.” I see this position of psychological non-essentialism to be a privileged perspective for analysis, especially while writing within an intellectual culture that values pluralism. Additionally, comparing systems can aid in rendering them complementary. The newness of each generation cannot help but continually reveal the folly of their inherited epistemological self understanding's claim to totality. We rarely see the dignity in accepting the mind's radicality, as this leads to an investigation of how our ways of understanding are limited, but only then can they grow in comprehensibly through compresnity, supplementation, and intellectual cosmopolitanism. Within the current Western approach to the mind, the most pronounced example of this psychological diversity is the co-orbital configuration of cognitive psychology and Buddhist meditation. Only through divergent methods and results can our self-understanding and transformation defy siloed conceptions.

For the sake of preserving this beneficial plurality, I will offer a critique of how these two systems can best coexist. First, I will briefly relate the historical context in which Buddhism passed into the Western world. This genealogy aids in illustrating the cultural momentum behind ‘Buddhist Modernism,’ to which my critique is a response. This intellectual movement holds as one of its tenets that Buddhist meditation can be integrated into psychology as a first-person science, a new frontier in the study of consciousness. I will rebut this assertion, by demonstrating how introspection categorically cannot be an experimental method, and how scientific enquiry is stunted by methodizing the subjective. A reversal will follow, as the Buddhist Modernist agenda may be turned against itself to reveal how the transformative potential of meditation is equally stunted when overtaken by a scientific approach. To fully grasp the causes of this inversion, an assessment must be made of Buddhism and Science's respective truths of the mind. Here, a case study utilizing the mental attribute of ‘attention’ as an example will display the strengths and divergent conceptions resulting from the value judgements latent in each epistemology. By holding up the same cognitive function in the cross-beam of both methods, like a cut gem, the benefits of each approach can be illuminated individually so that we can be confident in the complementary nature of separatism. In this paper, in order to harmonize these truths, I will assert that experimental psychology and Buddhist meditation should be divided perspectivally, as ethical development, being a subjective experience, occupies the first-person perspective, and scientific inquiry, which must have a separate subject and object, operates in the third.

An apt metaphor is that of an airplane. The aerospace engineer understands the individual parts that allow the plane to function. They can run diagnostics that identify faulty operations. The pilot, on the other hand, must know tangibly how to operate the airplane from the cockpit. They must have the tools to understand the way the airplane functions as a whole in relation to the changing conditions of the sky, and an ingrained reflex for timely decisions that must be expressed through the cockpit's controls. While both understandings present a truth of the way the plane actually is and can be mutually beneficial to one who has a grasp of both, it would be a mistake to assume that one kind of knowledge could completely perform the task of the other. Through the process of looking more closely at the kinds of truths that Buddhist meditation and experimental psychology assert, their usefulness can be more accurately assessed, and separatism can be proven more productive and complimentary than the model of convergence.

The desire for meditation to be absorbed into Western science is a cultural trajectory rather than a logical conclusion. Buddhist practices did not arrive in the West on their own terms, but rather mediated through the values of the colonial powers of the nineteenth century. This cultural feedback was coined 'Orientalism' by Edward Said, as a Western mode of asserting epistemological dominance through interpretations of Middle Eastern and Asian cultures. Said details the power dynamic in this hermeneutical endeavor by writing how "from the beginning of Western speculation about the Orient, the one thing the Orient could not do was to represent itself. Evidence of the Orient was credible only after it had passed through and been made firm by the refining fire of the Orientalist's work." Following the effects of these cultural representations, Evan Thompson, professor of philosophy at The University of British Columbia, in his book *Why I am Not a Buddhist*, argues how the Buddhism we received in the West was transformed by these narratives. As Christian missionaries moved into Asia, they "proclaimed the superiority of Christianity because it possessed science and advanced technology," and casted religions like Buddhism as underdeveloped forms of understanding. Through the domination of this Christian ethic, a cultural feedback-loop took shape, as "Asian Buddhist intellectuals and reformers figured out how to turn the argument around. They countered that Buddhism is the true scientific religion." This revised Buddhism is seen in its early form in Sri Lankan Buddhist Anagarika Dharmapala's speech to the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Dharmapala was both a reformer and Buddhism's first global ambassador, so as he spoke to the upper echelon of Western Christian intellectuals, many of whom had never been exposed to Buddhism, to them he was in effect speaking on behalf of the entire tradition in his claim to be conveying its essence. Dharmapala asserts that "Buddhism is a scientific religion, in as much as it earnestly enjoins that nothing whatever be accepted on faith. Buddha has said that nothing should be believed merely because it is said. Buddhism is tantamount to a knowledge of other sciences." Returning to itself, the values of pragmatism, individualism, and science that colonizers carried to the East are taken up in a new form. The Dalai Lama had said that "if scientific analysis were conclusively to demonstrate certain claims in Buddhism to be false, then we must accept the findings of science and abandon those claims." Here, it is clear that these statements by prominent Buddhist thinkers are rhetorical attempts to "present Buddhism as being a uniquely scientific religion compatible with the modern world." The echo of a colonial epistemological hegemony is the torch that Buddhist modernism continually carries forward. To more accurately glimpse each system's claim to truth, we must proceed with an understanding of the historical context in mind. Otherwise, we will be unable to differentiate the system from its cultural agenda and be unable to properly assess what happens when these systems step beyond their domain.

In the Western world, the prevailing mode of inquiry into the mind is the field of Psychology. This 'mind science' has developed highly precise tools of investigation and has cataloged the complex interplay of physiological, sociological, and cognitive elements in many different forms.

The psychological sciences have the almost unanimous trust of the general public in its institutions to present them with a self-understanding unattainable by the individual, which can point them towards elevated health and cultural prosperity. While numerous psychological studies have confirmed the health benefits of meditation, the attempt for meditation to become a trusted empirical mode of scientific investigation remains problematic. Buddhism scholar and follower B. Alan Wallace, supports this integration, arguing in his article “Buddhism and Science” in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* that “cognitive scientists have failed to devise a methodology for making reliable, direct observations of the whole spectrum of mental phenomena themselves, which can be made only from a first-person perspective.” It is true that a great barrier in cognitive psychology is the inability to measure subjective states accurately, but it is exactly for this reason that they at present cannot be measured scientifically.

There is a clear distinction here between the subjective and the measurable, which Evan Thompson clarifies, in stating that subjective experiences “aren’t experimental tests. They don’t test scientific hypotheses. They don’t provide a unique set of predictions for which there aren’t other explanations.” While subjectivity is empirical insofar as its various states can be observed by a subject, the experiences themselves cannot be acts of science, as “they test and validate things experientially, but not by comparing the results obtained against controls.” Wallace, while displaying a clear understanding of the defining limitations of science, shows conviction in his attempt to undermine them in the perusal of a reformatory agenda. Drawing undue comparisons, Wallace claims that “much as Galileo refines the telescope and used it in unprecedented ways to directly observe celestial phenomena, so the Buddha refined the practice of *samadhi* and used it in unprecedented ways to explore states of consciousness and their objects.” *Samadhi* is a Pali word that denotes refined attention and concentration, the meditator’s tool of investigation. Comparing *samadhi* to a microscope is a categorical error. While each improves the baseline human perceptive ability, the fact that the development of *samadhi* alters the examined mind renders it unscientific. The scientific method requires a separate subject and object, as an “optical or radio telescope doesn’t alter stars and planets. Bare attention [Mindfulness], however, isn’t an instrument applied to the mind from outside.” Even within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition in which Wallace was trained, one is taught to be wary of the subjective mind’s ability to abstract. Thrangu Rinpoche, famed Tibetan Lama writes how “if we were to meditate consistently upon something that is *not* true, the appearance of it would probably arise. For instance, if we were to meditate for a month or a year upon a horn growing from our heads, the image of just such a horn could come to be present.” Clearly, if psychological science were to corroborate meditation as a first-person experimental method, the reliability on which its conclusions rest would be compromised.

The unscientific nature of the subjective that Thrangu Rinpoche admits is far from a reason to disavow the efficacy of meditative practices. What Wallace fails to acknowledge, and Evans only approaches, is the fact that the impediments latent in a merger would be in effect for *both* psychological science and Buddhist meditation. As discussed previously, when meditation seeks to uncover scientific truth, the scientific method is compromised. What has not been made as clear up until this point, obscured by the cultural motives of Buddhist modernism, is how the meditative practice is also rendered ineffective by this adjustment of aims.

Here, a distinction must be drawn that highlights the underlying value judgements of each system that make them incompatible as one, but complementary as two. Both methods claim to disclose the truth of the mind, to see what Ajahn Chah, one of the most well-respected Thai Buddhist teachers claims to be the “Original Mind.” Truth, however, is a normative judgment, a rhetorical move to, consciously or not, conceal a value judgment. Truth is an orientation, like a beam of light shining on a cylinder.

When placed on one side of the shape the shadow that is cast is a rectangle, but when the light is shifted, the shadow becomes a circle. These are two truths about the same object that appear completely different based on the directionality of the approach.

Wallace's confusion may arise because subjective states are still subject to test and debate in order to be deemed truthful within the Buddhist theory of mind. However, where science orients its investigations against experimental control, the validity of a claim in Buddhism is determined against fixed principles of personal ethical development. Across every Buddhist tradition the world over, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* is considered one of the most foundational texts, as it is the first sermon of the Buddha after his enlightenment. In this sutra, the Buddha outlines the path towards enlightenment. He proclaims that suffering arises because we are ignorant of, and not vigilant to, its causes. According to the Buddha, the world is characterized by *dukkha* (Transitoriness). When one lacks the awareness of this impermanence, they seek a fulfillment that cannot satiate forever. The endless flow of becoming and passing away causes people to cling ferociously to contentment, and aversively deny pain and discomfort. The endless seeking, consuming, and identifying is akin to a sleepwalk, where one unknowingly proliferates suffering in an endless cycle. However, in light of the ephemeral nature of sense phenomena, satisfaction can be achieved through desire's cessation rather than its fulfillment. By seeing the truth of suffering, one can transcend it. This thwarting of suffering must be an ethical pursuit, for if it is performed in the interest of selfish desire it engenders further clinging.

What one, therefore, perceives in meditation is, while maintaining a seated position, the practice of holding the attention on the sensation of the body breathing, and continually returning to this object of attention as the mind is pulled away time and time again. Through this process, one becomes procedurally more aware of what the mind is fixated on, as it will continually distract from the practice. Enquiry can then be made into the root of this fixative distraction, and how it manifests in our mental patterns, our judgements, our physical experience, and our tendencies to be unaware of our harmful actions. One continues to develop the depth of attention and awareness of one's own mind, and thus how it changes the experience, in order to continually orient it towards compassion, and the precepts that ensure non-harming in thought, speech, and action. What then, could we say is the truth of the mind for a subjective ethical system such as Buddhist meditation and how does it differ from the truth produced by psychological science?

This is not to say that Buddhism offers the only type of meditation that can engender ethical transformation; rather, it illustrates the fact that a subjective system which aims at a developmental unison of this kind must have an ethical orientation. What Wallace misses in his need for scientific legitimacy is how crucial this underlying ethical value judgment is. In adjusting his mode for Buddhism to be taken up in the West, the difference between scientific meditation and secular meditation must be clarified. A meditative practice with the goal of unveiling scientific truths is impeded, but a system with an orientation towards a subjective secular ethic could achieve the same result. An examination of budding systems of this kind, however, must be the subject of another research endeavor. While an ethical orientation is beneficial for systems used in the first-person subjective tense, the psychological value of testability that is employed on the mind from the outside can neither be discredited, as Thompson attempts to do, by the mental unison in Buddhist meditation. Rather, we can only see the truth of attention for cognitive science, and the benefits of this view, when we approach the function through the scientific values of empirical testability.

The predominant taxonomy of attention in modern psychology was proposed by Michael I. Posner and Steven E. Peterson in their paper “The Attention Systems of The Human Brain.” In this landmark paper, they assert that attention and its processes, which mediate various aspects of cognition, are isolable for study, and that the anatomical structure responsible “interacts with other parts of the brain, but maintains its own identity.” The taxonomy consists of the alerting, orienting, and executive (conflict resolution) networks. This three-part model has been widely influential. Dr. R. Klein, Dalhousie psychology faculty member, attention researcher, and previous student of Posner’s tells me in conversation that “taxonomies are only good if they are useful.” That’s why his lab employs the Attention Network Test (ANT), a standardized test that “provides outcome measures that indicate the efficiency of the networks.” The subject of the test is shown an arrow on a screen and must, using a keyboard or button arrangement, select the correct direction it faces as soon as possible after it has appeared. The arrow is flanked on either side by arrows pointing in a direction either congruent or incongruent to the central one. The difference in the reaction time between unison or dissonant arrow directions gives a measurement for the executive function, the ability to discern the central arrow direction from the flanks. Before the arrows appear on the screen there are a number of visual cue conditions that may take effect. Either a cue appears showing where the arrows will appear, so one can orient their vision properly to the location, a central cue that signifies arrows are going to appear but not where, and the possibility of no proceeding cue. Using these conditions, time measurements of the cued reactions can be measured against non-cued reactions to construct standard scores for alerting and orienting.

While the validity may be disputed, and the cognitive operations that the test actually corresponds to may be fine-tuned, the reliability of the test is very consistent. A person taking many tests over a period of time will produce the same score, so we can say that while the taxonomy may not be fixed, the test reliably measures something that is. As such, the data can be standardized and be compared in meta-analyses across experiments. In 2019 over 30,000 people participated in an ANT-related study. At present, the Klein Lab is working to compile a database of these results to be used in quantitative meta-analyses. As Dr. Klein described, he took all the studies in the Klein Lab database that had compared a typically developing group with an ADHD group. As Klein relates, “what we found is that the alerting network and the executive networks were different, but the orienting network was not. What’s interesting about this is that the test didn’t show a global deficit in everything about attention.” As in many cases, this attentional study is an example of how making aspects of cognition isolable can give deeper insight into how these states function that can only be revealed from a third-person perspective that allows analysis across a population. The ANT has been used to study “the effects upon attention of anxiety (Pacheco-Unguetti et al., 2010), ADHD (Johnson et al., 2008), bilingualism (Costa, Hernández & Sebastián-Gallés, 2008), borderline personality disorder (Posner et al., 2002), deafness (Dye, Baril & Bavelier, 2007), mindfulness training (Jha, Krompinger & Baime, 2007), schizophrenia (Wang et al., 2005), and time of day (Matchock & Mordkoff, 2009).” While these benefits do not disqualify introspection entirely from the process of scientific investigation, as cognitive scientists must first examine themselves to ascertain the components that are to be tested, it is by the virtue of standard testability that scientific taxonomy proves valuable. Through this method, the body of scientific knowledge concerning the mind can continue to grow and evolve.

As discussed above, both methods of approaching the mind are incredibly valuable. Their systematic value judgements present different conceptions of attention, but each truth is useful and bears fruit in its respective domain. When, for cultural reasons, the systems are conflated with each other, or there is assumed to be only one way to approach the mind, then the culture is inevitably impoverished.

These rich traditions of thought should not need to sacrifice the power in the values behind their methods to fit a narrow zeitgeist. In Buddhist meditation, the aim of taking on scientific materialism to draw testable conclusions about the mind immediately limits the degree to which cognitive unison, which is a result of working with physical, mental, social, and environmental factors can occur. This hindrance is precisely because the kind of unison that meditation employs, and is the unique power of the subjective, can only reach its potential when measured against an ethical system, as personal ethical development involves attention to all the aforementioned aspects of one's experience in an undivided manner. On the other hand, in the psychological sciences, viewing the mind from a third-person perspective has the ability to draw conclusions about the mind across many individual subjects. This is only possible through testable models, so the system must value empiricism and replicability. In this way, cognitive science that corroborates truths from a subjective meditation fractures its approach to understanding the mind and sacrifices the conclusions it's able to draw. Clearly, the strengths of Psychological Science and Buddhist meditation are only available if they are kept separate. Drawing the division between them perspectively based on the value judgements that both operate upon is a mutually beneficial split, giving each the space they need to continue to be practiced. As the current trend of mindfulness practices being incorporated into clinical practice continues, I hope that this categorical division can lend mutual understanding and contribute to continual development.

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Contextualizing The End of History Against the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Noah Miko

In 1987 Ronald Reagan spoke in front of the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin and declared victory for Western liberalism: “Where four decades ago there was rubble, today in West Berlin there is the greatest industrial output of any city in Germany – busy office blocks, fine homes and apartments, proud avenues...” (Reagan). Soviet Communists “had other plans,” but Reagan argued that the West had “achieved a level of prosperity and well-being unprecedented in all human history” (Reagan). It was settled. Two years later with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Cold War was over. Communism would begin to fade and in its place, Reagan-style “Western” liberalism would prevail.

Written in the wake of the Cold War, *The End of History* predicts the destiny of world politics in the absence of Communism. Contextually, it is understandable that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War felt monumental. As Frances Fukuyama writes, “it is hard to avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history” (Fukuyama 3). There was a clear shift in history – something that could not be ignored. Writing at the end of the twentieth century, Fukuyama retrospectively characterized the period as one of “ideological violence” (Fukuyama 3). Liberalism versus fascism, Bolshevism, and communism. However, as Reagan declared in 1987, liberalism had finally won the fight. Fukuyama argues that the end of the Cold War signaled an “end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy” (Fukuyama 4).

More than three decades have lapsed since *The End of History* was published. Has Western liberal democracy dominated global society as Fukuyama predicted? While the Cold War of the twentieth century has ended, the twenty-first century has certainly seen opposition to liberalism. Notably, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has made it remarkably clear that there are still powerful forces preventing universal liberalism. The end of history as defined by Fukuyama has not been realized. This is not to say that his framework was completely incorrect, rather that it has stalled.

A Barrier to Liberalism

The war in Ukraine is a prominent example of an obstacle to liberalism and an occurrence preventing humanity from reaching the end of history. In an article published in *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, analyst Yongmin Park asserts that the war “will alter many aspects of global affairs the world has taken for granted...” (Park). When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, it “was a surprise to most pundits and indeed the world at large” (Park). The attack was a shock. It went against the world order and the destiny of history that, years earlier, Fukuyama had predicted would fold to liberalism.

However, it would be inaccurate to argue that these events were completely unaccounted for by Fukuyama. In *The End of History*, he concedes that “Russia and China are not likely to join the developed nations of the West anytime in the foreseeable future” (Fukuyama 15). At the “hard core” of foreign policy is national interest, and that will still prompt conflict between nations in the period beyond ideological struggle (Fukuyama 15). While Putin is clearly exercising his own self-interest in the invasion of Ukraine, the strategy is not one void of ideological violence. Since the end of the Cold War there has still been competition between the U.S. and Russia – the bipolar world did not cease to exist after the Cold War. The two superpowers still have ideological differences and have exercised those differences throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The United States, for example, has turned to the Middle East to “maintain its role as the guarantor of international order” (Park). The September 11 attacks prompted a shift in American foreign policy, one geared towards the Middle East instead of Russia. But the failure of Russia to play a meaningful role in global politics since the end of the Cold War “may have driven Putin to initiate a war where everyone loses” (Park). If this is the case, Putin succeeded. The United States and its allies have once again turned their attention to Russia.

Analysts have noted that “the war has resulted in the decline of Russian power” (Park). Since the invasion of Ukraine, Russia has become more isolated on the world stage than it had previously been. This is partly due NATO’s unified support of Ukraine. NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is a military alliance of countries in North America and Europe that all have liberal democratic governments to some extent. Their support of Ukraine, through Russian sanctions and military aid, has undoubtedly hurt Russian opposition. With Western liberal forces coming together to defeat an authoritarian power, the war can be considered an expression of ideological violence. Democratic countries like the United States and Canada oppose the expansion of Russian authoritarian society and thus send aid to Ukraine. With this, it can be argued that the end of history has not been realized: there is still ideological violence preventing the implementation of Western liberalism.

The Weaknesses of Russia

While the Russian invasion of Ukraine can seem like a clear counterargument to Fukuyama’s claims, the reality is a little more complex. In 2022, Fukuyama doubled down on his assertion that the end of history is imminent. In an article published in *The Atlantic* entitled “Still the End of History,” Fukuyama acknowledges the ongoing prominence of authoritarian states like Russia, but argues that there are holes in these states that will lead to their demise and give way to a take over of liberalism (Fukuyama). He identifies two main weaknesses: having a single leader that “all but guarantees low-quality decision making” and an absence of public discourse that means the leader’s support is “shallow” and weak (Fukuyama). This framework is absolutely true of present-day Russia. As Fukuyama writes, “President Vladimir Putin is the sole decision maker...so isolated that he had no idea how strong Ukrainian national identity had become in recent years...” (Fukuyama). Putin’s unrivaled power in Russia was a detriment, not an advantage. In a similar vein, we can look to the failed state of Nazi Germany. Referring to Nazi defeat in the Second World War, Fukuyama describes why fascism failed: “What destroyed fascism as an idea was not universal moral revulsion against it...but for the fact that expansionist ultranationalism, with its promise of unending conflict leading to disastrous military defeat, had completely lost its appeal” (Fukuyama 9). A similar scenario is currently unfolding in Russia. Putin’s ruthless expansionist efforts are proving to hurt his reputation and the ideologies that support it. As Fukuyama writes, “Russia has become a global object of ridicule” (Fukuyama).

In 1989, Fukuyama said the Soviet Union was “at a fork in the road” (Fukuyama 17). The state could either follow the path of Western European liberalism, or “realize its own uniqueness and remain stuck in history” (Fukuyama 17). In this context, “uniqueness” refers to trends in Russian history that tend to lag behind the rest of Europe, “a century out of date” as Fukuyama specifies (17). Clearly, Russia has not followed the path of Western liberalism. Rather it has gone the other way and reverted to an authoritarian state – “preoccupy[ing] us and slow[ing] our realization that we have already emerged on the other side of history” (Fukuyama 18). Fukuyama’s wording here is interesting. Despite him anticipating a possible reversion in Russian society, he views it as a distraction from the fact that the world has already reached the end of history. With this framework, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine should not be viewed as a great barrier to the end of history, but a footnote to a trend that is already being realized. As discussed previously, war efforts in Ukraine are already being proven detrimental to Putin’s regime. The war is not strengthening global support for Russia and authoritarianism, but is actually doing the opposite. As Fukuyama writes in his *Atlantic* article, strong Ukrainian resistance has “triggered a huge amount of finger-pointing in Moscow...whether Putin himself will be able to survive a Russian military defeat is an open question” (Fukuyama). As per Fukuyama’s original predictions, Russia’s uninspiring military pursuits in the past year suggest that the destiny of history is still moving towards a liberal world void of ideological violence.

Looking to the Future

If the Russian invasion of Ukraine does not conflict with Fukuyama’s original framework, then what does the end of history look like in the twenty-first century? How can contemporary conflicts be characterized if not by ideological violence?

Currently, it is difficult to view the ongoing war as insignificant to the greater narrative of history. Violent scenes in Ukraine dominate international headlines, and to label the invasion as a mere digression feels insensitive to those being impacted by the tragedies. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that our views and emotions are bound by the time in which we live. In 1989, Fukuyama described the end of the Cold War as “feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history” (Fukuyama 3). I argue that this is a feeling shared by every person in every era of human history in regard to some event. The events of our time seem monumental, and with all the violence, the idea that it means something greater for the direction of history is comforting. Fukuyama felt that the end of the Cold War was fundamental to history. Today, scholars have similar attitudes towards the war in Ukraine. An article previously cited in this essay labels the conflict as a “decline of world order” and a development that will have “global repercussions to which all members of the international community... should vigilantly attend” (Park). At this moment, the events unfolding in Ukraine feel monumental. But it is important to acknowledge this fact: it is a moment, temporary. When the conflict is viewed in this way, Fukuyama’s ideas become far more palatable. The ability to view the war as a moment in human history, and to not be consumed by it in the present, is imperative when discussing its significance on the grander scale of time.

This is not to say that the Russian invasion of Ukraine holds no significance. Instead, the significance lies outside of Fukuyama’s historical ideological struggle. In 1989 Fukuyama predicted an end to ideological violence and that the Soviet Union could either follow Western liberalism or remain stuck in history with its expansionist tendencies. In the wake of current events, it is clear Russia has not adopted liberalism, and that there is ongoing conflict between Russia and the West. But there can be conflict in the post-historical era. However, that conflict will be characterized by a civilizational struggle rather than an ideological one.

In *The End of History*, as well as *The Clash of Civilizations?* by Samuel Huntington, conflict in a post-ideological era is anticipated to be between civilizations. Fukuyama writes that “there would still be a high and perhaps rising level of ethnic and nationalist violence” in a post-historical era (Fukuyama 18). Similarly, Huntington anticipates “the return of traditional rivalries between nation states” and that humanity will be divided by cultural differences (Huntington 22). In a world where humans are no longer defined by their political ideology, civilizations are the broadest grouping of people. Conflicts will arise from this far more basic framework of grouping humans. Huntington writes that these cultural differences are “the product of centuries” that “will not soon disappear” (Huntington 25). In this almost primitive method of viewing people, “differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved by political and economic ones” (Huntington 27). This is to say that these differences are more deeply ingrained into humans than are political ones. Where a person can shift their politics, it is not as feasible for a person to change their cultural biases.

Based on these definitions, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia can be considered a nationalist, civilizational struggle. While there is certainly an ideological facet to the conflict as discussed earlier, Putin has also made clear his intentions to unite ethnic Russians in Ukraine and establish a pan-Russian nation (Kuzio). At the very least, Putin has used it as an excuse for his expansionist policies, a mission to “protect ethnic Russians” in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. If his efforts are successful, scholars anticipate Putin’s next target will be Transnistria, a faction of Moldova where ethnic-Russians are the majority (Park). From this, it can be concluded that the Russian invasion of Ukraine could be an example of civilizational conflict.

Fukuyama concluded his 2022 essay by stating “setbacks [to the progress of liberal democracy over the past fifteen years] do not mean the underlying narrative is wrong” (Fukuyama). This statement holds true when contextualized against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Certainly there are elements of the war, like NATO’s strong opposition to Russia, that prove ideological violence is not a phenomenon of the past. However, there are also aspects of the war that demonstrate a civilizational struggle, an occurrence that both Fukuyama and Huntington predicted in a post-historical era. Putin’s obsession with unifying a pan-Russian state suggests an ideological struggle, though certainly present, is not at the center of this conflict. As per Fukuyama’s original argument, ideological violence is dying out despite there being some forces distracting from that fact. With authoritarian states like Russia playing a major role in world politics, Western liberalism has not been widely adopted and humanity has not yet reached the end of history. Nevertheless, the trends predicted by Fukuyama in 1989 are still unfolding. The end of history is imminent.

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Engels' Historical Method

Emily Frank

Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* is a monumental work on the oppression of women and the development of the family. Engels bases his analysis in *Origin* on notes from Karl Marx's unpublished manuscript and the studies of anthropologists such as Lewis Morgan and Johann Bachofen (Engels 12). Using these resources, Engels traces the stages of the family from "prehistoric" times to the present, describing the type of family that is characteristic of each stage of "human development" (27, 90). The first two types of family, "consanguine" and "punaluan," are characterized by group marriage (Engels 44, 46). These forms are then supplanted by the "pairing family," from which the "monogamous family" emerges (Engels 56, 75). For Engels, the transition from the pairing family to the monogamous family is critical; it is the first change that is based on property relations rather than natural necessity. By demonstrating the role of property in shaping the monogamous family, Engels aims to show that the modern monogamous family is historically contingent, rather than natural or eternal. This essay explores *Origin's* radical advances in depicting the contingency of the family and inviting routes for change. Moreover, it examines how Engels' method enriched socialist feminist thought. Nevertheless, despite Engels' emphasis on the contingency of the family, he attributes the development of the family in its first three stages to natural causes. This essay then investigates how *Origin* asserts natural and biological truths about the nature of the family and sexuality to demonstrate the limitations of Engels' approach.

Origin traces the historical process of the modern family's development to show its contingency. In her seminal book *Sexual Politics*, feminist scholar Kate Millett labels Engels' method in tracking the history of the family as the "historical paradigm" (108). The method was utilized by Engels' contemporaries, for example by John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women*, but Millett argues it is at its "most radical" in *Origin* (Millett 108). Mill's analysis in *Subjection* utilizes the historical paradigm to argue that the oppression of women occurs throughout human history and must be overcome (Millett 108). Millett demonstrates that under Mill's framework, "deliberate" changes to the role of women can be made to advance "modern civilization" (Millett 110). However, Mill's view implies that the patriarchal structure is in some way natural or proper, and thus should not be altered too drastically (Millett 110). Conversely, Engels' *Origin* argues for more radical change and provides evidence of radically different conditions in the past. Engels demonstrates that in a "prehistorical" time, there was a "general and widespread supremacy of women" in many aspects of life (61). He argues that the shift from matrilineage to patrilineage occurred with the rise of wealth and that private property was not constant throughout human history. He states that it is "one of the most absurd notions derived from eighteenth-century enlightenment" that women have always been subjugated by men (60). This is the position held by Mill in *Subjection*, and one that, if undermined, opens the possibility for a "drastic reorganization" of society (Millett 120). By demonstrating that there was a time when women were not subjugated by men, Engels can argue that there is a conceivable possibility of these conditions being true again in the future. Thus, Engels shows the historical contingency of the patriarchal family and the subjugation of women to establish the possibility of radical change and promote a future of gender equality.

Engels' method of demonstrating the historical contingency of the family has been widely influential in feminist thought. Although Marxist theories of historical materialism were developed before *Origin*, Engels was instrumental in integrating the family and sexuality into this picture. In the preface of *Origin*, Engels describes "the generation of children" and "the propagation of the species" as an integral aspect of production, which is the driving force of the "materialistic conception" of history (10-11). With this statement, Engels opens the door for feminists to theorize within Marxism in "altogether grander heights" (Hunt). Feminists have taken up Engels' analysis and continued to explore the ways in which the modern family has been constructed (e.g., Millett). Moreover, feminists have utilized Engels' method to investigate the historical contingency of additional features of gender inequality that are commonly perceived to be natural. Namely, to show how they have been constructed by social, political, and economic forces. This strategy is commonly referred to as social constructionism, and in his book *The Social Construction of What?*, scholar Ian Hacking describes its importance in gender studies (Hacking 2). Hacking writes that a "core idea" of gender studies is that "gender, gender attributes, and gender relations" are not determined by biological or natural "truths" (Hacking 7). Feminist scholars have endeavoured to "expose the ideologies" that make gender categories and qualities appear natural, and, on this basis, suggest that circumstances of gender inequality can and should be changed (Hacking 7, 21). Hacking emphasizes that the contingency of many aspects of gender "was far from obvious" before the work of early feminist scholarship such as that conducted by Engels (Hacking 7). Their strategy is widely indebted to Marxist thought, and within the socialist feminist sphere, to Engels' *Origin* (Hacking 20; Hunt). Thus, *Origin's* significance is broader than the aspects of the family and inequality that it demonstrates to be contingent. Much of its value lies in its introduction of the family and sexuality into the historical materialist framework, and the influence of its method on feminist thought.

Although *Origin* powerfully demonstrates the contingency of important aspects of the family and the oppression of women, Engels' analysis falls short in many respects. While Engels argues that the transition to the monogamous family was driven by material conditions, this is not true for the earlier stages of his analysis. For Engels, the family's development until the "pairing family" is based on "natural selection" (65). In fact, Engels argues that there was "no reason why a new form of the family" should replace the pairing family (65). The monogamous family only developed when "new social forces" arose with the introduction private property (Engels 65). Therefore, Engels' analysis of the development of the family in the first part of his work claims to describe the nature of the family, sexuality, and gender relations. In this respect, Engels' analysis often falls short. For example, he does not recognize the possibility of sexualities beyond heterosexuality throughout his description of sexual and familial relationships. By conducting a supposedly universal history of sexual relations, he erases an important aspect of this history. Moreover, he bases the development from group marriage to pairing marriage on the natural proclivity of women to chastity, and thus naturalizes an inaccurate picture of female sexuality. He writes that the process of limiting "the circle" of sexual relations "could not be due to men for the simple reason that they never, even to this day, had the least intention of renouncing the pleasures of actual group marriage" (58, 65). Instead, pairing marriage was initiated by women who, he argues, "longed for relief by the right of chastity" (65). Millett notes that much of Engels' analysis is based on the "presuppositions of his [Victorian] culture" (116). Because Engels depicts much of the family's development as natural, his personal and cultural beliefs about the nature of female sexuality are often presented as universal truths. Thus, although *Origin* aims to demonstrate the contingency of the modern family, it often reinscribes prejudices and assumptions about the nature of sexuality and the family in its description of their development.

Engels' discussion of the chastity of women is not simply a throwaway remark in his description of the family's evolution. Rather, it is central to his analysis of the future of a communist society. Engels argues that the development of humanity from "savagery" into "civilization" was progressive, and simply marred by capitalist property relations (27). Although the object of Engels' critique in *Origin* is the rise of the monogamous family, he sees the development of monogamy itself as an important advance. In fact, he describes monogamy as a "great historical progress" and the "highest ethical standard" (80, 83). For Engels, monogamy introduces relationships based on "sexlove" which, for Engels, is "exclusive by its very nature" (98). While the establishment of monogamy constituted an advance, the influence of property relations caused "peculiarities" to be "stamped upon the face of monogamy," such as the subjugation of women (99). Engels aims to show that in a communist society, those "peculiarities" would be reversed, and the progress of monogamy maintained and expanded for the first time to men as well (99). Thus, Engels does not suggest that the oppression of women should be ended by returning to pairing or group marriages. Rather, the family under communism would progress beyond the current monogamous family. Engels' prediction that monogamy would be fully expanded to men under communism is based on his views surrounding the natural proclivity of women to chastity. Near the end of the book, he describes why the transition to a communist society would make men monogamous rather than give women the freedom to be polyandrous. He reasserts that "Bachofen was perfectly right" when he showed that women were the cause for the transition from group marriage to pairing marriage (99). He adds that women's economic dependency forced them to "submit to the customary disloyalty of men," but that this would no longer be true in a communist society (99). The increased power of women would "make men truly monogamous" because even though men naturally resist monogamy, women favor it (99). If women gained an "equal footing" with men, they would have the power to mandate that sexual relations be monogamous and naturally would not welcome a transition into polygamy (99). Engels' description of a moral communist future centres on his belief in a female sexuality inclined to chastity. This perspective propagates stereotypes of women taming male sexuality and moralizing men through marriage and exclusive relationships. Ultimately, Engels' flawed understanding of the nature of female sexuality does not merely influence his description of the pairing family's development, but also provides the basis for his prediction of a moral monogamous family in a communist future.

Engels' *Origin* has been widely lauded for its revolutionary critique of the subjugation of women and its radical examination of the contingency of the family. Nevertheless, despite Engels' emphasis on the contingency of the modern family structure, he often relies on assumptions about the nature of the family and sexuality to develop his argument. It is important to recognize the places where this occurred, and their significance to the weight of his argument. Engels claims that women caused the development of the pairing family because of their natural chastity. This claim is not merely a minor point in his anthropological descriptions of the family. Rather, it is central to his argument that true monogamy would characterize a communist society and provides the basis for his depiction of communism as a moral progression from capitalism. Still, despite *Origin's* serious shortcomings, its value lies in its method and its influence on feminist scholarship. By introducing family life into the sphere of historical materialism, Engels encourages feminist scholars to take up his analysis. Moreover, *Origin's* use of the historical paradigm provides a basis for the deconstruction of other seemingly natural or eternal truths. Thus, even though *Origin* naturalizes many aspects of sexuality and familial relations, it generates a space for other scholars to show the contingency of what it presents as natural. While the arguments made in *Origin* are of mixed value, its significance for socialist feminism remains incontrovertible.

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Truth, Self, and Fiction in Virginia Woolf's
A Room of One's Own
 Rafael Fecury Braga

When asked to speak on the topic of 'Women and Fiction', Virginia Woolf wrote the scripts of two lectures that would later become *A Room of One's Own*. To build her argument, Woolf employed a very distinctive style. In a work that refuses definition under any single genre, Woolf utilizes personal and self-fictionalized accounts, along with more 'traditional' argumentative devices. I argue that this is an intentional choice, meant to demonstrate that the dichotomy between the fictional and the factual (or the self and the collective, the domestic and the external, the subjective and the objective) is an arbitrary one. Woolf's erosion of these barriers illustrates that truth resides not in one sphere or the other, and that in fact, the illusory antagonism between different perspectives hinders the construction of truth or meaning. This style also supports Woolf's feminist objectives, as she uses boundary breakdowns to illustrate the many ways such boundaries have oppressed women throughout history, and continue to do so in her time. *A Room of One's Own* demonstrates that one cannot often find 'truth' in the physical or conceptual divisions imposed by male-dominated society and thought, and that pursuing and dwelling in the spaces between these divisions may be, if not more truth-finding, at least more truth-seeking.

One of the ways Woolf blurs the line between fact and fiction is through her use of the first-person pronoun 'I'. Woolf never specifies whether this 'I' is meant to refer to herself, or to the story's narrator—a deliberate indeterminacy which makes a political statement. 'I' does not pertain to a single person, but to various 'I's. This does not denote any struggle between the writer and the narrator fighting for a voice, but rather an overlap between the self and the collective. Woolf states early on in *A Room* that "'I' is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being" (Woolf, 4). 'I' pertains to no one in particular, and simultaneously applies to any and all women, including Woolf herself. It can never be solely attributed to any singular woman because any delineation of who this 'I' is defeats the purpose of the pronoun being both impersonal and extremely personal, thus expressing an overarching truth about womanhood. The anonymous 'I' can also refer to figures like "anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, [and who] was often a woman" (Woolf, 48). The authors of these poems have no real being, given that their identities remain a mystery; similarly, Woolf's 'I' can be anyone and no one. This personal-impersonal pronoun thus pays homage to the many women writers who had their names erased from history and from their work, giving them a voice and an 'I' to embody. Additionally, the use of the undetermined 'I' narrator serves a pragmatic purpose for Woolf. An anonymous narrator allows the writer to both emotionally and critically distance themselves from the content of their work, which was especially important for women writers in Woolf's time. Audiences often take what one writes as a product of who they are as a person, a strong identification which could create a dangerous situation for Woolf considering the anti-patriarchal focus of the essay. For example, around the time of *A Room's* publication, Radclyffe Hall, Woolf's contemporary, was accused of obscenity for her book *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), which addressed the topic of lesbianism. The anonymous 'I' in *A Room* allows Woolf to somewhat shield herself from similar public outcry, while also revealing women's inability to express their opinions without some safeguard, such as a proxy (self-)fictionalized narrator. In all, the 'I' in *A Room* is marked by an indeterminacy that multiplies and shares, rather than subtracts and limits, while also protecting Woolf from the perils women writers face in fully embodying and owning their work.

Boundary breakdowns are also present in the way Woolf employs fiction to help create a genealogy of women writers. At first, Woolf aims to deconstruct what one might judge as ‘factual’ about the condition of women. In Chapter 2, the narrator arrives at the British Museum in the “pursuit of truth” (Woolf, 26). Unsurprisingly, the truth found in a purely ‘objective’ and scientific environment is simply what *men* take to be true, shrouded in pompous jargon. Such accounts, Woolf writes, “had been written in the red light of emotion and not in the white light of truth” (Woolf, 32). These scientists never aimed to seek any truth about women, but to exert control over them and to validate man’s dominance. Thus, the scientific canon tells us more about men than about the women they report upon. Having diagnosed non-fiction as a lost cause when it comes to finding any truth about women’s condition, Woolf next turns to fiction; unfortunately, this pursuit is no more successful. She writes,

“if woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men, one would imagine her a person of utmost importance ... as great as a man, some think even greater. But this is woman in fiction. In fact, ... she was locked up, beaten and flung across the room” (Woolf, 43).

Women, as described in literature, are not at all a reflection of real women in society. Just as in nonfiction, men’s goal in creating this literary canon was never to faithfully portray women, but to create a false projection of them that served male needs and desires. Thus, if both factual and fictional portrayals of women contain no actual truth about them, could one entertain the idea that perhaps the whole idea of ‘woman’ is constructed and created? If so, what can be done to change this? How can one get closer to the truth? Woolf responds to these difficult questions by attempting to reunite all the sparse accounts of women writers and, where history fails, supplementing it with fiction. Elena Gualtieri helps clarify this method:

“This act of supplementation does not hide its fictional character but foregrounds it as a critical tool that raises important questions about the truth claims underpinning any ‘factual’ reconstruction of the past” (Gualtieri, 357).

Such a fictionalized-biographical account does not aim to hold an authority over the truth, like the overly self-confident and self-congratulatory writings found in the British Museum, but to show what could have been, under a different set of circumstances. Instead of narcissism and certainty, the fictional-biographical account is marked by a self-awareness of its own speculative character, as it aims to “cut across boundaries of genre to reveal an essential continuity between memory and invention, objective and subjective truths” (Gualtieri, 357). Another consideration in support of fictionality is that “the enchantments of fiction are, even though not deliberately truth-seeking, nevertheless – deeply and strangely – truth-attracting” (Goldstein, 297). This ‘truth-attracting’ wonderfully describes what it seems Woolf is doing in her implementation of fiction, allowing her to create the robust genealogy of women that writers male-dominated scholarship failed to provide. In this genealogy, fact and fiction commingle in pursuit of truth, further suggesting that the division between the two is not impermeable, or even particularly helpful.

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Another boundary-pushing device Woolf utilizes in *A Room* is the figure of the flâneur. Flânerie, in this context, serves as “pedestrian criticism”, making comments that appear to be of a domestic or quotidian scope, but which contain subtle (yet scathing) criticisms of the public or political sphere. For Woolf, the division between the private and public sphere—which confines women to the private space of the household, while men engage in political and public life—is also an arbitrary one. Men’s imposition of this public-private divide is clearly portrayed in Chapter 1, when the narrator is twice excluded from public life. First, the narrator, on a fictionalized Oxbridge campus, sits by a river allowing her thoughts to “let [their] line down the stream” (Woolf, 4). Her musings are quickly interrupted by a male scholar, whose face of horror and indignation make the narrator think:

“Instinct rather than reason came at my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path. Only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me.” (Woolf, 6).

This incident illustrates how deeply the public-private divide is embedded not only in society, but in women’s psyches, as it has become their instinct to remain on the gravel path, where men have told them they belong. The double standards here are clear. While men are allowed to dwell in the turf—an open, natural space without a clear direction—, women are restricted to the gravel path—a straight line between two points, with no space for meandering and deliberating. While men are allowed and encouraged to exercise their faculties and freedoms, women are confined to an artificial, narrow, stifling role. The second instance of such exclusion occurs when, opening the door to the library, a “silvery, kindly gentleman” stops the narrator from entering (Woolf, 6), stating that she is only allowed in if she is supervised or has a letter of permission. Like the first scene, this intervention involves a physical exclusion, as well as an intellectual one. Both of these incidents aim to show that a woman’s place is not in the public sphere. Instead of trying to fight this exclusion directly, Woolf seems to suggest an alternative solution that may produce more immediate results: if women are not allowed in the public life, let them reclaim the domestic and the quotidian as political. An example of lies in Woolf’s description of the academy’s luncheon. Instead of drawing the reader’s attention to “something very witty that was said, or for something very wise that was done” (Woolf, 10), the narrator focuses on comparing the male students’ meal to the women’s. While the men rejoice in an elaborate meal where “wineglasses [are] flushed white and flushed crimson” (Woolf, 10-11) the women receive prunes and custard (Woolf, 17). Describing the gender disparity in something as commonplace as food demonstrates that not much is needed in order to convey a political message. By highlighting the politics present in the domestic and supposedly-apolitical sphere, Woolf brings social analysis, which appeared far removed from the private sphere and restricted to a male audience, to the very place women inhabit.

In all, Woolf’s stylistic and narrative choices strongly and uniquely elucidate *A Room of One’s Own’s* feminist message. As the barriers between seemingly antagonistic spheres (fictional and factual, self and the collective, the domestic and the political...) are permeated, one finds an account that, if it is not more *truthful*, is at least *truth-attracting*.

Woolf first dissolves the barrier between the self and the collective by employing the first-person pronoun 'I' in an undefined manner, thus embodying the beinglessness of womanhood, while also paying homage to past women writers whose work they could never own, and protecting herself by placing relative distance between her and her narrator's feminist ethos. Woolf also questions the separation between the factual and the fictional, engaging in fictional-biographical exercises to elaborate on the history, accomplishments, and challenges of women writers, filling in the gaps left by male scientific and literary pursuits. These accounts are marked by a sort of continuity between memory and fiction, between the past and the present, which also work as a critical tool to denounce the condition of women. Finally, Woolf breaks down the barrier separating the political (or public) from the domestic (or private). It is clear that she supports woman's right to occupy public spaces without the tutelage or surveillance of a man. However, Woolf also seems to suggest that women could get around this issue of ostracization by highlighting the domestic sphere's own political elements. Through all these choices, Woolf demonstrates that the Western patriarchy's hyper-stratification and excessive divisions do not reflect the reality of our world's numerous ambiguities, and that the intermingling of seemingly oppositional perspectives, conditions, and disciplines is needed in order to find some truth.

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Identity as Exploration in Maggie Nelson's
The Argonauts
Esmé Gurnsey

The nature of identity is central to Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts*, specifically its fluidity, incomprehensibility, and the weight placed on its definition. The very title of the memoir confronts the reader with the question of identity continuity. The Argo ship is a Classical allusion which represents something that changes gradually until the point at which it is composed of entirely different parts. There seems to be a general sense of discomfort in allowing something to exist without fully understanding what it is or what its existence means for the existence of others. Once something is defined or given an "identity," we are able to place that thing within our realm of understanding and, in turn, situate our own identity in relation to it. However, as identity itself is ever-changing and something that grows with us throughout our lives, we are placed in the difficult position of constantly re-defining ourselves and those around us. As we situate ourselves in the world and distinguish ourselves from others, we inevitably encounter things beyond our comprehension, things that make us uncomfortable and vulnerable. As society expands its perspective on acceptable forms of identity, this pursuit of self-definition and recognizing others becomes more complex. Maggie Nelson frames the nature of identity in *The Argonauts* as exploratory and fluid, constantly developing through one's experiences and relationships. This concept is embedded in the structure of the text itself, demonstrated by its accumulation of literary references and its distinctly non-linear framework.

The Argonauts includes literary references throughout the margins of the text. These references further Nelson's arguments and add depth and nuance to her personal anecdotes. This use of references demonstrates how exposure to different modes of thinking helps us to define our opinions and our views on the world. Identity formation is accumulative, developing as we learn and navigate the world. In one passage, Nelson discusses how our gender identity impacts our daily experience in the world, "A friend says he thinks of gender as a color. Gender does share with color a certain ontological indeterminacy: it isn't quite right to say that an object is a color, nor that the object has a color" (Nelson 15). Nelson goes on to quote Judith Butler, connecting these two perspectives,

"My whole point was that the very formation of subjects, the very formation of persons, presupposes gender in a certain way ... Performativity has to do with repetition, very often with the repetition of oppressive and painful gender norms to force them to resignify" (Nelson 15).

These two quotations discuss the fluidity of gender identity and the difficulties we experience in attempting to define ourselves through our gender identities. Describing or defining one's gender identity is often difficult as we find language insufficient to capture exactly what it is that we are attempting to express. Nelson compares her friend's relation to gender with Judith Butler's notion of gender performance. Both of these perspectives provide unique and nuanced ways in which to approach gender identity, and we can infer that Nelson's opinions on the topic have been influenced and shaped by these two perspectives. Instead of directly presenting her opinions to the reader, Nelson uses a mixture of others' viewpoints and her anecdotes to convey a more nuanced perspective. Nelson continues with this thread of gender, identity, and definition as she speaks about her partner, who is happy to allow himself to exist within non-definition regarding his gender identity. "How to explain," Nelson inquires, "in a culture frantic for resolution, that sometimes the shit stays messy?" (Nelson 53). She then includes a quotation from Paul Preciado,

“I do not want the female gender that has been assigned to me at birth. Neither do I want the male gender that transsexual medicine can furnish and that the state will award me if I behave in the right way. I don’t want anything” (Nelson 53).

This quotation demonstrates the complexities present in the experience of gender identity; where some people find validation in concrete definition, others feel more comfortable with non-definition. Identity labels allow some people to navigate the world more easily. For some, language feels more constricting than liberating, and putting a label to an identity feels insincere or wrong. Nelson presents these differing ways of perceiving and presenting identity to encapsulate the way in which identities are fluid and shaped by personal relationships.

Nelson’s text offers a flexible and continuously developing model of identity, where each individual’s relationship to aspects of their identity evolves throughout their life. Nelson acknowledges that different ways of approaching gender may change for each person over time, writing, “How to explain that for some, or for some at some times, this irresolution is OK—desirable, even—whereas for others, or for others at some times, it stays a source of conflict or grief?” (Nelson 53). She asserts that it is also too simple to assume some people always prefer to define themselves while others always prefer non-definition. Nelson suggests that what people need and how they wish to identify at various points in their own lives is not always the same. In JP Hyzy’s article, “Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction,” they explore the idea of identity formation and the realization that many people feel entitled over identities that they are uncomfortable with. Nelson discusses her feelings of anger when reading about a woman’s comments on how her brother’s transition impacted her — asking “*Where does it fit into the taxonomy of life crises when one person’s liberation is another’s loss?*” (Nelson 50). In Hyzy’s article, they explore this idea of other people feeling personally affected by the identity of others,

“the world tends to care more about what your identity means for it. This has become clear to me through my many comings-out, but especially so with regard to my being trans. Questions motivated by this impulse are as common as they are shortsighted. They fail to acknowledge that there’s more to be gained from another’s self-actualization, from their living authentically,” (Hyzy 109).

These quotations demonstrate the tension that occurs when certain people feel as though someone else’s identity affects or offends them in some way. The sense of entitlement towards controlling another’s identity is most commonly directed at people whose identities are suppressed or marginalized (such as gay or transgender people). Often, while someone undergoes a transition, we are confronted with the fact that identities can fluctuate and that we will never fully be able to comprehend the identity of another. Which, in some cases, can cause discomfort. This is a fundamental theme of this text, that identity changes over time, that through our experiences, we desire to define ourselves differently and that this fact is very distressing to some. Not simply our identity itself, but our relationship to our definition of our identities is fluid. Nelson weaves her own ideas with the ideas of her friends and other prominent authors throughout *The Argonauts*, giving form to the assertion that identity is accumulative and developed through relationships. Once we are exposed to concepts that introduce us to different positions, these experiences fundamentally shape and alter our identities.

Nelson's memoir weaves her stories of several life-altering events in a way that is intentionally non-chronological. One big life change that Nelson undergoes is her pregnancy. She explores how motherhood alters one's perception of themselves and others' perception of the mother. In one passage, Nelson recounts a time in which she gave a lecture, which did not pertain to pregnancy or motherhood when an audience member asked her, "*I can't help but notice that you're **with child**, which leads me to the question—how did you handle working on all this dark material [sadism, masochism, cruelty, violence, and so on] in your **condition**?"* (Nelson 91). This question is troubling as it suggests that mother and child are inseparable. When people see pregnant women, as Nelson remarks later on the page, they are often obsessed with the pregnancy, almost unable to think of the pregnant person as *anything* other than a pregnant person. This question-asker cannot reconcile the idea that this pregnant woman could think of anything other than pregnancy, let alone "dark material." Nelson continues to explore this idea of the separation of child and mother, "Wherever I went, there the baby went, too. Hello New York! Hello bathtub! And yet babies have a will of their own, which becomes visible the first time mine sticks out a limb and makes a tent of my belly" (Nelson 91). Throughout a pregnancy, the mother completely supports the fetus until it is born. After it is born, the baby is still dependent on the mother for survival until that baby matures, despite the fact that it is now outside the mother's body. As Nelson remarks, the fetus during pregnancy already has some desires of its own, apart from the mother, yet is completely tethered to the mother's body. Naturally, this unique relationship between mother and child – or self and other – alters the mother's perception of herself and her identity as she must now support another being into adulthood who was once completely dependent on her body. Nelson asserts later on, a desire not to lose sight of herself, to assure her child knows that she is her own person, "I've got to give without losing sight of my own me. I'll let him know that I'm a person with my own needs and desires, and over time he'll come to respect me for elucidating such boundaries, for feeling real as he comes to know me as real" (Nelson 140). Nelson represents the idea that identity is constantly changing based on one's experiences. Motherhood fundamentally alters, if not one's identity, at least one's perception of their identity. It closes a gap between self and other in a radical way in which one must entirely support the existence of the other, yet the two are separate in many critical ways.

The experience of pregnancy is undoubtedly a powerful influence on one's identity as a whole, particularly in regard to their attitudes surrounding gender identity. In her article, "The Morbidity of Maternity: Radical Receptivity in Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts*" Katie Collins explores Nelson's intersection of the physical and psychic aspects of pregnancy and birth,

"Here Nelson ... seamlessly intersects the material—cervical dilation—and the theoretical—shattering and thinning ... Nelson's description of labor's thinness maintains coherence ... the cervical tissue is strained and reduced but not destroyed ... it largely retains its original condition—it is both the same and indefinitely changed" (Collins 317).

During pregnancy, the body experiences major changes and often complications arise. As Collins explains, Nelson's perspective on this process is a fairly positive approach. While pregnancy changes your body and mind, parts of you inevitably stay the same. Identity is complex as life experiences and the accumulation of knowledge can fundamentally alter it, while also adding on to the identity that already exists. In other words, life experiences, such as pregnancy, alter aspects of your identity while keeping others intact. Identity formation is not straightforward or simple and what is true for one is not necessarily true for another.

Much like the structure of *The Argonauts*, certain aspects of one's identity can be accentuated or diminished at various times. Identity formation is not a linear progression. Certain experiences can alter your identity while others can revive aspects of you that you had previously neglected or seemingly lost. Collins also discusses the ways in which pregnancy can change one's perception of the other,

“While pregnancy threatens violence against the self's coherence through the infiltration of another, it also invites ‘porosity,’ or collaboration and interrelation. Many women embrace the interpersonal demands of pregnancy and motherhood as a means to reject heteronormative, patriarchal, and capitalist social organization and regulation” (Collins 320).

Much like the structure of *The Argonauts*, certain aspects of one's identity can be accentuated or diminished at various times. Identity formation is not a linear progression. Certain experiences can alter your identity while others can revive aspects of you that you had previously neglected or seemingly lost. Collins also discusses the ways in which pregnancy can change one's perception of the other,

The mother's support of the fetus can be interpreted as a radical acceptance of the other. Pregnancy can change one's view of themselves as they are uniquely tethered to another being yet, this tethering can allow the mother to see the ways in which humanity is similar and interconnected. Nelson describes her thoughts upon discovering that her child would be male,

“Despite agreeing with Sedgwick's assertion that ‘women and men are more like each other than chalk is like cheese, than ratiocination is like raisins, than up is like down, or than 1 is like 0,’ it took me by surprise that my body could make a male body... As my body made the male body, I felt the difference between male and female body melt even further away... Radical intimacy, radical difference” (Nelson 87).

It is shocking to Nelson that her female body is capable of producing something that is often thought of as the opposite of female: male. Despite Nelson's views on gender and her vast knowledge on gender philosophy and study, this idea alters the way she perceives herself and perceives gender. It is not until she tangibly realizes that female bodies can produce male bodies, that the commonalities between male and female become startlingly apparent to her. It is one thing to wholeheartedly believe that women and men are more alike than they are different, and another to experience the blending of the gender binary in the form of pregnancy. Nelson's experience of pregnancy impacts her life in many different aspects and develops her identity in ways she never before considered. Parts of her have been accentuated, parts have been changed. Much like the *Argo*, her identity has radically transformed, while at the same time, remained intact.

Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* is an exploration of identity and the ways in which one's identity develops through experiences of the world and relationships with others. Throughout the text, Nelson references a variety of sources which represent the way that identity consists of accumulated knowledge and perspectives. Nelson's readings challenge, shape, and reinforce her own views, constantly altering her perception of herself and the world around her. Nelson's non-chronological storytelling contributes to the understanding of one's experiences as part of their ever-changing identity rather than isolated and inconsequential events. She explores how an individual's knowledge of how they are perceived by others shapes the individual's self perception.

Nelson presents the idea that to some, a clearly defined identity is necessary to keep them stable and fulfilled, while for others this feels constricting. Overall, Nelson presents identity as ever-changing and growing, as accumulative. Identity formation is as painful as it is fulfilling, as challenging as it is rewarding. Nelson presents the reader with crucial considerations for how to approach contemporary conceptions of identity. Once we frame identity as exploratory in nature, we are able to empathize with the other who, it seems, is just as disoriented as we are.

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The Heterotopic Arctic and Victorian
Morality of the Body
Eleanor Peebles

The Franklin Expedition of 1845 in search of the Northwest Passage has had a lasting hold on the public imagination, originating from the Victorian fascination with polar exploration. Fundamentally, the appeal of the Arctic to Victorian society lay in the heterotopic nature of the Archipelago, and the lens of a crisis heterotopia in the north is useful in understanding the moral contest implied in the eyes of the public. This contest is one the Expedition lost, by nature of being lost themselves – the failure to overcome, no matter how impossible the challenge, nonetheless leads to moral failure in the Victorian perspective of the polar explorer. The nature of the Arctic, in addition to its vast departure from the British environment, means it more than fulfills several of Michel Foucault's principles of a heterotopia, inverting these principles in a manner that allows the polar area to be interpreted as a non-traditional crisis heterotopia. This inversion is directly resultant of the perception of morality as a quality reflected in the physical Victorian body, and the inverted heterotopia provides a basis with which to understand why the loss of the Franklin Expedition was not just the loss of the ships and people themselves but rather a larger blow to the Victorian ego.

The Arctic Archipelago is a looming specter in British discovery narratives, with polar explorers heralded as “national icons” who were immensely popular with the public as both stories of heroism and sources of “scientific narratives [that] reflected and celebrated the rationality, determination, and logic of the Victorian mind” (Behrisch 73). As such, these explorers were more than just human beings: they had a very real presence in the public imagination and were thus subject to the moral stringency promoted by society. The veneration polar explorers received was directly tied to the Arctic's heterotopic and thus untouchable (to the general public) nature. Foucault defines heterotopias as the “counter-sites” of utopias – they are “effectively enacted utopia[s] in which the real sites . . . that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (23). The heterotopic features of the Archipelago in the Victorian gaze are largely a result of how drastically different an environment it was from Great Britain – its extended sunlight and the winnowed presence of British bodies to exclusively naval service members, entrenched in ritual and separate from society, are the main aspects that speak to a heterotopia. Foucault's fourth principle states that a heterotopic space “begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time” (Foucault 26). For the sailors who populated naval journeys such as the Franklin Expedition, the extended darkness of winter was an oppressive change from the reliable rising of the sun in Britain. An 1877 Arctic account by Sir George Nares describes how “the long Arctic winter, with its unparalleled intensity and duration of darkness, produced by an absence of sunlight for 142 days, was passed on board” (“The Recent Arctic Expedition,” 34). The disorienting effect this change in sunlight had on the crew was difficult to discern in the moment but easily seen in hindsight; “not until the sun actually returned on the 1st of March did [the expedition] in any way realize the intense darkness [they] must have experienced for so long a period” (“The Recent Arctic Expedition,” 34). Though Nares' account details an expedition two decades later, the ships and environment are similar enough that his writings can be accepted as potential insights into the Franklin Expedition. The known conditions of light during the day and darkness at night are upset in the Arctic, and this degrades the experience of time in such a way as to constitute a break with familiar temporal conditions in a negative manner.

In addition to the near-constant darkness fulfilling Foucault's fourth principle, the entity that propels sailors into the Arctic itself is the British Navy, making the Arctic a space where "a system of opening and closing . . . both isolates and makes [it] penetrable" according to the fifth principle of heterotopias (26). The hierarchical structure of the discovery service was present and looming at all times – nowhere is this more evident than in the journals of officers, whose personal writings the Admiralty would inspect upon return, and officers thus narrated their experiences and lives with a constant filter if they hoped to maintain their positions for future expeditions. In this way, "the Admiralty attempted to produce this authority by minimizing the possibilities of individual expression" and the highest-ranking officials, ensconced firmly in England, "denied the actual presence of the men on the ice . . . [in favor of focusing on the] scientific documents the Admiralty coveted" when expeditions returned home (Behrisch 76). What was valuable and worth recording was largely delineated by landbound Admirals, not those whose bodies actually completed the journeys. They were required to endure the physicality of it, but the intellectual outcome was controlled by the external Naval hierarchy. This intense curation controlled the morality of the personality, leaving only the morality of the body to the sailors, and to the public to judge. As the ships completing polar expeditions required a complex system of operations, and the British Navy as an institution facilitated joining and maintaining a position within it, the Arctic is well within Foucault's definition: it is accessible only by way of these institutional and physical structures. In these ways, with the sunlight corrupting British time and the Naval service establishing a ritualistic entrance, the Arctic exemplifies a heterotopia.

While the Arctic fits within the parameters of Foucault's traditional heterotopia based on his fourth and fifth principles, it also inverts the concept of a crisis heterotopia. Crucially, it does not reject the concept of the crisis space – rather, it exists within the heterotopic paradigm and inverts key characteristics specific to the crisis heterotopia, namely its internal and social aspects. Foucault's crisis heterotopias are defined as spaces that are "reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis" (24). Persons whose crises emerge from within their bodies, such as elderly or pregnant individuals, are gathered together to experience their personal crises as part of a larger whole within a specific area. The Arctic, specifically in the context of the Victorian perspective, where the polar explorer's body is a moral agent enduring trials, inverts the crisis so that it emerges from without, as an external force acting upon the body. The Arctic visits itself upon the bodies of explorers in varied ways, in the form of blizzards, freezing temperatures, lightning storms, the inexorable pressure of pack ice, and strong gales; the combined effect of these weather patterns and hallmarks of the Arctic Archipelago is a brutal one on the British body.

The Arctic is frequently anthropomorphized in Victorian descriptions of northern exploration, as "by the time of the Franklin expedition it was more common for Arctic to be feminised" than not (McCorristine, *Polar Queens* 174). This emphasizes its environmental harshness as a force which is acting upon the body rather than emerging from within, the north "attack[ing] [sailors] by 'white teeth' which could grip like 'a vice'" (McCorristine, *Polar Queens* 174). In addition, the inversion of the crisis into one rooted in an external force also inverts the relationship of the crisis to society and the lived environment. The environment that polar explorers endured, often mired in crisis and certainly dire for those on the Franklin Expedition, is made all the worse by the fact that it is not their permanent residence. Those on the Expedition were British sailors stranded in, and only ever meant to visit, the Arctic. The society they answered to was thousands of miles away, both socially and geographically distant.

As such, rather than being removed from the nexus of society to experience personal crises as part of a larger whole, the people populating polar expeditions were removed from society to experience larger crises in a personal, isolated manner as their bodies were attacked from outside. The environment becomes the aggressor, rather than functioning as a host. Fundamentally, the idea of a plight shared by all who occupy a specific space is retained within the crisis heterotopia of the Arctic – while the extent varies drastically, due to the nature of how harsh northern climates are, every sailor finds themselves suffering in one form or another.

The reason an inverted crisis heterotopia is effective as a lens through which to understand the Victorian perspective of polar exploration is rooted in what the inversion accomplishes. The externalization of the crisis and the sailors' changed relationship to their society and environment are fundamentally intertwined in that, together, they create a new moral dimension for the exploration narrative to exploit (Foucault 24). The inversion of the crisis heterotopia means that rather than being a space one is removed to once they experience a crisis, the Arctic is a space one is removed to where they subsequently become entrenched in the crisis. In this way, the crisis becomes a challenger to subdue rather than endure, as it has been introduced as an enemy rather than an intrinsic feature of the self. Through the Victorian perspectives on Arctic exploration and masculinity, the way the body handled the Arctic's visitation determined the ultimate worth of the man possessing it. "In the discourses of polar heroism, the British body overcame the environment through a denial of, or victory over, pain and suffering," meaning that the sailor faced a moral failure if they experienced a physical one (McCorristine, *Earthly Pole* 16). As a heterotopia with extreme weather patterns and unique survival complications, the Arctic is "a place where disciplined, resourceful British naval men almost succumb to starvation and madness, a place in which the resistant, intact male body so central to imperial heroic masculinity meets its limits" (Hill 420). With the rigid structure of the British Navy providing a moral backbone, the Arctic becomes a test of will, where the embodied British sailor can overcome the external features attacking the form by preserving the moral character within. Crucially, in the inverted crisis heterotopia, this internal character is intact to begin with – all attack is external, making the goal of the person to maintain what is already there. The anthropomorphized Arctic attacking the body in narratives therefore "depicts the fragility of the human body" (Hill 421). Ultimately, what the inversion of the crisis heterotopia accomplishes is illustrating that the moral test the Arctic administers in the Victorian perspective is one that all the men of the Franklin Expedition eventually fail, simply by virtue of not surviving. One critique that embodies the attitude of the Victorian public and the harsh judgment of Arctic voyages lies in George McDougall's 1852 poem "A Fast Man's Woes." McDougall journeyed north in expeditions on the HMS *Resolute* in 1850 and 1852, searching for Sir John Franklin and his crew, and provides in his poem a condemnation of the standards of the British body as the model upon which morality succeeded or failed based on the health and well-being of the sailor (Behrisch 78). In the narrative, McDougall's "own body becomes the focus for all experience in the Arctic," and the untouchable, incorruptible ideal man is revealed as impossible despite the "scientific pretension toward corporeal displacement" that the Admiralty sets up, perpetuating the physical morality contest as much as the public did (Behrisch 78). Regardless of the critique in "A Fast Man's Woes," it is undeniable that the public, far from McDougall's embodied reality, continued judging the Expedition and finding it wanting, even as they mourned its loss.

The Arctic, with its disorienting eternal sunlight and the ritualistic entry and exit of ships, meets the primary requirements of a traditional heterotopia. In fulfillment of the crisis heterotopia, however, it occupies an inverted role where the crisis is externalized and the source of social norms is spatially distant but spiritually nearby in the form of moral expectations of the body.

These social norms make a political statement out of the failure of the physical form, and a moral judgment out of the capacity of an individual's body to withstand environmental abuse. In the Victorian imagination, the failure the Franklin Expedition faced was not only a failure to return home or succeed in discovering the Northwest Passage, but also a moral failure as their bodies succumbed to the elements. Foucault's heterotopia provides a useful lens in understanding this morality and how the public perceived it in Victorian England. Much of what happened to the Franklin expedition is lost to history as they themselves were, but one detail is known to modern audiences as well as Victorian ones – the Expedition, trapped in pack ice, abandoned their ships eventually in favor of sledges. As such, they threw themselves on the absent mercy of the Arctic and found Foucault's last heterotopic prediction to be true: "in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up" (27).

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Asexual Interpretations of 'Bodies and Pleasures': Destabilizing the Biopolitical Categories of Sexuality
Zoe Coulter

Asexuality - generally defined by an experience of little to no sexual attraction to others - does not fit neatly into our current models of sexuality and medicalization of the body and mind. A close examination of this unease offers potential new analytical angles for understanding the biopolitical production of subjectivity. Within Nikolas Rose's conceptual framework of the biomedicalization of individuality, asexuality is only legible as a diagnosis. Regardless of whether the label is worn in a positive or a negative light, the lack of sexual desire is always a lack, a potentially treatable deviation from the constructed norm of a healthy body and brain. Paul Preciado also examines how identity and subjectivity are interpreted biologically, but his analysis of visible and invisible models of gender offers a framework for understanding how conflicting models of sexuality can coexist. Despite being contradictory, these gender models are able to function in tandem because they share an underlying belief in pre-existing identity categories. The model that posits sexual identity as a distinct and innate psychological fact allows asexuality to exist and be seen as a sexuality, but it is an uneasy existence. Nathan Snaza notes this unease and instead presents asexuality as a challenge to the very concept of identity categories, reframing it as a queer approach to sexuality rather than a legible identity in the category of sexualities. Snaza's erotic biopolitics of situation has similarities with Preciado's *potentia gaudendi*, or "orgasmic force". Both theories engage with sexual desire as a kind of energy in a field of relations, which deeply affects and is affected by how we perceive ourselves. However, where *potentia gaudendi* redefines sexual excitation to subsume all other relational excitations into the orgasmic force, Snaza's erotics opens the field of relations to include infinite variations of relational situations. In doing so, his erotic biopolitics explicitly questions the hierarchies of relationships attached to our biocultural understanding of being human.

The assertion of asexuality as a sexual identity is in one way an attempt to de-medicalize a lack of sexual desire, but at the same time an attempt to normalize a disinterest in sex by rooting it in biology rather than personal choice. Nathan Snaza observes in his article "Asexuality and Erotic Biopolitics" that the Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) emphasizes a simplistic distinction between "celibacy as choice and asexuality as nonchoice". Snaza refrains from speculating on the causes of asexuality by arguing that while it is not a choice, neither should it be understood as a sexuality in the same way that heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality are. However, he does not elaborate on the specific problems that arise from AVEN's biology-based choice vs non-choice distinction, which make it harder to define asexuality as a sexual identity category. One major issue is that the creation of the category "asexual" has not, in fact, precluded the continued existence of a medical diagnosis describing the same phenomenon: hypoactive sexual desire disorder. While this can partially be attributed to asexuality's lack of visibility in wider society, there is a more fundamental issue at hand: a biological understanding of asexuality is no longer sufficient for it to be seen as a nonchoice. Nikolas Rose argues in his article "Neurochemical Selves" that the widespread marketing of psychiatric drugs since the 1950s has changed how we understand ourselves, causing a shift from a psychological understanding of the self to a "somatic individuality".

This somatic individuality understands the self as embodied, places the roots of one's mental troubles in the biomedically-understood organ of the brain, and positions drugs that can potentially target specific brain functions as ways to fix those ills at their source. Rose argues that, while drugs can help with some mental illnesses, pharmaceutical companies have been quick to capitalize on the way that somatic individuality interprets everything as biomedical in nature and biomedically treatable. In this conceptual framework, the existence of hypoactive sexual desire disorder and the drugs recommended for its treatment in past and current editions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, currently DSM-V, are exemplary of the way that "the new generation of psychiatric drugs treat conditions whose borders are fuzzy, whose coherence and very existence as illness or disorders are matters of dispute". Rose argues that these drugs are "not so much intended to 'cure' - to produce a specific transformation from a pathological to a normal state - as to modify the ways in which vicissitudes in the life of the recipient are experienced, lived and understood". The pathologization of having less sexual desire than others, or than you yourself once did, requires not only a strictly defined "normal state" to compare against, but also an awareness that deviations from that normal state are undesirable and, crucially, able to be changed. When the categories of asexuality and hypoactive sexual desire disorder exist side by side, asexuality can be seen as merely being disordered without seeking treatment. To identify as asexual in this framework is to challenge the blanket pathologization of a lack of sexual desire, but it does not challenge its subsequent medicalization. The focus of choice is no longer whether to have sex or not based on one's desires, but whether to seek treatment or not based on how bearable one finds existing in a non-normal state.

In his book *Testo Junkie*, Paul B. Preciado also examines biomedical examples of how identities are understood and subjectivities are constituted, but he focuses on gender rather than mental health or sexuality. He analyses two contradictory models of gender; the "visible" model sees gender as biologically determined and posits that "the real is what you can see", while the "invisible" model posits an immaterial but "true 'psychological sex' distinct from the one that has been assigned at birth". The first model provides the impetus for sex assignment surgery on intersex babies (the idea being that gender can be assigned by changing what is seen), while the second underlies gender-confirming surgery for trans people (in order to make their invisible sex visible). Preciado argues that even though these models of visible versus invisible gender are fundamentally opposed, they are able to "function together thanks to a single metaphysical axis that attaches them as it opposes them". Both models rely on the idea that femininity and masculinity exist "as transcendental essences", as ideals that exist prior to and outside of the ways we create gender in society. Preciado then goes on to examine how neither model is more inherently biological than the other, and how both are harnessed by the technologies of the "pharmacopornographic sex-gender regime" to shape how we understand ourselves. This "pharmacopornographic regime" is Preciado's term for the way that our modern society is governed by biomolecular (pharmaceutical) and informational (pornographic) normative ideas, which are harnessed by industries that profit from people's desires and so find it profitable to shape those desires. In holding up gender and sexual identities as if they are prior categories that subjects must physically and mentally align themselves with, these models create "subjects that think of themselves as private organic spaces and biological properties with fixed identities of gender and sexuality".

Preciado draws a connection between seeing ourselves as biologically embodied individuals that, though medically alterable, are altered only with the goal of reaching a fixed and predetermined end-state, and seeing our gendered and sexual identities as fixed and real essences. Though this contrasts with Rose's model of the somatic individual who sees drugs as tools to construct an ever-improving embodiment, both theorists' frameworks examine the ideals of normative embodiment, mental health, gender, and sexuality. Rose and Preciado's arguments align when they reveal that these ideals, which are held up as essences to be actualized through biological intervention, are constructed by profit-driven biopolitical techniques.

Though Preciado focuses on gender, his analytical framework can be expanded to understand how sexualities have also been pharmacopornographically shaped and constructed. The visible model of sexuality sees sexual identity as evident only through one's actions, such that historical figures cannot be verified as gay or lesbian without documentation of their actual homosexual encounters, for example. Asexuality essentially disappears within this model, as you cannot prove a lack — especially when actions and desires diverge — and at any moment one's asexuality has the potential to be disproven. On the other end of the axis, an invisible model of sexuality posits an immaterial sexual identity that needs to be discovered and either upheld (if sexuality is seen as static) or constantly monitored and revised (if, as of late, sexuality is understood to be fluid). It is this second model which has given rise to the proliferation of sub-identities within the asexual spectrum, as a lack of desire makes one's sexual identity, or even a satisfactory definition of sexuality, uniquely difficult to pin down. Following Preciado's analysis, both the visible and invisible models of sexuality share a reliance on the categories of sexuality existing *a priori*, like Platonic forms. The visible models of sex and gender rely on physical clues, but are no less reliant than the invisible models on sorting actions and bodies into expected categories. Preciado argues that these, along with the categories of gender, are “somato-political biofiction”, ideas that have been built up and added onto by capitalist and political powers claiming to represent and cater to the subjectivities they themselves have created. When we understand ourselves to be bodies with disorders, we seek treatment. When we understand ourselves to be biologies with gendered and sexual identities, we seek biological techniques for making those identities visible by aligning our bodies and actions with the expected representations of those identities.

Nathan Snaza argues that seeing asexuality as a queer orientation to sexuality — rather than a sexual label itself — offers a new perspective for understanding sexual and non-sexual relationships beyond the categories we are used to siloing them into. In “Asexuality and Erotic Biopolitics,” he builds from Audre Lorde's concept of the erotic as “a field of joy extending well beyond the sexual as a restricted realm,” where “the affirmation of the erotic's more diffuse possibilities constitutes a political swerve away from the patriarchal capture of joy and pleasure” to outline a biopolitical understanding of situations, or “scenes in which entities come into contact and pleasures (and other affects) are generated”. For Snaza, situations are the site of a struggle for what becomes real, and his erotic biopolitics is one lens through which we can understand how events are interpreted and what specific meanings emerge from those interpretations. He argues that the dominant mode of interpretation compares reality against ideals of normalized categories, writing:

Asexuality appeals to me precisely as one eddy in a swirl of creative biocultural challenges to the norms of humanness articulated in relation to what Wynter calls Man: the specific, imperialist, heterosexist modality of performing the human that has increasingly ordered all social formations within colonial modernity.

Man is the supposed normal-state, created by colonialism and perpetuated by capitalism using techniques of biopower; Man is cisgendered, heterosexual, white, able-bodied, and neurotypical, and to not be Man is to be placed on a sliding scale from the edge of humanness to the non-human. Snaza draws a connection between asexuality and decolonial thought, not arguing that they are the same but rather that both challenge not only the specific hierarchized ideals that make up Man but also his very existence, the existence of the categories themselves. Snaza writes, “performing the human under the aegis of Man requires one to have a sexuality, and so to not have one (or to have the wrong one) risks exposure to the dehumanizing violence that saturates and enables the social field ... Sexuality, then, cannot be separated from coloniality, the biopolitics of race, or struggles over the meaning of the being human”. The existence of asexuality, then, goes one layer deeper than homosexuality challenging compulsory heterosexuality, and challenges a “compulsory sexuality”. If asexuality is seen as a queer perspective on sexuality rather than just another identity in Foucault’s “sexual mosaic”, Snaza argues, it opens a new space for inquiry and insight into the techniques of biopower and their effects on the situations that shape our subjectivities.

Where Snaza’s erotic biopolitics has an emphasis on situation, on a continuity and history of relationships of touch and the ways we are created and changed by our environments, Preciado’s *potentia gaudendi* emphasizes the present moment, the event of excitation, which cannot be owned but can be harnessed. Preciado defines *potentia gaudendi* as “‘orgasmic force,’ the (real or virtual) strength of a body’s (total) excitation”. Though this force is not confined to the “so-called sexual organs”, it is an arousal and excitation that is framed as sexual and focused on the immediate moment. Preciado argues that in the pharamacopornographic age, this force suddenly has the potential to create profit (for industries across any sector that engages with people’s self-images and desires) and so has been “moved to the center of technopolitical management”. When *potentia gaudendi* is understood as the medium through which one’s body is “a technoliving, multiconnected entity incorporating technology”, it becomes evident how biopolitical technologies can shape one’s subjectivity in ways that generate profit for the pharmacopornographic regime. Preciado calls for us to be aware of *potentia gaudendi* beyond the ways it has been harnessed by others, and then to turn around and seize the means of the production of subjectivity. Snaza’s erotics, on the other hand, while less focused than Preciado on critiquing the technologies that seek to control how we understand our own desires, envisions a resistance to those technologies through an expansive understanding of those desires. Snaza aims to recontextualize sexual energies and relations as merely one of a myriad of ways of relating. He writes that, “asexuality is not a *lack* of something others supposedly *have*... or even an attribute of my self. It is rather a specifically *erotic* relationality that orients me in a world”.^[7] Framing erotics as not necessarily sexual echoes Foucault’s argument that sex is no more real than sexuality, when he writes:

It is the agency of sex that we must break away from, if we aim - through a tactical reversal of the various mechanisms of sexuality - to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledges, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance. The rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures.

In this way, erotics brings into question not only the primacy of sex and sexual relations, but also their very existence as real and distinct categories of actions, definitively separate from the rest of the intricate web of interactions that shape our lives.

When a lack of sexual desire is understood under the label of asexuality, it makes this lack legible in ways that allow for political organizing and queer critiques of its medicalization, but it also opens it up to the biopolitical techniques and technologies that shape sexualities as given identities. Preciado and Rose both examine ways that capitalist profit motives have contributed to creating a biopolitics that encourages us to categorize and identify ourselves, in order to be properly treated and marketed to. In doing so, both build from Foucault's concept of biopower, which works to manage and administer life and produces the subjectivity of those it claims to represent. If you can be categorized as heterosexual or homosexual, man or woman, then you can be marketed the appropriate pornography, drugs, and gendered accoutrements needed to better fit into those pre-existing categories. Asexuality, not fitting neatly into either the drug or sex markets, presents a dilemma to this regime that can point towards a new understanding of biopolitics. Snaza picks up on this thread and argues for an erotic biopolitics that critiques the existence of sexuality categories as well as the codified hierarchies of said categories. Snaza's erotics and Preciado's *potentia gaudendi* both offer relational and situational understandings of the energies and actions that are then shaped into identities through biocultural technologies, but where *potentia gaudendi* expands sexual energy to encompass all other relations, Snaza's erotics explicitly places sexual relations as merely one quality among a myriad of ways of relating. In erotics, asexuality is not a lack, only a difference. Through this lens, an asexual biopolitical analysis can be a powerful tool in destabilizing the hierarchical identity categories that shape our understandings of ourselves.

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